

PM Lee Hsien Loong
Istana Annexe
Singapore 238823

22nd August 2005

Dear Mr Lee:

Youth & Development at the MRS, New York – Sept. 2005

You may have noticed that Kofi Annan's report, *In Larger Freedom*, contains no reference to a role for Youth in development. The Scottish Executive took steps to rectify this omission by hosting an important World Youth Congress on this issue in Stirling earlier this month. The outcomes of this Congress should form part of your thinking as you prepare for the Millennium Review Summit in New York next month. For they advance a new and startling proposal.

It is this: if you ignore the contribution that can be made by that 51% of the world's population that is under 25, the MDGs will not be achieved by 2015. If, however, governments engage and mobilise, train and mentor young people to carry out development initiatives and support youth-led business start-ups, we still have a fighting chance.

This is not some fanciful student idea. It is a serious economic proposal: the World Bank and IADB recognise the value of youth volunteerism to developing economies and invest in it. The Commission for Africa highlighted the value of youth-led business start-ups, which has also been reflected in the success and scope of the recent Social Entrepreneurship Forum 2005 (SEforum) in Singapore. The World Bank's 2007 World Development Report will focus on *Development for (and by) the Next Generation*.

Singapore spearheaded the move towards greater youth involvement in the major 2004-5 Youth Consultation Exercise, and more recently Singapore acted as a UN launch pad for massive aid and relief operations to tsunami-devastated areas of Indonesia.

Now, given Singapore's economic position in the ASEAN region, with your personal commitment to the development agenda, Singapore can demonstrate her leadership in the global push to engage young people in helping to end world poverty by putting the issue of Youth-led Development on the table at the MRS in New York.

I urge you to find the time in your schedule to meet the team of young people, including a Singaporean delegate, who drafted the attached Policy Document. They will outline in detail for you how they see youth-friendly training programmes, nationwide YLD programmes, and global youth service schemes being implemented over the next ten years to generate a wave of youth energy and mobilisation that can result in the MDGs being achieved – and exceeded – by 2015.

Sincerely,

David R. Woollcombe, President, Peace Child International
International Director, World Youth Congress series on
Youth and Development