



In Today's Bulletin

GHANA: UN Calls For Concerted Efforts To End Violence Against Girls

KENYA: International Volunteer Day 2017

MALAWI: Policy Challenge On Volunteering For Resilience

NAMIBIA: Kosis Youth Want Empowerment

ZAMBIA: New Partnership To Grow Financial Skills Of Youth In Zambia

ARGENTINA: Sports Minister Tasks Youths On Talent Development

BOLIVIA: Youth Initiative Adopted At UN Desertification Conference

CANADA: Government Provides Opportunities For Youth In Edmonton

JAMAICA: Food For The Poor Awards Grants To Jamaican Youth

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: YTC Youths Welcome Second Chance At Math

BAHRAIN: Bahraini Youth Motor Sports Aptitudes Praised

BANGLADESH: Youth Can Help Ensure Rights Of Minority Communities

MALAYSIA: Najib Says Need To Continue Creating Opportunities For Nation's Youth

PAKISTAN: Pakistan's Progress Depends On Youth Development

QATAR: Youth Gets Educated At Ajyal Fest

ARMENIA: Only 35.4% Of Armenian Youth Pursue Profession

AZERBAIJAN: Azercell Declares Further Support Of Youth

CROATIA: 300 Jobs Available For Youth, Says Farquharson

ROMANIA: Young People Set To Make Life-Changing Journey To Romania

SPAIN: Major Youth In Agriculture Showcase For Day One At Denbigh

AUSTRALIA: Citi Broadens Youth Unemployment Scheme

FIJI: Youth Unemployment A Priority For Fiji Govt

SAMOA: Samoa Calls On Older Generation To Listen To Youth Voice

TONGA: Tongan Youth Leader Hands Out Condoms To Raise Awareness

VANUATU: Vanuatu Pin Hopes Of Battling Youth Crime On National Ids

AFRICA
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ASIA
EUROPE
PACIFIC
INFO



✓ GHANA: UN CALLS FOR CONCERTED EFFORTS TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS

Accra, 7 December 2017 – As the world observes 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence from 25 November to 10 December 2017, the United Nations in Ghana calls on governments, non-governmental organisations, religious and traditional leaders, communities and individuals to take individual and collective action against human rights abuse of women and girls.

A world free from gender-based violence and from discrimination is paramount to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 2017 global theme, “Leave no one behind: End violence against women and girls” reflects the vision of the United Nations Secretary-General’s global UNiTE campaign to end violence against all women and girls.

The commitment to realising this vision requires reaching out especially to the most underserved and marginalised women and

girls among refugees, migrants, minorities, indigenous peoples, and populations affected by conflict and natural disasters.

Violence against women is one of the most extreme forms of discrimination. The UN Secretary-General’s 2017 report on progress towards the SDGs states: “On the basis of data from 2005 to 2016 for 87 countries, 19 per cent of women between 15 and 49 years of age said they had experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the 12 months prior to the survey.

In 2012, almost half of all women who were victims of intentional homicide worldwide were killed by an intimate partner or family member, compared to 6 per cent of male victims.”

In Ghana, adolescent girls face high levels of sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation due to their low status in the community which may be attributed to their economic

dependence, lower educational experience and the process of learning different social expectations/roles. More than 38% of adolescent girls aged 15-19 years are reported to have experienced at least one act of sexual violence (“Domestic violence in Ghana: incidence, attitudes, determinants and consequences”, Ghana Statistical Service, 2016). The actual number is undoubtedly higher, as many victims of violence do not report it for fear of victimisation.

UN Secretary General António Guterres stressed in his message for International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women: “There is increasing recognition that violence against women is a major barrier to the fulfillment of human rights, and a direct challenge to women’s inclusion and participation in sustainable development and sustaining peace.” He indicated that as long as violence continues, “we will not achieve the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development.”

Thus, as we implement the SDGs and work toward ensuring the underlying principle to leave no one behind is achieved, it is particularly important to recognise and protect the human rights of all women and girls and to end violence that they face on account of their gender.

In Ghana a strong partnership with government, CSOs, traditional and religious authorities and the people is needed to implement existing laws, enlist educational programmes, mobilise cultural and community leaders, eradicate harmful practices, including female genital mutilation, child and forced marriage, physical, emotional and sexual violence, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and all forms of trafficking.

[<http://accra.sites.uniconnetwork.org>]

✓ KENYA: INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY 2017

Nairobi, 6 December 2017 – THE year-end traditionally announces the International Volunteers Day celebrations held on 5th December. This year’s campaign is themed “Volunteers act first. Here. Everywhere.”

A series of national and international activities and media features showcased how volunteers play a crucial role in times of crisis all over the world - including Kenya - despite the security risks they often

face.

With 17 national UN Volunteers assigned to field duty stations, UNV Kenya is well embedded in the host agency, UNDP programs and projects on the ground.

Under the umbrella of the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA), Mr. Nahashon Lotaruk, a national UN Volunteer in the arid Turkana-county, is working closely with local

communities on income generating activities to help improve livelihoods.

