



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

OPA/AC.33/2  
17 September 2002

Original: ENGLISH

---

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COORDINATING UNIT FOR OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

FIRST REGIONAL FORUM ON YOUTH:  
“SECURITY, OPPORTUNITY AND PROSPERITY”

Geneva, 26-28 August 2002

**FINAL REPORT**

**Background**

The First Regional Forum on Youth was initiated and organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in collaboration with ILO, UNICEF, HCHR, UNAIDS, UN/DESA. Major financial contribution was made by the UNAIDS. UNDP and UNICEF also provided a support for the Forum by sponsoring the participation of the representatives of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and the Kyrgyz Republic. Each of the participating UN agencies nominated their resource persons and assisted the UNECE with bringing eminent experts to the Forum.

The private sector contributed to the Forum both in kind and in cash. Swiss Media Associations organized the Round Table on the Role of ICT in Mainstreaming the Youth. The Russian ICT company, Sibintek, funded the UNECE Contest of Young Artists. As a result of this joint effort, 280 participants from 41 country and representatives of the EU, Council of Europe, NATO, CIS, Friends World Committee (Quakers), World Economic Forum, International Federation Terre des Hommes (IFTDH), YCARE International, Youth Business International, Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum, America' Development Foundation, W.A. de Vigier Foundation, COMMUNICARE, European Youth Forum, World Assembly of Youth and etc., as well as UNESCO, UNCTAD and the World Bank, in addition to the above organizing UN agencies, took part in the work of the Forum.

Among the participants there were three State Secretaries (Romania, Hungary and Tajikistan), five deputy State Secretaries/Ministers (Russian Federation, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Slovenia), the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Family and Youth Affairs (Ukraine) and the President of National Union of Industrialists and Employers (Ukraine). Youth was represented by the Presidents of the National Youth Councils, Unions of Young Entrepreneurs, various youth societies and organizations. Other civil society organizations, including women's associations, were also participating in the Forum.

The UNECE secretariat prepared 3 background papers and the Information Notice for the Forum. It also created Youth Forum website with all the information on the preparation of Forum, documentation and participants' contributions accessible to all. The participants submitted more than 30 presentations, hard copies of which were made available during the Forum.

### **Organization of the work of the Forum**

The work of the Forum was organized as follows:

1. Opening session was held on 26 August from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
2. Working Groups' sessions from 11 a.m. to 13 p.m. and then from 15 p.m. to 18 p.m. on 26 August, and all day on 27 August.
3. The closing session was held on 28 August from 10 a.m. to 13 p.m.

Each Working Group held 5-6 panels, followed by discussion. Round Table on the Role of ICT in Mainstreaming Youth in Economic Activities was organized by the Swiss Media Association within the framework of the Working Group on Youth Entrepreneurship. In addition to the main event, the UNECE, in cooperation with the Russian ICT company "Sibintek", held the Young Artists' Contest for the Best Design of the Cover Page of the Country Assessment Reports "Towards the Knowledge-Based Economy". The winners of the Contest, who were able to come to Geneva, were granted the awards during the closing session of the Forum.

### **Results of the deliberation of the Forum Working Groups**

Three Working Groups were formed to have a more focused discussion of the specific risk factors and policies and measures of their alleviation:

1. The Working Group on Youth Health and Security. Responsible UN agency: UNAIDS/UNICEF and HCHR;
2. The Working Group on Youth Employability and Employment. Responsible UN agency: ILO and UNECE;
3. The Working Group on Youth Entrepreneurship. Responsible UN agency: ILO and UNECE.

#### **I. *Report of the Working Group on Youth Health and Security*** ***(Secretary of the WG: Mr. A. Kahnert)***

The Working Group considered three issues.

## A. HIV/AIDS

The discussions were based on the recognition that the current situation regarding HIV/AIDS prevalence in European transition countries is alarming in terms of the growth rates of the epidemic. These growth rates are indeed unprecedented in the history of HIV/AIDS, worldwide.

Prevention is at the center of countervailing strategies. Prevention methods focus on dissemination of adequate information, education of young people in schools, non-formal settings and high risk groups, and the provision of youth friendly services. Within the health services, voluntary confidential counselling and testing was identified as a very important prevention intervention.

