



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



# The UNESCO YOUTH FORUM

Celebrating a Decade of Youth Participation

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### List of Acronyms:

EFA	Education For All
IADGs	Internationally Agreed Development Goals
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OSN	Online Social Network
SHS	UNESCO Social and Human Sciences Sector
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund



## Foreword by Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO

Throughout the United Nations ‘International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding’, which was launched on 12 August 2010, young people have been making their voices heard and driving change towards democratic societies and greater opportunities for education, employment and inclusion. The “youth-quakes” in the Middle East have shown the revolutionary power of aspirations for human rights and dignity when combined with social and new media. Young men and women are leading the change, but they are also hardest hit by unemployment and the lack of opportunity.

UNESCO has acknowledged youth as key partners in development and peace for more than a decade now and has been working to support youth organizations, facilitate their greater social engagement, and strengthen their skills for meaningful political participation. The UNESCO Youth Forum is an open platform to hear youth voices from across the world, to listen to their needs and their vision.

The recommendations and follow-up process of the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum (October 2009), detailed in this

publication, have never been more pertinent. I commend all the young people who participated in the Forum at UNESCO Headquarters in October 2009 for putting forward proposals that are realistic, in-tune with current developments and that relate closely to our Organization’s mandate. They have demonstrated the potential of the Youth Forum process to echo global youth concerns and identify concrete priorities for action. The strengths of these recommendations were acknowledged by the 35th UNESCO General Conference, and, throughout 2010 and 2011, UNESCO has committed to ensuring that they are taken into account in our work now and in the future.

Youth are among those most affected by the economic, social and environmental challenges facing the world today, including the poverty and deprivation that the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs) and, in particular the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) aim to alleviate. They also have great potential to be partners in designing effective responses to these challenges. This is why we must engage the energies, the idealism and the fresh perspective of youth in our endeavours to foster peace and sustainable development.

First held in 1999, the Youth Forum remains among the very few long-term regular institutionalised mechanism for youth participation at the highest level within the United Nations system.

UNESCO's Member States called for it to be an 'integral part' of the UNESCO General Conference in a 2003 resolution, and its outcomes have formed the basis for draft resolutions by Member States.

The Youth Forum is not simply an event but a process that sets youth on a course that will enable them to effect change in their countries and communities, and it is followed up in a way that ensures words and intentions are translated into action.

Alliances with other UN agencies, with academia, civil society, and youth organizations help significantly to leverage the Forum's outcomes and ensure that its momentum is sustained in the periods between each two-yearly gathering.

UNESCO's National Commissions also have a key role to play in involving youth more closely in their communities and countries. It is most encouraging that many

Commissions have taken positive steps in this direction, through such initiatives as the creation of youth desks.

This International Year of Youth has offered a unique opportunity to the Youth Forum to enhance its impact by joining forces with other youth networks.

In the same spirit, the UN Interagency Network on Youth Development, established in February 2010, has included in its priorities a UNESCO proposal to create a joint follow-up mechanism of key youth events that will help to identify the emerging global agenda on youth, to forge synergies and to increase the accountability of those involved. Having acted as co-chair of the Network from February 2010 to February 2011, UNESCO remains committed to working closely with other UN entities to take the youth development agenda a step forward.

May this publication contribute to the development and growth of the Youth Forum, and may the ideas and proposals it contains be brought to fruit, beyond this International Year.

Irina Bokova

## Introduction

**Y**outh are a diverse group that is constantly evolving. The experience of ‘being young’ varies enormously across regions and within countries.

There is now a global consensus that their current situation provides an unprecedented opportunity to accelerate growth and reduce poverty. Young people represent more than 18% of the world’s population (1.2 billion) and therefore have the potential to make a significant contribution to the development of their societies: they are the most educated generation ever and are more flexible and adaptable than any other group to the new opportunities presented by globalization.

Worldwide, the literacy rate of youth increased from 83% to 89% between 1990 and 2009.<sup>1</sup> The increase of non-formal education initiatives contributed to developing life and livelihood skills in countries where large proportions of the youth population are left out of the formal education system. Considerable progress has been made to include youth in decision-making at governmental and inter-governmental levels. The recent

<sup>1</sup> Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat (DESA), The Millennium Development Goals Report 2011, New York, 2011. Available in: [http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/11\\_MDG%20Report\\_EN.pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/11_MDG%20Report_EN.pdf)

uprisings around the world have shown the power of youth as to change their societies. At community level, informal youth volunteerism has reached unprecedented levels.<sup>2</sup> The access to and use of ICT has expanded learning opportunities, even to remote areas, and is increasingly being used as a means to improve the participation of youth in community development.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, perhaps more than any other social group, young women and men face major challenges to their development: over 200 million youth live on less than US\$1 a day, 88 million are unemployed, 130 million are illiterate, more than 10 million live with HIV/AIDS and young women continue to face barriers in many areas of development. Nearly 80% of youth with disabilities live in developing countries, facing discrimination and significant barriers to participation and inclusion.<sup>4</sup>

Addressing these challenges and realizing the potential of youth as drivers of positive change and agents of

<sup>2</sup> Youth and Millennium Development goals 2008 <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/youthmdgs.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Unitar web seminar series on ICT policy issues for development/preparatory event for the global forum on ICT and development (ICT4D)

<sup>4</sup> Data collected from the UN Programme on Youth at UN DESA: <http://www.un.org/youth>



development and peace can be effective only through a holistic approach to both build the skills and capacities of youth and provide them with opportunities to engage in their societies. In this sense, ensuring the full, effective and meaningful participation of youth in designing responses to ongoing challenges is a prerequisite for success.

The objectives of the UNESCO Youth Forum embody the call for youth participation, the need for youth to be heard and to engage in shaping decision-making. Since the first edition in 1999, the Youth Forum has continued to evolve to make youth participation more meaningful and impactful. One of the greatest strengths of the 2009 UNESCO Youth Forum was that, the youth delegates produced a series of recommendations that are tangible, succinct and which relate directly to UNESCO's mandate. This was recognized throughout the 35th UNESCO General Conference and the Organization committed to sustaining the momentum created during the Forum, through a solid follow-up process in support of the youth delegates' efforts in their countries and communities.

This publication takes stock of the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum, which marked the tenth year of this unique youth participation process, and the follow-up action towards the 7th UNESCO Youth Forum in 2011. It provides an overview of the UNESCO Youth Forum process and a history of the development of the Youth Forum since its



'If you have to decide something related to a group of people, the most intelligent thing should be go and ask them what they think.'

Stefano Pistillo, youth delegate from Italy

creation in 1999. It then details the preparations and the proceedings of the 6th Youth Forum. Finally it looks to the follow-up of the Forum and to the opportunities for future development.

The publication is also intended to present the ways in which the Youth Forum has evolved through targeted innovations and a stronger follow-up process. It also seeks to recognize the cross-sectoral work which is key in the Youth Forum process, by giving credit to all those, both within the Organization and externally, who supported and participated in the Forum. It also builds the case for improved follow-up action and for a joint follow-up process linking the Youth Forum to other global and regional youth events.

## Background

As youth issues are increasingly placed at the centre of the development agenda, there is a growing recognition of the rights of youth to self-expression, participation in decision-making, access to information and right to

association in all areas of their societies. These different forms of youth participation are crucial to building a response to youth issues and allowing young people to become agents of change. As such, youth participation is essential to the development of societies, as it capitalises on the positive potential, capabilities and creativity of youth. It is therefore vital to consider how youth voices can be increasingly integrated into national development processes.

The proclamation of the United Nations (UN) International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, commencing on 12 August 2010, has been instrumental in raising awareness of the role of youth in development, dialogue and peace. With this initiative the UN has invited all Member States, the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, and youth organizations to strengthen synergies and to “promote actions at all levels aimed at disseminating among youth the ideals of peace, freedom, progress, solidarity and dedication to the objectives and goals of progress and development”.<sup>5</sup> The numerous initiatives organized in celebration of the Year

<sup>5</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 64/134, “Proclamation of the Year 2010 as the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and mutual understanding”, A/RES/64/134

'Restructuring within the UN has to take an inclusive approach. We need to reach out more to civil society, NGOs, the private sector and youth.'

Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General, UNESCO's Call to Action in Davos, 28 January 2010

have been contributing to raising youth issues on the global agenda and to creating opportunities for young people to contribute to social change.

## UNESCO and youth

A priority group for UNESCO, youth are key actors and partners in its mission to 'contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue'.<sup>6</sup> UNESCO addresses youth issues across all of the Organization's Programme Sectors (Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture and Communication and Information), with each of these sectors integrating youth priorities in their respective work. UNESCO promotes youth participation by engaging and empowering youth to contribute towards the development of their societies and addresses specific youth challenges, particularly violence among youth and other issues affecting their welfare, with a focus on specific groups.<sup>7</sup>

The Youth Programme within UNESCO is anchored in the Social and Human Sciences Sector (SHS). The sector contributes to holistic youth development through a focus on youth civic engagement, supporting successful transitions from school to the workplace and preventing violence.



<sup>6</sup> UNESCO, Medium Term-Strategy 2008-2013 (34 C/4), UNESCO's mission, page 7

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO, Medium Term-Strategy 2008-2013 (34 C/4), UNESCO's priorities, page 8

There are three global objectives that shape the Sector's activities on youth:

1. Strengthen knowledge-building and management on youth issues;
2. Foster the development of policies and frameworks to address youth issues;
3. Promote youth participation in decision-making, youth civic engagement and social inclusion.

This work complements and draws on initiatives within other UNESCO fields of competence including the right to education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), the use of information and communication technologies, sport for development, the promotion of sustainable development and the green economy, and cultural diversity.

Further information on the activities of the section for Youth, Sport and Physical Education is available on the UNESCO website [www.unesco.org/en/youth](http://www.unesco.org/en/youth)





## Box 1: Best practices in youth policies and programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

The project on 'Best practices in youth policies and programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)' was set up to identify, exchange and disseminate best practices of governments and NGOs in the region. It aims to improve public policies on youth and youth-related research, and to reinforce links between policy and programme development and implementation. The project was coordinated by UNESCO and the Inter-American Development Bank in 2008–2009, in partnership with seven United Nations agencies and other key partners. It included a selection of practices addressing eight key areas affecting youth development: education; employment; sexual and reproductive health; prevention of violence; poverty reduction; voluntary work; youth participation; and integral youth development.

The project originates in young people themselves and in the recommendations they have made at the 1st Americas Youth Forum (September 2007) and the UNESCO Regional Meeting – Youth Policies and Networks (October 2008). It also aligns with the recommendations of the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum where the youth delegates stressed the need to identify and exchange good practices.

A High-Level Regional Forum was held from 4 to 6 November 2009 in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, bringing together policy-makers, researchers, young experts and key IGOs and NGOs from the region to recognize and discuss the practices as well as identify policy recommendations. A publication based on this experience is currently developed as the final stage of the project. The success of the project has generated interest from UN partners who are exploring sustainable ways of duplicating it at global level.

For further information and for a full list of partners visit the project's website <http://youthpractices.ucol.mx/> or write to the UNESCO Section for Youth, Sport and Physical Education at [youth@unesco.org](mailto:youth@unesco.org)

# The UNESCO Youth Forum: a unique participation mechanism in the UN system

**T**he UNESCO Youth Forum is an innovative platform for dialogue, decision-making and action which reflects UNESCO's commitment to involving youth in all levels of decision-making. The Forum is unique in the UN system as it is the **only regular youth participation mechanism** that is institutionalized an integral part of the highest decision-making body of the Organization and allows youth to submit their recommendations to the representatives of UNESCO Member States.

