

**Guidance for implementing
the
United Nations System-wide Action
Plan on Youth**

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

In recent years, Member States have requested the UN system to intensify efforts towards a more coherent, comprehensive and integrated approach to youth development within the context of the World Programme of Action for Youth through, inter alia, the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD). These calls were made, for example, in several resolutions of the General Assembly as well as in the Outcome Document of the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth.

During the High Level Meeting, on 25 July, the principals of more than 25 member entities of the IANYD signed a joint statement in which they committed to make young people a priority in their work and to incorporate their perspectives within our organizations and in the United Nations system.

“In the coming years, we will intensify efforts within our respective mandates at the global, regional and national levels, including through strengthening mechanisms such as the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, in order to promote and support:

1. *COMPREHENSIVE POLICIES that include young people’s issues and voices, and enhance the use of data on young people to promote development and poverty reduction;*
2. *MULTISECTORAL PROGRAMMES that promote the human rights and fulfill the development needs of adolescents and youth, including marginalized adolescent girls;*
3. *STRENGTHENED CAPACITIES of national institutions and youth-led organizations to implement coordinated youth policies and programmes;*
4. *FULL AND EFFECTIVE YOUTH PARTICIPATION in society and decision-making, in both rural and urban settings, striving to include young people with disabilities, young people living with HIV, indigenous young people, young people from minorities, young migrants, young people who are stateless, internally displaced, young refugees or those affected by humanitarian situations or armed conflict.”*

We reaffirm our pledge to make young people a priority in our work and commit to incorporate their perspectives within our organizations and in the United Nations system.”

On 25 January 2012, the Secretary-General outlined his Five-year Action Agenda, which laid out five generational imperatives to be addressed by the United Nations, requiring the mobilization of all the human, financial and political resources available to the Organization. Working with and for young people is one of these imperatives. The United Nations system is called on to address the needs of the largest

generation of young people the world has ever known by developing and implementing an action plan on youth.

In response to the Secretary-General's Action Agenda and the requests from Member States, the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) has prepared a System-wide Action Plan on Youth (Youth-SWAP).¹

To develop the Youth-SWAP, a consultative and preparatory process was carried out. To seek input from youth and other relevant stakeholders for the development of the System-wide Action Plan on Youth, the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) conducted an online survey in all official UN languages in July-August 2012. Over 13,000 respondents from 186 countries participated in the survey. Throughout the process, there was strong participation and commitment of the UN system. 27 UN entities actively participated and another 22 were consulted or provided input.

At its spring session in April 2013, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination endorsed the Youth-SWAP as a framework to guide youth programming for the UN system.

In a letter dated 17 July 2013, the UNDP Administrator and head of the UN Development Group, Helen Clark called on Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators to promote the implementation of the Youth-SWAP.

"It is important for UN Resident Co-ordinators to be engaged in promoting joint programming which contributes to fulfilling the commitments in the Youth-SWAP and supporting the efforts of the IANYD in expanding interagency networks on youth at the country level. I write now to request your support to establish or strengthen inter-agency networks on youth at the country level, which may, inter alia, bring together a range of stakeholders including youth-led organizations; conduct assessments to understand the situation of young people; identify the most marginalized; and develop a multi-sectoral advocacy agenda to promote their human rights and development."

1.2. Objectives and focus of the Youth-SWAP

The Youth-SWAP provides an opportunity to harness the strengths of the UN system in the area of youth development and to promote joint programmatic work on the issue. It provides strategic guidance to the UN system as a whole in its work on youth within the framework of the World Programme of Action for Youth. It is intended to enhance coherence and synergy of UN system-wide activities in key areas related to

¹ The UN Inter-agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) consists of UN entities at the headquarters level whose work is relevant to youth. The aim of the Network is to increase the effectiveness of UN work in youth development by strengthening collaboration and exchange among all relevant UN entities, while respecting and harnessing the benefits of their individual strengths and unique approaches and mandates. The Network meets on a regular basis to share information and coordinate activities. The Network has thematic sub-groups which focus on specific issues of youth development and deepen its work in these areas.

youth development. Based on the Secretary-General's Five-year Action Agenda, the System-wide Action Plan focuses on the following thematic areas: employment, entrepreneurship, political inclusion, civic engagement and protection of rights, education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and health.² The Youth-SWAP aspires to improve the situation of young people in both peace and conflict-affected settings. It is understood that the thematic areas touch upon, and leverage the potential and benefits of UN work in other areas affecting youth development, such as sustainable development and climate change and culture among others. ICTs are seen as an enabling technology for the entire youth-SWAP.

For each thematic area, the Youth-SWAP includes one overarching goal, which represents the long-term objective to which the UN System should contribute in this area. Moreover, each thematic area consists of commitments (or outcomes) towards which to work, the measures (or results) that need to be achieved in order to meet these commitments, and indicators to monitor implementation of the measures. For each measure, a list of lead and supporting entities, which are responsible for contributing to the implementation of the measure, was also developed. The commitments, measures and related indicators are grounded in mandates received from intergovernmental bodies.

