

# *UN Secretary General Urges Caribbean Youth to Raise their Voices*

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Bridgetown, July 13 (AGENCIES-RHC)-- Young people across the Caribbean were provided with the unique opportunity to state their concerns to the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon during an interactive youth symposium hosted by The University of the West Indies.

The symposium held under the theme “Caribbean Youth Speak: The world we want post-2015”, took place at The UWI Cave Hill Campus in Barbados and simultaneously across the two other University campuses at Mona, Jamaica and St. Augustine in Trinidad and Tobago via video conference.

It also aired on television channels throughout the region and the Caribbean diaspora, with participation from university students and representatives of youth organizations across the region.

In a town-hall meeting format, ten students were selected to ask the Secretary-General questions on issues such as youth unemployment, climate change, and gender inequality. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who was in Barbados for the 36th Caricom Heads of Government Summit, expressed the view that reaching out to and hearing from young people is one of his top priorities.

Ki-moon called for the youth of the Caribbean region to help with the accomplishment of the new sustainable agenda. He also urged them to raise their voices on issues they care about, to act as global citizens and to have big dreams, passion and compassion.

“We now have the largest generation of youth the world has ever known. You are not just leaders for tomorrow; you are torchbearers for today. Our conversation comes at a critical time. The United Nations is celebrating its 70th anniversary and the international community is gearing up to shape a new sustainable development agenda for the next generation.

“We are calling the year 2015 a time for global action and young people are crucial to building the world we want.”

Ban Ki-moon also commented on the region’s progress with regard to the achievement of Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs) and added that the next step for the global community is to finalize a new agenda which includes seventeen sustainable development goals.

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