The UNDP Peace building programme has 12 volunteers deployed in different regions, some of them in frontier counties like Turkana or Wajir, supporting a peaceful elections process through mediation and peace building activities. Many other UN Volunteers are working on environment and climate change,

supporting program delivery on the reduction of the carbon footprint for the country and the set-up of a greenhouse data inventory on carbon emissions.



In the wider context of the UN Country Team, UN Volunteers with other UN partners such as UNHCR and UNICEF play a forefront role when it comes to offering support in times of natural disasters, economic instability, forced migration or humanitarian emergencies; whether it is supporting the functioning of the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps or responding to the child protection concerns in

Garissa county. Out of 180 UN Volunteers in Kenya, 75 % are nationals: young professionals, highly motivated and skilled, willing and ready to assist their own communities under often stringent conditions. Through their ongoing support, volunteers make the voices of the most vulnerable heard, helping people and communities be better prepared to face

uncertainty in the future.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly recognizes volunteers as stakeholders to support the grassroots implementation of the 17 Development Goals. International days such as the IVD celebrations are explicit moments where civil society organizations, UN agencies, funds, programmes, peacekeeping missions and UN Member

States can recognize and value the important role of volunteers as first responders to development and peace worldwide.

This year, we chose to celebrate our inspiring volunteers, both here, and everywhere.

[The Standard]

✓ MALAWI: POLICY CHALLENGE ON VOLUNTEERING FOR RESILIENCE

Lilongwe, 5 December 2017 - THE State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR) looks at the distinctive role of volunteerism in strengthening community resilience, and the enabling environment that can help maximise the contribution of volunteers around the world to risk reduction efforts.

As part of the report development process, qualitative field research was carried out in 15 communities globally to understand what communities saw as the

distinctive contribution of volunteerism to resilience, and the environmental factors that influenced the impact of volunteer work. Based on the meta-analysis emerging findings from that field research across the 15 communities the SWVR project is organizing Policy Challenges to bring in different groups of people to make policy suggestions, some of which may be incorporated into the final report.

A Policy Challenge was held last 24 November at the Lilongwe Technical College in Malawi with

university students and representatives volunteer involving organizations such as Red Cross-Malawi, World University Services of Canada (WUSC), Makwelero youth organization, Corps Africa and UNV Malawi Field Unit.

Key among the issues raised and discussed included the lack of government policy on volunteerism in Malawi and lack of information and engagement of the youth on the opportunities and benefits of volunteerism.

These were identified as barriers that hinder

youth from offering their services as formal and informal volunteers to organizations and their communities in Malawi.

At the end of the session participants put forward their recommendations on what governments, UN Agencies and VIOs can do to strengthen volunteerism for community resilience.

[Nyasa Times]

✓ NAMIBIA: KOSIS YOUTH WANT EMPOWERMENT

Kosis, 6 January 2017 - THE youth at the small settlement of Kosis in the Berseba Constituency want government to empower them with knowledge and skills to enable them to generate income for themselves.

Many of the youth at the settlement are Grade 10 and 12 dropouts, who mainly end up sitting at home waiting on their parents or grandparents to provide them with food and other basic needs.

In some cases the elderly, who depend on government grants of N\$1 100 a month, have to take care of the unemployed youth's children too, using the grants meant for pensioners. Kosis resident and community activist Anna Josef says the situation is worrisome and has become a huge burden for many pensioners, who must not only provide for the youth, but also live in fear, as some youth take away the little the elders get from the government and spend it on

liquor.

Some of the youth New Era spoke to indicated that many of them have no choice but stay at home with their parents after failing their respective grades, saying they won't be accepted anywhere with their low points, while jobs are hard to come by with the few points many obtained.

They thus feel the only way out for them is to be empowered with the

necessary skills, so that they can do something with their hands, which will enable them to generate an income and become independent.

One of those optimistic youth is Beauty Swartbooi, 18, who first failed her Grade 10 in 2015 while schooling at Suiderlig High School.



Subsequent attempts to improve on her subjects at Namcol last year were unsuccessful, as she again failed with a miserable 14 points, but she says if her love for needlework is nurtured, it can secure her an income.

She says she has a gift for dressmaking and her wish is to get further training, so that she can acquire a certificate or diploma that

people can trust that she knows the work.

Many youth also said they feel left out, as many of the training opportunities aimed for the youth are only offered in towns and rural youth are not catered for.

Josef narrated to New Era that the youth are ready to do something with their lives and it is up to the

necessary stakeholders to help. “They want government to provide them with the necessary skills and equipment to do projects, such as brick making,” she said.

She further said providing such opportunities will not only enable the youth at the settlement to make a living, but will also bring relief to their parents, whom they

depend on.

Josef added that empowering the youth will also reduce the scourge of alcohol and drug abuse in the area, which tend to proliferate as many young people at the settlement have nothing constructive do.

