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THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS,
INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO MILITARY SERVICE

Implementation of the Programme of Measures and Activities in Connection with
International Youth Year

Report of the Secretary-General

GE.83-11265

Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in pursuance of paragraph 3 of resolution 1982/36, adopted by the Commission on Human Rights, on 11 March 1982. In that paragraph the Commission requested the Secretary-General to submit to it a progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Measures and Activities in connection with International Youth Year.
2. The Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year at its first session (Vienna, 30 March - 7 April 1981) adopted a specific Programme of Measures and Activities to be undertaken prior to and during International Youth Year 1/ and the General Assembly in its resolution 36/28 of 13 November 1981 endorsed that Programme bearing in mind that continued review and revision of the Programme should be carried out in the coming years.
3. The General Assembly in its resolution 36/29 of 13 November 1981, requested the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year to ensure that, in the context of the preparations for the Year, systematic and continuous attention is given to the efforts aimed at the promotion of human rights and their enjoyment by youth, particularly the right to education and vocational training and to work, with a view to resolving the problem of youth unemployment.
4. The Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year held its second session at Vienna from 14 to 23 June 1982. The report on the second session 2/ contained recommendations for the future implementation of the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities to be undertaken prior to and during the International Youth Year and the General Assembly, in its resolution 37/48 endorsed those recommendations. In that resolution the Secretary-General was asked to convene the third session of the Advisory Committee during the first half of 1984.
5. The Secretary General pursuant to a request in General Assembly resolution 36/28 of 13 November 1981, submitted to the Assembly at its thirty-seventh session through the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year a progress report on the implementation of the specific Programme of Measures and Activities 3/. That report contained a preliminary analysis of trends and activities in preparation for the International Youth Year by member states, the United Nations system, non-United Nations Intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. The following survey of the trends and activities is based on the Secretary-General's report.

1/ A/36/215, Annex

2/ A/37/237 and Add. 2

5. The Secretary General pursuant to a request in General Assembly resolution 36/28, submitted to the Assembly at its thirty-seventh session through the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year a progress report on the implementation of the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities 3/. That report contained a preliminary analysis of trends and activities in preparation for the International Youth Year by Member States of the United Nations system, non-United Nations intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. The following survey of the trends and activities is based on the Secretary-General's report.

Member States

6. National legislation has been enacted in several countries in an effort to bring about the enjoyment by youth of human rights, particularly the right to education and to work. The themes of the International Youth Year - participation, development, peace - provide in the views of many Governments a sound basis for an integrated action for development purposes, particularly at the national level. In several countries a growing awareness has been observed of the need to establish structures and mechanisms to plan and co-ordinate youth-related activities; several Governments have established or are in the process of establishing National Co-ordinating Committees for the International Youth Year.

7. In establishing national priorities relating to youth many member States have identified unemployment, education and training, population, environment and housing, health, and crime prevention, inter alia, as important problems. Further, there is an increasing awareness that education for peace, mutual understanding and co-operation are of significance to the creation of a positive attitude towards disarmament.

8. The International Youth Year has been included in the agenda of numerous national youth meetings with a view to promoting the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities; similar attempts to include the International Youth Year agenda in future national youth and youth-related meetings are also being planned. With a view to raising consciousness on the issues and problems relating to youth, several Governments have proclaimed special events such as Youth Day and Youth Week, and such occasions have been used in the promotion of activities related to the International Youth Year.

United Nations System

9. The United Nations Secretariat has been actively involved in meetings and conferences on youth held within and outside the United Nations system with a view to promoting widespread awareness and the implementation of the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities for the International Youth Year. In particular, the Secretariat has continued to co-operate with the Geneva Informal Meeting of International Non-governmental Youth Organizations in that regard and specific measures have been taken, to promote the establishment of national co-ordinating committees for the International Youth Year.

10. The quarterly Youth Information Bulletin, which is published in English, French and Spanish, has served as a major channel of communications between the United Nations and youth organizations.

