



Statement by Ahmad Alhendawi

UN Secretary General's Envoy on Youth

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World Urban Forum

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Youth delegates, distinguished guests,

I am sorry that I am unable to attend the World Urban Youth Assembly, but I wanted to pass on my best wishes to you.

As you know, youth are society's most essential and dynamic human resource. There are more people under the age of 25 today than ever, totaling nearly three billion or almost half of the total global population; 1.8 billion of that total are between the age of 12 and 24. These youth live, by and large, in cities and towns; the cities of the developing world account for over 90% of the world's urban growth and youth account for a large percentage of those inhabitants. It is estimated that as many as 60% of all urban dwellers will be under the age of 18 by 2030.

The Youth Assembly is an excellent opportunity for you, the gathered delegates here, to explore how youth can better themselves and their communities globally. Many youth live in very tough conditions. They live in slums or informal settlements, or in society's that are torn by war and violence. We all know there are challenges, but you have an opportunity here to explore and propose new solutions to the challenges we face.

For example, I understand that there is mobile app contest being run at this WUF – a hackathon - focused on creating apps that address the issue urban resilience in the face of disasters. This is a perfect example of how young people can use skills in the area of technology and better their community. I look forward to finding out and using the new app that wins.

UN-Habitat's youth programme is recognized as one of the leading youth programmes within the UN system. From the Urban Youth Fund to the One Stop Youth Resource Centres, UN-Habitat has created some outstanding models through which youth can become productive and respected citizens.

In conclusion, I would like to again strongly support the work you are doing here. We at the UN support you. I encourage you to become involved in both the post 2015 debate, which you can do through the crowdsourcing campaign we currently are working on. I also encourage you to work towards HABITAT III, assuring that young people's are meaningfully engaged in this important event.

Thanks and good luck,

Ahmad Alhendawi

