

Media Update

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UNDP - ILO

PRESS RELEASE

The United Nations in Pakistan Convene a National Consultation on Youth Employment

UNDP and ILO jointly held a national consultation to discuss the current issues and constraints faced by youth in getting decent employment in Pakistan. With 64% of Pakistan's population under the age bracket of 29 years, youth will be a critical force for shaping human development in the country. The consultation was held under the auspices of the upcoming National Human Development Report for Pakistan– 2015. The report focuses exclusively on the three drivers of youth empowerment – education, employment and engagement. The National Human Development Report for Pakistan – 2015 aims to achieve better human development outcomes for young women and men across the country, with a view to informing public policy dialogue and improving the policy landscape for young people.

In their opening remarks, Mr Francesco d'Ovidio, ILO Country Director and Mr. Marc André Franche – Country Director for UNDP reminded the audience about the importance of creating decent employment opportunities for the youth. Mr. Franche said, "Pakistan has potential 56 million young workers and consumers, to enter the labor market. While youth unemployment is comparatively low, there are major issues around underemployment, vulnerable employment and dead-end jobs". In Pakistan, labor force participation depicts a decreasing trend over the period of time. Growth in employment is significantly lower than growth of labor-force. While youth unemployment is comparatively low, issues of underemployment, vulnerable/informal employment and 'dead-end' jobs abound.



Mr. d'Ovidio reinforced the need for concerted actions to address the heterogeneous needs of young women and men as they transition from school to work and through life in general. "These actions should be hinged on policy, legal and regulatory reform and most importantly political will, to ensure an enabling environment that reduces vulnerable employment and creates sustainable enterprises. There is thus, a pressing and urgent need to invest in sound youth employment policies and action plans. While the Pakistan economy is not generating sufficient jobs to meet the number of entrants into the job market, other pathways that lead to employment creation need to be promoted such as entrepreneurship development and harnessing opportunities available across value chains in key sectors of the economy is also an alternate pathway".

In his presentation on issues & constraints faced by youth in Pakistan. Dr. Faisal Bari – Co Lead Author: NHDR highlighted the relationship between educational outcomes and low quality jobs. "60% of youth in Pakistan works as casual or unpaid labor. There is a very strong relation between better quality jobs, education attainment and skills. Low educational attainment and skills requisition leads to low quality jobs". He further stressed that women might be facing gender discrimination and social barriers to enter the labour market "While the percentage of young women achieving secondary education is now similar to that of young men, women's labor force participation is more than 30% lower than men"

The participants at the consultation were informed regarding the labor-market dynamics. One million young people enter the labour force every year, but the economy is not absorbing them. Even the well-educated face challenges, given a lack of standardization and recognition of the quality of institutions. The challenge is not only to create more and good quality jobs, but a bigger challenge is to bring more people into the labor force to curb poverty and attain higher economic growth.

The participants coming from Government, Employers (Industries) and Workers (Trade Unions) expressed their views to strengthen the institutional arrangements for youth employment in Pakistan. Their feedback will become part of the National Human Development Report 2015 – which is going to be launched in the last quarter of 2015.

This consultation is part of the series of consultations and surveys carried out by a team of experts engaged to develop the National Human Development Report 2015 under the auspices of One-UN Programme-II (OP-II) funding



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