

## UN-HABITAT working with young men and women

The UN system officially defines youth as those aged 15-24. Globally, children and young people under 24 account for roughly 40 percent of the global population. Indeed, young people, many in the developing world condemned to live on the streets, are on the frontline of growing urban poverty, child trafficking, sexual exploitation, high unemployment, crime and violence, HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

- One out of three people in the developing world is under 14.
- In the developing world today, 57 million young men and 96 million young women are illiterate.
- One out of three people in the developing world is under 14.
- Over 70 million youths globally are unemployed, the majority in developing countries.

UN-HABITAT recognises young people as active participants in the future of human settlements, the UN parlance for towns

and cities. UN-HABITAT fosters partnerships with youth organisations. It works with partners like Stahlhofen and Lam to ensure their voices get heard on the world stage. Working with young men and women and understanding their diverse abilities, realities and experiences is an essential element of UN-HABITAT's drive for sustainable urbanisation.

Other UN-HABITAT departments that engage with young people include the Safer Cities Programme, the Sustainable Cities Programme that deals with environment, the Training and Capacity Building Branch and the Water and Sanitation team, which is promoting water conservation widely in schools and local communities in many developing countries, as well as the Youth Empowerment Programme that is imparting skills in construction technology to promote access to affordable housing and improve the livelihood of young people, for example through the Moonbeam Youth Training Centre in Nairobi. ♦

### Engaging

UN-HABITAT has devised a Youth strategy for enhanced engagement that works directly with youth-led groups.

### Informing

UN-HABITAT recognises young people as key to the future in an urbanizing world. Young people need to be informed of every opportunity to which they, like everyone else, have an equal right.

### Advising

A policy dialogue on youth, children and urban governance has been developed to promote dialogue and action on giving young people a role in urban governance.

### Connecting

UN-HABITAT initiates partnerships with youth organisations around the world. The agency regularly invites young people to its big international gatherings, like the World Urban Forum, so that their voices are heard on the world stage.

### Empowering

UN-HABITAT is setting up a series of computerised One-Stop youth information resource centres to help young

people living in poverty equip themselves better for employment through vocational training, apprenticeships.

### Consulting

UN-HABITAT's Urban Youth initiatives seek to engage and empower young people in urban poverty reduction responsibilities. It sees consultation and listening as a key to youth-led development.

### Doing

Starting with the continent facing some of the greatest poverty challenges, and in the context of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, UN-HABITAT has developed the Global Partnership Initiative on Urban Youth Development in Africa, the continent with the greatest problems. The initiative was started at the behest of governments which oversee the agency. This initiative was devised subsequent to a Governing Council resolution and in partnership with other relevant United Nations agencies, multilateral institutions and private foundations. This resolution also seeks to ensure "the active participation of UN-HABITAT in the Secretary General's initiative on youth employment". Some of the fruits of that resolution are the One-Stop Youth and We are the Future Centres.