

1 June 2015

High-Level Event on the Demographic Dividend and Youth Employment

The High-level event provided an opportunity for Member States and stakeholders to evaluate investments needed to reap the demographic dividend, including through employment opportunities for young people.

The concept of “demographic dividend” was conceived following the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994. It came at a time when the world was focusing on the interplay between population structure changes, economic growth and development. The demographic contribution to accelerating economic growth became known as the demographic dividend.

The demographic dividend can be realized through three steps:

First, improvements in health status, especially of women and children, contribute to a decrease in the number of children born to each family. Improved child survival combined with fewer children, leads to a bulge – or increase – in the population’s successive contingent.

The second step of the dividend is the educational investment in the population bulge. As families have fewer children, they and the government have more resources to invest in the education of surviving children and women increasingly enter the labour force. Also, with fewer births each year, a country’s young dependent population declines in relation to the working-age population. There are therefore fewer people to support; giving families and the country opportunities to invest in quality education for the young.

The third and final step is to have an economic environment where the educated bulge can find well-paid, decent jobs. The demographic dividend provides a time-limited window of opportunity for growth if it coincides with strategic investments to enhance human capital and create an enabling environment for businesses to demand and deploy those skills efficiently and equitably.

If all three steps are successful and timed well, a first dividend is produced as a large youthful population moves into highly productive jobs boosting the family and national income.

The event consisted of:

- A high level opening plenary,
- Two high level interactive panel discussions, and
- A closing plenary.

The panel discussions focused on particular themes and a set of questions to guide panelists and other participants as follows:

1st Panel Discussion – Theme: “How to harness the demographic dividend”

Questions:

1. What are the major reasons for the slow demographic transition in the least developed countries, and what can they do to speed up the demographic transition, and create conducive conditions for a demographic dividend?
2. How can more advanced developing countries make better use of a window of opportunity before it closes?
3. What are the principal obstacles to an active and productive participation of young people in the social, economic and political life of their communities and countries?
4. What partnerships and strategies can support countries to take advantage of their youth bulge?

2nd Panel Discussion – Theme: “Lessons learned: What policies and measures are needed to create opportunities for youth employment”?

Questions:

1. Do we need to develop a more refined and comprehensive understanding of human capital development? What are the skills needed to meet the future labour market needs?
2. What are the benefits and limits of using labour market and social protection policies to enhance synergies between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development?
3. How can developing countries be supported in their initiatives to create a framework on demographic dividend to promote decent jobs for youth?
4. What partnerships, strategies and best practices can facilitate conditions for boosting youth employment? What could be the main elements for a global strategy on youth employment?

Concept Note

High-Level Event on “The Demographic Dividend and Youth Employment”

01 June 2015, Trusteeship Council

Background

The linkages between population dynamics and sustainable development have received renewed attention in the context of the ICPD Programme of Action and the post-2015 development agenda. In addition to several resolutions of the General Assembly, the world leaders in the Outcome Document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) entitled “The future we want”, expressed concern about labour market conditions and widespread deficits of decent work opportunities, especially for young women and men. They urged all governments to address the global challenge of youth employment by developing and implementing strategies and policies that provide young people everywhere opportunities for decent and productive work, so as to ensure sustainable and inclusive development and to reduce poverty. Furthermore, one of the targets on youth employment in the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) calls for developing and operationalizing a global strategy for youth employment as well as implementing the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization by 2020.

The outcome document of Rio+20 recognized the importance of job creation by investing in and developing sound, effective and efficient economic and social infrastructure and productive capacities for sustainable development and sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth. Investments in young people for productive employment enhance the potential for expanded markets, sustainable economic growth and for improved quality of life. In this context, policies that promote labor-intensive economic growth are critical as a complement to human capital investment. Investments in young people can foster innovation and advance the capabilities of an entire generation in all fields of study, including governance, jurisprudence, management, planning, communications, health, and the arts. Enhancing

investments in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) contributes to increased industrial innovation, modern resource efficient manufacturing, which is needed for a sustainable future.

The concept of a “demographic dividend” was conceived in the late 1990s following the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994. It came at a time when the world was focusing its attention on the interplay between population structure changes, economic growth and development. The demographic contribution to accelerating economic growth is what has become known as the demographic dividend.

