

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL  
INTEGRATION SEGMENT  
30 March – 1 April 2015****Conference Room Paper<sup>1</sup>****Achieving Sustainable Development through Employment Creation and Decent Work for All**

From 30 March to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015, the Integration Segment of the 2015 session of the Economic and Social Council will focus on the topical theme of “achieving sustainable development through employment creation and decent work for all”. The Segment will provide a multi-stakeholder platform to demonstrate how the creation of good quality jobs could be a tool for promoting the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development.

This conference room paper aims to consolidate the inputs received from Member States and the United Nations system, to provide an overview of the emerging best practices and policy recommendations in employment creation and decent work for all from an integrated approach.

**I. Integrated policies for employment creation and decent work**

Productive employment and decent work are key elements to achieving a fair globalization, reducing poverty and achieving equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development. However, the pace at which we are reducing extreme poverty has slowed in recent years while environmental degradation and natural disasters have the potential to reverse the hard won gains in development and poverty reduction. The benefits of economic growth recorded in many emerging economies during the last decade were not fairly distributed, exacerbating social tensions and inequalities in all societies. Economic and environmental problems encourage labour mobility and in some parts of the world migrant workers face exploitation.

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 of the report of the Open Working Group on SDGs “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all” provide a framework of actions to deliver sustainable development. In this regard, inputs received from Member States and the United Nations system highlight various lessons learned, best practices and innovative solutions to facilitate sustainable development through increased investment in active labour market policies, proactive monetary, fiscal and trade policies, in addition to policies aimed building skills, particularly amongst the youth, and ensuring the right to education.

**1. Active labour market policies for reducing economic and social inequalities**

Inputs received by Member States highlight a wide diversity of labour market policies aimed at helping reducing economic and social inequalities, including the promotion of youth employment, micro, small and medium sized enterprises and health insurance contributions, support to unemployed, as well as the alignment of wage-setting with productivity developments.

For example, the **European Union** provides countries’ support for employment and social inclusion policies through the European Social Fund, of which at least 20% are earmarked for social inclusion. The

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<sup>1</sup> This conference room paper has been developed drawing from the inputs provided by the following Member States: Armenia, Belgium, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, The People’s Republic of China, Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, Ghana, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iraq, Italy, Kuwait, Morocco, Portugal, Slovakia, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey and the European Union; as well as the following UN system entities: ECA, ECLAC, ESCWA, FAO, IMF, ITU, UNAIDS, UN-Habitat, CCPCJ, CND, CSocD, CEPA, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFCCC, UNRISD, WFP; and Observers: IRENA.

<sup>1</sup> This conference room paper should be read in conjunction with the background note prepared by ILO and UN DESA (available at <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/integration/2015/documentation.shtml>).

European Commission is implementing a pilot project to promote a minimum income network, mutual learning and transfers of good practice. In cooperation with the Member States, work has also started on developing a common methodology for reference budgets to serve as a benchmark for minimum income schemes, inform on their adequacy and identify living costs of the most disadvantaged.

**Hungary** has established an integral set of policies helping to reduce inequalities including a Job Protection Action Plan, providing full or partial social security contribution relief to employers hiring low productivity workforce and a programme to encourage the reconciliation of work and private life aiming to promote the return of parents with young children to the labour market through the provision of childcare places. In **Portugal**, the programme “Commitment to Growth, Competitiveness and Employment”, launched by various stakeholders in 2012, supports the unemployed in their integration to the labour market. Another example of a labour market measure tackling inequalities is the Guaranteed Minimum Income, implemented by the Government of **Cyprus** in 2013. Finally, **Croatia** implemented various labour market measures to support the vulnerable groups in society. Amendments to the Act on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of persons with Disability were adopted in 2014 to ensure procedural provisions on the right of persons with disabilities to preferential employment.

Economic growth can't be considered sustainable and long-lasting unless it is grounded in inclusive labour policies. Since 2013, **Tunisia** has put in place a “Social Covenant” between the government and its major labour and industry associations, the Tunisian General Union for the Employment and the Tunisian Union for the Industry and Trade which involves a mix of different labour, macro-economic, regional development, social protection and educational policies. Such an approach aims at institutionalizing a dialogue amongst employers, government and trade unions.

