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**Twenty-third session of the Governing Council/  
Global Ministerial Environment Forum**

Nairobi, 21–25 February 2005  
Item 6 of the provisional agenda\*

**Follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development:  
contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme  
to the forthcoming session of the Commission on Sustainable Development**

**Statement by the Tunza Youth Advisory Council to the  
Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its  
twenty-third session**

**Note by the Executive Director**

The Executive Director has the honour to provide, in the annex to the present note, a statement by the TUNZA Youth Advisory Council to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-third session. The statement was developed through “chat sessions” on the Internet among the UNEP TUNZA Youth Advisory Council and different youth-led environmental groups around the world.

The annex is being circulated as received, without formal editing.

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\* UNEP/GC.23/1.

## Annex

### UNEP TUNZA Youth Advisory Council

#### **Youth Statement to the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, Nairobi, Kenya.**

Our purpose, as youth representatives from the UNEP TUNZA Youth Advisory Council is to present the views of young people to the UNEP Governing Council. This paper is written based on the contribution of different youth-led environmental groups from around the world on the need to implement the Millennium Development Goals, especially those that refer to hunger and poverty, human rights, gender and sustainable development.

All stakeholders and especially children and youth need to take action in order to meet the goals established at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Millennium Summit. To enhance our participation, we identify and propose the following key priorities for action:

**Provision of Funds and technical support** to youth and community based groups which can be done through the creation of specific programmes in the ministries of environment.

**Development of Steering Committees** made up of at least 50% of youth who play a key role in monitoring the funds allocated to the youth projects.

**Access to and ownership of Information** with the whole community in an understandable language for all. Indicators and targets need to be clear and re-affirmed.

**Build of awareness and dissemination of knowledge** on water, sanitation and human settlements, their interlinkages and effect on poverty, hunger and overall sustainable development. This is to be disseminated in courses and training programmes developed in consultation and partnership with youth councils, NGOs and the civil society.

**Involvement of children and youth**, as well as all other stakeholders in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies related to these issues. Platforms for participation should not only be used for sharing information but also for decision making. Special attention should also be given women, indigenous and the vulnerable groups.

**The consideration of youth as partners!** Youth knowledge and potentials on peer-to-peer education, education of indigenous practices and participatory methodologies and approaches could be strategically used on local, regional, national and international projects and actions.

**The skepticism surrounding youth empowerment and participation need to be set aside in order to create sustainable societies.**

Recalling our last statement to this Governing Council where we emphasized that ‘**there is no dignity in living in a place without water and sanitation**’ we call again for action.

This time, we would like to further emphasize that **the water issue has to be a public sector** supported by a strong legislative framework that is accountable and transparent. Therefore water regulations, control and management should always remain within the hands of the public not private corporation.

International agencies, such as the United Nations Environment Programme, should monitor and regulate water processes to ensure that privatization does not occur simply as a condition for assistance. There has to be national legislation and international legislative frameworks that will monitor activities of multinational companies and other actors of the private sector and ban privatization and monopolization of freshwater resources.

Successful partnership and community experiences on water management should be studied, shared and disseminated. Replications of such experiences should be supported especially if they are based on simple technologies and methods.

Access to basic sanitation should become part of the poverty reduction strategy papers and initiatives of all developing countries.

The role of (young) women should be reinforced since they are the ones managing the houses and looking after children. They can provide important information and should be recognized as partners in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects and processes. Their participation in these processes need to be highlighted.

Basic sanitation should be available at every school and should be a pre-condition for education.

Hygiene behaviour and practices should be included in the school curricula as well as in public campaigns.

All hospitals should be guaranteed clean water, a sanitation system and hygiene to reduce the risks of infection and spread of water borne diseases.

Encouraged countries to enact laws pertaining to the refugee crisis should be passed stating that any refugee camp to be set up should meet the EPA/OSHA/WHO in terms of sanitation and provide safe and clean drinking water.

Ensure better coordination between development agencies when dealing with water resource management to avoid opposition and duplication of efforts amongst the players.

There should be about 5 litres of free water per person per day and it should be a progressive scale: the more you use, the more you have to pay. The more you destroy the more you are subject to penalties by law.

Recalling that '**It is a human right to have safe and healthy shelter and to co-exist in a psychologically healthy environment**' we urge the follow actions to be taken.

Development of **secondary cities** to assimilate adequate share of population growth. This transformation to cities of sustainability will require cooperation between various levels of government, development partners, resource managers, the business sector, community groups and all citizens.

The adoption of an integrated approach to the provision of water, affordable electricity, sanitation, drainage, human health and solid waste management.

That at least 75 percent of rural communities are provided with social amenities to stimulate and sustain self-reliant development to curb rural-urban migration.

**Resettlement programs** should be developed where appropriate to address the specific problems of displaced populations in their respective countries.

**National shelter strategies** should be adopted or strengthened by all countries, with targets based on the principles and recommendations contained in the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. People should be protected by law against unfair eviction from their homes or land.

**Support** the shelter efforts of the urban and rural poor, the unemployed and the no-income group by adopting or adapting existing codes and regulations, facilitating their access to land, small grants and micro credits and low-cost building materials. Special attention must be given to marginalized and vulnerable groups as well; authorities should work to empower those whose voices are not always heard.

**Promote** the regularization and upgrading of informal settlements and urban slums as an expedient measure and pragmatic solution to the urban shelter deficit.

### **Conclusion**

There is enough data, statistic and research! We need action! Successful experiences need to be replicated considering the social, economical, cultural, environmental and political factors! Partnerships need to be made, involving the whole society to overcome these challenges. . As the future leaders, we want, in the present, to be accountable as agents of change and to be partners in the process of sustainable development.

We commit to working with our governments to implement the above in our communities and countries.

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