FORUM: Economic and Social Council (2-1)
QUESTION OF: Measures to Combat Youth Unemployment in East Asia
MAIN-SUBMITTER: Republic of Chad
CO-SUBMITTERS: Japan, Türkiye, Kenya, United States of America, Canada, Ethiopia, United Kingdom, Austria, Peru

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL,

Concerned by the persistent challenges of youth unemployment in East Asia, particularly the growing mismatch between educational qualifications and labor-market demands,

Alarmed by the potential displacement of young workers due to the rapid development of artificial intelligence and automation technologies,

Acknowledging the psychological and social consequences of prolonged youth unemployment, including increased stress, social isolation, and disengagement from the labor force,

Reaffirming Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, which promotes sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all,

Recalling the International Labour Organization's (ILO) efforts to promote decent employment, vocational training, and youth participation in the labor market,

Emphasizing the importance of cooperation between governments, educational institutions, and private-sector employers in addressing structural unemployment,

1. Encourages East Asian Member States to strengthen cooperation between educational institutions, government employment agencies, and private-sector employers to reduce structural youth unemployment by improving practical skills and employment opportunities through measures including but not limited to:
    a. Aligning university and vocational education curricula with labor-market demands through:
        i. Conducting regular labor-market assessments in cooperation with national employment agencies and industry represen

tatives to identify sectors experiencing skills shortages,

ii. Encouraging educational institutions to incorporate relevant technical, digital, and practical skills into existing courses based on the findings of these assessments,

iii. Strengthening science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and information and communications technology (ICT) education through school curricula, robotics clubs, science fairs, and coding workshops,

iv. Highly encouraging national governments, in cooperation with educational institutions and private-sector employers where appropriate, to offer scholarships and tuition subsidies in high-demand fields, particularly to students from low-income households,

b. Expanding paid internships, apprenticeships, and work-based learning opportunities through:

i. Establishing voluntary partnerships between universities, vocational institutions, and private companies to provide supervised workplace training for students and recent graduates,

ii. Encouraging participating employers to provide reasonable compensation, professional mentorship, and practical work experience relevant to participants' fields of study,

iii. Endorsing employers to consider qualified participants for full-time employment following successful completion of their training,

iv. Supporting structured work-placement opportunities modeled on existing national youth employment initiatives, including the Republic of Korea's Youth Growth Project,

c. Improving access to vocational retraining and professional certifications through:

i. Establishing affordable, short-term certification programs in industries experiencing labor shortages, as identified through the assessments outlined in subclause (a),

ii. Providing subsidized training opportunities for unemployed graduates and disadvantaged youth through existing government education and employment programs,

iii. Collaborating with participating employers to ensure training programs develop practical, industry-recognized skills,

iv. Promoting transferable professional skills through career counseling, mentorship, and workshops focused on communication, problem-solving, and workplace adaptability,

d. Expanding access to online vocational education and technical-skills programs through:

i. Encouraging cooperation between private-sector enterprises, accredited educational institutions, and relevant international organizations to improve access to online learning platforms such as Coursera,

ii. Promoting technical courses in fields such as data analytics, web design, and computer programming, including relevant programs offered by Google and recognized universities,

iii. Supporting online professional-skills courses focused on communication, workplace relationships, and career development,

iv. Encouraging participating institutions and employers to recognize relevant completed training and connect participants with practical employment opportunities;

2. Urges East Asian Member States to promote sustainable youth employment through the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), youth entrepreneurship, and targeted employment incentives through measures including but not limited to:

a. Improving access to financial support for SMEs through:

i. Encouraging cooperation between governments and financial institutions to provide affordable loans and credit guarantee programs for eligible SMEs demonstrating potential for sustainable growth and job creation,

ii. Prioritizing financial assistance for businesses that present realistic expansion plans and opportunities to employ young workers,

b. Promoting the recruitment and retention of unemployed youth within SMEs through:

i. Introducing temporary, targeted wage subsidies or tax incentives for participating businesses that hire eligible unemployed young people into newly created positions,
ii. Providing financial assistance through national fiscal funds and implementing relevant tax incentives through appropriate local tax authorities,
iii. Requiring participating businesses receiving government-funded incentives to demonstrate compliance with applicable labor regulations and report employment-retention outcomes to relevant national agencies,
iv. Conducting regular inspections to ensure that financial incentives are used appropriately and do not encourage the unnecessary replacement of existing workers,

c. Supporting youth entrepreneurship and the establishment of new businesses through:
i. Establishing or expanding youth entrepreneurship programs that provide practical business-management training, financial literacy education, and mentorship from experienced entrepreneurs,
ii. Facilitating access to startup grants or affordable financing for eligible young entrepreneurs with viable business plans,
iii. Encouraging cooperation between educational institutions, local business associations, and private-sector mentors to provide ongoing guidance during the early stages of business development;

