

International Youth Day and the National Youth Week 2008 activities in Kenya

The international youth Day was marked on 12th August 2008 all over the World. The celebrations were organized by UN HABITAT in collaboration with the Nairobi Area Youth Workers Network, One Stop Youth Resource Centre, Environment Youth Alliance, The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and City Council of Nairobi. Youth from all walks of life took part in various activities that demonstrated their contribution towards addressing the day's theme: **Climate Change: Time for Action**. The day's events involved concerts, youth market, refurbishing of the One stop youth resource centre-Nairobi, a procession, music extravaganza, tree planting and speeches from different personalities in the area of youth, sports, environment and local Government. Hope worldwide set up a tent for the youth to donate blood that was to be taken to various hospitals to the needy. There was also HIV testing and counseling track on site for those who wished to know their status.

The day started with youth art specialists painting the walls and refurbishment of the One Stop Youth Resource Centre situated at the Old Nairobi city council licensing offices. There was also tree planting to mark the day. This went on up to midday when the procession started led by a music band from the Salvation Army through the city streets all the way to Uhuru Park (The main celebration venue). The main message and slogan here was: **Ni life Yako** (It's your life) and this was to mean that whatever action and decisions the youth were to take today will automatically affect their lives in future. Music Concert by different youth groups which included the famous Zangaliwa, Korogocho youth group, Nairobi Area Youth Workers Network among others.

Mr. Naison Mangiza represented UN-HABITAT's Executive Director at the function and he stressed that youth are not just leaders of tomorrow, but also of today. He also noted that climate change is one of the greatest challenges humanity has ever faced, requiring us all to work together to overcome the impending crisis. What better time, then, to strengthen our commitment to empowering youth as agents of change, partners in solving our shared global challenges? These alarming realities stand as warnings, urging us towards renewed global commitment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Yet urban transformation, with the attendant problems of slum proliferation and irreversible changes to our production and consumption patterns. He said that the theme for the World Urban Forum, taking place this November in Nanjing, China: *"Harmonious Urbanisation: The Challenge of Balanced Territorial Development."* is directly connected to climate Change and that leaders from around the world, youth and other representatives of civil society will explore together how the global community can address sustainable urbanization in the context of climate change.

The ministry of Youth and Sports reiterated their commitment towards assisting youth in their quench to acquire livelihood skills through training and also offer them employment opportunities. The occasion was also graced by Miss Kenya 2008, Ruth Kinuthia who told the youth that their lives lies on their hands and today's decisions will decide their destiny.