

# **MELAKA ACTION PLAN FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

## **A. Preamble**

We, the 312 delegates from 50 nations have participated in the **MELAKA INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DIALOGUE**, which has been held from 29<sup>th</sup> July to 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2002, at the Equatorial Hotel, Melaka, Malaysia.

We express our gratitude to the organisers, the World Assembly of Youth (WAY), in cooperation with the Asian Youth Council, Malaysian Youth Council, the Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia and the State Government of Melaka. We are thankful for the support of the National Information Technology Council, Global Knowledge Partnership, Mimos Smart Computing Sdn Bhd, and Jaring Internet.

We note the outcome from other regional dialogues convened by WAY, including the Latin American Youth Dialogue, European Youth Dialogue, African Youth Dialogue, Caribbean Youth Dialogue and the Asia-Pacific Youth Dialogue.

We have hereby adopted the theme: *Action for Youth Employment* for this dialogue, realising that youth employment is one of the most urgent and pressing global concerns, and needs to be addressed if peace, justice and equity are to exist in the Global Community.

This Dialogue is of great significance as it is the first international event following up on the recommendations of the UN General Assembly and the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Youth Employment. We are pleased to note the Recommendations passed by the UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on Youth Employment, which were discussed in the plenary of the UN General Assembly on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2001, under the Agenda Item "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit." We support the UN Secretary General's Youth Employment Network, and urge the Member States to implement the High-Level Panel's Recommendations in partnership with youth and other social actors.

We commend the efforts by civil society, and the support by the government of Egypt, to convene the Youth Employment Summit in Alexandria in September 2002. We commit to participating in the Summit and sharing the outcomes from this Dialogue.

We realise that 66 million young people are estimated to be unemployed throughout the world, representing more than 40 per cent of global unemployment. We realise also that hundreds of millions more work fewer hours than they wish, and still others, largely in developing countries where 85 per cent of the world's young people live, work long hours with little gain and no social protection in the informal economy.

We are deeply concerned about the heavy toll that unemployment and underemployment takes on young people, their families and communities through economic hardship, human suffering, social exclusion and lost production.

Opportunities presented by rapid globalisation and fast-paced technological developments have offered many young people unprecedented new opportunities for education, innovation and productive and rewarding work.

However, these technologies have also added to uncertainty and insecurity by exacerbating already vulnerable situations, and widening the gap between those young people with well-paid and productive work, and those with low wage and poor quality jobs.

We believe that the challenge for all societies is to generate sufficient opportunities for all young people to obtain decent and productive work that makes use of their talents, experience and aspirations; and does so under conditions of freedom, security; equality and human dignity.

There is therefore a great need to launch a dialogue amongst young people, and to mobilise partners for action. There is a role and responsibility for everyone; governments, the private sector, youth organizations, employers, workers, community groups and civil society coalitions, in providing decent work for young people.

We have therefore deliberated on four broad themes:

- Institutional Support and Partnership for Youth Employment.
- Entrepreneurship for Employment Creation.
- Bridging the Gender Divide in Youth Employment.
- Youth Creating Digital Opportunities for Development.

## **B. Institutional Support and Partnerships for Youth Employment**

**We recommend that:**

1. WAY develop a brief concept paper, based on experiences in Italy and Germany, about providing compulsory social service programs as an alternative to compulsory military duties in countries where such programs exist and lobby such governments about the idea through its membership.

2. WAY members advocate to their governments, educational institutions, business sectors and non-governmental organisations to implement more internship programs for youth. Such programs should target those studying at school or university and utilise government incentive schemes such as matched cash contributions to cover allowances.
3. WAY call on the UN Secretary General's Youth Employment Network and the Youth Employment Summit to provide good practice examples of schemes that deliver entrepreneurship training and venture capital to youth and disseminate this information through the WAY network so that WAY members can seek the implementation of such schemes in their countries.
4. WAY, through its members and partners, examine existing research on the use of youth quotas within the government sector to see if this is a viable and feasible means of enhancing youth employment and inform its members of the outcome of this activity.
5. WAY recommend to the UN Secretary General's Youth Employment Network to explore, and strive for greater transferability of skills and qualifications between countries, particularly as it affects refugee and migrant workers.
6. WAY work with its member bodies to convene a dialogue on Youth Health with the joint goal of realising the youth employment opportunities in delivering health solutions and addressing the health issues which reduce for many young people their opportunities to gain long term employment. This dialogue should be pursued in partnership with the International Young Professionals Foundation and the Youth Employment Summit. The conference should include health professionals, representatives of relevant government departments, the WHO, the ILO, and Medicins Sans Frontiers.
7. WAY arrange a panel of experts to conduct a feasibility study of partnerships between government, business and educational institutions that would provide further education and training for youth while providing them with secure employment. The WAY panel should include delegates from business, vocational training institutions and universities, youth (as defined by the UN), and government departments, particularly the Malaysian Ministry for Youth And Sports (as a scheme, similar to the kind we propose, is already in place in Malaysia). The panel should meet within the next year to decide whether a scheme, similar to Malaysia's, could be created and promoted by WAY in its member (and other) nations. The results of the feasibility study should be presented to the WAY President by March 2004.

