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Youth in the ESCWA Region: Situation and Responses

Demographic Situation

The 14 countries of the region covered by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) are remarkable for the youthfulness of their populations. A consequence of a combination of rapidly-decreasing birth and infant mortality rates, 19.97 per cent of the ESCWA region's population was aged between 15 and 24 in 2010, compared to their global share of 17.6 per cent. Although declining gradually, projections from the United Nations Population Division suggest that it will remain higher than the global average until 2050.¹ This phenomenon of high youth population is spread across all countries of the region: while the country with the smallest proportion of its population being made up of youth is the United Arab Emirates with a youth population of 11.9 per cent, the median youth population of ESCWA countries is 20.05 with Yemen's youth population reaching 22.1 per cent. When considered as a proportion of the total working-age population, the percentages range from 14.9 per cent in the United Arab Emirates to 40.7 per cent in Yemen. With the exceptions of Egypt, the Sudan and Yemen, youth in ESCWA countries are concentrated in urban environments.²

Such a high proportion of youth among the population could be an advantage, representing a demographic "window of opportunity". As the members of this distinct socio-demographic group with high demographic density become economically-active producers of wealth with few dependants to support, more resources could be freed for investment and saving, producing a demographic dividend.³ However, in order to make this transition successfully, youth require policies that support them across a range of areas, from education and employment through to health and participation in social and political life. This paper will set out to provide an outline of the current situation of youth in the ESCWA region, showing that the potential of youth in the region is not yet being fulfilled, before discussing how Governments have responded in the framework of the World Programme of Action on Youth (WPAY), and presenting ESCWA's work assist member countries in this area.

Youth in the Economy

The ESCWA youth population shows a major improvement in literacy over recent years, with most countries achieving high levels of youth literacy among both young men and women; however, in some countries, there is a major gap between young men's and young women's levels of literacy (90.1% of young Egyptian men are literate, compared to 78.9% for Egyptian women; in Iraq, the figure is 88.9% for men and 80.5% for women; and in

¹ Own calculation based on United Nations Population Division, 2008b.

² United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2010c.

³ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2009c.

the Sudan, 84.6% for men and 71.4% for women).⁴ Arab youth are also increasingly making use of opportunities in tertiary education, with gross enrolment ratios reaching as high as 53 per cent in Lebanon, and averaging 30.4 per cent for the countries for which data were available in 2008. The participation of men and women differs across the region; however, with the exception of Yemen, women tend to outnumber men at this level of education, with 6 times as many women as men studying at university in Qatar.⁵

However, despite the fact that these statistics generally show a positive, upwards, trend in participation in education, tertiary education enrolment in the ESCWA region is low by global standards.⁶ Moreover, there are concerns about the quality of the education that youth receive. The causes are varied, including the status afforded to teachers, the outdated nature of curricula in many countries, short hours of school, the absence of key subjects such as sociology and economics, and the emphasis placed in many curricula on rote learning rather than critical thinking skills.⁷ The result is that educational outcomes are low: students from Arab countries perform poorly compared to counterparts in other regions of the world. According to the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study 2007*, none of the participating ESCWA countries⁸ met the international scale average in mathematics or science.⁹ Meanwhile, vocational education remains underdeveloped: it is carried out with little coordination with employers,¹⁰ and is not well-regarded.¹¹

These failings in education are seen as a partial explanation for another aspect of the Arab youth experience: the high levels of inactivity, unemployment, and underemployment that youth face.¹² Youth unemployment rates range from 3 to up to 22 times higher than adult unemployment rates in ESCWA countries.¹³ Throughout the region, youth make up a significant proportion of the overall unemployed population: from 33 per cent in the United Arab Emirates, almost half of the unemployed population in Lebanon, 51 per cent in Saudi Arabia, 57 per cent in the Syrian Arab Republic, two-thirds of the unemployed population in Egypt, and 70 per cent in Qatar.¹⁴ Where sex-disaggregated figures are available, they show that this is a problem which particularly affects young women: unemployment rates reach 27 per cent among young Bahraini women compared to 17 per cent among Bahraini men; 33 per cent among young Syrian women, compared to 16 per cent of young Syrian men; and 30 per cent of Qatari women, compared to 8 per cent of

⁴ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2010c.