Against this background, the Working Group heard, on the one side, reports about the situation with the epidemic in individual countries, and discussed, on the other, approaches and methods used in remedial or mitigating action.

Regarding reports about evidence, the Working Party listened to the particularly comprehensive report by Ms. Balakireva on the situation in Ukraine – the European country that presents, from many points of view, the most serious concerns on the continent in relation to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Another report linked the serious environmental damages in the Aral Sea region to HIV/AIDS risks of the young, arguing that the environmental disaster increases these risks, so that particular preventive efforts are warranted in environmental disaster areas. A detailed report was also made of the activities of Estonian medical students, aiming at informing and educating particularly vulnerable population groups in the country.

The rights-based approach to education of young people and especially vulnerable young people (such as, sex workers, injecting drugs users, street children, men who have sex with men, ethnic minority populations) and the provision of youth friendly services were highlighted, as were the life skills education and peer education schemes. It was suggested that the approaches currently in use should be complemented with empirical indicators, permitting the monitoring of the results of the approaches. Such information would particularly be valuable for those public managers, who are in charge of developing their own responses to the epidemic in their country.

## B. Trafficking/sexual exploitation

Evidence was presented on selected aspects, to which special risk groups are exposed – such as young refugees, youth soldiers, both men and women, and others. It was shown that all risks faced by the adults in the corresponding population groups apply to an even larger extent to the young.

In view of the evidence of trafficking and sexual exploitation, response requirements were discussed in relation to a number of specific proposals. The common denominator of the proposals was that they were focusing on legal schemes.

The Working Group also listened to the presentation of a comprehensive research project, with which it is hoped to embed trafficking into a cobweb of relations and links with other social processes. The ultimate aim of the project is to derive proposals for the solution

of trafficking problems from an integrated and inter-disciplinary research effort into the 'trafficking market'.

### C. Youth empowerment/prevention of violence

The Working Group heard an overview of the activities of an Uzbek NGO, which provides assistance to victims of domestic violence in difficult circumstances. Otherwise, youth empowerment occupied the center of the discussion.

Schemes, practices and experiences were reported in relation to a number of countries and with respect to youth empowerment as well as youth policies in general. These reports triggered a free discussion about multiple aspects of the problems that are commonly encountered.

The conclusions reached in this free discussion could be summarized in several ways, but three main avenues of widely agreed thinking appear to stand out. There is first of all the conviction that youth empowerment is insufficient everywhere. In this context, it was felt that a more pronounced and sustained effort could be made by the UN family to give voice to youth at their events. It was pointed out that this might also have encouraging effects for national practices in this field.

The second general conclusion was to underline the necessity for specifying a 'value domain' in youth empowerment schemes. The explicit formulation and tradition of community values were mentioned as being potentially instrumental to shaping a social identity for the young that corresponds to their wishes.

The third general conclusion relates particularly to transition countries and their wider difficulties in the transition processes. Insufficient youth empowerment schemes in such countries might in fact strengthen tendencies of emigration among the young. As emigrating persons very often are qualified above the average in their native country – a circumstance sometimes enhanced by special schemes of immigration countries encouraging migratory movement of the educated –, this mechanism, to the extent it exists, tends to compromise further the medium- and long-term development prospects of their native countries.

## **II. *Report of the Working Group on Youth Employability and Employment*** ***(Secretary of the WG: Mr. I. Adjoubei)***

The Working Group on Youth Employability and Employment held six panel sessions and discussed the labour market challenges for young people, ways of improving the employability, equal opportunities for youth, the role of Governments and the private sector, and the role of civil society initiatives in this area.

