



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **New Initiative Launched to Provide Jobs for Youth**

#### **Youth will be trained on road construction and maintenance using new technologies**

**NAIROBI, KENYA: July 27, 2012** – The International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Government of Japan and the Government of Kenya have today jointly launched a new project aimed at addressing the escalating youth unemployment in Kenya while improving rural and urban road infrastructure.

The Youth Employment for Sustainable Development Project (YESD) will empower youth with skills to participate in rehabilitation and maintenance of roads by using cheaper yet effective techniques known as “Cobblestone Paving” and “Do-nou”. The YESD will initially be implemented in Nairobi, Rift Valley and North Eastern with gradual expansion nationwide. By creating employment for young people, it ensures that incidences of crime that result from idleness among majority of the youthful population will reduce such as those experience in post election violence.

Speaking during the launch of the project in Nairobi and Eldoret, Japanese Ambassador to Kenya His Excellency Mr Toshihisa Takata said although youth unemployment was currently a big challenge in Kenya, there were opportunities to address it through innovation.

“We must discover new technologies and develop a productive working population to move the country forward faster,” he said.

He said the two low cost technologies had been used successfully in other countries and had vast potential in improving urban and rural infrastructure while engaging the youth productively.

“Japan’s broad technical portfolio positions us as a partner in Kenya’s quest to improve its infrastructure and tackle growing youth unemployment,” he said.

The pilot technical cooperation project is funded by Japan at a cost of USD1.6 million (Shs136 million) and is expected to equip at least 2,500 youth with road maintenance skills the initial nine months of implementation. It will be implemented in collaboration with the Kenya Institute for Highways and Building Technology, Directorate of Industrial Training under Ministry of Labor and the Youth Polytechnics under the Ministry of Youth Affairs.

Speaking at the function, Roads Minister Hon Franklin Bett said after training, youth with viable Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) would be contracted to pave and maintain certain roads and walkways through the Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KERRA), the Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA), local authorities and Private companies. He added that the youth will also be engaged in construction of rural markets and storage facilities.

ILO Country Director, Mr Alexio Musindo said the project launch coincided with the ongoing ILO worldwide campaign on youth employment. He said Kenya currently had over 11 million youth aged between 15 and 30 representing 32 % of the total population. He reiterated the commitment of ILO and its Constituents to ensure promotion of decent work for the youth in Kenya.

“These young people provide long-term potential for Kenya if given employment-based social protection,” said the director adding that 64% of those currently unemployed were youth.

“Regrettably, only 1.5% of the unemployed youth have formal education beyond secondary school level and over 92% have no vocational or professional skills training and therefore have limited chances of fully participating in the labour market,” he noted.

He said the project will provide youth with marketable skills, decent jobs and business opportunities to be in the labour market.

The Japan/ILO/GoK partnership program has identified four areas of focus:

- i) Development of youth owned SMEs
- ii) Strengthening training capacity of Kisii Training Centre through mainstreaming models for Cobblestone and Do-nou technologies
- iii) Capacity building for implementing agencies including the adoption of green jobs approaches (ILO Constituents, i.e., Ministries of Labour, Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE), Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU) and Ministries of Youth Affairs, Roads, and local authorities)
- iv) Strengthening programme monitoring and evaluation

### **More about the project**

The project is framed along ILO/AU/IGAD Employment for Peace, Stability and Development Strategy, which calls for a holistic approach to employment as key to poverty alleviation. The YESD is in line with the national priorities of Kenya as articulated in the Vision 2030. This project is also consistent with the TICAD process, a Japan-led initiative for Africa’s development. Within the framework of the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) held in 2008, Japan doubled its assistance to African countries to boost economic growth, consolidate peace and good governance and address climate change.

More over the project will promote rights-based approach to ensure equal opportunities for men and women, workers welfare and safety as well as full participation of the community in the decision making process.

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