[New Era]

✓ ZAMBIA: NEW PARTNERSHIP TO GROW FINANCIAL SKILLS OF YOUTH IN ZAMBIA

Lusaka, 6 December 2017 - MWABU is partnering with Financial Sector Deepening Zambia (FSDZ) to develop a financial education curriculum for both school learners and young women in Zambia.

The educational technology company is creating a blended learning and certification programme that combines face-to-face and virtual education.

Leveraging existing relationships in rural communities together with cutting-edge technology and world-class content, the programme will impact a significant number of learners in the country.

Mwabu has already been active in developing bespoke learning content and resources for a range of organisations across sectors in Zambia, such as conservation and healthcare.

Through its bespoke offering the company creates interactive, enquiry-based learning content across a wide range of topics, with public or private sector organisations.

To date, Mwabu is the only

organisation that has digitised a curriculum in multiple African languages, and as such, is recognised as a leader in African content creation.

“Our mission is to create educational opportunities for learners across Africa such that they develop the means, not only to improve their own lives, but also the lives of others in their communities,” says Justin Reilly, CEO of Mwabu.

Head of WIN at FSDZ, Veyrl Adell says, “Financial education is crucial for youth to successfully enter into adulthood.

Our work with Mwabu provides an opportunity to educate young Zambians using emerging digital tools, in order to empower them to manage their money and live better lives.”

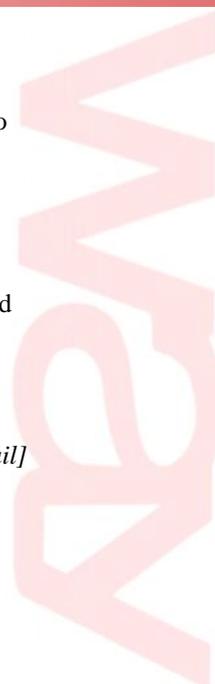
Initially, content will be rolled out to learners from grades one to twelve in the Eastern Province of Zambia, along with the NetGirls group in the region.

NetGirls caters for women between the ages of 15 and

22, most of who are not enrolled in formal education. Thereafter, the project will be extended to another two provinces within the country.

The project, which is already underway, will be implemented in phases and is expected to reach completion in December 2019.

[Zambia Daily Mail]





✓ ARGENTINA: SPORTS MINISTER TASKS YOUTHS ON TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Buenos Aires, 10 December 2017 - MINISTER of Sports and Youth Development, Solomon Dalong has advised youths in the country to develop their potentials in sports for them to represent the nation

in future sports competitions.

The minister gave the advice on Saturday in Ilorin while declaring open the third edition of the National Youths Games.

He said one of the cardinal objectives of the Millennium Development Goal was to empower the youths to achieve their dreams.

the reason why his ministry endorsed the Youths games as a driving force to achieve the set goals and stem the tide of youth restiveness.

[Vanguard]

Dalong added that this was

✓ BOLIVIA: YOUTH INITIATIVE ADOPTED AT UN DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE

Sucre, 11 December 2017 - AN initiative calling on global youth to combat desertification was adopted Friday in north China.

Global Youth Initiative for Combating Desertification was adopted at the Youth Forum of the United Nations desertification conference in Ordos City, in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

The initiative defined young people's specific responsibilities and proposed strengthening young people's engagement in combatting desertification.

"We are the new forces to drive change with fresh

ideas, innovative technology, inventive methods and means that can eradicate poverty and pave the way to a new sustainable economy," said the initiative.

It also suggested that young people should join online and offline platforms for national and international dialogue, consultations, social media campaigns and volunteering in supporting land degradation neutrality.

The one-day forum was held during the 13th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) that opened on Wednesday.

Monique Barbut, Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, said that young people will be the next generation in combatting desertification, which takes courage, hard work and vision.

Youth representatives from 25 countries and more than ten international organizations discussed about the challenges and opportunities of young people engaging in sustainable land management.

"Young people should work with each other from different organizations and projects, and integrate desertification work with climate change and biodiversity," said Lorena

Terrazas from Bolivia.

Oliver Gardner from Britain, suggested that good story-telling is needed to get young people in non-affected countries interested.

The UN desertification conference will last about two weeks, and its main task is to seek solutions for the UN sustainable goal of "achieving a land degradation neutral world by 2030" and to develop a new UNCCD strategy framework for the 2018-2030 periods.

[Xinhua]

✓ CANADA: GOVERNMENT PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN EDMONTON

Edmonton, 6 December 2017 - Building a strong middle class means giving Canada's youth the tools they need to find and keep good jobs.

Today, the Honourable Amarjeet Sohi, Member of Parliament for Edmonton-Mill Woods and Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, on behalf of the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, announced a new project that will give youth in Edmonton job skills

training and hands-on work experience. Randy Boissonnault, Member of Parliament for Edmonton Centre, joined Minister Sohi in making the announcement.

Up to 84 recent immigrant youth will participate in the project, which will be delivered by the Africa Centre thanks to more than \$1.3 million in Government of Canada funding through the Skills Link program.

The youth will develop skills to help them find and keep jobs, such as job search techniques and

interview preparation, and will receive tips from guest speakers.

