

Proceedings of the conference.

**United Nations of Youth
UNOY Alliance International Conference**

**OUR ENVIRONMENT - OUR RESPONSIBILITY
in response to the outcome of UNCED**

**16 - 25 August, 1992
"Islotsch" Minsk, Belarus**

After the arrival of most delegates in "Islotsch", a beautiful retreat, provided by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Belarus, the conference started on the evening of Sunday, August 16, with a Belarus folkloric group performance. A self introduction of participants followed and closed the day's activities.

The nine-day conference was attended by 87 participants from 34 countries, representing UNOY members from existing UNOY Nets and youth, in their individual capacities, from other Youth NGO'S.

Opening, Monday, August 17

The opening ceremony of the conference took place on Monday, August 17. Three state officials of the Republic Belarus Mr. Michael V. Podgainy, Minister of Youth Affairs, Dr. Anatoly Dorofoyev, Chairman of the State Ecological Committee, a personal representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Chairman of the Belarussian Ecological Union addressed the session.

Mr. Podgainy in his speech commended the UNOY Alliance International Conference for recognizing the grave environmental problem facing the world and making efforts to address it. He said that the environment has no borders and that it is not just the responsibility of only one generation to save it.

On his part, Dr. Dorofev said the Chernobyl disaster of 1986 had created gigantic ecological problems for the people of Belarussia, and therefore appealed to all peoples of the world to help solve these problems. He also stressed the need for the world to prevent any future occurrences of such disasters.

Dr. Dorofayev appealed for the support of the international community in order to alleviate grave consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. He assured the participants that the resolutions of the conference will be fully supported by the Belarussian government.

The Head of the Belarussian Ecological-Union pointed out that "the environment we create today is our future". He called for an ecological glasnost to solve the problems of population growth and of the environment.

Dr. Ahwraham Soetendorp, Honorary President of the UNOY Foundation in his message, enclosed in Addendum to the present document, said, that: "The young people of the world should form an alliance that raises its voice in all lands to support all who are threatened. If we stay together and act, we break the silence and feeling of powerlessness, we will gather the energy necessary to bring the world community into harmony with its transformed state ... The young people in the Global Forum in Rio made an impressive contribution as they were inspired by the task not to use "words, words, words" but "act, act, act!"

The Vice Chancellor of the Minsk Institute of Foreign Languages, (co-organiser of the conference) Dr. Juri Stulov, also gave a brief welcome address and said all global problems and difficulties could be solved when people will unite and pull their resources together.

In his intervention, Mr. Nikolai Firioubine, Founder of UNOY, said that already for twenty years the General Assembly of the United Nations has on its agenda the item called: Channels of communication of youth with the UN. At first the UN was involved in "broadening", then "strengthening" and finally in "attuning" those channels. We want to make it very clear that the UNOY is not another "CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION OF YOUTH WITH THE UN", but "AN INSTRUMENT OF PARTNERSHIP OF YOUTH WITH THE UN". In other words the UNOY seeks PARTNERSHIP of the youth with their elders in the policy and decision making process on all levels.

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Entertainment by Byelorussian folk groups ended the opening session.

The opening was attended by journalists from the national television, national radio and newspapers.

The afternoon started with the adoption of the conference rules of procedure and elections of the following participants for the smooth running of the conference.

Chairing team: Abu Hassan Koroma (Sierra Leone)

Paul Gideon van Zyl (South Africa)
Ayoola Ladapo (Nigeria)
Seha Seker (Turkey)

Sarah Hernandez (France)
Conference team: 3 volunteers

Rajiv Kaul (India)
Wagaki Mwangi (Kenya)
Yaroslav Sinitsov (Belorus)

International Secretariat: Nikolai Firioubine, Founder UNOY
Maria Kooijman, Int.Coordinator
Bimal N. Patel, Conf. Co-Coordinator
Roserie Steverink, UNOY Staff

Drafting team: Douglas Campos (Costa Rica)

Franklin Donkoh (Ghana)
Midori Paxton (Japan)

Gert Jan Rietveld (Netherlands)

Conference Facilitator: Valentin Romanov (Russia)

Plenary session I

Four presentations were made at this session by Mr. Jose Sotto, Director of the Facilitating Committee of the Independent Sectors for UNCED '92, Miss Wagaki Mwangi, IDYEN, Kenya, Mr. Mustapha chouikha, UNCED Youth Ambassador and Mr. Douglas Campos, UNOY member of the international Youth Committee of Youth '92 and at UNCED Global Forum.