In addressing the thematic areas outlined above, and considering gender perspectives in all areas, the Youth-SWAP is closely aligned to the World Programme of Action of Youth (WPAY). Although the Youth-SWAP focuses on a smaller number of thematic areas than the fifteen priority areas outlined in the World Programme of Action for Youth, the remaining WPAY priority areas are taken into account within the commitments, measures and indicators contained in the Youth-SWAP.

The Youth-SWAP provides a welcome opportunity to promote joint programmatic work on youth development and to identify ways in which activities undertaken by individual entities can complement each other. Close attention was paid in developing the Youth-SWAP to ensure that it is in line with existing mandates and is relevant for existing activities. In implementing the commitments and measures of the Youth-SWAP, UN entities at the country, regional and global levels should identify ways in which existing activities can complement each other in order to exploit synergies. Moreover, options for joint programming in areas in which entities are in the process of developing programmatic work should also be explored.

² The Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Agenda identifies the following thematic areas for an action plan on youth: employment, entrepreneurship, political inclusion, citizenship, protection of rights, education, including reproductive health. The Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development proposed "health" as an additional thematic area for the Youth-SWAP. Moreover, it proposed to use the term "civic engagement" rather than "citizenship" since the former is more inclusive, and suggested to refer to "Comprehensive Sexuality Education" rather than "education on sexual and reproductive health". CSE is a broader concept and also addresses issues such as life skills. It is the concept now commonly used within the UN system.

The Youth-SWAP addresses the development and evolving capabilities of a critical segment of society: the largest generation of young people the world has ever known. It addresses issues relevant to different age groups of young people within the thematic areas, including adolescents (aged 10-19 years) and youth (aged 15-24 years), and in accordance with agencies' mandates. Given that the definition of young people varies by country context, the Youth-SWAP may also apply to young people older than 24.

During the implementation phase of the Youth-SWAP, individual entities will work with and target specific activities towards the specific age groups of young people they are mandated to work with. As such, it is expected that different age groups within the cohort of young people will receive the specialised attention they require, based on their age-specific needs and evolving capacities.

2. Roles and responsibilities

The following section outlines the roles and responsibilities of various actors involved in the implementation of commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP. Section 5.5 outlines the specific roles and responsibilities of entities involved in the reporting process in more detail.

2.1 The role of Inter-Agency Networks on Youth

The roles and responsibilities of the inter-agency networks at the global, regional and country levels are:

UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development³ (Global):

- Identify and monitor global activities and initiatives that are being carried out in the context of the Youth-SWAP;
- Coordinate reporting on the Youth-SWAP;
- Support the formation of regional and country inter-agency networks where they currently do not exist;
- Ensure timely communication and coordination with and amongst regional inter-agency networks on issues related to the Youth-SWAP;
- Encourage youth participation in the implementation of commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP.

Regional UN inter-agency networks⁴:

³ The main preparatory work will be done by the Youth-SWAP core group, i.e. the sub-working group of IANYD on the Youth-SWAP. All major decisions affecting the Youth-SWAP will be circulated to the entire IANYD for feedback. It is envisaged that the Youth-SWAP core group, as a sub-group of the IANYD, will continue to exist for the duration of the validity of the Youth-SWAP in order to ensure overall coherence, guidance and coordination for the System-wide Action Plan.

- Identify and monitor regional activities and initiatives that are being carried out in the context of the Youth-SWAP;
- Identify focus countries for joint initiatives to implement commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP based on a set of selection criteria
- Identify regional priorities on which entities should focus in the joint implementation of commitments contained in the Youth-SWAP;
- Develop coordination mechanisms with country networks to ensure timely communication and coordination with regional inter-agency networks on issues related to the Youth-SWAP;
- Provide timely inputs into reporting to the co-chairs of the thematic sub-working groups;
- Encourage youth participation in regional implementation plans and activities carried out in the context of the Youth-SWAP;
- Promote the discussion of youth-related issues in the Regional Coordination Mechanisms (RCMs).

Country UN inter-agency networks⁵:

- Identify national priorities on which entities should focus in the joint-implementation of commitments contained in the Youth-SWAP;
- Provide timely inputs into reporting to regional inter-agency networks;
- Identify and monitor national activities and initiatives that are being carried out in the context of the Youth-SWAP;
- Encourage youth participation in country-level implementation plans and activities carried out in the context of the Youth-SWAP.

2.2 The role of different entities

Implementation of commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP relies on the involvement of all entities. The precise tasks and responsibilities of entities will differ depending on the roles they have volunteered for.

