

Session 6

Decent work opportunities for young women and men: Overcoming discrimination and disadvantage

Equality in diversity: A dream or a necessity?

Chairperson:

Mr. Ashraf Tabani, President, Employers Federation of Pakistan

Panelists:

Mr. Carlos Lupi, Minister of Labour and Employment of Brazil

Mr. Antonio D. Pitra Neto, Minister for Public Administration, Employment and Social Security, Angola

Mr. Gilles De Robien, Ambassador with responsibility for Promoting Social Cohesion, France

Ms. Barbara Byers, Executive Vice-President, Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)

Mr. Carvalho Da Silva, General Secretary, General Confederation of the Portuguese Workers (CGTP)

Mr. Ariosto Manrique, President, Youth Commission of the Mexican Employers' Confederation

- 1) Economic development is critical to meet the youth employment challenge – a challenge shared by both developed and developing countries. Responses at national and global levels should be informed by a vision that values equality and solidarity across generations.
- 2) Achieving decent work for youth requires integrated and coherent policy frameworks spanning education and training, alongside economic and social policies. The international community together with national governments should enhance policy coherence between policies and agreements that have an impact on youth employment.
- 3) Quality and relevance of education and training by and large affect the type and pace of youth transition to the world of work, and enable young people to become active citizens. Apprenticeship, career guidance, labour market information and other measures bringing students and teachers closer to enterprises have proven to be effective in making this transition smooth and should be part of regular programmes offered by education and training institutions. Measures to prevent

discrimination can help young people avoid falling into destructive behaviour, including drug addiction. These measures should be part of education and training curricula and involve schools, parents and their communities.

- 4) There are many factors which can make young people vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market because they have grown up without proper education, adequate nutrition and housing. Others encounter discrimination at work regardless of their pre-work background. Removing barriers of access to education of girls and young women is of the uttermost priority and a way to prevent discrimination at work in many countries. Gender and race issues should be included in all policies affecting youth employment to avoid perpetuating labour market segregation and discrimination. Measures to help young workers reconcile work and family responsibilities should also be encouraged.
- 5) Partnerships between public and private sectors at the local and central levels and coalitions with civil society groups, including youth groups, are a powerful tool to mobilize support and deliver on youth employment. Public-private partnerships between schools, training institutions, universities and enterprises should be forged to better align skills to the world of work and to leverage resources for funding education, training and lifelong learning.
- 6) Governments and the social partners are the major players in the development of youth employment policies and programmes. Employers' and workers' organizations have real knowledge of the needs of enterprises, workers and the labour markets and should be involved in the design, monitoring and evaluation of youth employment measures. Efforts should be made to encourage young entrepreneurs and workers join employers' organizations and trade unions.
- 7) Global and regional networks and forums provide useful platforms to share knowledge and experience on youth employment policies and programmes. The fast pace of globalization requires mechanisms to connect countries and actors, including through the use of information and communication technologies.