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**ILO Statement at UN High Level Meeting on Youth
NY, General Assembly Hall, 25 July 2011**

Ms. Jane Stewart
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Mr. President,

Giving young people the chance to obtain a decent job is essential to eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development.

The International Labour Organization promotes a development paradigm that aims to provide more and better jobs for young people, in conditions of freedom and in full respect of youth aspirations and rights at work.

This paradigm concludes that the best pathway for promoting decent work for young people is to combine employment-oriented growth strategies with interventions targeted at disadvantaged youth. Such strategies should address both demand and supply of labour and aim to improve the quantity and quality of jobs available to young women and men.

In terms of fighting chronic youth unemployment, or structural unemployment – as we call it – it is essential to get the economic fundamentals of overall labor demand right. This implies the establishment of a virtual circle of economic growth with explicit employment creation targets and objectives.

Unfortunately, national strategies do not always establish strong links between growth and jobs.

The disconnection between growth and jobs is leading to widening income inequalities and fueling social tensions in several countries and regions. As indicated by ILO statistics, this is particularly affecting young people who are more prone to unemployment, underemployment, and other decent work deficits.

Macroeconomic as well as structural and sectoral policies at the national level can play a major role in increasing the employment content of growth. For instance, it would be important to identify the sector and sub-sectors of an economy that are more youth employment-intensive. A multi-sector strategy could be most promising to reduce chronic youth unemployment, underemployment and poverty.

In addition, we must recognize that the private sector is the main creator of present and future jobs worldwide. Partnerships between the public and private sectors and the active engagement of the latter in the promotion of decent work for youth, can be pivotal for eradicating poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. President,

Perhaps the panel would care to offer comments on these and other strategies to deal with this important challenge of structural youth unemployment?