

YOUTH AND GLOBAL PROGRESS

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บทคัดย่อ

การเฉลิมฉลองปีเยาวชนสากล (IYY) ในระหว่างวันที่ 12 สิงหาคม 2553 - 11 สิงหาคม 2554 และการประชุมทั่วไปของผู้มีระดับสูงของสหประชาชาติ (UN) เกี่ยวกับเยาวชนในหัวข้อเรื่อง “ บทสนทนาและความเข้าใจร่วมกัน” (นิวยอร์ก วันที่ 25-28 กรกฎาคม 2554) กระตุ้นให้เกิดการ ถกเถียงอย่างกว้างขวางเกี่ยวกับเยาวชนและความก้าวหน้าของโลก

บทความนี้วิเคราะห์สถานการณ์ภาพของประเทศสมาชิกขององค์การสหประชาชาติในเรื่องความจำเป็นที่จะต้องขับเคลื่อนตนเองจากคำมั่นสัญญาไปสู่การปฏิบัติที่เน้นผลในสาขาเยาวชน ความท้าทายและโอกาสในการพบปะกับกลุ่มประชากรที่สำคัญในการก้าวไปสู่ความก้าวหน้า เช่นเดียวกับวิธีการและหนทางในการกระตุ้นแรงบันดาลใจด้านสิทธิมนุษยชนและเสรีภาพพื้นฐานของเยาวชนจะได้รับการพิจารณาอย่างละเอียดตามเอกสารปัจจุบันที่เกี่ยวข้องมากที่สุดของสหประชาชาติ ยูเนสโก และอาเซียน

บทความนี้นำเสนอการสาธิตวิถีการวิพากษ์วิจารณ์โดยตัวแทนเยาวชนเกี่ยวกับแผนปฏิบัติการในประเด็นเยาวชนและการริเริ่มต่างๆ ที่สำคัญในระดับโลกและระดับภูมิภาคที่ตระหนักถึงความสัมพันธ์อันใกล้ชิดระหว่างเยาวชนและความก้าวหน้าของโลกอย่างละเอียด กลยุทธ์การพัฒนาที่มีอยู่ต้องได้รับการปรับเปลี่ยนเพื่อให้เยาวชนเป็นตัวแทนพลวัตของความก้าวหน้าของโลกมากขึ้น ข้อเสนอสำคัญประการหนึ่งคือ โดยการส่งเสริมวิสัยทัศน์สากลของความก้าวหน้าอย่างเต็มที่ คนรุ่นใหม่จะมีโอกาสทางประวัติศาสตร์ที่จะสร้างแบบแผนที่แข็งแกร่งสำหรับระเบียบของโลกใหม่ โดยสร้างจากคุณค่าพื้นฐานที่ประกาศโดยองค์การสหประชาชาติ

Abstract

The celebration of the International Year of Youth (IYY) during the period 12 August 2010 - 11 August 2011 and the High-level Meeting of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding (New York, July 25-28,

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2011) encouraged a large and significant debate about youth and global progress.

The article analyzes the positions of the UN Member States on the necessity to move from commitments to results-oriented actions in the field of youth. The specific challenges and opportunities facing a very important population group in its march to progress, as well as the main ways and means for advancing young people's aspirations, human rights and fundamental freedoms are scrutinized on the basis of the most relevant and recent UN, UNESCO and ASEAN documents.

The critical approach demonstrated by youth representatives towards current plans of action on youth issues, as well as some important and far-reaching initiatives formulated at global and regional levels recognizing the close relationship between youth and global progress are presented in a detailed manner in the article. Existing development strategies have to be adapted to make youth a more dynamic agent of global progress. One of the main conclusions is that by actively promoting an universalist vision of progress, the younger generation has the historic chance to provide a solid building block for a new world order based on fundamental values proclaimed by the UN.

COPING WITH A HISTORIC PREMIERE

In the twenty-first century, being silent, passive and indifferent is not an option for young people. The active participation of youth in the process of development and the ways and means for combating alienation and frustration among younger generation are priority issues on global agenda. The high visibility of students demonstrations and youth protest movements worldwide make impossible any underestimation of the matter.

A consensus is emerging that the present is not inherited from the past but is borrowed from the future."Youth are showing their influence throughout the world, and they deserve support and opportunities to reach their potential and make the greatest possible contribution to our shared future. That is why I have made addressing the needs of youth one of my top priorities".¹ This assessment made by the UN Secretary-Gen-

eral Ban Ki-moon in his message to the Global Social Business Summit 2011 in Vienna, 11-12 November, is a source of inspiration for the present article dealing with youth and global progress from the perspective of momentous world events in the field of youth in 2009-2011.

Let's put it in context. Thus, it should be recalled that in December 2009, on the proposal of the Group of 77 and China the General Assembly adopted its resolution 64/134 proclaiming the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, to commence on 12 August 2010 and to be concluded on 11 August 2011. The proclamation and celebration of the International Year of Youth (IYY) represented the renewed commitment of Member States to ensuring that young men and women are at the core of the development agenda whose implementation is an imperative prerequisite of global progress.²

To begin with, it is appropriate to refer to the Outcome document of the High-level

Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding adopted by consensus by 193 UN Member States on 26 July 2011 (see the full text in the *Appendix*) which starts with the following two paragraphs: “We, Heads of State and Government, Ministers and representatives of Member States, gathered at a high-level meeting at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 25 and 26 July 2011 on the theme “Youth: dialogue and mutual understanding”, 1. Stress the need to disseminate and foster among young people and educate them about the ideals of peace, freedom, justice, tolerance, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, solidarity and **dedication to the objectives of progress and development;**” (*emphasis added*)

In the light of the above mentioned programmatic document, the first question to be asked is an elementary one: Could a world without young people be imagined? No special research is needed to answer that we cannot imagine that. But who are the young people?

