

In an exclusive interview with Mr K. Srinivasan, Mr Donald Charumbira (25), Secretary General of World Assembly of Youth insists that all Governments should start working on 'National Action Plan' to create more employment opportunities for youth. He also spoke frankly about the lack of desire on the part of US Government for creating more youth structures, which would benefit the young people of US to keep away from drugs, crime and other social behaviour. World Assembly of Youth (WAY) is the youth arm of United Nations Organisation and was established in 1949, to bring together all the young people of the world under a single banner. WAY is having membership of all the countries, except United States. Please read the interview further. Mr Donald may be contacted directly through email [dtc@pd.jaring.my](mailto:dtc@pd.jaring.my)

**Q : What do you think is the major problem of the youth at global level with different countries today?**

A: Thank you Young people face different challenges at different countries depending on the region and the realities of the country they come from. But we find some commonalities with the young people. United Nations and World Assembly of youth have identified some key problems and challenges, which are more or less universal. The first and major challenge people face is Youth employment. Youth employment is not only confined to the problem of unemployment, but it has also added some social problem, by increasing criminal activities and increasing socially delinquent behaviour and even related issues like HIV/AIDS. United Nations and World Assembly of Youth are acting actively to increase awareness about the need to create long term sustainable youth employment and to ensure that the young people are kept occupied in the time, because when they are not occupied, they are prone to falling for anti social behaviour.

**Q : When you are talking about youth employment, simultaneously, you need to improve the knowledge and skill also. What are the plans that WAY is having in this direction?**

A : The two general ways of addressing this issue is both on demand side and on supply side. On the demand side, it is the demand for the labour. Policies for stimulating the economic growth, stimulating employment generation are to be entrenched in the countries monetary and economic policies. Employment policies are to promote labour intensive programmes, instead of machineries.

'Supply side policies would say how the employment can be created if the youth are given skills; either to create employment or to add new value to products. Instead of just creating jobs for people without skills, it is better to create skills to add new value for products to create more employment.

These are the two ways of addressing the challenge. Both can work together depending on the reality of the different countries. In some of the developed world, we find lot of countries are exporting raw and semi processed products and this has resulted in less employment opportunities. If those Governments come up with policies of exporting processed and value added products, then more jobs would be created for their own people. That comes through imparting new knowledge and skills and encouraging them to become

entrepreneurs. This will make them as employment creators instead of employment seekers.

**Q : For this purpose, you need the support of various Governments. How do you plan to address this issue?**

A : Engaging various Governments is crucial, as the employment can be created only with the Governments commitment and support. Private sectors and NGOs are alone not sufficient to create employment and it all depends upon the Governments policies, which will determine the way in which the industry and business in their country are stimulated. In many cases, it would not be difficult to get the Governments on board, as every Government desires to create employment opportunities for their own people. The success of any country or Government lies in its ability to create jobs for its people, because jobs provide livelihood. It is upto us and NGOs to ensure to bring the Governments on board, whenever we want to promote this activities and programmes, because at the end of the day, it is only the Governments need to buy this course. Now they need to understand that the players like private sector and NGOs can bring to the table the value in creating employment. We want the Governments to know that they need not do anything by themselves. But they need to get partners from other sectors to get the systematic support for youth employment.

**Q : Have you been approaching various Governments either directly or through United Nations for this purpose?**

As World Assembly of youth, we are part of UN Secretary Generals focus group on youth employment. We have had several meetings with UN Secretary General with regard to youth employment creation. United Nations in conjunction with ourselves have called upon on all Governments to develop National Action plan on youth employment. We have also advised all the youth councils in the various countries to assist the Governments in those countries for developing National Action Plan and we will continue to assist them in the implementation phase of the Action Plan.

**Q: In this process, how do you feel that the Media in various countries can help you?**

A: Media can play a greater role in this task. They can create awareness amongst the all stakeholders about the need for creating employment, particularly for young people. Statistics and all the actions taken by the Governments and NGOs should be made known clearly through the media. This will make everyone aware of the challenges and how they can be part and parcel of the drive for more employment. Since media can reach out to more people, it can play a crucial role. As for as creating employment is concerned, Media can be a critical partner in creating a spirit of enterprise, so that young people can start to create jobs, than to look for jobs. For instance, Media can highlight stories of successful entrepreneurs who created opportunities for them successfully and pursued them and established large businesses. If the Media portrays such success stores, young people will be inspired and they may also start thinking on entreprising line, than looking for jobs.

**Q: I find that the youth from United States have not been part of this Dialogues. How would you plan to involve the youth from US also?**

A: United States lack youth structure. Young people, who have gone through the education system have not been mobilized under the youth structure, which will help them to become the responsible citizens in the National and global level. This particularly is important to decrease polarisation of young people in America so that they do not have any misconception about the rest of the world. It is critical for young people to visit and learn and exchange knowledge and experience with young people from different countries, so that in future they would be able to take informed decisions and they would be better leaders in their country. We would like to assist the US Govt. to develop youth structure and to increase the involvement of young people and in creating awareness about this.

There are couple of other countries who do not have the youth structure. Though they have desire, they are unable to make it for want of resources. America is a glaring case where resources are there, but desire to create youth structure is not evident at this stage. The Government should recognize them. They are addressing the issues in a polarised way. For examples, there are many issues like drug issue, gang issue, people living in slums, etc.

If it is a drug issue, they are treating it as a drug issue, even if the young persons are involved. Even if they are HIV, crime or terrorism, these issues are addressed separately. Infact, they should be pooled together as major symptoms of lack of constructive engagement of young people in developmental process. These issues are to be formally recognized as youth issues. In order for the country to progress, youth need formal structure, which would represent them as well as engage them in a constructive way. That is the critical need now in that country. This is what we would like to communicate to the US Government. We hope to work with them together. Drug issue is only a symptom of a big issue. The young people lack in ideology; they lack meaning and purpose in their lives. When they are formally pooled together in the youth clubs, they would become socially responsible citizens. In the youth clubs, they speak about doing community projects, about getting rid of crimes and drugs, about creating awareness of HIV and AIDs. Once they start participating in these types of activities, you will find that they would not go to drugs, crimes and bad social behaviour. They would occupy themselves constructive engagements.

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