



THIRD ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Follow-up to be given to resolutions  
adopted by the 93rd (June 2005) Session  
of the International Labour Conference  
and other matters arising**

**Resolution concerning youth employment**

**Introduction**

1. At its 93rd (June 2005) Session, the International Labour Conference (ILC) adopted a resolution concerning youth employment. Through this resolution, the Conference adopted the conclusions of the general discussion on this topic and invited the Governing Body to give due consideration to them in planning future action on youth employment and to request the Director-General to take them into account both when implementing the Programme and Budget for the 2006-07 biennium and allocating such other resources as may be available during the 2006-07 biennium. The text of the resolution is appended.
2. This document outlines and provides illustrative examples of the approach being explored by the Office to give effect to the resolution and to develop activities based on the plan of action contained in the conclusions.
3. The ILC conclusions endorsed an ILO plan of action to promote pathways to decent work for youth, which is based on three pillars: building knowledge; advocacy; and technical assistance. The conclusions specifically highlighted, inter alia, the importance for the ILO to “maximize the comparative advantage of its tripartite structure in its activities to promote decent work for young persons” (paragraph 51). The Office has undertaken a process of consultations with the constituents on the different aspects of the work programme, including the design and implementation of a fully-fledged international campaign on decent work for young people as proposed by the Conference. These consultations are being pursued by a wide range of ILO units in the field and at headquarters as a short and medium term follow up to the resolution.

## Building knowledge

4. The ILC conclusions recommended that the ILO expand knowledge on the nature and dimensions of youth employment, unemployment and underemployment so as to better assist countries in developing their policies and programmes addressing the youth employment challenge (paragraph 43). In this context, the Employment Strategy Department (EMP/STRAT) continues its research programme on youth employment in order to better understand the characteristics and determinants of youth employment and derive appropriate policy recommendations. EMP/STRAT has undertaken a series of country studies in developing countries, specifically where little information is available.
5. Research work has been initiated to gather information on the patterns of young people's transition to the world of work, their aspirations in relation to labour market needs as well as their sectoral distribution, working conditions, earnings and participation in training. School-to-work transition surveys are being implemented in 12 developing and transition countries and one territory.<sup>1</sup> National workshops involving ILO constituents and youth organizations are being held in most of these countries to discuss survey results; highlight policy recommendations for follow-up action; and agree on guidelines for improving implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth employment policies.
6. Further efforts are being made to strengthen research and knowledge dissemination on the relationship between the ten core elements covered in the Global Employment Agenda (GEA) and the achievement of decent work for young women and men.
7. In partnership with the International Co-operative Alliance, the Canadian Co-operative Association and the British Columbia Institute for Co-operative Studies, the Cooperative Branch in the Job Creation and Enterprise Development Department (EMP/ENT) has documented and published a number of case studies on the role played by cooperatives in promoting decent job opportunities for young people. Recent studies conducted by the InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development (IFP/SEED) have addressed measures to either stimulate youth entrepreneurship or facilitate labour market entry through enterprise-based schemes in vocational education and training. Research on basic skills for youth is being undertaken by the Skills and Employability Department (SKILLS).
8. The Conditions of Work and Employment Programme (TRAVAIL) will continue to update the database on national legislation related to minimum wages. The database, which was launched in February 2005, includes information on countries that have minimum wages for young people. Research on youth wages will be undertaken during the coming biennium. Efforts will be made to ensure Office-wide coordination in order to significantly expand and regularly update the existing ILO youth web site.
9. Another aspect of ILO work involves seeking age-disaggregated data relating to youth employment and the world of work and addressing the youth dimension in its research, studies and reports (paragraph 49). The Office will continue to maintain and update world and regional estimates for youth employment trends. Preparation of the 2007 Global Report under the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work provides an opportunity to explore the disadvantages and discrimination young people face in the labour market.

<sup>1</sup> Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro), Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic and Viet Nam.

