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POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES RELATING TO YOUTH

Channels of communication with youth and youth organizations

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/34/150.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 32/135 of 16 December 1977, the General Assembly adopted a series of guidelines for the improvement of channels of communication between the United Nations and youth and youth organizations. These guidelines are contained in an annex to the resolution, in which the following action was called for:

(a) Member States were requested to communicate the substance of the resolution and annex to national youth organizations and ask for their comments (para. 3);

(b) Member States and regional commissions were asked to comment on the guidelines and offer suggestions regarding their further development (para. 4);

(c) The Secretary-General was requested to undertake action for the implementation of the guidelines, in particular through: (i) joint consultations with the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, and (ii) the Inter-Agency Task Force on Youth policies and programmes, established in accordance with paragraph 2 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2078 (LXII) of 13 May 1977.

2. The Secretary-General was also requested to report on progress achieved in the implementation of the resolution. A report (A/33/261) was submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session. On 3 November 1978, the Assembly adopted resolution 33/6 on the basis of that report.

3. The present report is submitted in response to resolution 33/6, in particular to the request to the Secretary-General to report on: (a) comments and suggestions offered by Member States and regional commissions relating to the guidelines (para. 2); and (b) progress achieved in the implementation of the guidelines with specific action-oriented recommendations aimed at the further development and practical implementation of the guidelines and at the promotion and support of co-operation between the United Nations and its specialized agencies, on the one hand, and national and international youth organizations, on the other (para. 4).

II. COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBER STATES AND REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

4. As at September 1978, replies to the note verbale of 28 February 1978 were received from 13 Member States, the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See, the Economic Commission for Western Asia, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Africa (A/33/261, paras. 3-9). Subsequently, replies were received from two other Member States, Canada and the Seychelles. The reply from Canada is noteworthy because it contains, inter alia, details of the 150 national youth organizations and agencies concerned with youth to which the Government had sent the guidelines with a request for their comments, as proposed in paragraph 3 of resolution 32/135. The reply also contained some of the suggestions made by these bodies in their replies.

5. In response to the second note verbale of 7 February 1979 sent by the Secretary-General, requesting Member States and regional commissions to respond to paragraph 1 of resolution 33/6, 10 replies were received as at 15 June 1979, of which four recorded the fact that the Government in question had already expressed its views. The States replying were: Argentina, El Salvador, Mauritius, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Romania, Spain and Sudan.

6. The contents of the replies received in 1978 were summarized in paragraph 3 of A/33/261. The suggestions made were that the United Nations should increase its direct contacts with youth organizations; that it should provide additional information material of all kinds to such organizations and to Governments; that there should be strong contacts between youth organizations and regional commissions and that there should be more travel and exchange programmes between young people from different countries. Some Governments specified the possible focal points within their countries for United Nations contacts on youth issues. One Government expressed its reservations concerning the existing channels of communication between the United Nations and youth and youth organizations.

7. The replies received in 1979 reiterate a number of these points and in addition contain the following suggestions: that international, regional and national youth conferences be held on topics related to the United Nations and with a focus on issues which are of immediate concern to youth such as youth unemployment; that the role of schools as the most effective means of reaching youth and of raising consciousness concerning United Nations issues should be borne in mind; that the experience of the International Year of the Child should be utilized as a basis for furthering communication with youth; that the Geneva Informal Meeting of International Youth Non-Governmental Organizations could, if upgraded and given increased technical and financial resources, become an active international contact body with the United Nations.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES

8. The Inter-Agency Task Force on Youth considered the guidelines attached to resolution 32/135 at its second meeting, held in May 1978, and made some comments on the issue. The Task Force noted, in particular, that:

(a) At the national level the Administrator of UNDP was actively exploring possibilities of associating youth organizations with development activities of all kinds and, inter alia, through the activities of the United Nations Volunteer programme aimed at strengthening domestic development services and national volunteers movements specially among young people. But it appeared that much of it did not reach young people so far and it was felt that the proposed Directory of Youth Organizations could help to improve this situation to some extent. It was agreed that a publication by the Joint United Nations Information Committee being presented as an interagency-based selection of activities undertaken through the United Nations system in the field of youth to support and promote youth activities at national level in various countries could be of considerable importance to young people all over the world; it was also agreed that further development of the idea on feasibility of identifying national

liaison and focal point on youth might be included among the national objectives for an International Youth Year if such were proclaimed.