A demographic dividend can be realized through three steps:

First, improvements in health status, especially women and child health, contribute to a decrease in the number of children born to each family. The combination of improved child survival and fewer children leads to a bulge or increase in the successive contingent of the population.

The second step of the dividend is the educational investment in this population bulge. As families have fewer children, they and the government have more resources to invest in the education of the surviving children and women increasingly enter the labor force. Also, with fewer births each year, a country's young dependent population declines in relation to the working-age population. This translates into fewer people to support; giving families and the country an opportunity invest in quality education for the young population.

While investments in education and health expand human opportunity and well-being, they can be especially advantageous for development when age structures favor a potential “demographic dividend.” A number of countries face this potential dividend in the coming 20 years, because they have recently undergone a rapid decline in the number of children born to each woman, and young people will represent a proportionately large working age population in the coming 15-30 years. With fewer dependents they will have more resources for investment and savings, potentially raising both household and national wealth.

The third and final step is having an economic environment where the educated cohort/bulge can find well-paying and decent jobs. The demographic dividend provides a time-limited window of opportunity for growth if it coincides with strategic investments to enhance human capital and create an enabling environment for businesses to demand and deploy those skills efficiently and equitably.

If all three steps are successful and timed well, a first dividend is produced as a large youthful population moves into highly productive jobs boosting family incomes and national income. Speeding up the demographic transition produces the human and social dividends of improved health, education and the empowerment of women. Moreover, a faster demographic transition lays down the foundation for economic dividends to follow. This is done through the creation of a youth bulge of healthy, well nourished, educated, potential labor force as well as the expansion of female labor participation. Having a healthy and skilled labor force can in of itself help attract investments that create jobs.

According to the 2014 Report of the United Nations Population Fund on State of the World Population, the global population of adolescents and young people is at its highest ever, with 1.2 billion people between the ages of 15 and 24 in 2015, and 1.9 billion young people projected to turn 15 years old between 2015 and 2030. Investments made in young people during this critical period will shape their lives and the future of a world that will be increasingly dependent on them.

Objective

The high level event will provide an opportunity for Member States and other stakeholders to consider practical ways in which the international community can work in partnership with Governments in countries with a youth bulge to enable the necessary investments needed to reap the demographic dividend, including through employment opportunities and decent work for young people.

Format

This will be a one day event consisting of an opening plenary, two interactive panel discussions and a closing plenary. A detailed provisional programme will be available in due course.

The panel discussions will focus on particular themes and a set of questions to guide Panelists and other participants as follows:

The theme of the 1st Panel Discussion will be: **“How to harness the demographic dividend”**.

Questions:

1. What are the major reasons for the slow demographic transition in the least developed countries, and what can they do to speed up the demographic transition, and create conducive conditions for a demographic dividend?
2. How can more advanced developing countries make better use of the window of opportunity that they have, before this window closes?
3. What are the principal obstacles to an active and productive participation of young people in the social, economic and political life of their communities and countries?
4. What partnerships and strategies can support countries to take advantage of their youth bulge?

The theme of the 2nd Panel Discussion will be: **“Lessons learned: What policies and measures are needed to create opportunities for youth employment”**?

Questions:

1. Do we need to develop a more refined and comprehensive understanding of human capital development? What are the skills needed to meet the future labour market needs?
2. What are the benefits and limits of using labour market and social protection policies to enhance synergies between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development?

3. How can developing countries be supported in their initiatives to create a framework on demographic dividend to promote decent jobs for youth?
4. What partnerships, strategies and best practices can facilitate conditions for boosting youth employment? What could be the main elements for a global strategy on youth employment?

Outcome

The outcome will be a President's Summary of the key messages and initiatives on youth employment and harnessing demographic dividend, which will be circulated to Member States and stakeholders.

Organization

The High-level event will be convened by the President of the General Assembly in collaboration with UNFPA and ILO, and the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth.

Participants

Member States will be invited to participate at the highest possible level, U.N agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders will also be invited.