In his presentation, Mr. Sotto pointed out that though UNCED did not accomplish all the envisaged targets set before it two years earlier, it will be remembered in human history as having made some achievements. He said what was at stake was how local and national NGO's including the UNOY can impress upon their governments to be mindful of their summit promises and implement them. Some achievements of the UNCED according to Mr. Sotto, are that it secured a set of agreements between governments which made a significant step forward in international cooperation on development and environmental issues; political commitment to the agreements at the highest level and also placed the issue of sustainable development at the heart of international diplomatic agenda. It also opened new ways for communication and cooperation between officials and non-official organisations working towards environmental development.

He also explained that UNCED has articulated a basic international principle that human beings are the center of all things, hence the entire world has the right to development.

The most important challenge expressed in Agenda 21, chapter 25 related to children and youth in sustainable development is Principle 21 (A/CONF.151/5/Rev.1 Eng. p9):

The creativity, ideals and courage of the youth of the world should be mobilized to forge a global partnership in order to achieve sustainable development and ensure a better future for all.

He posed the question: "What is your model for partnership?" Partnership with Governments and NGO's - that is a new psychology and philosophy of life.

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In conclusion he said, UNCED has set the pace for the world to follow, adding that "a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step and UNCED was first step". (see addendum)

Miss Wagaki, on her turn identified access to information and ability to make decisions as two of the most important needs of every people. She therefore called for the commitment of participants to get the youth in their respective countries well informed and also to pressurize them to act. In order to get governments to act, she urged the youth to take initiatives to enable them make their governments responsive to their commitments. Miss Wagaki also called for the need for the youth to build global partnership for the exchange of ideas, adding that competition must give way for cooperation.

Mr. Mustapha on his part expressed the need for a change in the structures of limited nations. He said, the UNCED provided a unique opportunity for the youth to hold discussions and a forum for becoming informed. He also called for a new world order which affords equal rights to all peoples.

Mr. Douglas Campos in his presentation briefed the conference on the Youth '92 held in March in Costa Rica. He said political and other differences did not allow the conference to have smooth discussions and added that there is therefore the need for the UNOY to be the key to all youth problems. He said poor countries are getting poorer while the rich are becoming richer. Agenda 21, he explained, can therefore be a useful document in reversing this trend, yet the UNCED can not itself implement it unless the youth will be involved in this process. It is thus not the most important question whether UNCED was a success or failure, but what is important is the conference's ability to adopt positive and practical resolutions which can enjoin governments to act, he concluded.

Tuesday, August 18

Plenary session II

A presentation was made by Dr. Bernard Zamaron, D616gue general of the Robert Schuman Centre on the vision and future of the CIS countries. He urged the youth not to be afraid to change the prevailing powers of the world in order to enable them transform the world, and suggested two ways of effecting this change.

1. There should be democratic representation of states in the society of nations.
2. The current UN security council model needs a change.

On UNCED, he said the results will be noted only until economic improvements are seen all over the world.

In Mr. Sotto presentation which followed, he stressed the need for initiative in all things especially in solving problems. He called for *partnership based on common aspirations*. The UNOY, he concluded, should be different from other organisations that claim to champion the cause of youth but do otherwise.

He said the contents of Agenda 21, chapter 25 need to be carried down to the people in the towns and villages. In order that they would all team up to ensure that their governments are committed to development.

Forum discussion.

The session broke into three working groups to evaluate the UNCED and also to discuss the role of youth in the Post-UNCED Process. The following are the reports of the groups.

Group I

- * UNCED offered no concrete deadline for the implementation of its proposals. The youth therefore have to translate these proposals into action.
- * UNOY should make the struggle against poverty at local levels one of its priorities.
- * UNOY must be a catalyst to bring the world's youth together.
- * There is the need for recycling of waste and new environmental friendly energy system.
- * Governments must be pressed to include youth in government delegations to inter-governmental meetings and conferences.
- * Women's participation in government and decision making needs to be encouraged.
- * Governments must cut down military expenditures and channel such money to developmental programmes.
- * Nuclear testing must be stopped.
- * Governments all over the world must have global perspectives.
- * Environmentally safe living should be encouraged through the mass media.
- * Governments must be urged to quickly start the implementation of Agenda 21.