Held every two years in conjunction with the Organization's General Conference, the Forum's mission is to bring together youth delegates from all UNESCO Member States to exchange views on issues of global importance, identify common opportunities and challenges, and develop a series of calls to action that can have impact at policy level. The Forum is not simply a meeting but a long-term process that aims to provide youth with an open platform to voice their concerns and to empower them to take action on the issues that they deem critical. In 2009, with its 6th edition held immediately prior to the 35th UNESCO General Conference, the Youth Forum celebrated its tenth year.

Resolution (32C/Res.82) of the 32nd Session of the UNESCO General Conference (2003)

The General Conference,

**Recalling** the success of the third UNESCO General Conference Youth Forum, held in Paris from 26 to 28 September 2003,

**Recognizing** the importance of youth participation in the development and implementation of UNESCO's programmes,

**Welcoming** the Report of the UNESCO General Conference Youth Forum 2003,

**Taking note** of the positive reception of this report by delegates of the 32nd session of the General Conference,

**Reaffirming** that the needs and concerns of youth shall be mainstreamed throughout all programmes of the Organization, as envisaged in document 31 C/4,

**Recognizing** the importance of youth involvement in all levels of decision-making,

**Decides** that a Youth Forum shall be an integral part of every session of the General Conference, and

**Requests** the Director-General to incorporate a Youth Forum in the preparations for the 33rd session of the General Conference.

## Box 1.1: Highlights of the UNESCO Youth Forum (1999-2007)

**1st Youth Forum (1999):** 120 participants from Member States and observers from organizations active in the field of youth.

**2nd Youth Forum (2001):** 131 participants from 83 Member States and observers from organizations active in the field of youth.

**Innovations:**

Most debates took place in discussion groups, which were initiated with presentations from young delegates and UNESCO Sector representatives.

**3rd Youth Forum (2003):** 154 participants from 105 Member States and observers from 22 organizations active in the field of youth.

**Theme:** 'UNESCO and Young People: a Mutual Engagement.'

**Innovations:**

Resolution adopted unanimously at the General Conference institutionalizing the Youth Forum as an integral part of the UNESCO General Conference 2003.

**4th Youth Forum (2005):** 189 delegates from 129 Member States and 48 observers from organizations active in the field of youth.

**Theme:** 'Young people and the dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples: ideas for action in education, the sciences, culture and communication.'

**Innovations:**

Organization of UNESCO Regional Youth Forums (2006-2007) in the follow-up of the Forum.

**5th Youth Forum (2007):** 174 delegates from 116 Member States and 87 observers from organizations active in the field of youth.

**Theme:** 'Science and technology for sustainable development' and 'Education and Economic Development'.

**Innovations:**

Opportunity for youth delegates to contribute to the work of the two Ministerial Roundtables that took place during the General Conference, on the topics of the Forum.

## 1.1 History

The first UNESCO Youth Forum was held just prior to the 30th session of the UNESCO General Conference in 1999. Following the success of the first two editions, in 2003 the General Conference voted unanimously (32C/Resolution 82) to institutionalize the Youth Forum by making it an integral part of every session of the UNESCO General Conference, demonstrating Member States' increasing interest in youth as critical stakeholders and their commitment to see their views and aspirations represented in programme and policy formulation. As a result, the Final Report of the Youth Forum is submitted to the General Conference.

The Final Reports of the Youth Forums are available on the UNESCO website [www.unesco.org/en/youth](http://www.unesco.org/en/youth)



## UNESCO Regional Youth Forums

Following the 2005 UNESCO Youth Forum, a series of UNESCO Regional Youth Forums were organized prior to the 2007 UNESCO Youth Forum: the Pacific Youth Festival (17ñ22 July 2006, Tahiti), the UNESCO Euro-Mediterranean Youth Forum (16ñ19 November 2006, Cyprus), the UNESCO Asian Youth Forum (25ñ29 June 2007, Republic of Korea), the UNESCO Americas Youth Forum (9ñ15 September 2007, Mexico) and the UNESCO African Youth Forum (24ñ28 September 2007, Burkina Faso). These Forums allowed young people to address issues specific to their region, thereby leading to far more specific recommendations than in most global forums. In addition, these forums helped to develop and consolidate partnerships and networks between young people, youth organizations, UNESCO and other partners on a regional level.

Further information on the UNESCO Regional Youth Forums is available on the UNESCO website [www.unesco.org/en/youth](http://www.unesco.org/en/youth)



## Box 1.2: The UNESCO Asian Youth Forum: ensuring a sustainable participation mechanism at regional level



The UNESCO Asian Youth Forum was initiated in 2007 as part of the series of UNESCO Regional Youth Forums that took place in follow-up to the 4th UNESCO Youth Forum in 2005. It brings together youth from all over Asia to address regional issues and to support youth-led initiatives focused on mutual respect and sustainable development in the region, providing an opportunity to strengthen cooperation among Asian youth networks and to build a network of youth, youth organizations and other partners.

The 1st UNESCO Asian Youth Forum was co-organized by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO and the UNESCO Section for Youth, Sport and Physical Education in July 2007. It was held in Jeju Island (South Korea) and addressed the theme ‘Intercultural and interfaith dialogue to ensure peace.’ Following the recommendations adopted at this Forum, the Korean National Commission developed a Fund to support youth-led activities in the region and has since committed to organizing an annual UNESCO Asian Youth Forum.

Since then, the Korean National Commission and UNESCO have been co-organizing annual UNESCO Asian Youth Forums which serve as a catalyst for the development of a network of active youth in Asia and which provide key input to the UNESCO Youth Forum of the General Conference.

Bringing together youth activists and practitioners in Asia, the 4th UNESCO Asian Youth Forum was organized in September 2010 on the theme “Youth Creativity and Vision for Community in Asia”, (Republic of Korea, September 2010). The youth participants adopted a global “Project for common action” comprising specific action in the public, the civic, the culture and the youth sector. The 5th UNESCO Asian Youth Forum is scheduled to take place in the summer of 2011 and will directly link to the theme of the 7th UNESCO Youth Forum. The results of both the 4th and the 5th UNESCO Youth Forums will feed into the preparation and the debates of the 7th UNESCO Youth Forum.

Further information is available on the Korean National Commission for UNESCO [www.unesco.or.kr/eng/](http://www.unesco.or.kr/eng/)

## The 6th UNESCO Youth Forum, 1–3 October 2009

The 6th UNESCO Youth Forum was held in Paris from 1–3 October at UNESCO headquarters prior to the 35th session of the UNESCO General Conference. This marked the tenth anniversary of the Youth Forum and represented a milestone in its evolution, with the introduction of important innovations.

### Box 2.1: 6th UNESCO Youth Forum - Innovations

- An [online discussion platform](#) was established several weeks before the Forum enabling youth delegates to get to know each other before meeting in Paris and to participate in weekly online discussions on the key themes of the 6th Youth Forum.
- To ensure comprehensive and transparent internal coverage of the Forum, a [newsroom](#) was set up for [five youth journalists](#), enabling them to produce a daily bulletin during the Forum, conduct interviews and write feature articles. Following the Forum, the youth journalists reported on the Forum in their local and regional communities, networks and organizations.
- A [professional facilitator](#), supported by six co-facilitators from all UNESCO regions, led the participation of youth delegates during the Forum to help streamline the election processes and associated procedures, to guide the discussions and to support the youth delegates.
- An [Intersectoral Working Group](#) was established by the Director-General of UNESCO, to ensure that the preparation of the Forum drew on all that UNESCO has to offer through the active collaboration of all sectors.

## 2.1 Selection and preparation

### Youth delegates

The first step in the preparation of the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum was the selection of the youth delegates who would represent their countries, a process which is of utmost importance to the quality of the debates. The delegates were nominated by the National Commissions of the UNESCO Member States based on selection criteria established to ensure a high standard of participants, while avoiding the professionalization of their participation in youth conferences. The criteria emphasized the need to be active in youth issues and to be diverse in representation, including gender balance.

#### Selection criteria for the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum

- 18–24 years of age
- Membership in a representative youth organization and involvement in youth-related issues at the community level.
- Maximum of two delegates per Member State
- Consideration for gender parity and representation of indigenous peoples.

#### Box 2.2: LDC delegates at the Forum and Member States that donated funds

Thanks to the financial support of several Member States and of the Secretariat, youth delegates from the following LDC countries were able to participate in the Forum:

Angola, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Haiti, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, Uganda and Yemen.

As not all countries were able to fund the participation of delegates in the Youth Forum, UNESCO appealed to Member States and National Commissions to support the participation of youth from Least Developed Countries (LDCs). For these specific countries, UNESCO, with the financial support of several Member States who generously donated funds, covered associated costs for one delegate per LDC. In addition, several Member States donated funds to support delegates from other Member States that would have otherwise been unable to participate.

## Observers

Representatives of youth organizations, academic institutions, international, regional and national NGOs, IGOs, National Commissions and UN agencies also participated in the Forum as observers (a full list of observers and their organizations is available in the Appendix). Observers play an important role in the UNESCO Youth Forum by expanding the reach and impact of the Youth Forum to a large network of youth organizations, bringing their expertise to the Forum and by giving delegates access to this network after the Forum for follow-up action.

In addition to the participation of observers from a wide range of youth organizations, an NGO Fair was set up by the Joint Programmatic Commission (JPC) on Youth of the UNESCO-NGO Liaison Committee during the Forum allowing youth delegates to find out more about the programmes of UNESCO partner youth organizations. The Fair also gave an opportunity for those participating organizations to exchange ideas and experiences and to strengthen their networks.

### Box 2.3: Youth consultation in the Canadian National Commission for UNESCO

As part of the preparation process for the selected youth delegates, some countries undertook consultations to help prepare the delegates for the Forum and to ensure that they were representative of the views of young people from across the country.

Since its establishment in 2005, the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) of the Canadian National Commission for UNESCO has been facilitating youth participation in the Commission, through its youth network and organizations. In preparation for the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum, Provincial Coordinators organized, under the Commission's supervision, several youth consultations on the themes of the Forum, allowing youth from all over the country to identify recommendations regarding UNESCO youth work in each of its sectors of activity.

The two selected youth delegates and two Provincial Coordinators were invited by the Commission to participate in a national Drafting Committee which selected those recommendations that most represent the views of young Canadians across the country. The resulting national consultation report was then used by the selected delegates to effectively represent the views of other young Canadians during the Youth Forum

Further information on the Canadian National Commission for UNESCO is available on their website [www.unesco.ca](http://www.unesco.ca)

‘Today, through online networking, youth can communicate more easily and exchange their thoughts and ideas, thus making their voice heard. Also, through the Internet, youth can become better informed about social, cultural and environmental issues, and thus become able to participate in projects and activities.’

Jana Jabbour, youth delegate from Lebanon



## Online discussions

Following the success of the online platforms set up for the UNESCO Regional Youth Forums in 2006–2007, one of the major innovations of the 6th Youth Forum was to set up an online discussion platform several weeks in advance of the Forum for those youth delegates that were selected to participate. It gave delegates the opportunity to get to know each other and, most importantly, to participate in seven weekly online discussions on the topics of the Forum prepared by UNESCO Sectors.