⁵ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010a, Annex Table 4.

⁶ United Nations Development Programme and Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum Foundation, 2009, p. 108

⁷ United Nations Development Programme and Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum Foundation, 2009, p. 108

⁸ Lebanon, Jordan, Bahrain, Syrian Arab Republic, Egypt, Oman, Palestine, Kuwait and Qatar

⁹ Michael O. Martin, Ina V. S. Mullis and Pierre Foy, 2008; Ina V.S. Mullis, Michael O. Martin and Pierre Foy, 2008.

¹⁰ Navtej Dhillon, Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, Paul Dyer, Tarik Yousef, Amina Fahmy, Mary Kraetsch, 2009, p. 7

¹¹ United Nations Development Programme and Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum Foundation, 2009, p. 113

¹² United Nations and League of Arab States, 2007

¹³ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010, Annex Table 8

¹⁴ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010, Annex Table 8

Qatari men.¹⁵ This unemployment often seems to strike those with relatively high levels of education particularly hard,¹⁶ and is often long-term.¹⁷

Meanwhile, for those who cannot afford to stay unemployed, low-skill work in the informal sector is often the only solution.¹⁸ While this is effective as a survival strategy, it does not provide decent work, opportunities for career development or social protection, and it deprives governments of the tax income that regular employment would provide.¹⁹

The causes of these labour market difficulties are various. As mentioned above, education systems in countries of the ESCWA region do not prepare young people for participation in the global economy; their education is geared towards preparation for specific tasks, rather than broader critical thinking skills. However, this is a partial explanation: even if young people were equipped with the appropriate skills, there would still not be enough jobs for them to take. Private sector employment growth across the region is weak, while public sector employment, which in some countries traditionally absorbed young people (and especially women) coming on to the labour market throughout the second half of the twentieth century, is shrinking. In addition, labour market rigidities in the private sector mean that, while older workers are protected, there are few incentives to create jobs for younger workers, and those which do are vulnerable to layoffs, especially in periods of economic crisis.²⁰ Moreover, the attitude of many youth, particularly in the GCC, is to prefer public sector employment, where wages and benefits are higher, and terms of employment more generous than the private sector.²¹ Youth lack information on what jobs are available, with information about jobs coming through informal networks that exclude youth from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.²² Young women face particular restrictions on their ability to work.²³ Finally, it should be noted that private sector employment is often low-paid, low-status work, which is unattractive to many young people and therefore, in GCC countries particularly, is often the reserve of migrant workers.

The social consequences of the difficulties youth face on entering the labour market include poverty, the growth of the informal sector, and significant costs to the government.²⁴ As these youth are not able to develop their skills and contribute to the economy, these difficulties also hold back development.

This lack of educational and job opportunities youth find in their countries also contributes to migration among youth. Accurate, up-to-date and age- and sex-disaggregated data are lacking for the exact number of young migrants from ESCWA countries residing outside

¹⁵ *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010, Annex Table 8*

¹⁶ *Dhillon, Salehi-Isfahani, Dyer, Yousef, Fahmy, Kraetsch, p. 8*

¹⁷ *Dhillon, Salehi-Isfahani, Dyer, Yousef, Fahmy, Kraetsch, p. 8*

¹⁸ *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007, p. 124*

¹⁹ *Dhillon, Salehi-Isfahani, Dyer, Yousef, Fahmy, Kraetsch, pps. 9-10*

²⁰ *Dhillon, Salehi-Isfahani, Dyer, Yousef, Fahmy, Kraetsch, p. 22*

²¹ *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007, p. 124*

²² *Navtej Dhillon and Tarik Yousef, N.D., p. 14*

²³ *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007, pps. 128-132*

²⁴ *For example, the Dhillon, Salehi-Isfahani, Dyer, Yousef, Fahmy, Kraetsch, using a broader definition of youth, estimate that youth joblessness costs 2.74 per cent of GDP in Lebanon, 7.29 per cent in Egypt, and 9.09 per cent of GDP in the Syrian Arab Republic. Dhillon, Salehi-Isfahani, Dyer, Yousef, Fahmy, Kraetsch, p. 13*