The UN demographic statistics show that on 1st October 2011 our planet numbered 7 billion people, including over 1.8 billion young persons between the ages of 15 and 24, a figure never seen before. That figure may prove to be much higher if we use a more liberal definitional approach according to which the younger generation covers the group of 10-35 years. But even with that restrictive statistical definition what is obvious is the fact that the present generation of youth is the largest ever in history. This represents a world premiere.³

Academic debates and popular interpretations of the concept of global progress

have not produced a consensus definition of this suggestive notion. However, there is broad agreement that in general terms progress comprises both material/economic and immaterial components. Well-being, quality of life, life satisfaction and sustainable development are integral parts of global progress. “Progress is the attraction that moves humanity”, said Marcus Garvey.⁴ The dynamism of today’s youth is there to prove the validity of this assertion.

To be more specific from the younger generation’s perspective, it has to be recognized that there is no genuine global progress possible without reducing the development gap among the 193 UN Member States. In fact, this is a major objective in line with the recommendations adopted in September 2010 by the UN General Assembly and incorporated in the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, proclaimed by the UN Millennium Summit on September 8, 2000) at its 65th session in 2010.

There are eight MDGs which might give tangibility to global progress as they are directed to universal actions meant to: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development.⁵

According to optimistic assessments, the MDGs can be achieved, even in the poorest countries, with renewed commitment, effective implementation and intensi-

fied collective efforts by all UN Member States. However, the process is of an unprecedented complexity under the present circumstances of globalized competition.

It is true that each country has the primary responsibility for its own development, but efforts at the domestic level need to be supported by an enabling international environment that complements national actions and strategies. In this context it should be emphasized that good governance and the rule of law at the national and international levels are very important factors for sustainable development and the elimination of existing gaps.

In conformity with recent evaluations, global progress in the MDGs in areas closely related to youth has been significant. Positive results have been registered in promoting gender equality, access to skilled care at birth and universal primary education. At the same time, however, it is clearly recognized that even this progress is insufficient and uneven. Therefore, in a realistic reflection of the current situation, the Outcome document of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth, already mentioned above, states the following on behalf of 193 UN Member States who:

“Welcome the ongoing efforts by Member States to implement their pledges to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and acknowledge the contributions of Member States, the United Nations entities, civil society organizations, including youth-led organizations, and the private sector to improve the situ-

ation of young people; note with concern, however, that, despite these efforts, substantial numbers of young people reside in areas where poverty constitutes a major challenge and access to basic social services is limited, especially for girls and young women, and that youth development remains hindered by the economic and financial crisis, as well as by challenges brought about by the food crisis and continued food insecurity, the energy crisis and climate change; and also note with concern that the overall progress towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in particular on issues relevant to youth, has been uneven”; (See *Appendix*)

The delegation of Mexico at the High-level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding offered a more vivid picture of this situation described above by reminding that today over 200 million youth live on less than a dollar a day, 88 million are unemployed, 160 million suffer from malnutrition, 130 million have not had access to basic levels of education, and 10 million live with HIV/AIDS. Therefore, the world community of nations should not wait any longer to change this reality and adapt existing development strategies to make youth an active agent of global progress.⁶

It is in the light of these realities that we have to see the correlation between youth and global progress, which is one of the basic ideas of this article. In the absence of a

universally accepted definition of global progress we should not ignore the simple fact that it demands a visible increase in global quality of life (QOL) to be illustrated with reliable data on social, economic and psychological factors that contribute to QOL including wealth, health, security, knowledge, freedom and equality. Yet, all these elements have to be linked to the actual demands of the younger generation.⁷

So being the case, the delegation of Monaco had all reasons to refer to a French writer, George Bernanos, who asserted: “It is the fever of young people that keeps the world temperature stable. When young people cool down, the rest of the world feels the chill”.⁸ That assertion was further explained by evoking some major events of 2011. Indeed, it is the feverish youth yearning for democracy, human rights and justice that paved the way for new regimes in the Arab world. It is undisputable that the Arab Spring would have been impossible without the involvement of dynamic young people, whose essential role has been widely lauded and emphasized worldwide. The Arab protest movements and uprisings reflected the staunch will of young people to actively participate at all levels of decision-making to establish their role in the transition towards a modern and democratic society.⁹

Moreover, as UN debates fully illustrated, young people also have an instrumental mission to perform in international organizations so that in the decision-making process their views should not be ignored, especially in the framework of achieving the MDGs, which call for vibrant youth participation. The reason for that is crystal-clear: the positive effects of global-

ization are not sufficiently reaped by the youth of today, while the negative ones affect first of all the younger generation.

In this regard, the delegation of Switzerland cogently pointed out that information and communications technology is a fantastic tool to promote the participation and integration of young people in society by creating links and bridges and by contributing to learning about democracy and human rights with a view to creating an open society for all, with education and training opportunities. The same delegation rightly concluded that young people must be placed “at the centre of action for democratic change and progress”.¹⁰

In a similar spirit, the delegation of Nigeria, one of the largest African countries, reminded the obvious truth that the youth of any society are its assets and its hope for the future; early investment in them is imperative for meaningful national development. Their energy, if properly harnessed, will contribute in no small measure to today’s success and tomorrow’s hope.¹¹

TOWARDS RESULTS-ORIENTED ACTIONS

Consistent with the above African approach, the delegation of South Africa had one of the most vibrant messages to convey during the general debate of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth. In its view, it is time for Member States to move from commitment to results-oriented actions. All energies should be channeled to youth development, since the youth are today’s resources and tomorrow’s leaders. Young people hold the

key to society's future. Their ambitions, goals and aspirations for peace, security, development and human rights are often in accordance with those of society as a whole.¹²

From an European perspective, the delegation of Romania reminded that we live in a quickly growing global society in which the links between nations are growing ever stronger and more complex. This presents the youth of today not only with an extra challenge but with a unique opportunity. Mobility has allowed young people to develop a better sense of understanding towards other cultures and societies, breeding tolerance and balance. From this point of view, there are reasons to be optimistic, since more and more young people from challenged areas of the world now benefit from the fruits of globalization.¹³

There is no doubt that global society and its inherent mobility offer the younger generation the possibility for better training in various fields, making a considerable contribution to their overall capacity to adapt to the requirements of today's dynamic global labor market. On the other hand, much more has to be done for supporting the costs of facilitating, introducing and promoting youth access to information and communication technologies, which are crucial elements that cannot be denied and which, in fact, are inseparable from global progress.¹⁴

