

UN YOUTH FLASH

January 2007, Vol. 4, No. 1

WELCOME to the UN Youth Flash, a service of the UN Programme on Youth, keeping you informed about the work of the UN on youth issues. We encourage you to forward the UN Youth Flash to people in your network.

In this issue, you will find out more about:

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The UN Youth Flash can be read on-line at:

English: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/flash.htm>

French: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/french/flash.htm>

Spanish: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/spanish/flash.htm>

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Feature: Enabling youth living with disabilities

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The General Assembly adopted a landmark disability convention on 13 December, the first human rights treaty of the twenty-first century and one that some said represented the “dawn of a new era” for around 650 million people worldwide living with disabilities. The Convention was the most rapidly negotiated human rights treaty in the history of international law, emerging after only three years of negotiations, mainly due to lobbying conducted extensively via the Internet. This is a significant step for all of humanity since the main purpose of this legally-binding Convention is to “promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.” (Article 1, Purpose)

For youth with disabilities, the Convention marks a historical opportunity for the voice of youth to have an impact, as each country ratifying the Convention embarks upon implementation of the Convention’s principles and incorporation of its guidelines into national structures. Aspects of this process will undoubtedly be challenging, and the vibrancy and innovation of youth will be needed to create and adapt local structures and frameworks in ways that respond to the convention.

Reflecting the growing recognition of sports for development, the Convention includes sports in Article 30, and calls for States Parties to take measures to promote participation of people with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities and disability-specific sporting and recreational activities, as well as ensure that children with disabilities have equal access to participate in recreation and sports, including such activities in school.

An important requirement for the implementation of the Convention is the need for ownership by persons with disabilities, particularly young people. Youth must be active advocates in the shaping of their societies towards more inclusion and equality for all members. An example of how this can be achieved was illustrated during the negotiations of the Convention. Focus group discussions were conducted with over 200 youth with disabilities from 12 countries in order to determine which issues most affected their lives. The five key issues they identified were access to education, lack of employment, discrimination against persons with disabilities, lack of awareness by persons without a disability, poor compliance with existing legislation, and lack of access to health provision (Young Voices on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Leonard Cheshire International, 2006. See <http://www.lcint.webbler.co.uk/?lid=3103> for details).

Selected youth from the focus groups were later invited to New York to observe negotiations at United Nations headquarters. They were also given the unique opportunity to voice their opinions

to the negotiating body, thus communicating their views directly to the authors of the Convention, which included representatives of Governments, non-governmental organizations, national human rights institutions and experts in the field of disability.

There are numerous ways and means in which young people may be active participants in the implementation of the Convention. The focus groups suggested that monitoring groups could be formed to observe and advocate for legislative changes once countries have ratified the Convention. The media could be targeted by youth spokespersons as a mean of addressing discrimination and awareness-raising. Youth with disabilities can be trained as community educators in areas such as HIV/AIDS awareness and sign language.

Just recently, young people in Uganda lobbied the State Minister for Disability and Elderly Affairs, who agreed to ratify the convention on behalf of Government. The Minister will be accompanied by a youth with disability at the ratification. Ugandan youth hope that their country will be among the first 20 countries to ratify the convention.

Youth participation in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is critical for a timely and comprehensive implementation of the spirit and letter of the Convention. This participation is an opportunity to build their own confidence and capabilities at understanding human rights and active citizenship, while building a framework of inclusion and equality in our world.

The full text of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the six official languages of the United Nations can be found at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/convtexte.htm>. For more information, you may also e-mail: enable@un.org.

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News from UN Headquarters, New York
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Report on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

In order to facilitate a better understanding of discrimination and violence against the girl child, the UN Division for the Advancement of Women, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched a new report to provide further insight on the issue. The report provides analysis and presents recommendations that will be used assist the 51st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in its deliberations when it meets on 26 February. To download a copy of the report, please visit <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=E/CN.6/2007/2>.

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Highlights from UN Agencies around the world
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UNICEF State of the World's Children 2007 – Empower women to help children

The State of the World's Children 2007 examines the discrimination and disempowerment women face throughout their lives – and outlines what must be done to eliminate gender discrimination and empower women and girls. It looks at the status of women today and discusses how gender equality will move all the Millennium Development Goals forward. It shows how investment in women's rights will ultimately produce a double dividend: advancing the rights of both women and children. For more information and to download a copy of the report, please visit <http://www.unicef.org/sowc07>.

