

**UNCEB Joint Crisis Initiative on the Global Jobs Pact
2nd United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty**

Inter-agency Technical Meeting

**Building employment and decent work into sustainable recovery
and development – The UN contribution**

Report

ILO Training Centre, Turin, Italy

29 November – 1 December 2010

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Acronyms

CEB	UN Chief Executive Board
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EGS	Employment Guarantee Scheme
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Association
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITC-ILO	ILO International Training Centre
JFFLS	Junior Farmer Field and Life Skills
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PEP	Public Employment Programme
POVNET	Development Cooperation Directorate Network on Poverty Reduction
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SSS	Social Security System
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UI	Unemployment Insurance
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-NGLS	United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
US	United States
WB	The World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
YEN	Youth Employment Network

1. Introduction

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) organized an inter-agency technical meeting on “Building employment and decent work into sustainable recovery and development” at the ILO International Training Centre in Turin, Italy, on November 29 – December 1 2010. The aim was to prompt stronger and more coherent UN policy responses to employment and decent work challenges in poor countries, by means of facilitating policy dialogue and the exchange of good practice among senior technical officials from 16 different multilateral organizations, selected practitioners and international experts.

The meeting was spearheaded by the ILO and UNDESA as the co-lead agencies of the *2nd United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)*. It especially catered to the UN agencies engaged in the system-wide “Plan of action on full employment and decent work for all” under the 2nd Decade, as well as to the international organizations - including the IMF and the World Bank - that are involved with the *CEB Joint Crisis Initiative on the Global Jobs Pact*. Each of the organizations represented had an opportunity to bring up its own concerns and perspectives on employment and decent work issues and to share lessons learnt concerning appropriate policy frameworks and approaches, innovative partnerships and inter-agency initiatives as well as potential areas for research and cooperation. The meeting produced ideas and suggestions to strengthen the Plan of Action under the 2nd Decade. It also provided an up-to-date, unique overview of current thinking and action within the UN system on the key challenges of development, growth and equity.

The main outcomes of the discussion are spelt out in this report. They provide for a distinctive contribution to the wider debate on reshaping the development agenda that is taking place in the aftermath of the global economic, financial and other crises. Since the World Summit for Social Development of 1995, full employment and decent work have been endorsed at many levels, translated into development goals and initiatives, and significantly informed the international debate. As a result of Resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, ECOSOC and other global and regional fora, they have found visible place in the policies and operations of many UN agencies, funds and programmes, including the guidelines for the UNDAF. Progress has been constant but slow. Most recently, however, a number of breakthroughs are changing the contours of the official development agenda, helping set employment and decent work more centrally in development discourse and action.

First, in the wake of the global multiple crises – financial, fuel and food – the demands of countries for policy tools and assistance to cope with labour markets gaps have become more pressing. The content of policies and strategies for development is evolving as governments are adopting more flexible and more pragmatic approaches to the policy mix and are keen to learn from experience, good practice and the lessons gained from the crisis response. Interventions directly catering to investment and jobs that were anathema a few years ago are now upfront - from the re-emergence of long-neglected industrial and agricultural policies to active labour market interventions, public employment programmes and unconventional measures such as employment guarantee schemes. The meeting in Turin reviewed key features of those policies, bringing out the efforts of the organization of the multilateral system to assist countries in their new policy mode. It underlined the need to make sure that the specialized knowledge of each agency is used to develop new collective policy wisdom, comprehensive data collection, and research that is practical and actionable.

Second, the need and rationale for policy coherence to achieve employment, decent work and poverty reduction goals have become more evident. Coherence and coordination are not just ways to eliminate bureaucratic waste and duplication. They are essential conditions

for policy success. As suggested by UNRISD in their recent report on *Combating Poverty and Inequality* : “... efforts to tackle poverty through discrete and standardized policies unrelated to a country’s production and macroeconomic systems, social policies and politics are of limited impact, and may even be counterproductive.” The debate on progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, ten years after their launch, confirms it is essential not just to extend basic welfare services for the poorest but, at the same time, strengthen productive capacities, address inequalities and create opportunities and voice for people across the full spectrum of the job market. Greater coherence between social policies to protect vulnerable people and economic policies to foster productive investment and productive employment is an emerging tenet of strategies to sustain recovery and growth, promote inclusion and reduce poverty. The discussion in Turin showed how all multilateral organizations are becoming aware that, in spite of organizational boundaries and policy rifts, interagency cooperation is a necessary tool to achieve scale, improve efficiency and enhance the impact and visibility of the UN system. The review of the experience with joint UN programmes for youth employment – a topical area for international assistance – showed very concretely the progress so far as well as the challenges ahead.

Finally, the crisis is prompting a rethinking of orthodox economic approaches to development and a search for alternative models. In the transition, each institution is working with hybrid assumptions about key parameters of development, e.g. as it concerns drivers of growth, the scope of government and market failures, the role of labour market institutions. Different assumptions and different policy frameworks account for obstacles to operational coherence. But no organization alone can craft consensus on those issues.

