



Distr.  
GENERAL

E/ECWA/SDP/~~conf.~~1/3  
1 August 1983

ENGLISH  
Original: ARABIC

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

Regional Preparatory Meeting for the  
International Youth Year (1985)  
Baghdad, 9-13 October 1983

SITUATION AND NEEDS OF YOUTH  
IN WESTERN ASIA

August 1983

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### Introduction

This report presents some important aspects of the youth situation in the area and attempts to estimate the most urgent needs of youth as well as the most important problems encountered. The report also includes a brief summary of youth policies and work programmes of the States of the region and of the responsible national machineries or bodies. Thus, only the main characteristics and general outlines of those aspects are sketched.

The report concludes with a study set of basic concepts in order to implement the objectives of the International Youth Year (1985). It is expected that the related efforts would be conducive to more widespread awareness of the situation of youth, its problems and aspirations, for the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of youth participation in the development process and the building of world peace.

Dealing with such a multidimensional wide range, a brief report could not give a comprehensive account of the detailed plans, programmes, activities and machineries in connection with youth development and welfare in the area of West Asia, comprising thirteen States including the PLO. Further, the report does not pretend to answer all questions fully and sufficiently, but it claims to be an attempt made to generally take note of the complex aspects of the issue, thus inducing, perhaps, more deliberate and detailed further studies.

## 1. CONCEPT OF THE YOUTH PHASE

The concept of youth no longer indicates simply an age period during which an individual needs a set of services to prepare for the future. Youth now is rather broadly viewed as a period of a lifetime. Determined for practical and statistical reasons as a period of 10 years of age between 15 and 24, it is, however, primarily a phase with a set of characteristics for which it is considered the most important period of life, most fertile and most responsive to the rapid and successive changes taking place in the States of the region.

For development purposes, the youth phase follows the phase of adolescence or maturity, separating the phases of childhood and youth. It represents the peak of physiological growth and the full psychological and social development of human character. A phase, therefore, of aptitude and great ability for change and growth, with this growth being characterized by certain traits of imagination, audacity, adventure and relative independence of family obligations and personal motivation that often inhibit adults from freely and actively assuming their roles in society. Consequently, it is a liberalized phase during which an individual tends to be more reactive and more responsive to the requirements of change. Thus, young people are even considered as the most capable category of society for generously offering themselves for the purpose of self-fulfilment and proving their competence for responsibility. For demographic purposes, the youth phase includes two age groups:

The first, from 15 to 19 years of age. Although individuals of this group are still in the stage of growth and rather near to the peak of maturity, they are at the same time capable of effectively contributing to efforts for development.

The second, from 20 to 24 years of age. The individuals of this group have acquired many of the elements enabling their efficient contribution in various development fields and their mature exercise of adults' rights and conscious commitment to their duties. Consequently, action should be taken to promote their full integration in society without differentiation or discrimination.

## 2. THE YOUTH SITUATION IN WESTERN ASIA

No doubt the importance of a demographic study of youth in the States of the region is derived from the fact that such a study gives a factual quantitative and qualitative representation of this group, which facilitates a real awareness of its significance in the population structure. It also facilitates the conscious perception of its dynamics and the calculated forecasting of consequences resulting from its reaction towards the other community situations involved in current and continuous interaction within the social entity at large.

This report, on the demographic analysis of youth in Western Asian States, is based on the 1980 statistics and estimates published in the statistical booklet issued by the Economic Commission for Western Asia <sup>1/</sup> as well as on data and information collected from other sources, in particular the Department of Youth Affairs for the Secretariat-General of the League of Arab States in Tunisia.

### 1. Size of the youth category

According to the 1980 data, the youth population (15-24) of the States of the region was 17,341,438, accounting for 20 per cent of these countries' total population of 86,863,754. This clearly indicates the great significance of this region's youth category. It is representative of a large proportion; moreover, it is a major force and the peoples of the region, if appropriate plans were designed for its full integration and assimilation within the productive elements in various development fields, could ensure its efficient participation in building the future. By contrast, the exclusion, whether partially or entirely, of this essential population category from effective contribution to overall development and from assuming its complete share of the burdens, responsibilities and consequences of the planning and implementation of this development, undermines and debilitates society and deprives it of the new blood necessary for sustaining its vitality and strength.

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<sup>1/</sup> "Demographic and Related Socio-Economic Data Sheets, for Countries of the Economic Commission for Western Asia", United Nations Economic Commission for Western Asia, No. 3, Beirut, May 1982.

## 2. Age groups within the youth phase in the region

Demographically, age groups within the youth phase are divided into two major segments. Each is distinguished by its own characteristics, needs and problems. It is therefore necessary to underline the size of each segment compared with the other, in order to facilitate planning for youth programmes. The first segment, young people between 15 and 19 years of age, numbering 9,561,908, a proportion slightly exceeding 55 per cent of the total youth population. The second segment, young people between 20 and 24 years of age, numbering 7,779,530, accounting for 45 per cent of the region's total youth population. While a considerable proportion of the first segment is still in the state-of-the-art, a large part of the second segment has already acquired the elements of vocational formation and rehabilitation for the employment market in order to be integrated in public life.

## 3. The two sexes in the youth phase in the region

Male young people (15-24) amount to 9,239,683, comprising 53 per cent of the youth population in the region of Western Asia, while female young people number 8,101,755, accounting for 47 per cent of total youth. The proportion of female youth, accounting for nearly half the total amount of youth of both sexes, means that more attention in youth programmes and services has to be focused on girls in this region. Given the historical conditions which did not provide women with appropriate care, thus limiting their capacities and competence for assuming essential social functions in raising children, taking care of household chores and undertaking many types of gainful employment in order to contribute to increased family income, such as sharing with men in agricultural and pastoral labours and working in various manual and environmental manufactures. The ardent aspiration of the peoples of the region for advancement and progress requires concern for both sexes.

The appropriate training of future fathers equally requires future mothers.

## 4. Youth immigrating from outside the area

A number of States in the area are characterized by a population structure with an increased proportion of non-nationals from outside. For instance, in six of the Gulf States, the foreign component accounts for 32 per cent of the total population: these States are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the Emirates. The highest proportion

is in the Emirates, with 76 per cent, followed by Qatar with 73 per cent and Kuwait with 59 per cent. Oman has the lowest proportion, 18 per cent, Saudi Arabia has 59 per cent, and Bahrain has 31 per cent.

The foreign youth population in the six States is 855,689, representing 35 per cent of the total youth population of 4,427,785 in these States. Proportions of foreign youth, however, increase in certain Gulf States: 78 per cent in the Emirates, 75 per cent in Qatar, 58 per cent in Kuwait, about 53 per cent in Bahrain and approximately 29 per cent in Saudi Arabia. In Oman the proportion does not much exceed 15 per cent.

Nevertheless, the higher increase of the foreign youth proportions in the male category of the age group 20-24 attracts attention in the six Gulf States, with 89 per cent in the Emirates, 88 per cent in Qatar, 73 per cent in Kuwait, 61 per cent in Bahrain, 45 per cent in Saudi Arabia, and 30 per cent in Oman.

Against these high proportions represented by foreign youth in the Gulf States, a set of questions is posed for study within the context of the situation. The first of these questions is related to the impact of such a considerable majority of foreign youth as against the minority of national youth, whether for youth as a whole or for the community at large.

The second question concerns the availability of programmes and services, in order to develop in foreign youth a certain allegiance to the host communities for the provision of employment opportunities, public, educational and health services and other welfare services thus preserving these communities from any damage that might result from foreign youth taking part in illegal economic and social activities that could be to some extent injurious to the host States' national interests. The third question concerns the extent of the magnitude of foreign youth's tendency to seek permanent settlement in the host communities and acquisition of their nationalities, as well as the related population policy required. All these are questions and interrogations that have to be answered and that could be meaningful for future studies useful to these States in planning their treatment of this essential reality.