Group II

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- * The role of youth should include the identification of problems and means to solve them.
- * The youth also have the responsibility to promote dialogue and action through education.
- * The above can be done through several means including discussions, seminars, slide and film show etc.

As a concrete prove of their readiness to act, delegates named a number of programmes that could be undertaken in their various countries immediately after the conference. These include seminars for children and youth, newspaper articles and youth camps.

Group III

- * The youth should communicate, inform and educate people on all social, economic, political and environmental issues.
- * There is the need for the creation of an international information centre and the publishing of a UNOY newsletter.
- * UNOY must raise funds for the mobilization of youth.
- * There should be a follow up to UNCED.
- * Agenda 21 must be implemented by all governments that signed it without delay.

In the evening an inspiring workshop was given by Green Peace representatives from Moscow, Olga Manakanova and Chris Smid. They said: "To make people aware is one thing, to get people to act is quite another". They demonstrated effective ways for campaigning and problem solving. It has 2 elements: WHAT and HOW. WHAT are the problems; who is already working on them, etc.

Make a goal statement.

HOW is about strategy. Green Peace's main 3 strategies:

1. Research (correct data)
2. Public relations (to get support from public opinion)
3. Negotiation.

Wednesday, August 19

Participants visited Druzhny, a settlement centre for the Chernobyl disaster evacuees in the Byelorussian Republic, 250 Km away from Chernobyl. Druzhny has a population of 6000 people, half of them - 3000 are Chernobyl refugees from Pripyat which is within the 30 km zone of Chernobyl. Today many of the refugees found work in small enterprises in Druzhny or in Minsk (54 km away). The major problem is that the town of Druzhny was not capable to accommodate the refugees. Without hospital (only a poly-clinic), it even today has little facilities to help the people, many who stand in need of physical and psychological help.

Thursday, August 20

Three messages to the conference from the following dignitaries were read out (full texts of the messages are enclosed herewith below).

1-Arthur Dahl, Deputy coordinator Earthwatch, UNEP and former member of the UNESCO secretariat:

"While we in the UN system are making every effort to implement Agenda 22, the bulk of the effort will fall on your generation".

2-Hitoshi motoshima, Mayor of Nagasaki city, Japan:

"Nagasaki was reduced to ashes by the explosion of an atomic bomb over the city 47 years ago. More than two third of the population at that time were killed, injured and even today, many of the survivors are suffering from the late effects of exposure to the bombing.

It is imperative that the grass roots peace movement expands to global levels and inform humanity of the danger of nuclear weapons. We must rise above the barriers of nationality, religion, race or ideology and strive together for a peaceful world free from the threat of nuclear disaster.

3-Robert Muller, Chancellor, UN University For Peace, Costa Rica, former Ass. Sec. General to the UN. He expressed his regret for not being present at this important conference.

"I have followed the efforts and activities of UNOY with utmost interest since the beginning. my view has always been that youth is insufficiently represented at the United Nations, be it in the Secretariat, the delegations, the NGO's and world conferences ... You are entitled to make noise as we approach the 50th anniversary of the UN, and the year 2000. Express vocally your dissatisfaction with the way this poor planet and its people are mismanaged. we need urgently a new political world order as we enter into the third millennium ... The world

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needs the view of youth. You are a vital link between the past and future. You must therefore be given an eminent role in the United Nations, the most advanced instrument ever on this planet; the beginnings of a global body (the physical condition of humanity, its health, nourishment, longevity, employment and fulfillment) of a global brain, of a global heart and a global soul ... I am glad that you take a vigorous stand on this issue by requesting the creation of a United Nations Of Youth as part of the United Nations system. Do not cease making that noise, for if youth leads, the leaders will follow. The 50th anniversary of the UN offers a unique opportunity for world rethinking and action. I am glad that you have grasped it and that you are already prepared for it. I will support and help you in every way. We are in great need of a new youth movement for the nineties ...

Please ask for the replacement of military training institutions on this planet by peace training instruments. Ask governments to follow the magnificent and so successful example of the Costa Rica in demilitarizing their countries."

Presentations were made by Mr. Valentine Romanov, student of UN University For Peace, Costa Rica and Mr. William Angel, UN office at Vienna. In memory of those who lost their lives in the attempted coup in Moscow last year, Mr. Romanov asked for one minute silence after which he spoke on non-violent conflict resolutions. He cited several forms of conflicts and pointed out that conflicts are inherent to human beings.

