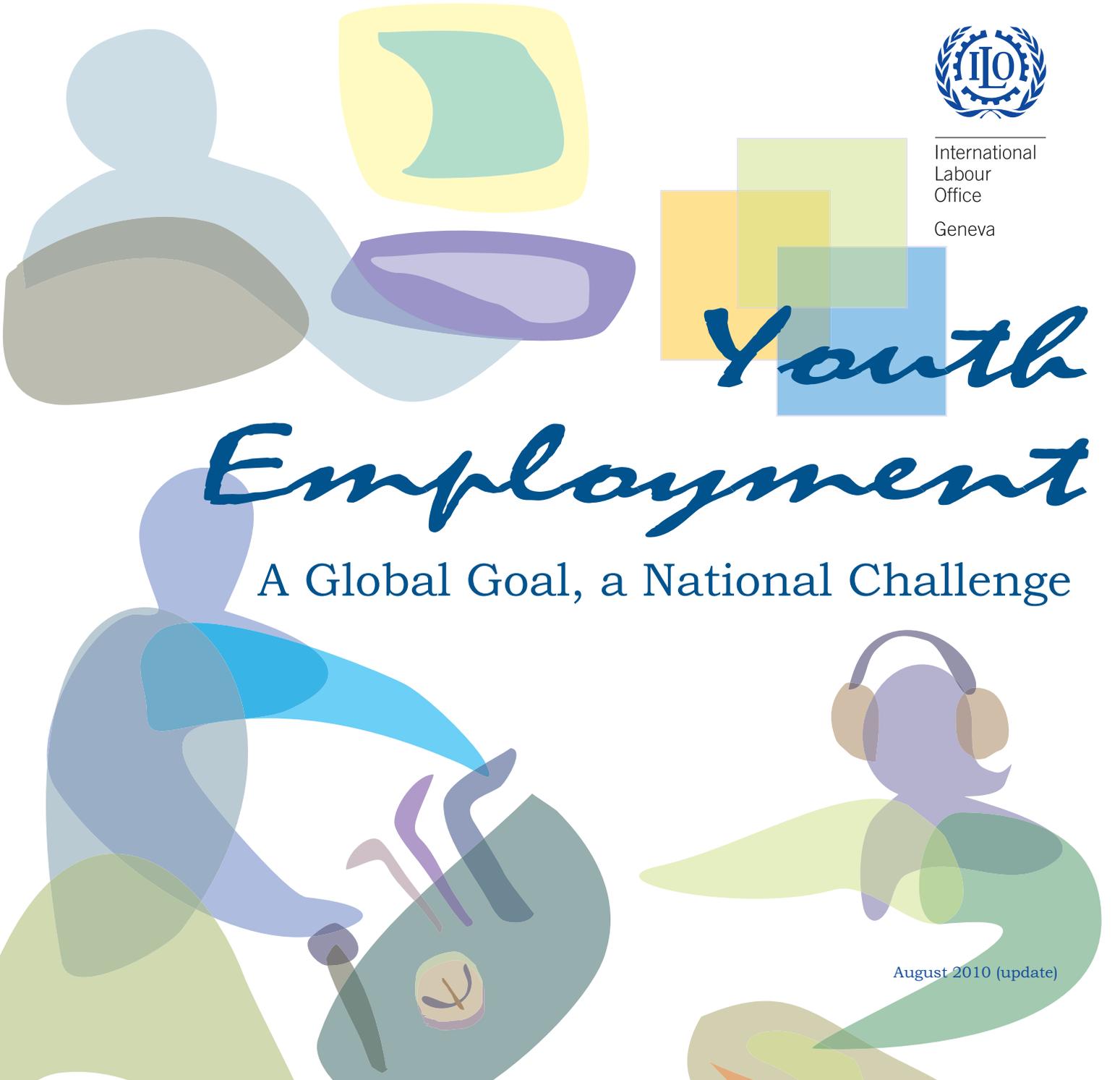




International  
Labour  
Office  
Geneva

The background of the cover features several stylized human figures and abstract shapes in various colors (blue, green, yellow, purple, brown, orange). One figure in the top left is light blue with a brown base. Another in the bottom left is blue and green, holding a hammer and chisel. A figure in the bottom right is purple and green, wearing headphones. In the center, the words 'Youth Employment' are written in a large, blue, cursive font. The word 'Youth' is positioned above 'Employment'. To the right of 'Youth' are several overlapping squares in yellow, green, and blue. Below the main title is the subtitle 'A Global Goal, a National Challenge' in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font.