5. Youth and education in the States of the region

If the hypothesis were valid that most students in the educational institutions of both the secondary stage with its various types (general, professional and technical) and the academic stage are of the age group 15-24 years, the 1980 statistics indicate that the total young peoples enrolled in the institutions of both stages amounts to 3,431,759, i.e. about 20 per cent of the total youth population in the States of the region. In case the estimated number of students enrolled in the third preparatory class with its various types was added, the proportion of enrolled individuals of this age group would rise to 25 per cent of the total youth of the same group (15-24). This means that 75 per cent of the total youth population in the States of the region are not enrolled in formal education. This situation also poses a question regarding the share of this proportion of youth in the programmes and services that are being planned for youth in the States of the region. No doubt a close observation of the situation would indicate that greater attention and care are allocated to the student sector, while the other youth sectors (rural, labour, nomad, illiterate) do not obtain any significant amount of care. Indeed, there is an agreement in principle that this matter should be the subject of major awareness during the International Youth Year for increased attention in all States as most requiring development and aid in order to eliminate accumulated underdevelopment and cope with the rapid course of modern scientific and technological progress. Here again, the call for focusing increased attention on planning informal educational programmes in order to cope with the requirements and conditions of these youth sectors comes into view.

In the educational situation of both sexes, figures indicate that the proportion of females enrolled in educational institutions amounts to 36 per cent of the total youth enrolled therein. It is observed that the proportion increases yearly in most States of the region. In some educational stages both proportions (males and females) are at a point of equality. The problem still exists in connection with the higher illiteracy proportions among both sexes as a result of two essential factors recorded by all studies on education in the States of the region.



The first factor concerns the primary schools being unable to assimilate all children at the age of six, where there is always a considerable number of children without any opportunity for enrolment in formal education. As a consequence, the balance of illiteracy accumulates every year. The second factor is dropping out of education during the primary years of study and before completing primary education. The consequence of this dropping out, per se, represents a youth problem that can no longer be ignored or treated lightly. Moreover, it adds to the increasing balance of illiterates, so that the raised illiteracy proportion continues despite all the efforts made towards eradication of illiteracy. The cause of this problem, in fact, is the continuous flow of new illiterates from the afore-mentioned two main sources, the lack of sufficient assimilation of children of primary education age and the rising rates of drop-outs in this educational stage before completion, especially among girls.

#### 6. Youth and productive labour

One of the most important economic development issues in the States of the region is production and the necessity of related promotion and the increasing of rates, along with the mobilization of economic resources and its optimum utilization. No doubt young people are the most competent category for increasing the quantity and quality of productive capacity and overcoming productive setbacks because of their characteristics which are quite appropriate to this major national objective.

The 1980 statistics indicate that 27.8 per cent of youth in the States of the region participate in several activities bringing economic returns; in the United Arab Emirates 65.6 per cent, Qatar 63.8 per cent, and Bahrain 48.4 per cent. Indeed, the generally rising proportion in the Gulf States is related to the fact that the great majority of individuals in this age group (15-24) are immigrants working in these States. In the other States of the region not importing a labour force, such as Syria, Lebanon and Egypt, proportions of youth participating in economic activity are much less; 36.4 per cent in both Syria and Lebanon, and 31.8 per cent in Egypt. Here, a question is posed regarding the possibility of planning programmes for activities of economic return for youth in such States in order to increase youth participation therein, particularly in regard to livestock, poultry and agro-industrial development, responsibility for which could be largely assumed by rural female youth in those countries. This trend is rather encouraged by the following points: First, the general participation of girls in the labour force in the States of the region is extremely limited and does not much

exceed 13 per cent of male participation. Second, there is an urgent and imperative need in the States of the region for increasing food production and decreasing the large volume of imported food products. Third, these programmes could possibly be the appropriate entry to the overall cultural and social development of women, particularly in the rural and nomadic areas.

### 3. FACTORS AFFECTING THE SITUATION OF YOUTH IN THE REGION

Those can be classified into two types: first, special regional factors stemming from the conditions and situations of the region, in the past and present, and the consequential issues related to youth. Second, international factors whose impacts affect all States of the world including the States of the region and their populations, primarily youth, which is the most susceptible category to such factors due to its above-mentioned characteristics and features.

#### I. Regional factors

Among the factors originating in the region's history and development, there is evidently a set of salient factors of highly significant impact on youth, its situation and aspirations in the States of the region. Following is a brief summary of the most important factors referred to in this study. It is emphasized, however, that there are other factors to be necessarily revealed through more comprehensive and detailed studies and research:

##### (1) Religious heritage

The region was the birthplace of the celestial religions. Religion has been assuming a major role in formulating all aspects of all of human life in the States of the region. This role continues to powerfully affect the movement of society and citizens until the present time. The youth category in the community has been most inquisitive with regard to the position of religious provisions in contemporary life and its consequential economic, social and cultural transformations. Thus, it is impossible not to first consider the religious dimension when dealing with youth issues in the region. Also, the religious component must necessarily be an essential ground for planning youth programmes and services.

(2) Monolinguality

All peoples of the States in the region speak Arabic in their dealings. It is a true vessel of their heritage of civilization. Thus there is, in fact, a full opportunity for wider exchange between youth in the region, which is a most important factor for regional planning in youth affairs.

(3) Common contemporary history

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, the States of the region were satellites of the Ottoman Empire. They were governed by rulers appointed by the Asitan. With the loosening grip of the Ottoman regime and the move of the national elements for the achievement of independence all over the area, national feelings began to be more infected with the will for independence until the start of the First World War. The national leaderships considered the opportunity appropriate for the liberation of the region from Ottoman rule. The war ended, and the promises for independence by the Great Powers at that period frittered away. The region was then divided between England and France. Once again, the States of the region were under foreign occupation that had various designations: protectorate, mandate, trusteeship. This situation was conducive to explosive situations and the thrust of revolutions and battles for independence in all parts of the region. Youth, in fact, put strong efforts into all those battles and revolutions as soldiers, and even in undertaking leadership responsibilities therein.

Before and after the Second World War, the situations continued to be either latent or explosive. With the signature of the United Nations Charter in San Francisco in 1945 and the international recognition of the rights of each State and its full sovereignty, the States of the region began successively to achieve complete independence. In the early 1970s, they all became totally independent sovereign States.

The significance of this historical narrative is related to its being instrumental of the awareness by the investigator of the nature of the region's political climate in the course of its modern history. Youth in the States of the region was distinctly affected by the political climate. The political awareness of youth in these States is extremely attentive and susceptible. Youth is always looking forward to assuming an essential political role in supporting and protecting national independence. Also, youth rejects the theme that, given the independence

achieved, this role has exhausted all its possibilities and thus become meaningless. The question which the situation poses, however, relates to the determination of youth's role and political significance in the current stage and its differential extent compared with that of the stages of struggle for independence. This historical era of youth in the region has generally intensified the national feelings of youth. There is still an urgent need for the orientation of such feelings to participation in the sincere efforts for overall development.

(4) Successive wars

For most peoples of the world, the Second World War had finally come to an end. States began rebuilding after the destruction caused by wars. Certain States have successfully achieved considerable economic and constructional progress. For the region of Western Asia, there have continuously been successive wars, starting from the Palestine War in 1948, followed by the tripartite aggression against Egypt in 1956, the Arab-Israeli wars in 1967 and 1973, the Iran-Iraq war ever since it broke out in 1980 and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Thus, most peoples of the region have been in a state of sustained tension, general mobilization and exhausted energies for nearly half a century. Needless to say, of course, the youth category in particular suffers to the largest extent the consequences and effects of such wars. Therefore, the establishment of a just and durable peace for the preservation of the rights, guaranteed safety and territorial integrity of the States of the region should be among the most essential responsibilities of the international community to be undertaken with maximum seriousness and determination. Such an achievement is in fact the most imperative requirement for ensuring any long-range planning for youth programmes in the region.

