

YCS Voices Concern for Millennium Development Goal Action at UN

Next week while the world leaders gather at the United Nations for the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) Review Summit, NGOs including the International Young Catholic Students will be hoping that the world leaders listen to the voices of the NGO's who met recently in Melbourne for Advance Global Health: Achieve the MDG's 63rd United Nations Department of Public Information Non Governmental Organisations Conference from the 30th August to 1st September. The Conference aimed to highlight the issues around global health, most importantly the lack of adequate health and health care systems in developing communities around the world and what needs to be done to improve global health in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The International Young Catholic Students (IYCS) was represented by 3 young people and an adult from Australia. The conference had a strong emphasis on youth involvement and a number of other NGO's run by young people were represented, including the Oaktree Foundation and UN Youth Associations from Australia and New Zealand. The voice of the young people was heard loud and clear over the course of the Conference, bringing with it the sense of urgency and passion for which young people are renowned. Vicky Burrows, Coordinator of the Australian YCS spoke of the need to achieve the MDG's;

“As young people, particularly young people living in the developed world we have a responsibility to keep our countries accountable to their commitments to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. However as individuals we also need to act to raise awareness in our communities and become involved in projects that work to achieve the goals. In a country like Australia there are still major inequalities and gaps health standards for Australian Indigenous people and we must act now”

One of the issues raised by the IYCS at the conference was the inequalities in the world's trading system, and the need to look for alternatives such as fair trade, which is also the theme for the Australian YCS National Campaign. In pressing the urgency of this issue, IYCS representatives succeeded in getting fair trade included in the Conference Declaration. The Declaration is presented to the UN and governments around the world as a push for more action to be taken to improve global conditions of health and poverty. The involvement of the IYCS members has added to international pressure on governments to ensure that fair trade is recognized as an urgent issue which cannot be ignored.