



# COHSOD Youth News

*Caribbean Youth Speak At CARICOM Council of Human Social and Development Meeting 2008*

## The Power to Change the World.....

March 17, 2008

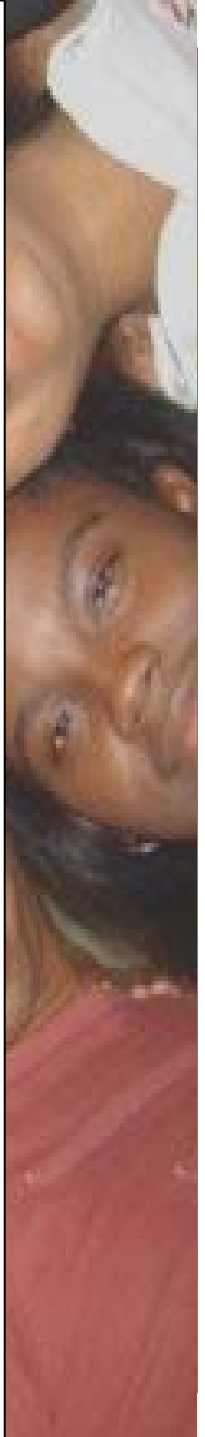
We, the children of the Caribbean are precious, since we hold the key to the bright and successful future of our beautiful region.

We see ourselves as products of our societies. Given the encouragement and leadership we need, we can be the ones to create the change needed for our region to truly become one single paradise.

We have dreams, hopes and aspirations and at such a vulnerable stage in our lives our rights should be protected, supported and promoted by any means necessary, so that we can reach our highest potential. Yet, we experience injustices, such as sexual, physical and verbal abuse, unavailability of good quality and affordable education, and to an extent the stifling of our voices, which violates our right to express ourselves. Children and youth have the right to be heard.

Realising that our problems are not unique, but rather part of a global struggle for human rights, we ask that the change begins with us. We do not want to be treated specially, but rather with dignity as first-class citizens. Give us the opportunity to show our true worth, don't just shut your eyes, close your hearts and ears, and hope that we'll go away. We may be powerless now, but in a few years, we will be the ones sitting in your seats and making the decisions. Give us a foundation that you would be proud of.

We need to be mentored, not dictated to; we need to be nurtured, not beaten and degraded. Let us be the change you want to see in the world. And as Governments of the Caribbean who have all signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we demand from you a Caribbean that is safe, one that provides us the right environment in which we can grow up and reach our full potential in whatever areas we choose, A Caribbean that can contribute to a World that is fit for us - your children.



## A World Fit for Children

If we had the power to change our world we would:

- ✓ Have more institutions of higher learning that are more affordable, ending the era of limited opportunities for youth to attend the colleges and Universities of their choice in the Caribbean;
- ✓ Grant children the right to express themselves without fear, utilizing the media more to their advantage.
- ✓ Ensure that children are involved in making decisions that impact their development and lives;
- ✓ Eradicate the scourge of drug and substance abuse among youth;
- ✓ Build more recreational facilities for children, emphasising sports for development and a healthy lifestyle.
- ✓ Implement programmes for parents and caregivers to help children grow up without violence in their lives, and finding alternative ways of disciplining children;
- ✓ Enforce legislation and a judicial system that protects young people from various forms of abuse and exploitation;
- ✓ Create a suitable learning environment for all children despite race, creed or religion.

**GIVE US THAT POWER .... WE WILL NOT DISAPPOINT YOU.**

### Highlights:

#### YOUTH NEWSCAST AND VIDEOS

Tuesday March 18, 2008.

In the afternoon participants of the COHSOD will view a special fifteen minutes youth newscast and one minute video documentaries produced entirely by adolescents in collaboration with the Backlot, Youth Media Guyana and UNICEF.

Also in the afternoon a Creative Space for demonstration in the use of Digital Playground and Information Technology will offer participants the opportunity to familiarise themselves with new technologies that facilitate children's participation in public forums.

## PARTICIPANTS COHSOD 2008

### From Guyana (*Youth Media*)

- Kiana Wilburg
- Joel Joseph
- Andrea Bryan
- Vidya Bijlall
- Justim Mounter
- L. Lall

### From Suriname:

- Genelva Krind
- Dalino Krind
- Serena Essed

### From Trinidad and Tobago:

- Anna Samai
- Shannon Jacob-Gomes
- Kurwin Mc Intyre
- Mikhail Passee
- Satis Phillip



### Quotable Quotes

"We would hope the end result of all of our efforts would mean that by this time next year, we would see an important shift for and among young people. That they would feel more confident of their role, their place and their rights in building the nation and the region as a whole, confident that change was happening with them and for them, and not at their expense."

*Nils Kastberg*

*Regional Director*

*UNICEF, Latin America and the Caribbean*