We will quote two more delegations which emphasized the young people's role in promoting global progress. Thus, the delegation of India after pointing out that young people constitute a vibrant and dynamic segment of society, it concluded that the younger generation is also the most valuable human resource in any country, as youth

are, in fact, the building blocks of the nation. This assessment is highly relevant as it comes on behalf of a country with an extraordinary demographic potential. It is statistically demonstrated that a total of 840 million people, close to 70 per cent of India's population of around 1.2 billion, are under 31 years of age. Consequently, India is the country with the youngest population in the world and has valuable ideas to convey on youth issues to the world community.¹⁵

The analysis offered by the delegation of the United States of America brings additional relevant elements to clarify why we confront what is both a great shared challenge and a great shared opportunity in the field of youth. The point of departure in this analysis is the undeniable fact that now more than ever young people are at the very core of changing world events. More than 60 per cent of the world's population is under the age of 30. That demographic reality is increasingly a potential driver of great economic and social reform. However, the same reality can generate one of the great threats to national and international stability and security. The US delegation pointed out that of all nations with new outbreaks of civil conflict, 86 per cent have significant majorities under the age of 30.

The American delegation took also the opportunity to remind that extremist and criminal organizations have sophisticated and comprehensive youth strategies, offering young people empowerment, a sense of belonging, a sense of political participation. Boys and young men are often the prime targets of such extremist recruitment, fueling unrest around the world. Girls and young women are very often the most vulnerable

victims of disenfranchisement and oppression, and an under tapped resource in the fight for economic growth.¹⁶

However, during the same debate the delegation of Mali and delegates from other African countries did not fail to mention that young people are often the engines of history. It was thus that men such as Modibo Keita, Nelson Mandela, Ahmed Sékou Touré, Agostinho Neto, Amilcar Cabral, Patrice Lumumba, Kwame Nkrumah and others – all young men – committed to freeing their peoples from the colonial yoke.¹⁷

In the same context, the delegation of Luxembourg appreciated that what is happening today South of the Mediterranean and in the Middle East marks a step in the emancipation of youth as political and social stakeholders in their own right that is as important as the events of May 1968 were for the youth of Europe. The world community must live up to this historic opportunity.¹⁸

Elaborating further on the events evoked by Luxembourg, the delegation of Egypt expressed the view that the Arab Spring, inspired by Arab youth, made clear the critical role youth can play in their societies at all levels. Efforts must be made to meet the challenges that hamper their development throughout the world.¹⁹

Going further in developing the above opinions, the delegation of Morocco said that in their assessment of the situation of young people in the Arab world, the States acknowledged that they share with the rest of the world's youth many common concerns and attitudes on matters of universal interest, such as the desire for security, liberty, equality, dignity, health and acceptance of others. They also recognized such issues

as the lack of job opportunities, emigration and migration, political participation, conservation of the environment and controlling pollution. The States also affirmed their resolve to invest in young people, who have the most potential for bringing a multiplier effect to bear on their countries' economies, and the importance of providing them with opportunities to participate in policymaking and leadership processes.²⁰

“Healthy discontent is the prelude to progress”, said Mahatma Gandhi.²¹ History proves his assertion is right. While not specifically discussed during the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth, some very recent events involving youth in many developed countries deserve to be mentioned in the present article.

The first such event is the Occupy Wall Street movement whose slogan is “We are the 99 percent!”. Without entering into details, judging from the mass-media reports, the Occupy Wall Street protesters are filled with idealism and represent the latest incarnation in a line of progressive, populist voices similar to some extent to the union struggles of the 1930s and the Great Depression. Such voices have been silent for too many years. The Occupy Wall Street movement has its roots in the frustration of rampant unemployment, widespread foreclosures and the glaring inequity of the differences between the protesters' situations and that of the other 1 percent who constitute the ruling class.

The movement is using social media to drive its participants in a way quite similar to the one used by mass-media to fuel the Arab Spring. The momentum is described as “infectious”, but the final conclusion sounds positive: the main thing is that “a new

generation has found its voice. Good for them”.²²

Joseph E. Stiglitz, Nobel Prize Laureate, in an article suggestively entitled “The globalization of protest” commented on these events in the following way: “Globalization and modern technology now enable social movements to transcend borders as rapidly as ideas can. And social protest has found fertile ground everywhere: a sense that the “system” has failed, and the conviction that even in a democracy, the electoral process will not set things right – at least not without strong pressure from the street”.²³

REFLECTING GLOBAL ASPIRATIONS

The preparation and celebration of the IYY presented a unique strategic opportunity both to raise awareness about the specific challenges and opportunities facing a very important population group and to advocate for young people’s aspirations, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The report submitted by the UN Secretary-General on the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding (document A/66/129) provided a comprehensive summary of initiatives marking the IYY. As a whole, UN Member States, civil society groups and governmental and non-governmental entities organized, until 6 July 2011, 354 events, bringing the youth agenda to a higher prominence.²⁴

Within this general framework inspired by the theme of the IYY, “Dialogue and Mutual Understanding”, many activities were dedicated to promoting communication across generations, cultures, religions and

civilizations. They championed the ideals of peace, respect for human rights and solidarity. Member States, youth organizations, civil society groups and young people were encouraged to celebrate the IYY by holding activities to showcase the contributions of youth to development, promote mutual understanding and underscore the benefits of their participation in all aspects of society.

To be more specific, the 354 events mentioned above included conferences, forums, camps, exhibitions, competitions (such as sports, writing, photography, art), film screenings, concerts and training workshops, intergenerational conferences, model UN conferences, youth summits, festivals, online and offline courses on youth-related issues and community-service projects.

Taking advantage of the opportunity to put youth issues on the calendar, China proclaimed 2011 as the “European Union-China Year of Youth”, with the twofold objective of promoting intercultural dialogue and strengthening mutual understanding and friendship between European and Chinese youth.