UNICEF Voices of Youth - Tuning in to Young Journalists

The 16th annual International Children's Day of Broadcasting (ICDB) took place on 10 December 2006. The theme for the day was UNITE FOR CHILDREN - UNITE AGAINST AIDS and brought together hundreds of broadcasters from around the world. Scheduled each year on the second Sunday in December, this UNICEF initiative encourages broadcasters to air programming that focuses on children's rights and involves television professionals and youth journalists working together to write, produce and present reports and programmes. For more information, please visit

http://www.unicef.org/voy/explore/media/explore_3449.html. Voices of Youth (VOY) Media Magic and ICDB call for entries for the *Make a Difference! OneMinutesJr.* video contest, sponsored by UNICEF and PROMAX. Youth video-makers below 25 years of age are invited to submit a one minute video reflecting the contest's theme. For more information, please visit www.unicef.org/videoaudio/video_37791.html.

UNESCAP Workshop provides training to Tsunami victims

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) in collaboration with the Government of Indonesia organized a training workshop to strengthen community support for orphans and separated children and youth affected by the 2004 Tsunami disaster. The workshop was held in Bandah Aceh, Indonesia, from 14 to 16 November 2006 and focused on providing psychosocial support to families and communities with orphans and separated children and youth. The workshop is being followed by policy advocacy activities to sensitize key decision-makers about the need to provide support and protection of children and youth affected by disasters as part of broader policies to promote social cohesion and development. For further information, please contact escap-esid@un.org.

UNESCAP HIV prevention among young people: Life Skills Training Kit

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) developed a training kit to support the efforts of Governments, civil society institutions and youth-work personnel engaged in training young people on health issues. The primary targets for the training kit are facilitators who train peer educators on two interrelated and critical health issues in the region, namely HIV/AIDS and substance abuse among youth. For more information, please visit <http://www.unescap.org/publications/detail.asp?id=1147>.

UNESCO Asian Performing Arts against AIDS

With the spread of HIV/AIDS in Asia, it is important to explore new methods of educating the public. UNESCO's new programme entitled "Expanding the use of innovative HIV/AIDS prevention approaches using traditional forms of performing arts in Asia" draws on dance and drama to engage people in HIV/AIDS issues and provide a channel for education and information. After attending a 3-week training workshop in Viet Nam in 2006, the artists will tour their countries with performances that address issues of gender, sexuality and HIV/AIDS. The target audiences are mainly rural communities and youth in particular. For more information, please visit <http://www.unescobkk.org/index.php?id=4349> or contact Ms. Patricia Alberth at p.alberth@unescobkk.org.

UNESCO Bangkok

The International Culture of Peace: Voices of Youth for 2006 was organized in Bangkok by UNESCO and UNESCAP as a part of Peace Day Celebrations to encourage creativity in youth. Drama, songs, visual art, poetry and sculpture were presented by young people in Thailand and other countries of the region. UNESCO Bangkok has also recently concluded the Japanese Funds in Trust (JFIT) sponsored Young Minds in Action and UNESCO Youth Envisaging Contest. The contest was initiated to promote awareness and engage students and teachers in Education for Sustainable Development. Over 150 entries were received from 10 different countries throughout the region. For more information, please visit <http://www.unescobkk.org/index.php?id=5444>.

UNESCO Abuja

A one day workshop on Human Rights and Citizenship Education was organized for primary and secondary schools in Nigeria at the UN House on 27 November 2006. The workshop was created to cultivate in youth a culture of peace, good citizenship and intercultural understanding. It was also intended to eradicate culture-based human rights abuses bordering on gender discrimination in the classroom by assisting teachers in preparing rights-based curricula. The workshop provided an opportunity for educators to appraise and validate the instructional manuals developed by UNESCO Abuja as guide for teaching effective human rights education in Nigerian schools. Participants included representatives from the Government, youth service corps, teachers and students from all levels of education. For more information, please contact Ngozi Awuzie at n.awuzie@unesco.org.

UNOSDP New institute to help poor youth through sport

The UN Office of Sport for Development and Peace in collaboration with Brazilian soccer star Ronaldinho, one of the world's best known sports figures and a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador, has launched an institute in Porte Alegre, Brazil, to help disadvantaged children through sport and education, an initiative that shows the way forward in global development. The UN will provide technical advice and assist in recruiting professional staff before the programme begins next March, as it shows the power of sport to help countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals. For more information, please contact richard.leonard@undp.org.

