Participants in the studio:
**Mr Gianni Rosas**, ILO Youth Employment Programme Coordinator.
**Ms Ruth Georget**, National Joint Programme Coordinator, MDG F on Youth Employment and Migration, ILO Manila.
**Ms Shyama Salgado**, National Programme Coordinator, ILO Colombo.
**Mr Edward Bernard**, Senior Programme Assistant, ILO Suva.
**Ms Qun Huang**, Senior Programme Assistant, ILO Beijing.
**Mr Anandan Menon**, Programme Assistant, ILO Delhi.
**Mr Saad Gilani**, Senior Programme Officer, ILO Islamabad.

**Mr Gianni Rosas**, ILO Youth Employment Programmes Coordinator.

**Mr Matthieu Cognac**, ILO Youth Employment Specialist

*You can watch the video of the show at: http://www.apyouthnet.ilo.org/podcast*

**Question 1: Why is the International Labour Conference (ILC) 101 Resolution on youth employment so important, what is special about the resolution, what are its priorities?**

Mr Rosas began by confirming that the resolution matters because it was adopted by all 185 member states of the ILO, including governments, employers’ & workers’ organisation, which shows consensus. It is a global framework that gives guidance on tackling the youth employment crisis. The main feature of the resolution is that it sets 5 main policy priorities covering supportive measures to boost jobs for young people, addressing the skills mismatch and the education-employment transition, which has become longer on average. The resolution also gives guidance on how to support disadvantaged youths through targeted measures and labour market interventions, as well as guidance on job quality, including rights at work, and how to support young people who wish to be entrepreneurs. The issue of job quality is particularly important for young people, since young people are affected than adults by low quality jobs, temporary employment and working poverty.

**Question 2: Turning to individual countries, what can be done and what is being done since this resolution was made?**

With specific attention to the Philippines, Ms Georget said that although youth unemployment has decreased in the Philippines over the last year, it is still high at 16.3%. Reflecting what Mr Rosas said, an important aspect according to Ms Georget is the issue of vulnerable employment among young people because they are at risk of sub-minimum wage salaries, a lack of social protection, and fewer opportunities to be part of workers’ organisations. Furthermore, there are over 650,000 young people who enter the labour force every year in the Philippines, and the skills-mismatch remains an issue. In response to this, the ILO has been working with the Department of Labor and Employment to help make policies coherent, and to target focused areas such as technical and vocational training. The ILO is also working to help young people see entrepreneurship as more than just a wage and salary factor, but also an opportunity for productivity, as well as to strengthen
labour market information so that young people can find the right job for their skills. Whilst progress has been made since youth unemployment decreased, Ms Georget stressed that there is still work to be done.

**Question 3: How does the Philippines work with workers’ and employers’ organisations when tackling the education-employment transition?**

In the Philippines, Ms Georget said that there is a lot of consultation with these groups, particularly the private sector since it has an insight into what makes a young person employable. For example, employers in the Philippines’ Business Process Outsourcing industry say that jobs are available for young people but that they do not yet have the right behaviour, attitude or work ethic, which is important to employers.

**Question 4: Is a lack of soft skills an issue found in other countries?**

In Sri Lanka, Ms Salgado said that soft skills is an issue. Although young people show academic promise and acquire qualifications, an holistic education including soft skills is not available, and this problem is evident in job interviews. Ms Salgado gave the example of English language which is taught as a subject but not as a skill. Although compulsory education ranges from 5 to 14, and free education is available up to tertiary level, vulnerable youths cannot take full advantage of this as the quality of English teaching is uneven across the country.

**Question 5: In solving these issues, is it necessary for government policy to be far reaching?**

The need for a comprehensive approach has been recognised in Sri Lanka, according to Ms Salgado. The ILO has been assisting with this, for example the Employment Policy for Sri Lanka was launched in October, and the inclusion of soft skills features prominently. There is also a separate youth employment national action plan which has been adopted and a YE Road Map which is awaiting validation. The ILO is helping to roll out the Action Plan in some of Sri Lanka’s nine provinces.

**Question 6: Entrepreneurship is seen as a second grade activity in many Asian countries. Is this a problem Sri Lanka?**

This problem still exists in Sri Lanka but according to Ms Salgado the ILO is helping to advance its appeal. This is important for a number of reasons, such as the very limited number of public sector jobs, which youth aspire for due to security and pension. Sri Lanka also suffers from having less educated youths as well as educated jobless youths. In response to this, the ILO is trying to integrate entrepreneurship into university curricula, and it is promoting the ILO’s Know About Business curricula within the schools system. Further issues which diminish the standing of entrepreneurship include attitudes, since parents do not want their children to be entrepreneurs but have a preference for doctors and lawyers, and there is also an ‘options overload’ where the younger generation has many choices, which includes entrepreneurship, making it harder to make a firm choice!
Question 7: In terms of the Pacific, what is the state of youth employment?