In October 2014 the Government of **Slovakia** adopted an amendment to the Law on Aid in Material Need (hmotná núdza) related to the overlapping of material need and the wage required for supporting the long-term unemployed. This measure increases and prolongs the entitlement to special benefit for persons in material need even if they become employed. The measure aims at increasing motivation of long-term unemployed and inactive persons in productive age to get work.

#### **Promotion labour standards and decent work – Armenia**

The “Armenia Development Strategy for 2014-2025” has the main objective of increasing employment through the creation of quality and well-paid jobs. Next to the demand side of improving the business environment and investment climate, a focus is also laid on the supply side, meaning the development of human capital, through enhancing the scope, quality and accessibility of healthcare, higher education and science. Moreover, the National Labour Code is currently under revision, as proposed by law by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, with the goal of fulfilling the requirements of the Revised European Social Charter and ILO conventions in 2014.

The examples provided illustrate the points highlighted by the **United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration**, underscoring that the performance of labour ministries could be further strengthened by: 1) ensuring the resources allocated to departments in charge of public sector employment are sufficient to meet the agreed SDGs; 2) enhancing the role of employment and labour ministries in overseeing international labour instruments, including legal conventions; 3) training and building the capacity of those responsible for enforcing labour regulations and providing them with the means to accomplish their mission.

## **2. Monetary, fiscal and trade policies to create employment and promote decent work**

Fiscal, monetary and trade policies contribute to maintain economic stability and ultimately create employment and enhance international competitiveness.

In **Greece**, a number of measures have been adopted towards the simplification of procedures and the reduction of administrative burden for businesses such as the electronic submission of labour reporting

forms and/or social security contributions. **Ghana** has increased its international competitiveness during the past years through a broad mid-term development policy framework, entitled the Second Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda 2014 – 2017. **Iraq** has implemented several financial policies to support businesses and employment through providing grants and soft loans to establish small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with focus on the fragile and poor social segments.

#### **Fiscal policies for stability and in support of employment growth – Botswana**

Botswana's main policy thrust is to combine monetary, fiscal and exchange rate policies to stabilise the economy and ultimately create employment through promotion of domestic investment, the attraction of Foreign Direct Investment and support for tradable goods and services, especially to ensure that exports are competitive on international markets. The National Development Plan 10 imposes a tight fiscal policy stance in order to reduce cumulative budget deficits with a view to rebuilding reserves to cushion the economy from possible future economic shocks.

National policies can be more supportive of job-rich and inclusive growth, even in countries undergoing fiscal consolidation. The **International Monetary Fund** underlines that: 1) public expenditure can be better directed, for example, by reducing untargeted energy subsidies and reallocating such resources to better education and training programmes (which allow for upward income mobility), and improved safety nets (protecting workers, not jobs, in times of crises); 2) lower labor taxes (in particular targeted cuts to employer social security contributions) and other active labor market policies (training and job creation programmes as well as effective placement services) can have a substantial impact on the distribution of income and the creation of jobs; and 3) for countries undergoing fiscal consolidation, fiscal measures can also be designed to mitigate possible adverse effects on inequality. For example, governments can protect the most progressive and efficient redistributive spending during the fiscal adjustment and improve targeting. Similarly, greater reliance on progressive revenue taxation can help avoid cuts in social transfers.

### **3. Education and skill-building policies**

The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization** indicates that despite progress towards the achievement of Education for All goals, in total, 121 million children and adolescents have never started school or dropped out despite the international community's promise to achieve universal primary education by 2015. National training systems, formal and non-formal vocational and technical education programmes and skill-building policies have proven their utility in reducing mismatches between labour supply and demand across surveyed countries.

To solve the problems of education or the mismatch between skills and jobs, **Turkey** implemented "Guidance and Career Planning Course Programme" for students at the basic educational level. Students completing this programme are expected to become individuals who "can evaluate alternative options for their careers" and "appreciate the value and importance of their professions."

