

### **High-level panel discussion:**

## **Promoting Integrated Policies for Poverty Eradication -- Youth Development in the 2030 Agenda**

### **Chair's Summary**

2 February 2017

The Commission held a high-level panel discussion on the emerging issue (sub-item 3(c)) “**Promoting Integrated Policies for Poverty Eradication: Youth Development in the 2030 Agenda**”, and heard presentations from the following panellists: H. E. Ms. Sophie Karmasin, Austrian Federal Minister of Families and Youth; Mr. Santiago Soto, Director of the National Institute of Youth (INJU) of the Ministry of Social Development of Uruguay; Ms. Gemma Wood, Youth Data Specialist from Australia; Ms. Al-Nashif, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi, Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth; and Ms. Nevena Vukašinović, Secretary General at ENGSO Youth (Serbia)-Sports. The panel was moderated by Ms. Vivian Onano, Partnerships Manager at SEED Project and Global Youth Ambassador for Water Aid.

### **Executive Summary**

- Youth are often faced by multiple, mutually reinforcing forms of exclusion.
- Youth mainstreaming in poverty eradication policies was regarded as central.
- Youth un- and under-employment is the biggest cause of poverty and exclusion of young people and the biggest challenge for meeting the SDGs in this field. Education, vocational training and labour market policies are key to fight this problem.
- The centrality of youth- or age-disaggregated data for evidence-based policies was highlighted.
- Youth involvement and participation in the design and implementation of youth policies should be universally promoted.

Panellists underscored that youth development is a key driver of poverty eradication around the world. Among the greatest challenges facing many countries today are inadequate human capital investment and high unemployment rates among youth. Young people should acquire the education and skills needed to contribute in a productive economy, and they need access to a job market that can absorb them into its labour force. Yet, some countries are struggling currently to educate and employ their young people, while also anticipating substantial growth in the number of youth. These countries will be doubly challenged in their efforts to assure universal high-quality education, productive employment and decent work for all.

Panellists highlighted the fact that several priorities for youth development are specifically identified

in the 2030 Agenda, increasing the need for the design, implementation and monitoring of robust, innovative and progressive youth policies for achieving the sustainable development goals. Youth policies provide a framework for the implementation of the goals and enable young people to fulfil their potential as active members of society.

Panelists and participants underscored the importance of youth involvement and participation in the design of youth policies and the decision-making on them. There was consistent support among delegations for youth partnerships in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Working with youth associations through formalized fora and lowering the voting age to 16 were given as examples contributing to increased youth involvement.

Two key issues discussed by the panellists and delegations were, how to effectively mainstream youth in poverty eradication policies, and the importance of data and evidence in the design, implementation and monitoring of youth policies.

### **Youth mainstreaming in poverty eradication policies**

Panellists noted that efforts to end poverty should address not only income but also the structural causes of poverty. Structural causes of poverty can include lack of or limited access to education, healthcare and other basic services, to food, nutrition, energy, adequate housing, and safe environments; unequal access to land and other productive assets, credit, inheritance, as well as to information, knowledge and technologies; lack of opportunities for decent work and participation; and social discrimination and exclusion.

It was noted that policies aimed at tackling the structural causes of the lack of employment opportunities for young people have often focused on increasing their employability, by improving access to, and the quality of, formal education, the availability of apprenticeships and other vocational programmes and by reducing the mismatch between skills acquired and those needed in the labour market. Some countries have also focused on promoting youth entrepreneurship, through provision of financial literacy training, credit, and micro-finance to youth. Over the last years, for instance, the Government of Uruguay has been committed to social development and to youth development in particular, through its Action Plan for Youth 2015-2025, which was developed thanks to an extensive participatory process.

Such policy measures have been most effective when integrated into policy frameworks that promote employment more broadly. However, such policies often fail to specifically target more vulnerable and marginalized youth, including youth living in poverty and those at risk of exclusion including indigenous youth, youth with disability, young refugees and rural youth.

Member States noted ongoing youth employment/entrepreneurship policies and programmes and their role in combatting youth un- and under-employment, lack of decent jobs, poverty eradication and meeting the goals of Agenda 2030. A number of European Union member states noted the value of the European Union Youth Guarantee Scheme on youth employment in reducing the number of youth not in employment, education or training.

The importance of youth policies and strategies was stressed by several Member-States as important in the role of poverty eradication. Youth health efforts, including through the provision of sexual and reproductive health services targeting issues such as HIV and AIDS; teenage pregnancy; and mental

health were highlighted as important to youth development and combatting poverty.

It was argued that youth mainstreaming should, in fact, be the norm in all policy design processes. The case of Austria was mentioned where all new legislation initiated by the government has to undergo a so-called “youth-check” for its probable effects on young people. This youth-check was seen as a useful tool for getting all line ministries on board.

### **Evidence-based youth policies**

Much discussion focused on the importance of youth or age-disaggregated data. Evidence-based youth policymaking ensures that youth policies are developed in a robust and effective manner through use of quantitative and qualitative statistics and data, scientific knowledge, as well as practical knowledge. Such evidence helps deepen the understanding of the current status of young people and translates data, experience, and knowledge into appropriate and successful strategies and policies for young people.

The importance of data collection and statistics for youth development was highlighted in the case of Mexico to create sound and evidence-based youth policies.