



Ready to rock

A new generation of Youth Delegates is ready to challenge the United Nations on climate change, the financial crisis and youth participation. The European ones met in Lisbon (picture above) for a UN Advocacy Meeting early July.

Heal the world...

When the European Youth Delegates met in Lisbon many of them already had their priorities ready, and Climate Justice is high on the agenda.

Will you be there?

Another high priority is to ensure inclusion of Youth Delegates from all over the world. The Youth Delegates are in particular happy to know that Croatia and Rwanda will have Youth Delegates this year. See page 3 for the full list.

Get on the floor

Moldova, Senegal and Portugal will co-sponsor the resolution on youth in this year's UN General Assembly and through the UN Program on Youth they have launched the most extensive consultation process for a UN resolution ever. Through the regional youth platforms across the world National Youth Councils will get to feed into the resolution online – before the resolution will be drafted, negotiated and finalised in New York.

Make it a better place...

Ms Catarina Corvalho from the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs challenged the European Youth Delegates on defining what needs to be tackled in the resolution on youth – and also on what is missing in the World Program of Action for Youth.

– for migrants!

One area which according to the Youth Delegates needs more recognition from the UN is migration and integration of young migrants. Migration can be a controversial topic but the Youth Delegates still think it should be emphasised in the WPAY:

- Yes, it is a controversial topic but the problems don't go away just because we don't talk about them, says Tobias Naef, Youth Delegate from Switzerland.

Read our interview with Ms Catarina Corvalho on page 2



Catarina (left) with Veronica and Anna from the Romanian and Finnish National Youth Councils

You can call me naive, but I like what I do!

The woman behind the small coffee table in the hotel lobby in Lisbon looks relaxed. Despite being dragged from New York and into a two-day meeting of European youth delegates, Catarina Carvalho from the Portuguese mission to the United Nations keeps on smiling. //by Matti Niemi, Finland//

She is here to advise the young delegates crafting their views on different aspects of international youth policy. This year they will have special influence as the work on the UN General Assembly resolution on youth begins in August with an online-consultation, a first of its kind on UN youth affairs.

Though an unprecedented chance for youth to influence the positions taken by the UN, Carvalho remains clear who gets to say what in the end: "You must be ambitious, but not crazy ambitious. It's still the member states which will have to draft the resolution".

Flag bearer for youth

Portugal started as the flag bearer for youth back in 1998. It was the year of the first Conference of Ministers responsible for youth. Ms. Carvalho says it was probably the growing population of people under 30 in Portugal, at the time largest in the EU, that made the country's decision-makers' heads turn to a UN-level approach to youth affairs. Ever since that conference, Portugal has every second year been presenting a resolution on youth for the UN General Assembly, nowadays co-signed with Senegal and Moldova.

It's not just Portugal that has been a centrepiece in developing youth affairs. Ms. Carvalho has also been in the game for a while. Looking back to the years she has been one of the prima motors of a UN approach on youth, Carvalho says it has been mostly good.

The climax of sorts was in 2005 when the 10th anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth, or WPAY, brought the highest number of Youth Delegates yet seen to New York. With a Swede as the president of the General Assembly, the first youth delegate in history got to speak in the plenary on 2nd of October, a date that Carvalho remembers with considerable accuracy.

At top of Carvalho's list is getting more Youth Delegates from all over the world. Next thing would be to get some assessment tools for the adopted resolutions. "We need to focus more on implementation. In 2011 we could have some kind of assessment trough the secretariat with the resolution", Carvalho says.

Like a fish in the water

Carvalho says she likes what she does: "Like a fish in water". She says that she has always been a fan of different social groups, but there was a clear reason why she chose youth: "It's important to work with them if you want to change anything", she says, recalling an old cliché, that young people are the adults of tomorrow. "In the long perspective it's very important".

"It's not that I don't trust adults", she says with a smile only a diplomat can produce. "You can call me naive, but I just like what I do".



Become a part of it!

Your country can still recruit a Youth Delegate to the UN General Assembly. The beauty of the process is that governments and civil society work together – typically the National Youth Council recruits the Youth Delegates – and the country provides them with full rights as delegates to the UN – of course under the same terms as other delegates.

Youth delegates' tasks vary but they typically make a speech within the Third Committee of the General Assembly, advocate on behalf of young people at the UN and organise a side-event to raise awareness of key issues.

It is a fundamental tenet of any democracy to include young people in decision-making. The UN Youth Delegates call on ALL countries to include a Youth Delegate in their delegation. For more information about Youth Delegates, see the website of the UN Program of Youth: www.un.org/youth

It's getting hot in here...

On the kind invitation of Germany the Youth Delegates decided to organise a side-event on Climate Change and Youth.

Today's biggest threat to sustainable development is climate change and armed to their teeth with strong arguments the Youth Delegates will work for a fair deal on climate change in Copenhagen – and for youth participation in the future Conferences of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

More information to come at: www.unyouthdelegates.org



Who are the 2009 Youth Delegates?

In 2009, the following countries are sending a Youth Delegate to the UNGA:

Australia	Belgia (tbc)	Bulgaria
Croatia (new)	Finland	Germany
Jamaica	Netherlands	Norway
Portugal (tbc)	Romania	Rwanda (new)
Slovakia	Sweden	Switzerland
Thailand		

Will your country have a Youth Delegate too? Tell us about it: falko@jugenddelegierte.de

“The yoUNg”

The European Youth Forum is mandated by its Member Organisations to coordinate the European Youth Delegates towards the UN General Assembly. Last year the YFJ UN and Global Coordinator, Mr Giuseppe Porcaro, followed the Youth Delegates and researched the UN Youth History.

The result is a documentary about youth participation in the UN.

Download it here:

<http://theyoungdocumentary.wordpress.com/>