

Commission for Social Development, 45<sup>th</sup> Session  
Agenda item 3(c) - Emerging Issues

Youth employment: impact, challenges and opportunities for social development

Chairman's Summary

1. A Note by the Secretariat entitled “Youth Employment: Impact, Challenges and Opportunities for Social Development” was introduced which highlighted key elements and provided discussion points on this subject. The note emphasizes the centrality of youth employment to social development through its contribution to poverty alleviation, social integration, intergenerational dialogue, citizenship and solidarity.
2. It was acknowledged that young people represent the promise and potential of a society's future, and youth employment must be placed at the centre of social development policies. The urgency of addressing youth employment is clear from the large numbers of young people who are currently neither in education nor employment. Without adequate and appropriate employment opportunities, young people are made more vulnerable and they face marginalization and social exclusion. Failure to adequately address the challenge of youth employment can impose large economic and non-economic costs on society.
3. There are 218 million children working in deplorable conditions and who are not attending school. Children who do not receive an education will find their future employment opportunities severely limited, and are likely to be trapped in an intergenerational cycle of poverty. Education must be made a priority so that young people can obtain the education and skills relevant to the labour market. In this regard, vocational training is vital to create a strong and viable education system. Education systems must be responsive to changes in the labour market, and strategies must be promoted to make education and training accessible for all youth without discrimination.
4. The creation of a decent work environment for youth requires many different approaches. For example, it is essential to promote good governance that works to eradicate poverty and promote social inclusion. At the same time, given the link between youth unemployment and slow economic growth, it is necessary to ensure robust economic growth that creates decent jobs for all young people.
5. A number of countries have developed youth employment strategies that focus on providing young people with training, apprenticeships and jobs, with a particular focus on ethnic minorities and youth without relevant labour market skills. Many countries are working to lower the number of school dropouts and raise the number of youth completing secondary education, while others are promoting greater growth in youth employment, by improving occupational training.
6. The Youth Employment Network supports dialogue and partnership among policymakers, the private sector, civil society and youth organizers to effectively address the issue of youth employment. As a result, many countries have launched or are developing National Action Plans for youth employment with the active participation and commitment of all stakeholders and partners, in particular young people themselves.