

The United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations  
and  
The United Nations Development Programme

In association with:  
The Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum  
And  
Youth Business International

**THE CHALLENGE OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTERPRISE:  
WHAT CAN THE PRIVATE SECTOR DO?**

**A round-table discussion in the presence of the Secretary-General of  
The United Nations and HRH The Prince of Wales**

**14.00-17.00 hrs, Tuesday 1 November 2005**

**United Nations Delegates' Dining Room: Room 6**

Objectives:

- to promote the business benefits of investing in youth employment in developing countries to contribute to poverty alleviation and the regeneration of economies;
- to highlight how the private sector can play a practical role in promoting employment and enterprise for young people and encourage private sector commitments for action;
- to raise awareness of the potential of partnerships between businesses, governments and international organisations to achieve progress in generating youth employment.

Outputs:

A Rapporteur letter summarising the discussion, and identifying the challenges faced by the private sector to engage in youth employment issues, and recommendations for a framework to overcome these obstacles with actions for scaling up the private sector contribution. This would include a menu of private sector-led actions that business and international organisations can join. Examples of actions that could form the basis of such a menu that may be raised in discussions, include:

- Credit loans for young people: How might the obstacles that prevent young people from accessing capital be overcome? How can the banking sector work together to take this forward?
- Mentoring: how can youth entrepreneurship be supported through business involvement in mentoring?
- Engaging young people through business supply-chains: how can this be achieved? What scope is there for cross-industry partnerships (e.g. agriculture, consumer goods and services, manufacturing and infrastructure sectors)?

- Training: how can companies contribute to the employability of young people through identifying the skills needed in specific sectors and developing market-driven training programmes? What successful models can be scaled up? How can employees engage in teaching that promotes business and financial skills? How can companies offer internships and managerial training for young people in developing countries?

In these areas how can business best engage with government to combat youth unemployment? Specifically, what are the best ways to support developing country governments who are lead countries of the UN Youth Employment Network, and therefore already committed to action on youth employment, and who have national action plans on youth employment in place?

#### Rationale:

Youth employment is a global challenge. Creating full and productive employment for young people is key to promoting sustained economic growth, alleviating poverty and delivering the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is also critical in addressing the issue of young people's growing alienation from society.

Encouraging and supporting youth enterprise is a central element in promoting youth employment. Working together, business, governments and civil society can unleash the capacity of young people for business start-ups and growth, which stimulate broader economic development.

The issue of youth employment has been highlighted this year through the Commission for Africa. It made an explicit recommendation to the G8 to expand the work of the UN Youth Employment Network, and to engage the private sector in generating employment opportunities and demand-led training in African countries with growing populations of young people. These themes were picked up in G8 discussions this year and by a business-led coalition, Business Action for Africa (for which IBLF hosts the Secretariat), working to promote positive change in Africa. This year is also the UN Year of Microcredit, which will be addressed at a special UN summit later in November.

Much has been said on the challenges and critical importance of youth employment, but action is still needed to maximise tangible impacts on the ground. The private sector is absolutely critical to this action. This event aims to focus private sector attention and energy into actions that address youth unemployment as well as making good business sense.

#### Event description:

The round-table discussion will address how the private sector, working with governments and civil society, can contribute to poverty alleviation and economic development in the world's poorest countries, by promoting and supporting youth enterprise.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations) will open, and chair the meeting, and set out the importance the United Kingdom attaches to the issue of youth enterprise. Andrew Devenport (Executive Director, Youth Business International) will explain the role of YBI in working with the private sector and

governments to assist young people to establish businesses. The meeting will be moderated by Robert Davies, CEO of the Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF).

Following presentations by young entrepreneurs, participants will be invited to contribute their thoughts in a moderated discussion on:

- Private sector action to increase its role in generating youth employment and enterprise, exploring the four specific areas mentioned in the menu above;
- closer collaboration with governments, the UN and civil society to support this action;
- business action to complement and enhance governments' national action plans;
- the challenges faced by the private sector in providing support to young entrepreneurs.

The Secretary-General, The Prince of Wales and Kemal Dervis (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) will speak in response to points raised in discussion.

Robert Davies will close the meeting by summing up the issues raised including recommendations for action to scale-up private sector support. These next steps will be captured in a joint "Rapporteur" letter from Kemal Dervis and Sir Emyr Jones Parry to all participants, which will encourage them to take forward these recommendations.

#### Background:

The contribution of youth enterprise is recognised and actively supported by IBLF. Through Youth Business International (YBI), a youth business start up programme of IBLF, disadvantaged young people are helped to realise their ambitions to become entrepreneurs. Now operating in over 25 countries, YBI brings together people in the corporate sector, civil society and government who make their skills, expertise and facilities available on young people's behalf to provide access to finance, business mentoring and support to young entrepreneurs during the start-up, and early development of their businesses.

Enterprise development is also a key priority of the United Nations Development Programme (a business and development partner of the IBLF). In promoting the recommendations of the report of its Commission on the Private Sector and Development, UNDP encourages developing countries to recognise the role of business in creating domestic employment and wealth, freeing entrepreneurial energies, and helping achieve the MDGs.

YBI also provides the Secretariat to the youth enterprise element of the Youth Employment Network (YEN). The YEN, a partnership between the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation and the World Bank was created under the impetus of the UN Millennium Declaration in September 2000. It invited Governments to volunteer as Lead Countries for the YEN by committing to develop national action plans for youth employment. In June 2005, the United Kingdom became the first G8 and European nation to join the YEN.

Meeting schedule:

- 14.00:       **Arrival**
- Guests take seats
- 14.05:       **Opening Session**
- Welcome by Sir Emyr Jones Parry
  - Andrew Devenport - The Challenges of Youth Employment
  - Thelma Mathamelo - Entrepreneur's perspective
- 14.20:       **Moderated discussion - Robert Davies**  
*"The Challenges of Youth Employment and Enterprise: How can the private sector contribute?"*  
Discussion of specific challenges including:
- Financial barriers for new entrepreneurs;
  - Initiating youth employment in business' supply chains;
  - Training young employees;
  - Mentoring young entrepreneurs.
- 15.00:       **Tea. Arrival of HRH the Secretary-General and The Prince of Wales**
- 15.10:       **Short presentations - YBI beneficiaries**
- 15.20:       **Moderated discussion continues - Robert Davies**
- 16.15:       **Key Note Speakers**
- Remarks by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan
  - Remarks by HRH The Prince of Wales
  - Response by Kemal Dervis
- 16.30:       **Responses on Action Plan framework for implementation - Robert Davies**
- 16.55:       **Sum-up and next steps - Robert Davies**
- 17.00:       **End**