UNOSDP Tennis star Serena Williams makes fact-finding visit to Ghana and Senegal

Following her participation in the UN Global Youth Leadership Summit, Ms. Williams travelled to Ghana and Senegal in early November to highlight the role of sport, youth, and empowerment of women and girls in achieving the MDGs. Her visits were organized by the UN Office of Sport for Development and Peace in consultation with the local UN country teams and national Governments. On the day of Ghana's biggest integrated child health campaign, Ms. Williams visited Nungua-Zongo, a deprived community in Greater Accra, where she distributed insecticide-treated bed nets for children, administered vitamin A supplements and polio vaccine, and coached girls in playing tennis. In Senegal, Ms. Williams met with President Abdoulaye Wade and personalities from the world of music. She visited Gorée Island, as well as a UNICEF program in the suburbs of Dakar that assists disadvantaged youth and a center for young women that provides opportunities to gain employment skills. She also gave tennis lessons to youth groups. For more information, please contact Karima Zerrou: karima.zerrou@undp.org.

UNFPA - World Bank consultation on youth and PRSPs

The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Bank will be hosting an expert consultation on Young People in Poverty Reduction Strategies: Investing in the Next Generation, which will take place at the World Bank in Washington, D.C., from 24 to 26 January 2007. The Division for Social Policy and Development/ DESA will be joined by youth representatives from Malawi, Sweden and Tanzania to present its work in relation to *Tackling Poverty Together (TPT): the Role of Young People in Poverty Reduction Strategies*. For more information about youth engagement in preparation for the meeting, please see: <http://groups.takingitglobal.org/YouthandPRSPs>.

UNDESA Guide to Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth

This Guide focuses on what Governments can do to fulfill the vision enshrined in the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY). It acknowledges a need for a new impetus to be given to the design and implementation of youth policies and programmes. Each section of the book briefly examines the concept of each priority area and how it is experienced by youth. It looks at mechanisms and specific policies that may enhance the political, cultural and socio-economic opportunities for youth. The recommendations and ideas contained in the book are inspired by analyses, case studies, lessons learned and good practices documented by a wide range of sources. To download a copy of the book, please visit http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay_guide.pdf.

UNDESA Art competition to help poverty eradication

The United Nations invites children between the ages of 5 and 15 from all over the world to participate in an art competition on the theme "WE CAN END POVERTY". The six best designs selected by the Panel of Judges will be presented during the commemoration of the International Day on the Eradication of Poverty, on 17 October 2007, and will be issued as United Nations stamps. The next 20 best designs will receive special commendation. The total of 26 winning entries will be displayed in a special exhibition at United Nations Headquarters in New York in 2007. The deadline for submitting entries is **30 June 2007**. Please visit <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/poverty/poverty.htm> to learn more about the competition.

UNAIDS Commemorations of World AIDS Day around the world

1 December 2006 was the 19th World AIDS Day and the 25th year since the first case of AIDS was identified. The latest global AIDS figures show that the number of new infections rose to 4.3 million in 2006, at the same time 2.9 million people died of AIDS-related illnesses. From a cricket match in South Africa to the Condom Chain of Life festival in Thailand, see the many unique ways the Day was commemorated around the world to raise awareness and generate support for the AIDS Campaign: <http://www.unaids.org/en/MediaCentre/PressMaterials/FeatureStory/20061205-WADEvents.asp>

Calendar of Youth Events

1-4 February 2007: UNEP Global Youth Retreat at Governing Council

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Youth Retreat takes place every two years in conjunction with the UNEP Governing Council session held in February. The Retreat brings together approximately 50 youth leaders including the Tunza Youth Advisory Council to review UNEP Governing Council documents and provide youth input to the Governing Council. In addition, the Retreat provides an opportunity for participants to review UNEP's activities along with young people and make suggestions on how to better engage youth in environmental issues. For more information, please contact children.youth@unep.org.