Co-chairs of the thematic sub-working groups

The co-chairs of each thematic sub-working group will convene meetings of the sub-working group. Members of the sub-working group are those that have agreed to act as Lead or Supporting Entities for the measures contained in the thematic area. The co-chairs of the thematic sub-working groups will call for and compile reports regarding the implementation of activities contributing to the achievement of measures within their thematic area. Co-chairs may also propose the removal of lead or supporting entities from the Youth-SWAP matrix for certain measures if these entities are unresponsive to repeated calls for inputs (see section 4.4).

⁴ IANYD is making a concerted effort to support the establishment of regional UN inter-agency networks in regions in which they do not yet exist, i.e. Africa and Eastern and Central Europe. It is envisaged that these networks will be established in the course of 2013.

⁵ The UN inter-agency networks on youth working at the country level can take various forms (e.g. networks, task teams or thematic groups). For simplicity, all of these are referred to as inter-agency networks throughout this document.

The following table provides an overview of the co-chairs for the thematic areas of the Youth-SWAP:

Thematic area of the Youth-SWAP	Co-chair entities
Employment & Entrepreneurship	ILO
Protection of Rights, Civic Engagement & Political Inclusion	UNDP, UN-HABITAT
Education, including Comprehensive Sexuality Education	UNESCO, UNFPA
Health	UNICEF, WHO

Lead and supporting entities

Lead and supporting entities have volunteered to lead/support the work on a given measure of the Youth-SWAP. Specifically, they will implement activities contributing to the achievement of the measures and will provide information on activities carried out by individual entities in support of these measures. Lead and supporting entities are responsible for providing timely inputs to calls for information from the co-chairs of the thematic working groups. In addition, lead entities for each measure will identify 2-3 suggested activities or initiatives along with any tools, guidelines and resources to support entities to achieve the measure. All entities are responsible for maintaining regular communication on the Youth-SWAP among their headquarters, regional and country offices.

Monitoring entities

Monitoring entities will compile data on each indicator for which they are responsible either through their own internal data sources or through any other appropriate source.

IANYD co-chairs

IANYD co-chairs chair the Youth-SWAP core group as well as the Youth-SWAP communication group. As such, they coordinate the overall reporting on the Youth-SWAP, based on inputs received from regional inter-agency networks and the co-chairs of the thematic sub-working groups.

Members of the Youth-SWAP Communication Group

The Youth-SWAP communication group consists of communication specialists from different UN entities that have volunteered to develop a joint communication strategy for the Youth-SWAP. Members of the communication group also agree to take on specific roles and commit to specific deliverables, as outlined in the communication strategy. The strategy may be found as a separate accompanying document to this guidance note.

2.3 The role of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth

The role of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth is to support the implementation of commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP through the following actions:

- Raising awareness of the Youth-SWAP, its thematic areas and the need for investment in youth among Member States, youth-led organizations and the general public;
- Advocating for the creation of regional and country inter-agency networks on youth by encouraging the deepening of a youth focus of existing UN programmes at all levels;
- Encouraging the involvement of regional and country networks in the implementation of commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP;
- Conducting fundraising initiatives for the Youth-SWAP.

3. Youth participation

As highlighted in the World Programme of Action for Youth, promoting youth participation in society and in decision-making is a key priority of the UN agenda on youth. It has been central to the work of the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, which has a specific sub-group on youth participation.

3.1 Youth priorities for the Youth-SWAP

To seek input from youth and other relevant stakeholders for the development of the System-wide Action Plan on Youth, the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) conducted an online survey in all official UN languages in July-August 2012. Over 13,000 respondents from 186 countries participated in the survey. The responses received helped identify relevant measures and commitments for the Youth-SWAP and in many cases confirmed the UN system's prioritization of areas that needed to be addressed within the thematic areas of the Youth-SWAP.

The overall outcomes of the survey are summarised in Annex 2.

3.2 Levels of youth participation in the Youth-SWAP

Participation of youth as partners and right-holders in the implementation of commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP is essential. There are three levels of youth participation that need to be addressed going forward:

- a) Informing and consulting youth about the Youth-SWAP;
- b) Encouraging their inclusive and meaningful participation in its implementation; and
- c) Engaging youth as partners and in the monitoring and reporting of the Youth-SWAP.

(a) Informing and consulting youth about the Youth-SWAP:

- Young people should be asked for advice on how to systematically work with them and to partner with them in the implementation of commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP;
- Youth and youth-organizations will receive specifically developed youth-focused information on the Youth-SWAP.