Each UNESCO Sector provided an introduction to a specific topic of its area of competence and a set of questions to stimulate discussion. Background papers were also provided by UNESCO to introduce the two themes of the Forum. Discussions were lively, involving delegates from all regions, who debated the issues at global, national and local levels. A summary of the key points from these discussions was presented during the plenary and parallel sessions of the Forum.

The online discussions played a crucial role in the preparation for the Forum. Delegates felt that they enabled them to gain a deeper understanding of the themes of the Forum and to begin formulating and discussing recommendations to put forward during the Forum itself.

The two discussion papers produced by UNESCO are available on the Organization’s website [www.unesco.org/en/youth](http://www.unesco.org/en/youth)

## 2.2 The Forum

The 6th UNESCO Youth Forum was held at UNESCO headquarters from 1 to 3 October 2009, gathering 128 youth delegates from 89 UNESCO Member States. Many of these committed young people are involved in youth structures (National Youth Councils, UNESCO

commissions, NGOs and other organizations) and activities in their home countries. The youth delegates were joined by 84 independent observers from 68 organizations active in the field of youth. Slightly more young women (54 per cent) participated than young men (see Chart 2.2).

### Box 2.4: Volunteers



Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in development issues. It benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity, and it is therefore a valuable mechanism for participation.

UNESCO acknowledges the significant added value that young volunteers bring to its activities. During the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum almost twenty volunteers supported all aspects of the organization of the Forum, making a major contribution to its success. Young volunteers have also been playing an important role in the follow-up process by raising awareness of the outcomes of the Forum and of youth issues in their communities.

On 5 December 2010, the 'International Year of Volunteers + 10' was launched by the United Nations Volunteers. Ten years after the proclamation of the 'International Year of Volunteers' this call for global action seeks to refresh and strengthen the spirit of youth volunteerism around the world.

Further information is available on the UN Volunteers website [www.unv.org](http://www.unv.org)

The Forum's main theme was 'Investing out of the crisis: towards a partnership between UNESCO and youth organizations'. This theme was chosen to ensure the connection between the Youth Forum and the General Conference as it was based on one of the themes of the UNESCO Ministerial Forum: 'Investing out of the crisis ñ through action in social domains'. A cross-cutting theme was also selected for the Youth Forum, 'Youth participation: UNESCO Youth Forum, a long-term approach,' enabling the youth delegates to discuss and debate concepts and approaches to youth participation and develop follow-up recommendations on how the Youth Forum process can be strengthened in the future.

The Forum was structured around two types of sessions: plenary sessions involving youth delegates and observers at the Forum as well as experts on each theme (see Box 2.5); and parallel sessions where the participants broke up into smaller working groups. In selecting the experts for the plenary sessions, particular emphasis was placed on inviting youth speakers who could share with energy and passion their first-hand experience of issues that are affecting youth around the world. During the opening session of the Forum, the youth keynote speaker, Adeola Ojeniyi, Regional Programme Coordinator of the West African Youth Network, explained the global importance of both themes of the Forum and underlined the necessity for youth to take positive action on the issues affecting them.

The discussions that took place during both plenary and parallel sessions led to a series of recommendations for concrete action on the themes, in the form of a Final Report produced by the Forum's elected drafting committee and presented to the 35th Session of the General Conference.

Chart 2.1: Breakdown of youth delegates by gender (%)

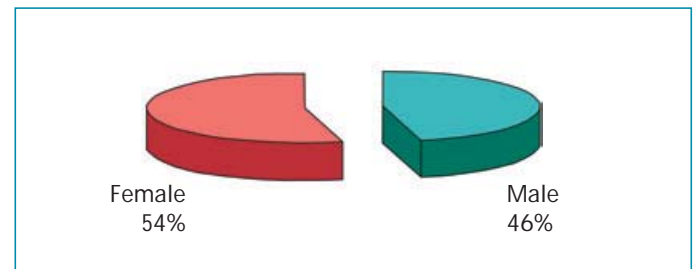


Chart 2.2: Breakdown of delegates by region (%)

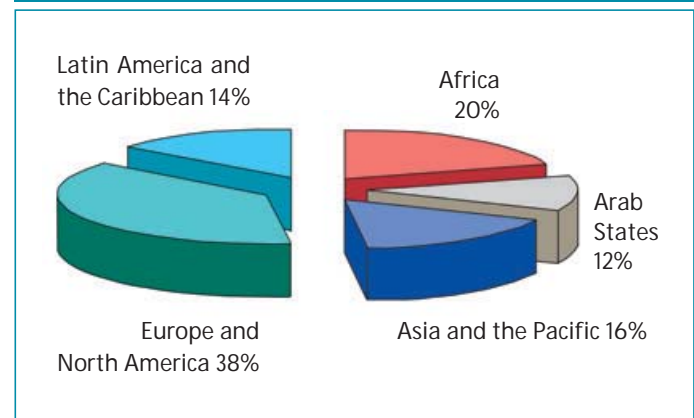
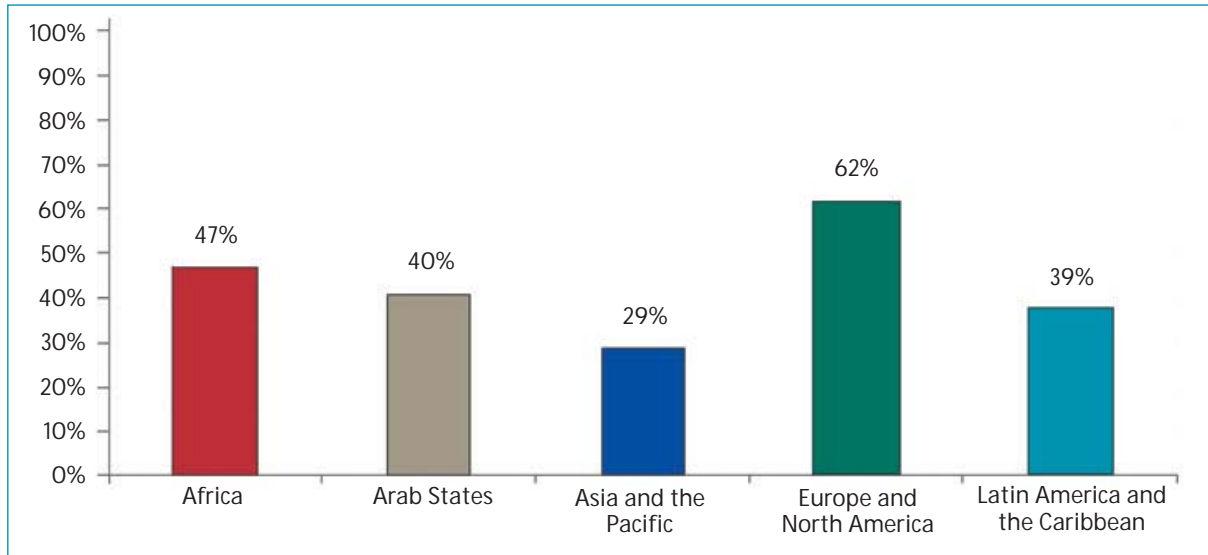


Chart 2.3: Percentage of Member States represented at the Youth Forum by region



## Plenary sessions

The Forum was based around two thematic plenary sessions which opened with a short presentation by a youth delegate, of the results of the preparatory online discussions on the theme in advance of the Forum. Presentations by experts including youth speakers provided a framework for discussion in which the youth delegates were able to debate openly, with the speakers and among themselves on the two themes of the Forum.

The first plenary session laid out the major challenges facing youth in relation to the crisis and focused on strategies for investing out of the crisis, both in terms of

policy responses and youth-led action. The discussions emphasized the importance of both education and employment, in terms of access, but also in terms of quality. Beyond the shift from education to employment, the session also stressed the need for a greater focus on the second component of this transition to adulthood, namely the transition from work to family formation. The crisis was recognized as having non-economic impacts on both the family unit and self-identity, which affects the socialization of youth and their sense of shared responsibility. In terms of strategies for investing out of the crisis, the participants focused on support for youth entrepreneurship, access to credit and improving linkages between education and employment. While



‘Education should be the way out of unemployment. There is a lack of focus on youth that are not educated. This can bridge gap between youth and adults in terms of employment. If we invest now we can reap benefits later.’

Matthew Gibbs, youth delegate from Trinidad and Tobago

acknowledging the importance of these two key areas, delegates also recognized the need to develop broader responses to the crisis in other areas of society, particularly in relation to youth civic engagement on local, national and regional levels. The session also revealed a concern for developing specific strategies for those most affected by the crisis including young women, migrants and unemployed youth.

The discussions of the second thematic plenary centered around strategies for improving youth participation with a specific focus on the mechanics of the UNESCO Youth Forum process. The speakers stressed the accountability of young people towards the effectiveness of youth participation processes and urged them to take on their responsibilities in this regard. They also introduced the functioning of the UNESCO National Commissions and concrete examples of youth participation in development at local, national and international level. In relation to the Forum, delegates highlighted the need to strengthen the role of youth within National Commissions and to increase the linkages between the Forum and the General Conference. More broadly, delegates stressed the need to use information and communication technologies and other tools for strengthening the linkages between youth

organizations globally and exchanging best practices. Participants acknowledged the importance of involving youth as key partners, actors and stakeholders and recognized that youth participation depends fundamentally on youth taking action themselves and that the follow-up to the Forum provides them with the opportunity to advocate for the changes that they wish to see.



## Box 2.5: List of speakers

### Opening session speakers:



**Pierre Sané**, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO



**Adeola Ojeniyi**, Regional Programme Coordinator, West African Youth Network, 'Youth and a World Beyond Difference'

### Speakers on the main theme, 'Investing out of the crisis: towards a partnership between UNESCO and youth organizations':



**Tarik Yousef**, Dean, Dubai School of Government: 'Making Markets Work for Young People in the Middle East'



**Shin-young Jeon**, PhD Candidate in International Development, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva: 'Beyond the global crises, towards a genuine partnership between UNESCO and youth organizations: challenges and responses in the Asia-Pacific region'



**Nicola Shepherd**, UN Focal Point on Youth, UN Programme on Youth, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York: 'Youth employment and the environment'



**Susana Puerto Gonzalez**, Technical Officer, Youth Employment Network, Geneva: 'Investing in Youth Employment'



**Bady Acuña Franco**, Executive Director, Colectivo Integral de Desarrollo, Peru, selected as part of the 'Best practices in youth policies and programs in Latin American and the Caribbean' project

(Session moderated by Pierre Sané, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO)

### Speakers on the cross-cutting theme, 'Youth participation: UNESCO Youth Forum, a long-term approach':



**Jennifer Corriero**, Executive Director, TakingITGlobal, Canada: 'Social Networking for Social Good'



**Sinead Ward**, youth expert, Foróige Youth Work Organization, Ireland: 'Youth Participation in Ireland'



**Gwakisa Makaranga**, Chief Coordinator, Youth Desk, UNESCO National Commission of Tanzania: 'Youth Desk, A practical Approach towards Youth Participation and Investing out of Crisis'



**Anushka Wijesinha**, Research Officer, Institute of Policy Studies, Sri Lanka: 'An Asian Perspective: the Gwangju Resolution and an overview of the Asian Youth Forum discussions'



**Xiaolin Cheng**, Chief of National Commissions Section, Sector for External Relations and Cooperation of UNESCO: 'National Commissions for UNESCO: a leading member of the larger UNESCO family'

(Session moderated by Golda El-Khoury, Chief, Section for Youth, Sport and Physical Education, UNESCO)

### Closing session speakers:



**Sara Mallawi** and **Justin Ordoyo**, youth delegates from Saudi Arabia and the Philippines respectively, elected by the Youth Forum to present the Final Report



**Koïchiro Matsuura**, Former UNESCO Director-General

The speaker presentations are available in full from the UNESCO website [www.unesco.org/en/youth](http://www.unesco.org/en/youth)

‘As a mechanism, the forum should be seen as the beginning of a continuing dialogue, not just a finite opportunity to connect with other delegates and share our ideas with UNESCO. ... The forum can be used to promote youth participation by providing access to continued involvement opportunities in UNESCO’s work or the work of other like-minded international organizations and NGOs.’