11. United Nations information centres continue to be actively involved with academic institutions and youth groups at all levels by delivering lectures and providing information material. Radio programmes produced by the United Nations reach a large audience of young people and periodically include items on their specific problems and needs. The activities related to the International Youth Year will be covered and publicized in the normal weekly and monthly schedule of radio broadcasts.

12. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs has provided intergovernmental bodies and Member States of the United Nations with information on policy measures and strategies for bringing young people into the mainstream of development. Among the activities of the United Nations in the field of international drug control including the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control is the provision of information to youth organizations and educational institutions, in order to promote a better understanding of the drug phenomenon and initiate appropriate preventive activities.

13. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific through its Ad Hoc Advisory Group Meeting on Youth Problems and Programmes, has developed a plan of action in order to assess the needs and aspirations of youth in the region, facilitate regional co-operation and co-ordination among regional youth organizations, establish a mechanism such as an interagency working group through which co-ordinated efforts to maximize youth participation in development could be made and develop a regional plan of action for the observance of the International Youth Year. The Economic Commission for Western Asia has given full support to the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities, particularly to the guidelines for regional action. The Economic Commission for Africa supports activities undertaken at the national and local levels, the objective being the establishment of close co-operation between regional and national endeavours. The Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) has been assisting in the formation of an Association of Non-governmental Organizations for Development, located in Santiago, which meets monthly at ECLA headquarters; it has one committee dealing with United Nations international years, including International Youth Year. ECLA has also completed a preliminary study entitled "The participation of youth in the development process of Latin America: Problems and policies regarding labour force insertion, education and employment opportunities".

14. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development relations with youth and youth organizations have developed, particularly since 1975, as a corollary of its work to mobilize public opinion in support of its specific policies for the enhancement of trade and development of developing countries. The youth-related activities of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) include substantive support to the planning, design, construction and management of urban and rural settlements, covering physical, social, economic and environmental aspects with the needs of Youth and their participation highlighted. The activities of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have focused on environmental education for youth. In this regard, UNEP has initiated some projects such as encouraging major children's libraries throughout the world to mount a special display of environmental books and introducing the Panda Educational Series as textbooks and wallposters in schools. As an integral part of its Assistance Programme, the plans for youth envisaged by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the period 1982-1984 include an expansion of programmes for vocational training, self-employment, community development, co-operative groups for agricultural and small-scale industrial production, and the introduction of education on family life.

15. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is promoting the involvement of young people in the mainstream of development, especially in rural areas, through co-operation with youth organizations and youth leaders. The activities of the United Nations Volunteers in the preparation for and support of the International Youth Year, all emphasize, inter alia, both increased mobilization of youth through popular participation schemes and projects, and increased use of United Nations Volunteers within development programmes. The United Nations Fund for Population Activities considers it necessary to continue to expand its support to population-related programmes most directly addressed to young people. Youth-oriented activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East focus on education, vocational training and the provision of scholarships to university students. The Agency sees the International Youth Year as an occasion to promote youth cultural events such as Palestine youth festivals devoted to music, folk dancing, painting and embroidery. The World Food Programme activities geared to youth fall under the following three categories: supplementary feeding of young people attending schools; feeding of students receiving instruction in the field of technical specialization, rural development or vocational training; and employment of unemployed or underemployed youth in practical vocational training in special camps. One of the specific projects of the United Nations University aims at examining the impact of changing attitudes towards work on the relationship between men and women, the young and the elderly, and the family.

16. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is making available to Governments advisory services on all aspects relating to young people's professional life. It has collected and disseminated information on measures taken at the national level and organized regional or subregional meetings on priority areas of employment policies concerning youth. ILO has intensified vocational training for young people in accordance with the needs of their countries, with particular emphasis on disadvantaged groups. It has encouraged increased participation of young people in the decision-making process concerning their work through trade unions. The implementation of several international labour conventions on special youth schemes will also constitute a major International Youth Year activity of the ILO.

17. The integration of rural youth in the development process is of great concern to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO). FAO has sponsored a large number of rural youth programmes within the extension services of Ministries of Agriculture in Latin America, Africa and the Near East, these programmes prepare youth for employment outside agriculture. In addition, internship programmes for young people have enabled FAO to maintain and develop communication with youth through various training schemes for development work, either at FAO headquarters or in the field.

