

# **Uniting 4 Development**

*The United Nations Inter-agency Network on Youth Development*

*New York, December 2013*

# Contents

- Preface..... 3
- Acronyms..... 3
- Introduction..... 6
- I. The United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development..... 7
  - Growing together ..... 7
  - Growing stronger ..... 8
  - Regional and national coordination ..... 10
  - Thematic sub-working groups ..... 11
- II. The System-Wide Action Plan for Youth Development ..... 15
  - How it began ..... 15
  - What is the SWAP? ..... 16
  - Youth Participation in the SWAP ..... 16
  - Implementation and Monitoring ..... 17
  - Thematic Areas of the Youth-SWAP ..... 17
- III. Who Does What?..... 21

## Preface

Representing over 40 percent of today's global population, the generation under the age of 25 is larger than ever before. Over 18 per cent of the global population is between 15 and 24 years of age and the number of young women and men is projected to grow further in the coming two decades.

This is an unprecedented opportunity for global development: youth can be drivers of economic growth and poverty reduction, if they are fully integrated in their societies and considered as invaluable human capital. As mentioned in the Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, youth *“are shaping social and economic development, challenging social norms and values, and building the foundation of the world's future.”*

At the same time, the global demographic situation presents a huge challenge: 87 percent of youth live in developing countries. Youth are demanding more and better job opportunities, good education, peaceful and equitable societies, and clamoring for a sustainable environment. The international community can build a strong basis for sustainable and inclusive development by addressing the multiple challenges faced by young people across the globe.

Now is the time to shape the development agenda beyond 2015 when the millennium development goals transition into a new vision of sustainable development goals for the coming decades. Let's make sure that young people play an important role in this global endeavor, which will help shape their future! The way the international community takes the challenges of adolescents and youth, particularly girls, and ensures they have the opportunities to reach their full potentials will influence the well-being and quality of life of present and future generations.

The United Nations system is called upon to address the needs of the largest generation of young people the world has ever known. This will require the joint effort of all United Nations entities active in the field of youth development. As the United Nations Inter-agency Network on Youth Development, we have joined forces to serve the needs of youth around the world. This network is an important mechanism for integrating the efforts of individual United Nations entities and in ensuring that through more and better cooperation, we can achieve greater results. What started as a knowledge sharing platform to exchange information between United Nations entities has grown into a strong advocate and joint partnership for youth development on a global, regional and national level.

Mr. Wu Hongbo

Under-Secretary-General for Economic and  
Social Affairs

Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin

Executive Director UNFPA  
Under-Secretary-General of the United  
Nations

<sup>i</sup> United Nations. A new global partnership. Eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development. The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. 2013.

## Acronyms

CBD	The Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DPI	United Nations Department of Public Information
DSD	United Nations Division for Sustainable Development
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
IANYD	United Nations Inter-agency Network on Youth Development
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
IYY	International Youth Year
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSAA	Office of the Special Advisor on Africa
OSRG/CAAC	Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
SRSR-VAC	Office of the Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children
SWAP	System-Wide Action Plan on Youth
SWG	Sub Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNAOC	United Nations Alliance of Civilizations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UN DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
ESCAP	United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ESCWA	Economic Commission for Western Asia
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's FUND
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNMC	United Nations Millennium Campaign
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNPBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization (WHO)
WPAY	World Programme of Action for Youth

## Introduction

The United Nations has a long history of working with and for young people. In 1965, the Member States of the United Nations acknowledged that young peoples' *imagination, ideals and energies are vital for the continuing development of the societies in which they live*<sup>ii</sup>. Twenty years later, the General Assembly declared 1985 as the International Youth Year. Under the title: *Participation, Development and Peace* it drew international attention to the role of young people in the world and their potential contribution to development. In 1995, the General Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) that remains the basis for United Nations policies in the field of youth development to this day. In 2007<sup>iii</sup>, five priority areas have been added to the WPAY, in order to respond to the changing challenges faced by young people.

The increased interest in youth at all levels, has also led to the expansion of youth-related activities across the United Nations system and has made it more and more important for United Nations entities to work together, leading to regular meetings of United Nations entities involved in youth development topics. As the benefits of sharing experience and collaborating closer started to show, the group decided to move to a more structured form of cooperation and in 2010 formally created the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD).

