

# YEN's *Revised Lead* Country Process

April

2009



The Youth Employment Network





## About YEN

The Youth Employment Network (YEN) is a partnership of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, and the World Bank. YEN was created in 2001 as a global platform to prioritise youth employment on the development agenda and to exchange on policies and programs to improve employment opportunities for youth. The wider Network includes development agencies, governments, the private sector, youth groups and other NGOs.

YEN is managed by a permanent Secretariat hosted by the ILO in Geneva. The Secretariat sees itself as a provider of innovative and value-added services for the Network. A specific focus is given to West Africa where the Secretariat has a regional office in Dakar, Senegal. For more information visit our site at [www.ilo.org/yen](http://www.ilo.org/yen)

## Contents

<i>Welcome</i>	3
<i>Background</i>	4
<i>Benefits for Lead Countries</i>	5
<i>Commitments of Lead Countries</i>	6
<i>Implications of non-compliance</i>	7
<i>YEN Lead Countries World Map</i>	8
<i>Annex: Selected Indicators and their Rationale</i>	9

# WELCOME MESSAGE

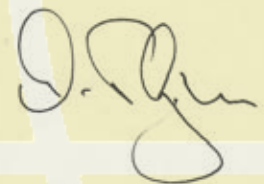
Dear Reader,

Welcome to the Revised Lead Country Process of the Youth Employment Network!

The Lead Country Process is YEN's flagship product. It aims to foster governments' engagement in the development and promotion of improved employment opportunities for young people. It was initiated in 2001 as a tool to prioritize youth employment on the development agendas. Since then, it has been coordinated by the YEN Secretariat.

A recent analysis of the Process has shown important opportunities to improve its effectiveness and results. Accordingly, this note introduces the Revised Process and provides key information on the new features and guidelines to become a Lead Country.

Best regards,



Markus Pilgrim  
YEN Manager



*21 countries have committed to developing and implementing national policies on youth employment*

## LEAD COUNTRY PROCESS

### Background

The Lead Country Process of the Youth Employment Network (YEN) is the joint policy response of the UN, World Bank, and ILO to better employment opportunities for young people. It was created in 2001 under an U.N. Resolution.

A recent analysis of the Lead Country Process underlined important achievements in regard to awareness rising and advocacy. Since its creation, 21 countries have joined the Process and committed to tackling the youth employment challenge at the highest level. Despite these major achievements, there is substantial room for improvement, in particular as regards to the engagement of Lead Countries to fulfill the requirements of the Process.

Accordingly, the YEN Secretariat revised the Lead Country Process under a new framework of benefits and commitments, displayed in the tables below. The revision builds on in-depth discussions held in June 2008 during the Third Lead Country Meeting, which aimed at converting the Process into an effective benchmarking tool on successful youth employment policies and programs.

#### Framework of Benefits and Commitments of Lead Countries

<i>Benefits for YEN Lead Countries</i>	<i>Commitments of YEN Lead Countries</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Technical assistance in the development of youth employment initiatives with a focus on Monitoring and Evaluation</li><li>2. Capacity-building on how to engage youth in national youth employment initiatives</li><li>3. Support in devising fund-raising strategies for youth employment programs</li><li>4. Access to experiences and good practices from other countries</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Annual reporting on youth labour market indicators and policy and institutional achievements</li><li>2. Sharing key youth employment documents with other Lead Countries and the YEN Secretariat at annual Lead Country meetings</li><li>3. Identifying responsible agency or department for national youth employment initiatives and name a technical YEN focal person</li><li>4. Developing action plans and other significant and strategic initiatives to mainstream youth employment at the national level</li></ol>

# Benefits for Lead Countries



## 1. Technical assistance in the development of youth employment initiatives with a focus on Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

The YEN will continue providing support to Lead Countries in the development of their youth employment policies and programs. This support involves bringing the expertise and technical assistance from YEN and its core agency partners.

The Lead Country Process' benchmarking approach introduces a distinct focus on M&E. Under this approach, the YEN will offer the following services to Lead Countries:

- (i) In-depth training sessions in standardized tools developed by YEN to assess and report on labour market conditions for young people. The standardized assessment tools are twofold – first on labour market indicators, and second, on political and institutional progress.
- (ii) National consultations to assist countries in the development and implementation of their M&E strategies.
- (iii) Bridging requests from the Lead Countries on specific M&E topics with the technical expertise from the core partners and other experts on the field.
- (iv) In order to assess progress and learn from ongoing and past experiences, the YEN will undertake two impact evaluations of national youth employment programs in selected Lead Countries.

## 2. Capacity-building on how to engage youth in national youth employment initiatives

Youth participation is of great importance to the legitimacy of policy making and the success of programs that are depending on the support and buy in from youth. In this context, the YEN has a unique role to play in bringing together not only its core partners but also to provide value added by including youth through formal structures rather than ad hoc activities.

Accordingly, YEN will provide capacity building to governments on how to engage youth in national employment initiatives by establishing official guidelines or procedures for assisting in youth mainstreaming in policy making, project development and implementation.