# Youth Employment

A Global Goal, a National Challenge

August 2010 (update)

# Youth Employment at a glance

- In 2010, as much as 90 per cent of the world's youth aged 15-24 lived in developing countries.
- The youth labour force participation rate is expected to decline from 53.8 to 50.9 per cent between 2000 and 2010 (51 per cent in 2009), mainly as a result of young women and men staying in education longer. In 2009, the labour force participation rate of young women (42.5 per cent) continued to be significantly lower than that of young men (59.1 per cent).
- Global youth unemployment reached 81 million in 2009, accounting for 40 per cent of total unemployment. Between 2007 and 2009, youth unemployment increased by 7.8 million (1.1 million in 2007/08 and 6.7 million in 2008/09). Already prior to the crisis, young people were nearly three times more likely than adults to be unemployed.
- Youth accounted for about 24 per cent of the estimated 633 million world's working poor in 2008. Some 152 million youth worked but lived in households that earned less than the equivalent of US\$ 1.25 per day in 2008.
- Young people are over-represented in the informal economy. For instance, in Latin American countries, as much as 82.4 per cent of teenagers aged 15-19 years were engaged in informal sector employment, an increase from the 80.8 per cent share in 2007, compared to a share of 50.2 per cent for adults aged 30-64 years.
- Almost 40 per cent of young people were working under temporary contracts in the European Union in 2008.

The world is facing a growing youth employment crisis. Latest ILO data indicate that of the world's estimated 211 million unemployed people in 2009, about 38 per cent – or 81 million – are aged between 15 and 24.\* Today, both industrialized and developing countries are failing to increase employment opportunities for young people.

“Creating jobs for youth is not enough. Across the planet, youth are not only finding it difficult if not impossible to find jobs, but also they cannot find decent jobs. ... We are facing not only an economic challenge, but a security threat of monumental proportions.”

Juan Somavia -- ILO Director-General.

More youth are poor or underemployed than ever before. Some 152 million youth work but live in households that earn less than the equivalent of US\$ 1.25 per day. And millions of young people are trapped in temporary, involuntary part-time or casual work that offers few benefits and limited prospects for advancement. Clearly, something must be done.

\* ILO, Global employment trends - January 2010.

*Why  
focus on youth?*



Young people bring energy, talent and creativity to economies that no-one can afford to squander. Around the world, young women and men are making important contributions as productive workers, entrepreneurs, consumers – as members of civil society and agents of change. What our young people do today will create the foundations for what our economies will do tomorrow.

Yet the lack of sufficient or sustainable decent work makes young people – and the societies they live in – extremely vulnerable. The youth employment crisis is not only an integral element of the broader general employment situation, it has specific dimensions.