Brian Bell, youth delegate from the United States of America

In addition to the two thematic plenary sessions, a number of other plenary sessions took place during the Forum, including a session to report back on the parallel sessions, a session to present and adopt the Final Report

of the Youth Forum and a question and answer session with the Deputy Director-General of UNESCO, Marcio Barbosa, facilitated by a team of five youth journalists.

### Box 2.6: Youth in the Asia-Pacific region: a case study

During the plenary session one of the youth keynote speakers, Ms Shin-young Jeon, presented an overview of the research that she had been conducting on the impact on youth on the global economic crisis from an Asia-Pacific perspective. Her work was carried out thanks to the financial support by the National Commission of Korea.

The presentation outlined the challenges related to youth employment, education, development of identity, relations and citizenship, and specific challenges for vulnerable subgroups (e.g. out-of-school youth, illiterate youth, youth workers; youth suffering from mental, physical and social problems).

The research identifies a number of responses to these challenges, proposes a locally-driven partnership led by youth and focuses on the UNESCO’s role in fostering this partnership with youth organizations.

The full version of this paper is available on the UNESCO website [www.unesco.org/en/youth](http://www.unesco.org/en/youth)

## Parallel sessions

In addition to the plenary sessions, a series of parallel sessions, prepared and moderated by the UNESCO Programme Sectors, were held simultaneously, in line with the two themes of the Forum and to each Sector's programme activity:

- **Education:** 'How to make education more relevant in today's world?'
- **Natural Sciences:** 'Science for a green economy: valuing youth perspectives and actions'
- **Social and Human Sciences:** 'UNESCO SHS Global Strategy on Youth: your feedback!'
- **Culture:** 'Role of culture in promoting youth-centred sustainable development'
- **Communication and Information:** 'Investing in online social networking tools'
- **Bureau of Strategic Planning:** 'Youth at the Crossroads: a future without violent radicalization'.

The parallel sessions involved in-depth discussions and were a crucial platform for delegates to discuss and develop their recommendations, which were then taken into consideration by the drafting committee for their inclusion in the Forum's Final Report. Box 2.7 below presents highlights of these sessions

In addition, a parallel session for observers was prepared and moderated by the Joint Programmatic Commission (JPC) on Youth of the UNESCO-NGO Liaison Committee. This session gave observers from a broad range of organizations the opportunity to exchange their experiences of youth participation at the global, regional and local level, and to put forward recommendations for collaboration with UNESCO, which were then presented in plenary.



The final observers' report prepared by the observers on the Youth Forum is available in full on the UNESCO website

[www.unesco.org/en/youth](http://www.unesco.org/en/youth)

## Box 2.7: Highlights of the parallel session debates

Each of the parallel sessions led to a number of concrete recommendations for action across all of UNESCO's programme sectors. Below are some highlights:

### Education [www.unesco.org/education](http://www.unesco.org/education)

- Locally-specific and indigenous cultures need to become an integral part of education for local communities to understand the relevance and need for education and to address gender issues.
- Better cooperation is needed between Ministries, labour organizations, business entities, enterprises and youth to build Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems.
- Resource kits need to be provided to help teachers to infuse the values of sustainable development across all topics.

### Natural Sciences [www.unesco.org/science](http://www.unesco.org/science)

- Cooperation needs to be encouraged between academia, the private sector and all actors involved in R&D, including knowledge transfer and programmes.
- The school must include 'green' concepts at primary school level and science education needs to be made more practical and less theoretical.
- Research that addresses adaptation to environmental change needs to be promoted.

### Social and Human Sciences [www.unesco.org/shs](http://www.unesco.org/shs)

- To ensure effective youth participation in decision-making, representative and inclusive youth councils or structures should be established at national level with sustained communication channels between them and the government.
- A process of data collection should be established on youth by different stakeholders with tools and mechanisms that ensure the wide dissemination and accessibility of the data.

### Culture [www.unesco.org/culture](http://www.unesco.org/culture)

- There is a need for strategic promotion on cultural diversity, particularly through youth-oriented communication tools (websites, online social networking tools, surveys, etc).
- The inter-sectoral approach to promoting cultural diversity should be applied so that the different sectors of UNESCO can work together along with different ministries of Governments.
- Cultural platforms and events within the UNESCO Youth Forum should be set up to give opportunities for participants to exchange local resources and practices.

## Box 2.7: Highlights of the parallel session debates cont.

### Communication and Information [www.unesco.org/en/ci](http://www.unesco.org/en/ci)

- More online forums should be created for youth to share their experiences and best practices and for information to be provided on UNESCO programme highlights.
- Informal education programmes should be set up to promote the use of online social networks (OSNs) among youth for positive advocacy.
- Assistance should be provided by UNESCO in influencing Corporate Philanthropy for youth organizations.

### Bureau of Strategic Planning [www.unesco.org/bsp](http://www.unesco.org/bsp)

- There should be more involvement and representation of youth in the UNESCO General Conference, UNESCO National Commissions and national policy-making processes.
- Partnerships between schools and NGOs should be strengthened and peer networks and mentorship programmes should be created to facilitate inter-generational, inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue.
- The media should be used to transmit positive messages on youth, facilitate youth-to-youth dialogue and disseminate information on best practices.

### Observers

Increase the representativeness of youth delegates through:

- A more transparent and open recruitment process at the national level, focusing on the dissemination of information to, consultation with, and participation of youth.
- More specific and comprehensive guidelines and criteria for the selection operated by UNESCO National Commissions.
- Appropriate preparation of the youth delegates, the production of an agreed plan of action and consistent feedback mechanisms to guarantee continuity and improvements between Youth Forums.

Improve the participation of youth delegates in decision-making processes by:

- Giving the possibility to youth delegates to work alongside their national representatives both at the local level and the international level.
- Providing targeted training and capacity-building activities for youth organizations to be able to take and accept responsibility in the decision-making process.
- Including youth in the planning, monitoring and evaluation processes of youth projects and activities to guarantee accountability.

The full parallel session outcome reports are available on the UNESCO website [www.unesco.org/en/youth](http://www.unesco.org/en/youth)

The Forum's representative drafting committee formulated the recommendations of the Final Report (see p. 35) based on the outcomes of the plenary and parallel sessions. This document is crucial to the Youth Forum process as it sets the agenda for follow-up and gives the delegates a series of common, concrete goals to pursue in their regions, countries and communities. Section 3 of this report goes into further detail on the structure of this follow-up process.

## 2.3 Media and the Youth Forum

One of the major innovations of the 6th Youth Forum was to establish a newsroom for a group of youth journalists selected and supported by UNESCO. These young journalists covered the activities taking place at the event - through blogs, articles and radio coverage - and reported back on the Forum to their regional and local communities, networks and organizations.

The team was made up of five established young journalists who work actively on youth and development issues. Each was selected from a different UNESCO region to ensure comprehensive and transparent internal coverage of the Forum.

### Box 2.8: The importance of media

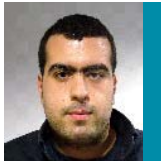
This innovation was based on the recognition of the fundamental importance of media and communications in bringing about social change. Changing attitudes is one of the most important objectives when it comes to youth issues and media is often best placed to bring about this change. It represents a key advocacy tool and can have a major impact on the rights agenda, by promoting, educating, monitoring and advocating on rights, bringing issues to the attention of policy and decision-makers, and by empowering young people by giving them the opportunity to voice their concerns and opinions.

In collaboration with a UNESCO staff member, the young journalists produced a daily bulletin, entitled 'U-TH', with articles, interviews, opinion pieces and features. The content of the news bulletin, as well as other articles and information produced in the context of the Forum's follow-up process, are also available online, on the U-TH blog created by the youth journalists

<http://unescoyouthforum.wordpress.com/>



## Youth journalist profiles



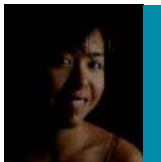
### Karim Abou Merhi, Lebanon

Karim is a reporter for Lebanon's largest and oldest newspaper, An-Nahar ([www.annahar.com](http://www.annahar.com)). His department deals with youth, education and civic activities, particularly issues related to NGOs. He is also Executive Editor of Nahar Ash-Shabab paper's weekly supplement on youth issues.



### Siena Anstis, Sweden/Canada

A freelance journalist and photographer, Siena Anstis is the Regional Communications Officer for the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF, [www.akdn.org/akf](http://www.akdn.org/akf)) East Africa, based in Nairobi. She is a weekly blogger for THIS Magazine and a correspondent for Neighborhood Watch, an Australian radio show.



### Michelle Shuk-Wah Chung, Australia

Shuk-Wah Chung is an Australian freelance radio and print journalist based in Beijing, China. Her stories have been broadcast or published in The Age newspaper, Australia; Asia Calling radio, Indonesia; Free Speech Radio News, USA; and other media outlets.



### Renata de Figueiredo Summa, Brazil/Italy

Renata Summa studied journalism at the University of São Paulo. After working for an NGO which fights contemporary slavery and writing a guide book, she worked for the international desk of Brazil's Folha de São Paulo newspaper ([www.folha.uol.com.br](http://www.folha.uol.com.br)).



### Ndri N'guessan Enoh, Ivory Coast

A youth journalist working for West Africa Democracy Radio ([www.wadr.org](http://www.wadr.org)), Ndri N'guessan Enoh has written articles for the Quebec-based Journalists for Human Rights (JHR) and represented his country at the 2008 Intergenerational Human Rights Forum at the University of Connecticut, USA.



### Box 2.9: Social events

In addition to the three days of discussion and debate, youth delegates had the occasion to relax for a few hours, get to know each other better and visit the city of Paris, over the course of two social evenings. On the first evening the delegates were given a tour of Paris along the river Seine on the Bateaux-Mouches. This outing offered the delegates the opportunity to admire the beauty of Paris by night as well as bond over the course of the journey. On the second day of the Forum, the Louvre Museum ([www.louvre.fr](http://www.louvre.fr)) offered the youth delegates the opportunity to tour the world-famous museum by night.



## 2.4 The Final Report

The Final Report of the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum was unanimously adopted by the youth delegates and includes a series of calls to action. It was produced by a drafting committee comprising of five youth delegates (one per UNESCO region) and two observers, supported by the facilitation team and UNESCO resource persons. The Report was concise and focused in order to maximize its potential impact.

The Final Report addresses the two themes of the Forum. It identifies the key issues relating to each theme and suggests specific recommendations for action, based on the outcomes of the plenary and parallel sessions and across UNESCO's Programme Sectors. The items on the main theme focused on education, employment and entrepreneurship, while on the cross-cutting theme they focused both on strengthening the Youth Forum process and involving youth further in the work of the National Commissions and UNESCO General Conference.