(b) Encouraging youth participation in the implementation of commitments contained in the Youth-SWAP:

- Youth should participate in many of the activities carried out to implement the SWAP as appropriate.
- UN inter-agency networks on youth at all levels should make specific efforts to engage youth and youth-led organizations;
- A specific effort should be made to include youth volunteers from the new UN Youth Volunteer Programme during the implementation of commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP;
- Many youth organizations are already actively engaged in the thematic areas of the Youth-SWAP and are working to achieve the measures and commitments outlined in the Youth-SWAP, without partnering with the UN system. Although the Youth-SWAP commits the UN system, mechanisms can be devised to recognise youth organizations that are working to promote the measures and commitments in the Youth-SWAP. One suggestion is for youth organizations to be able to make pledges to work in certain areas. Alternatively, youth-led organizations having a particular impact in the areas outlined in the Youth-SWAP could be highlighted in an annex to the annual report;
- Special efforts should be made to reach out to young women, youth with disabilities, indigenous youth, migrant youth, youth living with HIV, and other groups of youth.

(c) Engaging youth as partners and in the monitoring and reporting of the Youth-SWAP:

- Engaging youth as advocates for the Youth-SWAP will ensure that they have ownership;
- Youth participation in monitoring some of the indicators (e.g. their perceptions on improvements) should be facilitated where possible;
- It is important to seek feedback from youth on the Youth-SWAP. Asking youth organizations to prepare a shadow report on the Youth-SWAP or a crowd-sourced report from young people may be specific options (see section 3.3 below).

Key principles for youth participation in developing national monitoring and evaluation frameworks for the World Programme of Action for Youth are outlined in Annex 3. These also apply to youth participation in the Youth-SWAP.

3.3 Youth shadow reports or Youth participation score card

Youth should be given the opportunity to hold the UN system accountable for the implementation of commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP. Suggesting to youth organizations to prepare a shadow report on the Youth-SWAP can help achieve this. At the joint-meeting of the IANYD with youth-led organizations in August/September 2013, a detailed plan will be developed that allows young people to submit a report or multiple reports on the implementation of commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP.

A youth participation score card, prepared jointly by the Networks and youth organizations, to assess the quality of young people's participation in the Youth-SWAP may also be an option. If this option is pursued, IANYD will prepare a template, which regional and country offices can use as a tool to help them develop such score cards.

4. Implementation of the Youth-SWAP

In April 2013, the Youth-SWAP was endorsed by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination as a framework for the entire UN system. It is important to remember that while the Youth-SWAP is a new document, the commitments and measures contained in it build on the mandates of inter-governmental agreements such as the World Programme for Action on Youth as well as existing strategies and plans of UN entities. It is a roadmap intended to identify the plans of the UN system to support the realization of young people's rights and development priorities and to inspire collaboration at the global, regional and national levels. The activities undertaken as a part of the implementation of commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP will necessarily differ by region and country and will reflect national and regional priorities and specificities. It is envisioned that the vast majority of activities to implement the commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP will take place at the country level. Important activities to implement the System-wide Action Plan will, however, also take place at the regional and global levels.

Joint work through regional and country networks will be prioritised, but each entity will also continue to work individually to promote youth development in the context of the Youth-SWAP.

4.1 Activities

Recognizing that the Youth-SWAP captures existing commitments of UN entities as well as new commitments for joint action, there are two possible types of activities undertaken to implement the Youth-SWAP:

1. Activities that are undertaken by UN entities **individually** that contribute to achieving the measures or commitments in the Youth-SWAP (whether they are a part of existing plans or new initiatives as a result of the Youth-SWAP) are identified as such at the national, regional and global levels, **compiled by that entity** at the global level and transmitted to the lead entity for each measure for final reporting. Information on these types of activities should be available through existing reporting systems;
2. Activities that are undertaken **jointly** by two or more UN entities that contribute to achieving the measures or commitments in the Youth-SWAP (whether they are a part of existing plans or new initiatives as a result of the Youth-SWAP) are identified as such by inter-agency networks existing at the country or regional level, and short narratives on progress (following a pre-defined format) are **prepared by such networks** and sent to the IANYD for compilation at the global level;

In 2013 and 2014, it is likely that the majority of activities undertaken in the context of the Youth-SWAP will be activities undertaken by UN entities individually that are a part of existing plans. It is envisaged, however, that by 2015 and 2016, more joint activities will be undertaken, particularly as a result of the Youth-SWAP.

Networks at the global, regional and country levels should identify avenues for collaboration in implementing the commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP. Specifically, networks at all levels are encouraged to identify youth-related activities (individual and joint) that will be carried out at their respective levels. The identification of activities will allow entities to identify potential synergies and opportunities for working together in the thematic areas of the Youth-SWAP.

To provide inspiration to entities and country networks interested in developing new activities to implement the commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP, lead entities for each measure should identify 2-3 suggested activities or initiatives along with any tools, guidelines and resources to support entities to achieve the measure. Suggested activities and other resources should be based on good practices. Guidance for implementation of measures made available by lead entities will be shared through inter-agency networks.