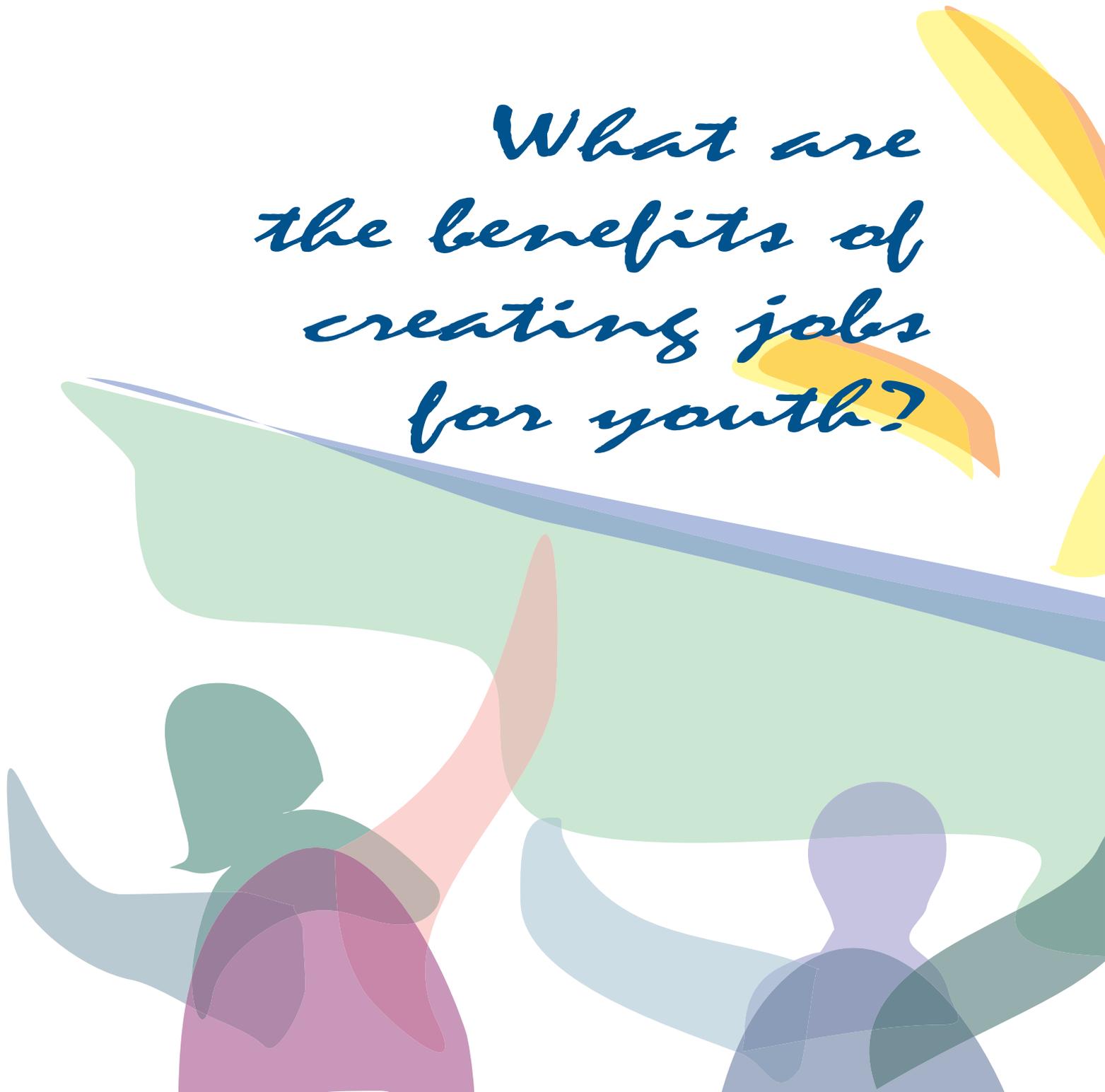
In industrialized countries, the challenge is finding jobs for millions of youth who are entering the labour market each year.

In developing and transition countries, the challenge is more fundamental – not only creating jobs, but finding decent jobs for young people who are often underemployed and working in the agricultural fields or city alleyways of the informal economy.

Thus, youth are all too often at the vortex of a vicious cycle of poverty, inadequate education and training, and poor jobs. This creates an endless trail of poverty linking one generation to another.

This “poverty trail”, from youth to adulthood, is fraught with danger for today’s societies. The costs are enormous – for individuals as well as economies – and the prospects are grim. Reduced self-esteem, discouragement and diminished levels of well-being can lead to anti-social behaviour, violence and juvenile delinquency that put democracies at risk.

*What are  
the benefits of  
creating jobs  
for youth?*





Access to productive and decent work is the best way young people can realize their aspirations, improve their living conditions and actively participate in society. Decent work for young people provides them with significant benefits in terms of increased wealth, a commitment to democracy, security and political stability. It strengthens economies. And it creates a cadre of young consumers, savers and taxpayers who fuel the energy, innovation and creativity that attract domestic and foreign investment. Productive and motivated youth are the architects of an equitable society and the bridges across generations. And youth employment also benefits societies by reducing costs related to social problems, such as drug abuse and crime.

*Starting right:  
A critical  
departure*





Starting right in the labour market is crucial not only to success at work but to the personal lives of individuals, their families and their societies. Starting right is the key to getting and keeping decent jobs later in life. Without the right foothold, people are less able to make choices that will improve the job prospects of their dependants. Thus, the impact of youth employment reaches well beyond the world of work and becomes a key factor in the transition to adulthood. And starting right at work can open the gates to the fulfilment of young peoples' responsibilities and aspirations, not only as workers, but also as citizens.