In the largest Muslim country, – Indonesia, – the Ministry of Youth and Sports hosted, sponsored or led several initiatives. Among these initiatives the most important may be the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) University Student Conference, held in Bandung from 21 to 24 March 2010. It was meant to help identifying the role of youth in preserving cultural heritage. In a similar spirit, the Asia-Africa Youth Forum, held in Bandung from 23 to 27 August 2010, constituted a strategic opportunity for young people to raise their voices and promote their ideas on the

MDGs. In another field, the Bandung Games, held in Kuala Lumpur from 29 April to 2 May 2011, was a bilateral youth sports forum that brought together some 800 Indonesian and Malaysian students in friendly competition.

In the ESCAP region, the Asia-Pacific Interagency Group on Youth took place on 18 August 2010. Significant youth-related programs of the UN entities in the Asia-Pacific region were mapped between November 2010 and March 2011. The mapping focused on the major issues identified under the UN World Program of Action for Youth, and recommended potential areas of collaboration. The mapping provided the regional input to a global stock-taking of the capacity of the UN agencies in youth-focused analytical research, programs and activities. The Asia-Pacific Interagency Group on Youth reviewed youth policies and experiences in the region for a regional report on national youth policies.

At institutional level, it should be recalled that UNESCO served as the Co-Chair of the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development from February 2010 to February 2011, and spearheaded a host of initiatives at the national, regional and international levels during the whole duration of the IYY. National studies on youth development and civic engagement were developed in Azerbaijan, Burundi, Congo, Kenya, Lebanon, Russia and Tanzania. UNESCO supported national policy formulation on youth in Brazil, Jordan, Lebanon, Tokelau and Tuvalu, in cooperation with other UN agencies and national and regional partners, developed regional studies on youth civic engagement in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean area, the Asia-Pacific region and

the Arab States, and completed a study on the situation of youth in the Greater Horn of Africa.

Within the framework of the IYY Lebanon conducted a project on “Cultural reconciliation for Lebanese youth”, and capacity development in peace dialogue for Lebanese and Palestinian high school students. UNESCO also provided educational support for marginalized and vulnerable youth by building capacity through sport (Palestinian Territories), offering grant schemes and scholarships (Jordan and the Palestinian Territories) and working to map technical and vocational education and training opportunities for youth, particularly for female students, in Gaza.

In Egypt, Iraq and Tunisia, and in the Palestinian Territories, UNESCO supported consultations with youth to promote youth civil engagement and participation.

In the Arab States, a regional research project on “Entrepreneurship education in the Arab States” was carried out in 2011. UNESCO proposed the development of a joint follow-up mechanism for key youth events in order to strengthen the accountability and responsibility of both the organizers and the participants of such events and to facilitate partnerships for follow-up.

The fourth UNESCO Asian Youth Forum took place in September 2010 in the Republic of Korea and addressed the theme “Youth creativity and vision for community in Asia”. In July 2011, the National Commission of the Republic of Korea for UNESCO, in cooperation with the UNESCO Secretariat, organized the fifth UNESCO Asian Youth Forum, linked to the IYY.

In Latin America and Caribbean area,

the Forum of Ministers of Social Development (11 and 12 July 2011, San Salvador) focused on the theme, “Social policies for youth in Latin America”.

From a global perspective, UNESCO assessed the results of 50 international and regional events on youth since 2008, and developed a matrix with common clusters of recommendations, built around the standard areas of the UN World Program of Action on Youth and a number of emerging issues identified through these events. The initiative was presented and discussed at the seventh UNESCO Youth Forum which took place in Paris, at UNESCO headquarters, in October 2011, where partners and young participants identified the next steps for collaborative follow-up actions.

The report submitted by the UN Secretary-General on the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding (document A/66/129) contains in its final section the following recommendations, calling upon Member States:

- (a) To further strengthen partnerships with and among young people, youth organizations, academia, civil society organizations, the private sector, the media and the UN system in order to develop partnerships with youth;
- (b) To continue promoting a culture of dialogue and mutual understanding among and with youth, as agents of development, social inclusion, tolerance and peace;
- (c) To undertake measures in partnership with relevant stake-

holders to develop a youth-centered global development agenda.

The practical relevance of these recommendations is crystal – clear if they are considered in the light of current aspirations of the younger generation, in particular in developing countries. Speaking on behalf of the African Union, the delegation of Rwanda recalled that the world has always changed, and changes have always been brought about by the new generations. Accordingly, organizations of young people should be created to channel their ideals and aspirations in order to give them the possibility of exchange with their elders, thus contributing to the socio-economic and cultural development of their countries.²⁵

THE NECESSITY OF A HOLISTIC APPROACH

The most important global event of the IYY was generated by the implementation of the UN General Assembly’s resolution 64/134 to organize a UN High-level Meeting on Youth. The Meeting took place on 25, 26 and 28 July 2011 in New York at United Nations Headquarters with the participation of over 500 young people from the entire world.²⁶

In addition to a large plenary debate, under the UN High-level Meeting on Youth, two panel discussions took place. The first one was entitled “Strengthening international cooperation regarding youth and enhancing dialogue, mutual understanding and active youth participation as indispensable elements towards achieving social integration,

full employment and the eradication of poverty”.

The second panel discussion was dedicated to “Challenges to youth development and opportunities for poverty eradication, employment and sustainable development”. Both discussions had as a common denominator the promotion of global progress for and with youth. Many developing countries contributed with valuable ideas to these discussions whose results were reported to the UN General Assembly by Ghana and India.²⁷

As the Group of 77 and China are the collective sponsor of the initiative to proclaim the IYY which led to the UN High-level Meeting on Youth, we will summarize in a detailed manner, using the original terminology of the relevant text, the content of the statement made by Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China which represent in fact 132 countries.²⁸

In the opinion of 132 countries, the overarching theme “Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding” provided all UN Member States, the UN system, youth organizations and other stakeholders the opportunity to exchange views on the challenges related to youth, to discuss how to better address them and to commit to taking concrete actions.

The Group of 77 and China stressed the need for further efforts to support young people in developing their potential and to tackle the obstacles they face. In this regard, the primary responsibility for ensuring youth development lies with States, which should develop comprehensive policies and action plans that focus on the best interests of youth. The Group of 77 and China encouraged the international community to

support Member States, through enhanced international cooperation and the fulfillment of all ODA commitments, in their efforts towards eradicating poverty as well as achieving full employment and social integration.