(b) At the regional level, the further promotion by the regional commissions, through various means (meetings, training courses, publications), of an exchange of views and experiences between countries was considered to be of great importance, especially in the light of increase in the number of non-governmental youth bodies operating at the regional level at present.

(c) At the international level, it was noted that the Youth Information Bulletin was now appearing quarterly in English, French and Spanish, and that the Geneva Informal Meeting of International Youth NGOs was continuing to meet usually three times a year.

9. Additional replies have been received from UNDP and from the Division of Human Rights. The Division pointed out that eight Governments (Chile, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ireland, New Zealand, Rwanda and the United Republic of Cameroon) had endorsed the proposal to study the possibility of the appointment by youth organizations in each country of a youth correspondent for issues related to human rights as recommended in paragraph 1(f) of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1 B (XXXII). The Commission on Human Rights had indicated in the annex to its resolution 23 (XXXIV) of 8 March 1978 the appropriateness of an educational approach by national institutions in the field of human rights: such an approach might, if so decided by the Government concerned, focus on (a) assistance in the education of public opinion towards the awareness of and respect for human rights, and (b) provision of a source of relevant information for the competent national authorities and the people on human rights matters. With regard to specific action relating to youth, young people participate in human rights fellowship programmes, and the Commission, in resolution 11 (XXVII), expressed the hope that further seminars on the role of youth in the promotion and protection of human rights would be organized along the lines of those held in 1970 in Belgrade and in 1973 in San Remo.

10. The Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1979/27 of 9 May 1979 on the question of co-ordination and information in the field of youth in which it called for special attention to be paid to the question of improving the existing modes of co-ordination, co-operation and communication in the field of youth within the United Nations system, and requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session on the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force (see para. 8 above).

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

11. It appears to the Secretary-General that the procedure utilized in implementation of resolution 33/6, namely, the sending of a second note verbale to Governments has not resulted in any major additions or change in the views and proposals already elicited the previous year. In view of the importance of strengthening communication with youth and youth organizations, the desirability of which appears to be unanimously accepted, the General Assembly may wish to

consider recommending that additional means of obtaining suggestions and comments should be utilized, especially in view of the decision already taken in General Assembly resolution 33/7 to proclaim an International Youth Year for the successful implementation of which greatly extended and improved communication with young people and youth organizations will be important. One such way might be to convene a number of regional working parties of comparatively short duration, on which both young people and those responsible for the implementation of youth policies and programmes at national and regional levels should be represented and work out together specific action-oriented recommendations relevant to the specific circumstances and conditions of their region for the improvement of communication between the United Nations and young people. Such working parties might be included in proposed system-wide programmes of regional and national meetings, which the Secretary-General proposed in his previous report (A/33/261, para. 11(f)). In order to avoid further additions to the United Nations budget, and at the same time as a direct contribution to furthering the exchange of views and co-operation between young people of different countries, one or more Governments or international youth organizations in the various regions might consider offering to act as host and to provide facilities, including travel grants, for the holding of such meetings.

12. In addition, the Secretary-General wishes briefly to recall the still relevant recommendations that he had put forward for consideration in paragraph 11 of his previous report:

(a) Governments should be encouraged to support the Geneva Informal Meeting of Youth Organizations;

(b) Governments and non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to provide material and identify channels of distribution for the quarterly Youth Information Bulletin;

(c) There should be an expansion of the provision of internships for young people within United Nations offices, both at Headquarters and elsewhere;

(d) A review of the relationship between the regional commissions and non-governmental organizations should be undertaken in order to facilitate working relationships between such organizations, especially those concerned with young people and the regional commissions;

(e) An advisory group of young people to advise on publications of interest to youth should be established.