## 3. Support in devising fundraising strategies for youth employment programs

Together with its core partners, the YEN may explore funding opportunities to support the development and implementation of youth employment programs in the Lead Countries. This effort may also feature fund-raising for M&E activities of a specific program.

## 4. Access to experiences and good practices from other countries

Lead Countries will benefit from peer review mechanisms and knowledge sharing through annual Lead Country Meetings as well as regional peer review meetings with participation of donors and partner agencies.



## Commitments of Lead Countries

### 1. Annual reporting on youth labour market indicators and policy and institutional achievements

#### ***Reporting on labour market indicators***

In order to facilitate the technical assistance in M&E, Lead Countries will report on youth labour market indicators on an annual basis. The collection of these indicators will assist governments in better diagnosing youth employment issues and strengthen the M&E of policies and programs currently under implementation. Lead Countries will focus on selected indicators (Annex) based on the revised MDGs employment targets

#### ***Reporting on policy and institutional progress***

These reports are an important tool to monitor the implementation and success of youth employment initiatives such as youth employment action plans, national strategies, or goals from specific active labour market programs. Regular reporting will lay the groundwork for comparing performance of Lead Countries, facilitating capacity building, and strengthening the benefits of information sharing.

The YEN Secretariat will provide training on the use of the corresponding reporting tools.

### 2. Sharing key youth employment documents with other Lead Countries and the YEN Secretariat at annual Lead Country meetings

This commitment aims at strengthening the exchange of experiences and learning-by-sharing practice. Key documents include National Action Plans (NAPs), National Development and/or Employment Strategies with specific youth employment chapters, progress reports, and evaluation reports, among others.

### 3. Identify a responsible agency or department for national youth employment initiatives and name a technical YEN focal person

Lead Countries will identify a government agency responsible for the development of national youth employment initiatives and name a responsive technical focal point for correspondence and coordination of activities with the YEN Secretariat.

### 4. Developing action plans and other significant and strategic initiatives to mainstream youth employment at the national level

New Lead Countries will be encouraged to develop NAPs as well as any viable policy-oriented initiative to address youth employment – such as mainstreaming youth employment in National Development and/or National Employment Strategies or programs tackling specific issues. It is important that these plans and initiatives are intended to be operational and express the commitment of the government by setting a minimum budget for youth employment.



## Implications of Non-Compliance

The revised framework of benefits and commitments brings in an important element to the Process: **sanctions**. Countries that do not comply with their commitments will no longer be considered Lead Countries.

The sanction scheme will follow the subsequent timeframe:

1. If a Lead Country fails to live up to its commitment to report annually on youth labour market indicators and policy and institutional achievements, it will be notified after the deadline for reporting has passed. In this notification the YEN Secretariat will provide a two-month extension for submitting the reports.
2. If the Lead Country misses the second deadline, the Secretariat will study the circumstances and may consider an additional two-month extension.
3. If the Lead Country is not entitled to or misses the third deadline, it will lose its Lead Country status and will have to reapply for it.