**High-Level Event on the Demographic Dividend and Youth Employment
Trusteeship Council Chamber, United Nations, New York
1 June 2015**

Provisional Programme

Morning Session	
9.00 – 9.30 a.m	<p align="center">- Opening Segment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E Mr. Sam K. Kutesa, President of the United Nations General Assembly • H.E Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations • H.E Mr. John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana
9.30 – 1.00 p.m	<p align="center">- High-Level Plenary (5 Minutes each):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hon. Mrs. Gabriela Montaño, President of the House of Representatives of the Plurinational State of Bolivia • Hon. Mr. Samheng Ith- Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of Cambodia • Hon. Mr. Mirando Mrsić, Minister of Labour of Croatia • Hon. Mr Badoul Hassan Badoul, Minister of Youth of Djibouti • Hon. Ms Hala Mohamed Youssef – Minister of Solidarity of Egypt • Hon. Ms. Reem Abu Hassan- Minister of Social Affairs and Labour of Jordan • Hon. Ms. Hind Subaih Al-Subaih, Minister of Social Development of Kuwait • Hon. Atty. Neto Zarzar Lighe, Minister of Labour of Liberia • Hon. Mr. Mahamane Baby, Minister of Employment and Youth of Mali • Hon. Ms. Delilah Gore – Minister of Youth of Papua New Guinea • Hon. Mr. Alimamy Amara Kamara, Minister of Youth Affairs of Sierra Leone • Hon. Mr. Mohamed Abdullahi Hassan (Nuh), Minister for Youth and Sports, Somalia • Hon. Stacy Roopnarine, Minister of Gender, Youth and Child Development of Trinidad and Tobago • Hon. Mr. Muruli Mukasa – Minister of Gender, Labour & Social Development of Uganda • Hon. Mr. Zhdanov Ihor, Minister for Youth and Sports of Ukraine

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hon. Dr.Wasil Noor Mohmmand, Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Affairs of Afghanistan • Hon. Mrs. Yuniasky Crespo Baquero, First Secretary of the Union of Young Communists (UJC), Cuba • Hon. Ms. Ludivina Magarin, Vice-Minister of Nationals Living Overseas of El Salvador • Hon. Dr. Degol Mendes, Secretary of State of Planning of Guinea-Bissau • H. E. Daw Lei Lei Thein, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development of Myanmar • Hon. Ms. Zulema Sucre Menotti, Vice-Minister of Social Development of Panama • Hon. Mr. Fernando Bolaños, Vice Minister of Population of Peru • Hon. Dr. Harsha De Silva, Deputy Minister of Policy Planning and Economic Development of Sri Lanka • Hon. Dr. Suliman Abderrhman Mohamed, Minister of Health Social Welfare, North Kordofan State, Sudan <p>Statements (3 Minutes each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Rachel Ariini -Asia Pacific Resource and Research Center for Women (ARROW), Indonesia (Youth representative) • Private Sector representative
Afternoon Session	
3.00 - 4.20 p.m	<p>High Level Interactive Panel 1</p> <p>Theme: “How to harness the Demographic Dividend”</p> <p>Chair: - Hon. Ms Hala Mohamed Youssef – Minister of Solidarity of Egypt (tbc)</p> <p>Moderator:- Mr. Osotimehin Babatunde, Executive-Director, UNFPA</p> <p><u>Panellists</u> (5 Minutes each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRH Princess Sarah Zeid– Maternal and Newborn Global Advocate • Mr. Caleb Barlow - Vice President, IBM • Mr. Gary Cohen – Executive Vice President, Becton, Dickinson and Company • Ms. Patricia Guedes – Director of Education Itau Social, Brazil • Mr. Adam Habib – University of Witwatersrand, South Africa <p>Interventions by member states and stakeholders (3 minutes each)</p>