In **Italy**, three types of apprenticeship coexist, two of them characterized by a dual training system that entails both formal education in school and work experience and training within companies. A third type of apprenticeship is instead fully carried out within companies, though a number of public "general skills" training is foreseen to be undertaken out of workplaces. Technical post-secondary education has been recently strengthened by setting up High Technical Colleges (ITS), which are managed by a network of companies and public institutions. By explicitly devising a role of companies in course scheduling and planning, and integrating them with work or traineeship experiences, the ITS proved to be successful in creating a stricter link between formal education and labour market.

#### **A holistic skill-building policy framework - Cambodia**

The Royal Government of Cambodia has put in place a holistic policy framework to shift the skills distribution away from agricultural production, towards a better-

trained workforce and higher value added industries. As part of the key pillars of these policy frameworks, the Cambodia National Qualification Framework, which has been introduced in 2013, allows every individual to acquire some skills from the formal education as well as to continue upgrade his/her skills and move to a higher level of education in different pathways. In addition, the expansion and enhancement of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) short-term programmes could reduce poverty through provisions of basic skills for the urban poor.

In **Finland**, the development of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualification structure and curricula is ongoing. On the 1st July 2015, a new reform will create a clearer learning outcome based and modular qualification structure to meet the needs of the working life. The new structure support flexible and individualized pathways and contribute to the validation of prior learning. Sustainable development is part of the Requirements for VET qualifications and skills requirements.

## **II. Sector-specific approaches: the cases of youth and women employment promotion policies**

Youth, especially young women, continue to be disproportionately affected by unemployment. Almost 74 million young people (aged 15–24) were looking for work in 2014. Such trends highlight the need of strong sector-specific approaches addressing youth and women employment.

### **1. Youth employment**

To create and sustain decent work opportunities for young people, the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization** proposes a set of key solutions, particularly: 1) adopting integrated policies at all stages to tackle youth unemployment, from the design through to the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review; 2) enhancing the quality of education and training, making education and training more relevant to labour market and individual needs; 3) giving voice to youth and strengthening their participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies affecting them; 4) strengthening the role of the private sector, partnerships and diversifying funding for education and learning; and 5) unlocking the potential of technology.

Among the urban social groups facing the brunt of rapidly increasing urbanization are unemployed and underemployed youth and women. **The United Nations Human Settlements Programme** has designed and implemented innovative economic empowerment models for urban youth. Two such models are the One Stop Youth Centres and Urban Youth Fund Projects. These model programmes help increase youths' access to entrepreneurship, livelihood opportunities, and governance. One Stop Youth Centres provide a meeting place for young people to come together to access information and resources critical to youth-led development programmes and projects. The main objectives of the centres are to provide vocational training and apprenticeships opportunities to urban youth, gender and age mainstreaming and provide new employment ideas. The Urban Youth Fund provides grants to urban youth organizations up to USD25000 for implementing new ideas and solutions for creating jobs and promoting good governance, adequate shelter and security of tenure. Projects that encourage gender equality and promote partnerships with the government or the private sector are particularly encouraged. The fund has supported 277 youth groups located in 65 developing countries and 175 cities with small grants for youth-led community development projects aligned with UN-Habitat's thematic focus areas since 2008.

Inadequate supply of decent employment for the youth is a universal problem. In Europe, the average youth unemployment rate is 21.4%. To address this challenge the **European Union** Youth Guarantee is a policy framework, which is translated at the national level into Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans, requiring investments by national governments.

### Youth unemployment measures - Portugal

Portugal adopted a set of complementary measures, combining education, training, traineeships, hiring and entrepreneurship supports. The "Youth Impulse" focuses on improving the employability of unemployed, acting on both sides of the labour market: establishing favourable conditions for companies to create jobs, and offering traineeships or certified vocational training to young people with a view to a sustainable future employment. The "Youth Guarantee" was implemented according to the European Commission recommendation with the goal of ensuring that all young people up to the extended age of 30 enjoy a good job opportunity, education, apprenticeship or internship within four months after being unemployed or dropping out of school. This measure especially targets the persons not in education, employment or training (NEET). All the measures combined managed to lower the youth unemployment rate from a peak of 42.5 per cent in the first quarter of 2013 to 34.8 per cent in 2014.

