

**Table 4.5. Policies and measures to promote equality and reduce discrimination at work**

Policies	Action
Effective application of the principle of non-discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop national plans (including positive discrimination policies) to address the problem of inequality and employment-related discrimination against women.</li> <li>• Establish legal frameworks and strengthen the stakeholders involved in combating sexual harassment.</li> <li>• Include in collective bargaining measures to prevent discrimination against women.</li> </ul>
Encourage participation of women in the world of work (60 per cent by 2010) and employment of women (eliminate obstacles preventing them from entering and remaining in the workforce)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access for women to active labour market policies in a proportion not less than their share in the labour force (training, intermediation, special employment plans, etc.).</li> <li>• Adopt measures to promote the rights of women workers with regard to collective bargaining.</li> <li>• Include specific measures for women in youth employment programmes.</li> </ul>
Improve the quality of women's jobs in the informal economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement training policies targeting less-educated women so they can have access to new niches in the labour market and non-traditional occupations.</li> <li>• Implement programmes granting women access to productive resources (information, technology, credit).</li> <li>• Improve working conditions and eliminate discrimination against female domestic workers (which implies the review of laws and regulations, improvements in the exercise of rights and social security coverage, and encouraging women to organize).</li> </ul>
Reduce the wage gap, eliminating discriminatory factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor developments concerning wage gaps.</li> <li>• Introduce programmes to combat occupational segregation.</li> <li>• Develop methodologies to implement "equal pay for work of equal value" policies.</li> <li>• Include clauses in collective bargaining agreements ensuring transparency in recruitment and promotion of women.</li> </ul>
Achieve a gender balance in social organizations and dialogue frameworks, and give more attention to demands for equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement programmes promoting balanced representation of women workers (including training of female leaders and negotiators and the establishment of quotas).</li> <li>• Include demands for equality in the agendas of workers' and employers' organizations and in collective agreements and bargaining.</li> </ul>

### 4.2.3. Youth employment

#### Objectives

Promote better training and job access for young people.

#### Target

Within a ten-year period, halve the percentage of young people over the age of 15 who are neither studying nor in employment.

#### Rationale

**171.** Today's 15- to 24-year olds were born between 1980 and 1990, making them the children of Latin America's "lost decade". A sizeable total of 19 per cent (around 102 million inhabitants) of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean is concentrated in two five-year cohorts. Although it is estimated that this percentage will have fallen by 2015, even so the total number of young people will still exceed 105 million.

**172.** There are currently about 57 million young people at work or wanting to work, of whom around 9.5 million are unemployed (accounting for 42 per cent of total unemployment in the region). However, it is not possible to obtain a real picture of the true magnitude of the problem of youth employment simply by look-

**Table 4.6. Youth employment situation in Latin America and the Caribbean**

	1993	2003
Number of young people (millions)	92.1	104.2
Youth EAP	52.8	57.0
Youth employment	46.2	47.5
Youth unemployment	6.6	9.5
Not in work	39.3	47.2
Indicators (in percentages)		
Participation rate	57.3	54.7
Employment-to-population rate	50.2	45.6
Youth unemployment rate	12.4	16.6

Source: ILO: *Global employment trends for youth* (Geneva, 2004).

ing at open unemployment (which is double the average unemployment rate) (table 4.6). To give a broader picture, 21 per cent of young people, or 22 million people, “neither study nor work”.<sup>16</sup> Two out of three in this group are women, many of whom became mothers at an early age. These young people are clearly at risk socially, given that they are not employed at all and are at an age when they have to take certain decisions (concerning work and even reproduction) which will have consequences affecting them for the rest of their lives.

**173.** Young people in employment are also faced with specific problems. Owing to their lack of training and work experience, they generally end up accepting the most precarious jobs. In Peru, for example, people aged between 15 and 24 years make up only 10 per cent of all individuals registered with the social health insurance system (despite the fact that they make up more than 40 per cent of the workforce) and two out of three of these young people are working without a contract. The situation is very similar in other countries in the region.

**174.** However, the situation is paradoxical in that, nowadays, many young people have more years of education than their parents owing to the wider spread of education over the past few decades in the region. They also have greater access to the modern world through information technology. In theory, this makes them more attractive on the labour market. Nevertheless, if they do find work, it is poorly paid and they enjoy little in the way of job stability or protection.

**175.** Various mechanisms have been established in the region to help generate employment for young people. Among the best known of these are the special hiring schemes introduced in some countries, which are usually linked to training. Such “special contracts” allow enterprises to cut young people’s employment benefits in return for training. Theoretically, this should be in a young person’s best interests, as an investment that would give them access to training and experience which would be of benefit to them for the rest of their lives.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, concern has been voiced that, in certain cases, these contracts are being used not really to train a young workforce but only as a mechanism to cut costs.<sup>18</sup> There are also examples of programmes being designed and implemented which target young people from low-income backgrounds.

<sup>16</sup> Of these 22 million, 25 per cent are seeking employment, although not actively.

<sup>17</sup> This issue is currently being discussed in certain countries, especially where changes in the world of production and work, along with increased labour market flexibility, have meant that young people’s career expectations have been lowered. However, adults who would normally embody such expectations find themselves in a very similar situation.

