Mr. Juan Somavia  
Director General  
International Labor Organization  
4, route des Morillons  
CH-1211 Geneva 22  
Switzerland

Dear Mr. Somavia,

INTEREST IN BECOMING A YEN LEAD COUNTRY

On behalf of the Government of Nigeria, I would like to formally indicate our interest in becoming a Youth Employment Lead Country.

2. Unemployment is the greatest challenge that Nigerian youth face today. While a number of public, private and nonprofit sector initiatives have been initiated to address this challenge, there has been little improvement. As a result, youth residing in the urban and rural areas continue to struggle to find sources of livelihood.

3. On November 4th, 2004, the Ministry of Youth Development launched a National Youth Agenda. The agenda specifically outlines a framework for addressing the challenges that Nigerian youth face, with youth employment, entrepreneurship and empowerment, as critical components. It is important to recognize that youth played a crucial role in the design and the launch of the Agenda.

4. The creation of this Youth Agenda demonstrates my personal resolve to address the issue of youth unemployment in Nigeria, not only as a strategy for realizing the Millennium Development Goals, but also because Nigeria’s future is largely hinged on its ability to empower our youth.
Dear Minister,

I am writing to thank you for your letter of 9 November 2004, conveying your Government’s interest in becoming one of the Lead Countries of the Youth Employment Network (YEN). In taking this step, the Federal Republic of Nigeria will be joining Azerbaijan, Brazil, Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, Mali, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal and Sri Lanka.

I should also like to thank you for the interesting information you provide regarding the launch of your Ministry’s National Youth Agenda, and on the youth role in its design and launch. A key part has also been played by young people and civil society in engaging our collaboration to tackle the youth employment challenge.

Access to decent work enables young people to participate actively in society, to contribute their talents and vision of the future, and to develop a sense of commitment and belonging. Employment creation and decent work are in turn critical if we are to address the broader development and security agenda, including poverty alleviation.

The YEN secretariat at the ILO looks forward to working closely with your Government in the development of your country’s review and action plan on youth employment. For your information, I enclose a recent UN Note verbale, which gives details on the reporting process for this plan. I am also including a guidance note, as a basis for discussion, outlining potential areas in which your Government may wish to concentrate its action. I would be grateful if you could communicate to the YEN Secretariat at the ILO the contact information for the official who will be responsible for coordinating this process for your Government.

Yours sincerely,

Juan Somavia

Dr. Frank Nweke
Minister of Inter-Governmental Affairs,
Youth Development and Social Duties
ABUJA
5. Nigeria would benefit immensely from the Youth Employment Network’s support, as we develop and implement a National Action Plan to promote youth employment. In addition, we hope to benefit from the experiences of the other lead countries, and to support a regional and international movement focused on youth employment.

6. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with the Youth Employment Network to improve the lives of Nigerian youth.

Yours Sincerely,

Mr. Frank Nweke (Jnr.)
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Youth Development and Special Duties.

CC: Mr. President and Commander-in-Chief, Federal Republic of Nigeria