The government of the **People's Republic of China** issued a series of new initiatives to promote employment of college graduates entrepreneurship: the "Graduate Employment Promotion Programme", conducting real-name registration, providing vocational guidance and training; and the "College Students Entrepreneurship Lead Programme", strengthening entrepreneurship training, business registration and banking account, to facilitate comprehensive measures to provide support and services for business students.

In the area of entrepreneurship development and self-employment, the **United Nations Development Programme** has supported business skills development, access to finance to support micro, small and medium enterprises, as well as their linkages to existing markets. For example, in Yemen, as part of the Youth Employment Action Plan through a scaling-up of the 3x6 approach, UNDP initiated the enrolment of 3000 young vulnerable Yemenis (25% women) in cash for work activities to constitute seed capital through a compulsory savings scheme for business creation. Bridging training with market needs for greater employability, 1000 youth in Sana'a and Aden have benefited from job placement and internship schemes yield job and internship opportunities for their effective integration in the workplace. Innovation, with a focus on solar energy, has been promoted with the launch of the second edition of the "Youth Innovation and Creativity Award".

## 2. Women employment

Women, rural populations and informal workers, also have particularly inequitable access to the labour market. External socio-economic factors have pushed already marginalized women, especially those with no formal education, into the fringes of society and the perils of the informal sector.

According to the **Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**, compared to other regions, the employment of women is extremely low. The region also suffers from the lowest measures of maternity protection in all its aspects. To address this challenge and the large gap between men's and women's labor force participation in the region, ESCWA proposes increasing women's representation in economic decision-making bodies, as well as facilitating their access to unions and syndicates. In order to be competitive and have fair working opportunities, Arab women need their governments to provide safeguards such as paid maternity leave, equal remuneration, incentives to the private sector to support and facilitate women's employment, and anti-discrimination legislation.

The **United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice** emphasized the need to develop international migration policies and programmes that include a gender perspective in order to adopt necessary measures to better protect women and girls and migrant children against dangers and abuse during migration, such as trafficking for forced labour.

The **World Food Programme** seeks to empower women through activities such as supporting livelihood opportunities and food for assets, nutrition education, and social protection, which improves their own

food security and nutrition as well as enhances their capacity to ensure the food security and nutrition of their households.

**The benefit of integrated sector-specific approaches - Honduras**

Honduras illustrates the benefits of combined sector-specific approaches. In the last years, the Government of Honduras has set in place eight programmes including, the pilot programme “Chamba Ahorita” (employed right now!) and human youth development which have contributed to reduce unemployment with a strong emphasis in gender and in the integration of specific vulnerable groups.

**3. Multi-stakeholder institutional approaches for a successful integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development**

Civil society, trade unions and private sector engagement takes place at different levels. Member States cited various ways of engaging different stakeholders through a range of tripartite social dialogue bodies and social dialogues that take place at cross-industry and cross-sectorial levels.

For example the European Union has 43 different sectorial social dialogue committees covering more than 75% of the EU workforce. In this context, **Italy** provides a relevant country example: Italy’s “Social Dialogue” is the major source of integration of economic, social and environmental spheres, engaging civil society through a bottom-up approach. NGOs, Social Partners and other relevant stakeholders participate in the lawmaking process through bilateral or multilateral meetings with the Government and local authorities. Civil society can also propose new laws provided that 50,000 citizens present a proposal in accordance with the Constitutional Charter. The popular project must pass through the Parliamentary exam, as all the other draft bills.

**III. Opportunities, inter-linkages and innovative labour market opportunities**

A stronger focus on the creation of green and decent green jobs can unlock major investments that will make our societies more resilient, inclusive and energy efficient. Investments in innovative sectors, such as the development of new renewable energy can contribute substantially to job creation in sectors most threatened by climate change such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries, which employ well over a billion people and to offset potential job losses.

**1. The case for an inclusive and green economy**

The collaborative efforts between **the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Development Programme** through the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, the Poverty-Environment Initiative and the *Green Jobs Initiative* have demonstrated the benefits of integrated policy approaches. Innovation of institutions, supply chains, and technology is critical to achieve the dual goals of greening the economy and increasing access of the poor to sustainably derived basic services.

