



**INTERNATIONAL
YEAR OF
YOUTH**
AUGUST 2010-2011
OUR YEAR OUR VOICE

Dialogue and Mutual Understanding

PRESS RELEASE

UN to appoint actress Monique Coleman as Youth Champion

New York, 16 November: The UN will appoint Disney actress and youth activist Monique Coleman as a “Youth Champion” for the International Year of Youth at a press conference today.

Ms. Coleman is best known for her character Taylor McKessie in the “High School Musical” movies and her recurring role as Mary-Margaret on “The Suite Life of Zack & Cody”. Most recently, she launched an online talk show, “Gimme MO”, to empower youth.

The American actress, a long-time advocate for improving the social and economic well-being of young people, says “I am extremely passionate about youth and look forward to highlighting the amazing ways they are already making a difference.”

Assistant Secretary-General Jomo Kwame Sundaram in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs will present Ms. Coleman with a letter of recognition as a UN Youth Champion to promote the International Year.

The International Year of Youth was launched on 12 August 2010 and runs through 11 August 2011. Youth, defined by the United Nations as people between the ages of 15 to 24, represent 18 per cent of the world’s population, or 1.2 billion people.

The Year provides an opportunity to recognize that young people in all countries are a major human resource for development, positive social change and technical innovation. It aims to advance their full participation on youth-related issues in global, regional and national development agendas.

To provide a vehicle to reach the young men and women who spend a great deal of time in cyberspace, Ms Coleman hosts each online “webisode”, which facilitates safe conversation on important issues confronting young people and provides much needed positive information and content.

By taking the web show on the global road to Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, Ms. Coleman will broaden the scope of youth issues and engage in youth-related activities. She explains “The purpose of the tour is to see and share through social media first-hand what youth all over the planet are experiencing and, through streaming technologies, to connect people in the developing and developed worlds”.

As Youth Champion, Ms. Coleman says she intends to give voice to young people, raise awareness about some of the most serious challenges they face and highlight the positive contributions they make in their communities. Through her online talk show, Ms. Coleman will host forums and conversations with young people centered around topics, such as their ideas for health care, similarities and differences between cultures and what changes they believe would improve the world.





Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message on International Youth Day was to "strengthen our efforts to include young people in policies, programmes and decision-making processes that benefit their futures and ours."

The theme of the Year, Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, calls for increased commitment and investment in youth as well as to building bridges between generations and across cultures, religions and civilizations.

For further information, please visit <http://social.un.org/youthyear/>, or contact Ms. Nicola Shepherd in the United Nations Programme on Youth at tel.: +1 917 367 9282, e-mail: shepherdn@un.org.

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