(5) Petroleum resources

The petroleum factor has played a major role in the peoples life in the region. Petroleum has emerged as a huge and unexpected fortune, particularly since 1973, which resulted in a set of consequential issues that had to be encountered by the petro-communities in the region. First, the inflow of tens of thousands of foreign labourers, youth in particular, to work in development and construction projects. The foreign immigration was on such a scale that the number of immigrant youth exceeded many times that of national youth, something which has various social and cultural implications for the community

in general, and for youth in particular in the States of the region. Second, the region became a market with ample purchasing power that attracted the attention of the major industrial States. Consequently, these began to compete in overwhelming the region with several durable and non-durable consumer goods. This had undoubted implications, the most important of which were the continuous rise of living standards, and, at the same time, the development of consumption patterns that are now deemed rather difficult to limit or control if necessary.

Also, the abundance of supply goods together with the high purchasing power of citizens had effective implications on the orientation of youth towards the development of many consumer trends to the detriment of the desirable development of productive skills among youth. Third, the emerging imperative need for establishing an infrastructure capable of dealing with such fortune and investing its revenues for overall social and economic development, whose efficient achievement the petro-States have accomplished rather successfully. The question, however, still exists with regard to the building of man himself with a view to the continuation and progress of development efforts. The disequilibrium between economic and constructional development rates in the petro-States and human development rates now requires a restoration of the balance between them, on the basis of the principle that the human being per se is the end and the means and, ultimately, the maker and innovator of progress. The youth category has the largest aptitude for growth and change, the acquisition of knowledge, the development of skills and the adoption of new values and trends. Thus, human development programmes for youth are among the most essential planning signposts in the States of this region.

The fourth issue that faced the petro-States was the absorption of the unexpected civilization shock and the organization of the encounter between tribal communities with their own values, traditions and economic and social activities and a civilization bearing new values, activities and behavioural patterns. The encounter was even more violent because the arrival of the adventitious civilization brought highly advanced means of communication through which its features were displayed in a rather attractive and dazzling manner. The youth category was certainly the first to meet, enter in contact with and deal with the new civilization. This raises an essential question regarding the elements that the new

civilization has, to no purpose, laid before youth in the region, elements which have been to the detriment of youth's cultural identity, self-confidence and confidence in its community's potentials. The fifth petroleum-related issue is the emerging imperative needs for public services that require urgent satisfaction, whose long-term deprivation is no longer justified since petroleum resources have been made available. Nevertheless, the petro-States have been able to present honourable and successful models of rapid response to some of these public needs at certain levels of technical performance and technological equipment, nearly comparable to those in the developed States. Youth had a share of these services, particularly those in connection with its sporting and recreation activities. Despite the recent formation of some athletic teams in certain petro-States, they were able to win regional and international championships and to approach the finals of world cups in a number of athletic games as widespread as football.

The most important consequences that resulted from the petro-States' response to the challenge of the previously mentioned and other issues are: the availability for youth of wider ranges of action in various positions of responsibility; the promotion of large numbers of young people to the leadership ranks, to undertake many of the important decision-making responsibilities and to occupy the posts of high-level and middle-level management. This furnished evidence of the capacity of youth, given the opportunity, for success, appreciation of public responsibility and an undertaking of its consequences. Indeed, the success of youth undermines all the arguments set forth in order to postpone the assumption by youth of public responsibilities. Here, a question is raised on the possibility of recording youth success stories and the achievements of youth in order to be an example for the new youth vanguard to follow.

## II. International factors

At the international level, a set of factors with strong implications for the situation of youth, whether related to its aspirations and demands or to the available potential for the satisfaction of its needs and the treatment of its problems, comes to the surface. Perhaps it would be appropriate to provide a brief summary of the most significant of those

factors, without details and without any elaborate analysis of the results of their various interactions.

(1) Modern technological progress

Perhaps the first of these international factors is modern technological progress, taking place at an extremely rapid rate in the form of an overall scientific and technological revolution. The States of Western Asia face a strong challenge to achieve modernity as fast as possible. They are required at the same time to preserve the genuine essence of their regional civilization. That necessitates the realization of a basic change in concepts, relationships and characteristics. It also necessitates a broad treatment of all aspects of economic, social and cultural activity relative to the establishment of a modern technological society. Here, one should pause to consider the present programmes and services that are being planned for youth. This planning should be completely aware of the overall requirements of change, among which the preparation of youth for assuming its role in the building of the new community in the region, which must be a technological society according to all standards, is most essential. Consequently, consideration in youth planning must be duly directed towards the priorities related to the scientific development programmes.

(2) Development of means of communication

The second factor is the great progress in means of communication that has accompanied and resulted from technological progress. The magnified efficacy of the means of communication was conducive to the transfer, beyond the boundaries of space and time, to each community, of cultures and life patterns from other societies all over the world. The profound influence of global means of communication on youth in the region has thus enabled it to cross traditional boundaries in order to formulate its own youth culture, which has sometimes been opposite to the adults' culture. Consequently, planning in the youth field requires radical treatment of the situation, so that the discrepancy between the two cultures will not lead to a disparity in thought, behaviour and values, impeding development in the States of the region. Hence the importance of planning so-called participation programmes that enable youth to share with adults in decision-making, planning, leadership and the undertaking of responsibilities. They will also allow, equally importantly, a wide-ranging exchange of ideas between the two parties, through dialogue and shared responsibilities, assisting the establishment of close relationships between them. Such an approach, however, can be established only

through sympathetic understanding by each party of the values and principles of the other and mutual agreement on what can be considered appropriate for adoption, regardless of the party who actually adopts and protects such values.

(3) World economic crisis

The third factor at the international level is the crisis situation of the world economy represented by the sustained rise in inflation rates, the continual higher unemployment rates, the aggravated indebtedness of the developing States together with their balance-of-payments problems, and finally the disturbance of the petroleum market and its decreased prices. These economic situations have affected most of the countries of the world, including the region of Western Asia. The common destiny of mankind necessitates the response of the States of the world to this acute economic crisis and their mutual co-operation in its resolution on the basis of the establishment of a New International Economic Order in pursuance of new principles and values of equity, justice and mutual confidence. Until then, youth planning requires increased attention to the further integration of youth in economic development efforts and projects in order to use this young energy for the recovery of the national economy in the States of the region.

(4) Diminishing world food

The fourth factor is the decreased world production of food, in addition to the continual rise of population growth rates. The 1982 figures recorded a population increase of more than 76 million persons in the world. Should the increase continue at these rates, the estimates indicate that the world population will amount to more than 6,000 million in the year 2000, of which 1,000 million will be in the youth phase. Along with this population increase, the decrease of food production rates continues all over the world. For the region of Western Asia, the outlook is not very bright. A number of States in the region import the larger part of their food. Some other States have lost their previous level of self-sufficiency in the production of food commodities and their dependence on imports has begun to increase yearly.

The spectre of famine now threatens many regions of the world. This is particularly evident in the African Continent, where famines affected several regions during 1983. The situation requires further concern for the planning of rural youth mobilization programmes in particular, in order to participate in food production projects in



in the States of the region, especially in the areas of livestock and poultry development based on the utilization of green forage instead of processed feed, since the potentials for this activity are available throughout the region, starting from the pastures of Dhufar in the extreme south to the Syrian desert and the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates in the extreme north.