The Working Group identified the following challenges facing the youth employment and employability:

- higher than average unemployment among the young people in transition economies, which holds even during the economic recovery;
- considerable involvement of youth in the shadow economy;

- a mismatch between the knowledge and skills required by enterprises and those offered by young entrants to the job market; enterprises want highly skilled workers and are reluctant to invest in training. According to ILO, young people with technical education in transition economies are in short supply, while there are too many lawyers, economists and psychologists. At the same time, the labour market often cannot absorb the supply of university graduates;
- absence of training in social skills;
- inadequate links and feedback between enterprises and educational institutions;
- insufficient participation of youth in decision making regarding their education and employment policy;
- problems associated with the globalization of economy, namely with international migration of young people from east European transition economies to the west of Europe. In particular, the persistent discrimination of young immigrants and children of immigrants is preoccupying; and
- lack of decent work, that is productive and satisfying employment, decent working conditions and employment security.

The above referred to challenges, which require an integrated approach to the youth employment policy. First, this policy should be integrated into the overall employment creation strategy. Second, it should be developed in conjunction with the policies related to human rights, access to education, migration, crime prevention, drug use and etc.

In order to facilitate transition from school to work and reintegration of unemployed youth, the youth employment policy should include the assistance and guidance to the young job seekers, provision of adequate and timely labour market information and other services, including, if needed, access to telephones, fax machines, electronic mail, assistance in drafting resumes etc.

The labour market information should include that on employment opportunities in the expanding sectors, for example, in the service economy and information and communication sector.

Partnership between Governments, employers and youth associations has proved to be vital for efficient youth employment policy. This implies that the exchange of information on best national practice in this area could benefit policy-makers seeking adequate solutions to the youth employment countries in their respective countries. Partnership of all stakeholders bears fruit in both national and international employability enhancement projects. As evidenced by a number of speakers, the resource of benevolent retired private sector managers can be effectively used in this endeavour.

Public policy should seek to enhance the flexibility of educational institutions as far as their curriculum is concerned. The experience shows that financial stimuli – the results-based budgeting, in particular, could be used to this end.

Training aimed at strengthening the employability should be based on individual-centred methodologies and informal ways of learning. The basis of employability includes, amongst other, the so-called “soft skills”: literacy, numerical skills, communication and the capacity to get to work on time. It also includes social skills, needed for communication.

Core competencies of the youth, entering the job market, should incorporate as well the labour market navigation skills.

When discussing equal opportunities for various categories of youth, the Working Group agreed that disadvantaged youth, which included among other the disabled, homeless, drug and alcohol addicts, single mothers, discriminated national minorities and immigrants, are in need of an early support, ensuring that they have the minimal skills, enabling their integration into the labour force. It is against this background their vocational training could be successful. One of the methods of the vocational training of the disadvantage young people is mentoring, which enables a personal and individualized relationship between the adviser/coach and the job seeker. It was also emphasized that the impact of programmes is enhanced, when they reach out to deprived communities.

Governments contribute to employability through establishing a regulatory basis for employment; undertaking targeted programmes of youth employment promotion; and cooperating with all the stakeholders, including the private sector and youth representatives.

A number of speakers from transition economies (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine) informed the meeting of their Governments' efforts to promote the employability of youth. The Working Group agreed that to be effective the government programmes of youth employment should be coordinated not only with the overall employment policies, but also with regional, ecological and industrial restructuring policies.

Several participants drew the attention of the Group to the financial constraints, inhibiting an active Government youth policy. In this area, a number of transition economies seek assistance from international financial institutions and other donors.

Despite this handicap, several transition countries have taken diversified and effective measures to improve vocational guidance, educational and training tailored to market demand. These measures are supplemented by social protection schemes in respect of new labour market entrants.

The Working Group agreed that a timely evaluation and performance measurement of labour market programmes is a prerequisite of their success. While several transition countries (e.g. Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland) do perform such a programme evaluation, a number of delegates requested assistance, including the methodological assistance, from the international organizations in addressing this issue.

The Working Group discussed the experience of countries with the so-called "dual system" of vocational training, which combines formal education with apprenticeship, and noted its positive role in facilitating the school to work transition and career preparation. The applicability of this system elsewhere is determined by country-specific social and other conditions.

The Working Group agreed on the usefulness of occupational forecasting for the purpose of enhanced employability. To be effective, macroeconomic forecasts and modelling should be supplemented by a detailed examination of sectoral occupational trends.

