

Finland – 2005

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Mr. Ronholm (Finland): As a youth representative from Finland, it is an honour for me to address this Assembly.

We are here to review the situation of youth and achievements attained in the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth 10 years after its adoption. I am delighted to see more youth representatives here at the United Nations highest decision-making body than ever before. However, more than 100 Member States still have not provided the voices of their youth the opportunity to be heard at this forum, in spite of the fact that the General Assembly has adopted numerous resolutions calling for the inclusion of youth representatives in Member States' delegations. True representation, however, can be achieved only when democratically chosen bodies representing different youth interests, such as national youth councils, conduct the selection of youth representatives.

General Assembly resolutions also recommend that young people be directly involved in decisionmaking processes. Youth-led development should be promoted at all levels. Young people should take responsibility for developing their own societies.

The World Programme of Action for Youth provides a very good basis for any country to develop a national youth policy. However, there is a need to strengthen the authority of the document. General awareness of the World Programme needs to be greatly increased. Youth organizations need to be involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Programme. There is also a need to find accurate indicators for monitoring the impact of the Programme. One solution is to choose indicators applied in the compiling of the *Human Development Index* that are suitable for youth issues and use them in analysing data for monitoring. The monitoring could be delegated to national youth councils — with the appropriate funding — to provide an adequate overall picture of the situation of young people in the State in question.

As a youth representative, I strongly recommend that a special United Nations taskforce be established to coordinate the implementation and monitoring of the World Programme of Action in order to make reporting official and efficient. The Programme should also be seen as a tool for reaching the Millennium [*22*] Development Goals. Although the Programme is not a legally binding document in itself, many of the important issues addressed therein — such as the right to

health and employment issues — are already included in existing, legally binding international instruments.

It is time for us all to act. We all know what to do, so now let us please do it. While celebrating its tenth anniversary, the World Programme of Action for Youth is getting rid of its “paediatric” problems. It is becoming a strong and independent teenager who has hopefully found its place in the United Nations family. And as a demanding teenager, questioning the status quo and demanding change, it should continue to do so in the future.