Youth in the Pacific are four times more likely to be unemployed than adults, according to Mr Bernard, unlike in Asia where youths are twice as likely to be unemployed on average. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community announced that 23% of young people are unemployed in the Pacific. Additionally, more than 50% of the Pacific’s population are young people. Therefore, a large sector of the region’s population is not in employment, education or training, which puts a lot of pressure on the limited resources in the region.

Question 8: Turning to countries where the ILO does not have projects, such as in China, how is the youth employment problem being tackled?

In China, Ms Qun confirmed that the ILO is building on existing experience such as the previous Start Your Business projects, and the Know About Business curricula has been introduced into universities. The rationale for this is not just to encourage entrepreneurship, but because there is a need to familiarise young people with the business environment and make them more familiar with enterprise cultures so as to strengthen their employability. However, there is another issue which needs to be attended to. As is the case in Sri Lanka, parents prefer to encourage public sector jobs, according to Ms Qun, partially because the transition to a market economy makes the public sector more secure.

Question 9: Moving to India, do young people prefer civil service jobs, and are young people being encouraged to explore other options?

In rural areas young people do have a preference for public service jobs, whilst young people prefer corporate jobs in urban areas. As of which, Mr Menon said that the ILO has plans to look at such issues, and the government is showing interest in seeing how this difference can be managed.

Question 10: There is thought to be a link between youth unemployment and social instability. Pakistan has a large youth population, is this link in evidence there?

Mr Gilani believes that there is a very strong link between youth employment and peace development, and this is the case in Pakistan. The Pakistani economy is not producing enough jobs, yet the youth population growth is outstripping this. Equally, the private sector is growing but it offers little security. These factors combine to make young people lose faith in the system, which is why the ILO has been listening to young people in the youth forums.

Question 11: Is the Pakistani government treating youth employment as a high priority?

The government of Pakistan is putting youth employment in all policies and plans and regional development frameworks, according to Mr Gilani. He went on to say however that with the country’s resources shortage, the resource allocation for national youth employment is detrimentally limited. Workers’ and employers’ organisations are supportive, however they similarly face issues in capacity.

Question 12: Returning to attitudes and perceptions of appropriate work, is this an issue across the region?
For Mr Cognac, this is one of the largest challenges. Over the discussions of the last two days, career guidance has featured highly because it is important for young people to develop their ideas on what they’d like to do in the future. Furthermore, from a young age, young people should start to acquire work experience such as in internships and apprenticeships, otherwise they are severely disadvantaged when they try to enter the world of work. Overall, Mr Cognac said that the ILO’s Youth Employment Focal Points had gather to combat the youth employment challenge by trying to create a link between what the countries need to be looking at and what the concrete actions on the ground can be. In the year prior to the ILC 101, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the President of Indonesia, called for a global coalition for youth employment. Mr Cognac emphasised that the Focal Points are looking at creating a network and this starts with partners and action plans.

**Question 13:** One partner in this action has to be young people themselves, yet practically they are not in the same system as older people are. How can young people be involved in shaping responses to the youth employment challenge?

Involving young people in the dialogue begins at home and talking about how they can contribute to society. Mr Cognac went onto say that it also begins at the local level in engaging young people in the local government and civil society.

**Question 14:** How can different bodies coordinate for partnerships in order to solve the youth employment challenge?

Mr Rosas said that several types of partnerships have been identified, such as in education and with the private sector which is the largest creator of jobs, as well as representatives of the world of work such as workers and employers organisations which can share their perspective, and of course with young people themselves. It is the belief of Mr Rosas that local, regional, national and global partnerships need collective action. This is likely to have a higher impact than the efforts of an individual or individual institution since synergies can be exploited. As of which, the ILO has engaged global level partnerships across the UN. For example, Ruth was talking about the organisation’s work in the Philippines which engages many parts of the multilateral system and the government.

**Question 15:** The private sector has been identified as a partner, yet it is seen as being more concerned about the short term and the bottom line. How engaged are they in these efforts?

Mr Rosas’ experience has been positive, especially since the private sector has a strong interest in the creation of decent jobs for young people because productive young people are also consumers, which acts on the multiplier effect. There are now several ILO initiatives across the world which show the impact and commitment the private sector has for creating jobs for young people.