

Sweden – 2002

Ms. Aksakal

UN Youth Delegate Programme

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Youth Delegate Search: <https://youthdelegatesearch.org/sweden-2002/>

11. **Ms. Aksakal** (Sweden), speaking as the youth representative for her delegation, said that human development and democracy were not possible if over half the population was left out, and meaningful youth participation meant that the strengths, interests and abilities of youth must be recognized and nurtured. That could be achieved by providing real opportunities for youth to become involved with decision-making at all levels of society. Their abilities and knowledge were often underestimated, and if youth became involved nationally, their influence internationally would automatically increase. Youth organizations must meet and work together, with the financial support and encouragement of Governments. Such cooperation would strengthen civil society and increase the influence of youth in the global arena. Governments, including those of developing countries, should include youth representatives in their delegations to the General Assembly.

12. Society sometimes failed to meet its responsibility to include youth. Young Muslims victimized after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and young women victims of honour killings were two examples. Little did the perpetrators of the 11 September attacks know or care that another group of innocent people would also be victimized, through an immediate increase in violence and hostility against Muslims, especially in the Western world. She cited examples of verbal and physical abuse against young people of Muslim origin, and although direct abuse had begun to subside, those young people still felt subjected to suspicion and hostility. She also called attention to the case of a young Kurdish woman living in Sweden shot dead by her father for defying the family cultural traditions. Such acts must be considered murder, and must never be accepted as “defence of family honour”. She herself did not look like a typical Swede, with blue eyes and blonde hair, but had her origins in Central Asia and was Muslim. She did not belong to just one culture, ethnicity or belief, and she was glad that Sweden recognized that fact.

13. Exclusion of youth was destructive for society and threatened social and economic development. To [*4*] include youth was a responsibility, in order to avoid their marginalization as adults.

