

Concept Note

**Joint Side Event
on**

**Investing in Youth & Ensuring Decent Jobs
to
Harness the Demographic Dividend**

*on the occasion of the first-ever
World Youth Skills Day*

15 July 2015

at the

**Third International Conference on Financing for Development
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

Background and Rationale

A population with a significant share of young people can be both an asset and a challenge for a country. In the long run, public investments in a relatively young population can spur economic growth. In the short term, a large youth cohort may exert pressure on the education sector, other social services and the labour market if not enough jobs are available for the increasing numbers of young people entering the labour market.

Today almost one person in five is between the ages of 15 and 24 years. Altogether there are over 1.2 billion youth in the world. The majority of young people - about 90 per cent - live in developing countries with 60 per cent in Asia and 17 per cent in Africa. The current population of young people in developing countries is the largest the world has ever seen - around 1 billion. It will reach 1.1 billion by 2060 and will decline only gradually thereafter.¹ Investments made in young people during this critical period, in particular in their education, health, participation and employment opportunities, will shape their lives and the future of a world that will be increasingly dependent on them.

The proposed event “Investing in Youth & Ensuring Decent Jobs to Harness the Demographic Dividend ” will mark the first-ever World Youth Skills Day, declared by UN General Assembly resolution

¹ <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm>

A/C.3/69/L.13/Rev.1 to be held on 15 July 2015. It will highlight the global imperative of providing young people with skills development for life and work as a means to achieve better socio-economic outcomes.

While investing in skills development of young people is important for all countries, it is particularly critical in countries faced with a large youth bulge. This concerns countries where young people will represent a proportionately large working age population in the coming 15-30 years with relatively fewer dependents. This demographic dividend provides a window of opportunity for growth if it coincides with strategic investments to enhance human capital and create enabling economic conditions and decent work for young people.

Over the course of the Post 2015 Development Agenda process to date it has been repeatedly emphasized how youth are central to sustainable development. Member States, as well as other stakeholders, over and over again have expressed their recognition for the fact that youth development contributes directly to ensuring key development outcomes and objectives from the community to the national and international level. The Secretary-General's Synthesis Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda includes a strong emphasis on youth and recognizes the importance of making the necessary investments in young people. The proposed Sustainable Development Goals include targets that call for increased numbers of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship, as well as for the development and operationalization of a global strategy for youth employment.

Objectives

This side event will provide an opportunity to 1) raise awareness on the importance of ensuring adequate investments in youth, including through resourced youth policies, in order to ensure young people are enabled to obtain effective skills for work and life which will be necessary preconditions for achieving sustainable development; 2) highlight good practices and lessons learned on effective approaches to skills development in order to address underemployment, unemployment and working poverty among young people; and 3) discuss practical ways in which the international community can work in partnership with Member States that are experiencing or about to experience a youth bulge in their population structures to enable the necessary investments needed to reap the demographic dividend.

Target Audience:

The event will bring together government representatives, policymakers, and representatives of civil society, the private sector, youth organizations, academia and the United Nations system.

Co-organizers

The event will be convened by the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and will be co-organized in partnership with ILO and UNESCO.

The event will build off of the outcome of the High Level Event on the Demographic Dividend and

Youth Employment, of 1 June 2015, convened by the President of the General Assembly in collaboration with UNFPA and ILO, and supported by the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

Format

The event will include a panel with presentations by select representatives of Member States, including high-level government officials, UN entities, civil society, including youth-led organizations, including through the Major Group for Children and Youth, and academia/researcher(s).

To mark the World Youth Skills Day, other events will be organized including at the UN Headquarters in New York, and at other locations around the globe.