GOOD PRACTICE PROCESS FOR PREPARING NATIONAL ACTION PLANS ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

This document has been prepared by the Youth Employment Programme of International Labour Office. It is currently being used in selected countries. The text is work in progress.

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I. Introduction

Over the past decades, growing levels of unemployment and underemployment among young people have been a source of deep concern for policymakers in most countries worldwide and have featured highly in the international development agenda. Following the Millennium Declaration commitment “to develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work”, two United Nations resolutions have encouraged member States to develop national action plans on youth employment – either integrated into their national action plans on employment or issued as separate documents – as a step in the process of meeting this commitment. These resolutions specifically invite the International Labour Organization, within the context of the Youth Employment Network and in collaboration with the UN Secretariat, the World Bank and other relevant specialized agencies, to assist and support the efforts of Governments in the elaboration of these national action plans.

As called for by the International Labour Conference in 2005 and set forth in the ILO Programme & Budget for 2006-2007, one key area of ILO support to tripartite constituents in the short to medium-term concerns the development of national action plans on youth employment. To this effect, the present document has been prepared as a complement to the ILO document “Guidelines for the Preparation of National Action Plans on Youth Employment”. Unlike the latter that suggests technical guidelines for the elaboration of these plans, this document points to the desired process underpinning it. Underlying the thrust of the proposed process-related approach is the recognition that youth employment problems cannot be tackled through fragmented and isolated interventions, but require sustained and concerted action – by several actors – over an array of policy areas. Participation and dialogue are, therefore, a necessary condition to develop national action plans that effectively meet the needs on the ground and respond to the concerns of the national stakeholders directly affected.

Against this backdrop, the present document has been prepared as a brief guide to ILO staff and national tripartite constituents who will be engaged in the elaboration of national action plans on youth employment. It is hoped that the process outlined in this document would also be followed by other international agencies that will be supporting a similar drive. More specifically, this document is designed to:

- Ensure a common understanding (among national and international partners) of the desirable process to support countries in drafting national action plans on youth employment.
- Suggest a practical step-by-step approach to develop national action plans on youth employment through a concerted and coordinated process that draws on and fosters broad-based national ownership.

It goes without saying that the main responsibility for the elaboration of national action plans on youth employment rests within each country. The role of the international agencies, such as conceived in the present document, is to provide support and technical advice along the process, while ensuring that such a process is country-driven and country-owned. This means that the definition and articulation of the most suitable *modus operandi* remains the responsibility of national governments in cooperation with relevant national actors, in particular employers’ and workers’ organizations. In this context, each country should adapt the suggestions outlined in this document to national circumstances and objectives.

II. **Suggested phases for developing the National Action Plan**

A coordinated and concerted approach to the development of national action plans on youth employment (NAP) requires the contribution of a number of institutions and agents, as well as a clear definition of their respective responsibilities and roles. The next box provides an explanation of the terminology used in this section to refer to the national and international partners involved in the elaboration of a NAP with the support of international cooperation.

| Responsible Government Institution: the governmental institution which has the responsibility to coordinate the development of the NAP. Normally, the Ministry of Labour/Employment assumes this responsibility. Depending on national circumstances, however, either the Prime Minister’s Office or the President’s Office would assume this role. |
| National Technical Team (NTT): a multi-sectoral team of technical experts – designated, through consultation, by the Responsible Government Institution and led by a National Coordinator – to draft the NAP and to serve as the national technical counterpart to the International Technical Support Team. The NTT should include not more that seven (7) technical experts, of whom at least one specialist from the fields of economy, employment and education respectively and at least one technical officer both from employers’ and workers’ organizations (social partners). The NTT may also include, where necessary, experts from academia and specialised institutions to serve as resource persons for specific technical issues. |
| National Coordinator: the person designated by the Responsible Government Institution to coordinate the NTT and liaise on behalf of the National Partners with the International Technical Support Team. S/he will be responsible for coordinating all preparations, logistics and follow-up to the International Technical Support Team visit. |
| National Partners: Relevant national stakeholders such as government institutions, employers’ and workers’ organizations, youth groups and civil society. |
| Lead Institution: the international agency in charge of coordinating the International Technical Support Team. It can be the ILO, the United Nations or the World Bank (as core partner agencies of the YEN) or other designated international agency. |
| International Technical Support Team (ITST): a team of international experts coordinated by the Lead Institution and made up of staff of the international agencies involved and consultants (as necessary) to provide technical support to the country in the elaboration of the national action plan. |
| International Partners: the ILO, the United Nations and the World Bank, other international or bilateral institutions/donors, and the YEN Secretariat. |
The proposed process of elaboration of the national action plan on youth employment with the support of the international cooperation involves four main phases, namely: (1) preparatory steps; (2) preparation by the country and the ITST in view of the mission to the country by the ITST and fielding of that mission; (3) drafting and follow-up to complete the draft NAP; and (4) final processing and adoption of the NAP. The following section presents suggested steps for each one of these phases. It should be noted that throughout the process translation and interpretation services may be required.

