

The **priority theme** for the 2018 policy cycle:

***“Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all”***

Proposed Side Event: **Youth Employment: an essential component in the fight to eradicate Poverty**

*Summary*

“Investing today in the employment of young people means investing in the present and future of our societies.” Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General

Unjust economic, political and social structures perpetuate a growing disadvantage for youth employment and empowerment illustrating that they are truly “left behind”.

This interactive panel will address youth employment as a key factor in achieving the ambitious agenda set forth in the 2030 Agenda. It will explore the present state of youth employment globally, its trends and prospects for the future. Additionally it will highlight debits in the promotion of youth employment and propose concrete plans of action to create opportunities for the young to engage in productive and satisfying work. Effective practices in assisting youth who may have experienced homelessness, gang membership or involvement with the judicial system will also be presented. Finally, speakers will explore ways to include the voices of youth in decision-making and policy processes at all levels.

*Rationale*

The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) depends on addressing decent work deficits and labour market inequalities, especially for youth, as they are both proxies and consequences of wider inequalities. Youth employment has been explicitly highlighted by the SDGs, the ILO and former Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon:

- **Goal 8.** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- **8.a** By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization.
- Former UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon appointed a Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth Employment to help support the realization of employment-related goals and actions under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth, and youth employment targets set out in the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism acknowledges the direct linkage of youth unemployment and violent extremism noting, "the absence of alternative employment opportunities can make violent extremist organizations an attractive source of income."
- The average amount of time for a young person to find decent work once leaving school is approximately 20 months. The importance of transitioning from childhood to adulthood with

decent work is imperative to a young person's well-being. This delay carries risks of skills deterioration, underemployment and discouragement.

- Work prospects for many young people still keep them in poverty, and if you are a young woman your chances of finding a quality job are even less likely. Deep-rooted socio-economic and cultural challenges tend to disproportionately disadvantage women.
- The global youth unemployment rate is on the rise after a number of years of improvement, and is expected to reach 13.1 per cent in 2016 (from 12.9 in 2015). As a result, after falling by some 3 million between 2012 and 2015, the number of unemployed youth globally will rise by half a million in 2016 to reach 71 million and will remain at this level in 2017.
- Unemployment figures understate the true extent of youth labour market challenges. Large numbers of young people are working, but do not earn enough to lift themselves out of poverty. Roughly 156 million youth in emerging and developing countries live in extreme poverty (i.e. on less than US\$1.90 per capita per day) or in moderate poverty (i.e. on between US\$1.90 and US\$3.10) though they are employed. Youth exhibit a higher incidence of working poverty than adults.
- In addition to low pay, young people frequently work involuntarily in informal, part-time or temporary jobs.
- Facing the prospect of unemployment, working poverty and/or vulnerable forms of employment, young people tend to look abroad for better education and employment opportunities.
- A significant proportion of youth, especially in developing countries, is unable to enroll in education (e.g. due to the economic necessity to work and to supplement their household incomes), thereby running the risk of remaining trapped in poverty through lack of access to better jobs.
- the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization can help develop and shape national strategies for youth employment, combat decent work deficits for youth, address poverty and inequality and strengthen the capacities of youth to achieve a more equitable and prosperous future.

### *Co-Sponsors*

- Salesians of Don Bosco
- The International Labour Organization
- Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
- UTEC

### *Speakers*

- Amber Barth, Senior Programme Officer, **ILO**
- Gregg Croteau, Executive Director, **UTEC**, Lowell, MA
- Lyndell Pittman, Director Youth Employment for homeless and at-risk youth, **Covenant House**
- Cristal Cruz from **Good Shepherd Services**, New York