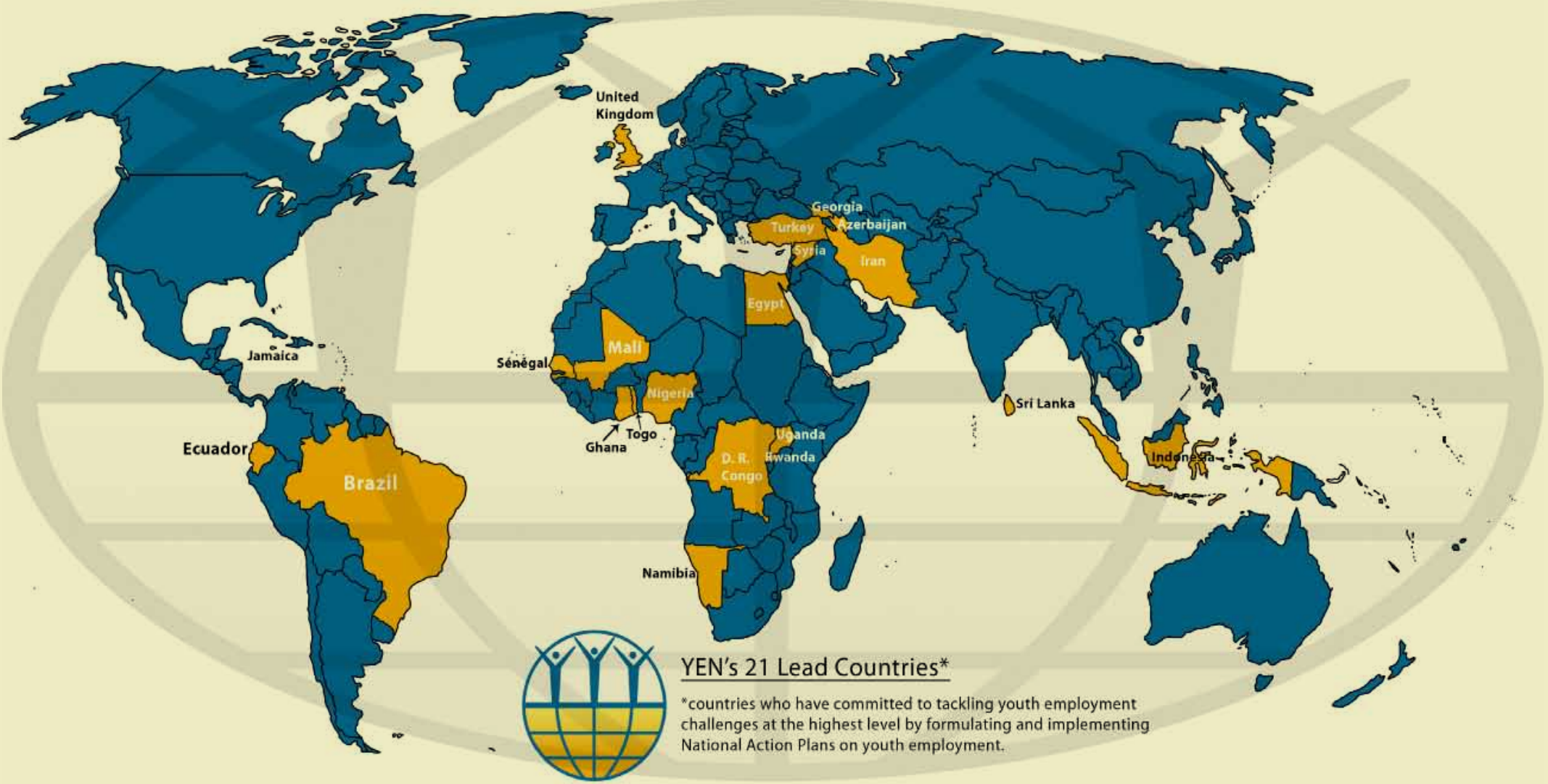
### Key information for current and future Lead Countries

#### Renewing your Lead Country Status

1. Current Lead Countries must read and ensure an understanding of the framework of benefits and commitments as well as the implications for non-compliance.
2. Send a formal letter of request to renew the Lead Country status from the YEN Focal Point in the Government to the YEN Secretariat.

#### Steps to become a Lead Country

1. Future Lead Countries must read and ensure an understanding of the framework of benefits and commitments as well as the implications for non-compliance.
2. Send a formal letter of request to become a Lead Country from the Head of State or Government to the UN Secretary General or the Director-General of the ILO.



**YEN's 21 Lead Countries\***

\*countries who have committed to tackling youth employment challenges at the highest level by formulating and implementing National Action Plans on youth employment.

## Annex: Selected Indicators and their Rationale

Indicator	Rationale for reporting on this indicator
<b>Indicator 1:</b> <i>Youth unemployment rate</i>	The unemployment rate is the best-known and most used labor market indicator. It gives a measure of the inability of an economy to generate employment for young persons who are not employed but are available and actively seeking work.
<b>Indicator 2:</b> <i>Relaxed youth unemployment rate</i>	The indicator, also referred to as youth joblessness, is a measure of the unutilized youth labour potential. It adds to the standard measure of unemployed youth those who are not technically unemployed because they do not meet the active job search criteria but who would like to work.
<b>Indicator 3:</b> <i>Status of young workers in employment</i>	The indicators refer to the proportion of the employed population classified as: wage and salaried workers, household enterprise workers, and employers. <i>By reporting on these indicators, Lead Countries are also informing on what are deemed to be the more vulnerable statuses of employment, namely own-account workers and contributing family workers.</i>
<b>Indicator 4:</b> <i>Distribution of youth population by primary activity</i>	The indicator captures the full extent of activity options of the youth population, delineating between active and inactive economic activities. It includes the following categories: employed, unemployed, discouraged, and in school. <i>By reporting on this indicator, Lead Countries are also computing the Youth Employment-to-Population Ratio, an MDG-related indicator, which is the proportion of a country's working-age and young population that is employed.</i>
<b>Indicator 5:</b> <i>Youth employment by sector</i>	The indicator shows where youth are working, i.e. in what specific sector. Aggregate sectors include agriculture, industry, and services. Employment in each category implies differences in terms of pay, job attachment, conditions of work, etc. Changes over time provide information on possible areas of economic growth or deterioration.
<b>Indicator 6:</b> <i>Median earnings for wage and salaried young workers</i>	Earnings relate to remuneration in cash and in kind paid to employees, as a rule at regular intervals, for time worked or work done together with remuneration for time not worked. The indicator gives an idea of job quality.
<b>Indicator 7:</b> <i>Educational attainment of the youth labour force</i>	The indicator reflects the levels and distribution of the knowledge and skills base of the youth labour force. It provides an indication of the capacity of countries to achieve social and economic goals and insights into the broad skill structure of the labour force. It also supports analysis of the influence of skill levels on economic outcomes and the success of educational policies.



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