The exchange in Turin outlined emerging common elements of a new paradigm, bearing witness to the dialogue that had started between the UNCTAD, UNDP, ILO, IMF and others to understand better the linkages between macroeconomic frameworks, social policy and labour markets in achieving development. It will take time to shape a new consensus; wider discussion and exchange based on “experience regarding what is working” will be necessary. In the meanwhile, it is important to set up open, lean and flexible mechanisms to promote inter-agency knowledge sharing and policy dialogue, facilitate synergies and improve system-wide coherence. A few minor steps in that direction were attempted in Turin.

Structure of the Report

This report draws on the discussion and exchange of views at the interagency meeting and the background research papers and the presentations submitted. Section 2 provides a summary review of the main policy messages. Section 3 details the key points presented and discussed at the different sessions of the meeting. Session 1 set the scene through an open and interactive ‘world café’ brainstorming on the key themes and the main expectations of the participants. Session 2 contextualized the discussion looking at patterns and policy options for recovery from the global economic crisis and exploring key linkages between economic growth, structural change, employment generation and demographic trends. Session 3 compared different broad policy frameworks for growth, employment and social cohesion. Sessions 4, 5 and 6 explored selected policy areas, rural development and employment, public employment programmes and decent work for the youth, focusing on experience and lessons from successful projects and programmes. Session 7 looked at the experience with policy coherence and interagency collaboration on the ground, pointing out the main constraints and opportunities. Session 8 ended the meeting with a breakout group discussion to collect ideas and suggestions to strengthen the plan of action for the 2nd UN Decade on Poverty Eradication.

The full set of papers and presentations made at the seminar can be found at http://www.ilo.org/integration/events/events/lang--en/WCMS_150552/index.htm.

2. Highlights

In the aftermath of the global financial and economic crisis, there is growing recognition of the need for policy coherence for employment and decent work

In 2004, the World Commission concluded that the multilateral system was underperforming in terms of ensuring coherence among economic, financial, trade and environmental and social policies to promote human development and progress. Today, there remain fragmentation and inconsistencies, but some of the main constraints to policy coherence are weakening.

There is a new, clear political priority on job-rich growth. There have been steps towards UN system-wide operational coherence and a few solid episodes of inter-agency policy dialogue. There has been a shift away from the earlier “mainstream” narrow set of policy tools. There is also a new drive from emerging donor countries and the G20 towards a broader view of development, going beyond the narrow focus on the Bottom Billion and the MDGs to encompass a full range of coherent policies for inclusive and sustainable growth.

The challenge is to consolidate this unique moment into concrete sets of policy suggestions, crafting a stronger, employment-centred development agenda that is better shared across the multilateral system. This should have (a) a macroeconomic dimension to encourage global coordination and employment-friendly national frameworks, and (b) policy and institutional reforms to support productive investment, structural transformation, technological upgrading and a fair sharing of the dividends of growth to ensure stable and balanced development patterns.

Recovery remains uneven and fragile, low income countries need fiscal space and policy autonomy for job-rich growth

Global recovery is uneven and fragile. The ILO cautions that recovery is jobless and the quality of jobs has suffered most from the crisis. Fixed capital formation remains low in many regions and there is concern for the implications of fiscal austerity in developed economies. Ultimately, in the absence of financial reforms and fiscal support to aggregate demand, economic volatility and financial imbalances might end up being redressed mainly through painful labour market adjustments.

According to the IMF, low income countries (LICs) are regaining positive growth rates faster than in earlier recessions, driven by regional exports to emerging economies, high commodity prices and countries’ own fiscal stimuli. Yet household incomes have been hit hard, especially among the most vulnerable groups. The economic outlook for LICs remains uncertain, depending largely on the strength of the global economy and openness to trade. The Fund sees some scope for rebuilding financial buffers in LICs while expanding public expenditure in infrastructure and social safety nets.

UNICEF sees contraction in social spending in 2011 in about half of the 126 developing countries surveyed, having strong social implications - cuts in food and fuel subsidies, public sector wages nearing the poverty line and narrowing of social expenditure catering to the extreme poor. UNFPA warns against high rates of demographic growth and urbanization in the poorest countries, leading to long spells of labour market distress especially for the youth.

Overall, there is consensus among agencies on the need to sustain fiscal resilience in low income countries through international support, mobilization of domestic resources and tax reforms. There is a new attention to the developmental impact of fiscal policy. The focus is no longer exclusively on the debt incurred as a result of public borrowing, but also on the growth generated by public investment. There remain differences across agencies as it

concerns spending priorities as well as areas for reform (e.g. trade and labour markets). In-depth analysis of causal linkages and better evidence on the multiplier and employment impact of different sets of policies and reforms are needed to make the case for job-rich recovery and development, building up capacity to assist governments more effectively.

There is a new breed of initiatives on the growth-employment-poverty linkage

Work is in progress in expanding the multilateral policy toolbox for a job-rich growth. If the ILO has developed its Global Jobs Pact, most other agencies have also taken steps to respond to countries' demand for assistance in addressing labour market vulnerabilities.