The present booklet gives an overview of the work of this network, summarizes its history and composition and outlines milestones and achievements since its establishment.

It also provides an inventory of "Who does what?" in the field of youth development, giving an overview on the mandates and focus areas of each of the network members. Project spotlights highlight concrete examples of intervention on the ground. For more in-depth information on the work of individual entities, the booklet lists key publications as well as relevant websites.

## I. The United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development

### Growing together

In recent years, Member States have increasingly asked the United Nations system to intensify the collaboration between the different United Nations entities and to develop a shared strategy to address the challenges of young people<sup>1</sup> around the world. The IANYD jointly works towards an enabling and inclusive environment that gives every young woman and man the opportunity to actively participate in the political, social and economic life of his or her society.

In view of the multifaceted challenges that youth are facing today, the IANYD pushes for a holistic joint strategy that takes into account key aspects of the life of a young person growing up in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: employment, entrepreneurship, political inclusion, civic engagement and protection of rights, education and health.

#### The World Programme of Action for Youth: the backbone of UN youth engagement

In 1995, the General Assembly adopted the **World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY)**. Until today, the WPAY builds the basis for UN policies in the field of youth development. In the programme, the international community agreed on priority areas and defined practical guidelines on how to improve the situation of young people around the world. In 2007<sup>1</sup>, Member States adapted the WPAY to the changing challenges ten years after its first adoption. Today, the programme covers fifteen youth priority areas and proposes concrete actions therein.

For more information on the WPAY, please visit:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay2010.pdf>

---

<sup>1</sup> In this document, the word “*youth*” may be used interchangeably with the term “*young people*”.

## Growing stronger

Since its creation in 2010, the IANYD has grown both in membership and integration and has become an important mechanism for the United Nations to better respond to the specific challenges young people face.

**ADVOCATE FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:** Being a member of the network has led to a changing mindset within many organizations, highlighting the importance of youth inclusion and participation when it comes to policy development and programming. As such, the network has played an important role in bringing youth development issues into the international development agenda and pushing for the inclusion of young people in the discussions around the post-2015 agenda.

**SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE:** The IANYD has improved the internal coordination within the United Nations both in policy development and programming. For example, the IANYD helped member entities to better accord their positions and speak with one voice on international conferences and forums.

**YOUTH PARTICIPATION:** The IANYD is not only pooling the efforts of different United Nations entities but it also offers a platform for the engagement with young people by exploring innovative ways of working more closely with youth.

### **Innovative ideas for youth participation**

In September 2013, the IANYD and over 100 youth-led organizations, networks and movements came together at the UN Headquarters in New York to jointly identify ways in which the IANYD could better work with and for young people. The main goal of the meeting was to come up with innovative ways to strengthen youth participation in the United Nations system overall, and to partner with young people in the implementation of the System-Wide Action Plan on Youth.

The Open Meeting was an important step towards increased cooperation between the IANYD and youth-led organizations and will lead the way for future cooperation. The commitment of the network members to closely work with youth-led organizations was reinforced as it has been decided that an open interaction with youth-led organizations should become a regular part of IANYD meetings. Furthermore, structured ways for partnerships, collaboration and participation between the IANYD and youth organizations have been discussed, as for example through the establishment of youth advisory boards.



## The co-Chairs: continuity and fresh ideas

The permanent co-chair of the IANYD is UN DESA, the efforts of which are led by the Division for Social Policy and Development. In its convening role, UN DESA ensures the continuity of the network and facilitates exchange and cooperation between the members. The second co-chair, currently UNFPA, is selected by network members and rotates on an annual basis. Previous co-chairs have been UNESCO (2010), ILO (2011) and UN-Habitat (2012). By putting forth their organizational priorities, mandates and strengths they have developed the network further and came up with fresh ideas on how the United Nations can adapt and improve its services to address the needs of young people.

### The United Nations Focal Point on Youth

The United Nations focal point on youth is the permanent chair of the United Nations Inter-agency Network on Youth Development. Based within the Division for Social Policy and Development at UN DESA, its mandate is predominantly based on the World Programme of Action for Youth.

