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Mr. Hajiyev (Azerbaijan): As a youth delegate from Azerbaijan at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, it is a great honour for me to be here and to address the Assembly today on the occasion of the 10-year review of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

Since adoption of that Programme in 1995, our world has changed significantly. The time therefore has come to rethink the old agenda and to start looking upon things in a bold new way. Poverty represents serious threat to the security and well-being of young generations. It deprives young people of education and employment and often makes them victims of human trafficking, exploitation and abuse. To a large extent, only low paid and insecure jobs with limited possibilities for advancement are available to the young generations.

Young people, with their enormous untapped potential, can make their own important contribution to poverty reduction. Rather than being viewed as a target group for which employment must be found, young people want to be accepted as partners for development. According to statistical data, only a small percentage of youth across the globe is able to find the necessary funding to start up their own businesses and to involve themselves and other young men and women in entrepreneurship. However, if Governments employ specific programmes to promote youth employment and entrepreneurship at the national level, we will succeed in significantly reducing youth unemployment. Furthermore, national youth-led business funds could be established in order to provide necessary assistance to young entrepreneurs.

I am pleased to represent here one of the leading countries of the Youth Employment Network, a major international initiative to address the challenge of youth employment globally. Azerbaijan, as one of the first countries to join the Network, has recently adopted a youth policy in the form of the State Programme for Youth 2005-2009, which views the promotion of youth employment and youth entrepreneurship among its key policy directions. The programme envisages adoption of a national action plan on youth employment by 2006 and preparation of measures to promote youth entrepreneurship in remote areas and to improve the training and education of young people in this area.

I am also happy to note the achievements of other leading countries of the Network, such as Brazil, Indonesia, Namibia, Senegal and others, which have also undertaken

measures to promote youth employment in their respective countries, including the adoption of national action plans. As a youth representative, I fully support these actions and hope that all Member States can learn from the results achieved so far by the Youth Employment Network, and especially from best practices provided by lead countries.

Another formidable challenge the young people of Azerbaijan continue to face is the ongoing armed conflict with Armenia, which has a detrimental impact on youth and significantly limits prospects for their full-scale development. As a result of this conflict, generations of young Azerbaijani women and men have grown up in refugee and internally displaced persons camps. We, as youth representatives of Azerbaijan, believe that the young generations of both countries can contribute tremendously to the solution of the conflict; this is vital for the security and development of our region. We hope that the Armenian side will demonstrate the same constructive approach towards that end.

We are grateful that, in both the Millennium Declaration and the outcome document of the Highlevel Plenary Meeting (resolution 60/1), youth concerns have been taken into account to a certain extent. However, this is not enough. Around the world, the contributions that young people are already making to achieving the Millennium Development Goals should be further acknowledged and strengthened. Youth needs to be part of the discussion and decisions shaping our world for our common future. It is [*28*] therefore crucial to involve them in the design and implementation of various development programmes and policies, in particular those targeting young people.

In conclusion, I wish to thank Azerbaijan and the United Nations for providing me with the opportunity to speak here today. I hope that more and more younger people, from all countries, especially those from developing countries and countries in transition, will be able to participate in future sessions of the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies and will eventually become real and active partners of Governments in realizing the global goals and commitments before us.