8. WAY convene a meeting of stakeholders in the next 12 months to progress the formation of a global media organisation that generates media related training and jobs for young people around the world while also providing a much needed resource to the growing world youth sector. Stakeholders invited to participate should include: youth and activist internet and radio groups (e.g. indymedia, adbusters); representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Ministry of Communications from as many countries as possible; representatives from the World Bank and UN; and global and national media corporations (e.g. NewsCorp).
9. The Melaka International Youth Dialogue notes the recommendation of the European Youth Dialogue to establish a World Youth Bank, and we append herewith Annex 1 being a resolution in this regard.

### **C. Entrepreneurship for Youth Employment Creation**

Our workshop discussed and explored how Entrepreneurship can create more and better jobs for the Youth.

**We recommend that the following general actions be taken at all levels:**

1. Remove Barriers to Youth Entrepreneurship;
2. Create Conducive Environment for Youth Entrepreneurship;
3. Promote Youth Entrepreneurship; and
4. Ensure Sustainable Youth Entrepreneurship.

**We also recommend that:**

1. Youth be provided with the opportunity to learn from the experienced and skilled businesspeople;
2. Increased government fiscal support and public funds should be directed towards youth entrepreneurship;
3. Governments should introduce entrepreneurship curriculum in schools;
4. Governments, national and international organisations should be encouraged to set up Youth Development Banks that provide support to youth entrepreneurs and realise the potential of youth as a banking resource;
5. Developmental agencies and financial institutions should provide micro-credit systems of loans;
6. There be greater awareness and promotion of social entrepreneurial ideas;

7. There should be responsible governance of funds and resources meant for youth entrepreneurship projects;
8. Family and community should value and encourage youth entrepreneurship; and
9. There should be more provision of technical, managerial and human relation skills for young entrepreneurs.

#### **D. Bridging the Gender Divide in Youth Employment**

In recent years, the Gender Divide in Youth Employment has been widening. The burden of unemployment has fallen disproportionately on young women and girls. Approaching the youth employment issues from a gender perspective poses various challenges. We need to reconcile the lack of social protection for women working in the informal economy and the protection available for those working within the formal economy.

#### **On Bridging the Gender Divide through the Formal Sector, we recommend that:**

1. National or International Standards for Gender Issues (SGI) be formulated by governments or the UN to be implemented in formal organisations. This should take the following into account:
  - (a) Equal opportunity for career advancement.
  - (b) Prevention of sexual harassment through proactive policies.
  - (c) Stimulation of education and training.
  - (d) Balanced representation at management, policy, economic and decision-making levels.
  - (e) Implementation of equal pay for work of equal value.
  - (f) Promotion of an active and visible policy of gender mainstreaming in all policies and programs.
2. The participation of youth in implementing the SGI within the community can be promoted through:
  - (a) Encouraging youth to be constantly involved in promoting awareness of the SGI.
  - (b) Communication and information in schools by special peer-to-peer programs.
  - (c) Monitoring of changes in the working environment.
  - (d) Ensuring continuity of efforts to promote the SGI.
3. Compulsory syllabi are implemented in schools to incorporate values that minimise current gender prejudice with a more positive atmosphere conducive for justice and equality.

**On Bridging the Gender Divide through the Informal Sector, we recommend that:**

4. Young men and women be empowered by having policies that extend to the grassroots level through:
  - (a) Awareness campaigns.
  - (b) Educational materials geared towards fostering gender equality.
5. Informal traders in particular youth are provided with the infrastructure (i.e. shelter, water and sanitation services) to earn a sustainable livelihood in a conducive business environment.

