FACT SHEET
6th UNESCO Youth Forum, Paris, 1-3 October 2009

Overview and history

- The 6th UNESCO Youth Forum will take place in Paris from 1-3 October 2009 as an integral part of the 35th UNESCO General Conference. It brings together young people from around the world to exchange on topical issues and identify common opportunities and challenges, leading to a Final Report which will be presented at the UNESCO General Conference.

- The first UNESCO Youth Forum was held at the 30th General Conference (1999). In 2003, it was unanimously decided (32C/Resolution 82) that the Youth Forum would become an integral part of every session of the UNESCO General Conference, the highest decision-making body of the Organization.

Delegates and observers

The Forum will include **147 delegates from 99 countries**, and **85 observers from 56 organizations***.

- Delegates are nominated by UNESCO Member States (maximum of two per Member State) according to the following list of criteria: age (18-24 years-old); membership in a representative youth organization and involvement in youth-related issues at the community level; gender parity (for member states with two delegates); and representation of indigenous peoples.

- Representatives of youth organizations, international and national NGOs and UN agencies will also participate in the forum as observers.

- Five youth journalists (one from each UNESCO region) will also be present to cover the Forum.

Themes

- In order to ensure the connection between the Youth Forum and the General Conference, the Forum's main theme will be "*Investing out of the crisis: towards a partnership between UNESCO and youth organizations*," based on one of the themes of the Ministerial Forum to be held during the UNESCO General Conference: "Investing out of the crisis – through action in social domains (Education, Sciences, Culture and Communication).

- There will also be a cross-cutting theme "*Youth participation: UNESCO Youth Forum, a long-term approach*" dedicated to the strengthening of youth participation.

Agenda

The Forum will run over three days with opening and closing sessions, one plenary session on each theme and seven parallel sessions. The plenary sessions will be moderated and will include contributions by youth panelists and experts on the themes being discussed.

- Session 1 (in plenary): "*Investing out of the crisis: towards a partnership between UNESCO and youth organizations*": presentations by youth panelists and experts, followed by a discussion.

- Session 2 (seven parallel sessions): Presentations, in relation to the two themes of the Forum, on UNESCO's programmes with and for youth will be prepared and chaired by UNESCO's sectors, followed by a discussion. One additional parallel session, organized by the Joint Programmatic Commission on Youth, will take place for observers.

- Session 3 (in plenary): "*Youth participation – UNESCO Youth Forum, a long-term approach*": presentations by youth panelists and experts, followed by a discussion.

- The discussions in the plenary and parallel sessions will lead to a Final Report, produced by a representative drafting committee and containing key recommendations and commitments made by the youth participants on the themes of the Forum. These recommendations will be presented by two youth delegates at the 35th UNESCO General Conference.

[* The information contained in this fact sheet is accurate as of 22 September 2009.]

What's new

For the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum a number of new elements have been introduced to contribute to the improvement of the organization, implementation and follow-up of the Forum:

- An **Intersectoral Working Group** has been set up by the UNESCO Director-General in order to ensure that all sectors of UNESCO (Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture, Communication and Information and the Bureau of Strategic Planning) work closely together to prepare the Forum and to contribute to its programme. Additionally, each UNESCO sector will present its area of work to the youth delegates and facilitate ensuing discussions during seven parallel sessions. The results of these sessions as well as the plenary sessions will be included in the Final Report.

- The Youth Forum will be led by a **lead facilitator assisted by five co-facilitators**, one from each of the five UNESCO regions (Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean). The professional facilitator will lead the participation of youth delegates during the Forum, which will help to avoid lengthy processes with regards to elections, associated rules and procedures of the sessions and guide discussions. In addition, there will not be an election of a president of the youth delegates in order to streamline the administrative process and to give more time for discussion.

- During the Forum's plenary sessions, **presentations will be made by both high-level experts and youth panelists**, including a youth keynote speaker at the opening session, contributing to the quality of the debates and providing a framework for discussion. The Forum will also provide youth with opportunities for discussion in several different contexts (delegates alone without observers or UNESCO staff, observers alone, and mixed plenaries) in order to maximize the potential for meaningful interaction between the participants.

- In addition to the youth delegates and observers, a **newsroom will be set up for five youth journalists**, one from each UNESCO region, who will attend the Forum in order to ensure internal coverage of the Forum, through blogs, articles, video clips, radio coverage and other mediums, and to report back on the Forum to their regional and local communities, networks and organizations.

- In preparation for the Youth Forum, an **online dialogue** has been set up to enable youth delegates to interact, to get to know one another, and to discuss and prepare the topics of the Forum prior to meeting in Paris. Each week during the build-up, an introduction, several questions and background documents relating to the themes of the plenary and parallel sessions of the Forum will be added to the online dialogue. The debates will be summarized each week, and will feed into the presentations during the Forum.

- A second **online discussion forum open to young people from around the world** has also been established in collaboration with TakingITGlobal (www.tigweb.org). It will allow UNESCO to gather the views, concerns and experiences of a broader scope of young people on the topics of the Forum. The main points resulting from these virtual exchanges will be included in summary documents to be used as background information for the sessions of the Youth Forum.

- An **in-depth critical review process** will also take place after the Forum in order to ensure that strengths and weaknesses are identified and that continued improvement of the Youth Forum and recommendation follow-up can be achieved in the future.

- The **follow-up process** for the 6th Youth Forum will extend the online dialogue process and will involve UNESCO partner organizations in the lead up to the 7th Youth Forum in 2011, focusing on implementing the recommendations from the 2009 Forum's Final Report. This follow-up will provide a vital opportunity to engage youth in the development of their communities and countries and is an important component of UNESCO's accountability towards youth.

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