## Promotion and advocacy

10. Paragraph 40 of the conclusions calls on the ILO “to continue to play a leading role in the Youth Employment Network (YEN) to promote decent work for young persons and to synchronize the work of the YEN with these conclusions”. As part of its promotional and advocacy effort on YEN-related work, the ILO intends to publish a report on the global analysis and evaluation of national action plans on youth employment. The report, which was produced under the aegis of the YEN, is intended to facilitate peer partnerships in addressing the youth employment challenge and to help countries learn from experiences in other countries. In the meantime, the report findings have fed into a report on the same topic, which was submitted at the 60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly within the framework of its ten-year review of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.<sup>2</sup>
11. The ILC conclusions also urge the ILO to continue to promote the expansion of the YEN. Since the ILC, six new countries have joined, bringing to 16 the total number of lead countries in the network by September 2005.<sup>3</sup> Many more countries have expressed interest in joining.
12. The Conference envisaged a promotional campaign to disseminate the conclusions of the general discussion (paragraph 46). The Office is working closely with its constituents and other stakeholders, including young people themselves, to devise and organize appropriate action at national, regional and international levels. The campaign will include new initiatives and tools to help employers’ and workers’ organizations reach out to young persons and effectively cater for their needs.
13. Efforts will be strengthened to ensure that relevant international labour standards are used as key references in all promotional and advocacy activities on youth employment. The ILO instruments provide a firm basis for the promotional campaign and references to them will enhance their visibility and promote understanding of them. They will also be promoted in the process of formulating, implementing and reviewing national action plans on youth employment.
14. Collaboration with multilateral institutions and other international organizations will be further reinforced to ensure greater policy coordination across national initiatives. Specifically, a strong emphasis on decent work for young people, consistent with the GEA, will be promoted in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, Decent Work Country Programmes and national action plans on youth employment. Furthermore, the ILO will continue to collaborate closely with the United Nations and the World Bank under the framework of the YEN.
15. As called for by the ILC conclusions (paragraph 48), tripartite meetings are being organized in order to promote good practice on policies and programmes for youth employment. A subregional conference, held in Zimbabwe in October 2005, gathered government, employer and worker representatives from nine countries of the southern African region to discuss policies and programmes aimed at effectively promoting decent work for young women and men at the national level.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations: *Global analysis and evaluation of national action plans on youth employment*, Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/133), July 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Azerbaijan, Brazil, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic and the United Kingdom.

## Technical assistance

16. The Office will continue to provide guidance and policy advice to countries in the formulation of national action plans on youth employment. In the framework of a project on youth employment coordinated by the YEN, support is being provided to Senegal and Sri Lanka. As a step towards the formulation of the plan in Sri Lanka, two studies have been launched over the past months, on youth entrepreneurship and youth migration, respectively.
17. An important field of ILO work includes assisting governments, together with employers' and workers' organizations, in implementing and monitoring labour market policies and programmes conducive to sustainable employment creation for young women and men. Emphasis will be placed in particular, but not exclusively, on interventions in areas such as education and training, labour market information and career guidance, entrepreneurship and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, including cooperatives, employment-intensive approaches in infrastructure, public works, as well as working conditions, including wage policies, occupational safety and health and HIV/AIDS. Efforts will be deployed also to strengthening the capacity of labour administration to promote the application of labour legislation at the workplace.
18. The inclusion of a specific outcome on youth employment in the Programme and Budget for 2006-07 provides an immediate opportunity to pursue work relating to the ILC conclusions on youth employment. In this context, consultations between units at headquarters and in the field are being undertaken to identify appropriate action based on the needs and demands arising on the ground.
19. A number of donor countries have recently expressed increased interest in providing additional support to the ILO's work in relation to youth employment. Proposals are being pursued to expand the size and scope of the current technical cooperation programme on youth employment. At the time of preparation of the present document, new proposals concerning technical assistance to countries of south-east Europe and Hungary are being submitted to donors. A youth employment programme sponsored through a public-private partnership is currently being pilot-tested in Latin America. Preparatory work is under way to develop proposals for a global youth employment technical cooperation programme. In addition, synergies between youth employment and child labour-related projects are being explored in order to enhance coherence and consistency.

## Conclusion

20. Many priority areas covered by the ILC conclusions fall in the realm of long-term strategies for promoting pathways for decent work for youth. A sustained commitment from the ILO will be required to give effect to the resolution. As noted in the conclusions, "... meeting the youth employment challenge calls for an integrated and coherent approach ..." (paragraph 19) combining action to enhance job creation, employability, workers' rights and equality. In this context, efforts will be pursued to ensure that youth employment issues are addressed throughout the Organization.

**21. *The Governing Body may wish to request the Director-General to:***

- (a) communicate the resolution to the governments, employers' and workers' organizations of member States and to intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental international organizations with consultative status and the other non-governmental international organizations concerned with the issue of youth employment;***
- (b) take full account of the resolution when planning future action on youth employment, including when implementing the Programme and Budget for the 2006-07 biennium and when allocating such other resources as may be available during the 2006-07 biennium.***

Geneva, 7 October 2005.

*Point for decision:* Paragraph 21.

## Appendix

### Resolution concerning youth employment <sup>1</sup>

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization, meeting in its 93rd Session, 2005,

Having undertaken a general discussion on the basis of Report VI, Youth: Pathways to decent work,

1. Adopts the following conclusions;

2. Invites the Governing Body to give due consideration to them in planning future action on youth employment and to request the Director-General to take them into account both when implementing the Programme and Budget for the 2006-07 biennium and allocating such other resources as may be available during the 2006-07 biennium.

