Guests:
Mr Richard Howard
ILO Senior Specialist on HIV/AIDS.
Mr Tung Bui
Coordinator, Youth Voices Count.

Host:
Mr Matthieu Cognac, ILO
Youth Employment Specialist

Camera, sound, editing:
Mr Julian Hadden

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

**Question 1: What UN resolutions and recommendations exist which deal with the issue of HIV/AIDS in the work place?**

Richard Howard first mentioned that since June 2010, the ILO passed Recommendation 200 on HIV/AIDS in the world of work which is a labour standard to guide national level policy in the workplace. Key principles include that companies should not carry out mandatory testing; testing should not take place against the consent of the worker; workers with HIV/AIDS are entitled to confidentiality to their condition; there should be reasonable accommodation (for example time off for treatment, adjustments in work flows) where needed; and crucially workplaces should provide workers with access to treatment. Importantly, if governments and health insurance does not provide access to treatment, then employers should.

**Question 2: What UN initiatives are relevant to this area?**

Tung Bui highlighted that the UN has a special focus on youth issues, including many conferences. For example, last year in Bali, there was the Youth Global Forum which allowed youth to highlight the issues they are facing and develop recommendations on how to address these issues. Decent work is included in the UN’s broader focus. There will be another international youth forum in March, and the issue of young people & HIV will once again be brought out.

**Question 3: Turning to national policies in this region, are there any which should be underscored?**

Most countries in the region have national policies inline with ILO standards on HIV/AIDS, according to Mr Howard. However, although there is good coverage of policies, there needs to be greater attention paid to implementation to ensure that there aren’t exceptions to provisions on HIV.

Mr Tung added that although there are many policies and initiatives on young people and HIV, monitoring and evaluation can be lacking. Mr Tung called upon all governments to make the workplace a more attractive place for young people, and particularly young people with HIV/AIDS.
Question 4: How attentive have employers been to this topic?

Mr Howard commented that it was originally MNCs (multinational companies) who were the first to set the standard with policies and practices. However, over the past 5 years national companies in China and Thailand have been making progress. For young people in general, it must be recognised that employment is essential for both prevention and treatment.

If people have jobs, they are less likely to engage in risk behaviours. For example, many young jobless people are drug users. Often, well educated but unable to get jobs. Therefore, on the prevention side, a youth employment strategy makes sense. On the care and treatment side, people with HIV/AIDS need jobs. They cannot survive with ARV (antiretroviral) drugs alone. As of which, policies and programmes at all levels are needed to ensure jobs for those who are infected. The same is needed at company level, and trade unions must protect the rights of people who are infected. In summary, all three groups have a role to play.

Question 5: To finish, are there any key messages which you’d like to share with young people, governments and employers?

Mr Tung ended the show by requesting that young people are confident, and that they fight for your rights. They are young, they are talented. They should claim what they deserve.