

S t a t e m e n t
by

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Croatia's Youth Delegate at the 60th United Nations General Assembly

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Item 62

Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family devoted to evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond

6 October 2005

Mr. President,

My name is Matej Peretin and I am a Youth Delegate and member of Croatian delegation at the 60th General Assembly of the United Nations. I am fourteen years old and a first year student at the Petar Preradović Grammar School in Slatina, a town in northern Croatia. I was recently elected President of the Local Youth Council of Slatina, which operates within the framework of Croatian National Youth Council.

Croatia has aligned itself with the Statement of the European Union delivered by the United Kingdom. I wish to take this opportunity to set out how young people in Croatia have implemented, at the local level, the recommendations of United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth and also the relevant parts of the United Nations Millennium Goals.

Croatia has had a national youth policy since 2000. Among the key priorities of the policy are the participation of youth in decision-making, non-formal education and youth employment.

Mr. President,

Consistent with the call of the World Programme of Action for Youth for the full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and decision-making, a National Youth Council was initiated and registered in Croatia in 2001. The Council operates as a national civil society organization, open to all young people in Croatia aged between 15 and 29 years.

The Croatian National Youth Council signed a Social Partnership Agreement with the Croatian Government, and the Government approved the Council as the member of State Working Group for the elaboration of a National Programme of Action for Youth. In 2001, the President of the Council was invited to participate in the Croatian President's Expert Group for Youth.

The Council has also represented the interests of Croatian youth in a number of international events including the Fourth United Nations World Youth Forum in Dakar, the International Labor Organization Global Employment Forum and the UN World Summit on Information Society in Geneva, among others.

In 2005 the Council was awarded the «World Youth Award» by World Assembly of Youth as one of the three most effective National Youth Councils globally. The Secretary-General of Croatian National Youth Council serves as the vice-president of the World Assembly of Youth.

The network of local youth councils in Croatia relies significantly upon information and communications technology. I invite delegates to visit the stand of Croatian National Youth Council in the United Nations Headquarters lobby to learn more about the Council's governance and its activities.

Mr. President

The Croatian delegation invites the Youth Delegates and Governments of the United Nations member states to recommit themselves to the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth. In this regard, we encourage member states which have not yet done so to consider adopting a full and effective youth participation agenda at all levels of government in relation to the social, economic and political processes that concern young people. In Croatia we have found that direct elections for local youth councils have been important for strengthening legitimacy. In addition, cooperation between local Civil Society Organizations, governmental bodies and the private sector can be helpful in developing funding schemes for employment and educational opportunities for youth.

Finally, allow me to draw attention to a Croatian initiative. In 2002, we commenced negotiations for the establishment of a Croatian Youth Bank, focused on job-creation for young people. In the same year, youth representatives from around the world, gathered in Croatia, expressed their will to be included in the process of establishing a World Youth Bank. A special resolution on a World Youth Bank was adopted in 2002 by most representatives of National Youth Councils across the globe. The World Youth Bank Network, an international NGO, which is the preparatory body for the establishment of a World Youth Bank is now operating from its administrative headquarters in Zagreb.

It is my pleasure to invite you all tomorrow to join us at the World Youth Bank Project side event which will focus on a potential strategy to address the global problem of high levels of youth unemployment. You can also learn more about this project on the World Wide Web at www.w-yb.org

Mr. President

Finally, allow me to express the intention of the Government of the Republic of Croatia to continue to attach special importance to the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

Thank you.