### Conclusions on promoting pathways to decent work for youth

1. In addressing the employment challenges faced by young women and men, it is important to recall the ILO Decent Work Agenda, the ILO Global Employment Agenda, the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the ILO Declaration of Philadelphia, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, the body of international labour standards relevant to work and young persons (see appendix), the conclusions of the Tripartite Meeting on Youth Employment: The Way Forward (Geneva, 13-15 October 2004), the World Commission report on the Social Dimension of Globalization and the ILO's participation in the inter-agency Youth Employment Network.

### *Issues and challenges*

2. In all regions and countries, young women and men set out in life with dreams, hopes and aspirations. Yet everywhere young women and men face challenges in the labour market. If young people are to be given opportunities, then multiple pathways to decent employment are needed. Achieving decent work for young people is a critical element in poverty eradication and sustainable development, growth and welfare for all.

3. Young women and men bring numerous assets to the labour market: relevant and recent education and training; enthusiasm, hope and new ideas; willingness to learn and be taught; openness to new skills and technology; realistic expectations on entry to the labour market; mobility and adaptability; and represent a new generation to meet the challenge in countries with an ageing workforce. The challenge is to bring young people into employment without displacing other workers. Policy-makers have to consider intergenerational issues and recognize, in this context, a life-cycle approach.

4. Young people are employed and seek employment in diverse local, national, regional and international circumstances. This includes diversity between developing and developed economies, and within these economies. Governments, employers and young workers are not homogeneous groups; they have different needs, capacities and

<sup>1</sup> Adopted on 15 June 2005.

expectations. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up is universal and applies to all workers, regardless of national circumstances and levels of development.

5. Many young people are in education or employed in decent jobs. In many countries, young people are able to make successful transitions from education to the world of work. In some countries, the ageing workforce also presents growing opportunities for young people. There are diverse forms of work in which young people can engage, with vastly different employment conditions, including permanent full-time or part-time work, as well as casual, temporary or seasonal work. These forms of employment may provide entry points for young workers to the labour market and enhance their long-term employment prospects. Unfortunately, there are also too many young workers who do not have access to decent work. A significant number of youth are underemployed, unemployed, seeking employment or between jobs, or working unacceptably long hours under informal, intermittent and insecure work arrangements, without the possibility of personal and professional development; working below their potential in low-paid, low-skilled jobs without prospects for career advancement; trapped in involuntary part-time, temporary, casual or seasonal employment; and frequently under poor and precarious conditions in the informal economy, both in rural and urban areas. Other young workers lack adequate incomes, access to education, training and lifelong learning, social protection, safe workplaces, security, representation and rights protected under international labour standards, including freedom of association, collective bargaining and protection from harassment and discrimination.

6. Of the world's over 1 billion young people, 85 per cent live in developing countries with a high incidence of poverty and inadequate employment opportunities. There is significant regional variation in youth employment, with some countries facing greater challenges than others due in part to the uneven impacts of globalization and the asymmetries in current global economic activity. The scourge of HIV/AIDS, the weight of external debt, armed conflict, poor governance, unstable institutions and gender inequality compound weak economic growth and deter the public and private investment necessary to create jobs. Rapid population growth is expected to significantly increase the number of youth searching for decent work opportunities in most developing countries.

7. In developed economies, the challenge may be linked to slow economic and employment growth, the transition into employment, discrimination, social disadvantages, cyclical trends, and a number of structural factors. Variation in the youth employment challenge requires specific responses.

8. In too many instances, the labour market prospects for young people vary according to gender, age, ethnicity, education level, family background, health status and disability. Some groups are therefore more vulnerable and face particular disadvantage to securing and retaining decent work.

9. The regulatory environment for investment and enterprises and labour law should create an investment climate that fosters economic growth and decent employment of young persons. Whilst employment cannot be directly created but only encouraged by legislation or regulation, it is recognized that labour legislation and regulation based on international labour standards can provide employment protection and underwrite increased productivity, which are basic conditions in order to create decent work, particularly for young people. Labour laws and, where they exist, collective agreements, should apply to all young workers, including those currently lacking protection because of disguised employment relationships.<sup>2</sup> Efforts should be made to move those in the

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<sup>2</sup> As referenced in the conclusions of the International Labour Conference's general discussion on the employment relationship (2003).

informal economy into the formal economy. The creation of an enabling environment, the pursuit of good governance and the sustainable existence of both physical and social infrastructure are necessary for the competitiveness of existing businesses and the start-up of new enterprises.

