CONCEPT NOTE
BREAKOUT SESSION
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
ECOSOC Youth Forum 2016
1 February 2016
3 – 5 p.m.
United Nations Headquarters, New York

1. Background and Context
Throughout the world, young men and women aspire to productive, decent and formal employment opportunities. Today, after a period of increasing youth unemployment (from 2007 to 2010), the global unemployment rate among youth has settled at 13.0 per cent. While this is a positive recovery in terms of trends, the rate remains well above the pre-crisis rate of 11.7 per cent and in practice translates into nearly 74 million youth, aged 15 to 24, looking for a job (ILO, 2015). Youth are affected by an increased complexity of labour market entry and a shrinking of stable employment. Today’s challenge for youth is therefore not only about finding work but the type of work available. It is not a trivial challenge and it is perhaps the greatest of our time.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers a unique opportunity to foster investment and collaboration on youth employment. In particular SDG 8 and a series of aspirational targets recognize today’s employment challenge and open a consistent pathway for focalized action on employment and entrepreneurship (see box).

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<th>Key targets:</th>
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<td><strong>4.4:</strong> “By 2030, increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship”;</td>
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<td><strong>8.3:</strong> “Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises including through access to financial services”;</td>
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<td><strong>8.5:</strong> “By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value”;</td>
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<td><strong>8.6:</strong> “By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training”;</td>
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<td><strong>8.b:</strong> “By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization”;</td>
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| **9.3:** “Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets”.

In light of the sizable youth employment challenge and the tremendous momentum of the 2030 Agenda, the breakout session on youth employment and entrepreneurship will serve as a venue to engage young people in a collaborative discussion about innovative and tangible action for the achievement of youth employment and entrepreneurship related targets.

2. Objective

Objective:
To engage with young people in identifying innovative and inclusive solutions to the global youth employment challenge with a particular focus on their role in supporting the achievement of youth employment and entrepreneurship related SDGs.

Means:
Discussions during the session will be divided in four key topics, consistent with the strategy framework of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, namely:

- A strategic multi-stakeholder alliance to support high level advocacy, coordination and commitment for the promotion of youth employment.
- Regional and country level action to expand and scale up effective policies and programmes.
- A knowledge facility on decent jobs for youth, to pool existing expertise and enhance evidence and knowledge about what works.
- Funding modalities and resource mobilization to expand interventions for youth across sectors, both financial and nonfinancial, and to ensure sustainability of joint efforts for the promotion of youth employment and entrepreneurship.

Discussions will build on the lessons learned from youth-led initiatives as well as global coalitions and partnerships for the promotion of youth development, including the Inter-agency Network on Youth Development, Solutions for Youth Employment, the Youth Employment Inventory, and the International Initiative for a Youth Employment Decade.

Expected outcome:
To identify areas for youth engagement in support of the implementation of the SDGs as they relate to youth employment and entrepreneurship.

3. Flow of the Session

The session will be organized and monitored by the IANYD working group on Employment and Entrepreneurship with the support and active engagement of other interested entities and youth organizations.

The session will be conducted in a “marketplace” format, with one moderator, eight facilitators and four “marketplaces” located in different corners of the room.
The moderator (a representative of the Major Group on Children and Youth) will open the session with a general introduction to the issue of youth employment and entrepreneurship in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

Following this introduction, participants will split into four groups. Each group nominates a rapporteur and proceeds to one of the four “marketplaces”.

Facilitators have 15 minutes to introduce their “marketplace”, answer questions and receive comments and recommendations. The recommendations (the main output of the session) will be written on a board in each of the groups.

After 15 minutes, the moderator asks the groups to move on to the next “marketplace”.

After 70 minutes, all groups will have visited all “marketplaces”.

Back into plenary, rapporteurs present key messages from the interactive discussions and the recommendations for youth engagement in support of the implementation of the SDGs as they relate to youth employment and entrepreneurship.

Before closing the session, the moderator will invite representatives from the Global Initiative’s Task Team and other youth employment partnerships to reflect on these recommendations.

Interpretation: In the absence of interpretation, facilitators will convey the message in different languages based on needs and capacities available.

4. Questions for the participants
• What are possible solutions to the global youth employment challenge?
• What are best practices and lessons learned on improving youth employment?
• Who are the key stakeholders in addressing youth employment?
• How can young people be involved in the implementation of the 2030 agenda as it relates to employment and entrepreneurship?
• What can be done at the national and regional levels to scale up action on youth employment?
• How can existing knowledge be made available and distributed?
• What can be done to leverage resources and improve access to finance?
• How can entrepreneurship be promoted as a career option for young people?
• What can be done to support the implementation of youth employment and entrepreneurship related targets of the 2030 Agenda?
5. **Suggested reading materials**