They will also gain valuable work experience in such fields as accommodations, food services and tourism, business and the trades.

Skills Link supports projects that help young people who face more barriers to employment than others develop basic employability skills and gain valuable job experience, which, in turn, assists them in making a successful transition into the workforce or to return to

school.

These youth could include those who have not completed high school, single parents, Indigenous youth, young persons with disabilities, youth living in rural or remote areas or newcomers.

[Canada NewsWire]



✓ JAMAICA: FOOD FOR THE POOR AWARDS GRANTS TO JAMAICAN YOUTH

Kingston, 18 December 2017 - FOOD For the Poor (FFTP) - Jamaica continues its commitment to the education of Jamaica's youth by awarding educational grants to 299 students who are studying from basic to tertiary levels.

FFTP made the grant resresentation at its Ellerslie Pen, St Catherine office recently.

The grants awarded will ensure that back-to-school expenses, such as textbooks and/or tuition fees, are covered or are paid in part.

David Mair, executive director of FFTP Jamaica, lauded the donors who offered their support and made it possible to equip students with much-needed resources to go back to school.

"Close to 300 students from basic to tertiary institutions will benefit from the

disbursement of educational grants this year. None of this would have been possible without the consistent generosity of our donors, sourced through our head office, FFTP Incorporated," Mair said.

In his welcome remarks, Mair urged the awarded students to be good stewards of the gift. "Study hard, stay focused, and make us proud by maintaining an A or B average at all times," he said.

He also challenged parents to encourage their children and become actively involved in their lives.

The importance and the impact of this educational grant was not lost on the students, who were all appreciative of the gesture. Their faces lit up with joy, optimism, and gratitude as they collected their cheques from Mair and Craig

Moss-Solomon, a director at FFTP Jamaica.

Chante Williams, a student at Wolmer's High School for Girls, expressed her gratitude.

"This programme has helped me a lot to acquire most necessities for back-to-school, such as to purchase books," she said.

"This is very important for a student. You need your books to analyse and really comprehend the subjects you are being taught, so, I would like to say thank you to Food For The Poor and its donors for creating this programme to aid children, such as myself, to succeed," she added.

Parents of the awardees were also grateful for the donation. Samantha Barrett, who has two children benefiting from the back-to-school programme, was one of those parents.

"The day when I got my children's book lists, I waved it in the air and I said, 'God, you are their heavenly father, so I am looking to you to provide for them.'

In the afternoon, I got a call from Food For The Poor about the back-to-school programme and what I needed to provide," Barrett said.

FFTP Jamaica has been administering its back-to-school programme for more than 20 years and has seen great academic achievements from awardees, up to the tertiary level.

The organisation has pledged to remain committed to the educational development of children across Jamaica.

[The Cleaner]

✓ TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: YTC YOUTHS WELCOME SECOND CHANCE AT MATH

Port of Spain, 11 December 2017 - TWENTY-NINE young men attached to the Youth Training Centre (YTC) have embraced "a second opportunity" to study mathematics as a formal subject as they graduated from the 2017 bpTT Young Adult Math Experience workshop at the facility at Arouca recently.

"I didn't like mathematics in the past and never really put my mind to it when I was in school. But this workshop has been very interesting.

Our tutor used practical examples to teach us the

subject and made it really simple to understand. I hope to be an electrical engineer in the future and I know, for sure, that I have to pass math to achieve this goal," said 16-year old Joel Rambally.

A release said the Annual bpTT Young Adult Math Experience offers young men and women a second chance to study mathematics, a taxing subject for many, in a relaxed and fun environment.

Now in its seventh year, the initiative started off with students from the Civilian

Conservation Corps (CCC) it covered training at five locations this year, Port of Spain, Diego Martin, Mayaro, YTC (Arouca) and Tobago. The workshops are facilitated by training agency, Cross and Associates, with tutor Nicole Lord overseeing the YTC session.

This year marks the second edition of the annual math experience at the YTC, with Acting Assistant Superintendent of Prisons, Avellina Augustine-Kanhai, lauding BPTT for giving the youths a second opportunity to revive their interest in the subject.

"It is always a pleasure to see learning taking place, especially among youths. Within the service, we have a programme of education and skills training and we ensure that everyone is afforded the opportunity to learn and improve themselves.

"We thank BpTT wholeheartedly for enhancing our learning activity and providing these young men with this chance to move forward in life.



I also want to thank all the coordinators of the programme, parents and the facilitators, for partnering with us to make a real difference in the lives of these young men.

Joel Primus, Community Sustainability and Stakeholder relations Advisor, bpTT, told the graduates that while some people tend to have a negative view of YTC youths, their participation in the workshop demonstrated that something positive and heartening was taking place at the institution.

“Your graduation this morning shows that you have already embarked on a new life for yourselves which will usher great hope for your future.

Irrespective of what happened in your past, it is important to look ahead and plan for the future. Use this math experience as a building block for your new life,” Primus urged the young graduates.