10. Investment in youth reaps benefits for individuals, communities and societies. Decent work for young people unleashes multiplier effects throughout the economy and society, boosting investment and consumer demand and ensuring more stable and cohesive social ties across generations, including sharing institutional workplace knowledge. It shifts young people from social dependence to self-sufficiency, helps them escape poverty and enables them to actively contribute to society.

11. Youth unemployment and underemployment impose heavy social and economic costs, resulting in the loss of opportunities for economic growth, erosion of the tax base which undermines investment in infrastructure and public services, increased welfare costs, and unutilized investment in education and training, and may also be associated with social instability and conflict, increased levels of poverty, crime and substance abuse.

12. The youth employment challenge is bound to the general employment situation and, while it has its own dimensions, it is influenced by a number of general factors which may have positive or negative consequences, including:

- the impact of globalization;
- the impact of structural reforms in developing countries;
- the level of, and fluctuation in, aggregate demand;
- demographic trends;
- the level of economic activity, public and private investment and sustainable growth;
- the employment intensity of growth in developing countries;
- an enabling regulatory environment for both enterprises and the protection of workers' rights;
- entrepreneurship and enterprise creation options, including through cooperatives;
- education and training outcomes;
- the relationship between education and labour market needs; and
- work experience and labour market services.

13. As new entrants to the labour market, some young workers lack the specific training or seniority that may buffer older workers from swings in market conditions; their employment is highly dependent on the state of the economy. During economic downturns, the practice of “last hired, first fired” and the lack of vacancies take a toll on young workers when they are less equipped to find new employment.

14. Whilst some young people transition effectively from education to work, the transition is problematic for too many others. One concern is when young persons do not possess basic literacy and numeracy skills that are necessary to access vocational training and transition from a state of unemployability to employability. Another concern is when, for protracted periods, young people are not in employment, education or training. In other instances, some young people do not complete schooling and/or have insufficient skills to gain secure and sustainable employment opportunities.

15. Failure to find a job may be linked to lack of relevant skills and training opportunities, to low demand for the skills in which young persons have trained, or to changing demand in the labour market. The mismatch that arises can lead to long periods of jobseeking, higher unemployment and sustained periods of lower skilled and precarious work. Lack of opportunities for work experience and entrepreneurial development, combined with the absence of adequate labour market information, vocational guidance and counselling, and poor job placement mechanisms, exacerbate the problem of getting a decent job.

16. Particular groups of young people face specific hardships due to discrimination and social exclusion, including those with disabilities, those affected by HIV/AIDS, indigenous youth, those involved in hazardous work, demobilized soldiers, ethnic minorities, migrants and other socially disadvantaged youth. In general, young women, in particular young women with children, are more prone to unemployment, discrimination, sexual harassment, underemployment and poor working conditions. In some cases, young persons are denied access to employment opportunities for which they are fully qualified and competent solely on the basis of their age.

17. Governments and social partners are committed to addressing the youth employment challenge with the involvement of young women and men. Urgent action is required to enhance the involvement of young workers, workers' organizations and employers of young workers and their organizations in development, implementation and monitoring of youth labour market policies and programmes.

### ***Policies and programmes for decent work for young people***

18. The principles of the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), whereby "each Member shall declare and pursue, as a major goal, an active policy designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment", are fundamental to any employment policy directed at young people.

19. Although one size does not fit all, meeting the youth employment challenge calls for an integrated and coherent approach that combines macro- and microeconomic interventions and addresses both labour demand and supply and the quantity and quality of employment. Youth employment should be considered in all relevant social, employment and economic policies through a well-balanced policy mix. Supportive national trade, industry, training and wage policies, with appropriate involvement of the social partners, are also required to meet the youth employment challenge. The employment prospects of young people are inextricably linked to the general employment situation and can be especially vulnerable to fluctuations in economic conditions. Consequently, targeted interventions aimed at overcoming disadvantages, while promoting equality, social inclusion and an equitable society, are required. Policies and programmes that aim to prevent cycles of disadvantage from being repeated across generations are critical in achieving social inclusion and decent work for youth.

20. High and sustained economic growth is a necessary condition for the generation of employment, including quality employment for young people. This requires macroeconomic policy supportive of increased and sustainable employment growth through expanded investment, productive capacity and aggregate demand in conditions of economic and political stability. Governments should have policy space to ensure ownership of their macroeconomic and industrial policies enabling them to expand their economies including the manufacturing and services sectors. Social progress and economic growth should go hand in hand. Policies relating to globalization, including trade and foreign direct investment, should, wherever necessary, be reformed to create decent jobs for young people. Monetary, fiscal, trade and social security policies should be coherent

with the overall objective of increased and sustainable economic growth, employment generation and social protection. Assessment of the likely employment implications of macroeconomic policy choices can better inform an adequate policy mix.