#### 4. THE NEEDS OF YOUTH IN THE STATES OF THE REGION IN VARIOUS SECTORS

Need is a concept referring to one of the growth requirements that must be met so that growth (with its physical, social and psychological aspects) can develop in a normal and sound manner and at regular rates without imbalances or disturbances. Generally, the satisfaction of human needs must take place in a way that ensures sound and regular growth without obstacles or defects. That is to say that satisfaction must be balanced and it must be calculated. In the satisfaction of needs, extravagance is like parsimony; they are both extremely disadvantageous for human growth. Extravagance diverts investment from human development and exhausts public energies and resources without gains for the nation. By contrast, it may lead to increased dependence and reluctance on the part of citizens with regard to participation in areas of satisfaction of needs. A situation which consequently results in reducing the general ambition of individuals and groups, considered the main spur to promotion and progress. Likewise, severe deprivation is not conducive to a growing social allegiance. It may, contrarily, lead to emerging rebellious feelings in society; or at least it may induce the emigration of citizens, primarily youth, to countries more generous in the satisfaction of vital human needs. In this respect, attention must be called to the fact that when society is no longer able to meet the vital needs of youth in a balanced and sound manner, it is subsequently deprived of its influence on youth as well as of their commitment to its path and objectives. Therefore, there is ground to say that society must take action in providing all its potential for the fulfilment of vital needs, rather than marginal ones. However, moderation and equilibrium should be two characteristics of this fulfilment. Also, youth itself should participate in bearing some of the responsibilities.

Youth in the region of Western Asia shares with all world youth in its common needs. At the same time, youth in this region has its own needs which originate in the coexisting and interacting conditions and situations in the region per se. Therefore, the present study deals very

briefly with the general needs of youth, dealing in some detail with the special needs of youth in the region of Western Asia itself. Nevertheless, it should be quite evident that both types of needs (general and special) influence each other.

#### I. General needs of youth

Vital needs of youth can be generally classified into four distinct groups. We should bear in mind, however, that there would be a certain degree of interlocking in this type of classification, i.e., in view of the fact that the fulfilment of one need realizes the fulfilment of other concurrent needs; thus, some of the needs that could be listed in one of the four groups could be also listed in another group.

The first group of youth needs can be designated as the physical needs, such as: the need for food, clothing and housing; the need for training and physical development; the need for rest; the need for treatment and prevention of disease; and the need for protection against the subversive maladies of the age that undermine the health, morale and ambition of youth. Among these are alcoholism, smoking and drug abuse.

The second group of needs can be named the psychological needs, such as: the need for belonging to an entity; the need for affection and love; the need for self-fulfilment; the need for freedom from fear; the need for freedom of self-expression; the need for achievement, success and self-confidence; the need for security and the need for acceptance and appreciation.

The third group of needs relates to those needs considered social needs, such as: the need for a recognized social position; the need for just treatment and equal rights and duties; the need for friendship; the need for instructions and guidance without tutelage or denial of the right to decision-making, or at least participation therein; the need for independence in managing daily requirements; the need for the exercise of leadership and fellowship; the need for a family; the need for a clearer, more sympathetic and freer pattern of social relationships; the need for further opportunities for fundamental participation in all essential sectors of life in society, and, finally, the need of all youth to make fruitful use of its leisure in various types of recreational activity, which develop its capacities in the exercise of sports, appreciation of beauty and the acquisition of skills in literature, arts, music and nature.

The fourth group of youth needs relates to those regarded as educational needs. These prepare youth for intelligent and sincere participation in the public affairs of its community as well as in overall development efforts. Among them are: the need for updated acquisition of knowledge; the need for development of skills and behavioural patterns required for successful managing of various situations, and the need for the acquisition of the set of values and tendencies that prepare the young to be a good citizen of the community.

## II. Special needs of youth in Western Asia

Youth in this region has its own needs that originate in the region itself. They can be perceived through the presentation of a brief summary of youth sectors in the States of the region. Despite the several homogeneous characteristics of youth in any region of the world, youth sectors must be individually classified according to the more homogeneous characteristics in order to reveal thereby the special needs of youth in each sector, as well as to enable the suggestions of appropriate entries of each individual sector in conformity with the specific needs, problems and issues of each. In the region of Western Asia, where it is possible to distinguish 10 youth sectors, it is necessary to understand the situations related to each sector individually in order to supplement the general view of the needs of youth previously summarized in this report.

It is observed that an interlocking between these sectors is somewhat inevitable. However, the objective of such classification is to generally encompass all the youth in the region in the most appropriate sectors according to its characterized circumstances, requirements and problems. Furthermore, the individualized study of each of these sectors would provide a clearer vision and deeper understanding with regard to the aspirations and hopes of youth in each sector, to enable the conscious and explicit planning of more effective and more relevant programmes in connection with the vital needs of youth in its various sectors. With the recognized interlocking, this individualization, however, must allow for the treatment of youth affiliated with more than one sector on the basis of its several actual affiliations. For example, a number of young people in a society could be considered on the basis of their affiliation with the two sectors, students and rural youth, or students and urban youth, in accordance with the findings of the studies carried out and accurate statistics.

(1) Rural youth

With the exception of three States in the region: Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar, rural youth represents a major sector. The rural population represents 89 per cent of the total population in the Yemen Arab Republic, 63 per cent in Democratic Yemen, 55 per cent in Egypt, 52 per cent in the Syrian Arab Republic, 37 per cent in Jordan, 35 per cent in Iraq, and 27 per cent in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, such magnitude can no longer be ignored in any plans or programmes for youth in the States of the region.

In fact, rural youth in the region is living in a succession of situations which in total represents a largely disadvantageous social, cultural, sanitary and economic climate to youth and its communities. The most important of those situations could be circumscribed in the following, as briefly as possible:

- Increased migration of the rural population, particularly young elements, to urban areas, due to deteriorating living standards in villages, in order to have better opportunities for employment or education.
- Lack of fundamental services in health, education, social welfare and recreation.
- Underdevelopment of agriculture and its attenuated productivity, particularly in food production.
- Migration of youth and fathers in some labour-exporting States of the region in order to work abroad and their abandonment of agricultural labour upon their return.
- Environmental pollution and the spread of many endemic diseases such as bilharziasis.
- Rise of so-called underdevelopment rates such as illiteracy rates and child mortality rates.
- Beginning and spread of the emerging phenomenon of child employment, and reliance on agriculture to fill the gap in youth and adult migration.

- Increase of construction requirements, with the scarcity of the skilled and professional workers necessary for current construction development in most rural parts in the States of the region.

In the light of these situations, a set of rural youth needs is posed at present, the most important of which are the following:

- The need for improved living standards in villages in order to enable larger fulfilment of vital needs of rural youth in food, clothing, housing, education, health, employment and recreation.
- The need for developing the rural educational system so that it will be related to rural community requirements, in order to increase the affiliation of rural youth with its community and to reduce its continuous emigration therefrom.
- The need for programmes of mobilization of youth efforts for environmental sanitation.
- The need for programmes for increased participation of youth of both sexes in food production.
- The need for the development and modernization of agriculture in order to enable agricultural income to attract large numbers of rural youth.
- The need for training programmes of sufficient numbers of rural youth in the professions required for rural construction development (electricity, carpentry, plumbing, mechanics, building).
- The need for the establishment of rural youth institutions with more appropriate activities and programmes for rural youth needs.

## (2) Urban youth

Urbanization has witnessed a considerable growth in the Third World. Thirty-five per cent of its total population, accounting for two thirds of the global population, live now in cities. In the region of Western Asia, the proportion far exceeds that in most States of the region. According to the 1980 estimate, it was 90 per cent in Kuwait, 86.1 per cent in Qatar, 85 per cent in Bahrain, 80.9 per cent in the Emirates, 75.9 per cent in Lebanon, 65 per cent in Iraq, 63.2 per cent in Jordan, 52.6 per cent in Saudi Arabia, 48.9 per cent in Syria, 45 per cent in Egypt, 36.9 per cent in Democratic Yemen, and 22 per cent only in Oman, and it does not exceed 11 per cent in North Yemen. Thus, urban youth in total accounts for considerably raised proportions in most States of the region. With the population increase as well as the increase of rural-to-

urban emigration rates, all indicators point to an annual increase of this phenomenon. Despite the fact that urban youth might find living in city societies more pleasant and attractive, given the availability of many opportunities for employment and recreation, the urban environment per se, particularly in large cities, affords diminished social interdependence and reduced informal social control. The social relationships prevailing among its individuals tend to be rather marginal and indirect. The conflict of personal interests is sometimes to the detriment of public interests. Moreover, in many cases, available employment opportunities are coming to be scarce. Hence, youth programmes in cities must be oriented to the establishment of social patterns endowed with the characteristics of the small-scale community, providing a fully appropriate institution for sound social upbringing. Such patterns might follow the example of district clubs or youth centres at neighbourhood levels, where opportunities could be provided for the integration of youth in society and the realization of the social rank aspired to in its milieu. Efforts to intensify the establishment of this type of local youth institution represent the cornerstone in the field of attaching urban youth to its community and establishing close relationships between youth and adults, with a view to increasing the effective participation of urban youth in the public affairs of the community.