3. Calls upon East Asian Member States to improve the quality and accessibility of youth employment opportunities by promoting fair labor practices, strengthening career development pathways, and reducing barriers to stable employment through measures including but not limited to:

a. Promoting fair and stable employment conditions through:
i. Encouraging employers to provide competitive wages, reasonable working hours, and employment benefits in accordance with national labor regulations,
ii. Strengthening the monitoring of workplace conditions and labor-law compliance to discourage unfair treatment, wage violations, and exploitative employment practices,

iii. Encouraging employers to provide transparent employment contracts outlining wages, working hours, job responsibilities, and conditions for contract renewal,

b. Strengthening long-term career development opportunities within SMEs through:
   i. Encouraging businesses to establish structured career advancement programs, including professional mentorship, skills-development opportunities, and transparent promotion criteria,
   ii. Promoting cooperation between SMEs and larger corporations to provide professional training and exchange programs that allow young employees to acquire additional industry experience,
   iii. Supporting the recognition of transferable professional skills and qualifications to improve young workers' ability to transition between employers and industries,

c. Reducing geographic and financial barriers to employment through:
   i. Encouraging improvements in regional public transportation connections between underserved communities and major employment centers,
   ii. Expanding reliable internet connectivity and access to digital tools in rural areas to support online learning, remote employment, and job searches,
   iii. Encouraging discounted public transportation fares or employer-provided transportation assistance for young job seekers facing financial difficulties,
   iv. Strengthening public employment services, including career counseling, job matching, and interview preparation, particularly for recent graduates and individuals experiencing prolonged unemployment;

4. Reminds East Asian Member States to mitigate the potential negative impacts of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation on youth employment while promoting technological innovation and economic productivity through measures including but not limited to:
   a. Monitoring the impact of AI and automation on youth employment through:

i. Encouraging national employment agencies to cooperate with technology companies and industry representatives to identify entry-level occupations and industries particularly vulnerable to AI-related job displacement,
ii. Conducting regular assessments of changing employment demands and emerging job opportunities resulting from technological advancement, with technical support from the International Labour Organization (ILO) where appropriate,
iii. Sharing relevant findings with educational institutions and employment agencies to support workforce-transition policies,

b. Supporting reskilling and employment transitions through:
i. Establishing targeted training programs that equip unemployed youth and workers facing technological displacement with skills required in emerging and expanding industries,
ii. Encouraging cooperation between governments, educational institutions, and private-sector employers to provide affordable training and career-transition assistance,
iii. Prioritizing assistance for young workers in occupations identified as highly vulnerable to automation,

c. Promoting responsible adoption and appropriate regulation of AI within the private sector through:
i. Encouraging companies introducing AI and automated technologies to assess potential impacts on entry-level employment and consider workforce retraining before implementing large-scale job reductions,
ii. Promoting voluntary employer-supported training initiatives that allow young employees to adapt to new technologies and transition into updated roles,
iii. Encouraging national governments to consider appropriate workforce-protection guidelines and regulations addressing excessive or avoidable displacement of workers,
iv. Encouraging relevant national authorities to assess corporate AI-related employment risks using company reports and other available labor-market evidence,
v. Facilitating periodic regional discussions on effective AI-related workforce policies, regulatory approaches, and their employment outcomes;

5. Requests East Asian Member States to address the social, psychological, and financial barriers associated with prolonged youth unemployment and support young people not in employment, education, or training (NEET) through measures including but not limited to:
    a. Identifying and reaching out to disconnected young people through:
        i. Encouraging national employment and social welfare agencies to cooperate with educational institutions and local community organizations to identify young people at risk of prolonged disengagement from education and employment,
        ii. Establishing accessible outreach initiatives through community centers and digital platforms to inform NEET youth about educational, vocational, and employment support services,
    b. Expanding access to psychological and social support services through:
        i. Integrating accessible mental health counseling and referral services into existing youth employment, educational, and community support programs,
        ii. Providing appropriate well-being screenings within school systems to identify students who may need additional psychological support,
        iii. Training relevant youth support personnel to recognize signs of psychological distress and connect individuals with qualified mental health professionals where necessary,
        iv. Expanding accessible psychological assistance to young people in rural and remote regions,
        v. Promoting community-based support groups and peer mentorship initiatives to reduce social isolation,
    c. Establishing pathways for the reintegration of NEET youth through:
        i. Providing flexible second-chance educational opportunities and vocational training programs for young people who have discontinued formal education,
        ii. Facilitating access to career guidance, practical skills development, and employment preparation programs for individuals returning to the labor market,