The Working Group also discussed the role of civil society institutions, and that of youth organizations, in particular. Youth organizations contribute to employability through trying to influence government policies and programmes; and through implementing their own projects. In this latter case, they provide a feedback to decision-makers, which could be used in elaborating or adjusting policies. As an example, the European Employment Strategy was developed in consultation and with participation of the European Youth Council.

A number of youth organizations informed the Group on the ongoing projects aimed at developing employability of youth both in their countries and abroad (in developing countries). These include, for example, projects, providing possibilities of vocational training, developing entrepreneurship and self-employment (youth villages) in rural areas and implementing temporary employment schemes in the period of summer vacations (“students’ construction detachments”). In highlighting factors behind the success of those projects, they emphasized the necessity of cooperation with local authorities, enterprises, banks and industrial associations.

Finally, the Working Group discussed and agreed on the importance of non-formal education as a factor of employability. Different views were expressed regarding the need for formal recognition of skills and competencies acquired through this type of education.

### III. *The Working Group on Youth Entrepreneurship* (Secretary: Mr. A. Szabo)

The Working Group on Youth Entrepreneurship carried out four Panels on the following subjects:

- Entrepreneurship as a Means to Alleviate Poverty, chaired by Ms. Rachel Golden, Vice-Chairperson of the UNECE Team of Specialists on Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation;
- Learning to be Entrepreneurial, Government Youth Entrepreneurship Initiative, chaired by Mr. Antal Szabo, Regional Adviser on Entrepreneurship and SMEs of the UNECE;
- Youth Entrepreneurship Programme: Private Sector and NGO Initiatives, chaired by Mr. Jan Elofsson, Vice-President of the Swedish COMMUNICARE; and
- Youth Entrepreneurship Programme: Partnership Approach, chaired by Mr. Duncan Campbell, Head of the Employment Policy Unit of the ILO.

During the discussion of the above issues, the participants referred to growing difficulties faced by young people in their attempt to enter the labour market and to earn a decent income. They identified a number of processes, which, in their view, have impacted income opportunities for youth in the region. These are: unfinished transition towards a market economy; EU enlargement; globalization; the aging of the population, and, finally, a rapid technological change, and expressed concern that most policy options targeting youth appeared ineffective in providing a lasting solution.

Some of the participants expressed doubts about the effect of a noticeable effort by many Governments to channel young people to the SME sector. According to some country

studies, average survival rate of the SMEs created by young entrepreneurs is only 10-15 per cent. A more profound approach to the youth current problems is needed to reduce the risk of poverty, and, therefore, recruitment of young people by illegal and informal businesses, including drug dealers, which has been on rise in some of the countries of the region.

In many countries in transition, according to the participants, Governments appear either underestimating the magnitude of youth problems and, therefore, remain passive, or lacking adequate resources to provide an effective support of youth entrepreneurship and employment generation. This is confirmed by the facts that, in some countries, the responsibility for youth affairs is spread among different Government agencies, while in some other countries, the specialized Ministries or agencies responsible for youth affairs do not receive resources adequate enough to support any significant youth programme, which could make a difference. Participants called upon the UN organizing agencies, the donor community and the private sector to provide expertise and assistance in the area of youth entrepreneurship, especially, with the view of how to increase the survival rate of young entrepreneurs. They expressed interest in learning about successful approaches, programmes, schemes and tools to promote youth entrepreneurship, as well as in building partnerships with organizations from other countries.

Innovative Government policies to promote youth entrepreneurship were presented during the panel on Government and Private Sector Initiatives. Presentations were made by the Government representatives of Hungary, Slovenia and Ukraine. They emphasized the role of the Government in the creation of a favourable institutional environment for the development of entrepreneurship and SMEs. According to Mrs. Róza Nagy, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy and Transport of Hungary, 99% of all enterprises in the country are SMEs. There are 63 enterprises per 1000 inhabitants in the country, while the EU average is 52. There are 800,000 enterprises, and the majority of these are sole proprietors. SMEs play important role in the economy, generating about 50 % of the GDP. The newly elected Government, understanding the importance of SMEs, launched a new programme and innovative policy instruments to reinforce the SME sector. To assist SMEs to overcome financial constraints, the new programme envisages to introduce lending scheme, credit guarantees, and a special credit card for the owners of SMEs. It also contains a special set of measures aiming to facilitate youth entrepreneurship

In Slovenia, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Sport, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Economy elaborated a Programme of the Development of Entrepreneurship and Creativity among Young People. By supporting this Programme, the participating Ministries have been able to stimulate the development of entrepreneurship and the enterprise creation in their respective fields. The Small Business Development Centre, a public organization, which carries out public tenders for selecting subcontractors, coordinates the Action Programme.