4. 20 - 5.40 p.m	<p align="center">- High Level Interactive Panel 2</p> <p>Theme: “What policies and measures are needed to create opportunities for youth employment?”</p> <p>Chair:- Hon. Mr. Mirando Mrsić, Minister of Labour of Croatia (tbc)</p> <p>Moderator:- Mr. Charles Dan, ILO Special Representative on Youth and Social Inclusion</p> <p><u>Panellists</u> (5 Minutes each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Mona Mourshed - Director General, McKinsey's Global Educational Practice • Mr Wellington Chibebe - Deputy Secretary General, Internation Trade Unions Confederation • Ms. Reeta Roy - CEO, MasterCard Foundation. • Ms. Johanna Nyman - President, European Youth Forum • Hon. Ms Hala Mohamed Youssef – Minister of Solidarity of Egypt <p>Interventions by member states and stakeholders (3 minutes each)</p>
Closing Segment	
5.45 – 6.00 p.m	<p>- Wrap up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Osotimehin Babatunde, Executive-Director/ UNFPA (5 Minutes) • Mr. Charles Dan, ILO Special Representative on Youth and Social Inclusion (5 Minutes) • Closing Statement by H.E. Sam K. Kutesa, President of the United Nations General Assembly.



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

24 July 2015

Excellency,

I have the honour to transmit herewith a Summary of the key messages and proposals from the High-Level Event on the Demographic Dividend and Youth Employment which I convened on 1 June 2015, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam K. Kutesa', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Sam K. Kutesa

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

High-level Event on the Demographic Dividend and Youth Employment

United Nations Headquarters, New York, 1 June 2015

President's Summary

Introduction

The President of the General Assembly convened a High-level Event on the Demographic Dividend and Youth employment on 1 June 2015, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth. The purpose of the Event was to provide an opportunity for Member States and other stakeholders to consider practical ways in which the international community can work in partnership with Governments in countries with a large youth population to enable the necessary investments needed to reap the demographic dividend, including through employment opportunities and decent work.

The one day event, which consisted of a High-level opening plenary session with high level representatives and two interactive panel sessions, discussed key issues surrounding the topics of demographic dividend and youth employment namely: "how to harness the demographic dividend" and "what policies and measures are needed to create opportunities for youth employment", respectively. Interventions from the floor followed both interactive panels, with a closing segment concluding the Event.

Key messages

The following key messages, recommendations and initiatives emerged from the High-level Event under the broad themes of health, education, empowerment, employment and cross cutting issues:

Health

Participants emphasized the importance of addressing high fertility rates, especially where there is still large unmet need for services through universal access to family planning and reproductive health services. Many speakers underscored the need to safeguard freedom and rights so that families can choose; thereby reducing unintended pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted infections, including Hepatitis B and HIV.

Participants noted that preventable maternal mortality, newborn deaths, adolescent pregnancies, and violence against women and girls are all problems that need to be addressed and which are usually compounded in circumstances of humanitarian crisis and conflicts.

Education

Participants underscored that investment in human capital development is one of the most critical ways to achieve the demographic dividend. Speakers emphasized the importance of quality education, training and skills development. They stressed the need for ensuring access

to both universal and quality education, reducing skills gaps and matching education, skills training and over all career guidance with the specific and evolving needs of the diversified labour market.

Speakers further acknowledged that investments in health and education are critical for the demographic dividend and youth employment. It was further noted that investing in the education of young girls is an investment in the future of families and it empowers societies.

They stressed the need for stronger and systematic partnerships between universities, the private sector and governments to increase access to knowledge and technology. They also called for use of new analytical tools to look at responsiveness of universities to job markets in order to support governments get snapshots of emerging and dying professions, and to empower students to make good training choices.

The importance of broadening access to high-level science journals to enhance quality access to knowledge and the latest scientific developments and theories for all students and life-long learners was also emphasized. Governments were encouraged to collaborate, including under the aegis of the United Nations on this subject with a view to addressing this and other related issues such as the question of intellectual property rights.

Furthermore, participants stressed the need to explore diversified means of financing for education. In particular, they called for increased partnerships between Governments and the private sector in developing a business model for financing post- secondary education and support university students to participate in innovation hubs, including start-up incubators. They pointed out that such innovations could be fundamental for business development, stimulation of entrepreneurship, and expansion of employment opportunities in communities.

Speakers drew lessons from urban youth initiatives which support young people, particularly those who have traditionally been excluded, to develop skills through short-term supplementary educational opportunities. Participants noted that both inter-sectoral and multi-sectoral approaches have been key to the success of such initiatives, which involve training for adults who interact with the young people with a goal of fostering leadership.

Participants further stressed the importance of coupling training with social skills, values and attitudes that are essential for keeping a job and sustaining good performance. They also stressed that while education and skills development is important to enhance employability of young people, training should also incorporate respect of human rights and dignity of people. Vocational and technical training were also emphasized.