Implementation of the commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP is an ongoing process and activities will be developed throughout the timeframe for the Youth-SWAP, i.e. until end 2016.

4.2 Focus countries

Objectives of identifying focus countries:

Focus countries are those in which all participating UN entities make a special effort to work jointly to implement the commitments and measures in the Youth-SWAP. The UN inter-agency networks in these countries may choose to focus on all thematic areas of the Youth-SWAP or to prioritise specific areas, depending on country priorities – and they may make specific requests to the regional or global inter-agency networks to support implementation.

The selection of focus countries will not hinder entities from implementing and supporting SWAP-related activities in other countries. Since some measures in the Youth-SWAP may not be relevant for all countries, it is important to retain a degree of flexibility so that all areas of the Youth-SWAP are addressed.

Reporting will be on all countries (focus countries and those in which individual entities undertake activities related to the Youth-SWAP).

Criteria for selecting focus countries:

Regional networks will identify a limited number (3-5) of countries in which to focus on joint initiatives to promote the implementation of commitments and measures

contained in the Youth-SWAP. Selection of focus countries should be based on the following criteria:

- Countries expressing an interest in becoming focus countries or to increase their work on youth should be given preference;
- Countries with large youth populations should receive particular attention;
- If possible, at least one post-conflict country could be selected per region;
- Both least developed and middle income countries should be considered;
- One UN countries/countries in which joint programmes already exist and are well-functioning should be chosen alongside countries in which joint programmes do not yet exist and in which joint implementation of commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP would provide a concrete opportunity for the development of joint activities;
- Countries developing UNDAFs in 2014, 2015 or 2016 should receive particular attention.

Focus countries identified to date by regional UN inter-agency networks:

Asia-Pacific:

Latin America and the Caribbean:

MENA: Jordan, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen

If regional networks are unable to identify 3-5 focus countries immediately, it is possible for them to identify 1-2 focus countries in 2013 and the remaining focus countries in 2014.

4.3 Updating the Youth-SWAP and the implementation framework

The Youth-SWAP is a “living” document that needs to be adjusted to changing realities. The Youth-SWAP core group will meet on a regular basis (at least once a month) and will monitor that implementation of commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP is proceeding smoothly and according to agreed timelines. Moreover, annual meetings of IANYD will be followed by a 1-day working session on the Youth-SWAP at which IANYD will assess progress, identify any potential challenges related to the Youth-SWAP and define priorities for the coming year. The co-chairs of regional UN inter-agency networks on youth should attend these working sessions, brief IANYD on their experience with the Youth-SWAP and provide recommendations for future work.

If necessary, annual reports can include a section with recommendations for amendments to the Youth-SWAP (e.g. suggestions to reformulate or remove indicators which cannot be monitored). A final decision on these recommendations will be taken by IANYD after consultation with regional networks.

Participating entities agree to take on the roles and responsibilities as outlined in section 2.2. It is understood that all entities, lead or supporting, are committed to the implementation of the measures in the SWAP and contributing fully to its

monitoring and reporting. At different times, different entities may be in better positions to take the lead, and as such, the arrangements of which entities are lead and supporting for each measure or monitoring entities for indicators will be considered flexible. Recommendations to rotate lead or supporting entities from the Youth-SWAP matrix may be made by the co-chairs of the thematic sub-working groups or by entities themselves, and will become effective once endorsed by the Youth-SWAP core group.

5. Reporting modalities of the Youth-SWAP

5.1 Format for reporting

Reporting on the Youth-SWAP is crucial to show impact and results that the UN system is achieving, but also to identify scope for improvement and lessons learned. Reporting will take place once a year (in mid-April). Reports on the Youth-SWAP should collect information on what the UN system does collectively (which is highlighted as a priority), but also what is done by entities individually that contributes to the measures of the Youth-SWAP (which gives a fuller picture of what the United Nations system does as a whole for and with young people). Reports on the Youth-SWAP will therefore include narrative sections on the joint and individual activities that were carried out to achieve the overall goals, commitments and measures in the Youth-SWAP, based on reports received from individual entities and country and regional inter-agency networks as well as a quantitative annex which monitors the indicators identified for the Youth-SWAP.

Structure of the report

Annual reports will be structured as follows:

- Introduction
- Inter-Agency collaboration in the context of the Youth-SWAP*
- Progress made in achieving the overall goals, commitments and measures in the SWAP, for each thematic area, (i.e. Employment and Entrepreneurship, Protection of Rights, Civic Engagement, Political Inclusion, Education, Comprehensive Sexuality Education, and Health):
 - Joint-interagency achievements (global, regional, country)*
 - Individual agency achievements (global, regional, country)*
 - Illustrative examples*
- Youth participation in the context of the Youth-SWAP*
- Challenges, Lessons Learned and Priorities for the coming year*
- Annex: monitoring update on the measure indicators**

* Information to be collected through networks at the country, regional and global levels.