their countries of birth; however, some indicative figures are suggestive of youth migration trends. Firstly, many young people in the ESCWA region show the desire to migrate: of the 12 ESCWA countries surveyed by Gallup in 2010, a median figure of 24 per cent of respondents said that, if given the chance, they would migrate.²⁵ Moreover, many young Arabs migrate for study: it is estimated that 206,549 of the almost 3 million internationally-mobile students in the world in 2008 came from Arab countries.²⁶ Finally, figures from Spain suggest that young people from ESCWA countries represented from 5 to over 10 per cent of the total number of migrants from that country.²⁷ Although these figures are not definitive, and with causes other than labour market outcomes driving migration, nonetheless it seems that poor education and labour market outcomes contribute to young people leaving ESCWA countries. In the absence of adequate policies to persuade these youth to contribute to development in their countries of origin, this can equate to a loss of the potential of these (often highly-educated) youth.

Another consequence of poor labour market outcomes is that young people's ability to participate in wider society is limited. This is particularly notable in relation to family formation, as the average age at which people marry has increased across the region. In Jordan, for example, the mean age at marriage has increased from 21.5 years of age for women and 25.9 for men in 1979 to 25.4 and 28.6 in 2004.²⁸ Insofar as this increase represents the effect of other, more positive factors that delay family formation, such as increased female education and participation in the workforce, this is not problematic, and can be beneficial in reducing the risk of adolescent pregnancy; however, it is also suggested that such delays are also to some extent involuntary, as young men (particularly) are unable to signify their eligibility for marriage, or to carry the high costs that marriage often implies. This limits young people's ability to take part in rites of passage to adulthood, preventing them from being considered as full adults.²⁹

It is therefore clear that the socio-economic situation of youth in the ESCWA countries is poor, particularly in the countries of the Mashreq. Poor-quality education, gender imbalances and poor labour market outcomes mean that young people are finding few opportunities in their own countries and are adjusting their expectations to include emigration and delayed marriage and family formation. This situation prevents ESCWA countries from being able to benefit from the potential that well-educated youth employed in decent jobs would bring for socio-economic development.

Youth and their Well-Being

Youth in the ESCWA region face a particular risk profile. Although they region face a relatively low prevalence of HIV, malaria and tuberculosis, youth in specific areas, and

²⁵ *Silatech/Gallup, N.D.*

²⁶ *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2010, Table 9. These figures are for the ESCWA countries of Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and also include the non-ESCWA Arab countries of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia*

²⁷ *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2009b, p. 3*

²⁸ *United Nations Population Division, 2008a.*

²⁹ *Dhillon, Salehi-Isfahani, Dyer, Yousef, Fahmy, Kraetsch, pps. 12-13.*

particularly in the least-developed ESCWA countries, do face such risks.³⁰ Two major health risks faced by youth in the ESCWA region relate to smoking and road accidents. The median youth smoking rate in the region is 25.2 per cent for men, and 13.2 per cent for women.³¹ Meanwhile, insofar as such data are available, it seems that the main causes of death of youth relate to road accidents.³² Finally, youth's knowledge of and access to reproductive health information and care remains relatively limited,³³ and although the number of pregnant adolescent women is dropping, those that do undergo pregnancy face serious risks to their health.³⁴