He gave the assurance that bpTT would continue to support the math experience at the YTC “and will support this initiative in other ways to help in your development for life”.

Also addressing the graduates was Andrew Cross, Principal/Consultant, Cross and Associates, who told them that their graduation celebrated the end of a programme and heralded the celebration of a new beginning.

“Mathematics is a vehicle for positive change in your life.

Whenever you make

mistakes, you need to correct them.

That is the objective of math and this opportunity should serve to change your life for the better,” Cross advised the graduates.

[Trinidad Guardian]

NEWS



✓ BAHRAIN: BAHRAINI YOUTH MOTOR SPORTS APTITUDES PRAISED

Manama, 2 December 2017 - HIS Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman Al Khalifa has lauded the potential and capabilities of Bahrain International Karting Circuit (BIKC) in Sakhir, expressing pride in young Bahrainis who have been contributing effectively to the consolidation of the status of motor sports in the Kingdom greatly supported by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince,

Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister.

Attending the second round of the 2017/2018 Bahrain SWS Endurance Championship, HH Shaikh Mohammed congratulated the three winners in the fierce competition among 21 teams that lasted three hours.

He praised the high level of organisation of this championship and the

strong competitions between the teams which proved their outstanding merit and aptitudes.

He wished all teams and players success in serving karting as a sport that has become highly popular among young people, which augurs well for the future and for the amelioration of the Bahraini participation in various motor races.

HH Shaikh Mohammed highlighted the efforts of

the Bahrain Motorsports Association and its chairman and Chairman of the International Karting Committee (CIK)'s Board of Directors Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa Al Khalifa.

The third round is scheduled for February 9 and the competition will be held over 24 hours.

[Bahrain News Agency]

✓ BANGLADESH: YOUTH CAN HELP ENSURE RIGHTS OF MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Dakar, 8 December 2017 - THE youth of Bangladesh can play a vital role in ensuring the rights of the communities who are lagging behind in the country, said discussants yesterday.

Indigenous people and women are the vulnerable groups whose rights need to be ensured for the development of the country, they added.

The Department of Television, Film and Photography of Dhaka University (DU) and UNDP jointly organised the programme titled, "Uphold the Rights of Women and Ethnic Minorities in Bangladesh",

at the Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban on the campus with an aim to make the youth vocal in the issue.

At the discussion, Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu said men generally belittle women and term them weak which is not right as they have already proven themselves in different professions. "Women are now police, soldier, pilot, engineer and what not?" he stressed.

Putting emphasis on cultural activities, Inu further said creating non-communal society is a challenge but the youth can

bring a change by treating every citizen equally.

Dr Abu Jafar Md Shafiul Alam Bhuiyan, chairperson of the department, said the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord signed on December 2 in 1997 is yet to be fully implemented.

If it stays this way, the indigenous people will be frustrated, he added.

Urging the government to implement the accord fully, the teacher also called upon the youth not to demean the minority communities.

Sharmeela Rassoul, chief technical advisor to Human Rights Programme of

UNDP (Bangladesh), explained that all religions support human rights of others and tell to respect all people. Satej Chakma, a History student of DU, said each community has their own identity in the country.

To ensure their human rights, all their cultures need to be respected and their identities require to be recognised the way they want it, he added.

Shankor Paul, communities and minorities expert of UNDP (Bangladesh), was also present.

[The Daily Star]

✓ MALAYSIA: NAJIB SAYS NEED TO CONTINUE CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NATION'S YOUTH

Kuala Lumpur, 3 December 2017 - PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said that creating opportunities for youth is the key to a secure future for Malaysia.

Opening the Kuala Lumpur International Youth Discourse 2017, he said this included ensuring the right

education and skills were available for them.

In this regard, he said, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) was vital in producing a highly skilled and competitive young workforce.

"This is why all the

Malaysia's TVET institutions, currently under seven ministries, are being merged to become TVET Malaysia under the purview of the Human Resource Ministry," he said.

Najib also spoke on the need to take a more holistic

approach to issues that might affect young people.



“For instance, for years we have responded to drug addiction with an iron fist, but my cabinet recognises that such an approach on its own may not be the most effective,” the prime minister said.

Najib pointed out that in the ‘Social Agenda’, his government would look into solving the problem of drug addiction through inclusion.

He said this included making sure that young people have jobs for a secure life rather than turning to life-destroying escapism.

“Rather than isolating addicts, we need to integrate them.

The government, he said, had spent close to RM13 billion to assist young people own affordable

homes and to resolve the housing issue, especially in urban areas.

“These are just some of the policies that we have put in place to deal with the challenge of creating a secure future for young Malaysians,” he said, adding that the government had also been consulting various quarters in formulating the 2050 National Transformation (TN50) agenda.

Najib took the opportunity to highlight the government’s numerous achievements, thanks to the stability provided by the democratically-elected Barisan Nasional (BN) government which is anchored by Umno.

The prime minister took a swipe at others who would make all sorts of promises

but had no track record to speak about.

“They just oppose, even when they secretly agree with a proposal...because they’re not concerned about the welfare of the people. They’re only concerned about their own selfish political ambitions,” he said.