21. Placing economic growth and employment generation at the centre of national policy objectives calls for supportive and coherent national, regional and international policy frameworks. Reforms are required at the national and international levels to ensure developing countries have access to additional financial resources to promote economic development and decent work. International debt relief, including debt cancellation, and increased official development assistance (ODA) are important components of such reforms. In addition, some of the recommendations of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization are particularly relevant in this regard. National and international strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) should combine economic growth, poverty eradication and social and employment objectives, including youth employment. The forthcoming review of the MDGs in September 2005 provides an excellent opportunity to assess the extent to which national, regional and international policies and strategies address the promotion of decent work for all with a focus on young people.

22. Increased and sustainable economic growth, while necessary, is not a sufficient condition for sustainable employment generation, particularly for young people. A range of complementary policies are needed to enhance the employment content of growth while also increasing productivity and ensuring adequate social protection. Policies should seek to strengthen enterprises and enhance labour demand as well as the quality of the labour supply. Governments should review all policies to ensure they do not discriminate against the hiring of youth.

23. In developing countries the employment intensity of growth must be increased. For example, employment-intensive investment in infrastructure has been shown to be an effective means to enhance sustainable decent work among low-income and low-skilled workers, as well as to create assets that enhance productivity and output. Such investment is a proven means to eradicate poverty, particularly when it is combined with training.

24. The development of entrepreneurship among young people is an important component of employment policies. Some young people have the potential to become entrepreneurs and create or join an enterprise. Some young people also have the potential to establish or join cooperatives. This potential should be actively nurtured through an enabling environment combining information on opportunities and risks faced by entrepreneurs and those involved in cooperatives, business development services directed particularly at young people, mentoring and financial services (including access to credit and venture capital) and simplifying registration (including business entry) procedures. Employers' organizations, together with governments, have an active role to play. The development of entrepreneurship and cooperatives should respect international labour standards. National legislation and policies concerning cooperatives should be in accordance with the Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193).

25. As stated in the 2004 UNDP report *Unleashing entrepreneurship: Making business work for the poor*, developed country governments should:

... foster a conducive international macroeconomic and policy environment to unleash the full potential of entrepreneurs in developing countries. A robust international economy provides markets for goods from developing country companies. In addition, increasing the flow of development aid and reforming the global trading system to provide fair economic opportunities to producers from developing countries are essential for promoting rapid growth in domestic private investment.

26. Policies for small enterprises, including entrepreneurship and cooperatives, should be reviewed for their relevance to young persons in different country circumstances. Policies to promote employment should also be reviewed to attract, inform and assist young persons in establishing or joining small enterprises, and to assist young persons in the informal economy to move to the formal economy. Small and medium-sized enterprises, including cooperatives, can be an engine of job creation and seedbeds for innovation and entrepreneurship. In some countries, many small and medium-sized enterprises are marginal and operate outside of the formal economy. The right to participate in employers' and workers' organizations by persons establishing or working in small businesses is important.

27. Tripartite dialogue can inform policies that target specific industries and sectors with strong potential for youth employment. In developing countries, policies seeking to increase agricultural production, rural non-farm industries, manufacturing, tourism and technological capabilities could provide real prospects for raising both economic growth and decent employment for youth. The provision of adequate high-quality public services, especially in developing countries, in areas such as health care, education, utilities, power and water is required and will directly generate additional decent work for youth as well as providing an enabling environment for increased private investment and job growth. There is considerable scope to expand economic activity in key sectors through public and private initiatives which will also help economic and job growth. The development of skills relevant to technology, when coupled with education and vocational training, can open up new opportunities for young people.

28. Labour market and social protection policies and employment legislation and regulations, which take into account international labour standards and social dialogue and recognize the right to collective bargaining, and the promotion of freedom of association, workplace safety, policies on wages and hours of work and other labour standards, should ensure adequate protection of young workers and the improvement of their employment prospects. The regulatory environment for enterprises should create an investment climate that fosters economic growth and the decent employment of young persons.

29. Governments in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations should establish labour market information and monitoring mechanisms to ensure a regular flow of information on the employment situation, specifically of young people. In order to avoid precarious employment situations that deny workers basic rights, and ensure occupational safety and health protection, labour inspection and national labour administration systems should play a key role and need to be strengthened, where necessary.