The Final Report provided the structure on which the follow-up action for the Forum has been based, leading up to the 7th UNESCO Youth Forum and has offered the delegates, UNESCO and its partners a number of areas on which to base their follow-up efforts.



## Introduction

We the 128 youth delegates of the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum, representing 89 Member States, have gathered at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France from 1-3 October 2009 to share our experiences, exchange our views on youth issues and to develop recommendations for action. Our discussions focused on one main theme, 'Investing out of the crisis: towards a partnership between UNESCO and youth organizations' and a cross-cutting theme 'Youth participation: UNESCO Youth Forum, a long-term approach.' On this 10th anniversary of the UNESCO Youth Forum, we are proud to represent different countries, cultures and points of view and to bring them together in order to find better opportunities for youth.

### Investing out of the crisis: towards a partnership between UNESCO and youth organizations

The world is facing an unprecedented set of global crises leading to extreme poverty and widening inequalities. While we must acknowledge that young people are an important asset to development, we are also deeply affected by the current global crisis in all aspects of our development.

We affirm that education at all levels is a public responsibility and public good. We strongly believe that education is the most important tool for youth to overcome this crisis and it is also fundamental for development. Although significant improvements have been made in recent years in access to education globally, the relevance and quality of education lags behind. Education remains insufficiently linked to employment and overly focused on 'credentialism'. At a time where our future depends on the expansion of the green economy, fewer and fewer young people are pursuing scientific careers. Even before the crisis, unemployment rates were highest among youth, a situation which is now worsening, particularly for young women. A greater focus must also be given to those groups that are most affected by the crisis including migrants, minorities and indigenous peoples.

In order to face these challenges, we have the following proposals:

1. In order to reach the Education For All (EFA) objectives, public responsibility and investment is an absolute necessity in all countries. In addition we strongly demand that donor countries follow up commitments of development aid to education at a level which will ensure the achievement of EFA objectives by 2015.
2. To improve the link between education and the changing labour market, education must be accompanied by a process of early participation in the labour market. One mechanism for achieving this is two-way intergenerational partnerships, such as mentorships and internships, which enable youths to gain access to the market and to acquire relevant skills at an early stage. In parallel, technical and vocational education and training needs to become a formalized part of the education system and become a viable alternative to university studies;
3. We call upon UNESCO National Commissions to coordinate cooperation and dialogue between youth organizations, civil society groups and the private sector to promote and enhance youth and social entrepreneurship and business creation programmes, which will help to alleviate unemployment among youth (by 2011);
4. We call on Member States to raise awareness on the importance of the green economy among youth and to work with the research community to foster youth scientific research.



## Youth participation: UNESCO Youth Forum, A long-term approach

We are committed to 'invest out of the crisis' using our energy, creativity and sense of responsibility to take action and secure a better future. We are confident that our opinions and ideas can make a difference, but they must be heard. This is the sixth time that youth delegates participate in the UNESCO Youth Forum, but we need further spaces to participate, to follow-up and to put our recommendations into action. We must have more resources and support for our initiatives, as well as opportunities to strengthen our capacities and skills to implement them. More mechanisms are also needed for youth involvement in UNESCO National Commissions and the General Conference.

We believe that intercultural dialogue is essential for us to achieve these common goals. In addition to face-to-face communication, we can leverage online social networks (OSNs) to expand our reach, keeping in mind that these networks are not universally accessible and can be short-lived.

We, the participants of the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum, want to change this situation:

1. We strongly call on every Member State to include youth delegates within their official delegation to the UNESCO General Conference by 2011, based on a common set of criteria
2. We call on all UNESCO National Commissions to create permanent youth desks;
3. We urge National Commissions to invest in preparation and both follow-up and monitoring of previous recommendations, and encourage youth regional meetings for this purpose;
4. We urge Member States to ensure greater international representation of delegates at the Youth Forum and to secure funding for least developed countries that may not be able to send youth delegates to the Forum;
5. We encourage Member States to cooperate closely with youth organizations and their partners, to establish or to develop existing representative and inclusive youth councils at national level to enhance communication between us and our governments;
6. We welcome the initiatives of National Commissions which disseminate good practices regarding our involvement in their work;
7. Online tools, such as online platforms and databases, must be maintained and further developed for multidisciplinary knowledge-building and management of youth issues, and to increase youth participation;
8. Member States should invest in non-formal education in order to reach all youth, particularly those who are not in school, and also hold fora and events related to cultural diversity, in order to multiply the opportunities for young people to participate in their communities;
9. We ask UNESCO and its Member States to cooperate with NGOs and media institutions to promote positive messages (particularly through OSNs where youths are very active) on issues such as non-violence, to disseminate good practices among youth, and to ensure that the Bonn Declaration on Education For Sustainable Development is implemented;
10. We request the establishment of an evaluation mechanism of the concrete actions and support of the National Commissions in implementing the recommendations of the Forum
11. We request the feedback of the UNESCO General Conference on the Final Report.

## Conclusion

We are committed to building a strong partnership with UNESCO towards sustainable development and the implementation of a progressive agenda. Whilst some may lack hope in the future, we are agents of positive change and through this Forum we aim to take hope back home with us to make a difference in our countries and communities.

‘After seeing (the presentation by these two youth delegates), I believe we can all say that our future is in very good hands... We cannot just take these recommendations for granted... we have to act on them.’

Davidson L. Hepburn, President of the 35th session of the General Conference

## 2.5 The Youth Forum and the General Conference

Justin Ordoyo from the Philippines and Sara Mallawi from Saudi Arabia, were elected by their peers to present the Final Report to the 35th UNESCO General Conference and thereby to ensure that the recommendations of the 6th Youth Forum were brought to the highest decision-making body of UNESCO.

The UNESCO General Conference is the highest decision-making body of the Organization. It meets every two years and its participants are all the Member States and Associate Members; non-Member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations are invited as observers. The General Conference decides on the main lines of emphasis and general approach to the implementation of UNESCO’s work.

Further information on the General Conference is available on the UNESCO website [www.unesco.org/confgen/](http://www.unesco.org/confgen/)

The two representatives of the Youth Forum presented their final recommendations both during the General Policy Debate and during specific sectoral meetings:

- The Final Report of the Youth Forum was presented in full during the General Policy Debate of the General Conference, chaired by the President of the 35th session of the UNESCO General Conference, Davidson L. Hepburn.
- The recommendations relating to Education were presented during the Ministerial Round-Table on, ‘What Education for the Future?’ (9 October). Their presentation was met with a very positive response by the Ministers of Education that were present. The young representatives of the Youth Forum were subsequently invited by the Director-General to a private ministerial luncheon.

‘If you feel that you are too insignificant to cause the world to take action and move, then imagine yourself sleeping in a room with a mosquito.’

Youth delegates’ intervention during the General Conference

- Speaking at the Informal Meeting of Presidents and Secretaries-General of the National Commissions of UNESCO (14 October), the youth delegates emphasized their commitment to taking action on the Final Report after the Youth Forum and highlighted the need for support from National Commissions in order to achieve these objectives.
- At the Social and Human Sciences (SHS) Commission the youth delegates presented the findings and recommendations relating to youth participation, non-violence and multidisciplinary knowledge-building and management on youth issues (19 October).

Through these interventions, the youth delegates were able to raise awareness of the Youth Forum throughout the General Conference, making use of the momentum and energy of the Forum to advocate for the need to take action towards genuine social change.

The Youth Forum also featured in the proceedings of the General Conference. During the Programme and External Relations Commission of the General

Conference, which deals with general questions and programme support, an amendment proposed by Norway was passed inviting the Director General and the Executive board, when preparing future sessions of the General Conference, to include the results of the Youth Forum on the agenda of the General Conference. In addition, during the Social and Human Sciences Commission, Austria proposed an amendment calling for a special emphasis on facilitation of youth participation, particularly at a time of global economic and financial crises, in initiatives aiming to further promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

A video of the Youth Forum representatives addressing the General Conference is available on the UNESCO website  
[www.unesco.org/en/youth](http://www.unesco.org/en/youth)

8 35C Res.35: Report by the Director-General on the activities carried out to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

## 2.6 Evaluating the Youth Forum

As the first step in the follow-up process, delegates and observers were given an evaluation form at the end of the Forum to gather their views on the preparation process and the Forum itself. With responses from 73 per cent of delegates, this initial evaluation (see Chart 2.4) showed that delegates' expectations focused around the dialogue, exchange and networking with many delegates welcoming the opportunity to 'meet with youth from different countries and exchange ideas and experiences' and 'to share best practices and ideas'. Participants also often felt that they had gained a better understanding of UNESCO. One African delegate was pleased to come away 'with an understanding of what UNESCO really does', while a delegate from the Arab

States saw the Youth Forum as a 'great chance to know more about National Commissions.' They also highlighted the importance of 'coming up with concrete solutions' and the need to 'return home and to set realistic goals to bring about change in attitudes to youth'.

Delegates also assessed the different activities of the Forum, with particularly positive remarks in relation to the Final Report and a general feeling that they had succeeded in developing 'concrete' and 'strong' recommendations (see Chart 2.5). A majority of delegates rated the two main plenaries of the Forum as 'excellent' (see Chart 2.6) and felt that they had gained 'a much better understanding of the themes' although many would have liked to have 'further opportunities for discussion'.