For example, employment in environmental goods and services in the United States in 2010 was 3.1 million (2.4%) and growing. In Brazil in 2010, 2.9 million green jobs (6.6% of formal employment) were recorded in sectors aimed also at reducing environmental harm. In China the green component of the fiscal stimulus that started in 2008 may create some 5.3 million direct and indirect jobs, including 430,000 jobs by 2030 in renewable energy and almost 900,000 jobs relating to solar PVs by 2020.

As reported by **UNEP**, investment in green agriculture could create 47 million additional jobs in the next 40 years relative to a business-as-usual scenario. Jobs in the recycling chain often provide a source of income for workers with low levels of education, no marketable skills, and limited access to productive assets. In Brazil, China and the United States, the waste sector employs 12 million people, most of them extremely poor. The formalization of this sector via social policy measures and investments in green technology can ensure safer working conditions and open up opportunities to develop new skills and diversify future employment options.

The renewable energy sector employs 5 million people worldwide and continues to show a steady climb. For example, a EU study that simulated the potential employment effects of investing one billion EUR into key green sectors concluded that almost 100,000 jobs could be created in the renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable transport sectors.

## 2. Agriculture and food assistance for sustainable livelihoods

Today, some 2.6 billion people worldwide draw their livelihoods either partially or fully from agriculture, 1.6 billion from forests, 250 million from fisheries, and 200 million from pastoralism. It has been estimated that ecosystem services and other non-market goods make up 50-90% of the total livelihoods of poor rural households. UNEP's 2011 Green Economy Report defines green agriculture as farming practices that maintain and increase farm productivity and profitability; ensure the provision of food and ecosystem services; replace negative externalities of agriculture with positive ones; and rebuild ecological resources of food and ecosystem services; replace negative externalities of agriculture with positive ones; and rebuild ecological resources by reducing pollution using resources more efficiently.

The **Food and Agriculture Organization** is strengthening the normative understanding of the ways in which the Decent Work Agenda can be applied to agriculture and rural areas. FAO has developed an applied definition of Decent Rural Employment (DRE), and is supporting its members to put this concept into practice through an integrated country approach. FAO considers DRE as a principal driver of all three dimensions of sustainable development. Promoting DRE will: 1) enhance the economic sustainability of agriculture and food systems giving rise to a virtuous cycle of rural productivity and income growth; 2) attract youth to agriculture, and thereby reverse the trend of ageing farmer populations; 3) improve the social sustainability of agriculture and food systems by promoting the right to decent work for all, including for rural workers in the informal economy and small-scale producers.

FAO regards productive and decent employment - including diversification into non-farm employment, green jobs and the ecological literacy of rural workers - as vital to reducing the pressures from biodiversity loss and unsustainable natural resource management in rural areas and supporting environmental sustainability.

**The World Food Programme** underlines key areas on which food assistance could contribute to the Decent Work Agenda by working with governments to strengthen and extend social protection, including food-based safety nets; improving food security and nutrition, with a focus on the vulnerable population, children, and women, which is essential for physical and cognitive development necessary for healthy lives to engage in productive work; and indirectly promoting opportunities for work through its livelihoods activities.

## 3. Digital technologies and the supply of right skills profiles

Despite considerable progress in educational development in both developing and developed countries, skills mismatch remains a persistent concern. Jobs in the **ICT sector** are going unfilled because employers claim they cannot find employees with the right set of skills. Despite the growing demand for digital skills, many youth are not being taught these skills in school. In response to these challenges the **International Telecommunication Union** published the "Digital Opportunities: Innovative ICT solutions for Youth Employment" report, highlighting that ICTs should be included in youth employment and entrepreneurship strategies for several reasons: ICT has infiltrated virtually every market segment, more jobs and businesses require digital skills than ever before. ICTs are creating new market sectors that didn't exist even a few years ago, such as micro work, gaming and the mobile apps economy.

