

NEWS RELEASE  
Mennonite World Conference

For Immediate Release  
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GLOBAL YOUTH PLANS MOVE FORWARD

Strasbourg, France -- Five young people will be chosen to evaluate and consider action on plans proposed at the first Global Youth Summit (GYS), held last August in conjunction with the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Zimbabwe.

In January, MWC executive officers authorized forming a Youth Continuation Committee (YCC) with one representative from each of the five continental regions. Nominees must be members of a MWC member or associate member church and be approved by the church's leaders and by the MWC executive committee, which meets in July 2004.

The YCC will bring the voices of youth to top-level MWC gatherings. Current plans call for the YCC to meet first with MWC officers and executive staff in December 2004 and conjointly with the General Council in 2006 and 2009.

Already GYS participants are engaged in lively conversation with each other informally via e-mail. Jeremie Ngoya (Democratic Republic of Congo) reported a regional youth meeting in Kinshasa and Saturday gatherings to pray that youth will come to church on Sunday. Silas Absalom (Kenya) noted a national youth conference and efforts to reach out to youth in nearby Tanzania and Uganda who did not attend the GYS.

Elina Ciptadi (Indonesia) reported writing a monthly column in the conference magazine, on-line discussions with church leaders and making a presentation to the GKMI synod (conference) in January. Jennifer Egan (Canada) told of sharing her Africa 2003 experience at Canadian Mennonite University, where she is a student, at her church, at a Mennonite Church Canada meeting and with students at a Mennonite high school and with seniors.

The young people also share prayer requests. In February, during the upheaval in Haiti, Cynthia Manzo Guerrero (Mexico) asked for prayer for friends there and for a March 6 youth meeting in Mexico.

Many such e-mail messages continue to strengthen bonds forged in Zimbabwe among the 220 Anabaptist young people from 28 countries who met for three days before Assembly 14 in Bulawayo. Twenty eight were delegates selected in their home countries.

The Bulawayo event was phase two of the GYS. In the first phase, youth groups from around the world completed surveys to name challenges facing youth and to suggest how the church and youth can address these issues. About 1,500 respondents participated in the survey.

"This phase was extremely ambitious," said David Lind, a GYS facilitator. "[It was] implemented in places as diverse as Paraguay, Angola, India, Canada and Germany with oversight via e-mail. That the plan was carried out at all is remarkable."

Survey summaries were discussed in Bulawayo. Delegates from five continental regions then reported to the General Council there and proposed several global and local actions, phase three of

the summit.

Among actions suggested were organizing regional youth gatherings, building a global communication network and setting up a GYS web site, which could be linked to the MWC web site. Locally, delegates said, they hoped for affirmation from their churches, a place in decision making and help in tackling the spiritual and economic issues they face.

A full report of the first GYS to General Council can be accessed via the MWC web site ([www.mwc-cmm.org](http://www.mwc-cmm.org)).

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