Additionally, the Group of 77 and China reaffirmed the importance of the UN World Program of Action for Youth as the framework for youth policies, while recognizing the urgency of further developing it in order to fully address all current challenges affecting youth.

On substance, the Group of 77 and China acknowledged that problems faced by youth today have to be dealt with within a broader context of coordinate actions based on a holistic approach by tackling upfront problems encompassing a vast array of multidimensional aspects. Thus, the very nature of problems that distress youth today demands overlapping actions such as ensuring the best possible education, providing access to employment opportunities, enabling adequate food supply and nutrition, generating a healthy physical and social environment, granting the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and also the participation in decision-making processes.

At the same time, the 132 countries speaking by the voice of Argentina firmly stated that by managing to bridge the gap on all forms of inequalities – social, regional, racial, gender and others – a considerable contribution will be made for the much-needed worldwide achievement of the MDGs.

The first specific issue mentioned in this context was youth unemployment as a clear example of a challenge affecting youth that requires new ideas and renewed efforts from

the UN Member States and the international community. Unemployment has become a global problem affecting youth worldwide. All UN Member States were urged to consider undertaking efforts towards the development of a global strategy to effectively address this issue.

The second specific issue was the need to ensure that all citizens, including youth, enjoy the highest attainable standards of health and the necessity to undertake efforts to realize this objective.

The third issue was the importance of protecting youth from violence and crime, as well as preventing and addressing their involvement in criminal activity, including drug related activity. Healthy environments must be provided for younger generations.

Beyond these specific issues closely linked to the objectives of global progress, the Group of 77 and China urged UN Member States to take concerted actions in conformity with international law to remove the obstacles to the full realization of the rights of young people living under foreign occupation to promote the achievement of the MDGs.

In the final part of its statement, the Group condemned the recruitment and use of youth in armed conflicts in contravention of applicable international law, deplored the negative consequences that it has on involved youth and called upon Member States, in cooperation with UN entities, to take concrete measures and continue to support programs to ensure effective social and economic reintegration and rehabilitation of demobilized young people.

In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China pledged to remain committed to working to improve the lives of young

people in all countries, to assist them to realize their fullest potential and to make valuable and positive contributions to the development of their societies. This can be interpreted as a strong appeal for promoting global progress.

While reflecting on the substance of the statement of the Group of 77 and China summarized above, it is useful to add that it is in harmony with other collective statements made during the High-level Meeting. A few relevant examples will illustrate this observation.

The representative of the European Union stated that in order to create more and equal opportunities for young people, specific programs and practical tools are needed. An example was offered: the Youth in Action program which aims to inspire a sense of active citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans. It promotes mobility, non-formal learning, youth work, volunteering, intercultural dialogue and inclusion.²⁹

According to the African Union, which considered from 30 June to 1 July 2011 the theme “Accelerating youth empowerment for sustainable development”, Member States should allocate sufficient resources to regional organizations for the purposes of youth-oriented programs. For all countries of the world young people are an invaluable asset, an inexhaustible gold mine and a profitable growth area for investment for sustainable economic and social development. The twenty-first century will be the century of human capital, as embodied by young people.³⁰

A sub-regional organization — CARICOM — recognized that young people are already actively involved in so-

ciety and make valuable contributions to it through achievements in leadership, democratic processes, business, technology, research, sports, music, art and many other fields. Their affinity with information and communication technology allows them to share knowledge and experiences beyond the borders of their own communities and to build bridges between their societies and cultures and those of others.³¹

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

The above sobering reflections did not exclude some justified criticism. Thus, the delegation of Germany had the initiative to formulate some critical comments about the High-level meeting on Youth. In its opinion, although dialogue was one of the topics of the IYY, it was regrettable that the framework of the Year was not used to its fullest potential with regard to its long-term impact. This High-level Meeting was described as yet another meeting just about youth issues. However, the question remains: were young people really involved in the negotiations? When focusing on the best interests of youth, politicians must involve young people as equal partners and key stakeholders at all levels. Therefore, youth participation means going beyond dialogue. It is the involvement of youth in the entire decision-making process, beginning with the definition of the relevant issues and ending with the implementation and evaluation of policies.

Youth delegates from Germany identified additional three priorities on which they would like the UN to focus: the strengthening of youth participation; international migration; and sustainable development.³²

By way of illustration, youth representative of the Netherlands said young people were becoming a globally interconnected generation. In his country, a poll of 11,000 youth found over 54 per cent had friendships outside Europe; interconnected-ness forced young people to become conscious of each other's presence, acknowledge each other's humanity and accept responsibility towards each other and the planet, thinking about the consequences of their actions to others. Youth organizations inspired many people to meet the standard of "Do no Harm. Do Good", he said.³³

Youth delegate of Finland said recent developments around the world showed questions of youth, peace and security were directly linked with issues concerning the education, employability and social inclusion of youth. "Through tackling issues such as education successfully, we can also avoid having large masses of young people around the globe living without a hope of a brighter future", she said.³⁴

In the opinion of Brazil, recognition of the diversity of youth is non-negotiable. There is a necessity for working to build a better and more equal world for all; to that end, it is imperative to invest in youth, especially in developing countries. A better and more equal world will be a reality only when there is certainty that the generational transition will be based on the empowerment of youth and when young people have the autonomy to forge their own destinies.³⁵

The delegation of China expressed similar ideas by inviting all countries to encourage young people to create a harmonious world through cultural dialogue. The arguments formulated in this regard by China are most relevant. Diversity of cultures and civi-

lizations is a fundamental characteristic of human society. Cultural pluralism is the common heritage of humankind. Diversity among civilizations and cultures should not be a cause for conflict in the world but an important driving force for the advancement of human civilization. As the heirs of civilization, young people should not only absorb the spiritual essence of their nationalities and regions, but also contribute to dialogue among civilizations. As the pioneers of cultures, youth should contribute to the creation of a compatible, open and new youth culture, leading to a new era of cultural coexistence.³⁶

The young delegate of a small European country, – Monaco, – considered that today “youth does not blind us to the shocking, cruel and unjust realities of the world we live in. We are the Internet generation. Thanks to social networks, blogs and virtual communities, we are aware of the injustice, despair and decadence confronting members of our generation who may sometimes live far from us and our daily concerns. Let us recognize this irreversible interdependence and establish dialogues among cultures”.³⁷

The delegation of Mexico was quite categorical in this regard by stating that the world will be what its youth will be – we reap what we sow. It is time to stop understanding youth as a physical state and start seeing it with a vision of ongoing life.³⁸ That is clearly a sound strategic appeal.