Other risks to youth well-being come from conflict. Five countries within the region are considered as countries affected by conflict,³⁵ with populations in these countries facing internal conflicts and foreign occupation, sometimes simultaneously. In addition to the direct risks to the lives and health of youth, these conflicts exacerbate youth's difficulties in accessing education and employment, as education infrastructure is destroyed or closed; young people face formal and informal restrictions on their mobility; and political priorities shift away from social and economic issues. Moreover, conflicts uproot youth, with young people being internally-displaced or becoming refugees, usually in neighbouring countries. It is estimated that the Sudan has the largest internally-displaced population (IDP) in the world, with potentially up to 5.2 million people being IDPs, while there are over 2.75 million Iraqi IDPs.³⁶ The Syrian Arab Republic, hosted a "population of concern" to UNHCR of over 1.3 million in 2009, of whom 37 per cent were under the age of 18,³⁷ to which should be added 4,766,760 Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and in Palestine itself.³⁸ Although the situations of refugees vary, with some able to live in urban settings while others are confined to camps, nonetheless the refugee experience is rarely a positive one for youth. For example, a socio-economic survey of Palestine refugees in Lebanon found that youth accounted for 24 per cent of Palestinians in poverty in Lebanon, and 29.4 per cent of those in extreme poverty.³⁹ Youth are also involved in conflicts as combatants, exposing them to risk and violating their rights.⁴⁰

Youths from minority or disadvantaged groups are at risk from multiple discrimination, as youths and members of disadvantaged groups. This is particularly clear in the case of young women, who have fewer legal protections and rights than men, and as such face wage discrimination compared to their male peers, discrimination in access to information

³⁰ *United Nations and League of Arab States, 2007.*

³¹ *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2010c,*

³² *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2010c.*

³³ *Population Reference Bureau, 2007.*

³⁴ *United Nations and League of Arab States, 2007, p. 58.*

³⁵ *Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan and Yemen*

³⁶ *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, N.D.*

³⁷ *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2009. Unfortunately, data for the specific youth segment of the population are unavailable*

³⁸ *United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, N.D.*

³⁹ *Jad Chaaban, Hala Ghattas, Rima Habib, Sari Hanafi, Nadine Sahyoun, Nisreen Salti, Karin Seyfert, Nadia Naamani, 2010, p. 32, table 3-5*

⁴⁰ *United Nations Development Programme, 2009, p. 92.*

and social services, cultural pressure to marry, as well as the risk of gender-based violence, female genital mutilation and honour killings.⁴¹

The youth of the ESCWA region therefore face particular risks which violate their rights and hinder their ability to engage in and benefit from development.

Youth in Civil Society

Youth in the ESCWA region are often excluded from formal public life. For those countries who allow their citizens to vote, youth are generally permitted to vote, either at ages 18 or 21. However, only Bahrain, Qatar and the Sudan allow youth to stand at national elections; in other countries, the minimum age for candidacy range from 25-30, excluding youth from direct participation in formal national decision-making processes.⁴² Other forums through which young people could participate, such as parliamentary committees, are meanwhile only tangentially related to youth, and tend to be of a lower status. Youth participation in civil society is also constrained, as the governing bodies of such organizations also tend to exclude youth.⁴³ Environmental initiatives, an area of particular pertinence and interest to youth, are not immune from this syndrome, often engaging youth as human resources rather than as partners.⁴⁴ As a result, youth participation in voluntary activities is low: in Egypt, for example, the Population Council found that 2 per cent of 15-17 year olds and 3.2 per cent of 18-24 year-olds were involved in any kind of voluntary activity.⁴⁵ This exclusion, coupled with the general lack of space for meaningful political participation in most ESCWA countries, means that young people often feel isolated from politics and frustrated: in Egypt, only 16% of eligible young people had voted in the 2005 election.⁴⁶

Finally, and more positively, access to information and communication technology in the ESCWA region has grown massively since since the year 2000, with some countries registering growth rates in the number of internet users of tens of thousands of percent. The United Arab Emirates is the most-connected country, with 65.2 internet users per 100 people, although the median figure for ESCWA countries is 21.25 internet users per 100 people.⁴⁷ Unfortunately data are not available as to the demographic make-up of these users; however, analysis of the usage of the social networking site facebook suggest that 75 per cent of its users are between the ages of 15 and 29, suggesting that youth are engaging in online activities.⁴⁸ Finally, in relation to the connection of educational institutions to the internet, there is a wide variation between countries, with Bahrain having connected almost all its schools to the internet, with Saudi Arabia and Jordan also above the global median of 77 per cent of schools connected, but at the lower end of the