Through its work and programmes, the United Nations Focal Point on Youth aims at:

- Enhancing awareness of the global situation of youth and increase recognition of the rights and aspirations of youth (*including the biannual World Youth Report*)
- Promoting national youth policies, national youth coordinating mechanisms and national youth programmes of action as in cooperation with both governmental and NGOs
- Strengthening the participation of youth in decision-making processes at all levels in order to increase their impact on national development and international cooperation (*including the Youth Delegates Programme*)

*For more information on the United Nations Focal Point for Youth, please visit:*  
<http://undesadspd.org/Youth.aspx>  
*Or contact: youth@un.org*

## Regional and national coordination

The IANYD not only focuses on joint policy development but also strongly aims to contribute to better coordination between its members when it comes to programming of concrete activities on the ground. Therefore, the IANYD promotes the creation of inter-agency networks at the regional and country level. These networks are an important tool for United Nations entities in the field to share knowledge and information, avoid duplication of activities and help to identify opportunities and potential for increased cooperation. The close cooperation of the IANYD and national and regional networks ensures the global and cross-regional coordination of programmes and initiatives.

### *The United Nations Asia-Pacific Inter-agency Group on Youth*

A very active example for cooperation at the regional level is the [United Nations Asia-Pacific Inter-agency Group on Youth](#) that coordinates all youth related activities in the region. The group serves as platform to coordinate programming and implementation of the different UN entities engaged in youth-related matters the region (including ESCAP, FAO, ILO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA and UNICEF).

The Group was formally established in 2010 to enhance coordination and promote the principle of “Delivering as one UN”. The Inter-agency Group supports the regional implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth and allows UN entities to effectively share information, enhance cooperation and coordination on the ground, as well as disseminate good practices and lessons learned.

#### **Regional Mapping**

During the International Year of Youth, the Asia-Pacific Inter Agency Group on Youth conducted a mapping of youth related programmes implemented in the region. The mapping focused on the major issues identified under the World Programme of Action for Youth, and recommended potential areas of collaboration for the Inter Agency Group. The main findings of the mapping can be accessed at:

<http://social.un.org/youthyear/docs/ESCAPFinal5.pdf>

## Thematic sub-working groups

The thematic sub-working groups of the IANYD allow interested network members to engage in in-depth discussions and interactions on specific thematic areas. An important feature of the thematic sub-working groups is the inclusiveness of their composition as they allow Civil Society Organizations, in particular youth-led organizations, to be members. This participatory approach ensures a multi-angled view on selected relevant issues and gives the opportunity to learn from CSOs who are active in a specific topic and exchange best practices, lessons learned and discuss the way ahead. The sub-working groups greatly contributed to the work of the IANYD by deep-diving into specific issues – mostly brought up by the youth themselves - developing new ideas and approaches which then fed back into the general IANYD discussions. Currently, thematic sub-working groups are working on the following thematic areas: Youth Participation, Employment, Environment, Youth Participation in Peacebuilding, Social media, Youth Policy, Inclusive Youth Volunteering, and the Post-2015 agenda.

### ***IANYD Sub-Working Group on Youth Participation in Peacebuilding***

A successful example for the cooperation in IANYD Sub-Working Groups and their inclusive and participatory approach is the IANYD Sub-Working Group on Youth Participation in Peacebuilding, which is co-chaired by the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the international NGO Search for Common Ground. The Sub-Working Group is a platform for coordination, information-sharing, joint advocacy and policy discussions for UN entities, NGOs and civil society organizations promoting youth participation in peacebuilding. The Sub-working Group includes over 70 members from UN entities, NGOs, Youth CSOs to Academia.

Recognizing that civil society organizations are at the forefront of programmatic and advocacy work on youth participation in peacebuilding, the Sub-Working Group has made the direct participation of civil society organizations one of its priorities.

Currently, the Sub-Working Group is developing an operational guidance note that will offer concrete assistance to project managers on how to support youth participation in peacebuilding programming and ensure that youth are part of peace building progresses.