** Information to be collected through the monitoring entities.

A section of the report could also provide information on the youth organizations supporting the implementation of commitments and measures contained in the Youth-SWAP.

Annual reports should be limited to maximum 1,500 words (approximately three pages) per thematic area.

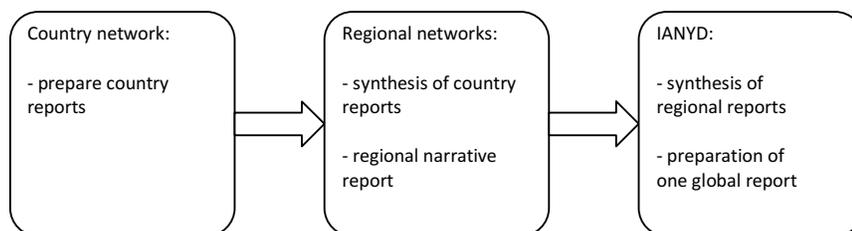
In light of the timeline for planning and implementation of new initiatives, it is expected that the first report in April 2014 will provide information regarding activities that are undertaken by UN entities individually or jointly as a part of existing plans that contribute to achieving the measures or commitments in the Youth-SWAP. From April 2015 onwards, reports are likely to include more information on new joint initiatives planned as a result of the Youth-SWAP. The annex of the report on indicators in the first year will identify baselines and benchmarks for as many indicators as possible.

5.2 Reporting on achievements

Reporting on joint activities, the effectiveness of inter-agency collaboration and youth participation will mainly be through self-assessment (i.e. an internal analysis in relation to the UN system's own performance) by inter-agency networks at different levels on the joint activities carried out in the context of the Youth-SWAP.

For joint activities, reporting will be through the country and regional networks where they exist. Reports prepared by the networks will be sent to IANYD for compilation at the global level.

Figure 1. Reporting on joint activities



Where there are inter-agency networks at the country level but without a functioning inter-agency network in that region, reports can be sent directly to the IANYD.

For activities carried out by individual entities, the entity implementing the activities will identify activities taking place at the national, regional and global levels, will compile them at the headquarters level and will transmit the information to the lead entity for each measure.

It is anticipated that reporting for individual entities will be gathered through existing mechanisms where possible. In some cases, strengthened systematic reporting on youth issues at the country level may be necessary. Efforts to achieve this could be classified as a separate line of activities implemented in the context of the Youth-SWAP.

Annual reports will be consolidated by IANYD, based on inputs from regional and country inter-agency networks (for joint initiatives) and from the co-chairs of the thematic areas (for individual activities). The reports will be finalized by the co-chairs of the IANYD in consultation with the co-chairs for each thematic area. Entities will determine internally if reporting to their governing body against the Youth-SWAP is relevant, based on their governance structures.

The table below outlines the deadlines for submitting reports from regional inter-agency networks (for joint activities) and from IANYD member entities (for individual activities) to the IANYD co-chairs.

Annual Report	Deadline for receiving reports from regional inter-agency networks and IANYD member entities
2014	15 January 2014
2015	15 January 2015
2016	15 January 2016
2017 (Final evaluation)	15 January 2017

5.3 Monitoring of/reporting on high-level and measure indicators

For each of the high-level and measure indicators, the implementation matrix below (accompanying document) provides a definition as well as the data sources and collection mechanisms. This information ensures comparability of data collected across countries and provides a means to evaluate the continued suitability of indicators throughout the validity of the Youth-SWAP.

The Annual Report on the Youth-SWAP will make specific reference to the thirteen high-level indicators that supplement the narrative section and best describe progress made in all the thematic areas. Monitoring of the 77 measure indicators, which can provide additional information on the effectiveness of specific UN action to promote youth development, will be reported on in an annex to the report.

A baseline for each of the indicators will be established through the reporting in the first year (i.e. by the end of April 2013). At the same time, benchmarks and related timelines will be established through consultations of IANYD and the regional networks.

Data may not be available for all indicators in the first year of reporting. The indicators for which data is not yet available will be listed with explanations where appropriate. Proposals to modify or remove indicators based on data unavailability will also be considered at this stage.

