

Baku Declaration

27 September 2008

We the participants in the Fourth Global Youth Employment Summit (YES Azerbaijan 2008) have assembled in Baku from 24-27 September 2008 to reaffirm the essential message articulated in the first YES summit held in Alexandria, Egypt in 2002, and reaffirmed in Mexico 2004 and Kenya 2006. We are conscious that we meet at a critical and historical moment, when the world stands on the verge of major changes, and where everyone recognizes that profound changes are needed in the way we manage our affairs if humanity is to reap the benefits of the enormous technological advances we are witnessing, while avoiding the negative environmental and social consequences of an insensitive greed-driven globalization.

We stand committed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We believe that this will require a special recognition of the role of youth. Youth are society's most valuable resource, the recipients of its heritage and the very content of its future. Our development demands special attention to the reduction of unemployment, specifically among youth, and this will be best achieved by the empowerment of youth that they may become full partners in the crafting of their destiny. We want to change the development paradigm to a youth-led development where they will be the main actors in the design of the policies, programs and partnerships that will shape their future.

To that end, we rededicate ourselves to focus on the quality of education that youth receives, and to the manner in which they transit from school to the labor force. We recognize that these years of transition are fraught with dangers and filled with opportunities. The kind of choices they make in those years are critical to ensure that they adopt healthy lifestyles, and acquire the self-confidence to take on the challenges of the new world in which they will both compete and contribute. It is

essential that our policies and programs provide second chances to those who make wrong choices.

We want to ensure that our youth have learned the skills required for continuous life-long learning, and acquired the social, interpersonal and entrepreneurial skills that will stand them in good stead as they design their own sustainable livelihoods, be they employed or self-employed, be it in existing enterprises or in new ventures.

This will not only require the creation of new market opportunities, new social innovations and new models of operation, it will also require that the content of the work that youth will do will fulfill their aspirations and help push their societies onto the path of sustainability.

This outlook must permeate the manner in which we evaluate our policies, our programs and the enabling environment created by existing and pending legislation.

From Baku, we shall continue the journey started in Alexandria, through Mexico and Kenya, towards the next summits in Sweden and back to Alexandria in the years ahead.

Together, we shall advance successful models of the past, such as micro-credit and development services, as well as harness the powerful technologies shaping our world such as Information and Communications Technologies (ICT), as we invent the new models of the future.

Together we shall ensure that the societies we are creating are human centered and environmentally conscious, dedicated to pluralism and social justice, respectful of cultural diversity, and that the opportunities they shall afford will be gender balanced and respectful of the rights of all.

Together we shall actively support a new world economic order, where trade shall be fair, environmental considerations shall be accounted for, governance shall be transparent, transactions shall be honest, and where our actions, linking local, regional and global, shall be driven by ethical standards adopted by the community of nations.

Only thus can we have harmony and peace in a multi-cultural world.

Only thus will we be able to create youth employment and self employment through entrepreneurship.

Only thus can our youth find fulfillment for themselves and purpose for their activities.

Only thus will we be able to ensure opportunities for everyone and solidarity for all.

This declaration was adopted by the Fourth Global Youth Employment Summit (YES Azerbaijan 2008) on 27 September 2008.