PARTNERSHIPS DRIVE PROGRESS

The obvious point to begin with is the fact that research shows that the current

young generation can be the greatest generation ever. Today’s young people are starting NGOs, inventing solutions to longstanding human problems, forming partnerships with others around the world, standing with the poor to combat disease, providing educational opportunities, and inventing simple yet effective ways for the disadvantaged population to connect to the global economy.³⁹

A number of important, some far-reaching, proposals have been advanced at the conclusion of the IYY. Most of them are not sufficiently elaborated from the perspective of their possible implementation, but they deserve to be mentioned as evidence of the strong will to give real tangibility to the objectives of global progress for youth.⁴⁰

First of all it was pointed out that if the year 2011 is the IYY, 2012 should be the year that all the promises made during the IYY and all relevant resolutions are implemented and that investments in young people must be massive and continuous. In this regard it was proposed to set up a group of friends of youth, made up of Permanent Representatives of Member States to the UN in New York, in order to monitor the implementation of the outcome document of the High-level Meeting. The future of humanity will depend upon the world community’s capacity to put young people to work at the service of peace, international security, and humane, sustainable and equitable development.

Several countries proposed the proclamation of a decade dedicated to youth and aimed at a coordinated and sustained campaign in this direction. The UN General Assembly should pay particular attention to this matter.

Namibia and SADC Member States recommended the creation of a specialized UN agency for youth in order to support and fund youth initiatives.

This proposal was made in light of the critical assessment that the existing UN agencies do not adequately address youth development issues. The recommended specialized youth agency should report and be accountable to a UN youth committee. The UN World Program of Action for Youth must be reviewed and mechanisms for its implementation, monitoring and evaluation must be established. The professionalization of working with youth should be encouraged.⁴¹

In the same context, it was pointed out that along with interaction among UN entities, it is necessary to develop global partnerships on youth issues, with the participation of Member States, youth organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Only the concerted and coordinated efforts of all stakeholders can lead to the effective implementation of youth policies at the national and international levels. The UN General Assembly could forge a new global partnership for youth under the title “Help Future Generations Prosper”, focused on investing in future global leadership by providing support to talented young people.⁴²

An interesting example was presented by Morocco. In its view, regardless of the extent of individual countries’ national efforts and the effectiveness of their youth policies, their success will remain contingent on concerted endeavors at the regional and national levels to overcome the challenges facing young people. That is the goal of the Arab Youth Observatory recently estab-

lished in Rabat, which will serve as a mechanism for predicting trends among young people. The Observatory is expected to contribute to eliminating barriers and creating a new communications dynamics among the peoples of the Arab region, aimed at fostering economic integration and mobilizing young people’s capabilities in order to ensure development.⁴³

As Chair of ASEAN in 2011, Indonesia stated that it was determined to make ASEAN a more people-centered organization, with the full participation of young people. The primary responsibility for ensuring youth development lies with individual States. However, one of the key assets for successful national endeavors is international cooperation. Cooperation among international stakeholders is vital in contributing to youth programs in all participating nations. Through cooperation, nations can exchange information about best practices and lessons learned, as well as intensify active support for youth programs.⁴⁴

It should be also mentioned that on November 18, 2011 in the Chair’s Statement circulated by Indonesia at the end of the 19th ASEAN Summit in Bali the following paragraph was inserted:

We commend the level of engagement among youths in the region through the numerous youth exchange programs within ASEAN and with ASEAN’s Dialogue Partners, and the continuous effort to facilitate regular engagement and dialogue between ASEAN youths and officials through ASEAN activities and projects, focusing on entrepreneurship, leadership devel-

opment, education and volunteerism. In this regard, we welcome the initiative to establish the ASEAN Youth Volunteer Program by the ASEAN Senior Officials on Youth”.⁴⁵

The 210 youth delegates of the 7th UNESCO Youth Forum, (representing 127 Member States) who met at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France, from 17 to 20 October 2011, to discuss “How YOUTH drive change” submitted to the UNESCO General Conference, the supreme decision-making body of this specialized agency, a number of far-reaching proposals. Some of them deserve to be mentioned as they are directly related to youth and global progress. The Youth Forum requested the full support of all Member States to work together for the elaboration of an International Convention on Youth Rights which describes and protects youth in a time of change. The Forum proposed the creation of a youth sub-commission to guarantee the engagement of UNESCO Member States with youth.⁴⁶

Another interesting initiative is the YY Millennium Tour to be promoted in cooperation with the UN. In a meeting with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January 2011, the Grameen Creative Lab (GCL) led by Nobel Prize Laureate, Professor Muhammad Yunus, received the mandate to engage younger generations for the achievement of the MDGs. To this end, GCL is planning the YY Millennium Tour which will empower younger generations worldwide to make an impact towards the achievement of the MDGs

through social business. Starting in 2012, the YY Millennium Tour will include a series of social business labs to kick-start social business movements in countries in danger of not achieving the MDGs. Regular, local workshops in partnership with local organizations, as well as train the trainers methodologies, will facilitate self-sustaining social business movements. The tour will be accompanied by global summits and congresses to facilitate an international exchange of views on how to achieve the MDGs through social business. One Young World, the premier forum for young talents of leadership caliber, joins GCL as the first partner of the YY Millennium Tour, financing 10 social business labs across the world. Finally, GCL aims to expanding the network of partners worldwide to make this initiative a success.⁴⁷

The YY Millennium Tour is very topical also in the light of the initiative of the Government of Sri Lanka to host in 2014 a world conference on youth in Colombo, with a focus on the participation and involvement of youth in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.⁴⁸

The most recent UN General Assembly resolution on youth was adopted by consensus on November 8, 2011. It is entitled “Policies and programmes involving youth”. Its paragraph 15 contains an urgent appeal addressed to all UN Member States to increase efforts, including to address the ongoing social impact of the crises, to improve the quality of education and promote universal access to education, particularly for young women, out-of-school youth, youth with disabilities, indigenous youth, youth in rural areas, youth migrants and youth living

with HIV and affected by AIDS, without discrimination on any basis, to ensure that they can acquire the knowledge, capacities, skills and ethical values needed, including by appropriate access to scholarships and other mobility programs, non-formal education, technical and vocational education and training, in order to further develop their contributions to societies as relevant actors to promote development.⁴⁹ As a whole, this resolution conveys a topical message: investment in youth development and education is crucial for sustainable, social and economic progress.