Tech hubs, app labs and other business incubation spaces provide solutions to young digital entrepreneurs, offering Internet connectivity, support structures (including shared office space), mentorship and collaboration. ICTs are also changing the way we learn through online learning opportunities and ICT-enabled resources. There are a growing number of jobs and business opportunities for youth that possess ICT skills. The European Commission estimates that there will be a skills shortfall of some 900,000 ICT jobs in Europe by 2015. In the US, there will be 1.2 million IT jobs by

2022, but only 39% of these will be filled by US computing undergraduates - leaving a skills shortfall of 732,000 jobs.

#### **4. New employment opportunities for the informal sector**

As highlighted by the **United Nations Economic Commission for Africa**, the informal sector remains the major source of employment across Africa, accounting for 70 per cent of employment in Sub-Saharan Africa and 62 per cent in North Africa. The dynamism of the informal sector in creating employment and value addition is particularly strong, representing about 80 per cent of the total labour force, and contributing about 55 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa's GDP. In most countries, informal jobs mostly emanate from the services and agriculture sectors. In addition, 9 in 10 informal workers are women and youth, but the lack of social protection, skills' upgrading and productive income often trap these groups into poverty and exclusion from economic growth and development, with only about 10 percent of operators benefiting from social protection schemes.

**Switzerland** proposes several actions on how the agricultural sector could play a role in youth employment in Africa: 1) priority on achieving sector transformation, focusing on organizing the production sector and strengthening direct commercialization schemes; 2) channeling further investments geared towards increased productivity and quality (bottleneck: rural finance, SME finance, crop insurance products); and 3) strengthening supply chain developments as well as sector-wide approaches, so as to scale up production levels.

Crafting effective programmes for creating decent employment opportunities in the informal sector is one of the major challenges facing developing countries. The **Moroccan** experience in implementing its national promotion strategy for the micro and very small enterprises represents an interesting policy case. The national strategy targets both registered and un-registered micro-enterprises through the use of a mix incentives for tax breaks, subsidized social protection programmes, access to financing and sector specific economic incentives in support of integrative approaches such as the promotion of entrepreneurship in the ecotourism sector. The overall ambition is to provide coverage to 500,000 micro-enterprises by 2017 (out of a total of three million structures).

#### **5. Social Protection**

To enable effective policy frameworks in employment creation and decent work for all, the establishment of adequate levels of social protection to all members of society is required. Social security involves access to health care and income security, particularly in cases of old age, unemployment, sickness, invalidity, work injury, maternity or loss of a main income earner. **Belgium** has a highly developed social security system. The Belgian system is based on the principle of solidarity. Thus, this system achieves a redistribution of income in society: the young to the old, the healthy to the sick, those who have jobs to unemployed, and men to women.

The **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean** stresses the need to address four types of exclusion from productive employment and decent work: 1) the involuntary exclusion from the labor market; 2) the exclusion from any kind of job; 3) the exclusion from a productive in high- or medium productivity activities; and 4) the exclusion from decent work in high- or medium productivity activities.

#### **IV. The role of ECOSOC in promoting sustainable development and decent work**

As part of the proposals concerning the follow-up to the ECOSOC 2015 Integration Segment, Member States raised important ideas that can help the Council to scale-up its future work. These include initiatives for enhancing ECOSOC's capacity to raise awareness and creating, through the Integration Segment a thematic, focused platform for promoting policy integration and coherence at the highest level.

Member states highlighted the role of ECOSOC as an institution that can raise awareness for good employment policies, such as promoting good working conditions and decent work. In this regard, ECOSOC can also facilitate the discussion and exchange of lessons learnt and best practices, and

promotes mutual understanding and learning in this regard. It should ensure the opportunity for an effective debate and an exchange of experiences and views.

ECOSOC is a forum open to all countries and stakeholders. Such vantage position can allow the ECOSOC system to collaborate and coordinate its work with the ILO. In this regard, the Council can strengthen as an outcome of the Integration Segment the ILO's role as the central agency in the area of the promotion of decent work, as this is a crucial instrument for the transition to sustainable modes of production and consumption.