Najib further rapped their shadow Budget, saying that their fantasy economics would make Malaysia unsafe, insecure and unstable.

The prime minister said the government under his leadership, on the other hand, had a proven track record of achievements. It is a record that sees Malaysian government delegations enthusiastically welcomed by leaders around the world from the United States and the

United Kingdom to China, India and Saudi Arabia, to name just a few,” he said.

Najib said it was a record that had seen Malaysia awarded accolades by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and many other global institutions.

[Bernama]

✓ PAKISTAN: PAKISTAN’S PROGRESS DEPENDS ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Islamabad, 7 December 2017 - PAKISTAN can progress only if its youth take the lead in all walks of life, said Prime Minister’s Youth Programme chairperson Leila Khan.

“The government is fully committed to equipping youth with all the possible resources and opportunities in the fields of education, skill training, entrepreneurship and employment in order to enable them to contribute positively in the socio-economic development of Pakistan,” she said chairing a feedback session with the members of Pakistani youth delegation, who, under the umbrella of the Prime Minister’s Youth Programme, participated in the 19th World Festival of

Youth and Students 2017 in Sochi, Russia from October 14 to 22.

The 2017 Festival, hosted by the Russian Federation, marked the 70th anniversary of the event which was first held in Prague in 1947.

Around 30,000 energetic and engaged young people from 180 countries across the globe attended the Festival for developing intercultural cooperation and strengthening international ties.

The festival programme consisted of discussion, panel discussions, and a series of scientific and educational events. Pakistani delegation included 62 young leaders in media, technology,

entrepreneurship, politics, civil society, health and environment, and education.

It also included national performing arts group of the Pakistan National Council of Arts, and a Lok Virsa exhibition team to perform and showcase our rich national culture and traditional heritage at the festival. Ms Leila Khan appreciated the delegates for effectively presenting a soft and bright image of Pakistan at this mega international event.

She urged them to follow all the good things learnt during the festival where young people from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds had an opportunity to interact and learn from

each other’s experiences.

[The News International]



✓ QATAR: YOUTH GETS EDUCATED AT AJYAL FEST

Doha, 4 December 2017 - DIRECTORS of nine of the short films selected for screening at the fifth Ajyal Youth Film Festival, talked about their films during one-on-one discussions with members of the local and international press at Katara Cultural Village.

Ahmad Saleh, director of animated short *My Second Eye* an animation based on a traumatic real-life event he witnessed at a refugee camp talked about bringing his vision to life.

“At first, I couldn’t even imagine what I would do with it, the event was so shocking. I’m glad I could transform it into a story that people are now able to watch.”

Katja Benrath, who directed her co-production *All of Us* which deals with an incident in 2015, when a bus of Muslim and Christian Kenyans was attacked by Al Shabab terrorists, as a graduation project, said that she was especially pleased that her film would be judged by a youth audience.

“I was here five years ago and I was impressed by the young jurors and how knowledgeable they were. I really like the idea of educating through film and it is amazing that the youth is learning from the festival this way.”

Elina Fessa, who tells two separate but intersecting stories that will change the lives of those involved in *Tracks* was excited to be showing her film in the Middle East.

“It’s the first screening at a festival focussed on youth rather than other filmmakers, so I’m expecting the reactions to be more raw.

It’s amazing to be given the opportunity to reach such a genuine audience.”

The shorts were shown in two of the three programmes dedicated to international film that are part of the 5th Ajyal Youth Film Festival: *Abstract Visions* and *Home*.

[The Peninsula Qatar]

NEWS



✓ AMERNIA: ONLY 35.4% OF ARMENIAN YOUTH PURSUE PROFESSION

Yerevan, 12 December 2017 - GENERATION of Independence: Research Among Young People” found out that Armenia’s youth today is “vulnerable and incomplete”.

The study was carried out by the Armenian branch of Friedrich Ebert Foundation in cooperation with Faculty of Sociology of YSU.

They surveyed 1200 people aged 14-29 from Yerevan and 10 marzes of Armenia.

According to the research, young Armenians have uncertainty in public life, and social activity is more characteristic for the males.

The youth don’t trust state agencies and display minimal political involvement.

“We initiated the research to understand young people in Armenia, as they are the sector of society that starts changes, moves forward and succeeds.

Our goal was to stress the importance of young people’s role in the society and political decision making,” Director of the FES South Caucasus Office Julia Blazius told the press today.

She noted that the research outlined main problems and

stressed certain points in education and employment.

The research discovered that one of serious problems is lack of financial resources for acquiring professional education. 24.3% of young people in Armenia don’t want to continue their education for that reason exactly.

On the other hand, professional knowledge doesn’t guarantee a job, and only 35.4% of the youth pursue their respective profession.

Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Armenia Karine

Harutyunyan attached importance to such researches.

“They raise awareness in the ministry about young people’s problems, help us plan the efforts and make targeted decisions,” Deputy Minister said.