Speakers also underscored the need to encourage and incentivize more Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) learning that focuses on practical applications.

Empowerment

Participants noted that gender based violence including sexual violence, remains a serious risk for young women and girls, with devastating effects on their prospects for productive learning, self-confidence, and meaningful employment. They also noted that early marriages impact negatively on young women and girls, offering limited chances for a better future. As such, they underscored the importance of young women's empowerment, education and employment including mentoring and role models as essential means to breaking the invisible barriers to their engagement, mobility, and opportunities. They also highlighted the need to provide equal opportunities for women and girls including finding ways to help fight invisible barriers, including in respect to employment and educational opportunities.

It was further highlighted that youth leadership and participation are absolutely essential as direct means of empowerment, but also to ensure that developments in all sectors are meaningful and provide youth with the chance to express themselves and be part of crafting and monitoring solutions. Participants called for increased participation of young people in decision-making, which in turn ensures and promotes inclusive development. Member States were encouraged to include young people in national delegations to UN meetings to ensure that their voices are heard.

Several participants shared their country experiences and perspectives, with legislative quotas as useful empowerment tools for inclusion of women and youth in politics. In this regard, they pointed to the need for a diversity of quotas that offer long term, stable work for youth and women in fully accessible work places.

Employment

During the discussions, speakers noted that the problem of youth unemployment represents one of the most important challenges for many countries, particularly in Africa. They noted that while young people should be at the forefront of development and global change, many young people are forced to sit on the margins of society due to unemployment; something that they are no longer contented about.

Participants noted that the youth constitute a large proportion of national populations but are not fully integrated into productive employment. Moreover, millions of young people join the labour market every year while lacking professional experience, access to credit facilities and are trapped in poverty. They also pointed out that as a result, many young people have resorted to unproductive and nefarious activities, including drug abuse, prostitution and violent extremism. Some speakers associated youth unemployment with high HIV/AIDS prevalence among young people, and to political instability in their countries and regions.

Participants emphasized the need for on-the-job experience schemes such as internships and apprenticeships. They pointed out that while it is important to create job opportunities, young people should not be exploited as free labour. In this regard, initiatives such as internships should not be used as a new way of exploiting young people. Instead, countries should ensure

social protection systems to eradicate poverty and reduce persistent inequalities, while ensuring that the youth are fully aware of their rights.

Further, participants expressed support for the Sustainable Development Goal on promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all and acknowledged the call for a global strategy on youth employment. They underlined that there should be strategies and indicators at national, regional and global levels to track progress in the implementation of the new post-2015 development agenda.

Speakers stressed that tackling youth employment in the post-2015 framework requires political will, solidarity, collective efforts, joint initiatives, innovative partnerships and new ways of working together. In this regard, they called for increased private sector engagement to support business development programmes, empowerment of micro, small and medium enterprises, better access to capital and credit, micro-credit initiatives and dedicated funding mechanisms.

Participants underlined the importance and potential of the agriculture sector in employment. They stressed that access to land, mechanized farming and access to national and international markets would go a long way in ensuring employment, both for local farmers and young people. They also pointed out that industrialization and value addition to natural resources and agricultural products would contribute to expanding employment opportunities and transforming economies.

Private sector leaders in the IT sector expounded on the potential that technology, connectivity, and innovation can do to harness the demographic dividend and create employment for the youth. They emphasized the potential of mobile phones and online platforms, including for entrepreneurship. They also noted that the high prevalence of cybercrime and security challenges reflects the problem of growing IT skills without meaningful work opportunities.

Youth Voices on Employment

A youth representative conveyed the following key messages, emanating from interactions among young people on the important subject of youth employment:

- Promote policies and measures that address unequal work systems - by enabling physical access, measures that consider women, girls and young people's security and safety at the workplace, provide affordable child care, allow parental leave (both maternity and paternity leave), offer after school programmes which enable parents to work, etc.
- Invest in youth employment which is not focused on accumulation, competition, and exclusion which fuels unemployment, leading to unfulfilling jobs, and exploitation.