5.4 Process for collecting data

In the process of developing the list of 77 indicators, the principle followed was that each entity that proposed the indicator should have existing or planned mechanism to collect data and will commit take the lead in reporting on it compiling additional data sources that other entities may have. In order to compile global data on these indicators, it follows that there are several possible scenarios:

- a. The data for the indicators is publicly available and can easily be reported on for all countries or globally;
- b. Monitoring entities have existing mechanisms for gathering data and reporting on that indicator in all or most countries, and no other entity has any mechanism to provide additional data, in which case the report of the monitoring entity will provide the final value of that indicator;
- c. Monitoring entities have existing mechanisms for gathering data and reporting on that indicator in some countries or on specific parts of the indicator, and additional entities also have competing or complementing data for the indicator, in which case the monitoring entity will coordinate with lead and supporting entities to resolve discrepancies and present the IANYD with the value of that indicator;
- d. Monitoring entities do not have existing mechanisms for gathering data but have made plans for doing so, such as introducing a questionnaire, in which case these plans will be discussed and agreed upon with lead and supporting entities and implemented in cooperation with them, to provide a value for that indicator;
- e. Monitoring entities do not have existing mechanisms for gathering data nor do they have plans in place for doing so, in which case plans will be developed for reporting in a subsequent year or the indicator will be withdrawn.

For some indicators, particularly those that monitor implementation of joint activities or in cases where lead entities do not have existing mechanisms for reporting on indicators proposed by them, a questionnaire may need to be developed. Rather than having each entity develop and send out a questionnaire related to the indicator they are monitoring, a consolidated approach would be strongly encouraged.

The option of using a web-based tool to enable individual entities to input the data and to aggregate inputs will be developed to ease data compilation efforts. However, it needs to be ascertained whether the human and financial resources to set up, operate and support the use of such a web-based tool will be available.

5.5 Responsibilities in the context of reporting

The role of the **co-chairs** of the sub-working groups for each thematic area will be to compile reports from lead entities (for individual activities) and regional inter-agency networks (for joint activities) regarding the implementation of activities contributing to the achievement of measures within their thematic area. They will compile a narrative report on the activities undertaken within that thematic area, including summary of achievements, challenges, lessons learned and future priorities and present it to the IANYD co-chairs for editing and finalization.

The role of the **lead and supporting entities** will be to implement activities contributing to the achievement of the measure. **Lead entities** will compile information on activities carried out by individual entities in support of the measure and will transmit a summary report to the co-chair of the thematic area. **Supporting entities** will provide timely information on activities carried out individually in support of the measure.

Monitoring entities will compile data on each indicator for which they are responsible either through their own internal data sources or through any other appropriate source as agreed by lead and supporting entities, compiling additional data from lead and supporting entities, removing duplication or inconsistencies, and building consensus with the lead and supporting entities on the final value for the indicator.

IANYD co-chairs coordinate the overall reporting on the Youth-SWAP, based on inputs received from regional inter-agency networks and the co-chairs of the thematic sub-working groups.

5.6 Gauging inter-agency collaboration

The process of developing the Youth-SWAP has significantly strengthened inter-agency collaboration and has led to plans to create UN inter-agency networks on youth in regions and countries in which they do not yet exist. This increase in inter-agency collaboration needs to be captured in reporting on the Youth-SWAP. In particular, it is useful to capture the number of new joint initiatives that had been established as a result of the Youth-SWAP, what youth perceptions of UN collaboration are, etc. Strengthened inter-agency collaboration is also envisioned to contribute to strengthened joint programming, streamlined youth participation at the national and regional levels and coordinated delivery of technical support to Member States. Since much of this information will be qualitative, a section of the annual reports will be devoted to this issue.

6. Communication Strategy

A communications group, composed of communication specialists from various UN entities, has been established to develop a joint communications strategy for the Youth-SWAP. The draft communication strategy is contained as a supplement to this guidance note.

Annex 1: Regional UN Inter-Agency Networks on Youth

Region	Co-chairs	Members
Africa	No inter-agency network on youth currently exists	No inter-agency network on youth currently exists
Asia-Pacific	UNFPA: Josephine Sauvarin (sauvarin@unfpa.org) ESCAP:	
Central and Eastern Europe	No inter-agency network on youth currently exists	No inter-agency network on youth currently exists
Latin America and the Caribbean <i>(Grupo Interagencial Regional de Juventud para América Latina y El Caribe)</i>	UNFPA: Ana Elena Badilla (badilla@unfpa.org) UNDP: Diana Costa (diana.costa@undp.org)	ECLAC FAO ILO UNAIDS UNDP UNESCO UNFPA UNICEF UNV UN Women WHO UNDG Secretariat
Middle East and North Africa <i>(Arab States/MENA Region UNDG Interagency Technical Task Team on Young People)</i>	UNFPA: Sasha Bodiroza (bodiroza@unfpa.org) UNICEF: Liv Indreiten (lindreiten@unicef.org)	ESCWA ILO UNAIDS UNDP UNESCO UNFPA UN HABITAT UNICEF UNV UN Women WHO