The youth, he said, must be concerned with the identification of conflicts and the different ways through which to solve them in non-violent ways. He therefore proposed negotiations with the participation of young trained peacemakers should be used in solving conflicts since it is one of the most peaceful methods.

Mr. William Angel began his presentation with a brief resume of his experience with youth movements and congresses since the 1970s to date, touching his participation in the UN World Youth Assembly in New York (1970). He said that at the two earlier world youth congresses in 1936 and 1938 efforts were made towards the creation of a Youth League of Nations. Explaining the reasons why there had not been any more world youth congresses since 1970, Mr. Angel remarked that several attempts towards such were prevented by the then prevailing East-West ideological strife. He regretted that the current political and ideological changes (Perestroika and Glasnost) had not reflected in the UN, and expressed the need for such a change which would also welcome the youth to the UN. One such attempt was the UN Youth Forum in Vienna in 1991, a large meeting of youth NGO'S.

Mr Angel explained the relationship of the UN with the various youth NGO'S. The question was raised whether there is really a need for a UNOY Alliance and, if so, how such could be created. Mr. Angel stressed that for any formidable global youth action, any attempt to have a real global youth body should take into consideration the need for a genuine democratic structure and a representation of all 179 countries of the UN.

He described the UNOY as a wonderful idea for the future, but added however, that the idea is not yet a reality.

He recommended the UNOY to apply for an NGO status and the active participation of the UNOY in a possible international planning committee for the purpose of convening the 2nd UN World Youth Assembly to commemorate the 50th UN anniversary. He also emphasized that there is still time to introduce through the governments into the Draft UN World Youth Programme of Action (which will be considered by the UN Social Commission at its session in February 1993 in Vienna) suggestions along these lines. As a first step towards the realisation of the UNOY dream to consolidate the efforts of all the numerous youth groups of the world the UNOY may participate in the International planning committee for the UN Youth NGO Forum in case it will be held in 1993 in the UN Vienna Office.

In conclusion, he proposed that youth groups should aim at getting to the stage where they would work in partnership with the UN bodies and agencies (as is already the case with a number of UNOY Nets in various countries).

Group discussions

The session broke into four groups to discuss the UNOY structure, principles, its relation with the UN (inc. possible NGO status) and how it can be funded. Following are their reports.

Group I

- * UNOY should be a global youth Organisation promoting peace and cooperating with like minded organisations and individuals.
- * The UNOY objective should be to combine the efforts of national youth organisations and individual youth to build a new world order in cooperation with the UN based on humanism, and global awareness of the oneness of mankind.
- * The goals should include assisting national and global projects aimed at promoting peace, protection of the environment and the promotion of education and sustainable development.

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- * Membership should include groups and individuals based on the principles of equality, non-violence, respect for human rights, religious, racial and ideological beliefs.
- * Right and duties to include the initiation in undertaking both national and international projects.

GROUP 2

- * The name UNOY should be maintained.
- * UNOY should be a global youth alliance of NGOs and youth individuals.
- * UNOY should accept the UN charter as the basis for its independent work, and cooperate closely with it to achieve its aims.
- * To develop relationship with the other organisations based on unity and equality.
- * The structure of the UNOY in individual countries should be made up of NGOs and individual youth, to form a national assembly consisting of delegates from the various groups. There should be the international assembly, the council and the secretariat.

GROUP 3

- * UNOY should be a set up of a global Organisation which represents youth or provides a platform for them.
- * Should convene meetings that will facilitate discussions amongst democratically elected youth representatives.
- * Delegates to the conference should involve in non governmental organisations which are community based with aims centered on Agenda 21.
- * UNOY should function in a manner similar to the present UNOY nets, undertaking projects in their respective communities.
- * Structure of UNOY should be that of local nets and an international secretariat.

GROUP 4

- * UNOY should be an international NGO which promotes an alliance of Young people and youth organisations.
- * UNOY should promote a World Youth Assembly under the auspices of the UN in 1995.
- * It must be a unification of youth organisations.
- * In the process of bringing different groups together to form the UNOY the present nets should lose their identities as UNOY since maintaining the name UNOY and calling on other groups for the formation of UNOY Alliance cannot work. (this issue was later again taken up with Mr. Angel in order to see how a possible bottom up structure (UNOY nets acting at the grass root level) could go together with a top down global alliance of youth NGO's structure.)