30. Measures to address the working conditions of youth in the informal economy include small business management training, enhanced cooperation and organization of micro- and small enterprises and the full enforcement of social and labour protection through processes such as well-resourced labour inspection systems, labour courts and functioning tripartite institutions. The organization of informal economy workers and employers through their respective organizations is also important to achieving this objective. Emphasis should be placed on necessary regulatory changes (including the removal of barriers to business entry) to enable young people in the informal economy to make the transition into the formal economy through incentives, such as management training, increased access to credit and simplified registration systems.

31. An enabling environment for investment and enterprise creation is essential for growth and employment. This includes effective public and private investment in essential physical and social infrastructure, inclusive of quality public services, recognition of property rights, good governance, stable institutions, political stability, the rule of law including labour law, and a conducive legal framework for private investment, as

advocated in the Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998 (No. 189).

32. Access to universal, free, quality public primary and secondary education and investment in vocational training and lifelong learning are essential for individual and social enhancement and preparation for future working life. Education for all is an effective means of combating child labour and eradicating poverty.

33. Education, vocational training, core skills – including literacy and numeracy – labour market services and work experience and awareness of labour rights and occupational health and safety are essential components of a comprehensive policy to enhance the employability of young people. Education and vocational training policy should be broadly based, have a link to employment policy and should be responsive to the development of core skills being used in workplaces. A key function of the education system should be the progressive development of employability skills among young people.<sup>3</sup>

34. Vocational education and lifelong training responsive to the evolving demand for skills in the labour market, along with apprenticeship schemes and other measures that combine training with work, are fundamental to improving youth employability. A variety of initiatives, including public and private partnerships, and appropriate incentives for individual and collective investments in human resources development, can ensure the continued relevance of vocational education and training to labour market needs. Enterprises have a critical role to play in investment in training. A number of mechanisms used in combination to further investment in training and to guarantee access are required.<sup>4</sup> National policies should aim to provide all young women and men with the broadest possible access to responsive vocational education and training opportunities. Such policies should be guided by the relevant provisions of the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), and the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195). Education and training authorities should seek to:

- Integrate basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and, where possible, technological knowledge into education, equipping students with a foundation for the world of work.
- Incorporate career guidance and support, knowledge of industry along with industrial relations and essential labour issues, such as occupational safety and health, into the early years curricula.

<sup>3</sup> “Employability is defined broadly. It is a key outcome of education and training of high quality, as well as a range of other policies. It encompasses the skills, knowledge and competencies that enhance a worker’s ability to secure and retain a job, progress at work and cope with change, secure another job if he/she so wishes or has been laid off, and enter more easily into the labour market at different periods of the life cycle. Individuals are most employable when they have broad-based education and training, basic and portable high-level skills, including teamwork, problem solving, information and communications technology (ICT) and communication and language skills, learning to learn skills, and competencies to protect themselves and their colleagues against occupational hazards and diseases. This combination of skills enables them to adapt to changes in the world of work. Employability also covers multiple skills that are essential to secure and retain decent work. Entrepreneurship can contribute to creating opportunities for employment and hence to employability. Employability is, however, not a function only of training – it requires a range of other instruments which results in the existence of jobs, the enhancement of quality jobs, and sustainable employment. Workers’ employability can only be sustained in an economic environment that promotes job growth and rewards individual and collective investments in human resources training and development.”, para. 9 of the resolution concerning human resources training and development, ILC, 88th Session, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Para. 12 of the resolution concerning human resources training and development, ILC, 88th Session, 2000.

- Foster career entry and career development, including the recognition of prior learning to facilitate transfer between educational programmes and through the transfer of relevant educational qualifications and credits.
- Make education more responsive to labour market needs by directly engaging educators with industry partners in the sector and encouraging student contact with industry. Programmes which, in the latter school years, combine learning with work or work experience can bring students and employers together.

35. Public and private employment services can provide career guidance and counselling, impart up-to-date labour market information and support young people in finding, securing and retaining jobs. Where necessary, public employment services should be strengthened.

36. Taking into account relevant provisions of the Employment Policy (Supplementary Provisions) Recommendation, 1984 (No. 169), active labour market policies and programmes (ALMPs) can greatly facilitate initial employment as well as re-entry into employment. Labour market programmes could target youth, in particular disadvantaged young people, or mainstream programmes could be adapted to the needs of the individual. ALMPs are more likely to be effective when they are well targeted; meet the specific requirements of the intended beneficiaries, based on a careful analysis of the local employment situation; are linked to demand for real jobs; and include measures to improve the competencies, skills and sustainable employment opportunities of beneficiaries.

37. Social benefit programmes to support unemployed and underemployed youth should be established where they do not exist. Social benefit programmes should contribute to job search and labour market efficiency. However, public policy should assist young people to move into decent work or education as soon as possible.

