

His Excellency Ban Ki-moon  
Secretary-General  
The United Nations  
1, United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017  
United States of America

**Message to the United Nations Secretary General**

CC:

Mr. Sha Zukang, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

Mr. Patrizio Civili, Secretary, Chief Executives Board of the UN System

Ms. Patience W. Stephens, Team Leader and Focal Point, United Nations Programme on Youth

Your Excellency,

**Subject: Youth issues and the global agenda in the United Nations System**

As stated in the latest World Youth Report of the United Nations, children and young people under 25 years of age constitute more than half of the world population. These children and young people face huge challenges both in developing and developed countries, reflected in the fact that youth are among the most vulnerable groups in society.

The demographic challenges being faced in both the North and the South, coupled with the fact that young people are directly affected by or are actors in most of the global processes which dominate the global agenda - climate change, conflict, HIV/AIDS and health, migration, employment, urbanisation, the strive for democratic societies and civic participation - demonstrates the scope of youth issues, and consequently, of youth policies. This has thus to be recognized in the implementation of the UN Reform process.

We, as democratic, membership-based, youth-led organisations, which represent international, regional, national and local youth, believe that contributing to the improvement of the conditions faced by young people all around the world is part of our mission, and that this mission contributes, through the voluntary commitment of millions of young people, to the major endeavour of achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

In the past, the United Nations has made important steps in recognising the contributions made by youth organisations - notably through the adoption of the World Programme of Action for Youth, the organisation of the World Ministerial Conferences on Youth, and through the joint organisation of the World Youth Fora with youth organisations. At the same time, many UN programmes and specialised agencies, such as the UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank, have been focusing on youth as part of their priorities.

Although the proliferation of programmes and youth initiatives might be seen as positive steps, the level of coordination between the central offices of the UN, the programmes and the agencies is still very low. As a consequence, resources risk not being used effectively; there is, in addition, a duplication and overlapping in the main political initiatives, technical tools and support provided to youth and their organisations.

For this reason, as representatives of International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations and Regional Youth Platforms, with outreach on all continents, gathered for our annual International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations in Cairo, Egypt:

- We encourage you to consider the implications for young people of the major issues on the political agenda of the United Nations and strengthen this focus within the whole organisation: there is a need for the UN to assume a strong political commitment.
- We offer our expertise and help in order to explore together, in the spirit of the UN Reform, a way for stronger and better co-ordination of youth affairs within the United Nations System. We think that this should be done together with the Chief Executives Board of the UN system, the United Nations Programme on Youth and in the spirit of co-management with democratic and youth-led

- youth organisations.
- We request the allocation of more human and financial resources to youth issues, and that the existing resources are used more efficiently.
  - We also encourage you to call for a meeting with leaders of youth organisations, using the opportunity of the forthcoming UN General Assembly in October 2008, in order to begin a more detailed discussion on the matter.

We take this opportunity to thank you for your attention and trust that the young people we represent can count on the active support and partnership of the UN system, as we work together to improve the conditions under which they live. We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience, and to meeting with you on the occasion of the next UN GA.

With our kindest regards,

The Presidents and the CEOs of the following organisations,

**Regional Youth Platforms**

European Youth Forum  
Latin American Youth Forum  
Caribbean Federation of Youth  
Panafrican Youth Union  
Pacific Youth Council  
Asia Students Association  
Asia Youth Council

**International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations**

International Falcon Movement  
World Student Christian Federation  
AIESEC International  
Global Young Greens  
International Federation of Medical Students' Associations  
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions  
International Federation of Liberal Youth  
International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth  
International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS Pax Romana)  
International Union of Socialist Youth  
International Young Democrat Union  
World Association of Girl Guides & Girl Scouts  
World Organisation of the Scout Movement  
World Alliance of the YMCAs  
World Esperanto Youth Organisation  
World Federation of Democratic Youth  
World YWCA

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies supports the signatory organisations in this initiative.