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INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE

POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES RELATING TO YOUTH

Letter dated 14 November 1985 from the Permanent Representative of  
the German Democratic Republic to the United Nations addressed to  
the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit to you the report of the activities and the measures taken by the German Democratic Republic during the International Youth Year.

I should like to ask you to have these documents circulated as official documents of the General Assembly under agenda items 89 and 95.

(Signed) Harry OTT  
Ambassador Extraordinary  
and Plenipotentiary

Deputy Minister of  
Foreign Affairs

ANNEX

Letter from a Member of the Council of Ministers of the German Democratic Republic and Chairman of the National Commission for the International Youth Year to the Secretary-General

I have the honour, on the occasion of the United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year, to be held in the framework of the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly, to inform you about fundamental aspects of the youth policy pursued and selected measures in this field taken by the German Democratic Republic.

The decision of the United Nations to designate 1985 as International Youth Year has, from the very outset, met with full support on the part of the German Democratic Republic, which has worked actively to ensure that this timely and significant initiative would become a success for the benefit of the youth and a peaceful future.

The numerous events organized on the occasion inside and outside the United Nations Organization are a clear reflection of what a great contribution the younger generation can make to the preservation and strengthening of world peace, the development of friendly relations and fruitful co-operation among States.

At the 12th Parliament (national conference) of the Free German Youth in May, the 3,500 delegates taking part discussed the manner in which the younger generation can help make peace secure and strengthen the German Democratic Republic in every respect. Addressing the Conference, GRD State Council Chairman Erich Honecker expounded the policy of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, which is focused on enhancing the welfare of the people and making peace secure, and paid tribute to the active contribution of the younger generation to the successful implementation of that policy. At a meeting between Erich Honecker and the Free German Youth executive on 30 September 1985, attention was drawn to the basic aspects of the working and living conditions of the youth, their active involvement in political and social life and their rights and obligations in society. Such meetings with leading figures of our country have long been standard practice. They have triggered multifarious initiatives of young people along the lines of their participation in social development and of the struggle for peace. They have been helpful to the Free German Youth in the exercise of its responsibility as representative of the interests of youth.

For the preparation and observance of the International Youth Year, the Government of the German Democratic Republic appointed a National Commission. It is composed of leading representatives of the State and of social organizations as well as of youth representatives.

The National Commission co-ordinates a broad range of measures permeating all areas of public life. Frequent contacts with co-ordinating bodies of other countries serve the exchange of experience on the content of youth policy, and in

particular, on ways of living up to the concerns of the International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace.

The National Commission is of the view that the recommendations contained in the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities as adopted by the United Nations on the International Youth Year have largely come true in the German Democratic Republic. The basic rights of youth formulated on the basis of the Constitution, i.e. the right to political co-determination, the right to work, the right to education and recreation, and the right to joie de vivre and happiness, are fully implemented. A special youth act ensures the all-round advancement of young people. The youth policy of the German Democratic Republic seeks to assist the younger generation in making use of these rights in a way that increasingly benefits both society and the individual. It is this concern and the pursuit of friendly relations with the young people of other countries that inspire the activities of the German Democratic Republic to mark the International Youth Year.

The German Democratic Republic youth dedicated a large number of events to the fortieth anniversary of liberation from fascism. Country-wide attendance at these events ran to over 2.5 million young people. They were frequent visitors of memorial sites dedicated to the resistance against nazism. The 12th Parliament of the Free German Youth, which was also attended by 193 youth delegations from 109 countries as guests, came as a national climax in the series of events marking the International Youth Year.

At that conference, the younger generation identified itself unanimously with the policy of the German Democratic Republic, which is directed towards the well-being of the people and a secure peace. The Conference provided fresh proof that the young people of the German Democratic Republic have learnt the lessons of history and that they are firmly resolved to do everything to ensure that no war will ever start again from German soil. The participants called upon young people around the world, irrespective of political, ideological or religious differences, to pool their efforts to avert a nuclear catastrophe, put an end to the arms race on Earth and prevent its extension to outer space.