Annex 2: Main outcomes of the Youth-SWAP survey

Thematic Area	Key challenges and concerns highlighted	Proposed solutions
Employment and Entrepreneurship	Lack of job opportunities	Increase training and vocational education
	Education and training do not match the skills required by employers	Increase entrepreneurship training
	Job without rights and entitlements	Easier access to financial services
Education	Poor quality and availability of education	Support initiatives enabling a smooth transition from education to the labour market
	Curricula poorly linked to knowledge and skills needed for work	Promote non-formal and formal education
		Make education more affordable
Education on Sexual & Reproductive Health	Lack of effective curricula and learning/teaching materials on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)	Strengthen content, quality and coverage of CSE
	Teachers and workers not adequately trained to deliver CSE to youth	Make CSE a mandatory part of primary and secondary school curricula
Protection of rights	Lack of legal framework promoting human rights	Improve access to youth-friendly information about rights and how to exercise them
	Lack of awareness about human rights	Increase awareness and implement programmes about human rights
	Poverty	
Political inclusion	Lack of support and commitment toward young people	Promote youth leadership, capacities and skills
	Ignorance and indifference of people in position of authority	Work with political parties and other relevant institutions to improve young people's participation in political parties and relevant institutions
	Public institutions not leading by example	
Civic engagement	Limited opportunities for the effective participation of youth in decision-making	Improve the quality of global citizenship through civic education on human rights, civic engagement, gender equality, peace and sustainable development
	Lack of trust between youth and government institutions and political parties	

Annex 3: Key principles for youth participation in developing national monitoring and evaluation frameworks for the World Programme of Action for Youth⁶

- **Transparent and Informative:** Youth must be provided with full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views freely and their views to be given due weight, and how this participation will take place, its scope, purpose and potential impact; ensuring that such information is accessible to the most marginalised youth such as youth people with disabilities and other special needs. Youth need to be given information on their rights and responsibility of meaningful participation.
- **Inclusive:** Youth participation must be inclusive, challenge existing patterns of discrimination, and encourage opportunities for marginalized youth, including both young women and young men, to be involved. Youth are not a homogenous group and participation needs to provide for equality of opportunity for all, without discrimination on any grounds. Programmes also need to ensure that they are culturally sensitive to youth from all communities;
- **Safe and sensitive to risk:** In certain situations, expression of views may involve risks. Adults have a responsibility towards the youth with whom they work and must take every precaution to minimize the risk to youth of violence, exploitation, abuse or any other negative consequence of their participation. Youth should be included in disaster risks reduction and emergency preparedness initiatives.
- **Youth-Led Organisations and Youth-Led Networks:** Support and strengthen youth-led organisations and youth-led networks including online based networks. Special efforts should be made to reach out to the most marginalised youth-led organisations and networks such as youth with disabilities-led organisations, adolescent girls and young women-led organisations and networks, indigenous youth-led organisations, youth-led organisations in urban slums, minority youth-led organisations, LGBT youth-led organisations, etc.
- **Voluntary:** Youth should be encouraged to volunteer and their contributions must be promoted and respected. Youth should never be forced or manipulated into expressing views and they should be given the option to discontinue their involvement at any stage.

⁶ Taken from the Report of the Expert Group Meeting “Working Towards a Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation of the World Programme of Action for Youth”, New York, 14-15 December 2011. Available at <http://social.un.org/index/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=j1pjWMrNHVY%3d&tabid=756>.

- **Respectful:** Adults working with youth should acknowledge, respect and build on good examples of young people's participation, for instance, in their contributions to the family, school, culture, media and the work environment. Youth's views have to be treated with respect and they should be provided with opportunities to initiate ideas and activities. Youth need to be respected as knowledge leaders and contributors of knowledge base for youth participation from their perspective and experience.
- **Relevant:** Youth need to be given space to enable them to highlight and address the issues they themselves identify as relevant and important. The issues should enable them to draw on their knowledge, skills, abilities and responsibilities.
- **Youth-Friendly:** Investment need to be made in developing youth friendly environments, processes, structures and mechanisms that enable youth to effectively participate in matters that affect them. Participatory and inclusive methodologies and tools should be adapted to maximize youth's capacities and potential.
- **Time and Resources:** Adequate time and resources (financial and human) should be made available to ensure that youth are adequately prepared and have the confidence and opportunity to contribute their views and supportive actions in processes of social transformation.
- **Capacity Development:** Adults need preparation, skills and support to facilitate young people's participation effectively, to provide them, for example, with skills in listening, working jointly with youth and engaging youth effectively. Youth themselves can be involved as trainers and facilitators on how to promote effective participation; they require capacity-building to strengthen their skills in, for example, effective participation awareness of their rights, and training in organizing meetings, raising funds, establishing youth led organisations, dealing with the media, public speaking and advocacy;
- **Accountable:** A commitment to follow-up and evaluation is essential. For example, in any research or consultative process, youth must be informed as to how their views have been interpreted and used and, where necessary, provided with the opportunity to challenge and influence the analysis of the findings. Youth are also entitled to be provided with clear feedback on how their participation has influenced any outcomes. Wherever appropriate, youth should be given the opportunity to participate in follow-up processes or activities.