

**MESSAGE FROM THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SUMMIT (YES) KENYA
COUNTRY NETWORK ON THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY 12TH AUGUST
2006. By Emmanuel Dennis. YES Kenya Country Network.**

The international Youth day 2006 "Tackling Poverty Together" gives a good opportunity for the Youth to proactively take the lead role in solving their plight. We at the Youth Employment Summit Kenya Country Network want to take this opportunity to join in with other youth from around the world in the fight against poverty.

We recognize the youth as a special age group of productive people who should be given the opportunity to lead a process of sustainable development within their own communities. The Youth Employment Summit (YES) Kenya Country Network encourages the Youth to effectively lead the commitment of advocating for effective policies and programs to promote productive employment and empowering the youth to be actors of change and not just advocates.

The main objective for which YES Kenya Network was formed is to champion widespread employment of youths in various cadres, to enable them acquire a source of livelihood through application of sustainable lifestyles, practices, beliefs and values in Kenya and through engaging in the development process and particularly by mobilizing the interests of the youth in various development sectors including but not limited to the environment, Health, sustainable agriculture, socio-cultural and economics dynamics, energy, appropriate technology, Information, communication and technology (ICT) and policy issues.

YES Kenya Network envisions a society where development initiatives are targeted towards youth employment, and that such initiatives are sustainable, inclusive and above all allow participation of all peoples.

"Employment for sustainable livelihoods."

YES Kenya Network shall through a process of pro-poor civic engagement; project formation and implementation, building of grassroots movements and influencing policy reforms through dialogue seek the attainment of the vision above.

One of the best practices that focuses on tackling poverty is under the framework of the Youth Employment Summit Campaign which encompasses the Millennium Development Goals. After the first Global Youth Employment Alexandria Summit of 2002, YES Kenya Network Members began lobbying for inclusiveness and participation of the Youth in National Policy Processes and implementation. YES Kenya Network thus participated actively towards developing a Road Map on Youth Employment and the National Youth Policy, now waiting enactment by Parliament. Such progress has been achieved through linkages and sustained partnerships with the GTZ-PROSYR and Partners for Progress (PfP) among other organizations, in the formulation and implementation of the YES Kenya Network Strategic Plan.

During the Mexico Summit in 2004, the YES Kenya Network - with the support of the Government - lobbied to have Kenya host the 3rd Global Summit dubbed the YES Kenya 2006.

YES Kenya Country Network actively participated in a strategic plan of Action for Kenyan Youth (2006-2011) hosted by The Ministry of Youth Affairs, which culminated in the Twin Launch of the said Ministry and The YES Kenya 2006 Summit Process in March 2006.

YES Kenya Network started to make its presence felt in the grass root areas through the Provincial Coordinators who are assisted by District Focal Persons. These structures are geared towards achieving the goal of making YES Kenya the most formidable youth serving organization in the country with its reach to the core of the grass root Kenya. We are thus encouraging Young Kenyans to come up in large numbers to promote sustainable development through out the country while engaging senior Kenyans to support them in taking up leadership roles. It is through such initiative that we encourage the Youth to remember many of the citizens living below a dollar a day. Through collaborative initiatives at community level shall we engage our fellow youth in programmes that are geared to reducing our poverty stricken communities.

The YES Kenya 2006 Summit constitutes a milestone event as it is the third of the six global summits to be held by the decade-long Youth Employment Summit Campaign and the first one to be held in Sub-Saharan Africa, cradle of many of the Youth Employment Summit Country Networks. The event, better known as Youth Employment Summit Kenya 2006, will build on the accomplishments of Alexandria Youth Employment Summit 2002 and Mexico Youth Employment Summit 2004, the previous two global summits of the Youth Employment Summit Campaign. In the former, 1600 delegates from 120 countries launched the decade campaign at the Library of Alexandria in Egypt. The Alexandria Youth Employment Summit 2002 was co-chaired by the First Lady of Egypt, H.E. Suzanne Mubarak and Former U.S. President, William J. Clinton. In the latter, held in Veracruz, Mexico, 1500 delegates from over 100 countries gathered and shared the results of the first two years of work in their countries and the projects and ideas for the future.

It is anticipated that at Youth Employment Summit Kenya 2006, there will be about 2000 delegates from over 120 countries; special participation is expected from the African continent, focusing on generating livelihood opportunities for youth in the region. Further, Youth Employment Summit Kenya 2006 will be a working summit where multi-stakeholder collaboration will lead the actions that can be transformed into employment opportunities for youth and contribute to fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's).

The **YES Kenya 2006** will focus on **Creating Markets...Unleashing Entrepreneurship**, identifying markets at the Bottom of the Pyramid, markets in eco-entrepreneurship, building trade

capacity, attracting foreign direct investment, building an entrepreneurial culture, capacity building through the YES Academy.

YES Kenya Network will be engaging in Partnerships with various agencies to formulate working programmes that will engage the youth in projects that fit the development of their communities and thus tackling poverty as a post summit agenda through:

- Offering leadership trainings in various areas for the youth to be ready for the job market including Project Development and Management, Leadership and many more.
- Establish a state of the art Youth Resource Center with a working data bank for youth serving organizations in Kenya offering information on job searching and for information exchange to all youths and other organizations in the region.
- Support the establishment of a center of excellence on youth employment.
- National Policy engagement and influence to fit the vision of solving the plight of the Youth in Kenya.

We are thus glad to be part to the call of the youth tackling poverty by themselves, as there is no one who will solve the plight of the youth if they are not proactive in the same arena. The youth are important in and should play a key responsibility in tackling poverty. I want to wish the entire youth world over the best as we celebrate the International Youth Day in tackling poverty together. Our dynamisms and energies will help us to prove that we can and we must live beyond the poverty levels by creating sustainable livelihoods for ourselves.