*What works best?*



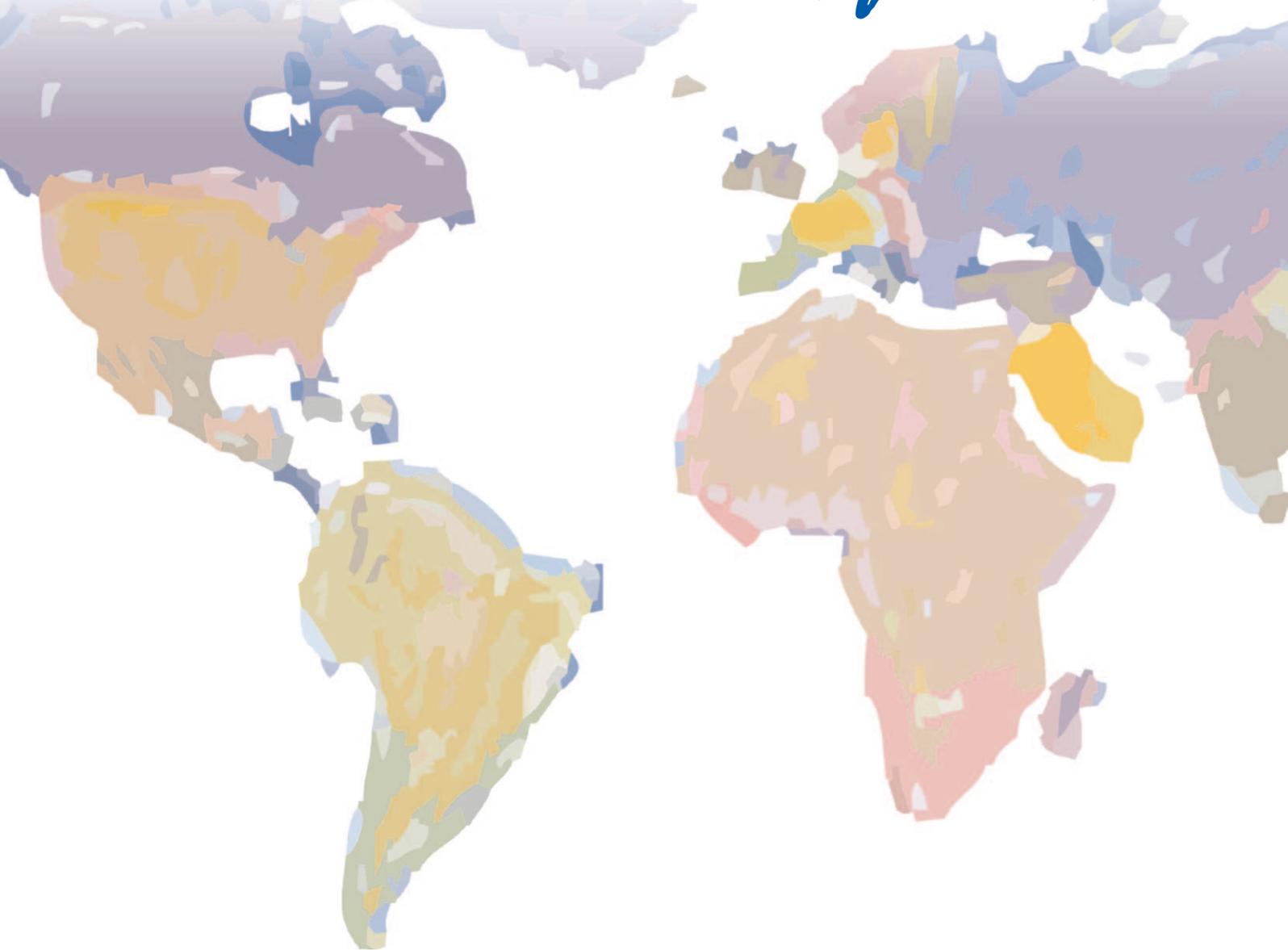
Nearly every country in the world has worked to address the youth employment challenge. Yet many of these efforts have been limited to specific programmes that are narrow in scope and limited in time. What's more, efforts have often focused on youth unemployment, neglecting the poor working conditions of many young workers.