According to her, those problems aren’t new, and the research contains important issues and stresses, such as lack of state funding for higher education and resulting low quality of education, etc.

[Armenian Weekly]

✓ AZERBAIJAN: AZERCELL DECLARES FURTHER SUPPORT OF YOUTH

Baku, 25 December 2017 - AZERCELL CEO Vahid Mursaliyev met with the students who had obtained the title of Azercell scholars.

The operator reports that Mursaliyev stated at the meeting that in addition to monthly stipend from Azercell, the program will also provide the students an opportunity to enrich their knowledge about telecommunications, participate in Azercell’s

corporate events and social activities, receive various trainings, as well as take internship at the company. “Azercell has supported the youth and students since the company started its business activity. A number of student programs, internships and other projects have been carried out so far.

We also concluded cooperation agreements with the universities you study in. All these steps are

aimed to develop our education”, he stated.

The stipend winners currently study in Baku State University, Azerbaijan State Economic University, ADA University, Public Administration Academy under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Khazar University, Gafqaz University, Ganja State University, Nakhchivan State University, Baku High Oil School, State Oil and Industry University,

Azerbaijan Technical University, Mingachevir State University, Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction and Ganja Agrarian University. Azercell has conducted the Student Bursary Program annually since 2008. Over 130 students from various universities in Azerbaijan have benefited from the Program.

[Azerbaijan Business Center]

✓ CROATIA: 300 JOBS AVAILABLE FOR YOUTH, SAYS FARQUHARSON

Zagreb, 10 December 2017 - NEARLY 300 jobs are expected to be made available to young persons in the country during the third and fourth quarters of this year.

This was revealed by Labour Director Robert Farquharson during an interview with The Bahama Journal over the weekend.

The Department of Statistics Labour Survey revealed that while there was a decline in the unemployment rate among youth (15-24) (From 25.1 percent to 24.1 percent) it was still considerably higher than any other age group.

“Department of Labour in conjunction with the

Ministry of National Security has embarked on the Citizens Security and Justice Program and the employability aspect of that program is about to kick in during the third and fourth quarter of 2017,” Mr. Farquharson said.

“This will involve the training and employment of 200-300 young people between the ages of 16-29.

We expect it to have a direct impact on those numbers.

“It’s a four-year program and over the four years we are expected to train about 1,600 persons and have all these persons employed.”



The Citizens Security and Justice Program was launched in May 2016 by the previous administration.

The Progressive Liberal Party quickly moved to capitalize on the survey results, with PLP Chairman Bradley Roberts saying Friday that the statistics from 2012 to 2017 show

that 39,505 jobs were added to the economy, 7,770 of which were added in the final six months of the Christie administration.

“Regardless of what is said about the PLP government under Mr. Christie, those are the objective numbers and the unvarnished facts,” Mr. Roberts said.

The program focuses on non-violent conflict resolution, youth employment training, the strengthening of the Public Employment Services, the continuation of the successful work of the Swift Justice Initiative, and the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. The program, funded by a

\$20 million loan from the Inter-American Bank (IDB), represents the “single largest investment in a coordinated and comprehensive policy to address crime” in The Bahamas.

[Novosti]

✓ ROMANIA: YOUNG PEOPLE SET TO MAKE LIFE-CHANGING JOURNEY TO ROMANIA

Bucharest, 12 December 2017 - A GROUP of young people from North Belfast are gearing up for a potentially life-changing trip to Romania.

Twenty youths, aged between 15 and 18, who are part of the Romania Project in the New Lodge area, are to travel to the country in just a few weeks.

The New Lodge Youth Project, as part of Ashton Community Trust, started back in 2015 and enabled young people to get involved in an extensive programme which involved personal development,

supporting young people with disabilities at the 174 Trust, volunteering to help Belfast’s homeless and intergenerational work with the local elderly.

Youth worker Sean McMullan, who is in charge of the project, said the project was much more than just a trip abroad. “The young people learn so much throughout the year within the programme which benefits them whilst out in Romania,” he said.

“The young people volunteer weekly in the 174 Trust with young people with disability, taking part

in homeless work and also learning a lot about themselves.

“Whilst in Romania the young people work in a local disability centre, orphanages, family homes and engage with young people their age to experience the culture of a young person living in Romania.

“The young people are a credit to us at the youth centre, to themselves and to their families as well. The Romania Project experience is one that is life-changing and it is a privilege to be a part of this experience with all of these dedicated young

people.

“Whilst already making a big impact in their community I know that these young people will be great role models for other young people in their youth centre and community for a long time to come.”

The project has won two awards for positive change and continues to impact positively on young people’s lives in the New Lodge district.

[Belfast Media Group]

✓ SPAIN: MAJOR YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE SHOWCASE FOR DAY ONE AT DENBIGH

Madrid, 4 September 2017 - THE village is to be the venue for students who are currently engaged in agriculture studies from Manchester, St Ann and St Catherine, to apply for the Rio tinto alcan scholarship fund, which is managed by the development bank of Spain and the applicable programme executed by the Spain 4-h clubs.

