



NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS

SECRETARY GENERAL'S MESSAGE FOLLOWS

8 June 2009

6TH ANNUAL YOUTH ASSEMBLY AT UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
Organized by Friendship Ambassadors Foundation
and The International Institute for Culture and Peace

The 6th Annual Youth Assembly at the United Nations will take place at UN Headquarters from 5 to 7 August 2009. The Youth Assembly has been held at the United Nations for the past five years with the sponsorship of various Permanent Missions to the UN. It is organized by the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation and the International Institute for Culture and Peace (both NGOs associated with DPI). Its primary sponsor this year is the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the United Nations. The Outreach Division of DPI, as well as the United Nations Programme on Youth of DESA, are involved in the planning and organizing of this year's event.

This is the first year that DPI is playing a collaborative and supportive role in the Youth Assembly. This partnership falls in line with DPI's continued outreach efforts to enhance and diversify its range of educational programmes, products and services aimed at a youth audience, which the UN defines as ages 15-24. The Youth Assembly is particularly important in engaging youth in the area of MDGs, a priority issue for the UN and an area of considerable interest and relevance to young people.

Participants will focus on Youth-Led Development toward the success of the Millennium Development Goals. They will participate in discussions and workshops with specialists in the eight Millennium Development Goals. They will take away from the experience a greater understanding of and appreciation for the work of the Organization in this important area, and they will gain practical knowledge of ways they can make a difference in their own communities.

In August 2008, approximately 600 youth leaders representing countries from each continent participated in the Youth Assembly. It is anticipated that there will be hundreds of youth leaders in attendance again this year. A particularly large group of youth will travel from China to attend this year's programme.

For more information, please contact the Group Programmes Unit of the Department of Public Information, at (212) 963-1361 or (212) 963-6019, or visit the Friendship Ambassadors website at: http://www.faf.org/unyouthassembly/ya_home.htm. Applications can be sent directly to: yaapplications@faf.org.

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE FOR YOUTH ASSEMBLY AT THE UNITED NATIONS
New York, 5 August 2009**

It is a great pleasure to greet the participants in the 2009 Youth Assembly at the United Nations. I thank the Permanent Mission of Hungary, the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, the International Institute for Culture and Peace and all others involved in making this event possible.

The world needs you to make the most of this gathering. We face multiple, interconnected crises with severe impacts that fall disproportionately on the young.

In 2007, for example, youth comprised 25 per cent of the world's working age population yet accounted for 40 per cent of the unemployed. The global economic downturn means that, in the near term, youth unemployment will continue to climb. Unemployment rates tell only part of the story, especially for the vast majority of youth who live in developing countries. For them, informal, insecure and low-wage employment is the norm, not the exception.

Climate change, meanwhile, continues to threaten tremendous upheaval, saddling young people with a crushing, unjust "ecological debt". At the same time, I am encouraged by the contributions that young people have made to the debate on climate change mitigation and adaptation. Their views and proposals can help build the momentum necessary to "seal the deal" in Copenhagen later this year.

Indeed, young people have proven themselves to be dynamic actors in our work for sustainable development. They have gotten involved in international forums such as the Commission on Sustainable Development, and have helped their Governments and communities to formulate poverty reduction strategies, entrepreneurial schemes and many other policies and initiatives.

Young people often lead by example: practicing green lifestyles, promoting innovative uses of new technologies such as social networks. They -- you -- deserve our full commitment -- full access to education, adequate healthcare, employment opportunities, financial services and full participation in public life.

This Youth Assembly offers a timely opportunity to learn from and inspire each other. I urge you to see your time here as a call to action. The world needs each and every one of you to do your part in transforming our world and building a more sustainable and equitable future for all. Please accept my best wishes for a successful and rewarding experience.