### (3) Student youth

The number of youth of this sector in the States of the region is 3,431,759, accounting for nearly 20 per cent of total youth. About two million of this number are in universities or engaged in higher studies. As a matter of fact, this segment of youth represents a significant group of the youth in the entire region. It is the most mature youth group in many scientific, cultural and social aspects. Moreover, it enjoys the facility for assembly and movement within society. Thus, it is characterized by a special dynamic force which has an impact on the processes of change in society. The most important feature of youth in this sector is its determination to participate in the public affairs of society and the related decision-making. In some cases, however, because of the lack of appropriate channels for the satisfaction of this imperative desire, youth tends to oppose adopted policies since it did not share in their formulation. Nevertheless, this group often expresses a sincere desire to participate in the general national effort and related

responsibilities. Hence, the aspirations and requirements of this group could be summed up as follows:

- A developed educational system more associated with development needs in the States of the region and more associated with the hopes and ambitions of youth itself, giving more attention to the interests of student youth in all cultural, social, political and professional fields.
- More effective student organizations that allow to the fullest extent for student participation in the formulation of the educational process not only as recipients of planned educational programmes and applied methods and systems for education, but as essential partners of the teachers and members of the teaching board.
- Channels or programmes that allow for the full participation of students in public life and the expression of their views on the essential issues of society.

(4) Youth in the labour force

Youth participation in the labour force runs at differential rates in the States of the region. The highest rate of participation is in the Emirates, 77.2 per cent of the total youth in the 20-24 age group: Qatar, 75.7 per cent; Bahrain, 64.6 per cent; Jordan, 57.2 per cent; Oman, 55 per cent; Kuwait, 52.8 per cent; Iraq, 51.4 per cent. The rate declines to 48.5 per cent in Saudi Arabia; 47.6 per cent in Democratic Yemen; 44.6 per cent in Syria; 43.9 per cent in Yemen; 38.9 per cent in Egypt; 27.2 per cent in Lebanon.

These rates generally indicate the considerable proportion of youth in the labour force. They also point up the early involvement of youth in professional life, although some rising participation rates are attributed in some Gulf States (Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman) to the increased proportion of immigrant workers from outside these States. Another observation is the lower rates of participation of female youth in the labour force, compared with males. The highest rates of female participation (20-24 years of age) are 19.7 per cent in Syria, 15.8 per cent

in Lebanon, 15.3 per cent in the Emirates and 15.1 per cent in Kuwait. The rate decreases to 6.7 per cent in Oman. There is no doubt that this wide sector of youth has vital needs originating from its specific situation created by a series of factors. The most essential of those factors are the following:

- The continuous inflow of an external labour force from a large number of States in the region, in such a way that a large majority of the labour force in some of these States consists of immigrant workers.
- The spectre of unemployment (total or partial) is now threatening important numbers of workers particularly in some overpopulated States in the region. Thus, some hundreds of thousands of young workers in these States have been prompted to emigrate to other countries to seek better labour opportunities and more appropriate wages to meet living requirements, the costs of which are presently rising in a disturbing inflationary manner.
- The rapid changes in industrial systems caused by technological progress in the present industrial world; as a result, the continual need of young workers for the development of the various areas of professional training and for permanent technical and scientific development in order to cope with the extraordinary pace and scope of technological evolution.
- The growing transformation of most States of the region from agricultural and pastoral communities into industrial, urban societies, as well as the resulting substantial growth of the labour force in industrial areas and the continuous emigration of rural and desert youth to seek employment in the major industrial centres, without previous professional or social preparation, have caused various social, health and construction problems, some of which have attained serious levels.
- The increased problems of the utilization of leisure and recreation time. This emerging problem has been the result of labour legislation providing for the determination of working hours and for expanded rights to various types of leave and rest.



As a result of these and other factors, youth in the labour force in the States of Western Asia has the following needs:

- Need for professional orientation.
- Need for continuous scientific and technological development.
- Need for the advantageous use of leisure in appropriate types of free sporting, cultural and recreational activities.
- Need for appropriate insurance against unemployment.
- Need for orientation and welfare services for migrant workers, as well as for programmes for strengthening their national identity.
- Need for the awareness of the economic and social objectives of development plans and of the role of workers in the achievement thereof.

(5) Illiterate youth

It is unnecessary to reiterate the relevant supporting figures and statistics: this group of youth, in fact, represents a considerable proportion of total youth in most States of the region. Therefore, this sector of youth constitutes a tremendous human resource that requires major services and programmes for development. Otherwise, the future of communities in the region would be threatened by the existence of a large group of citizens who would be unable to undertake the responsibilities of promotion and development in order to further the progress aspired to. Perhaps it would be useful in the present study to underline the feelings of inferiority and social, cultural and psychological frustration that sometimes affect the illiterate group, thus hindering its social adaptation and response to ambitious hopes and objectives. Effective youth programmes in the field of adult education or popular education consequently become the most urgent needs of youth in the region. The related experiences of some States in overall campaigns for the eradication of illiteracy, and in the methods of popular universities or schools with varied curricula and informal education activities, might set an example that could be adopted after local adjustment in the States of the region.

(6) Nomadic youth

Despite the lack of sufficient data and statistics on nomadic youth in the States of the region, realistic estimates indicate that it is a significant group in the States of this region, with its extensive deserts, accounting in some States for nearly 20 per cent of the total population.

This sector of youth has its own variable conditions and situations compared with the other sectors. Like its communities, nomadic youth is characterized by spatial instability due to its permanent peregrination in exploration of opportunities for living and employment within the desert areas. The consequence of this is the difficulty of planning long-range youth programmes such as those planned for youth in other sectors. Also, this group has been facing rather severe material and cultural isolation, though slightly attenuated at present due to the major technological progress in means of communication, from the surrounding areas and communities. Nomadic youth practises, on a primitive basis, various occupations such as grazing and certain forms of desert agriculture in addition to the manual manufacture of certain local raw materials. The youth, however, does not acquire, by this type of practice, any high-level professional skills or experience. Consequently, the income derived from these jobs is rather modest, not enabling the youth to improve or promote its living standards. Hence, it was necessary to perceive new approaches for action with this group of youth and to use its seasonal and marketing congregation areas for the provision of services, on the basis that such congregations would be most suitable locations for meeting large groups of desert youth during long periods of time, sometimes for several months. The situation of desert youth, however, necessitates the utilization of the results of modern scientific and technological progress in planning effective programmes for the stable settlement of youth within the context of its own desert and around feasible economic projects in areas related to the development of livestock (cattle and sheep) and desert agriculture - then, following or during such steps, the planning of other youth programmes for cultural and social development and various sport and recreational activities.

(7) Female youth sector

Female youth accounts for 47 per cent of total youth in the States of the region. In all cases, that means that the individual female sector amounts to nearly half the total youth of the region with all its sectors. In fact, women in the region of Western Asia have lived many years in extremely underdeveloped situations and under excessively severe conditions, and faced many social, health and economic problems. Thus, the capacity of women to assume their essential role as partners to men in the advancement of society have been limited, and their efficiency in fulfilling the most important role as regards family welfare and the upbringing of children has been reduced.