Chart 2.4: Delegates' expectations of the Youth Forum

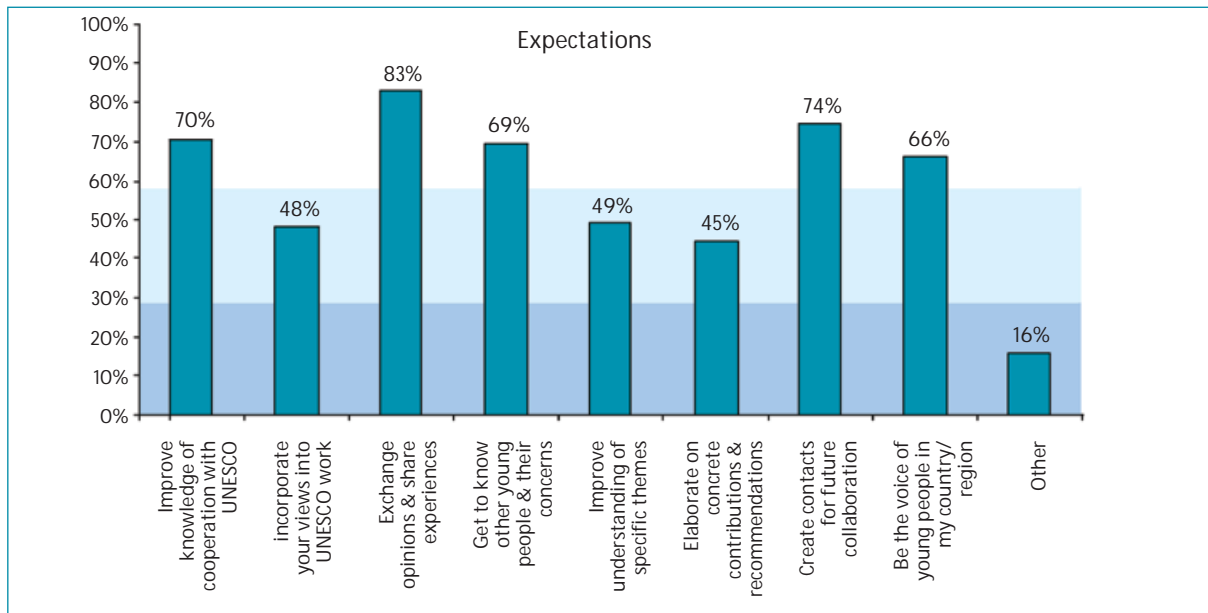


Chart 2.5: Evaluation of other elements

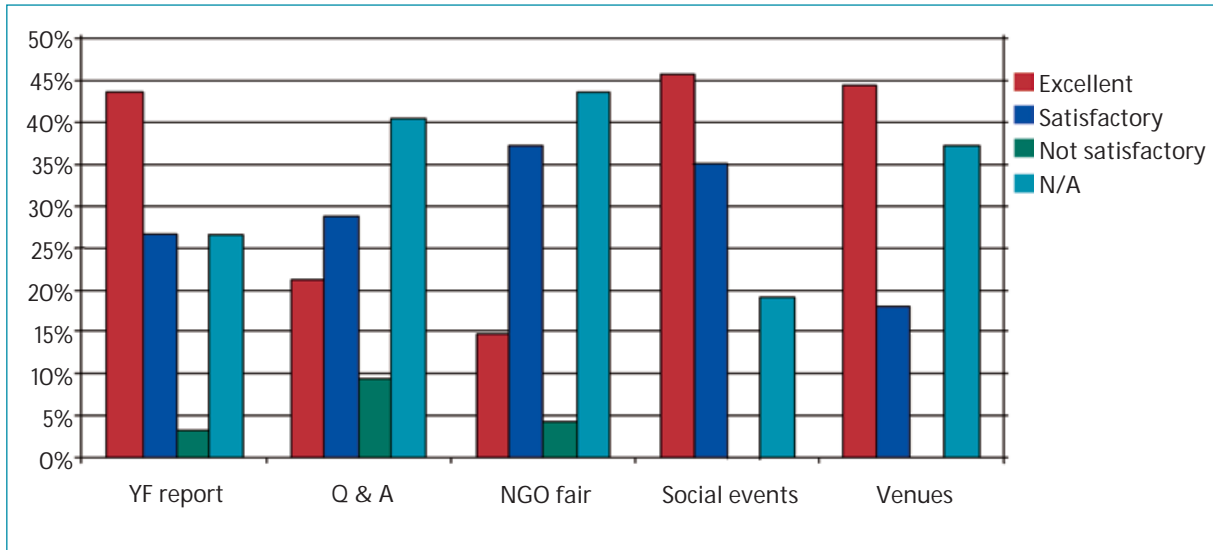
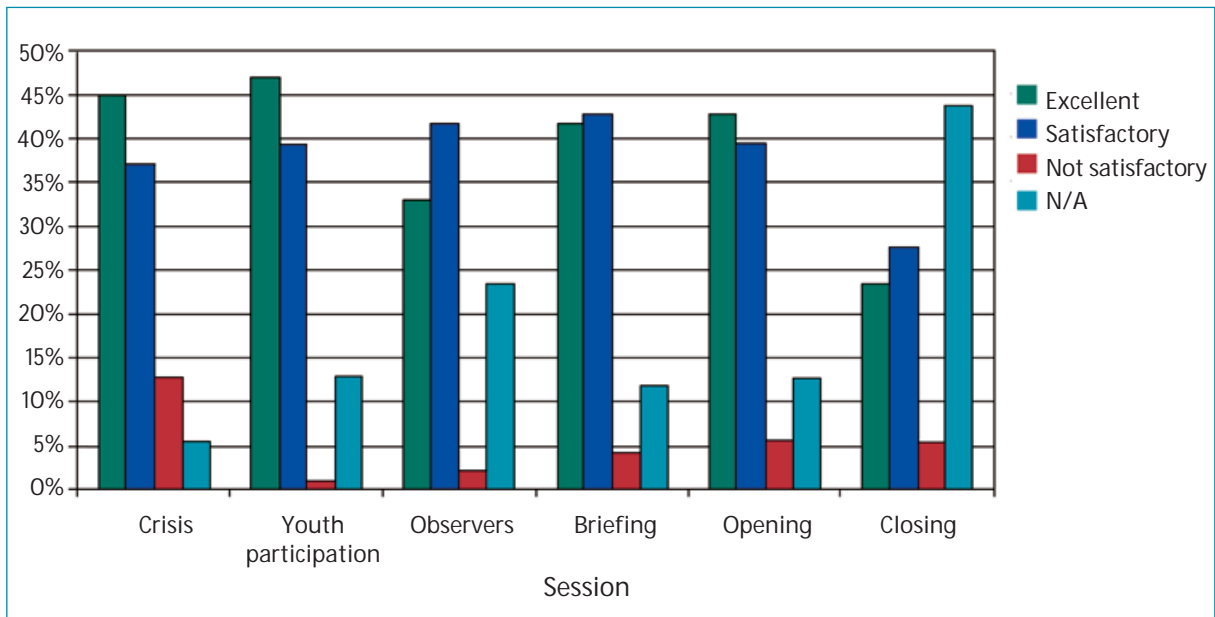


Chart 2.6: Evaluation of plenary sessions





## Looking ahead: the importance of follow-up

**T**he Final Report of the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum was only the beginning of a long-term follow-up process, the success of which depended mainly on the ability of the youth delegates to act on the recommendations formulated during the Forum.

Follow-up initiatives are crucial to translate global commitments and recommendations into tangible national and community action. Systematic follow-up which takes into account young people's opinions and aspirations, and provides them with a platform for taking action, leads to their involvement as young citizens who strive to make positive contributions to their communities at local, national and international levels. Following up on recommendations formulated by youth is therefore an essential pathway for meaningful youth participation, as well as being an integral part of UNESCO and its partners' accountability, including that of youth themselves.

UNESCO has been working actively in support of the follow-up process which feeds into the preparations of the 7th UNESCO Youth Forum in 2011. The Organization has identified a number of key areas of focus to build

towards achieving the recommendations of the Final Report and to ensure the continued strengthening of the Youth Forum process, namely:

- To introduce the recommendations of the youth delegates into key stakeholders' agendas and strategic initiatives worldwide.
- To provide support to youth delegates in their efforts to follow-up on their recommendations at national level.



‘The Youth Forum is a good way to involve a number of youth, but in order to reach more youth it must generate a ripple effect. The country delegates should be provided with adequate resources during the conference to be able to return home and educate and engage others.’

Xing Chiu, youth delegate from Canada

- To encourage partnerships between youth delegates, other young people, National Commissions, NGOs, youth organizations and civil society in order to facilitate follow-up action at national and local level.
- To continue to involve Youth Forum ‘alumni’ in order to build a network of engaged young people committed to community action.
- To create links with other global and regional youth events that are working towards similar goals as the Youth Forum process.

To achieve these, UNESCO has disseminated the Final Report of the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum with its partner networks and has maintained the online platform to enable dialogue and networking leading up to 7th UNESCO Youth Forum. The Organization has also been supporting partnerships between the youth delegates and the UNESCO National Commissions, particularly in terms of establishing youth representation structures and developing follow-up action on the recommendations of the 6th Youth Forum.

### 3.1 Increasing national youth participation: National Commissions

A key requirement to ensure the success of the follow-up process is that youth should be provided with appropriate structures and mechanisms for follow-up at country level. One such mechanism are UNESCO’s National Commissions which could enable youth to cooperate with decision-makers within national governments.

UNESCO is the only UN Agency to have a global network of country-level cooperating bodies known as National Commissions for UNESCO. There are presently 196 National Commissions across the world operating on a permanent basis and acting as national agencies of consultation, liaison and information, to mobilize and coordinate partnerships with civil society. The National Commissions also make substantial contributions to the advancement of UNESCO’s objectives and programmes in their countries. The National Commissions are key stakeholders of the Youth Forum and have a crucial role to play in supporting youth-led action for the implementation of the Forum’s recommendations.

### Box 3.1: Feedback from the National Commissions

The National Commissions played an important part in the selection and preparation of the youth delegates for the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum. In recognition of this, a questionnaire was circulated to several National Commissions by the UNESCO Secretariat in advance of the Youth Forum to evaluate the process from their perspective and to gather ideas for future development. Some of the ideas received included the following:

- 'UNESCO should collaborate in the development of the Youth Network in order to monitor and produce information as well as future activities organized by young people.' National Commission of Argentina.
- 'We should work more closely with youth groups in society and use the National Commissions network to inform more youth.' National Commission of the Netherlands.
- 'We help youth delegates through patronage and financial support to organize trainings, workshops and others activities to follow-up on the Youth Forum.' National Commission of Poland.
- 'National Commissions should be encouraged to share good practices on how to involve youth in the work of their Commission and in UNESCO's programmes. Successful models of youth engagement in National Commissions could be examined and documented and widely shared with other interested National Commissions.' National Commission of Canada.



Once the delegates have produced a series of recommendations in the form of the Final Report, the National Commissions have an even more important role to play. Their importance on a national basis in providing networking opportunities with different social actors, influencing their country's representation within UNESCO, linking with the UNESCO Secretariat in making their role in the implementation of follow-up activities vital. The objectives laid out in the Final Report can only be achieved with their support.

As reported by youth delegates, over 25 per cent of National Commissions have already established mechanisms for youth participation in their activities, but many have yet to develop these structures. In follow-up to the 6th Youth Forum, several delegates entered into discussions with their National Commission in order to work towards setting up a permanent youth structure, or youth desk, within the Commission. Several

of these discussions have already led to concrete outcomes and youth desks are in the process of being established in a number of Member States:

- Melissa Bryant of St Kitts and Nevis is working with the UNESCO Secretary-General in **St. Kitts and Nevis** to establish a permanent Youth Desk in the Ministry of Youth. She is also in consultations with the Director of Youth to establish a Youth Advisory Group to the National Commission, similar to the one that exists in Canada.
- Edwin Leo Mokodompit and Yasmine Sagita Rafiq from **Indonesia** were able to convince the Executive Chairman of the Indonesian National Commission to establish an official permanent youth desk as part of their National Commission. The first Youth Desk Workshop was organized in May 2011 to finalize their action plan.
- Carlos Cisneros of Ecuador has initiated discussions with the National Commission of **Ecuador** which led to the establishment of the youth desk in spring 2011.
- In **Uzbekistan**, where a youth desk has already been established, Elbek Saidov has made a series of presentations on the results of the Youth Forum and the role of UNESCO and youth in achieving sustainable development.
- Chantal Cogle of **Jamaica** received assurances by her National Commission that they would work towards establishing a youth desk. Based on her report on the Youth Forum, the National Commission has decided to establish a calendar of youth participation events throughout the year.
- Nick Sirios and Lilly Taka of **Greece** discussed the Final Report with their National Commission and have successfully established the “Hellenic Youth Committee”, a permanent youth desk at the Commission.
- Andrea Knebel of **Hungary** has worked towards setting up a youth desk with her National Commission.
- The youth delegates from **Uganda**, Sylvia Namukasa and Stella Nakawuki, have been working closely with the National Commission to establish a youth representation desk and to organize regular consultations of the Commission with youth in the country.
- In follow-up to the Youth Forum, the National Commission of **Morocco** decided to establish a youth representation desk in the Commission.

### Box 3.2: Creating a youth desk: the example of Tanzania

‘Youth involvement is of crucial importance as a long-term approach to investing out of the crisis. The best way possible for UNESCO to actively involve young people is by directly engaging them in its ongoing programmes. This can be done through the establishments of youth-led desks at the UNESCO National Commission.

