



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/OPA/CONF.3/2003/8/S.8 (Summary)
28 July 2003

ENGLISH
Language: ENGLISH
ENGLISH and RUSSIAN only

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COORDINATING UNIT FOR OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

**CIS FORUM ON YOUTH:
“Youth of the XXI Century: Realities and Perspectives”**

Kiev, Ukraine, 24-26 September 2003

**KEY ROLE OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE SUSTAINABLE
AND INDEPENDENT NATION AND STATE BUILDING PROCESS**

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Summary

We, at the World Youth Bank (WYB), consider CIS Forum on Youth as a major breakthrough in dealing with youth problems in this region (as well as the First UNECE Regional Forum on Youth: “Security, Opportunity and Prosperity” held in Geneva in 2002). Never in the history have various UN bodies and affiliated organizations held an international Forum on a theme so fundamental and so long-term neglected – the role of youth in the development. Political, economic and even religious matters have been talked over, elaborated, evaluated and discussed on many occasions and in every possible way, but the role of youth in the nation and state building process comes as the last, but not the least, important theme to be elaborated, evaluated and agreed upon. WYB sincerely hopes that various policies and policy instruments will be discussed and elaborated in order to agree on approaches and conditions necessary for the full development of youth in the Eurasian region. Vast natural and social resources as well as the unique cultural heritage and precious historic background of this region raise hopes that, in the nearest future, this region could become not only economically advanced but powerful strategic partner of the developed world. We also hope that the key historic role of youth in that process at all levels, national, regional and local, will soon be recognized, empowered and legally formulated.

Poverty is basically three-dimensional: material (income), intellectual (education, knowledge) and spiritual (moral, religious, etc). Generations, which youth spent in poverty, have had to suffer the rest of their life from: the lack of education and skills, consequently, the lack of income, consequently, the lack of health and, finally, the lack of knowledge and understanding, and, therefore, continuous poverty, which they handed over to their children.

If we could agree on that, it seems that the development of a mankind as a whole has been structurally unresolved for several thousand years, because poverty is not the cause but the consequence of our misgoverned development of the Human Civilization. Accordingly, youth poverty is not the cause but the consequence of the poverty of their parents.

To deal with youth poverty on a long-term basis, we have to recognize that this multidimensional problem requires structural multidimensional approach, including coordinated political, economic, spiritual, cultural and other social actions at all levels (global, regional, national, local).