



29 September 2020
Global Online Dialogue Series
**“Navigating uncertainties: An intergenerational dialogue
on COVID-19 and youth employment”**

Concept Note

Background

Today’s youth face the unique challenge of managing their personal development and transition to adulthood amid more uncertainties than usual. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), COVID-19 has impacted job prospects for the world’s 1.2 billion young people. This demographic – 15 to 24 years old – faced an unemployment rate three times higher than adults before the crisis. However, this situation has not stopped young people from taking concrete actions to support other community members affected by the pandemic, as well as concretely contributing to the pandemic response and recovery.

Society as a whole benefits from young people’s smooth transition to adulthood. Evidence-based inclusive policies supporting young people during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as ensuring their meaningful participation in decision-making processes related to the pandemic’s response and recovery, are essential. In addition, actions to build back better taken by young people themselves need to be reconized, highlighted and supported.

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs invites young people to an intergenerational dialogue where they can share their concerns about finding jobs in a worsening market and discuss ways forward. The online forum “Navigating uncertainties: An intergenerational dialogue on COVID-19 and youth employment” offers young people an opportunity to discuss the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic during this period of their lives when many things are in flux. Members of older generations will share their experiences from making the school-to-work transition amid challenging situations of the past. A brainstorm on innovative solutions toward decent employment for youth, and how different generations can work together to ease the school-to-work transition of today’s youth will follow. In this discussion, participants will consider:

- How is the pandemic affecting today’s youth employment right now?
- How are youth thinking about their future in the short-, medium- and long-term?

- What actions are young people already taking today to address the employment challenge?
- What are some of the key approaches that should be scaled-up and replicated? How can other generations support these approaches?
- How can Member States partner with young people to ensure an optimal response and recovery from the pandemic, especially from a youth employment perspective?
- What are some of the key policy changes that would quickly open doors to young people looking for employment or taking the entrepreneurship path?

The event will feature youth, young entrepreneurs and members of older generations. The discussions will draw from the *2020 World Youth Report*, the work of the UN High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs (HLAB), and other work of the UN, particularly the International Labour Organization. Online participants will be welcome to submit questions in the Zoom chat during the event and ahead of time on social media. The results of the discussion will inform UN DESA's future policy briefs on the economic and social effects of the pandemic.

Date and time

Tuesday, 29 September 2020, 9:30-10:40 a.m. EDT

Location

The event will be held on Zoom, using one of UN DESA's new licenses, and streamed to UN DESA's [Facebook channel](#).

Moderator

Lyanne Alfaro (USA), Supervising Producer and Social Media Content Director for Nasdaq

Event format

I. Introductory remarks
(7 minutes)

Mr. Jeph Acheampong (Ghana), founder of Blossom Academy, which recruits and develops African data science talent

II. Roundtable 1: Protecting and strengthening youth employment during COVID-19
(30 minutes)

Part 1: Moderator-driven discussion

20 minutes

The moderator will drive a thoughtful conversation with young people from around the world about the challenges they are experiencing while training for jobs, searching for jobs and beginning their careers during the pandemic. Participants will share their good practices for coping during this time, as well as what kind of policies and support could advance young people's agency and development. (20 minutes)

Guiding questions:

- What actions are youth taking right now to begin their careers and, if needed, adjust their life plans?
- What are the effects of long-term job hunting on mental health, and how can young people cope with them?
- What types of educational opportunities or trainings could be implemented now to better prepare youth for an uncertain job market?
- What would be the first three key actions that stakeholders need to take to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on youth employment?

Speakers:

- **Ms. Anastasia Gage**, Professor at Tulane University's School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine; member of the UN High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs
- **Ms. Mbuki Mburu** (Kenya), Public Policy and Youth Development Advocate & Project Lead of Jenga Hustle, a jobs-related policy initiative.
- **Ms. Nolundi S Luthuli** (South Africa), Managing Director, iSeluleko Youth Leadership Development Forum; SDG Acceleration Action registrant
- **Mr. Saúl Zenteno-Bueno** (Mexico) Professor in the Social Sciences and Humanities Division at Tecnológico de Monterrey Campus Chiapas
- **Dr. Alexandre Kalache** (Brazil), President of the International Longevity Center, Brazil

Part 2: Q&A

10 minutes

III. Roundtable 2: Considering entrepreneurship in a tough job market **(30 minutes)**

Part 1: Moderator-driven discussion

20 minutes

A moderator will hear from young entrepreneurs about their career paths and how to get started being your own boss – even during a pandemic.

Guiding questions:

- What are the key challenges faced by young entrepreneurs? How have these challenges changed during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How are young entrepreneurs making a difference and providing support to community members during the COVID-19 crisis?
- How can governments create an enabling environment that would support the growth of youth enterprises, including during the current pandemic?

Speakers:

- **Ms. Ellen Chilemba** (Malawi), Founder and CEO of Tiwale
- **Mr. Krishna Gautam** (Nepal), Director of Ageing Nepal
- **Mr. Nwachinemere Emeka** (Nigeria), Founder and CEO of Kitovo Technology, a Nigerian social enterprise that connects farmers with tools to improve crop yield; selected enterprise in the 2020 Science, Technology and Innovation Forum [Innovators Challenge](#) -
- **Ms. Waziha Raquib** (Bangladesh/Malaysia), Co-founder of Neeti, a youth advocacy network, and thematic focal point for SDG 8 for the UN Major Group on Children and Youth
- **Ms. Marija Vasileva-Blazev**, Special Advisor to the UN Youth Envoy

Part 2: Q&A

10 minutes

IV. Concluding remarks
(5 minutes)

Mr. Elliott Harris, UN Chief Economist and UN DESA Assistant Secretary-General