⁴¹ *United Nations and League of Arab States, 2007.*

⁴² *Inter-Parliamentary Union, N.D.*

⁴³ *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2009a, p. 20*

⁴⁴ *United Nations and League of Arab States, 2007, p. 118.*

⁴⁵ *Egyptian Cabinet Information and Decision Support Center and Population Council, 2010, Table 1.1*

⁴⁶ *Egyptian Cabinet Information and Decision Support Center and Population Council, 2010, p. 18.*

⁴⁷ *United Nations Development Programme, 2010, table 17*

⁴⁸ *Arab Social Media Report, 2011.*

scale, poorer and conflict-affected countries had only connected 20-25 per cent of schools.⁴⁹

Much therefore remains to be done in enabling youth to participate actively in civil society in the ESCWA region, although it would seem that in relation to use of ICT tools, young people are at the forefront of developments in the region.

Conclusion

The youth of the ESCWA region face many challenges. This is particularly concerning as this may hold back longer-term development: the wide range of transitions and experiences youth undergo are essential for determining future outcomes; when they are difficult, they risk spreading disadvantages encountered at youth ages along the life course. For example, youth whose first job is in the informal sector find it hard to break out of this sector. Moreover, these challenges prevent societies from benefiting from the transitions youth undergo: in relation to employment, the large growth in the number of young people, coupled with the relatively-low number of children and dependants, means that youth who successfully transition to decent work would be able to contribute to increasing output and building up savings and providing money for investment, thus boosting development.⁵⁰ In addition, youth are a source of creativity and innovation; enabling them to act on their ideas in business and civil society would enable ESCWA countries to “keep pace with global developments and meet the ambitions of the peoples of the region” in terms of technology and ideas.⁵¹ Governments therefore need to implement policies across a wide range of sectors in order to ensure that youth transitions happen under the best-possible circumstances, in order to ensure accelerated and sustained long-term development.

It is in recognition of this that the United Nations developed the World Programme of Action on Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY) in 1995. This Programme sets out 15 priority areas grouped into three clusters, covering topics ranging from education, health, employment, participation, fighting drug abuse, and ensuring gender equality, with the aim of providing a coherent, multi-sectoral framework for enabling youth to participate in and benefit from development and ensuring that their special needs and vulnerabilities are addressed. The WPAY in particular calls on governments to implement multi-sectoral national youth policies, able to address the specific and multi-faceted situation of youths in their countries. The next section will therefore consider how governments have reacted to issues of youth within this framework.

Government Reactions

In general, the response to the WPAY in the ESCWA region has been inadequate. An ESCWA survey carried out in late 2008 found that policymakers, although interested in the subject of youth, lacked the capacities, information and understanding of the key

⁴⁹ *International Telecommunications Union, 2010, Chart 2.4.,*

⁵⁰ *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2008.*

⁵¹ *United Nations Development Programme and Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum Foundation, 2009, p. 173*

concepts of youth development to develop and implement policies that would properly integrate youth into development processes. In general, there is a lack of data, research and analysis that would enable policymakers to identify the situation of youth in their countries, as well as a lack of political will to engage with the subject. Development is rather dealt with sectorally, without regard for the distinct needs and potentials of different socio-demographic groups, particularly youth.⁵² As a result, most countries still deal with youth through projects of limited duration, focus, geographical reach and sustainability. Only five countries in the ESCWA region (Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Yemen) have national youth policies, although another five (Iraq, Lebanon, Qatar, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Emirates) are in the process of developing them.