**On the Role of Membership-based Organisations, we recommend that:**

6. Youth organisations actively embark on gender awareness and skills training programs at all levels of society using creative methods of delivery that lead to:
  - (a) Balanced gender representation in the workforce ,
  - (b) Youth being more informed and equipped to be effective in the work force.
7. Youth organisations inculcate volunteerism by working hand in hand with school systems, as this will equip youth with life skills that provide equal opportunities in capacity building.
8. Balanced representation be ensured at all levels of membership-based organisations including ensuring participation of:
  - (a) Youth by UN definition (15 to 25 years)
  - (b) Rural youth
  - (c) Young women

**On the Role of Government Agencies and International Organisations, we recommend that:**

9. International organisations work with governments to:
  - (a) Provide resources for the implementation of free or highly subsidised compulsory education for all.
  - (b) Eradicate quotas that do not promote gender equality in all educational institutions especially at the tertiary level
  - (c) Review curriculum and gender related policies in educational institutions.
10. International organisations act as supporting structures that work with the media to bring attention to violations of ratified conventions.

11. Supervise implementation of policies and conventions that take into account marginalised youth, such as street children, and act as advisors to governments in reviewing gender policies.

## **E. Youth Creating Digital Opportunities for Development**

### **We recommend that:**

In the short term (1 year):

1. Youth should get organised, network and link themselves with global networks such as the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) to access available information and resources for youth Information and Communications Technology (ICT) projects/ initiatives.
2. ICT internships and volunteer programs such as Malaysia's CyberCorp and Canada's Netcorps should be supported and expanded particularly to war-torn countries like East Timor in the areas of education, health agriculture and ICT.
3. Governments introduce ICT and entrepreneurial courses into the education syllabus to better employment opportunities.
4. ICT businesses donate computers to communities in developing countries and employ youth to customise the computers to local needs and contexts
5. Governments and developmental bodies set up incubator programs for youth businesses and to encourage youth to become self-employed in ICT as employers.
6. Governments and developmental bodies provide entrepreneurial courses/ modules / programs with mentors and assistance in developing business models.

In the mid term (1-3 years):

7. Youth organisations leverage on the media for awareness raising on youth actions in the ICT sector.
8. Youth expand ICT access in developing countries through venturing into ICT businesses.
9. Governments, private sector, and communities expand ICT skills training for youth, including "Train the Trainer" programs to increase capacity.
10. Governments ensure equal opportunities and participation of young women in ICT businesses.

11. Youth should be an integral part of each country's official delegation to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and its preparatory meetings to ensure that youth can directly participate in decision-making related to the Information Society and that they are involved in follow-up actions related to youth.

In the long term (3-5 years):

12. A Youth-Donor platform/ forum be established to explore funding opportunities for youth ICT projects.
13. Governments and UN bodies should allocate and disburse funds for youth ICT projects targeted at youth, vulnerable groups and marginalised communities in developing countries.
14. Governments intervene to reduce taxation on ICT companies and imported ICT goods to promote domestic digital economies.



## MIYD Special Resolution on the World Youth Bank

1. *Drawing* on the Declaration of Youth as a Global Banking & Financial Resource, adopted at European Youth Dialogue 2002;
2. *Realising* that unemployed youth, at a global, regional, national and local level is a respectable labour resource. No only that, **youth** is a respectable economic, social, political, financial, security, intelligence, and cultural **power**. As the UN Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan said in his *Global Alliance for Youth Employment - Recommendations of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Youth Employment* – “ In the next ten years 1.2 billion of young women and men will enter into working age population, the best educated and trained generation of young people ever, a great potential for economic and social development.”
3. *Witnessing* the emergence of new knowledge economies with their networked societies that form a Global Digital World.
4. We, the Global Youth, believe that the right time has come for the full realisation of the youth banking and financial potential.
5. A youth banking system can:
  - (a) ensure an effective promotion of entrepreneurship among young women and men;
  - (b) provide better know-how and information on market opportunities;
  - (c) organise training in business skills;
  - (d) access the sources of capital and financial services; and
  - (e) become a mentoring service to support other business activities.
6. The concept of a World Youth Bank Network represents the oncoming New Cosmopolitan Praxis of the imminent One World of Tomorrow. Sustainable banking strategies of a World Youth Bank represent new forms of "virtual banking" - intensive investment in ideas and knowledge based on a new understanding of realities virtually and virtuality's reality. In other words, investing in the Future will be the WYB's long-term development strategy, compared to traditional capital relations where investments were being done in a manner to prolong the socio-economic relations of the Past.

7. The World Youth Bank shall:

- (a) improve and develop the quality of life of youth around the World;
- (b) fight unemployment, ignorance and youth social exclusion by providing fast access to low-cost capital and life-long learning facilities to all segments of Global Youth and Civil Society.

We, the participants of the MIYD 2002, hereby **resolve** to establish a Global Youth Banking and Financial Network, and call upon the United Nations system, governments, private sector and civil society to support us in this endeavor.

Melaka, 1<sup>st</sup> August 2002