Establishing youth desks should not be the responsibility of UNESCO or National Commissions, but of the young people themselves. Those youth delegates that took part in UNESCO Youth Forum should take the leading role in making this possible as they are the beneficiaries of these youth desks.

Youth desks are tools that will motivate young people to design, develop and implement program relevant to their changing needs. They can also create platforms for young people to interact with others around the globe to foster partnership with different UNESCO National Commissions on youth activities. Youth desks can also help to coordinate a number of youth-related activities such as UNESCO National Youth Forums and follow-up on the outcomes of Youth Forums.

I have a strong belief that youth desks will help in promoting youth participation. It is possible. Let us dare to do it.’

George Gwakisa Makaranga, Chief Coordinator of the Youth Desk of the Tanzanian National Commission of UNESCO

In addition to the establishment of youth desks, several other initiatives have been proposed to develop the participation of youth in the work of the National Commissions:

- The National Commission of Canada has developed a toolkit to share good practices on how to engage youth in the work of National Commissions and in UNESCO’s programmes. The handbook will be presented at the 7th UNESCO Youth Forum.
- At the Informal Meeting of Presidents and Secretaries-General of the National Commissions of UNESCO, the youth representative of the Austrian National Commission put forward a proposal to organize, in cooperation with UNESCO, a conference of youth desks and youth panels of the UNESCO National Commissions. The “Regional Youth Participation Conference”, will take place in September 2011, in Vienna, with the support of the UNESCO Participation Programme, and will examine successful experiences of youth involvement in the work of the National Commissions.

‘I’m glad that each and every one of you continues with active follow-up activities on a local level; in my opinion that is one of the most important results of the fruitful debates that took place at the UNESCO Youth Forum.’

Theano Karafoulidou, youth delegate from Greece

### Box 3.3: Handbook of good practices in youth participation

In collaboration with the UNESCO Secretariat, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO is developing a tool to help National Commissions for UNESCO foster youth engagement in their work. This tool will include several models for youth engagement from different National Commissions, as well as the Canadian model, and will showcase successful practices as well as challenges encountered and lessons learned. While there are already many tools in existence to facilitate youth engagement in general, this tool will be specifically designed to help National Commissions increase youth participation in their programmes and to share related practices across countries.

## 3.2 Youth delegates follow up and take action locally and globally

In the aftermath of the Youth Forum, the youth delegates have been following up and taking action on global, national and local levels. As a first step immediately following the Forum, many delegates presented an overview of the Youth Forum and the recommendations of the Final Report to their peers, communities and youth organizations.

In addition to their increasing involvement with National Commissions, delegates have also been active in other ways to contribute to the follow-up to the Youth Forum:

- Sylvia Namukasa of **Uganda** met with her youth group to report back to her peers about the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum. Sylvia was also nominated as Climate Youth Advocate to represent Uganda as part of her delegation at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen, Denmark from 7–22 December 2009.
- Djeneba Seydou Diarra of **Mali** was invited by his youth organization to present an overview of the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum to spread the word about the recommendations of the Forum.
- Manuel Pozo of **Peru** was not able to attend the Forum due to a lack of funding, but he followed the progress of the Youth Forum process through the online discussion platform and has distributed the Final Report of the Forum to various organizations at regional and national level.

- As part of the follow up process to the 6th Youth Forum, **Canada's** National Commission has invited five members of its Youth Advisory Group to help develop a two-year Plan of Action for the Group, based on the recommendations included in the final Youth Forum report as well as on recommendations from the pan-Canadian youth consultations held in summer 2009.
- Barbara Soetan of the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** has collaborated with the National Youth Agency and the British Youth Council in lobbying and supporting local authorities in following up on the Final Report.

UNESCO has been supporting the delegates of the Youth Forum by providing them with opportunities to participate in other key youth events worldwide and to share the Youth Forum recommendations with the other participants in these events. Successful examples of this participation include the High-Level Regional Forum on Best practices in Youth Policies and Programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean (Puerto Vallarta, November 2009), the first World Youth

Meeting for a Sustainable Future (Bari, January 2009), the UNESCO Forum of Ministers of Social Development (Kingston, January 2010), the 5th World Youth Congress (Turkey, 31 July–13 August 2010) and the World Youth Conference in Mexico (23–27 August 2010).

### 3.3 Creating an accountability structure to give greater impetus to action

The UNESCO Youth Forum is part of a larger network of global and regional youth participation mechanisms that share a similar set of goals and give young people the opportunity to influence decision-making at different levels. By strengthening the links among this network there is a tremendous opportunity for these various youth participation processes to expand their scope and potential positive impact on youth issues both globally and locally.

In order to increase the responsibility and accountability of both the organizers and the young participants

‘In addition to the UNESCO Youth Forum, a number of global youth events have and will be organized, addressing similar challenges. To ensure the accountability of both the organizers and the young participants towards the outcome of each event, it is important to link these events through a sustainable joint follow-up process which facilitates policy dialogue initiatives between policy makers, youth and key stakeholders ñ a core area in UNESCO’s mandate.’

Golda El-Khoury, Chief of Section for Youth, Sport and Physical Education, UNESCO

towards the outcome of global youth events that often develop concurrent recommendations and pledges, UNESCO has proposed the establishment of a collaborative follow-up mechanism for all global youth events. This entails a process by which the outcomes and follow-up of previous events are reported in every subsequent youth event. Such a process would encourage the review of the results of previous meetings, identifying common recommendations and discussing potential partnerships for joint follow-up. It therefore increases the accountability of all stakeholders involved, as well as creating synergies at all levels for tangible outcomes.

This initiative aligns with the message of the UN International Year of Youth, which invites all Member States, the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and youth organizations to take advantage of the Year to build on the synergies among their activities. UNESCO has been mobilizing key partners around this idea which was welcomed by the UN Interagency Network on Youth Development and

endorsed as one of the interagency initiatives in the context of the International Year of Youth.

The process of developing this collaborative follow-up mechanism involves global and regional youth events, including the NMC World Youth Meeting for a Sustainable Future (19ñ21 January 2010, organized by the government of Italy in Bari), the Youth Assembly of the HABITAT World Urban Forum, (19ñ21 March 2010, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), the 5th World Youth Congress (31 Julyñ13 August 2010, Istanbul, Turkey) and the World Youth Conference (23ñ27 August 2010, Leon, Mexico), among others.



### Box 3.4: NMC World Youth Meeting, Bari, 2010

From 19–21 January 2010, the first World Youth Meeting was hosted in Bari, Italy. The meeting brought together 500 youth delegates from 90 countries and more than 1,000 participants involved in implementing innovative programmes and community activities to promote change. The Meeting included 12 workshops clustered around five main themes: (1) citizenship; (2) education; (3) employment and economy; (4) environment and (5) human safety and development.

The three days of discussions at the Meeting led to the adoption of a joint Action Plan by the delegates, entitled the Bari Vision, which lays out a set of 12 priorities which are grouped into five clusters.

#### The Bari Vision

##### Citizenship

1. Choosing together, choosing well, choosing (in) time
2. Building equal opportunities means creating a decent future

##### Education

3. Knowledge and skills necessary to live in dignity in the twenty-first century and to develop sound human capital for a sustainable future
4. Learning by experiences for a new responsible world citizenship

##### Employment and economy

5. Poverty should not be a fate
6. A decent job is a right; child labor is a form of violence
7. Criminal finance hinders human development

##### Environment

8. Necessary, useful, surplus, superfluous
9. Cooling down the city-heavy planet
10. Water: fundamental for life but a limited resource

##### Human safety and development

11. A decent roof and right to food safety for a dignified life
12. Fleeing to seek a future

### Box 3.4: NMC World Youth Meeting, Bari, 2010 cont.

The World Youth Meeting is the first strategic meeting of the NMC- *ni, mondlokaj civitanoj* (we, global local citizens) project, which aims to promote sustainable development and youth participation in decision-making at the local and global level.

One of the defining characteristics of the NMC project is its emphasis on a dual commitment to action both by the organizers, but also crucially by the young participants. NMC emphasizes this commitment to action by youth in order to ensure that the project's impact extends far beyond the World Youth Meeting and to empower young people to be agents of positive social change. In the case of the Bari meeting, this is evident in the Bari Vision where delegates have committed to increase their impact locally and globally. In turn the organizers' have committed to support the youth delegates in working towards this Action Plan.

In addition to this emphasis on a dual commitment, NMC has also developed a global-local approach based on the conviction that local actors are fundamental to sustainable development. By creating global-local platforms, NMC can create a global network of partners that are taking practical action on a local level and communicating on their experiences with this global network.

*'I want to congratulate us all on the great work we came up with at NMC World Youth Meeting. I believe that our actions must now be to actually and practically implement what we presented.'* Rami Shamma, NMC World Youth Meeting delegate

For more information on the NMC project, visit [www.nimociv.org](http://www.nimociv.org)



### Box 3.5: 5th World Youth Congress on Youth and Development 2010, Turkey

The 5th in the series of World Youth Congresses on Youth and Development was held in Istanbul, Turkey from 31 July to 13 August 2010. Turkey welcomed 1,000 young people from around the world to meet during Istanbul's year as the European Capital of Culture.

UNESCO participated in a number of thematic panels during the Conference and hosted two workshops on the establishment of youth desks at National Commissions and on the joint follow-up mechanism of key youth events. As co-chairs of the Interagency Network on Youth Development, UNESCO and the UN Programme on Youth developed joint workshops on the International Year of Youth and on how youth can engage in the work of the UN System.

The Congress developed the **Istanbul Action Plan** which proposes Five Main Actions that Governments, intergovernmental organizations and youth civil society need to work on together:

- Implementation of an educational revolution with the idea of teaching us what we need to learn, integrating non-formal project-oriented, skills-oriented education and including us in the dialogue to determine our curriculum.
- Focus on creating a culture of youth entrepreneurship and ending the youth dependency culture.
- Placing youth at the heart of the effort to build a green economy and the transition to sustainable lifestyles; enable youth to make the daring investments required to achieve success.
- Efforts on part of Governments to see youth as a sector rich on assets for development and resources that Governments can engage with and harness. Governmental and international support for the establishment of youth organs and bodies as parts of all regional and intergovernmental organizations' as young people are willing to find compromising and meaningful solutions that can revolutionize international policy-making.

### Box 3.5: 5th World Youth Congress on Youth and Development 2010, Turkey cont.

- Creation of an UN Youth Agency with dedicated funding that Ministries of Youth, international youth NGOs and National Youth Councils can apply for funding of youth-led initiatives and an implementation of an annual World Youth Report.

The World Youth Congress series was born in 1997. The first Congress, held in Hawaii in October 1999, was entitled: the Millennium Young People's Congress (MYPC). Ten key priorities were identified for the new millennium, eight of which closely mirrored the UN's Millennium Development Goals, agreed a year later at the UN Millennium Summit. The key message of that first congress was: 'Young people want to be active in development, not just beneficiaries of development aid delivered by others...' This gave birth to the concept of youth-led development and the "Be the Change" Youth-led Development programme which are central to the whole World Youth Congress Series.

Subsequent Congresses in Morocco (2003), Scotland (2005) and Quebec City, Canada (2008) have all discussed one main question: 'What are the most effective ways that government, UN and other development aid agencies can use the incredible talent, energy and idealism of young people in their shared effort to make poverty history in a sustainable way and achieve the UN's Millennium Development Goals?' Each Congress is unique: hosts are encouraged to stamp the identity and culture of their country on their congress and make it their own.