Addressing the 12th Parliament of the youth organization, State Council Chairman Erich Honecker, the German Democratic Republic highest representative, commended the youth for their active championship of peace and social progress, and he emphasized:

"The German Democratic Republic promotes co-operation rather than discord between States. It turns against the sowing of hatred among peoples and war hysteria. The German Democratic Republic is fighting for a coalition of common sense and realism to avert the danger of nuclear war."

Together with progressive youths from all over the world, the emissaries of the younger generation of the German Democratic Republic took part in the 12th world Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow, which was the most comprehensive and significant international youth rally in the International Youth Year.

The German Democratic Republic will continuously improve the political, economic, social and cultural conditions for the all-round development of the youth.

This objective is served by the decisions taken by the Government of the German Democratic Republic in the wake of the 12th Parliament of the Free German Youth concerning the duties of government agencies in assisting the youth organization. These decisions encourage the young to make contributions of their own to the further shaping of the advanced socialist society in the German Democratic Republic and include a number of social benefits such as a 50 per cent cut in railway fares for schoolchildren, apprentices and students on all routes, greater financial assistance to students and apprentices having children, larger funds to stimulate outstanding achievements among students and the construction of further youth clubs, sports facilities, hostels for young tourists and holiday camps.

On behalf of the National Commission of the German Democratic Republic I assure you, Mr. Secretary-General, of our unqualified support in the pursuit of the lofty goals of the International Youth Year, i.e. to preserve peace for the present and future generations and to promote social progress.

I take the liberty of sending you enclosed a survey of selected activities undertaken by the German Democratic Republic on the occasion of the International Youth Year and of facts about its youth policy.

(Signed) Hans SATTLER  
Member of the Council of Ministers of  
the German Democratic Republic,  
Chairman of the National Commission  
for International Youth Year

APPENDIX

Selected Activities and Measures of the German Democratic Republic  
on the Occasion of the International Youth Year

Functions

- (a) Twelfth Parliament of the Free German Youth in the capital, Berlin, from 21 to 24 May 1985 followed by youth rallies in all counties and districts of the German Democratic Republic at which 3 million participants manifested their desire for peace and their closeness to the socialist States;
- (b) Meeting between German Democratic Republic State Council Chairman Erich Honecker and the Free German Youth executive in the capital, Berlin, on 30 September 1985;
- (c) Peace manifestations of the youth on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of victory over fascism and meetings between anti-Fascist resistance fighters and youths;
- (d) Events organized by the youth organization in the framework of United Nations Disarmament Week and in connection with the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations;
- (e) Solemn appeals issued by the youth organization on World Peace Day - 1 September 1985; far more than 31,000 youth work teams work extra shifts as peace initiatives;
- (f) Ceremony to mark the fortieth anniversary of the World Federation of Democratic Youth and meeting of its executive committee in Berlin, capital of the German Democratic Republic, from 8 to 11 November 1985;
- (g) In over 100 panel discussions involving more than 3,500 delegates to the 12th Parliament of the Free German Youth on 20 May 1985 in the German Democratic Republic capital, Berlin, cabinet ministers and heads of other central government agencies answered questions about youth policy;
- (h) The "Week of Youth and Sportsmen" from 18 to 26 May 1985 was marked by a broad range of political, cultural, sporting and touristic events. Mayors, company directors and co-operative farm managers reported to young people on what has been done to implement the Youth Act;
- (i) The Festival of Political Song was held in the capital, Berlin, from 16 to 23 February 1985 with the participation of 60 artistic companies and soloists from 31 countries, and peace concerts were given under the motto "Rock for Peace";
- (j) Friendship Days were held between the youths of the German Democratic Republic and the Socialist Republic of Romania from 25 to 29 September 1985 at Neubrandenburg and Friendship Days between the young people of the German Democratic Republic and the Syrian Arab Republic will be observed at Eisenhuettentstadt from 27 November to 3 December 1985;

