

29 May 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Closing of the Commemoration of 20th Anniversary of World
Programme of Action for Youth**

Delivered by H.E. Alvaro José De Mendonça E Moura, Permanent Representative of Portugal on behalf of President Kutesa

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, as we close this commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

Today has provided an opportunity to consider the many successes we have enjoyed over the last two decades in our efforts to address issues facing young people globally and in our individual countries.

We have shared experiences and reflected on the main challenges that persist with regard to young people, including lack of access to quality education, unemployment, gender inequality, violence and conflict, and limited participation in political and socioeconomic spheres.

It was also noted that some young persons are lured into illegal activities including violent conflict due to lack of opportunities for gainful employment.

Many delegations called for the full and effective implementation of the World Programme of Action through renewed, collective commitments by all stakeholders.

Participants highlighted the need for robust and effective policies for youth, as well as the importance of including young people in decision-making at all levels.

The importance of education in empowering young people and enabling them to reach their full potential was underscored. Many speakers expressed concern about the millions of young people that are not in school, while others stressed the need for safe educational environments following shocking attacks targeting schools around the world.

Many speakers emphasized the need for skills development, promotion of entrepreneurship and facilitating access to affordable credit as crucial for youth to engage in income generating activities.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

Given the important contribution and influential roles that young people continue to play worldwide, many speakers stressed that the time has come to give the youth “a seat at the table” with regard to our future development aspirations.

Today, we have heard strong support from Member States, civil society and young people themselves for taking concrete steps to improve the situation of young people worldwide.

It was emphasized that the youth will play an important role towards the achievement of sustainable development. As we formulate an ambitious and transformative post-2015 development agenda, today’s proceedings have added impetus towards ensuring that the needs of young people are prioritized.

It is incumbent upon governments and all stakeholders worldwide, as we mark 20 years since the adoption of the World Programme of Action for Youth, to ensure national development plans and policies take into account the needs and interest of the young.

I would like, once again, to thank all of you for your valuable contributions and proposals. A President’s Summary of today’s event will be made available to stakeholders in due course.

I thank you for your attention.