Achievements and results:

- Enhanced coordination and collaboration between UN and NGOs
- Advocate for youth participation in peacebuilding in both youth and peacebuilding forums in the UN
- Organization of several brown-bag events to facilitate discussions amongst stakeholders
- Contribution to post-2015 agenda discussions
- Developed Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding

# 2010

- Official establishment of the IANYD
- Launch of the International Year of Youth

## Co-Chair: UNESCO

A key milestone in 2010 was the official **launch of the network** per se, at the first ever **Meeting of the Heads of Youth Programmes in the UN system**, hosted at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. In the year of UNESCO's co-chairmanship, the most important element was the harmonized coordination of the UN preparation and celebration of the **International Year of Youth on "Dialogue and Mutual Understanding"**. Especially important was the increased **harmonization of UN inputs**, position and representation to key global events during the Year, including the World Youth Conference (Mexico, August 2010). Furthermore the network played an important role in identifying, analyzing and assessing the common recommendations emanating from global and regional youth events, laying the ground for the development of the UN system-Wide Action Plan on Youth.

# 2011

- High-level meeting of the General Assembly

## Co-Chair: ILO

As the IANYD co-chair in 2011, in close cooperation with the focal point on youth, the ILO supported several initiatives to **strengthen Inter-Agency cooperation** in the area of youth development. A particular focus was put on themes relating to the promotion of decent work for young people, in order to advance the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, especially in the areas that were the subject of member States' deliberations during the **International Year of Youth**. Furthermore the IANYD continued to advocate for the International Year of Youth and coordinated joint activities of the network in this regard. This included the coordination of joint IANYD inputs to the **High-level meeting on Youth** organized by the General Assembly in 2011. In the context of the high-level meeting, the network has furthermore promoted and facilitated **youth participation** as well as their contribution to the outcome document.

# 2012

- United Nations Secretary-General's Five-year Action Agenda

## Co-Chair: UN-Habitat

Apart from a notable increase in membership at the IANYD, the year was essential for the further development and integration of the network. In close consultation with the Member States the IANYD explored opportunities for setting incremental steps in strengthening youth participation in the UN. The co-chairs of the IANYD were furthermore actively engaged in the **establishment of the office of the SG's Envoy on Youth**, assisting in the institutional setting up as well as resource mobilization. The **Youth 21 Initiative** launched by UN-Habitat aimed at supporting youth to take up leadership in the 21st Century and focused on building an aid architecture for youth engagement in the UN system. The highlight of the Youth 21 Initiative was the **Youth 21week in Nairobi** organized by UN-Habitat, UN DESA and UNDP in March 2012. Furthermore UN-Habitat held the **African Youth conference on the Post 2015 Development Agenda** to review the progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and discuss the future and plight of youth in the beyond 2015.

# 2013

- Development of the Youth SWAP
- 
- Open Meeting with Youth Organizations

## Co-Chair: UNFPA

As the current co-chair of the IANYD, UNFPA strongly advocates for **youth participation**. In close cooperation with UN DESA as the permanent co-chair, UNFPA organized the **Open Meeting with Youth-led Organizations** and initiated an accountability and reporting mechanism to capture the involvement of youth-led organizations to the implementation of the youth-SWAP. A clear milestone of 2013 was furthermore the **development of the youth-SWAP**, where UNFPA particularly supported a participatory process including youth. In its role as co-chair of the IANYD, UNFPA has continued to provide support to the SG's Envoy on Youth, in particular by seconding a staff member to the Office of the SG's Envoy on Youth, Mr. Ahmad Alhindawi, for his first year in office.

For the continuation of the co-chairmanship, UNFPA will prioritize the facilitation of the implementation of the SWAP at the regional and national level, providing technical support to country teams of countries who have expressed interest in participating in the SWAP process.

# 2014

Co-Chair: UNIDO

### **SPOTLIGHT ON: International Year of Youth 2010**

In August 2010, the second International Year of youth was proclaimed under the motto "*Dialogue and Mutual Understanding*". Main aim of the year was to encourage dialogue and understanding across generations and promote the ideals of peace, respect for human rights and freedoms, and solidarity.

During the International Year of Youth, the IANYD has proven as a very important forum, as the members not only developed a joint framework for collective efforts and concrete joint activities, but also coordinated their inputs to conferences and events, speaking as one United Nations on youth development issues. Through joint activities, the IANYD raised awareness on youth related topics and promoted the importance of youth development at the top of the international agenda. The IANYD further fostered mobilization and engagement of youth and promoted cooperation between the United Nations and youth organizations.