Whatever the differential policies in the States of the region with regard to the areas of women labour, all recognize the role of women in development efforts and the importance of the relevant preparation of women. They also emphasize the importance of planning effective programmes for the education of young women and the amelioration of their cultural and social levels so that they can become better wives and mothers and more informed citizens. The future of the entire society in the region depends upon the proper preparation of the mothers of tomorrow, amounting to more than eight million young women. The expanded programmes for female youth education and preparation for working life and managing of household affairs, for child welfare and, finally, for the eradication of illiteracy among women, still at a very high rate in this region of the world, become a national necessity for development efforts and upbringing of future generations in the States of the region.

(8) Special cases in the youth sector

In reviewing the situation of youth in the region of Western Asia, it will be necessary to indicate certain special cases of youth relating to rather irregular conditions on account of diverse factors. These include:

(a) Youth in Lebanon

It is known that youth in Lebanon, and Lebanon as such, have been undergoing the same situation ever since the domestic troubles broke out in 1975, continuing during the Israeli invasion in the summer of 1982 and the subsequent dramatic developments. Youth, primarily, has been the fuel in these events and these battles. Youth (15-24) in Lebanon is estimated at about 450,000 young people, male and female, in the 1980

estimates. The actual number, however, is thought to be less in view of the victims of war among youth and the number of young people who have had to migrate outside Lebanon.

One of the studies made during the first years of the civil war indicates the effects on children and youth who experienced the events. Among these effects are:

- A weakened commitment to a united Lebanon and increased fanaticism and affiliation with small sects, for the sake of the security and protection that the larger homeland is unable to provide.
- Involvement of youth in the killings and bloodshed that have become regular behavioural patterns and a matter for boasting and competition.
- Broken-down household life under insecure conditions depriving the Lebanese family of its essential social functions.
- Extremely serious psychological and neurological disorders as a result of living in permanent fear.

Lebanese youth is, therefore, in most urgent need of special programmes to assist it in resuming its regular life on the soil of a united and liberated Lebanon, as well as in the treatment of its maladies and psychological, emotional and value ruptures, on the one hand. The Lebanon of tomorrow, on the other hand, urgently needs aid to mobilize its young potential to participate in rebuilding the country. Hence the question: Is it possible to assist Lebanon in adopting such programmes? Could the assistance be intra-regional, as well as international, coming from other organizations and bodies that might assist as well? A programme for Lebanese youth to participate in rebuilding its country is of primary importance and on the top of the list of youth programmes in Lebanon.

(b) Palestinian youth

Palestinian youth also has its own situation that requires special treatment for its issues and problems. Although the data and statistics obtained on Palestinian youth refer to 1970, <sup>2/</sup>they are still valid in

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<sup>2/</sup> The statistics and data based on a report on the situation of children and Arab Palestinian youth issued on 24 January 1976 by the Educational and Social Planning Section in the Planning Centre of the PLO.

essence, despite the change in the situation following the Israeli invitation of Lebanon.

According to these statistics, the number of Palestinian youth (15-24 years of age) is 553,000, accounting for slightly more than 18 per cent of the total Palestinian people of 3,060,000. It was expected that the number of Palestinians would be nearly 4 million in 1980 and the number of Palestinian youth 800,000.

The dispersion of the Palestinian people ever since the dramatic cataclysm of 1948 symbolizes the situation of Palestinian youth, as well as its permanent, ardent aspiration for the day on which this people will recover its legal rights and reconstruct its community on its usurped national soil. Nevertheless, this youth is not content to wait for the hope of tomorrow, but pursues the processes of growth and progress in various fields through the diaspora, participating in services for its people, in the support for the struggle and in services for the host States in the region of Western Asia and the Arab world in general.

Of course, the efforts of the economic and social institutions of the PLO, whether inside or outside the occupied land, particularly in education and employment, require support and back-up for further achievements that will permit the continuous and determined resistance of youth as well as its preparation for returning to the home country in order to create the new Palestinian community. Hence the necessary question of possible types of youth programmes to be planned for Palestinian youth consistent with its rather unstable conditions and situations, for ensuring unity of purpose and commitment and securing regular scientific and cultural progress, as well as increased participation in the development of the host societies. In this context, there is an imperative need for programmes that allow further opportunities for the co-operation of Palestinian youth with the youth of the host states.

(c) Disabled youth

As a result of the successive wars and their consequences in the region in terms of various kinds of injuries and disabilities affecting thousands of the youth involved in these wars, the number of disabled

youth has increased in the region at rapid and high rates. Despite the lack of data and statistics on this youth and the types of disabilities concerned, there is an awareness that the numbers are now impressive and dramatic, given the extremely cruel events of which thousands of youth who have offered the most precious sacrifices to the home country have been the victims. The issue, therefore, necessarily requires a study at a regional level of the number of disabled youth and the size of the problem involved. In the light of this study, it is suggested that appropriate programmes should be planned for the social, medical, psychological and professional rehabilitation of this youth so that they can continue living with as little bitterness and frustration as possible. The concern for this group of youth is not only a requirement in terms of justice and compensation, but also, primarily, a development requirement, to restore to this youthful potential its capacity for effective participation in the achievement of the goal of overall national renaissance in the States of the region.

##### 5. SOME PRINCIPAL PROBLEMS OF YOUTH IN THE REGION

Youth in the States of the region share with the majority of world youth a number of problems of a general nature such as the conflict of values, trends towards independence and the concern about the future. There are some problems, however, linked with youth in this region per se. The most essential of those problems are the following:

###### (1) Diminished participation of youth in national development

The diminished participation of youth in development efforts is the consequence of two factors: First, the continuous exodus of youth from those States of the region exporting labour, at annually increasing rates. This deprives the community of the potential contribution of youth emigrating to seek employment abroad. In the region of Western Asia, available data indicates that four States in the region are now suffering from such deprivation, primarily Lebanon, which during

the last few years has lost an estimated number of about 11,700 young people; in the case of Egypt the figure is 10,339, in the case of North Yemen 5,276, and in the case of Syria 3,120. This is in addition to the loss by the four States of able elements of productive labour in other age groups. Undoubtedly, this continuous emigration in quest of outside employment, along with some positive effects, leads to serious depopulation in a sector which has a capacity for production and the construction of the future. The implications of the migration of this young labour force are now evident in the severe shortage, in all four States or some of them, of the artisans and technical and professional personnel required for the implementation of development projects in various fields. Secondly, the large inflow of foreign workers in the States of the region, particularly in the Gulf area, creating a situation that needs to be controlled through accurate national calculations. According to a study by the World Bank, the number of Asians employed in the Gulf States had increased to 368,400 in 1975, and the figure is expected to be 1,027,000 in 1985. The first resulting disadvantage for national youth in these states is the abstention of youth from effective participation in productive labour as long as the foreign labour force is there to do the job. Should the situation continue, it would indeed have negative effects on overall national development plans, the burden of which should be principally borne by national forces.

(2) Increased living costs

Increased living costs and the difficulty of starting an independent life and meeting related needs are major components of the problem. Young people in a number of States in the region face severe difficulties in their attempts to secure economic independence, marry and establish families. The first difficulty, or sometimes even impossibility, that youth encounter concerns proper housing, in addition to the tenaciously preserved traditions in the communities of the region relating to increasing dowries and excessive expenditure on the rites and ceremonies of marriage. Finally, the continuously rising prices of all the necessary daily commodities, and thus the permanently decreasing purchasing power of the limited incomes that youth usually enjoys at the start of its working life.

Several States in the region have attempted to assist youth in responding to such problems. Some have adopted successful projects to provide economic housing for youth about to marry. Also, they have raised wages and salaries to keep pace with price inflation. But youth in a number of States in the region still urgently needs more effective assistance in order to overcome such difficulties and obstacles, which hinder the fulfilment of one of the most vital human needs of youth.