- Ensure the new transformative development agenda, with sustainable development goals as its integral part creates conditions that will ultimately lead to transformative employment that is long-term, stable and sustainable. In this regard, make efforts to ensure that the wide cross section of job opportunities that will arise as an outcome of the global transition to low carbon economies are offered to young people who have traditionally been excluded and marginalized from such opportunities.

Cross Cutting Issues

Participants emphasized the importance of putting the youth at the center of national development policies and of having in place national youth policies and structures that are aimed at identifying their potential and creativity and empowering them to excel in their endeavours.

Speakers stressed that national policies should create an enabling environment for domestic and foreign investments. They underlined that foreign direct investment should be targeted towards the informal economies and that global decisions and investments should favour utilization of natural resources to empower young populations, especially in developing countries.

Participants noted that large populations in developing countries impinge on the realization of the demographic dividend. As such, measures to reduce population growth should be encouraged, including through repositioning of and investing in family planning services.

Participants also underscored the importance of eliminating economic and social inequalities to reap a demographic dividend; which calls for a multi-sector approach as well as community based approaches. The need to enhance the role and expertise of the private sector in order to tap into their support and resource for youth development was therefore stressed.

They underlined the importance of macroeconomic and regional integration initiatives. In particular, establishment of regional watch dog bodies that would ‘publicize and celebrate the best employers and name and shame the worst’.

The importance of South-South and Triangular Cooperation was highlighted and speakers called upon the UN System, including UNFPA, ILO and other partners to support efforts towards harnessing the demographic dividend.

Conclusion

The Event addressed a number of key questions and problems attributed to the slow demographic transition in developing countries, and what can be done to speed up the transition and create conducive conditions for a demographic dividend. Drawing lessons from countries that have already attained the demographic dividend, the Event also addressed ways in which countries can make better use of opportunities at their disposal, and how countries can be supported to create and promote decent jobs for youth.

Overall, participants underlined that young people constitute a group that is now recognised as a critical demographic entity; and whose interests should be prioritized and included in order to reap the demographic dividend and sustainable development. It was emphasized that young people need and deserve a world in which they are valued, protected, free from discrimination, exclusion; and in which leaders recognize their needs and work to fulfil them. The demographic dividend is about empowering a generation of young people to thrive in a changing world, which in turn could enhance the progressiveness and resilience of countries and societies.

1 June 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the High-Level Event on the Demographic Dividend
and Youth Employment**

**His Excellency, Mr. Prosper Bazombanza, First Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Mr. Secretary- General,
Distinguished delegates and participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased to welcome you to this High-level Event on the Demographic Dividend and Youth Employment. We are grateful to His Excellency, Mr. Prosper Bazombanza, First Vice-President of Burundi, and the many Honourable Ministers who travelled from their capitals to join us today.

My appreciation also goes to the United Nations Population Fund and the International Labour Organization for their partnership in organizing this event.

Excellencies,

Over the last two decades, the world has given greater attention to the interplay between changes in population structures, economic growth and development.

As we know, changes in the age structures of populations have economic, social, and at times even political implications. For instance, labour supply and savings tend to be higher among working age adults than dependent ones.

Countries with large populations of young people and declining fertility rates stand poised to benefit the most from the demographic dividend. The more young people grow into well-educated adults with fewer dependents and new opportunities to acquire wealth, savings and purchasing power, the more they will be able to accelerate economic growth and development.

To harness the demographic dividend, right policies and interventions are needed in order to get a higher proportion of the youthful population into economically productive adults. Already, we have witnessed this trend in East Asia and Latin America. For example, Asia experienced a seven-fold increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita by harnessing their demographic dividend, while Latin America experienced a two-fold increase.

Similar opportunities exist elsewhere, particularly in Africa. Of the 1.8 billion young people worldwide, nine out of ten of them live in Least Developed Countries, many of them in Africa. This trend is projected to continue; with the number of young Africans aged 15-24 set to double by 2045.

By harnessing its demographic dividend, it is estimated that the African continent could add up to US \$500 billion per year to its economy, for as many as 30 years. This potential windfall could significantly transform the economies of many African countries. It would result in more resources being available for investment in critical infrastructure for socio-economic growth and development.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

In countries where young people represent a large portion of the population, there is urgent need to create enough jobs for the working-age population.