At the occasion of the launch of the International Year of Youth, 27 heads of UN entities jointly signed a **joined statement** in which they committed to working together, to make youth development a priority in their organizations' work and to enhance the direct collaboration with young women and men.

As a highlight of the International Year of Youth, the General Assembly organized a **United Nations High-Level Meeting on Youth**. Representatives from 400 youth groups, member states representatives as well as experts from numerous UN entities gathered to discuss how to strengthen international cooperation on challenges to youth development and how to enhance dialogue, mutual understanding and active youth participation. The IANYD strongly advocated for the involvement of young people and facilitated the participation of youth-led organizations and youth movements in the meeting. To make sure that the outcome document reflected the ideas of young people, the IANYD facilitated inputs of youth organizations to the outcome document. The outcome document acknowledged the role of the IANYD to facilitate the coordination between UN entities and intensify efforts towards a more coherent, comprehensive and integrated approach to youth development.

*For more information on the IYY, please visit: <http://social.un.org/youthyear/>*

## II. The System-Wide Action Plan for Youth Development

### How it began

In the beginning of 2012, the Secretary-General outlined his Five-year Action Agenda, defining main priorities to be addressed by the United Nations and the international community as a whole in the coming five years. One of the top priorities described within is addressing the needs of the youth by deepening the youth focus of existing programmes on employment, entrepreneurship, political inclusion, citizenship and protection of rights, education including on reproductive health. The Secretary-General furthermore put a strong emphasis on increased cooperation of different actors of the global community as well as on system-wide partnerships to achieve this goal.

The five-year Action plan called for the development and implementation of a System-wide Action Plan for youth development. Furthermore, the five-year Action plan foresees the appointment of an Envoy on Youth as well as the establishment of a United Nations Youth Volunteer Programme under the umbrella of the United Nations Volunteer Programme.

### ***The Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth***

As part of his Five-year Action Agenda, and in recognition of the growing importance of youth issues in the world, the Secretary-General created the position of United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. In a groundbreaking appointment, the first envoy, Mr. Ahmad Alhindawi was appointed by the Secretary-General in 2013.

Mr. Alhindawi advocates for addressing the development needs and rights of young people, as well as to bringing the work of the United Nations with and for youth closer to youth. The work-plan of the United Nations Secretary General's Envoy on Youth responds to the United Nations Secretary-General's Five-year Action Agenda, and is guided by the World Programme of Action for Youth. The work-plan of the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth outlines four priority areas: Increase youth Participation at all levels, Advocating for youth development needs and rights, promote multi-stakeholder Partnerships on youth development, and to work as a catalyst to enhance the Harmonization of the UN work on youth development. The Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth actively collaborates with the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development in all areas, including in developing and implementing the United Nations Youth-SWAP. Furthermore the Envoy encourages the development of mechanisms for young people to participate in the work of the United Nations and governments to develop youth engagement strategies.

For more information on the SG's Envoy on Youth, please visit: <http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/>

The IANYD was called to support the implementation of the youth-related goals set in the Five-year Action Agenda and played a crucial role in the development of the System-wide Action Plan for Youth. The IANYD coordinated the development of the Youth SWAP by bringing together all United Nations agencies active in the field of youth development and coordinating their inputs as well as reaching out to the youth worldwide to learn about their development priorities.

The co-chairs of the IANYD furthermore contributed to the implementation of the other goals set by the Secretary-General, by facilitating the setting up of the office of the Envoy on Youth as well as the United Nations Youth Volunteer Programme.

### **What is the SWAP?**

The main aim of the Youth-SWAP (System-wide Action Plan for Youth Development) is to enhance coherence and synergy of United Nations system-wide activities in key areas related to youth development as well as building a concrete plan of action for the coming years. The Youth-SWAP builds on the specific mandates, expertise and capacities of individual United Nations entities, pooling the strengths of the whole United Nations system and promoting joint programmatic work. The SWAP will guide the priorities of the IANYD in the coming years and sets a clear focus for the work of its member entities in the field of youth development. The SWAP builds on World Programme of Action and through its commitments and measures the SWAP will help the United Nations implementing the WPAY.

