



# Statement

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August 12, 2009

## **REPRESENTATIVE CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY August 12, 2009**

On this day 10 years ago, the United Nations declared August 12 to be International Youth Day. Today's society is the youngest ever, with about 50 per cent of the world's population aged 25 years or under. More than at any time in our history, youth action, inclusion, and full participation are integral to planning the future.

As B.C.'s Representative for Children and Youth, I have a mandate to advocate for the young people of this province and to ensure that their voices are heard at our decision-making tables. Our young people are facing a myriad of challenges today, many of which are a direct result of B.C.'s high child poverty rates.

On this important day, I invite organizations and governments to celebrate the youth in their midst by engaging them in efforts to eradicate the poverty that is stifling so many, so profoundly.

I also want to thank our young people for their many contributions to our society. You have a voice, and can and should be key agents for development and peace, while, helping bring about thriving and healthy societal change.

I hope that International Youth Day 2009 will serve as a reminder of our responsibility to ensure that all young people have every opportunity to participate fully in society. Let's ensure that as leaders of today, we listen carefully to the leaders of tomorrow and that we commit to hearing the voices of young people in our work and in our families.

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond  
Representative for Children and Youth, British Columbia