

Germany – 2008

Ms. Schrader, Mr. Klein

UN Youth Delegate Programme

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7. Ms. Schrader(Germany) said that the youth delegates had travelled across their country to talk with young people, in schools and at conferences and other events, in order to understand their hopes, concerns and visions in the light of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. Young people saw education as the decisive force in breaking out of poverty. They refused to accept unemployment, illiteracy and the waste of resources, and called upon Governments to increase their investments.

8. Education had been recognized as a human right by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Millennium Development Goals and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, if efforts to promote it were not substantially increased, many countries would fail to ensure universal primary education, and only a few would achieve gender equality in primary and secondary education, the two Millennium Development Goals that had seen the least progress. The ability to educate youth would determine each country's contribution to the global community; each euro invested in education had a social return on investment of 120 per cent. Education should unlock one of the world's most powerful resources, whether they be young Europeans, whose numbers would shrink by 25 per cent by 2050, or young Africans, who would have the task of leading their countries out of conflict, poverty and hunger.

9. Young persons wished to see greater recognition of the value of non-formal education systems. In many developing countries, such systems represented the only access to education. Non-formal education providers, many of them youth organizations, should receive more than the limited support that they currently enjoyed.

10. Mr. Klein(Germany) said that over half of the world's population were less than 25 years old. Young persons wanted to be included in political decision-making. They wanted not only to be the subject of decisions but also to be key agents in their implementation. The status of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals was of great concern to young people. To see the Goals as a mere statement of good will would be one of the greatest possible mistakes. Young persons called upon all Governments to contribute to their realization.

11. Including youth in the political system at an early stage in their lives and in an age-appropriate manner would help nurture a sense of ownership and identification and, in the long term, help strengthen the legitimacy of political institutions. Around the world, young volunteers and youth organizations were already contributing greatly to social development through international student exchanges and peer-to-peer education programmes in Africa, and by tackling issues such as juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, racism and sexual health. Youth organizations should therefore receive greater administrative and financial support.

12. Young people also felt that taking an active part in society meant more than simply volunteering; they wanted to be fully able to shape the future of their communities. However, their participation could provide the maximum benefit only if they were fully informed of the rights and means at their disposal, if the mechanisms of participation were attractive to them and if the results were transparent.

13. In conclusion, young people called upon Member States to recognize the value of informal education by supporting youth organizations; ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child; promoting youth input in the planning, evaluation and implementation of decisions affecting them; and supporting youth participation at the United Nations by including young people in all Member State delegations.