(3) Incipient drug abuse

The abuse of drugs, particularly pharmaceuticals, has begun to spread among youth in a number of States in the region. Some studies and surveys indicate disturbing figures. According to all indicators the problem has begun to spread beyond control. Co-operation is therefore necessary at the regional and international levels to closely examine the problem, determine its real magnitude and its various aspects in the States of the region and suggest effective remedial measures. Until then, each State in the region should take rapid and active measures for the strict control of the process of selling and consuming various types of medicinal drugs, as well as for further efforts for the control of trafficking in drugs across territorial frontiers, in addition to the rapid detection of areas and locations of plantation and production of drugs inside the country where possible.

(4) Crime and delinquency

Communities in the States of the region are, generally, marked by their cohesion. Their traditions and customs provide a large degree of domestic security and stability. It has thus been possible to protect the majority of youth there against indulgence in crime and delinquency and against involvement in the swirling currents of perversion plaguing youth in the world at large, particularly in the so-called developed States. Owing to relationships of direct precedence continuously preserved, the communities of the region have been able to achieve this degree of cohesion and security which has enabled them to enjoy a strong measure of social control and



and supervision. However, as a result of the expanding urban societies and the emerging cities of one million and more inhabitants, i.e. societies with diminished social control thanks to which an individual can find possibilities for concealment so as to be rather more easily trapped by other influences leading him away from supervision by the family and relatives and into involvement in delinquency and crime, the beginning of the rapid evanescence and disappearance of these healthy community features is being witnessed at the present time. The phenomenon of transformation from local communities with limited population (less than 20,000 inhabitants) to "cosmopolitan" urban societies, increasing year after year, has begun to invade the communities in the region. Some of the relevant demographical indicators show that 63.7 per cent of the population in Bahrain live in cities with a population of 20,000 and more. The proportion is 77.7 per cent in the Emirates, 86.1 per cent in Qatar, 68 per cent in Kuwait, 56.2 per cent in Jordan, 47 per cent in Saudi Arabia, 44.1 per cent in Egypt, 42.7 per cent in Syria, 30.6 per cent in Iraq. The proportion decreases in North Yemen, South Yemen and Oman. Nevertheless, the phenomenon itself is increasing even in the three States. Thus, it has not been surprising to witness the emergence of some crimes that the communities in the States of the region did not know such as smuggling, hold-ups, kidnapping and trafficking in drugs, though this has not become very serious up to now. It is therefore necessary to increase concern for the social aspect in the planning of cities and communities so as to provide sufficient control over the growth of these urban centres so that they are not transformed into vast social labyrinths, apart from the swelling construction problems arising from the rapid expansion of these cities. Also required are the formulation of more effective policies for social defence against crime in the States of the region and action to encourage youth to participate in voluntary efforts for the treatment of the causes of perversion in society.

#### 6. PRINCIPAL BODIES CONCERNED WITH YOUTH AFFAIRS IN THE REGION

There are several bodies concerned with youth affairs at the various levels. At the regional level, there is the Council of Arab Ministers for Youth and Sports within the context of the League of Arab States, having its own technical secretariat and financed by the Arab Fund for Youth and Sporting Institutions. The Council was established in 1978, and it undertakes the organization of programmes at the Arab level. Its technical secretariat has recently prepared a general Arab policy for youth and sports. At the present time, steps are being taken for its endorsement, in the form of a declaration by the member States. Among the important matters dealt with in the general Arab policy are the following:

1. Some principles concerning work with youth and the importance of youth participation in planning programmes for its own welfare.
2. Motivation for the preparation of the general Arab policy for youth and sports.
3. The Arab conception of youth.
4. Salient features of the general Arab policy for youth and sports, its goals and areas of application.
5. Means and requirements for the implementation of the general Arab policy in the member States.

The promulgation of the general Arab policy at this particular time is regarded as an effective contribution towards realizing the objectives of the International Youth Year, and presents a conceptual and practical framework that may help the States of the region in planning for action with youth and its rationalization.

At the regional level also, since 1974, about 17 Arab federations for various athletic games have been formed, as follows:

- In Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the headquarters of five of these federations are situated: the Arab Football Federation, the Arab Table Tennis Federation, the Arab Handball Federation, the Arab Athletics Federation and the Arab Cycling Federation.
- In Baghdad, the headquarters of seven of the federations are located: the Arab Wrestling Federation, the Arab Tennis Federation, the Arab Volleyball Federation, the Arab Basketball Federation, the Arab Gymnastics Federation, the Arab Federation for Equestrian, and the Arab Chess Federation.
- In Cairo, the headquarters of four of the federations are located: the Arab Fencing Federation, the Arab Karate Federation, the Arab Judo Federation and the Arab Federation for Long-Distance Swimming.
- In Tripoli, there is the headquarters of the Weight-Lifting Federation.

At the national levels, there are various bodies in the States of the region concerned with the affairs of youth and sports. In each of the six States, Bahrain, Qatar, Egypt, the Emirates, North Yemen and the PLO, there is a Supreme Council for youth and sports composed of representatives of ministries and bodies related to youth affairs, a fact which emphasizes the importance of co-ordination and integration in work with youth.

In Saudi Arabia, there is a general superintendence for the welfare of youth, very similar in its composition to the Supreme Council for the welfare of youth and sports. In both Iraq and Oman, there is a specialized ministry for youth. In Jordan, this work is included in the competence of the Ministry of Education, Tourism and Youth, while in Kuwait it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour. In Lebanon, it comes under the specialization of the Ministry of National Education and Fine Arts. In Syria, work with youth comes under the Regional Bureau for Youth (Shabibah) and Sports. In South Yemen, the Federation of Socialist Youth of Yemen (ASHYD) undertakes responsibility for youth affairs. Besides, in some countries in the region, there are mass youth organizations having local and specialized branches, as in Iraq, Syria, Democratic Yemen and Egypt.

At the national level, in several States in the region, in addition to the above-mentioned formal bodies, there are domestic bodies participating in the Olympic committees, sporting federations and some central associations such as those concerned with scouts, girl scouts and youth hostels.

At the local levels, there are numerous youth institutions, having various designations, such as youth centres, clubs and other institutions for the service of local youth. The beneficiary youth usually participates in the administration and in the local planning for its programmes within the context of the national plan adopted for youth welfare and sports.

#### 7. THE MOST IMPORTANT EXISTING PROGRAMMES FOR YOUTH IN THE STATES OF THE REGION

In most States of the region, various types of programmes for youth have been established, to the point where they are now known as the traditional programmes, in spite of a certain amount of recent modernization. They concern six main fields, as follows:

- Sports field
- Cultural field
- Scientific field
- Artistic field
- Social field
- Public service field

The main criticism of the existing programmes for youth is as follows:

(1) The current programmes almost regard the activity itself as the end, not the means, as should be the case. Hence, the diminished interest in the planning of these programmes for the development of pioneering and organized youth groups. In many cases, these programmes were not capable

of reaching the grass-roots of youth, being content to focus on a limited group of proficient and talented individuals and the populations of the cities. For example, despite the guiding principle adopted of "sports for all", the application and reality of these programmes are still concerned with the élite or the select few only. Even a game such as football, despite its wide popularity in all the States in the region, is reserved for only the stars to practise, while the role of the public is limited to watching and encouragement. The level of the performance of the game, therefore, is not stable, depending on chance offers of unexpected new talents without any previous preparation. If sports were widespread at the level of the youth grass-roots in various sectors, the flow from championships of new elements discovered and developed would be facilitated. The same applies to other activities: camps for exceptional young persons, scientific clubs for proficient students, art for the talented only, and so on. The danger of this trend is that it disregards the fact that every human being has certain gifts in one or more fields but needs opportunities to help him to discover and develop them. It is necessary, therefore, to plan the programmes for youth so as to facilitate for everyone the practice of all the activities, in order to: first, ensure equilibrium in the growth of youth; second, allow new talent to be continually discovered, nurtured and developed.