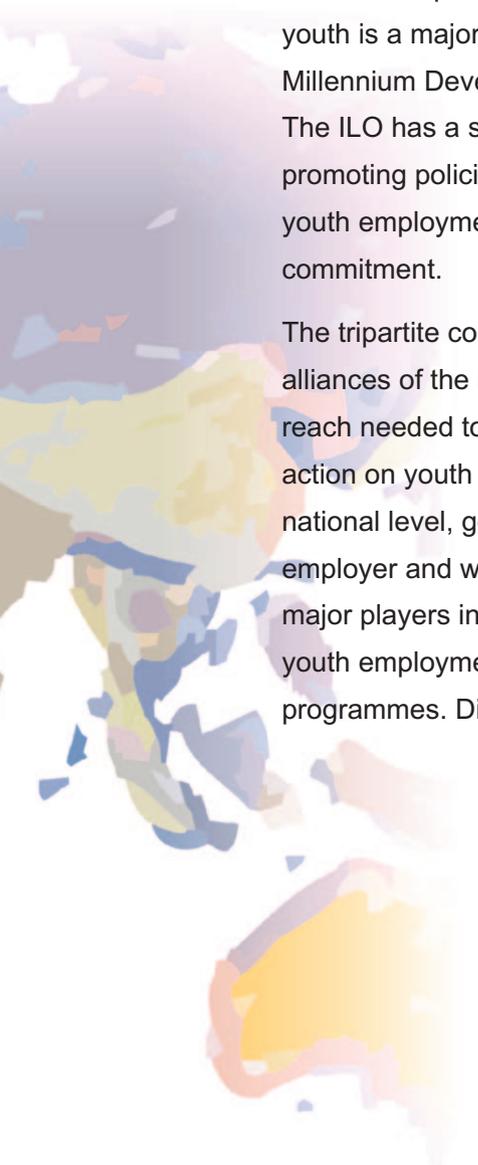
Productive and long-term youth employment requires sustained, coherent and concerted action on a combination of economic and social policies. Experience across countries shows that youth employment initiatives are more successful if they combine a range of measures spanning education and training,

labour market services, support for gaining work experience and entrepreneurship development. These initiatives work best when designed and implemented together with the social partners.

In June 2005, government, employers' and workers' representatives from 178 countries at the International Labour Conference agreed that the best strategy for tackling youth employment requires an integrated approach that combines supportive macro-economic policies and targeted measures, and addresses labour demand and supply, as well as the quantity and quality of employment.

# *The ILO response*





Decent and productive employment for youth is a major commitment of the Millennium Development Goals.

The ILO has a special role to play in promoting policies and initiatives on youth employment as part of this commitment.

The tripartite constituency and global alliances of the ILO give it the global reach needed to catalyze support and action on youth employment. At the national level, governments, and employer and worker organizations are major players in the development of youth employment policies and programmes. Dialogue and alliances

with civil society, public and private sectors and youth are also important to building support for and developing solutions. At the international level, the ILO's leading role in the UN Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network (YEN) – a global partnership of the World Bank, the United Nations and the ILO – provides a major opportunity to build international consensus and influence the international agenda with a comprehensive strategy for the employment and social inclusion of young people.





*The ILO response*



The ILO's programme on youth employment operates through a global network of technical specialists at its headquarters in Geneva and in more than 60 offices around the world.

It provides assistance to countries in developing coherent and coordinated interventions on youth employment.

Work in this area includes:

- Data collection on the nature and dimensions of youth employment, unemployment and underemployment;
- Analysis of the effectiveness of country policies and programmes on youth employment, technical assistance in the formulation and implementation of plans of action on youth employment and development of tools and training material;
- Policy advice to strengthen in-country labour market policies and programmes for youth employment and capacity building for governments, employer and worker organizations;
- Advocacy and awareness-raising activities to promote decent work for youth with a focus on employability, employment and workers' rights;
- Establishment of strategic partnerships on youth employment between private and public sectors at the international, sub-regional and national levels;
- Promotion of cross-country and global peer networks to achieve better performance and share good-practice experiences among ILO constituents and other stakeholders;
- Collaboration with multilateral and other international institutions to ensure policy coherence across national initiatives affecting youth employment.



# Youth Employment Programme

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