1st Phase: Preparatory Steps

- **Responsible Government Institution:**
  - Undertakes consultations with all relevant institutions and in particular with the social partners with the aim of ensuring their full engagement in the process and its follow-up
  - Designates the National Coordinator
  - Following consultations, sets up the NTT to be led by the National Coordinator
  - Determines through consultation and formally invites the Lead Institution to take part in the NAP process
  - Establishes, through consultation, a division of work among National Partners
  - Determines through consultation with the National Coordinator and the Lead Institution the time of the first ITST visit

- **National Coordinator:**
  - Convenes the first meeting of the NTT to discuss preparations of the NAP based on the ILO Guidelines
  - Commissions, where necessary and in agreement with the NTT, technical surveys to fill information and data gaps
  - Convenes, if necessary and in agreement with the NTT, thematic working groups to deepen the analysis of specific policy areas
  - Coordinates the preparation of the situation analysis by the NTT and prior to the ITST mission, sends it to the ITST
  - Prepares a draft programme of meetings for the ITST Mission, in consultation with the Lead Institution

- **Lead Institution:**
  - Sets up a team of technical experts that will constitute the ITST and will be coordinated by the Lead Institution

- **International Technical Support Team:**
  - Establishes first contacts with the National Coordinator to discuss the NAP process
  - Provides guideline for the preparation of the situation analysis
  - Prepares comments on the situation analysis and forwards them to the NTT, prior to the ITST mission
2nd Phase: International Technical Support Team Mission

Note: The purpose of the ITST Mission is i) based on the findings of the situation analysis, discuss policy priorities and possible actions (sections 2 and 3 of ILO Guidelines); and ii) to discuss next steps and timeframes for the development and implementation of the NAP. The mission would include at least a full day technical workshop between the NTT and the ISTT with the aim to exchange views on progress made to date and next steps. It would also include bilateral meetings between the ISTT and National Partners, in particular the social partners.

- National Coordinator:
  - Prior to the visit of the International Mission, convenes meetings of the NTT as appropriate to hold some discussions on the comments on the situation analysis received by the ITST and to draw some preliminary policy priorities for presentation and discussion at the technical workshop

- National Technical Team:
  - Chairs the technical workshop and provides support throughout the mission
  - Prepares a draft timeline for the completion of the draft NAP and subsequent adoption and launch

- International Technical Support Team:
  - Provides their technical input to the workshop
  - Holds separate technical meetings with the Responsible Government Institution and National Partners, in particular the social partners

3rd Phase: Elaboration of Draft National Action Plan

- National Technical Team:
  - Drafts the next sections of the NAP (policy priorities and planning action), based on the outcome of the ITST Mission
  - In agreement with the Responsible Government Institution, circulates the draft to relevant government institutions at the central and local levels and the social partners for comments
  - Consolidates the draft based on the inputs received and circulates it to other relevant National Partners
  - Sends the complete draft NAP to the Lead Institution for final comments
  - Finalizes the draft NAP in the light of the inputs from the ITST
  - Sends the final draft NAP to the Responsible Government Institution
  - Drafts a proposal for a National Tripartite plus Conference, in collaboration with the Responsible Government Institution, to adopt the NAP and sends it to the Lead Institution for discussion
• International Technical Support Team:
  o Reviews the draft NAP and provides inputs and comments to the NTT
  o Engages in a dialogue with the NTT and Responsible Government Institution concerning the organization of the National Tripartite plus Conference

4th Phase: Adoption of the National Action Plan

• Responsible Government Institution:
  o Organizes together with the support of the Lead Institution a National Tripartite plus Conference as a platform to discuss and adopt the final draft NAP

• National Technical Team:
  o Presents the final draft NAP at the Conference
  o After the Conference, includes the feedback, if any, from participants in the final NAP and submit it to the Responsible Government Institution for adoption according to country procedures/practices