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(k) Over 700 youngsters from 20 countries took part in an international trade union youth camp at Ferch from 6 July to 17 August 1985;

(l) The Red Cross sponsored an international youth camp at Weimar from 12 to 25 August 1985 with participants from 20 European countries;

(m) An international symposium on the subject: "The development of independence in scientific work, of a consciously active approach and of increasing personal responsibility of students during studies" with participants from eight countries was held in the capital, Berlin, from 24 to 26 April 1985;

(n) The Ministry of Higher and Technical Education, the Central Council of the Free German Youth and the central executive of the sciences trade union met in Dresden from 22 to 23 February for consultations on ways of promoting junior scientists;

(o) In 1985 more than 60 per cent of the young working people and students were involved in the youth's scientific and technological creativity movement. The results will be presented to the public in exhibitions at company, district and country level, and in Leipzig from 11 to 22 November 1985 at a national exhibition;

(p) Over 2 million children and youths participated in holiday schemes, and a holiday exchange programme operated with the Polish People's Republic involved 300,000 children and youths;

(q) Some 11,000 boys and girls took part in the central Children's and Youth Spartakiad in winter sports in Karl-Marx-Stadt from 25 February to 2 March 1985 and in summer sports in Berlin from 22 to 28 July 1985. At district level some 1.03 million children and youths were involved in the winter and summer sports spartakiads;

(r) By the end of 1985, 2 million youths will have taken part in the programme offered by "Jugendtourist", the travel agency of the Free German Youth. While more than 290,000 GDR youths travel abroad by "Jugendtourist", over 200,000 young people from abroad visit the German Democratic Republic;

(s) More than 10,900 students from the German Democratic Republic worked as members of international student work teams in seven countries;

(t) Over 10,500 students from 18 countries worked and spent holidays in the German Democratic Republic together with students of the Republic.

#### Facts about German Democratic Republic Youth Policy

The 1985 budget provided for the following expenditures:

(a) 11.6 billion marks on training and education; 350 million marks on the use and maintenance of sports facilities;

(b) 93 million marks to subsidize holiday travel by young people;

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(c) Young people getting married receive an interest-free loan to the tune of 5,000 marks. When children are born, the amount of loan to be repaid is reduced by 1,000 marks for the first, 1,500 marks for the second and 2,500 marks for the third child. In 1985 alone, the State used 225 million marks to waive repayment of such loans.

On the suggestion of the youth organization, the GDR Government took the following decisions in the International Youth Year:

- (a) It increased the funds available to universities, other institutes of higher learning and technical schools for the recognition of outstanding academic achievement;
- (b) It provided additional grants to apprentices and students having children;
- (c) It granted a 50 per cent reduction in railway fares to schoolchildren, students and apprentices on all routes.

Since 1976, the further development of Berlin, the GDR capital, as the economic, scientific, intellectual and cultural centre of the German Democratic Republic has been assigned to the full responsibility of the youth organization. This project ranges from housing construction up to the establishment of further educational and recreational facilities, including a large public youth centre which will provide hotel-style accommodation, conference rooms and services as well as facilities for games and other leisure-time pursuits.

The network of youth clubs is being expanded. Until 1990, the capacity of such clubs in urban as well as rural residential areas will grow by some 37,000 places. The 264 youth tourist facilities provide accommodation for 5.3 million overnight stays per year. In 1985, the cities of Dresden and Erfurt will each be given an additional youth hostel.

During the past 10 years, 80,000 youths from developing countries have completed vocational training in the German Democratic Republic.

At present, 18 work teams of the Free German Youth, in token of German Democratic Republic solidarity, are active in African, Asian and Latin American countries, assisting them in building their national economies. These teams have so far trained 6,000 skilled workers. In the Nicaraguan capital, German Democratic Republic youths set up a field hospital to show their solidarity. The Free German Youth friendship brigade which established the hospital is now helping in the provision of medical care to the population.

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