18. The policy and guidelines for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in its preparation of the International Youth Year are contained in a resolution adopted by its General Conference at its twenty-first session. A working group of the annual Collective Consultation on non-governmental youth organizations has been established to ensure a permanent liaison between UNESCO's youth programme and international non-governmental youth organizations. UNESCO is also organizing information campaigns on the International Youth Year and promoting cultural exchanges with a view to involving young people in development.

19. The World Health Organization (WHO) has planned activities for the International Youth Year including components such as population, family planning, health and family life education within the context of the World Health Organization Global Strategy of Health for All by the Year 2000. WHO will continue to concentrate on the training of young people to develop and promote community based primary health-care activities with particular emphasis on the rural areas.

20. The following are some of the activities envisaged by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) within the framework of the International Youth Year: the launching in 1985 of the ITU's world-wide drawing and photographic competition entitled "Youth in the Electronic Age"; organization of the Seventeenth World Telecommunication Day on the general theme of the effects of telecommunications on unemployment; and special International Youth Year 1985 amateur radio activities.

Intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system

21. The Commonwealth Youth Programme has established an International Youth Year Planning Group to co-ordinate Commonwealth activities in this regard. It plans to convene, in its different regions, a series of high-level planning conferences as part of its preparations for the International Youth Year. Also a Youth Day or Week has been proclaimed in a number of Commonwealth member States to sensitize both the public and the policy-makers to the aspirations and the needs of young people in the community concerned.

22. The Council of Europe has established a European Youth Centre in Strasbourg (France). The main objective of the Centre is to promote youth co-operation, including the exchange of information on issues pertinent to youth policies and programmes. The Intergovernmental Committee on Migration has encouraged over 1,600 highly qualified persons, including young people from developing countries who stay in industrialized nations after their studies or training, to return and resettle in their homelands which need them.

Non governmental organizations

23. In the area of promotional and information activities, various non-governmental organizations have taken steps to focus public attention on both the objectives of the International Youth Year and the problems, roles and potential of youth through directives and communications to their regional and national affiliates. National youth organizations have held youth rallies, set up exhibitions and stimulated governmental actions concerning such issues as employment and peace. Some of them have provided counselling services or played an active role in the vocational training of young people. Youth organizations in a number of countries have been encouraged to work out appropriate strategies aimed at increasing youth involvement in the life of society. Youth groups in other countries have received government support in those activities designed to develop contacts among young people at the interregional and international levels. Some organizations are providing services to young people in the fields of juvenile justice, employment, education, recreation, alcohol and drug abuse, adolescent pregnancy and residential care.

24. Regional non-governmental youth organizations have encouraged their member organizations to channel information relating to the United Nations activities in the field of youth to their affiliates. For example, the Eighth Asian-Pacific Youth Forum (15 to 18 February 1982) adopted a series of recommendations to be brought to the attention of Governments in the Asian and Pacific regions, including the establishment of an ad hoc committee, to co-ordinate International Youth Year preparations and activities in the area. The regional office for east, central and southern Africa of the International Co-operative Alliance, (Moshi, United Republic of Tanzania) is carrying out a study on strategies for the involvement of youth in co-operatives in its area.

25. Many other non-governmental youth organizations have executed specific projects within the context of the three themes of the International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace. For example, one organization is planning a series of meetings at the regional and national levels on the participation and development themes. Similarly, in Africa and Latin America regional non-governmental youth organizations are planning to enhance the participation of youth in rural and community development projects through meetings, seminars, trainings and workshops. Some non-governmental youth organizations have organized conferences at the regional and international levels on questions relating to peace.

26. An important role in the implementation of International Youth Year objectives is played by the Geneva Informal Meeting of International Youth "Non-governmental Organizations". In co-operation with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the Geneva Informal Meeting has circulated to its member organizations a questionnaire on the programme of activities for the preparation and observance of the International Youth Year. In close co-operation with the International Labour Organisation, the Geneva Informal Meeting organized a Workshop on Unemployment in May 1982 and it is also involved in preparing a draft programme for future activities.