38. Governments should take responsibility for the regular monitoring and evaluation of the performance of policies and programmes promoting decent work for young people. Assessing performance against established benchmarks is a proven method for moving forward. Knowledge about what works and what does not work, the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of policies and programmes on youth employment should be compiled and disseminated widely and creatively. Tools which support employers, workers and governments to identify areas of work where there are gaps in the application of international labour standards are important and should be developed.

### ***An ILO plan of action to promote pathways to decent work for youth***

39. With regard to ILO work on youth employment, the Decent Work Agenda provides the paradigm, and the Global Employment Agenda, including its ten core elements and cross-cutting themes,<sup>5</sup> which include the “four Es”<sup>6</sup> of the Youth Employment Network (YEN), provide the policy pillars.

<sup>5</sup> Promoting trade and investment for productive employment and market access for developing countries; promoting technological change for higher productivity, job creation and higher standards of living; promoting sustainable development for sustainable livelihoods; a call for policy integration to ensure macroeconomic policy for growth and employment; decent work through entrepreneurship; employability through improving knowledge and skills; active labour market policies for employment, security in change, equality, and poverty reduction; social protection as a productive factor; occupational safety and health – synergies between security and productivity; productive employment for poverty reduction and development.

<sup>6</sup> Employability, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship and employment creation.

40. The ILO, in close collaboration with the social partners and relevant international agencies, should continue to play a leading role in the Youth Employment Network to promote decent work for young persons and to synchronize the work of the YEN with these conclusions. The ILO should continue to promote the expansion of the YEN to include more countries, both developing and developed. The ILO, through the full commitment of its constituents, should ensure that it has the funds required to give effect to these conclusions and be a strong technical partner of the YEN.

41. The ILO should, with its tripartite constituents, strengthen partnerships with international financial institutions and United Nations organizations in order to give a central place to the promotion of youth employment in development policies and poverty reduction strategies, and in the forthcoming review of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. This should include promotion of the ILO Decent Work Agenda and the Global Employment Agenda. The ILO should play a role in promoting the resolution of the international debt problem and advocate increased resource flows into developing countries.

42. The ILO plan of action, with particular focus on developing countries, is based on three pillars: building knowledge; advocacy; and technical assistance.

### ***Building knowledge***

43. In order to assist countries in developing their policies and programmes addressing the youth employment challenge, the ILO should expand knowledge on the nature and dimensions of youth employment, unemployment and underemployment. Particular emphasis should be placed on gathering factual data and empirical evidence on the effectiveness of country policies and programmes and in synthesizing the results of country studies and evaluations. This analysis should collect examples of where policy interventions have been successful and where they have not, and should extract lessons learned from such experiences. The ILO should facilitate global peer partnerships to promote better performance and disseminate and share best-practice experiences and models among its constituents, such as industry training and skills development, education linkages and human resources practices.

44. The ILO should develop a research agenda that includes the ILO strategy for evaluating the success of its youth-oriented technical cooperation projects, and use evaluation information to feed back into programme design. The ILO may draw on its experiences through evaluating its other youth-related efforts, for example the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

45. The ILO should strengthen research and knowledge dissemination on the ten core elements covered in the ILO Global Employment Agenda and the relationship between these core elements and the achievement of decent work for youth, including a regularly updated web site and database, publications, newsletters and practical guides. The ILO should partner, as appropriate, with other international organizations in the gathering of information and empirical research.

### ***Advocacy and the promotion of decent work for youth***

46. The ILO should undertake a campaign to promote the conclusions of the general discussion on promoting pathways to decent work for youth. This campaign should include an international, regional and national focus which is developed in conjunction with the social partners. The campaign should have as its core objective the promotion and implementation of these conclusions with a specific focus on information for young people themselves, taking into account the specific needs and interests of young workers,

including an appropriate focus on young women and other vulnerable groups. In conjunction with its constituents, the ILO should be responsible for:

- an international promotional campaign aimed at young people to promote decent work with a focus on employment creation, workers' rights and employability, as detailed in these conclusions;
- working directly with workers and employers in the development of tool kits which will assist governments and workers' and employers' organizations to promote awareness of their rights and responsibilities for decent work.

The ILO should target this campaign at young people through communication means that are most familiar to young people, including youth media and networks for students and other young people. The Committee on Employment and Social Policy of the Governing Body of the ILO should oversee the campaign.

47. The ILO should strengthen cooperation with multilateral institutions and other international organizations to promote policy coordination which makes the achievement of high and sustainable levels of employment growth a priority for all relevant international institutions. The ILO should also promote the strong emphasis on decent work for youth and the Global Employment Agenda in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, as well as decent work country programmes, YEN national action plans and other country-level activities undertaken by international financial institutions.