Of the countries which do have national youth policies, the following issues can be identified:

Few countries have action plans for the implementation of their policies; definitions of youth vary, with only Bahrain, Palestine, and Yemen's policies fitting the definition of the WPAY; some youth may have been involved in the formulation of the policy, but are rarely considered as actors in the development process; data on the exact situation of youth and the many youth sub-groups (for example urban and rural, national and non-national, male and female) are lacking; many national youth policies are neither costed nor allocated specific budgets; the policies are not linked to other development programmes; and targets for measuring progress are not available.⁵³

Therefore, although it is useful that these countries have begun in the process of integrating youth into their development programmes, areas requiring progress remain. Until youth are fully-integrated through multi-sectoral, costed national youth policies backed up by action plans and political commitment, ESCWA countries will continue to suffer from a lack of youth involvement in development, with negative effects on youth and society as a whole.

ESCWA's Response

As part of its mandate to “foster comprehensive, equitable, integrated and sustainable development” in the region, the Population and Social Development Section (PSDS) of ESCWA assists member countries to enhance their capacity to “address the implications of demographic changes with particular emphasis on the youth bulge ... and to adopt relevant policies”.⁵⁴

In particular, PSDS undertakes the following activities:

- (1) Advocating for the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth

⁵² United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2010a

⁵³ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2009a,

⁵⁴ United Nations General Assembly, 2009.

- (WPAY) and encouraging national governments to formulate national youth policies.
- (2) Strengthening the individual and institutional capacities of Member States to help them formulate national youth policies and related plans of actions.
 - (3) Monitoring countries' responses to the WPAY and their progress towards achieving goals and targets on youth development.
 - (4) Conducting research and analysis on the situation of youth in education, employment, health and participation in public life. This will help in identifying the problems and challenges they are facing and in formulating appropriate youth policies that target them as a distinct socio-demographic group.

Since 2008, PSDS has undertaken a range of different activities to assist member countries to integrate youth into development. ESCWA's role in the process of integrating youth into development was recognized in the 26th ministerial session and reinforced, as the member countries of the ESCWA region emphasized its comparative advantage "in undertaking a leading role in coordinating efforts of regional organizations and country bureaux of United Nations organizations with regard to the implementation of WPAY"⁵⁵

Within this framework, PSDS has:

Held a workshop in 2008 on "Reinforcing National Capacities in Responding to WPAY: National Reports and Systematic Documentation of Accomplishments" and an Expert Group Meeting in 2009 on "Reinforcing Social Equity: Integrating Youth into the Development Process". A further Expert Group Meeting on "Follow up to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond" in the Arab region is planned for the end of March 2011;

Begun implementation of a project under the United Nations Development Account on "Strengthening capacities of policy makers in the ESCWA region to formulate national youth policies and plans of action: Responding to the World Programme of Action for Youth". This project was requested by ESCWA member countries as an outcome of the 2009 Expert Group Meeting, and will assist Iraq, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Palestine and Yemen to develop and operationalize their national youth strategies. In addition, PSDS is implementing a project with the Arab Labour Organization on "Developing a regional initiative on youth employment";

Provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Youth and Sports on the process of writing national youth reports, building their capacity to monitor the situation of youth in Palestine. It is able to provide any technical assistance to member countries on youth issues upon request.

PSDS will continue this work as a core feature of its workplan, and is ready to work with governments and other partners to achieve the implementation and operationalization of the WPAY throughout the ESCWA region.

⁵⁵ *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2010b.*

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is therefore clear that the youthfulness of the ESCWA region gives it a major potential for achieving a demographic dividend, accelerating the process of social and economic development and spreading benefits along the life course. However, until now, the policies in place across the region are not unlocking the potential of youth, causing youth themselves to suffer problems of unemployment, risks to their health and exclusion from social and political participation, and limiting the potential demographic dividend for development that this youth population represents.

In order to counter such problems and unlock the potential of youth for development, ESCWA member countries should adopt the World Programme of Action on Youth as a framework for their youth-based interventions, and in particular, draft and implement multi-sectoral national youth strategies, linked to broader development strategies. The Population and Social Development Section of ESCWA stands ready to further assist governments in this process through its research and analysis, capacity building projects, and technical assistance.

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