The Head of the Department for Family and Youth Affairs of the State Committee of Ukraine informed the participants about the difficult situation of the youth in Ukraine, where 38% of all the registered unemployed are below 28 years. The formal SME sector is largely underdeveloped and contributes only 7% of the GDP. One out of seven young people are employed in the informal sector. The self-confidence of the youth has been decreasing. However, according to a study conducted by the State Committee, 40% of the youth would like to become entrepreneurs and run their business legally.



The State Committee for Regulatory Policy and Support of Small Entrepreneurs elaborated a three-year Programme for Support of Youth Entrepreneurship. This is based on the social partnership between Government and youth organizations. The Programme has two years experiences so far. It is implemented by a newly created organization: the Youth Centre of Ukraine. The Government also created youth job centres in 20 regions in Ukraine. One of the programmes is oriented towards the development of entrepreneurial activities in rural areas.

The panel on the Private Sector and Non-government Initiatives revealed a growing involvement of the corporate and non-government sector in addressing the problems of youth, therefore, indicating a huge potential for joint action been ignored so far by many Governments. Below are some most successful stories of such initiatives presented at the panel.

The Young Entrepreneurs Scheme (YES) in Ireland aims at developing self-confidence & self-esteem amongst second level students between 12 and 18 years of age. Students are entering YES because of its challenge, thrill of selling, earning money and obtaining recognition. In Ireland, with a population of 4 million, about 60,000 second/level students have already set up a business through YES. A pilot programme was also introduced in Estonia.

The Swedish COMMUNICARE (Do together) is a non-profit organization aiming to change the attitude of young people from disadvantaged groups through local offices for developing a good society and with a methodology of “young leads young”. Since April 2002, 30,304 contacts were made and 204 young people started their own business.

The Programme “Young Talents” was developed by a non-profit organization, International Investment Centre in Yaroslavl, the Russian Federation, without any Government support. So far, 500 new jobs were created.

All three initiatives have been successful. The speakers emphasized the importance of the models tailored to the local conditions. They also underscored the importance of participation of the target groups in developing such models. In their view, much of the success have to be attributed to the creativity of the young people involved in the process, as well as to the approach, which initially starts with the development of self-esteem, as well as the volunteering of mentors.

In his presentation, the Director of the Youth Business International (YBI), Member of the Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum, put a strong emphasis on partnership approach. He emphasized, that there exists a significant gap between the provision of skill training and business planning, on one hand, and the provision of financial and enterprise support, on the other one. YBI intention is to bridge this gap. According to the YBI approach, business support for young entrepreneurs should be based on (i) voluntary business mentoring: (ii) pro bono advice: (iii) links to other businesses and networks: and (iv) provision of training/technical advices.

Since 1993, over 60,000 young people were helped, and 60% of all businesses are still trading in their third years. The YBI is a charity organization with a revolving fund with nearly 70% recovery rate.

The representative of the ILO informed the participants about a recent initiative of the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, to form a High-Level Panel on Youth Employment Network, and invited the most creative leaders of the private sector, economic policy-making and civil society (including youth leaders) to join the panel to explore imaginative approaches to the youth employment challenge. The network is expected to develop recommendations on possible sources of solutions, including the contribution that information technology and the informal sector could make in employment generation. The Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network will make recommendations and provide a guideline to a range of actions that would be implemented to improve the position of young people in the labour market. One of the recommendations is devoted to youth entrepreneurship. Mr. Duncan Campbell, Head of the Employment Policy Unit of the ILO, briefed the participants about this initiative and called governments and NGOs to join this Network.

