

Norway – 2001

Ms. Anne Beathe Kristiansen

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54. **Ms. Kristiansen** (Norway), speaking on agenda item 108, said that the United Nations system and Member States should help young people to combat injustice and poverty and to participate in the development of national and international policies. To that end, Member States should implement the Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy, adopted at the fourth session of the World Youth Forum, held in Dakar in August 2001, and consider strengthening the United Nations Youth Unit to promote the influence on the United Nations of young people throughout the world. United Nations agencies should also improve their dialogue with non-governmental organizations.

55. For over 30 years, the Norwegian Government had included youth representatives in its delegation to the General Assembly; she encouraged other Member States to follow that practice, particularly as the involvement of young people in the preparation for world conferences and other important United Nations activities would inspire in them an interest in those events. It would also be very useful to prepare a special report on young people's opportunities to influence political decision-making.

56. No issue was more important to future generations than peace. Therefore, in order to avoid an escalation of violence and terror, as the events of 11 September 2001 had tragically illustrated, it was essential to invest in health, participation and, above all, education, which was perhaps the single most important factor in development. Thus, it was all the more significant that there were still 130 million children who had no access to primary education, which meant that the communities in which they were growing up were being denied the foundations for future development. She also drew attention to the fact that two thirds of the many children who were not in school were girls; no development strategy was better than one that involved women as central players.

