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ILO-CIDA Launches Youth Employment Project in the Philippines

Young women and men are the world's greatest assets, for now as well as the future. But they also represent a group with serious vulnerabilities. According to an ILO estimate, as many as 500 million young people are expected to enter the world's workforce over the next decade. The majority of jobs available to them tend to be low paid, insecure, and with few benefits or prospects for advancement. The situation of young people who are able and willing to work, but who cannot find a decent job, is even more desperate. It has been estimated that young women and men are two to three times more likely to remain unemployed than adults. Long term involuntary unemployment or underemployment further weakens their future prospects and gives rise to a vicious cycle of lack of work experience, obsolescence of skills, shrinking employment opportunities and resultant poverty.

Providing more and better employment opportunities for the youth is a global challenge. A whole generation of young women and men growing up without the prospects of finding decent work is a burden for every society and a potential source of social instability. Poor employment or no employment in the early stages of a young person's career can harm job prospects for life and hamper efforts to escape from the poverty trap. In fact, the Millennium Development Goals implicitly call for global partnerships to help countries develop and implement strategies to provide decent and productive work for the youth.

Responding to the call to give young people a real chance to find decent and productive work, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) initiated a project for "Promoting Youth Employment in the Philippines: Policy and Action." The ILO Subregional Office for South-East Asia and the Pacific will manage the project with a total grant fund of US\$990,000 from CIDA.

Werner Konrad Blenk, ILO's Subregional Director for South-East Asia and the Pacific, said: "The project will foster gender sensitive policies and sustainable capacity at national and local levels to enhance the opportunities of young women and men to access decent, secure and self-fulfilling work."

The project - launched on 12 August 2005 during the International Youth Day 2005 Celebration - aims to support the efforts of national and local governments, business, labor unions, youth organizations and other development partners to formulate and implement an integrated national programme for youth employment and build a repertoire of local action programmes that can be replicated by the major service providers.

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