

## Talk show summary: UN Secretary General's Envoy on Youth (August 2013, Bangkok)

August 2013, Talk Show #22

Guests:

**Mr Ahmad Alhendawi**, UN  
Secretary General's Envoy on  
Youth

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: Based on your experience, what is the most critical issue facing young people, and is the world doing enough?**

Looking at unemployment figures, there are 73,400,000 unemployed young people worldwide. Mr Alhendawi emphasized that the figure is often quoted at 73,000,000 but he is adamant that the additional 400,000 are not forgotten. In his role, he is trying to focus the UN on how it can help young people, and this is his mandate from Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Therefore, in his work plan, there are four priorities. The first is youth participation with the UN. He believes that UN country teams need to work with young people to help programme design. At the regional level, there are plans to launch a youth advisory group to speak on behalf of young people. The second priority is for partnerships. This is necessary because when investing in youth, one party alone is not enough; partnerships are essential, and this includes the private sector, academia and others. The third priority is advocacy. Looking at the [post-2015 agenda](#), there are opportunities for youth to be prioritised to ensure an all-encompassing agenda is developed. The final and fourth priority is harmonisation. The UN can be harmonised at all levels to bring all youth related Agencies together and to create a [System-Wide Action Plan \(SWAP\) for Youth](#).



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**Question 2: In terms of the SWAP for Youth, and regional coordination mechanisms, these are plans. But how can it be ensured that they will achieve meaningful results on the ground?**

These strategies are all linked. Without connecting teams, individuals, tools, and knowledge it would not be possible to influence change. Also, there is a need for regional networks to come together since this facilitates dialogue, which helps young people to find a partner to collaborate with. This is a step however, not a goal in itself, but it contributes to change.

**Question 3: The Arab Spring is partly-attributed to youth unemployment. Youth unemployment remains high in the Middle East, and in the Asia-Pacific. What can the leaders of the Asia-Pacific learn?**

Governments must listen to their young people. Listen to their aspirations. Listen to the unemployment figures, and read the reports of the UN on the issues at hand. For example, the [ILO's Global Employment Trends for Youth](#) emphasises excellent policy advice in this area.

**Question 4: Turning to innovation, this is something which you have been advocating for young people to pursue. Why?**

Mr Alhendawi believes that there is a correlation between young people and innovation, and that they are the driving force behind innovation. Looking at economic empowerment instead of purely employment, innovation allows young people to move from being job seekers to job creators. They can create business opportunities for themselves and other young people. Innovation can help shift the discourse from seeing young people as waiting for chances, but to make their own and to contribute to pressing issues.

**Question 5: Are there any key messages for young people, governments, workers and employers?**

The UN now has a new momentum for young people. The UN wants to priorities youth. The message now is that this can't be done alone. Everyone is needed in this challenge. The private sector, governments, media, academia, youth organisations must come together. The UN provides a venue for everyone to debate. Now the UN can bring these people together to create decisions and actions.