All these proposals, recommendations and assessments should be realistically interpreted in the light of the authoritative final finding formulated by the UN Secretary-General in his most important report on the work of the Organization in the year 2011:

“Periods of global transition present huge challenges but also tremendous opportunities for advancing humanity’s progress. Together, no challenge is too large. Together, nothing is impossible”.⁵⁰ In the same spirit, speaking in Asia to a student audience, the UN Secretary-General concluded with the following words: “Ultimately, partnership drives progress”.⁵¹

This credo has to be taken seriously at all levels. Otherwise, we will be forced to meditate more profoundly on the paradoxical assertion made by Romanian philosopher E. M. Cioran according to whom “Progress is the injustice each generation commits with regard to its predecessors”.⁵²

In this respect, a valid observation was made by the delegation of South Africa which quoted late President Oliver Reginald Tambo, who said: “A nation that does not take care of its youth does not have a future and does not deserve one”.⁵³

The future is inseparable from the process of education at all levels. An educated public opinion is capable to direct efforts towards sustainable progress. Therefore, the words of a great educator, C.W. Eliot, President of Harvard University, are fully cogent in this context: “In the modern world the intelligence of public opinion is the one indispensable condition of social progress”.⁵⁴ This opinion is under a permanent process of revalidation worldwide.

In this respect, it is appropriate to recall the visionary approach formulated by Brother Prathip Martin Komolmas, President Emeritus of Assumption University, about “Educating intelligences and active minds to change the world”, which indicates an undisputable path to global progress.⁵⁵

This message of universal validity is being articulated at the most appropriate time. Indeed, the full implementation of all UN resolutions about youth may contribute to educating intelligences at all levels and to the creation of a more hopeful and optimistic outlook about global progress. That could further contribute to generating the enthusiasm and energy needed to tackle the specific problems affecting youth. By promoting a universalist vision of progress, youth have the historic chance to provide a solid building block for a new world order based on fundamental values proclaimed by the UN which may give the world community of nations a renewed sense of confidence in the future.

Further efforts are urgently needed to develop a genuine youth-centered global development agenda. There is no doubt that UN Member States have to make a much more firm commitment to implementing youth policies and programs at the national, regional and global levels. The whole UN system is expected to continue to strengthen its coordination mechanisms and ensure a more coherent and holistic approach in the social field in order to maximize the impact of ongoing youth activities as a prerequisite to promoting global progress. Youth energy, dynamism, motivation, temerity and sense of invincibility are essential assets for today's and tomorrow's world and its continuous progress.

Endnotes

¹The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message to the Global Social Business Summit 2011 in Vienna, 11-12 November, is available at <http://www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp> visited several times in November 2011. The most recent book on youth emanating from the UN System is *Investing in Youth Policy*, prepared under the auspices of the Asia - Pacific Interagency Group on Youth, Bangkok, 2011, 136 p.

²All relevant documents about the International Year of Youth quoted in this article are available at <http://www.un.org/en/events/youthday/> visited several times in November 2011. For the chronology of the High-level Meeting of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding see *Journal of the United Nations* dated July 25, 26 and 28, 2011. For all recent UN resolutions on youth see <http://social.un.org/index/Youth/Resourcesandtools/SGreports.aspx>

³See UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Remarks at special event to launch the 7 Billion Actions Initiative, 14 September 2011 available at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sg>

[speeches/search_full.asp?statID=1293](http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sg) visited on November 10, 2011. Pierre Buhler, French diplomat and the author of the book "Power in the XXIst Century" cogently observed that there was a lot of attention paid to the fact that we had crossed the 7 billion population mark. Much less attention was paid to another fact that 60 percent of these 7 billion live in Asia - 37 percent in China and India alone. See his article "Whose Century, the 21st?" in *The International Herald Tribune* dated November 24, 2011.

⁴The quotation is available at www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/m/marcus_garvey.html.

⁵The full text of the United Nations Millennium Declaration is available at <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide/>.

⁶All debates during the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding can be consulted in verbatim form in documents A/65/PV.110-115 dated July 25-28, 2011. See also press release GA/11119. The outcome document A/RES/65/312 was adopted without a vote on July 26, 2011. All quotations and examples from debates are given in this article on the basis of documents A/65/PV.110-114. At the time of writing, document A/65/PV.115 is still under embargo.

⁷For a relevant analysis of the concept of global progress used in the present article see Better Life Initiative: Measuring Well-being and Progress - OECD available at www.oecd.org/ff/?404; <http://www.oecd.org:80/progress> visited on November 5, 2011. For the concept of "civilizational progress" see Jed Esty, *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2011, 304 p. See also Chris Salamone, Gilbert N. Morris, *Rescue America: Our Best America Is Only One Generation Away*, Greenleaf Book Group Press, New York, 2011, 250 p. In an opinion mentioned by these two authors "all collective progress is merely an outcrop of individual progress". (p.2)

⁸Georges Bernanos (1888 - 1948) was a French author. His writings contain a strong criticism of modern society.

⁹For the source of quotation see note 6 supra.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴For details and relevant examples from Southeast Asia see *Investing in Youth Policy*, prepared under the auspices of the Asia - Pacific Interagency Group on Youth, Bangkok, 2011, 136 p. See also *Youth in Transition. The Challenges of Generational Changes in Asia*, UNESCO, Bangkok, 2005, 266p.

