

OPENING ADDRESS BY :

MISS EDIOLA PASHOLLARI

Acting Secretary General of the World Assembly of Youth

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH FORUM

“THE ROLE OF YOUTH ON POVERTY AND MIGRATION ERADICATION”

13-15 APRIL 2009

TOURISM VILLAGE TRIPOLI, LIBYA

Invited guests,

International Youth Forum participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the World Assembly of Youth, I would like to bid a warm greeting and welcome you all to the International Youth Forum.

We are further honoured by the presence of various government leaders and senior government officials amongst us and your continued commitment to matters affecting the youth.

To all invited dignitaries and guests, I would like to take this moment to welcome all of you to this event, which not only celebrates the vitality of being a youth but also the role that youth can play towards developing a greater community. This event dubbed the international youth forum brings together youth and youth leaders from around the world to discuss and address issues that are close to their hearts.

The theme for this year's event is "The Role of Youth on Poverty and Migration Eradication" comes at a time when global recession is taking place and this contributes towards the downward trend of poverty. The gains made in the previous years are all but eroded but this does not mean that the fight towards poverty elimination or reduction has died off.

The objectives of IYF 2009 are:

- To achieve a behavior modification among youth;
- To bring awareness about how poverty and migration affect youth and the extent to which youth are affected;
- To increase youth awareness of their responsibilities regarding poverty and migration reduction;
- To improve the national and international policies that deal with poverty and migration and its effects on the society;
- To recommend improvements to the current systems of education for youth worldwide on poverty and migration;
- To heighten international resolve to tackle the poverty and the migration challenges;

- To improve cooperation between governments, civil society and private sector to address poverty and migration;
- To have a stronger, more effective national youth councils with leading roles in the fight against poverty and migration.

As you all know, Poverty is the shortage of common things such as food, clothing, shelter and safe drinking water, all of which determine our quality of life. It may also include the lack of access to opportunities such as education and employment which aid the escape from poverty and/or allow one to enjoy the respect of fellow citizens. According to Mollie Orshansky who developed the poverty measurements used by the U.S. government, "to be poor is to be deprived of those goods and services and pleasures which others around us take for granted."

It is at this hour that we need to double our efforts and come up with solutions that are long lasting that not only shows our concerns but also taking a hold of our future. It is therefore very important that such events be organized not just to get the information or draw a path but to sensitize and educate our youths on the way forward.

Poverty is everyone's problem. It cuts across any line you can named or imagine: age, race, gender, social, geographical or even religious. Whether you are black or white, rich, middle-class or poor, we are ALL touched by poverty. -- Kathleen Blanco

It is therefore with such concern that we all come together in the spirit of togetherness and oneness to face the struggle that creeps upon our lives and threatens the very existence of our human race.

Just to set your mind rolling and make you put on the thinking cap. Here are a few facts about poverty that most would not know:

At least 80% of humanity lives on less than \$10 a day

More than 80 percent of the world's population lives in countries where income differentials are widening

According to UNICEF, 25,000 children die each day due to poverty. And they "die quietly in some of the poorest villages on earth, far removed from the scrutiny and the conscience of the world. Being meek and weak in life makes these dying multitudes even more invisible in death."

Number of children in the world 2.2 billion Number in poverty 1 billion (every second child)

The question I thus bring forth to you is; what is our role as youth towards reducing poverty?

It is therefore my humblest request that by the end of this forum we shall have charted a way forward and stood together with One Voice united to fight this menace to our society.

I also would like to thank our hosts for the effort and outstanding hospitality that has enabled us to hold this forum here.

Thank you!