A graduated student from the University of Debrecen of Hungary, representing a youth society, drew the attention of the participants to the fact that many young people with higher-education face difficulties in finding jobs. Even in the advanced countries in transition, it is difficult to find a job for a graduated student, because large companies and multinationals find them either lacking work experience (usual demand of 2-3 year-work experience) or overqualified. It is also impossible to get a start-up practice because of the lack of incentives for companies. Even having an entrepreneurial management training, it is difficult to start-up own businesses, because of the lack of collateral and initial capital. In her view, Governments have to help to overcome these obstacles, which most of the graduate students are facing before even starting their career.

The President of the World Youth Bank Organizing Committee informed the participants about the decision of the World Assembly of Youth to create an universal financial intermediary for channelling all financial resources oriented towards youth entrepreneurship. In the next ten years 1.2 billion of young women and man will enter the working age population, the best educated and trained generation of young people ever. Investing into the future is of paramount importance, because we have "One World of Tomorrow".

An independent consultant and trainer of the Swiss TrainLing Company emphasized the basic human principles and values, as well as the worth of verbal communication skills, for to be an entrepreneur. In his view, the collapse of the US Enron company highlighted the importance of bringing back the business ethics. Large enterprises should show good examples for SMEs and especially start-ups. He suggested that any education and training system should be based on an "integrated education", which means to keep the BALANCE between the TECHNICAL, (computer, etc.) knowledge and skills and the HUMAN, (interpersonal verbal communication, etc.) knowledge and skills. It is true, that we are going into the electronic age, however, it is also true that we would remain human creatures.

In their conclusion and recommendations, the participants underlined the following:

1. Youth programme are new initiatives of the Government not only in countries in transition, but also in advanced market economies. Ministries for Youth Affairs in are new structures without significance experience. In the majority of cases, there is lack of co-operation between the Government authorities, which are responsible for economic

development, entrepreneurship development, education, and those, which are responsible for youth affairs. Governments are encouraged to create intergovernmental bodies responsible for youth programme, including those on young entrepreneurship. Governments should elaborate action plans taking into consideration the recommendations of the Youth Employment Network.

2. Due to the fact that little is known about the effects of Government youth policies and programmes, the participants recommended that in the follow-up to the Forum a special effort should be undertaken to organize the exchange of experiences in the area of youth entrepreneurship. Systematic data collection on youth enterprises by age and gender and benchmarking of the development of youth entrepreneurship very much recommended. International foundations and youth development programmes, such as the Prince of Wales Foundation Business Leaders Forum, COMMUNICARE, YES, Kiev Youth Business Centre, International Investment Centre, SBDC, and others, were invited to elaborate a benchmarking and evaluation methodology in order to capture the impact of youth entrepreneurship policies and programmes on youth.

3. Participants emphasized, that the best way of poverty alleviation among the young generation is to encourage the development of indigenous entrepreneurship and to provide a supportive environment for the SME creation and evolution.

4. It was recommended that Governments should carry out a dialogue with large enterprises and multinational companies in order to identify measures to improve the access of the newly graduated students to jobs.

5. The UNECE was advised to investigate the possibility of creating a special website for young entrepreneurs.

### ***Round Table on the Role of ICT in Mainstreaming of Youth***

The Round Table organized by the Swiss Media Association brought together experts in e-learning, e-teaching, e-training, e-human resources management, representatives of the private sector, education establishment and policy –makers from Switzerland, Korea, Russian Federation, France, Germany and Ukraine.

In their presentations, panelists emphasized that the most important pre-condition for the information technologies to release their potential and for the societies to fully capture social and economic benefits associated with these technologies is the willingness, commitment and determination of the Governments to make this happens. Technologies are a means, a tool, which, depending on the existing environment, may have either a limited and/or differentiating effect in terms of income distribution, or, on the contrary, may significantly empower all the social groups, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of the society, widening their access to income opportunities. Examples, which were highlighted by some of the panelists, showed that even illiterate people could benefit from these technologies, including the acquisition of literacy.