7-16 February 2007: Commission for Social Development, 45th session

As the key UN body in charge of the follow-up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, this review session is themed Promoting Full Employment and Decent Work for All. The Commission will also discuss issues related to social groups and have panel discussions on ageing and youth. A panel presentation of the World Youth Report 2007 will include a synopsis of the report's main themes and findings. This will be followed by a discussion and comments from experts on youth. The report is expected to be released in May 2007. The five priority areas identified in the World Youth Report 2003 will be discussed at the session of the Commission, before being forwarded for adoption by the General Assembly as a supplement to the World Programme of Action for Youth. For more information, please visit <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csodc2007.htm>.

26 February-9 March 2007: Commission on the Status of Women

At its fiftieth session, the Commission on the Status of Women will consider the report of the Secretary-General on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child. The Commission will also consider a report on progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes. For more information, please visit <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/51sess.htm>.

8 March 2007: International Women's Day

Since 1975, International Women's Year, March 8 has been celebrated as International Women's Day to commemorate the historic struggle to improve women's lives. It is a day when women are recognized for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political. It is an occasion for looking back on past struggles and accomplishments, and more importantly, for looking ahead to the untapped potential and opportunities that await future generations of women. Read more about the Day at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/iwd/> or email: ianwge@un.org.

15 April 2007: Young entrepreneurs in Africa

Making African Cities Better Places to Work, to Live in and to do Business will be held one day prior to the 21st Governing Council of UN-HABITAT (16 to 20 April 2007) in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting will bring together youth groups, city level decision-makers and private sector stakeholders in order to discuss the market opportunities, best practices and business models to strengthen youth entrepreneurship in urban areas. It will also help to identify potential partnerships and projects involving youth and address sustainable housing and services, especially in the most

deprived urban areas. For more information, please contact Paul Wambua, paul.wambua@unhabitat.org or Christine Auclair, christine.auclair@unhabitat.org.

12-14 April 2007: Water and Youth first international meeting

The Food and Agricultural Organization and the Pan American Health Organization will join over 300 national and international organizations to convene the first international meeting on "Water and Youth" in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The objective of the Meeting is to increase commitment and to initiate action that will contribute to water sustainability, as well as to forge a network of international cooperation. For more information or to get involved, please visit <http://www.waterandyouth.org> or contact info@waterandyouth.org.

20-22 April 2007: Eighth Annual Global Youth Service Day

Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) is celebrated on a designated weekend every April in more than 115 countries. GYSD also remembers the year-round contributions of young people as assets and resources in their communities. In April 2007, millions of young people, in partnership with non-Governmental organizations, faith-based institutions, Governments, schools, media, and businesses will address the most pressing needs in their communities and their countries. For more information, please visit <http://www.GYSD.org>.

16-22 April 2007: Act! Speak! Build! Week

Act! Speak! Build! Week is Habitat for Humanity's international, student-initiated week of advocacy. The Week empowers young people to educate themselves and their communities and move people to social action. Young people, ages 5 to 25, work in partnership with local affiliates to plan and host events focused on ending poverty housing. For more information, please visit <http://www.habitat.org/youthprograms/intl/default.aspx>.

30 April-11 May 2007: Commission on Sustainable Development, 15th Session

The themes for CSD-15 are energy for sustainable development, air pollution/atmosphere, climate change and industrial development. The official programme of CSD-15 will include the Learning Centre which constitutes a series of 3-hour courses focused on financing, education, national sustainable development strategies, gender and sustainable development law. The Learning Centre is intended to facilitate teaching/training at a practical level on various aspects of sustainable development. For more information, please visit <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/policy.htm>.

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On the Internet
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UNICEF-Voices of Youth – Feedback on discrimination and violence against girls

VOY is calling for children and young people to send their feedback on how to stop discrimination and violence against girls by **30 January 2007**, which will be presented to this year's Commission on the Status of Women. The youth version of the expert group report on this topic, the questionnaire and the facilitator's guide are all available on VOY in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish and Swahili at: http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction_3295.html.

UNV honours outstanding Online Volunteers of the Year 2006

Every year, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and its Online Volunteering (OV) service honour ten exceptional women and men who have made an exemplary impact on human development by sharing their expertise over the Internet and by demonstrating their commitment to volunteering. These volunteers are good examples of how volunteering online can mobilize global action towards sustainable human development and to reach the Millennium Development Goals. For more information, please visit http://www.unvolunteers.org/infobase/news_releases/2006/06_12_05_OV.htm.

UNICEF - Voices of Youth and ICDB launch Media Magic Digest