The SWAP addresses issues relevant to different age groups of young people, including adolescents (aged 10-19 years) and youth (aged 15-24 years). Taking into consideration the differing definitions of youth by country context, the Youth-SWAP may also apply to young people older than 24.

### **Youth Participation in the SWAP**

The System-Wide Action Plan for Youth is the result of a consultative process and has strongly benefitted from inputs from youth and United Nations entities. To make sure that the United Nations System-wide Action Plan for Youth is rooted in young people's development priorities and takes into consideration their proposed solutions, the IANYD conducted a survey amongst 13,500 youth from 186 countries.

The participation and engagement of young people in the SWAP does not end after the initial youth survey, but it will be at the core of the whole process of implementation. The IANYD entities will team up with youth in implementing regional and national activities. Furthermore,



youth will be engaged as partners and in the monitoring and reporting of the Youth-SWAP by facilitating and encouraging their feedback through shadow reports, online surveys or crowd-sourced reports. Last but not least the IANYD is committed to keep youth informed about the SWAP process and achievements on a regular basis through regular online updates, media campaigns via Facebook, twitter and others, as well as the constant exchange with youth CSOs.

### Implementation and Monitoring

While the youth-SWAP is an important tool for the cooperation between United Nations entities, helping to better focus and coordinate initiatives on a global level, the implementation on the regional and national level is meant to be at its core. The SWAP will assist to better coordinate national and regional programming, to increase synergies and facilitate joint programming. Therefore the creation and further fostering of national and regional networks will be important to reach the goals set in the SWAP and bring its implementation down to the programming level.

The IANYD will annually report on the progress made in the implementation of the SWAP at all levels. To make the progress measurable, a set of indicators has been developed and a baseline for each of the indicators will be established through the reporting in the first year.

### Thematic Areas of the Youth-SWAP

Based on the Secretary-General's Five-year Action Agenda, the System-wide Action Plan focuses on the following thematic areas: employment and entrepreneurship, political inclusion, civic engagement and protection of rights, education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and health. Each thematic area of the Youth-SWAP includes one overarching goal: the long-term objective to which the United Nations system will contribute in this area.

Thematic Area	Overarching Goal
Employment and Entrepreneurship	Ensure greater opportunities for youth to secure decent work and income over the life cycle, contributing to a virtuous circle of poverty reduction, sustainable development and social inclusion.
Protection of rights and civic engagement	Ensure the inherent rights of youth are recognized and upheld to enable young people's engagement in all aspects of their development.

<b>Political Inclusion</b>	Ensure the progressive, substantive inclusion of young people in political and decision-making processes at local, national, regional and international levels
<b>Education, including comprehensive sexuality education</b>	Ensure that young people, on an inclusive, equitable and universal basis, are actively learning in formal or non-formal education systems, and are receiving quality education on sexual and reproductive health.
<b>Health</b>	Ensure that young people, on an inclusive, equitable and universal basis, enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**


Youth unemployment is not only a problem in developing countries: young people all around the world face the challenges of unemployment and underemployment. The global youth unemployment rate is estimated at 12.6% in 2013, meaning that 73 million young people are out of job in 2013<sup>iv</sup>. Also, youth are more likely to be engaged in informal employment compared to older workers and transitions to decent work are slow and difficult. Furthermore, youth often face special difficulties and hindrances when establishing or developing their own business. For example, access to finance is often lacking: due to their perceived high lending risk and lack of collaterals young people often cannot access the credit needed.



Responding to these challenges, the SWAP sets the overall goal to ensure greater opportunities for youth to secure decent work and income over the life cycle, contributing to a virtuous circle of poverty reduction, sustainable development and social inclusion.


## **PROTECTION OF RIGHTS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

Participation is a fundamental right. It is one of the guiding principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that has been reiterated in many other Conventions and Declarations. Through civic engagement, young people are empowered to play a vital role in their own development as well as in that of their communities, helping them to learn vital life-skills, develop knowledge on human rights and citizenship and to promote positive civic action. To participate effectively, young people must be given the proper tools, such as education about and access to their civil rights<sup>v</sup>.

