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United Nations

“Youth deserve our full commitment  
– full access to education, adequate  
healthcare, employment opportunities,  
financial services and full participation  
in public life.”

United Nations Secretary-General  
Ban Ki-moon

The **International Year of Youth** is being celebrated from **12 August 2010 to 11 August 2011** and everyone has a role to play!

#### WHY AN INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF YOUTH?

In December 2009, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 64/134 proclaiming the Year, signifying the importance the international community places on integrating youth-related issues into global, regional, and national development agendas. Under the theme **Dialogue and Mutual Understanding** the Year aims to promote the ideals of peace, respect for human rights and solidarity across generations, cultures, religions and civilizations.

The world is facing many, often overlapping, crises including financial, security, environmental and other socio-economic challenges hindering the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. Investing in and partnering with youth is key to addressing these challenges in a sustainable manner.



“As we expand our efforts,  
we must do even more to  
reach out, to listen and to  
learn from young people.”

United Nations  
Secretary-General  
Ban Ki-moon

### WHY YOUTH?

The UN defines youth as those between the ages of 15 to 24. Today, **youth represent 18% of the global population** or 1.2 billion people. **87% of youth live in developing countries** facing challenges brought about by limited access to resources, healthcare, education, training, employment and economic opportunities.

Member States of the United Nations recognize that young people in all countries are a major human resource for development, positive social change and technological innovation. Their ideals, energy and vision are essential for the continuing development of their societies.

Young people are not merely passive beneficiaries but effective agents of change. Dedicated, enthusiastic and creative, youth have been contributing to development by addressing society's most challenging issues.





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Young people's efforts have contributed to combating poverty and hunger in their communities, stemming the HIV/AIDS pandemic through peer education and championing the protection of the environment. Youth have also been pioneers in encouraging dialogue, understanding and respect among people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

Youth often lead by example, such as by practicing green and healthy lifestyles, promoting innovative uses of new technologies including utilizing mobile devices and online social networks and by bridging gaps to foster the development of inclusive societies. Their contributions to community, national, regional and global development must be recognized and encouraged.

Member States of the United Nations proclaimed the International Year bearing this in mind and with the knowledge that how these challenges are addressed and how youth's potential is harnessed directly impacts current social and economic conditions.

**“Many young people remain marginalized, disconnected or excluded from the opportunities that globalization offers.”**

**General Assembly  
Resolution 62/126**

## YOUTH AND THE UNITED NATIONS

In 1985, the UN celebrated the first International Year of Youth. On its 10th anniversary, the General Assembly adopted the **World Programme of Action for Youth**, setting a policy framework and guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people.

Today, the World Programme of Action for Youth plays a prominent role in youth development. It focuses on measures to strengthen national capacities in the field of youth and to increase the quality and quantity of opportunities available to young people for full, effective and constructive participation in society.

## 15 PRIORITY AREAS OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR YOUTH

- Education
- Employment
- Hunger and poverty
- Health
- Environment
- Drug abuse
- Juvenile delinquency
- Leisure-time activities
- Girls and young women
- Participation
- Globalization
- Information and communication technologies
- HIV/AIDS
- Youth and conflict
- Intergenerational relations

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The **United Nations Programme on Youth** serves as the focal point on youth at the UN. It undertakes a range of activities to promote youth development including supporting intergovernmental policy-making, conducting analytical research and increasing the effectiveness of the UN's work in youth development by strengthening collaboration and exchange among UN entities through the **Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development**.

## WHAT'S YOUR ROLE IN CELEBRATING THE YEAR?

Everyone is invited to promote the ideals of peace, freedom, progress and solidarity towards the promotion of youth development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

**Member States of the United Nations** are encouraged to hold national events in celebration of the Year and to raise public awareness about the important contributions of youth to their country's development.

Member States are also encouraged to review their national youth development policies and programmes to fully implementing the World Programme of Action for Youth.



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**YOUth and Youth-focused Organizations** are encouraged to initiate and participate in activities in celebration of the Year and its theme.

UN Photo/Mohamed Siddig





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- **Organize an event:** Use the Activities Kit for guidance and effective strategies on promoting your event.
- **Post an event on the official Calendar of Events:** Post your event on the official calendar for the Year and submit a request to the UN for use of the official logo.



INTERNATIONAL  
**YEAR OF  
YOUTH**  
AUGUST 2010-2011  
OUR YEAR OUR VOICE

UN Photo/Sophia Paris







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- **Participate in local events:** Visit the official calendar to find activities in your community and learn about what others are doing around the world to celebrate the Year.
- **Raise public awareness:** Download the International Year of Youth banner from the official website and post a link on your webpage. Promote the Year using online social networking tools.
- **Contribute to online discussions:** Join the monthly consultations on Facebook ([facebook.com/UNyouthyear](https://facebook.com/UNyouthyear)) and share your views on various issues. Previous discussions focused on organizing low-cost activities; increasing the effectiveness of youth participation and representation at the community level; engaging the media to raise public awareness; and making suggestions for the official slogan of the Year: **Our Year. Our Voice.**
- **Talk to your leaders:** Meet decision-makers to reiterate the importance of youth participation in development and of fostering mutual understanding.
- **Subscribe to Youth Flash:** Learn about what's happening in the UN system and youth organizations worldwide. Visit [www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/flash.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/flash.htm) to subscribe to the monthly e-newsletter of the UN Programme on Youth.
- **Reach Out:** Talk to your neighbours to learn more about their culture and religions and encourage your friends to do the same.

For more activities and to download advocacy materials for the Year, visit the official website for the Year at: [social.un.org/youthyear](http://social.un.org/youthyear).

“Imagine a year when everyone from all sectors of society can engage in dialogue about issues affecting young people — a year we all listen with respect and speak with dignity. The International Year of Youth is this opportunity. This is our year to find, define, and make our voice heard — let’s not waste it!”

Christopher Derige Malano,  
Pax Romana, member of the  
International Coordination Meeting  
of Youth Organizations (ICMYO)

#### WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The Year, from 12 August 2010 to 11 August 2011, begins with **launch events** at UN Headquarters in New York and around the world showcasing youth contributions to development and promoting the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

**The UN Conference on Youth**, taking place in 2011, is a highlight of the International Year of Youth.

Many other events are scheduled throughout the world to celebrate the Year. Please visit the official **Calendar of Events** for more information at: [social.un.org/youthyear](http://social.un.org/youthyear).

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