48. The ILO should promote good practice on policies and programmes for youth employment through tripartite meetings. This should include giving special attention to the gender dimension of the youth employment challenge, as well as the specific needs of young people affected by HIV/AIDS, and of those facing particular disadvantage due to disability, ethnic origin, labour migration and other specific circumstances.

49. The ILO should give a cross-cutting youth dimension to all its work. In particular, it should seek age-disaggregated data relating to employment and the world of work and include specific sections addressing the youth dimension in its research, studies and reports, including those relating to international labour standards and the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, as appropriate.

### ***Technical assistance***

50. The ILO should:

- (i) continue and intensify the provision of guidance and policy advice, particularly to developing countries, based on the Global Employment Agenda to promote decent work for youth;
- (ii) organize periodic, regional youth employment technical meetings in order to build knowledge and exchange experiences among youth employment policy-makers and the social partners;
- (iii) enhance the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations to effectively participate in the setting of policies and programmes in favour of youth employment, through its programme of technical cooperation, the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin, and other means;
- (iv) strengthen the capacity of labour administration to promote the application of labour legislation at the workplace, for the benefit of all workers, including young women and men;

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- (v) assist developing countries in establishing and strengthening inspection services, public employment services, data-gathering and monitoring and evaluation systems on youth employment;
  - (vi) seek additional funding from donors to expand its programme of technical cooperation for the promotion of decent work for young women and men.

51. The ILO should maximize the comparative advantage of its tripartite structure in its activities to promote decent work for young persons. In addition to the role of governments already noted, the ILO should support employers and workers and their respective organizations, as the case may be, to:

- (i) review job descriptions to promote the hiring of youth, recognizing that young people bring positive attributes to work;
- (ii) recognize skills and productivity, not just qualifications or years of experience, to ensure that young workers have equal opportunities to other workers;
- (iii) help educate, train and mentor through investing in education and training, participating in training bodies and assisting school-to-work transition;
- (iv) work with industry partners, young people's networks and youth organizations to inform young people, schools, training bodies and employment agencies of both industry needs and expectations of young people;
- (v) to assist young people and employers of young people to:
  - develop basic learning skills of literacy, numeracy and technological skills;
  - actively look for work and job opportunities, including entry-level work that combines employment with education or work experience;
  - prepare for the responsibilities of the world of work and career development by developing employability skills or upgrading skills through technical vocational training, and/or in the workplace.

52. The ILO should support efforts to strengthen the capacity of workers' and employers' organizations to reach out and engage young workers and employers of young workers to ensure that their specific needs are taken into account in social dialogue processes, including collective bargaining.

## Appendix to the resolution

### International labour standards relevant to work and young persons

In addition to the Conventions on fundamental principles and rights at work and their related Recommendations – the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98); the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29); the Forced Labour (Indirect Compulsion) Recommendation, 1930 (No. 35); the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105); the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and Recommendation, 1951 (No. 90); the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), and Recommendation, 1958 (No. 111); the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and Recommendation, 1973 (No. 146); the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and Recommendation, 1999 (No. 190) – and to the priority Conventions on employment and labour inspection and their related Recommendations – the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), and Recommendation, 1964 (No. 122); the Employment Policy (Supplementary Provisions) Recommendation, 1984 (No. 169); the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), and its Protocol of 1995; the Labour Inspection Recommendation, 1947 (No. 81); the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129), and Recommendation, 1969 (No. 133) – , these instruments include in particular: the Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88), and Recommendation, 1948 (No. 83); the Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150), and Recommendation, 1978 (No. 158); the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181), and Recommendation, 1997 (No. 188); the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), and Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195); the Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998 (No. 189); the Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (No. 175), and Recommendation, 1994 (No. 182); the Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193); the Workers’ Representatives Convention, 1971 (No. 135), and Recommendation, 1971 (No. 143); the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), and Recommendation, 1983 (No. 168); the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), and Recommendation (Revised), 1949 (No. 86); the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), and the Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975 (No. 151); the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169); the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and its Protocol of 2002; the Occupational Safety and Health Recommendation, 1981 (No. 164); the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184), and Recommendation, 2001 (No. 192); the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), and Recommendation, 2000 (No. 191); the Medical Examination of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1946 (No. 77); the Medical Examination of Young Persons (Non-Industrial Occupations) Convention, 1946 (No. 78); the Medical Examination of Young Persons Recommendation, 1946 (No. 79); the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95), and Recommendation, 1949 (No. 85); the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131), and Recommendation, 1970 (No. 135); the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102); the Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168), and Recommendation, 1988 (No. 176); the Hours of Work (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 1), and the Hours of Work (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1930 (No. 30); the Night Work Convention, 1990 (No. 171), and Recommendation, 1990 (No. 178).