Many software programmes, which were presented at the Round Table, are able to augment the users in terms of their learning capability, knowledge, information, as well as in terms of economic gains. Programmes and schemes, successfully implemented by Korea, Switzerland, as well as by some of the participating companies in Africa and Asia, have

demonstrated, that information technologies may be used anywhere with a minimum support. However, if the issue of access remains unresolved in some of the countries of the UNECE region in the immediate future, this would lead to the formation of a new division, the first- and the second-class citizens, those having the access and those deprived of it. Therefore, the Governments have a crucial role to play in ensuring that these new technologies are accessible to all.

The participants also presented cases of successful youth entrepreneurship schemes, which involve various stages of the ICT development and application, from software design, content provision, programming to wholesale/retail. However, as it was undermined by the Director of the Foundation de Vigier Entrepreneurship, key pre-conditions of success are a preliminary screening of business ideas and the availability of seed money to ensure that young entrepreneurs are provided with a start-up capital.

### **Recommendations of the Forum**

Apart from the specific recommendations made during the deliberations of the Working Groups, the participants of the Forum made the following recommendations:

1. Request a joint Secretariat of the UN organizing agencies to draft a regional plan of action, which should be sent to all the Ministries responsible for youth affairs and organizations, which participated in the Forum, for contribution and comments. In preparing a draft plan of action, the joint Secretariat is recommended to make sure that all the three goals of the Forum (security, opportunity and prosperity of youth), which are horizontal aspects, are taken into consideration and, therefore, its implementation will result in alleviation of all the risk cited factors and the vulnerability of youth in the region.
2. Recommend the draft regional plan of action being submitted for consideration, including possible means and way of its implementation, by a joint meeting of the Ministers for Youth Affairs and National Youth Councils to be held in the first quarter of the year 2003.
3. Recommend conveying the Second Regional Forum on Youth in 2004, ensuring that all the countries of the region are fully represented.
4. Recommend other UN Regional Commissions to organize similar regional Forums on Youth with the UNECE First Regional Forum as a model.
5. Invite ESCAP and ESCWA and ECA to consider the possibility of joining some of the UNECE sub-regional programmes aiming to facilitate the development of youth e-commerce.
6. Invite the private sector to actively participate in national, sub- and regional youth programmes and projects on the partnership basis.
7. Request the joint Secretariat to address the Governments of the UNECE member States, calling upon them to support activities and initiatives, aiming to promote youth

employment and youth entrepreneurship, and/or to develop specific national policies and policy instruments.

8. Call upon all the relevant UN agencies and bodies to continue their cooperation in promoting youth employment and youth entrepreneurship in the UNECE region.
9. Call upon Governments and all relevant UN agencies and bodies to provide better targeted actions with regards to the employability of youth in general with specific attention towards youth in disadvantaged situations.
10. Invite the donor community to consider the possibility of providing a financial support for youth employment and entrepreneurship projects and programmes, initiated in countries in transition, including those based on the partnership approach and joint youth ventures.
11. Request the joint Secretariat of the UN organizing agencies to identify a possibility of developing and funding sub-regional projects on ICT in Mainstreaming Youth in Economic Activities, including from the UN Development Account.
12. Recommend establishing a UNECE group of experts for screening project proposals made by the participants of the Forum in order to form a portfolio of bankable projects to be presented to international financial institutions, bilateral development assistance agencies, corporate and other private foundations for funding.
13. Request the UNECE to organize a workshop in sub-regions on Best Practices in Generating Youth Employment and Self-employment Opportunities and on How to Increase the Survival Rate of SMEs Owned by Young Entrepreneurs, giving a special attention to youth in declining industrial areas and possibilities of utilizing its potential in their recovery.
14. Request the UNECE to initiate a systematic collection of data on youth entrepreneurship and to prepare a compendium of best practices in ensuring the sustainability of business set up by young entrepreneurs.
15. Request the UNECE to study the possibility of developing a PPP youth entrepreneurship programme for the South-East European sub-region or within the framework of SECI to be submitted for consideration/funding by the Stability Pact, the EU, EBRD and the World Bank.
16. Request the UNECE to study the feasibility of creating youth banks in the region, drawing upon the expertise available in the UN system, regional and international financial institutions.