At the reconvened session after the group discussions, no concrete decision could be taken on the groups reports. After diverse views were expressed and hours of discussions, it was agreed that the session adjourned. However, the report of the group I was considered quite reflective of the majority view. Hence it was proposed for acceptance at the next plenary.

Friday, August 21

Plenary IV

Before going on to the day's business the chairman Valentine Romanov, informed the session about the conference team's observance of a systematic absence of a few participants at plenary and other sessions and appealed to those involved to change their habit.

For the day's discussion, it was proposed that the report of group I in the previous working group discussions should be accepted as a basis of the discussion on the alliance charter of UNOY.

After a very profound debate on the alliance charter which made the conference almost chaotic the session was adjourned and broken into three working groups to discuss the UNOY Alliance, the global youth village concept and to review the UNCED.

Saturday, August 22

Participants visited Vilnius, capital of Lithuania on sight seeing.

Sunday, August 23

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In the absence of the main speakers, there was a general discussion on networking and communication. Abu Hassan Koroma who led the discussion stressed the need for the preparation of concise project proposals by any group before inviting others to team up with them.

Other contributors explained the basic communication strategies. Delegates were advised to learn how to use and to strengthen the communication process between members

Reports from working groups

The following reports were presented at the plenary

- * global youth village
- * our environment our responsibility
- * UNOY provisional charter (Addendum)

Working Group: Global Youth Village (GYV) Sunday, August 23

Goals and functions of the GYV

The working group brainstormed the vision, function and goals of the GYV.

Ingolf Kruseman will participate in September in an architectural seminar where he will present the GYV proposal.

See background paper (Addendum by Ingolf K. and Mr. N.Firioubine.

Ingolf summarized the meeting of 21

Location of the GYV and function:

a. in nature (lake, hills, trees)

August

b. conference centre in the centre, surrounded by living quarters in a circular fashion

Result of the brainstorming session about the goals of GYV:

- goals similar to UNOY
- unification of youth in a village, conflict free
- in a joyful environment, youth curing themselves from the everyday world. It must be open to all.
- exchange, information centre

Goals:

1. to offer the possibility to young people and youth NGO's of the world to collaborate in concrete, community based development projects
2. in doing so, to facilitate intercultural understanding and communication exchange between youth of different countries
3. organise educational seminars amongst participants,
4. strengthening the role of youth in:
 - non-violent conflict resolution
 - environmental protection and restoration
 - education in their communities
 - promoting social equality (human and children's rights)
 - contributing towards global peace and understanding

Action plan

1st step

write a report on the project

- description of the GYV coordinator (Paul Gideon van Zyl, S.Africa)
 - budget of realisation (Sarah Hernandez, France)
 - architectural plans (Ingolf Kruseman. NL)
 - location (Wolfgang Fueter, Switzerland)
- <<<deadline; November 1st, 1992

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2nd step

Distribution of this report to every participant of the GYV team <<<deadline december 1st, 1992

3rd step

Contribution of each participant in the research of funds from Dec. 1st to Jan 1st, 1993

4th step

Fundraising

<<<deadline April 1st, 1993

If no positive results have come up, this wg will stop its work.

working group on OUR ENVIRONMENT - OUR RESPONSIBILITY August 23

Chairwoman Seha Seker, Turkey

Outcome of the working group

General remarks:

- History and mankind symbol of struggle of environment mankind.
- Psychology of Russian people is different.
- Think as decision makers.
- Define the concept of environment.

How can we contribute towards healing and preserving the environment?

Research and develop educational community based projects on:

- educational projects to learn from people sustainable linkages
- ozone layer, green house effect
- waste management, population control and environment
- industrial influence on pollution of rivers
- environment and UNCED and ecology
- translate Agenda 21 in simple language
- nuclear power plants (radiation has no limits)
- social ecology and environmental, stressing that "humanity as a whole i's the centre of environment and development.

Project and community based action:

- make ideas into practical projects and develop initiatives
- developing strategies which lead to action
- focus on the education of children
- siberian forest project
- children of Chernobyl project
- practical ways of helping people

Networking

- share projects, exchange information with one another and with
- organisations
- share ideas and experience.