

## **WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION**

### **YOUTH & EMPLOYMENT IN POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS BEIRUT, 28-30 January, 2004**

#### **A. BACKGROUND**

Youth makes up more than 40 per cent of the world's total unemployed. Youth unemployment can lead to marginalization, exclusion, frustration, low self-esteem and, sometimes, to acts that create burden on society... (E/cn.5/2003/4, para.7). Forced by poverty and the lack of possibilities for better jobs, many young people have no alternative but to turn to informal activities to earn income. With economic growth being insufficient to absorb new labour force entrants, there is a danger that informal work will become the only option for large numbers of young people, thereby making the objective of a decent job for all increasingly unavailable. Increasingly, the distinction between employment and unemployment has lost much of its meaning as young people move in and out of informal activities where neither term has any relevance". (para.8)

Youth unemployment thereby poverty are exacerbated by political instability due to conflict (civil or military). Between 1989 & 2000, 111 armed conflicts were reported in the world, the majority occurring in the poorest developing countries, particularly in Africa. There is no conflict without youth participation; indeed, young men constitute the majority of most armed forces (para. 45). Associated with conflict is the loss of livelihoods as a result of loss of assets, coping mechanisms and/or loss of breadwinners often shifting children/youth into the position of heads of household. Recent efforts have focused on demobilization and reintegration and the crafting of a culture of peace based on equal opportunities and participation in reconstruction, development and social transformation hence this capacity building workshop.

#### **B. OBJECTIVES**

This regional workshop targets youth in conflict situations, aiming to:

1. Contribute to a better understanding/assessment of the overall impact of conflict (civil or military) on youth (male/female) in relation to social capital and livelihoods because of sudden household responsibility inherited as a result of death of heads of HH;
2. Assess current policies/programmes for youth employment, focusing on the 4 main aspects including youth employability, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship and job creation;
3. Encourage/support the development of practical strategies for programme development and implementation to improve youth employability, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship with support from the government/banks;
4. Devise an advocacy strategy targeting national institutions for mainstreaming youth issues (including the workshop recommendations) and international institutions for resource mobilization, and,
5. Agree on a monitoring methodology and integrate mechanisms/indicators in the strategy.

## **C. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING**

### 1. Date & Venue

The workshop is scheduled to take place in Beirut in January 2004.

### 2. Proposed Agenda (See separate attachment)

### 3. Methodology

The workshop will adopt a participatory approach through adult experiential learning, using youth leaders as facilitators/trainers in collaboration with a consultant and DESA technical adviser. National papers will prepare a situation analysis of youth & employment (and coping strategies) in post-conflict situations. These papers will contribute to the development of a 3-scenario based analysis of youth issues in the region.

### 4. Participation

Four/five participants including 1/2 government officials (one of whom should represent the planning ministry), one representative each from civil society/NGOs, the Private sector and banking institutions from Lebanon, Egypt, Algeria, Syria, Jordan, and West Bank/Gaza will be invited to participate in and contribute to this capacity building process.

### 5. Languages

The workshop will be conducted in English/Arabic.