Indeed, during the High-level event for the commemoration of the World Programme of Action on Youth held on Friday last week, addressing the challenge of rising levels of youth unemployment was highlighted.

It is essential, in the context of the new development agenda, to take measures in support of national policies to provide an enabling environment for attraction of domestic and foreign investments, promotion of entrepreneurship, greater access to capital, increased access to energy, among other areas.

With many developing countries' economies still being driven by commodity production and export of agricultural and mining products, adding value to their large reservoir of natural resources through processing and manufacturing will transform economies and create more employment opportunities. Accelerating regional integration will also create larger markets for trade and investment and in turn increase employment opportunities.

Policies are also needed that deliberately target investments in young people, including through education. We need to expand access to quality education and skills development at vocational and tertiary levels. Through vocational training, specialised and practical job-related skills can be developed that prepare young people for work in occupations more in-line with the job market needs. There is need to target new jobs in the growing sectors such as services and ICT. Greater investments are required in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) to advance innovation. Giving attention to local content requirements can also ensure that investment projects generate employment and business opportunities for nationals especially the youth.

Furthermore, the empowerment of women and girls, particularly with regard to educational opportunities and universal access to quality reproductive health knowledge and services is also critical. It is strongly linked to their professional advancement, entrepreneurship and political participation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This High-level Event comes at an opportune moment when intergovernmental negotiations on an ambitious, universal and transformative post-2015 development agenda are underway. We have to ensure that the youth are recognized as important contributors to the achievement of sustainable development and that they benefit from the new agenda.

The needs of countries with large youth populations should be considered in the context of our sustainable development objectives. In this regard, we will need partnerships between governments, the private sector, and other stakeholders to make the necessary investments in education, skills development, health, among other areas, in order to empower the youth and expand their opportunities. We also need greater cooperation as well as sharing of experiences on initiatives and strategies that work at national, regional and international levels.

Excellencies,

Let us seize the opportunity of the new development framework we are formulating to ensure that young people worldwide can fully utilize their talents and energy to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. In doing so, we will be laying the foundation for a more prosperous future not only for ourselves, but for generations to come.

I thank you for your attention.

1 June 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Closing of the High-Level Event on the Demographic Dividend
and Youth Employment**

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

As we close this High-level Event on the Demographic Dividend and Youth Employment, I thank all participants for their contributions to our discussions on this important topic.

Throughout the day, speakers underscored that the youth not only represent the hopes of the future, but they are also emerging as the leaders of today.

Many participants emphasized that young people are at the forefront of global change and innovation and will play an important role in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

They also called for the creation of formal and informal mechanisms that would empower the youth to play a greater role in solving the challenges facing them.

The use of new technologies to further engage young people and allowing them to share their challenges and contribute to solutions was noted by many participants.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

Youth unemployment and under employment were highlighted as enormous challenges in many parts of the world; including developing countries, those in conflict and post-conflict situations, those facing humanitarian challenges as well as countries with large refugee populations.

The lack of gainful employment often leads to frustration and discontent, making youth populations vulnerable a number of risk factors.

Many emphasized that access to universal, high-quality education must be part of global efforts to address issues facing young people. The need for vocational training and practical job-related skills to prepare young people for the job market was also emphasized.

Participants called for increased investment in youth development, including by enabling young people to harness their full potential, which in turn will spur economic growth and development.

Many underlined the need for value addition to primary products through processing and manufacturing, which would aid the creation of jobs for young people, particularly in developing countries.

Speakers called for increased investment in girls whose access to health and education may be limited by family, societal and cultural hurdles.

They also noted that large populations in developing countries impinge on the realization of the demographic dividend. As such, measures to reduce population growth should be encouraged.

Others called for increased access to social security and ensuring that the youth are fully aware of their rights, including labour rights and sexual and reproductive rights.

Speakers stressed the urgency of addressing these challenges through increased cooperation at all levels as well as stronger engagement with civil society, the academic community and the private sector.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This event provided a useful platform to explore the many challenges facing the youth and to share strategies for maximizing the potential found in today's young people.

A detailed President's Summary of our discussions will be transmitted in due course to all stakeholders.

I thank you for your participation and kind attention.