<sup>18</sup> In Peru, for example, only 7 per cent of young people in job training schemes state that they are receiving training (see J. Chacaltana: *Políticas de empleo para jóvenes en Perú* (Lima, ECLAC-CEDEP, 2005), (forthcoming).

## Policies

**176.** Two main groups of policies are required to achieve the proposed targets. The first comprises policies aimed at reducing the number of young people expelled from the education system (school and post-secondary education). These are put forward and described in the sections of this Report on the eradication of child labour and the development of vocational training.

**177.** The second group of policies is directed at increasing employment opportunities for young people. The following measures are recommended:

- Measures aimed at facilitating the link between young jobseekers and the demand for labour. Staff turnover rates among young people are quite high, since they are often employed in short-term jobs.<sup>19</sup> Traditional “first job” policies are therefore insufficient. When a jobseeker repeatedly has to look for employment, the cost of the credentials required of young people may become a problem and, thus, policies aimed at bringing down such costs (using modern information technology) may be useful. There is also a need to consolidate policies regulating private employment agencies, which tend to focus on job placement for young people.
- Incentives to encourage formal employment. In this case, there is a need to review the effectiveness of the various existing forms of training contract and to ensure that training is in fact being provided. Programmes aimed at democratizing the labour market are also important in this context.
- Measures aimed at encouraging youth entrepreneurship. This would essentially mean changing basic education curricula, since in most cases education in Latin America (though not in the Caribbean) almost inevitably prepares the individual for life as an employee, even though the market for this is quite small. On the other hand, entrepreneurship requires a high degree of perseverance, and very few successful business people have succeeded with their first company. This being the case, States and, in particular, policies supporting young entrepreneurs, should establish “awards for perseverance”, for example, providing access to credit to any young person who, after a failure, wishes to try again with a better idea for a business.
- Promote the accreditation of training and experience. The issue of training is dealt with in the relevant section of this Report. With regard to experience, few countries in the region possess mechanisms for accrediting the experience acquired by young people during their early years in the labour market.<sup>20</sup>

**178.** Lastly, turning the exclusion faced by young jobseekers into an opportunity would require specific efforts in the field of information and communications technology (ICT). The coming decades will see a dramatic increase in the use of information technology in the region, and therefore the ability to use ICT will become a fundamental skill. If large numbers of young people are excluded from these new developments, they will also be excluded from the labour markets in the future.

**179.** Although various types of policy have been put forward to promote youth employment, the most successful tend to be those aimed at enhancing vocational skills and qualifications, thus improving young people’s chances of finding quality jobs. Accordingly, training institutions and labour ministries are seeking to improve and adapt their approach to young people. Over the past five years, vocational training and skills programmes for disadvantaged young people have improved both in quality and in quantity. They include the following:

- In **Argentina** the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security is developing a strategy aimed at integrating technical education and training in the provinces with training under programmes for unemployed young people. An effort is being made to coordinate this with existing regional educational programmes.

<sup>19</sup> J. Weller: *La problemática inserción laboral de los y las jóvenes* (Santiago de Chile, ECLAC, 2003).

<sup>20</sup> States could promote public, private or joint systems for work experience accreditation, taking into account the specific characteristics of each labour market.

- **Brazil** launched the National Programme for the Inclusion of Youth (*Pro-Jovem*), using national budget funds, with the aim of facilitating access to better education, vocational qualifications and digital technology. The programme complements a range of training options offered mainly by the Ministry of Labour and Employment which include the *Plano Nacional de Qualificação* (National Qualification Plan) and the *Consórcio Social da Juventude* (Social Partnership for Youth).
- **Chile** provides computer literacy programmes as a part of the development of employability skills under youth training programmes financed by the Ministry of Labour National Training and Employment Service (SENCE). This provides a basic skill which improves employability in the information society.
- In **Colombia**, the *Emprender* (Start-up) fund, administered by the National Service for Training (SENA), was established to finance business initiatives put forward by young trainees participating in vocational training programmes, either during their training or as members of associations along with young university students. The fund provides selected business projects with money which does not have to be reimbursed.
- The Technical Institute for Training and Productivity (INTECAP) in **Guatemala** and the National Apprenticeship Service (SENA) in Colombia have extended their opening hours to include evening and early morning schedules for people whose working hours do not allow them to attend courses during the day.
- In **Uruguay**, the Ministry of Labour, supported by CINTERFOR-ILO, is developing a vocational training programme aimed at female heads of household who are especially vulnerable to unemployment. The programme, which promotes equal opportunities, makes use of both public and private training provision.

**180.** These or other policies to generate employment for youth should, furthermore, result from a wide-ranging consultation process with young people themselves, as recommended by the International Labour Conference at its June 2005 Session.

#### 4.2.4. Micro- and small enterprises

##### Objective

Improve the quality of employment in micro- and small enterprises (MSEs).

##### Target

Within ten years, significantly increase the percentage of workers employed in MSEs which are covered by business services and enterprise policies aimed at raising productivity and which have access to markets and minimum levels of protection in all the countries of the region.

##### Rationale

**181.** This section of the Report focuses on an analysis of the situation and proposals related to small and micro-enterprises. This is not to discount the important economic and social role played by medium-sized and large enterprises. In order to grow, the latter need a conducive economic, social and legal environment, which could be fostered by applying the policies put forward in section 4.1 of this Report. It is MSEs which, given their usually low productivity, need specific policies for promotion and development.