 Therefore, the SWAP calls to ensure the inherent rights of youth are recognized and upheld to enable young people's engagement in all aspects of their development.

## **POLITICAL INCLUSION**


The capacity for progress of our societies is based, among other elements, on their capacity to incorporate the contribution and responsibility of youth in the building and designing of the future. Youth are not adequately represented in formal political institutions and processes such as Parliaments, political parties, elections, and public administrations. The average age of parliamentarians globally is 53, only 1.65% of parliamentarians around the world are in their 20s and 11.87 % are in their 30s<sup>vi</sup>.

 To enhance the political inclusion of young people, the SWAP aims at ensuring the progressive, substantive inclusion of young people in political and decision-making processes at local, national, regional and international levels.

## **EDUCATION INCLUDING COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION**

Education is central to development and to ensuring sustainable livelihoods for young people around the world. Education can become a catalyst for eradicating poverty and hunger as well as in promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth. However, data shows that much remains to be done to ensure access to education to all young women and men: for example, 10.6 per cent of youth globally are non-literate<sup>vii</sup>.

Efforts to enhance youth education have to take into consideration the need for **Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)** that emphasizes a holistic approach to human development and sexuality. Evidence has shown that CSE can provide young people with the knowledge, skills and efficacy to make informed decisions about their sexuality and lifestyle<sup>viii</sup>. Education has been identified as a priority area in multiple internationally agreed development goals, as it is a prerequisite to eradicate poverty and hunger and for the promotion of sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth.

 In line with these internationally agreed goals, the SWAP aims at ensuring that young people, on an inclusive, equitable and universal basis, are actively learning in formal or non-formal education systems, and receive quality education on sexual and reproductive health.

## HEALTH

The United Nations call for a physical and social environment that promotes good health offers protection from disease and addiction and is free from all types of violence<sup>ix</sup>. More than 1.8 million young people aged 15 to 24 die each year, mostly due to preventable causes. A much greater number of young people suffer from illnesses that hinder their ability to grow and develop to their full potential. For example, every year at least 20% of adolescents experience a mental health problem, most commonly depression or anxiety<sup>x</sup>. Health issues affecting young people include early pregnancy and childbirth, HIV/AIDS, malnutrition, mental health issues, tobacco use and harmful use of alcohol, violence and injuries.



The SWAP has therefore set the goal to ensure that young people, on an inclusive, equitable and universal basis, enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

### **III. Who Does What?**

The following section gives an overview on the IANYD member entities and their work in the field of youth development. Their individual and specific mandates make their areas of work as well as their levels of intervention very different. The individual entities touch on very different aspects of a young persons' life. These 40 entities form the United Nations Inter-agency Network on Youth Development that helps bringing all these aspects together and promotes a holistic concept of youth development as it is anchored in the WPAY and as it is being implemented through the Youth-SWAP on a global, regional and national level.

---

<sup>i</sup> United Nations. A new global partnership. Eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development. The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. 2013.

<sup>ii</sup> UN Resolution A/RES/20/2037 of 6 December 1965

<sup>iii</sup> UN Resolution 62/126 of 18 December 2007

<sup>iv</sup> ILO. Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013. A Generation at risk.

[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_212899.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_212899.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> UN DESA. Society and Decision Making. Factsheet. 2011.

<http://undesadspd.org/Youth/WorldProgrammeofActionforYouth/Participation/SocietyandDecisionMakingFactsheet.aspx>

<sup>vi</sup> IPU. Global Parliamentary Report. The Changing Nature of Parliamentary Representation. 2012. <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/gpr2012-full-e.pdf>

<sup>vii</sup> UNESCO. UIS Fact Sheet: Adult and Youth Literacy. 2013.

<http://www.uis.unesco.org/literacy/Documents/fs26-2013-literacy-en.pdf>

<sup>viii</sup> UNESCO. International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education. 2009.

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001832/183281e.pdf>

<sup>ix</sup> United Nations. World Programme of Action for Youth. 2007 :

[http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay\\_text\\_final.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay_text_final.pdf)

<sup>x</sup> UN DESA Health Factsheet. 2011.

<http://undesadspd.org/Youth/WorldProgrammeofActionforYouth/Health/Healthfactsheet.aspx>