For more information visit [www.turkiye2010.org/en.html](http://www.turkiye2010.org/en.html)

### Box 3.6: The World Youth Conference (WYC 2010), Mexico

The World Youth Conference 2010 (WYC 2010), presented and discussed during the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum, was held in Leon, Mexico from 23 to 27 August 2010 as a space for discussion and reflection on the role of young people in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). There were three main pillars to the event: (i) The Government Forum; (ii) The Social Forum, comprised of the NGO Global Meeting and Global Interactive Forum; and (iii) The Legislators Forum. The WYC 2010 was preceded by five regional preparatory conferences in Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania.

During the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum, Elena Zuñiga of the Mexican Institute for Youth introduced the plenary session in which the observers presented their report on the Youth Forum. Ms Zuñiga introduced the World Youth Conference 2010 and spoke about the importance of creating links between these global youth events.

UNESCO was actively involved in the preparation of the Conference, as a member of the International Committee that was set up by the government of Mexico and of the LAC Youth Working Group.

UNESCO organized 9 parallel activities (workshops, roundtable) on its areas of competence, namely: youth civic engagement; social inclusion and violence prevention; education; world heritage and cultural diversity; poverty reduction through sustainable community tourism; youth policies and social development (in LAC). UNESCO also held a joint workshop with UN DESA on the establishment of a joint follow-up mechanism of key youth events as a way to strengthen the accountability of all stakeholders involved in such events.

UNESCO mobilized a number of youth networks to participate in the Conference and was the only UN agency that addressed the Closing Ceremony, highlighting the need for strengthened commitments to, and increased investments in, youth. A publication on Education, Youth and Development, UNESCO in Latin America and the Caribbean prepared was presented during the Conference.

### Box 3.6: The World Youth Conference (WYC 2010), Mexico cont.

The World Youth Conference adopted the **Guanajuato Declaration** which stresses a number of points in specific areas relating to youth development (education, health, employment, technology and innovation, gender equality, culture, access to justice and security, participation, sustainable development, international migration), as well as key global concerns ,such as the need to:

- Increase investments in comprehensive youth development within public policies and national development plans, developed with the meaningful participation of youth;
- Mainstream a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all public policies and programmes relating to youth;
- Promote the development of evidence-based national, regional and international policies, plans, strategies for youth and the collection, analysis and dissemination of data disaggregated by gender and age, as well as research on youth issues;
- Encourage the participation of youth in the generation and distribution of knowledge through ICTs;
- Ensure that youth have the necessary education, information and skills for effective participation in national development.

The World Youth Conference also requested the UN General Assembly to recognize, strengthen and mandate the UN Interagency Network on Youth Development to assess and follow up existing declarations, commitments, structures and mechanisms relating to youth (e.g. the Declaration of World Youth Conference, the World Programme of Action on Youth etc.). This could link directly to the idea of the global assessment of the results of key youth events and the establishment of a joint follow-up mechanism, suggested by UNESCO in Puerto Vallarta, in November 2009.

For more information visit [www.youth2010.org](http://www.youth2010.org)

### 3.4 The opportunity of the UN International Year of Youth

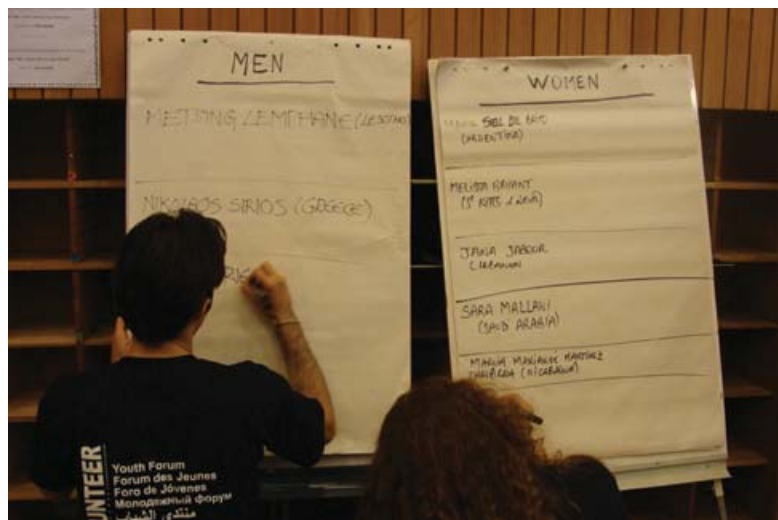
On 18 December 2009, the United Nations decided to proclaim the year commencing on 12 August 2010 the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the first International Youth Year in 1985 on the theme Participation, Development and Peace.

The proclamation of the International Year was a crucial development as it has allowed to bring youth to the forefront of global debates and has recognized their potential to contribute to peace and development. With this initiative the UN has invited all Member States, the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and youth organizations to take advantage of the year to build on the synergies among their activities to be carried out at the national, regional and international levels during the Year and to promote actions at all levels aimed at disseminating among youth the ideals of peace, freedom, progress, solidarity and dedication to the objectives and goals of progress and development, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The UN has also requested all sectors of society, including the private sector and civil society, to support all activities related to the Year and to work in

partnership with youth and youth organizations to better understand their needs and concerns and to recognize the contributions that they can make to society.

The International Year of Youth has been highly relevant to UNESCO's work. It has embraced UNESCO's approach to youth as agents of peace and as a vital asset and partner in the effort to mitigate the long-term adverse consequences of the current global crises. The Year coincided with the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (February 2010 - February 2011) and was fully aligned with UNESCO's founding vision to 'build peace in the minds of men' as well as the future programme on Culture of Peace.



The follow-up of the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum has taken place during a biennium where youth are at the forefront of development debates. In the run-up to the 7th UNESCO Youth Forum, this follow-up process aimed to build on the momentum generated by the Year and to send out a strong message on the importance of investing in youth and the capacity of youth to be accountable partners.

The 7th UNESCO Youth Forum will be organized shortly after the end of the International Year of Youth and will provide a platform for agencies and organizations to assess efforts, reflect on achievements and plan the way forward. It will also allow reporting on relevant initiatives organized within the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures.

For further information visit

<http://social.un.org/youthyear/index.shtml>

### 3.5 The 7th UNESCO Youth Forum in 2011

The 7th UNESCO Youth Forum will take place from 17 to 20 October 2011, at UNESCO HQ in Paris, as an integral part of the 36th UNESCO General Conference. Marking a period when youth are making their voices heard, the

7th Youth Forum will examine how youth drive positive change in their countries and communities.

The Forum will highlight and debate the ways in which youth are constructively engaging in building peace, supporting good governance and promoting economic opportunity. It will particularly reflect on the role of social networking and new media in fostering democracy, inclusion and active participation of youth in public life. It will also examine the different facets of exclusion and their causal relation with violence and vulnerability among youth.

Apart from this global significance, the 7th UNESCO Youth Forum also presents the opportunity to continue building on the successes of the previous Forums and to look for ways to keep innovating, in particular by introducing opportunities for advocacy, skills development and representation of disadvantaged and vulnerable youth, including young women, youth with disabilities, and indigenous and minority youth, among others. By giving the delegates of the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum the opportunity to pass the baton on to a new generation of young people and by linking the Youth Forum to other global and regional youth participation mechanisms, UNESCO aims to further raise awareness of youth issues on global, national and local levels and to provide a platform for more young people to take action.



## Appendix: 6th UNESCO Youth Forum participants and organizers

### Further sources

#### Resources on youth participation

- European Youth Forum, 2008, Guide for youth NGOs at UN meetings
- Gerison Lansdown, 2001, Promoting Children's Participation in Democratic Decision Making, Innocenti Research Centre, Florence
- UNESCO, 2004, UNESCO's Commitment to Youth: the Youth Forum
- UNESCO, 2004, UNESCO's contribution: Empowering youth through national policies
- UNFPA, 2008, Youth Participation Guide: Assessment, Planning and Implementation
- UNICEF, 2006, Child and Youth Participation Resource Guide



## 6th UNESCO Youth Forum participants and organizers

### Youth delegates by region

#### AFRICA

Angola, Joao Victorino MATIAS ■ Angola, Maria Teresa Gouveia LEITE ■ Botswana, Kitso MASI ■ Botswana, Maduo Constance MOLAOLWA ■ Burkina Faso, Nebon Kader Wilfred BABINE ■ Comoros, Ismaïl Saandi SAMIAT ■ Côte d'Ivoire, Anon Stephane DAGOU ■ Djibouti, Mohamed ALI KAOURAH ■ Eritrea, Hagher Ganzai WELDEKIDAN ■ Ethiopia, Beza FEKADE ■ Gabon, Elsa Rabel MENZENE M'EKAGHBA ■ Gambia, Omar KORITA ■ Ghana, Laura Liusa THOMPSON ■ Kenya, Monica WANJIKU NJAU ■ Kenya, Albert Yara MIGOWA ■ Lesotho, Metsing LEMPHANE ■ Malawi, Eunice MHANGO ■ Mali, Djeneba Seydou DIARRA ■ Mozambique ■ Igor Xadreque MADEIRA MATAVEL ■ Namibia, Sharonice Davinnia BUSCH ■ Niger, Nafissatou OUSMANE DJIBO ■ Nigeria, Sarah Izilin Ayewah ■ Senegal, Ndèye Ngone MBAYE ■ Seychelles, Pema Julie Bernadette VADIVÉLO ■ Uganda, Stella Lukwago NAKAWUKI ■ Uganda, Sylvia NAMUKASA

#### ARAB STATES

Egypt, Raafal Hamed AZZA ■ Egypt, Ramy Hassan Ahmed Abd EL RAZIK ■ Lebanon, Jana JABBOUR ■ Lebanon, Elias KARAM ■ Morocco, Yassir Jamal ■ Morocco, Zineb Filal ■ Oman, Wadhhaa AL-BADI ■ Oman, Salah Masoud AL-HANSHI ■ Qatar, Abdel Aziz AL DIRHAM ■ Qatar, Mohammed AL SUWAIDI ■ Saudi Arabia, Abdulaziz A ALSHALHOOB ■ Saudi Arabia, Sara MALLAWI ■ United Arab Emirates, Abdulla AL HADID ■ United Arab Emirates, Maryam AL ANSARI ■ Yemen, Ibrahim Mohamed MOTHANA

## ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Bhutan, Chimi LHATSHO ■ Cambodia, Chea SOKMEAN ■ China, Yi WANG ■ Indonesia, Edwin Haluoleo Agus MOKODOMPIT ■ Indonesia, Yasmine Sagita RAFIQ ■ Islamic Republic of Iran, Amidian HAJAR ■ Islamic Republic of Iran, Mohsen BAGHERI ■ Japan, Aya IMAI ■ Lao People's Democratic Republic, Soukdaly SISAYKEO ■ Malaysia, Sm Madiha MUHAMMAD ■ Malaysia, Rabin PATMANATHAN ■ Philippines, Justin ADRIEL ■ Republic of Korea, Jinsun BAE ■ Republic of Korea, Kim HONGSEOK ■ Russian Federation, Alexander ROSANOV ■ Russian Federation, Tatiana LABUZOVA ■ Singapore, Kartik DAS ■ Singapore, Nurzahida ROHMAT ■ Thailand, Yasmin SATTAR ■ Thailand, Nattaphol CHINAWONG ■ Uzbekistan, Elbek SAIDOV

## EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

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## LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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