Furthermore, ECOSOC should reinforce its expertise in designing coherent policies for the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and contribute to promote policy coherence in global governance so that economic, employment, social and environmental policies work hand in hand and promote inclusive and sustainable growth that creates employment and decent work for all.

ECOSOC, through its convening capacity, can support increased action by the United Nations system entities for the provision of technical support in a wide range of topics, such as the creation of clean industries, private sector development, public-private partnership, small and medium sized enterprise development and attracting investment. In this context, the ECOSOC system could encourage the United Nations system to initiate projects that support national ministries to conduct studies and programmes that facilitate decent work and its interrelation with environmental sustainability. The synergies of the social and environmental agendas should be given priority attention, including through greater awareness on the potential of "green and decent jobs"

Another type of technical and financial support could be the strengthening of statistical and data collecting capacities. This is necessary for programme countries for rigorous policy analysis and decision-making.

## **V. The Way Forward: recommendations**

The submissions from United Nations system organizations incorporate a number of recommendations that may be considered by the participants of the ECOSOC 2015 Integration Segment "Achieving Sustainable Development through Employment Creation and Decent Work for All". These include:

- a) Looking beyond the minimum 'safety net', innovative approaches will be required to fully reach the potential and aims of the SDGs, including a greater emphasis on education and training, removal of barriers such as lack of transport, access to e-solutions and opportunities to access funding for personal and organisational development in support of achieving decent work for all;
- b) Promoting decent work for women can have an exponential effect on improving the food security and nutrition of an entire household. Women are more likely to spend their incomes on food and children's needs and distribute food within the family in a more equitable way, better supporting children's education, nutrition and health.
- c) Social protection policies that include food and nutrition-based safety nets are needed to provide basic food and nutrition needs in the event of inadequate and/or loss of work. Social protection mechanisms, including food-based safety net programmes, provide a means for integrating the various elements of sustainable development into a broader framework to channel investment derived from rising levels of prosperity to support national sustainable development goals.
- d) Promoting targeted investments in the agricultural sector to increase global food production. Investment that maximize the creation of decent rural employment opportunities - for example, sustainable value chain development that engages small producers and their organizations, or employment-intensive rural infrastructure programmes that favour local job creation - can be particularly catalytic in producing positive outcomes with respect to all three dimensions of sustainability.

- e) The international community should promote sustainable jobs and livelihood programmes through management of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystem services. Jobs, livelihoods and economic revitalization programmes offer important windows of opportunity to not only generate income but also strengthen community-level resilience, increase equitable access to natural resources, and better protect against economic and environmental shocks.
- f) Making links with social protection schemes will enable affected people to have minimum measures of resilience and coping mechanisms in the advent of conflict or disaster.
- g) Public work programmes that guarantee paid work for the restoration of natural capital can provide the necessary stimulus to protect the environment while transitioning people out of poverty.
- h) Bringing local communities equitably into the growing “green” travel and tourist industry can diversify livelihood options while achieving the conservation of biodiversity.
- i) In any comprehensive global or national youth employment and entrepreneurship strategy, the demand for digital jobs and the supply of digital skills training as well as digital employment / entrepreneurship resources need to be recognized by policy makers and United Nations programmes.
- j) In order to create and sustain decent work opportunities for young people it is imperative to ensure greater integration and consistency between public policies affecting youth employability (particularly education, employment and youth policies) at all stages of the policy process, from the design through to the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review.
- k) New forms of partnership, networks and alliances at the local, sectoral and national levels, and among public, private and civil society stakeholders, must be built.
- l) The role of the private sector particularly through public-private partnership should be strengthened to allow governments to increase learning opportunities, capitalize on the full potential of all learning settings and tap into the resources needed to make lifelong learning a reality for more people.
- m) Youth organizations and associations should be directly associated and engaged in the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies affecting them.
- n) The involvement of youth and particularly women in the decision-making process at all levels needs to be promoted, recognizing the fact that women empowerment is crucial for achieving positive changes in society.
- o) Good urban governance is key to achieving sustainable, equitable, efficient, transparent, accountable and secure cities. Well-governed cities create equitable economic opportunities for all, including youth, women, the disabled, minorities and marginalized groups.