

UNITED NATIONS



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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**REMARKS TO ECOSOC AND PEACEBUILDING
COMMISSION ON JOB CREATION FOR YOUNG
PEOPLE**

New York, 4 June 2012

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I thank the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission for convening this event.

I commend your collective focus on youth employment in countries emerging from conflict. This gathering is an excellent demonstration of your will to promote partnerships for job creation.

I encourage ECOSOC and the PBC to keep it up. We must engage all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations system to ensure that there is a common approach to job creation in post-conflict situations.

In the past two years, young people around the world have risen up with a simple call for jobs and justice ... dignity and decent work.

But the challenge of youth employment stretches back farther.

Post-conflict and fragile countries have been struggling with the employment challenge for a long time. Several countries on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda have identified youth employment as a priority.

We know the challenge. Countries emerging from conflict or instability are expected to quickly deliver meaningful improvements in people's lives.

Job creation and economic opportunity are central. Yet creating jobs for a large number of youth takes time and immense resources.

In many parts of the world, young people lack education, experience, training and skills.

But the challenges are compounded in post-conflict and fragile countries that often suffer from weak institutions, poor investment and crumbling infrastructure.

The international community is increasingly recognizing the need to focus on job creation soon after conflict ends. Later is often too late. Frustration boils over. Countries relapse into violence.

Quite simply, we need to do a better job in addressing employment needs in a rapid and sustainable manner.

Short-term interventions can make a quick, visible dent on unemployment.

At the same time, we can promote longer-term employment by supporting such efforts as improving the regulatory environment, investing in infrastructure, building skills, and expanding access to financial services and assets.

And, of course, we must keep the focus on young people. The Secretary-General has made empowering youth a priority in our action agenda for the coming five years.

We are building on the 1995 World Programme of Action for Youth by developing a system-wide action plan in areas such as employment, entrepreneurship, political participation, human rights and education.

We will also appoint a new Special Advisor on Youth to develop and implement our agenda and spearhead a UN youth volunteers' programme to help young people build skills.

The role of the private sector is crucial. Policies should encourage apprenticeships and entrepreneurship mentoring programmes.

Private employers can also help ensure that training policies match market needs and facilitate youth access to markets, capital and networks.

Young entrepreneurs in particular would benefit from less cumbersome administrative procedures to start new businesses and engage with the formal sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

By joining our efforts, the United Nations, international financial institutions, the private sector, NGOs, and foundations can make a real difference in expanding opportunity and building lasting peace in countries emerging from conflict.

Once again, thank you for coming together to do just that. Let us join forces to help young people make the most of their potential – for themselves, their communities and our shared future.

Thank you.