Youth in agriculture day on Saturday is to involve close to 200 youth between the ages of 18 and 35 years, competing in events including agricultural jingle, business model/

plan, agri-animation, agro-processing and the agri-quiz competitions.

Under the theme, ‘youth farmers: budding nation builders,’ the village will be open daily throughout the show, between the hours of 9:00 am and 6:00 pm. The village is one of the main focuses of the national youth in agriculture programme that is led by the Spain 4-h clubs, the youth training arm of the ministry of industry, commerce, agriculture and fisheries.

The 4-h clubs have been at

the helm of the youth in agriculture programme since 2008, when it was mandated by the government to lead the multi-agency planning committee which is geared at, among other things, stimulating youth involvement in agriculture, and preserving fostering national food security.

[ABC]



✓ AUSTRALIA: CITI BROADENS YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT SCHEME

Canberra, 5 December 2017

- CITI Australia plans to help 1800 young people find jobs by spending an extra \$1.5 million on its Pathway to Progress program, which runs globally but kicked off locally in 2015.

The money will be distributed to various organisations as grants to help them to run employment initiatives, with the Brotherhood of

Saint Laurence, Foundation for Young Australians and The Smith Family among recipients.

Through the program, some Citi employees also voluntarily act as mentors, coaches and role models to young people.

Australia's youth unemployment rate is around 13 per cent - based on 15 to 24-year-olds compared to the general

unemployment rate of 5.6 per cent.

Launching the program, Treasurer Scott Morrison said mentors are vital to helping more unemployed young Australians find jobs and remain employed.

Mr Morrison stressed the importance of mentors while launching the expansion of a program run by global financial services group Citi to help disadvantaged young people

find work.

Mr Morrison said growing the economy will help bring that figure down.

"We are seeing the economy grow, we are seeing improved signs coming through, particularly most recently," he said.

[Sydney Morning Herald]

✓ FIJI: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT A PRIORITY FOR FIJI GOVT

Suva, 14 December 2017

- THE Fiji government says the priority of its National Employment Policy is to address youth unemployment.

According to the Ministry of Employment, the current national unemployment rate

is 5.5 per cent, while the youth unemployment rate is 18.1 per cent.

The FBC reports the Deputy Secretary for Employment Viliame Baledrokadroka saying the unemployment among 15 to 24 year olds is a major issue.

Mr Baledrokadroka said the policy would provide new opportunities for skills upgrading, leading to productive employment for young people.

[Radio New Zealand]

✓ SAMOA: SAMOA CALLS ON OLDER GENERATION TO LISTEN TO YOUTH VOICE

Apia, 16 September 2017

- SAMOA's deputy prime minister has called on the older generation to listen to the voices of the youth and support their initiatives as they will be the leaders of tomorrow.

Speaking at the opening of Youth Week in Apia, Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa acknowledged many young people's achievements and contributions to Samoa's development.

Youth make up 64-percent

of Samoa's population.

She also encouraged the youth to utilize their talents and skills to develop their families, villages and the country and acknowledged those who have excelled in sports on the world stage.

Fiamē made particular reference to Samoa's recent gold medal won at last month's Commonwealth Youth Games rugby sevens tournament.

[Radio New Zealand]

✓ TONGA: TONGAN YOUTH LEADER HANDS OUT CONDOMS TO RAISE AWARENESS

Nuku'alofa, 14 December

2017 - A Tongan advocate for sex education has been handing out condoms around Tonga to start the discussion on safe sex practices.

Ministry of Health figures show a high rate of teenage pregnancies this year, of around 30 births per 1000 girls.

Joshua Sefesi holds sessions

with men to educate them on equality and safe sexual practices and informs women about the support available to them.

Mr Sefesi said Tonga is a conservative and religious nation, which makes the topic of safe sex taboo.

"The issues especially the consequences are that the youth need someone to reach out for them and talk

about all these issues because it all leads down to decision making."

Joshua Sefesi is Tonga's 2018 Queen's Young Leader winner, recognised for his voluntary work on safe sex awareness.

[Radio New Zealand]



✓ VANUATU: VANUATU PIN HOPES OF BATTLING YOUTH CRIME ON NATIONAL IDS

Port Vila, 13 September

2017 - Vanuatu is cracking down on underage drinking and youth crime by introducing national identification cards.

The minister for Internal Affairs Alfred Maoh says the number of violent incidents and criminal activities in and around Port Vila has increased.

Mr Maoh told Koro Vaka'uta a lot of the crime and misbehavior can be attributed to young people having easy access to alcohol.

[Radio New Zealand]

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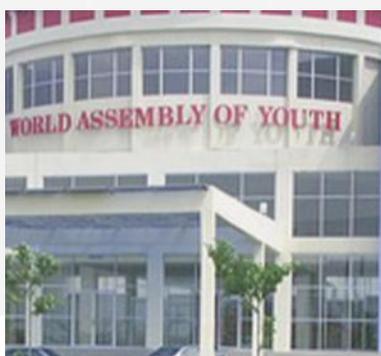
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