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Population Dynamics in the 21st century: Transforming challenges into opportunities

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Working Group: Population Dynamics and Political Governance/Role of Youth

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Written Notes

Youth: Why Does It Matter?

Today, the population under 25 is estimated at 3.1 billion people. This is 45% of the world population of 7.1 billion people. The current size of the world's population ages 15-24 is 1.2 billion. This group is expected to grow during the next 20 years (Population Reference Bureau).

The Medium variant of the 2010 United Nations population projections may prove too optimistic, because fertility might decline more slowly in LDCs and especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

Youth: Where Do They Live?

About 90% of youth live in developing countries. Half of them live in cities (urban areas, whatever defined).

What is the Youth Bulge?

The concept of youth bulge refers to the weight of youth in the adult population.

Situation in which a high proportion (40% or more) of the population is 15–29 years old, relative to the adult population (above age 15); however, other definitions are being used, e.g., proportion of youth (either 15–24 or 15–29) to labor force population (15–64) (May 2012: 281).

Youth: What Is At Stake?

The youth must undergo 5 major transitions, namely learning after primary school age, starting a productive working life, adopting a healthful lifestyle, forming a family, and exercising citizenship (World Bank, World Development Report: Development and the next generation, 2006).

Youth: Major Challenges

First, how can youth manage the 5 transitions? Namely learn, work, be healthy, start a family and become a citizen?

Second, how can youth be heard and especially organize?

Youth: Stakeholders

From both public and private sectors, the key three groups are the youth advocates, the policymakers, and the program managers (Gribble 2010).

Youth and the State

The state's capacity might be overwhelmed by the "rising of the youth". There is also a need for political negotiation processes between state and society. Last but not least, the state must be inclusive and equitable in the distribution of available resources

Youth: Key Policies

Five main policies are necessary, namely use a multisectoral approach, start with children, recognize youth's changing needs, reach out-of-school youth, and coordinate program efforts (Gribble 2010).

References

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