¹⁵Data and assessments are taken from the source mentioned in note 6 supra.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid. In a statement dated Geneva, 23 November 2011 the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Abdelwahad Radi, expressed his deep concern at the continuing violence in Egypt, particularly in Cairo. He deplored the loss of life and the many injuries. The President called on the transitional authorities to guarantee the protection of human rights and civil liberties for all Egyptians, including the right to peaceful protest. The IPU President stressed the need for political dialogue to resolve the current impasse. He called for an orderly transition towards democracy based on the transfer of power to a civilian government through free and fair parliamentary and presidential elections. Established in 1889 and with its Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, the IPU - the oldest multilateral political organization - currently brings together 159 affiliated national parliaments and nine regional assemblies as Associate Members. For details see IPU website: www.ipu.org.

²⁰For the source of quotation see note 6 supra.

²¹The quotation from Mahatma Gandhi is available at www.brainyquote.com/quotes/.../mohandas_gandhi_3.html.

²²The article about the Occupy Wall Street movement is available online at: <http://www.newsreview.com/sacramento/content?oid=4168600>.

²³See *Bangkok Post* dated November 8, 2011, Opinion section.

²⁴The report is available online. All data and

evaluations about the IYY are taken from the SG report entitled *International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding*, document A/66/129, 19 pages. For this report and for all other recent UN reports on youth see <http://social.un.org/index/Youth/Resourcesandtools/SGreports.aspx> visited in November 2011.

²⁵For the source of the statement by Rwanda see note 6 supra.

²⁶The figure of 500 was mentioned by the President of the UN General Assembly. For source see note 6 supra. The full statement by the President in the original French version is available at <http://www.un.org/fr/ga/president/65/statements/youth250711.shtml> visited on November 10, 2011.

²⁷See *Journal of the United Nations* dated July 26, 2011.

²⁸For the full text of the statement see <http://www.g77.org/statement/#jul>.

²⁹For the source of the statement by the European Union see note 6 supra.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is an organization of 15 members. The collective statement of this regional institution is available in the documents mentioned in note 6 supra.

³²For the source of the statements see note 6 supra and note 33 infra.

³³See Press release General Assembly, GA/SHC/4004 of 3 October 2011.

³⁴For the source of quotation see note 6 supra.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹See Jill W. Iscol, "Turning Idealism Into Action", *Daily Beast*, October 26, 2011.

⁴⁰All suggestions and proposals are summarized on the basis of documents mentioned in note 6 supra.

⁴¹The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has a membership of 15 States and was established in 1980. The statement made on behalf of SADC is available in documents mentioned in note 6 supra.

⁴²For the source of information see note 6 supra.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵The full text of the document is available at www.asean.org. It should be noted that the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Najib Razak, concluding his participation at the 19th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits in Bali, Indonesia, told a news conference on November 20, 2011, that the interest shown by the world's big powers towards the region was only expected as many now saw that the 21st century would be an Asia-Pacific century. "East Asia will be the pulse of global progress", he said. Read more: Towards a progressive Asean - Editorial - New Straits Times <http://www.nst.com.my/opinion/editorial/towards-a-progressive-asean-1.8361#ixzz1ePfluIB5> visited on November 22, 2011.

⁴⁶For the full text of the UNESCO document see [www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human.../youth/The UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human.../youth/The%20UN%20Inter-Agency%20Network%20on%20Youth%20Development) led by UNESCO stated the following on July 25, 2011: "We join Member States and youth-led organizations in building on synergies to promote the ideals of peace, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, gender equality, solidarity, progress and development". Source: <http://social.un.org/youthyear/docs/JointStatementInteragency.pdf> visited on November 15, 2011.

⁴⁷The source of this information is <http://www.grameencreativelab.com/> accessed on November 18, 2011.

⁴⁸This conference was announced in the preamble of resolution A/C.3/66/L.7/Rev.1 entitled "Policies and programmes involving youth". See note 49 infra. The ambition of Sri Lanka is to create a platform for the global cause of youth and the MDGs and to strengthen the role of young people in the global development agenda. See [http://www.srilankayouth.lk/side%20event \[1\].pdf](http://www.srilankayouth.lk/side%20event%20[1].pdf) visited on November 24, 2011.

⁴⁹The draft resolution on "Policies and programmes involving youth" (document A/C.3/66/L.7/Rev.1) was introduced on November 8, 2011 by the representative of Portugal, who noted that youth had a hard time in finding employment under the current global circumstances. See press-release General Assembly GA/SHC/4027 of November 8, 2011.

⁵⁰See paragraph 130 of document A/66/1 dated August 2011.

⁵¹See the press-release SG/SM/13950 dated November 15, 2011 containing the text of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's speech at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. While addressing directly the young people, the Secretary-General said: "Whatever your chosen path, whatever your profession, be bold. Think big. Above all, think of yourself as part of the wider world. Be global citizens. Believe; believe in your ability to make a difference, at home and everywhere".

⁵²The quotation from E. M. Cioran (1911-1995) is available at <http://www.famous-quotes.com/author.php?page=1&total=44&aid=1527> visited on November 15, 2011.

⁵³For the source of quotation see note 6 supra.

⁵⁴The quotation from Charles William Eliot (1834-1926), a famous American educator, president of Harvard University for 40 years, is taken from *Webster's New Twentieth Century Unabridged Dictionary*, second edition, Prentice Hall Press, New York, 1983, p.1438, second column.

⁵⁵See the home page of Assumption University at www.au.edu. It should be noted that appeals for change in order to promote progress are frequent and strong. Dr. Tej Bunnag, a former foreign minister of Thailand, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), and professor Said Irandoust, president of the AIT stated: "...to ensure that students continue to love learning, universities need to become facilitators of change rather than ossified ivory towers..... Sooner or later, the changing scenario coupled with market forces will force universities and policymakers to change. Realisation has already dawned that students are the most important players in the education sector. Their voice is being heard in all corners of the world, and that voice is not restricted to education alone". See the article "Welcome to the new world of student-centred education" by the two mentioned authors, *The Nation*, November 24, 2011, p.12A. *Bangkok, November 25, 2011.*