

ASIA-PACIFIC FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2019

“Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”

27-29 March 2019 | UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE CENTRE . BANGKOK, THAILAND

Decent Jobs for Youth: Working together in Asia and the Pacific

Venue: Meeting Room G, 1st floor, UNCC

Date: 28 March 2019

Time: 12:00 - 13:15

Organizers: Government of Bangladesh, a2i - Innovate for All; Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); International Labour Organization (ILO); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Background:

Labour markets are undergoing major structural changes including the onward march of technology and automation, the impacts of climate change, demographic changes, the evolving nature of employment relations and growing inequality. Tomorrow’s future leaders and workers, young people, will be at the front lines of these changes, yet their current prospects are marked by lack of jobs, and particularly lack of quality jobs.

Today, over 63 million young people are unemployed across the globe, and 141 million youth are working, yet living in poverty. Youth unemployment in Asia and the Pacific is expected to reach 27 million youth in 2019, at a time when millions of new jobseekers are entering the labour market. In countries like Bangladesh, a growing workforce is a considerable challenge when aiming to promote decent jobs for youth, yet, if appropriately facilitated, can be an opportunity for greater wealth for the region. Youth living in rural areas, around half of the region’s population, are most likely to be among the working poor, facing particular challenges such as limited access to information and education, vocational education, land, inputs, financial services and markets. Moreover, youth’s voices are often not heard during the policy process to reflect and address their multifaceted needs. This situation sheds light on the economic potential and role of decent jobs to transform the lives of young women and men across the region.

Supporting youth’s transition to employment is therefore key to bring about an inclusive, sustainable and human-centred world of work. To scale up action and impact on youth employment, the United Nations initiated the [Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth](#), the overarching and inclusive [alliance of partners](#) taking [action at country and regional level](#), sharing knowledge and leveraging resources for more and better jobs for youth under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

With 23 United Nations entities at its nucleus, **Decent Jobs for Youth** works with governments, social partners, parliamentarians, companies, foundations, youth and civil society organizations, regional institutions, and the academia with a concrete action agenda across eight [thematic priorities](#), from green and digital jobs, to promoting quality apprenticeships and supporting youth in the rural economy.

Scope:

Recognizing the power of collective action, the FAO, ILO, UNDP and UNFPA with the support from the Government of Bangladesh, are convening a side event in the context of the 2019 Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. The FAO, through policy assistance, specific programmes and awareness-raising, seeks to develop a strong enabling environment in which young people can thrive and seize current and future decent rural employment opportunities. UNFPA Asia Pacific works with the private sector to demonstrate the economic and health benefits of providing sexual and reproductive health services within industries employing young women. The Government of Bangladesh, a2i - Innovate for All, is working with a whole-of-government approach by bringing innovations in skills ecosystem through sectoral human resource development, industry-driven apprenticeship, creating entrepreneurship and 4IR-based future skills. UNDP works to eradicate poverty while protecting the planet. UNDP helps countries develop strong policies, skills, partnerships and institutions so they can sustain their progress. The ILO is the specialized UN agency for the world of work and aims to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues.

The side event will leverage the Forum's focus on "empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality" to invite member states and other Forum participants to join **Decent Jobs for Youth** and maximize the impact of their youth employment investments.

The side event will feature an interactive, multi-stakeholder conversation about solutions to the youth employment challenge and the power of collaboration in boosting decent jobs for youth in Asia and the Pacific. The objective of the side event is to foster collaboration to scale up action and impact on youth employment under the aegis of **Decent Jobs for Youth**. It will serve as an opportunity to introduce the Initiative, facilitate a multi-stakeholder dialogue about what works for youth employment in Asia and the Pacific, and identify opportunities for joint action to advance youth employment related Sustainable Development Goals.

While youth employment cuts across the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it finds momentum under Goal 8 on Economic Growth and Decent Work. The side event will showcase (i) actions implemented across the region aiming at reducing the number of youth not in employment, education, or training (SDG indicator 8.6) (ii) experiences in the development and operationalization of youth employment strategies (SDG indicator 8.b.1) and (iii) good practices in achieving productive and decent employment for all, with a focus on rural youth (SDG indicator 8.5).

Key Questions:

The key questions to be discussed in this side event are:

- **Youth employment challenge:** What are the most pressing challenges affecting youth's transition to decent work today and what are the challenges of the future in Asia and the Pacific?
- **Gender equality:** How about young women? Being young and female can serve as a double strike for those seeking to access quality skills training and education programmes and find productive employment and decent work. What solutions are effectively integrating young women into the labour market and facilitating access to decent work?
- **Youth living in rural areas:** What are the specific challenges that youth face accessing decent jobs in agriculture and the wider rural economy and how can we overcome them?

- **Skills development and the role of the private sector:** How can skills development be harnessed to promote sectoral growth? How can the private sector support the expansion of apprenticeships in Asia and the Pacific? How can governments support young people in preparing for the future of work?
- **Advancing youth employment related SDGs:** From a policy perspective, what are youth employment policies or strategies making a sizable impact in the labour market situation of youth in Asia and the Pacific? And from a programmatic perspective, what are effective interventions facilitating youth's transition to decent work whilst reducing youth NEET rates in the region?
- **Partnerships and South-South Cooperation for scale:** How can **Decent Jobs for Youth** be leveraged to promote a successful transition of youth into employment and to reach the scale and impact needed to achieve the targets set in the 2030 Agenda, including through South-South Cooperation?

Session:

Moderator: Ms. Sukti Dasgupta, Chief, Employment and Labour Market Policies Branch, ILO

Presentation on Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth by Ms. Annette Sachs Robertson, Deputy Regional Director, Asia and the Pacific, UNFPA, on behalf of partners of Decent Jobs for Youth

Panel discussion:

- Mr. Anir Chowdhury, Policy Advisor, a2i - Innovate for All, Government of Bangladesh
- Ms. Liu Kai, Executive Director, International Department, All-China Youth Federation (ACYF)
- Ms. Lei Motilla, Executive Director, Asean Youth Community (AYC) and Thematic focal point for youth in fragile situations, SDG 8 Working Group, UN Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY)
- Ms. Clara Park, Gender, Rural and Social Development Officer, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, FAO
- Mr. Roberto G. Valerio, Executive Director, Industrial Group of Zamboanga, Inc. (IGZI), Philippines
- Ms. Lena Yuliana, Vice Treasurer, KSPI and member of the ITUC Asia-Pacific Youth Committee
- Ms. Charu Bist, Livelihoods Advisor, UNDP

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Organized by partners of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth:



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations



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Resilient nations.