iii. Institutions, and private-sector employers to provide gradual workplace reintegration opportunities, including supported internships and apprenticeships,

d. Providing appropriate financial assistance for vulnerable young job seekers through:

i. Encouraging targeted financial support, including monthly allowances where nationally feasible, to reduce essential living-cost barriers during active participation in employment preparation or job-search programs,

ii. Considering different levels of assistance according to participants' financial needs and employment circumstances,

iii. Seeking voluntary financial or technical cooperation from relevant international organizations and nongovernmental partners, where appropriate,

iv. Conducting periodic evaluations of financial assistance programs to assess affordability, effectiveness, and their contribution to employment outcomes;

6. Invites East Asian Member States to strengthen regional cooperation, improve youth employment data collection, and promote effective evaluation of national employment initiatives, with support from relevant international organizations, through measures including but not limited to:

a. Improving the accuracy and transparency of youth employment statistics through:

i. Encouraging national statistical agencies to collect and publish regularly updated data on youth unemployment, underemployment, and the proportion of young people not in employment, education, or training (NEET), using internationally recognized statistical definitions where appropriate,

ii. Cooperating with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and its statistical database, ILOSTAT, to improve data collection methods and facilitate meaningful comparisons between countries,

iii. Encouraging the publication of disaggregated employment statistics, including differences by age group, gender, ed

ucational background, and geographic region, while protecting individual privacy;

b. Encouraging voluntary regional cooperation among East Asian Member States, with support from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), through:
    i. Facilitating regional conferences and policy discussions where participating governments can share successful youth employment strategies and challenges,
    ii. Encouraging the voluntary exchange of employment research, policy recommendations, and best practices among participating Member States,
    iii. Inviting UN ESCAP, within its existing mandate and available resources, to provide technical assistance and support regional knowledge-sharing initiatives upon the request of participating governments;
c. Establishing effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for youth employment initiatives through:
    i. Recommending governments establish measurable objectives for participating youth employment programs, including employment placement rates, job retention, and improvements in participants' earnings,
    ii. Developing standardized evaluation frameworks that allow participating governments to compare youth employment policies and identify successful approaches,
    iii. Conducting periodic evaluations of program effectiveness and identifying administrative inefficiencies and structural deficiencies,
    iv. Supporting participating governments in publishing accessible evaluation reports and using the findings to improve or adjust programs that fail to achieve their intended objectives,
    v. Encouraging voluntary cooperation with the ILO to incorporate relevant international labor standards and technical guidance into national policy assessments.

7. Endorses Member States to strengthen legal protections against discrimination in youth recruitment and ensure equal employment opportunities for young job seekers through:

a. Establishing accessible and confidential complaint mechanisms for young people who experience discrimination during recruitment processes, including:
    i. Providing both online and offline reporting channels for young job seekers to report discriminatory treatment,
    ii. Ensuring that reported complaints are reviewed by relevant government authorities,
    iii. Establishing clear procedures and reasonable timeframes for investigating discrimination complaints,
    iv. Providing legal guidance and assistance to youth who experience recruitment discrimination;
b. Conducting regular inspections and monitoring of recruitment practices in both private and public enterprises through:
    i. Reviewing interview procedures to identify discriminatory questions or selection criteria based on age, gender, socioeconomic background, or disability,
    ii. Encouraging enterprises to adopt transparent and objective recruitment standards based on qualifications, skills, and professional experience;
c. Promoting awareness of equal employment rights among young people and employers through:
    i. Organizing educational campaigns to inform young job seekers of their legal rights and available complaint procedures,
    ii. Promoting awareness of equal employment opportunities through public information campaigns and digital platforms,
    iii. Improving public employment platforms to provide accessible information regarding job vacancies, expected qualifications, wages, employment benefits, and recruitment procedures,
d. Promoting transparent and merit-based recruitment practices through:
    i. Encouraging blind recruitment during initial screening, where appropriate, by removing unnecessary personal information such as appearance, family background, and age,
    ii. Establishing standardized assessments of applicants' professional skills and relevant qualifications,
    iii. Encouraging structured interviews focused on job-related questions to minimize personal bias.