(2) The existing programmes of activities are classified under separate types of education; thus there are programmes for sporting education, religious education, social education, artistic education and national education. This approach has led to the disintegration and division of education, which is by nature, an integrated process. Also, it has resulted in a multiplicity and reiteration of entirely analogous programmes, somewhat disguised under such classifications.

(3) The current programmes for youth are being planned and formulated on behalf of youth, instead of together with and by youth. The majority of young people profoundly reject this method, or at least they manifest indifference and a lack of attention towards such programmes. In extremely simple terms, youth wants to lead its own life and protect its right to plan for this and participate in the treatment of its own problems, whether in the field of sports, culture, recreation or work. Young persons look forward to expressing themselves in activities of their own choice, planned and organized by them, not by others.

(4) Many existing programmes for youth are planned without any real examination of the needs and problems of youth. These programmes are unable effectively to respond to the vital needs of youth. By contrast, such programmes continue to deal with youth as if the situation of youth had congealed or as if the rapid changes of society did not affect youth. Consequently, many programmes for youth are losing the vitality and capacity necessary for dynamic harmonization with the changing situation and needs of youth. Thus, such programmes continually fail to achieve their goals, and often even fail to attract the participation of youth.

(5) In the existing programmes for youth, there is a lack of association and co-ordination with the educational process ensured by the school, the family and the local community. Although some of these programmes are, conceptually, based on association and integration with the other educational institutions, in actual practice they fail to ensure this essential and vital interaction. Thus, under the single tutelage of youth welfare, these programmes become rather independent despite being executed within the context of other institutions such as school welfare programmes.

#### 8. CERTAIN SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS

In addition to the numerous suggestions included in the present report, in association with each of the aspects examined, the general results of this research lead to a number of specific suggestions, as follows:

##### First - At the regional level

1. Co-ordination and integration among Arab regional organizations and with international regional organizations concerned with the affairs of youth, as well as the organization of periodical meetings for strengthening the required co-ordination and co-operation.
2. Support for the Arab Fund for Youth and Sport Institutions, expanding the areas of its activity and its financing in order to cover the various programmes for youth.
3. Establishment of a regional centre for youth to carry out the following activities:
  - Conduct special research and studies on youth in the region.
  - Train and prepare leaders and pioneers for youth action in the region.

- Exchange specific information and data on youth in the region through a developed system for documentation and exchanges.
  - Adoption of common programmes for youth in the region.
4. Co-ordination and integration in the action of the organizations of the United Nations system concerned with youth in the region, particularly UNICEF, UNESCO, FAO and ILO. Such co-ordination and integration might be realized through the formation of a commission for youth affairs within the ECWA with the participation of these organizations of the United Nations system.

Second - At the national and local levels

1. The formulation of new national policies on the basis of new concepts of action for youth, viewing work with youth as a development activity aimed at increasing the effectiveness of youth participation in overall national development, considering youth, particularly youth at the peak of maturity (the age group from 20 to 24) as a creative force and full partner in decision-making, planning for development and undertaking its burdens and responsibilities and associating and harmonizing between the fulfilment of the vital needs of youth and the fulfilment of the needs of society itself through the activities of youth and the objectives of the programmes for youth.
2. The conduct of periodical studies and research to measure and assess the needs of youth, its problems and the changes in its situation in order not to continue the planning of programmes for youth to meet no longer existing or changed needs and problems of youth.
3. Representation of youth (20-24 years of age) in the councils, bodies and commissions planning for youth, as well as in the boards of faculties and universities and committees on study missions.
4. Wider representation of youth in the councils of local government, the local administration, managing boards of co-operatives and local associations.
5. Further competence for youth in the self-administration of its institutions, clubs and centres.

6. Formulation of new plans for youth giving sufficient attention to the following programmes:

- Sports programmes ensuring opportunities for practice of the basic sports by all categories of youth, with expanding services to include the youth grass-roots in all sectors, not only the élite.
- Development programmes relating to agriculture and food, particularly for rural and nomadic youth of both sexes, on the basis of the formation of groups of youth in the rural and nomadic areas for various types of productive activity in the areas related to the raising of poultry, cattle, sheep and bees, as well as to the dairy industry and the packing and preservation of agricultural products.
- Programmes for scientific and technological development, encouraging the establishment of scientific youth groups for the practice of various scientific activities and for becoming acquainted with contemporary technological progress.
- Programmes for aesthetic development in the various branches of art and literature.
- Programmes for the advancement of women and raising of their standards.
- Programmes for the vocational training of youth dropping out of education.
- Programmes for domestic tourism and excursions.
- Programmes for the rehabilitation of war-disabled youth.
- Public service programmes, encouraging youth to volunteer for the service of the community in the various public aspects. In this regard, there are three possibilities, as follows:

First, to volunteer for action in the existing community service institutions. Second, to join local groups for fire-fighting, succour and aid, maintenance of utilities and amelioration of the environment. Third, to participate in the general campaign for the control of epidemics, arboriculture, the levelling of roads, the filling up of ponds and other matters of public interest.

7. The provision of sufficient utilities, playing fields and establishments for youth to practise various activities. This may include increasing the efficiency of use of existing utilities and establishments instead of the heavy burden of establishing new ones.
8. The initiation of the experiment of establishing the "Local House for Youth" at the small neighbourhood level in urban communities and at the small village level in rural communities, as a meeting place for youth in the small local community. The significance of such a house lies not in the material facilities available such as utilities and apparatus, but rather in its being a real house for the local youth. The young persons themselves can organize affairs, with the assistance of a well-prepared local pioneer, to be suitable for the important action on behalf of youth, regarded as a national action aimed at the development of human beings capable of active participation in the advancement and progress of the community.



## 1. Total youth in the States of the region 1980\*

	Total population	Youth (15-24)		Total	Proportion of total population
		Male	Female		
Bahrain	343 881	50 327	32 842	83 169	24.2%
Democ. Yemen	1 858 000	176 000	178 000	354 000	19.1%
Egypt	40 085 000	4 501 000	3 977 000	8 478 000	21.2%
Iraq	13 025 000	1 293 000	1 205 000	2 498 000	19.2%
Jordan	2 092 200	1 955 000	187 700	383 200	18.3%
Kuwait	1 374 123	137 430	109 958	247 388	18%
Lebanon	2 452 000	223 000	214 000	437 000	18%
Oman	984 000	89 697	81 705	171 402	17%
Qatar	243 357	31 515	14 072	45 587	19%
Saudi Arabia	9 229 107	991 053	705 879	1 696 932	18%
Syria	8 969 000	966 000	885 000	1 851 000	21%
U.A. Emirates	983 492	129 458	53 849	183 307	19%
Yemen	5 224 594	450 972	456 618	907 590	17%
	86 863 754	9 234 952	8 101 623	17 336 575	20%

\*Based on the Statistical Publication issued by ECWA, 1982.

\*Demographic and Related Socio-Economic Data Sheets, for Countries of the Economic Commission for Western Asia, United Nations Economic Commission for Western Asia, No. 3, Beirut, May 1982.

2. Distribution by nationality of total youth (15-24)  
(National and Foreign)  
in the Gulf States  
1980\*

State	Total youth (15-24) Number	%	Number	Nationals Proportion of total youth %	Number	Foreign Proportion of total youth %
Bahrain	83 169	100	48 614	58%	34 555	42%
Kuwait	247 388	100	116 794	47%	130 594	53%
Oman	171 402	100	144 907	85%	26 495	15%
Qatar	45 587	100	11 571	25%	34 016	75%
Saudi Arabia	1 696 932	100	1 209 508	71%	487 424	29%
United Arab Emirates	183 307	100	40 702	22%	142 605	78%
	2 427 785	100	1 572 096	65%	855 689	35%

\*Ibid.