UNCTAD subscribes to ILO's view that employment is not a residual result of economic growth but requires coherent macroeconomic policies, structural industrial change and a distinctive range of labour market policies and institutions including income policies, minimum wages, public employment programmes. UNICEF is stimulating a broad debate on the macroeconomic foundations of inclusive recovery. UNDP is active in many areas including private sector development, youth employment, public employment programmes and it is looking at the employment dimension of each of the MDGs. FAO and IFAD are strongly engaging in promoting employment and decent work in rural areas. UNFPA is researching the linkages between population dynamics, employment creation, food security and poverty and it is about to launch population situation analyses at country level to feed into development strategies and UNDAF. UNWTO is measuring employment in the tourism industries. UNESCO is working on a holistic approach to education and TVET. The World Bank is carrying out analytical work on the employment impact of the crisis, monitoring labour market indicators and developing a jobs knowledge platform.

Those efforts are very encouraging. The issue is to avoid reinventing the wheel and ensure that the state-of-the-art specialized knowledge of each agency is disseminated across the system and used to develop collective policy wisdom, comprehensive data collection and research that is practical and actionable.

Is an alternative economic policy model emerging?

There is some convergence in the way UN agencies are approaching issues of poverty, employment and growth. Some common elements are:

- The advocacy for macroeconomic policies that better reconcile sustainability and growth – e.g. less rigid trade-offs between inflation and unemployment underemployment, capital account management, fiscal policy etc;
- The revival of industrial policy and trade strategies geared at crowding in private sector investment, local production capacities and economic diversification;
- Better attention given to policies and institutions to address labour market vulnerabilities and inequalities, ensuring productivity translates into adequate remuneration and workers' earnings.
- The quest for a holistic development strategy, where synergies between economic and social initiatives work to ensure impact at the macro, institutional and micro levels.

In the emerging heterodox framework, wages are not seen as indicators of shortage/excess of labour, which should be left free to fluctuate in order to clear demand and supply. They are considered critical components of household incomes, thereby sustaining demand for consumption, hence investment and growth. Labour market policies, institutions and organizations play a role in connecting productivity, earnings and consumption, and fostering stable growth trajectories.

Especially in the poorest settings - where labour market institutions are weak and most people are casually employed or self-employed in the informal economy with no employment contracts, no collective bargaining and very weak enforcement of minimum wages - a range of public interventions are necessary to sustain livelihoods and promote access to remunerative work. This may take different forms, for instance: public works; setting the floor for earnings; microfinance; conditional and unconditional cash transfers, and public delivery of basic social services.

A full-fledged policy model alternative to the pre-crisis mainstream one is still under construction. Though the faith in self-regulating markets is more tempered, there remains a tendency within the IFIs to prioritize prudent fiscal and monetary policies, nominal targets for credible commitment, state retreat from markets, and optimism about the optimizing capacities of individual economic agents. The underlying practice, if not the conviction, remains that “sound” macroeconomic fundamentals are sufficient to generate output and employment growth. The new “multipolar” membership of the IFIs is producing lively HQ policy debates and some greater acceptance of non conventional policy approaches. But on the ground, there remains a divide between the IFIs and the UN. Stronger policy dialogue, joint analysis and research might help overcome a-priori judgements that fuel the divide on both sides.

Sharpening the employment and decent work policy portfolios – emerging and re-emerging good practice

Employment targets can be an effective tool to encourage policy commitment and consistency from governments. Targets can be constructed so as to provide employment equivalents of achieving the MDG goals, thereby providing useful guidance to policy-makers. Sectoral employment indicators could specially contribute to industrial and sectoral policies.

Investment in agriculture and rural development is critical to poverty reduction by means of enhancing productivity and incomes of small farmers and landless labourers. Support programmes should facilitate access to production inputs, finance, services and marketing opportunities for small producers and the strengthening of the linkages between local demand and local production and between farm and non-farm activities. Integrating the decent work dimensions – e.g. issues of wages, workers’ rights and social dialogue - remain a distinctive challenge given the fragmented nature of labour markets and production in rural areas.

Public employment programmes (PEPs) are being more commonly used for emergency situations and as a response to economic downturn. Traditionally they comprise infrastructural development and maintenance, with the introduction of labour-intensive techniques accounting for a stronger employment impact. The scope of PEPs has broadened to cover community and social services as well as resource regeneration and the environment. Innovations in project selection, recruitment of workers and delivery of payments account for greater transparency and accountability. PEPs provide an important employment safety net while structural solutions to foster private enterprises and growth take effect.

The introduction of a legal guarantee to a minimum number of work days is a main innovation.

Employment Guarantee Schemes (EGSs) – of which the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of India is the most renowned example - are self-targeting public programmes where temporary employment is offered to those who have an urgent need to earn an income, e.g. up to a maximum of 100 days per year per poor household at a given wage. Beneficiaries enrol when they need extraordinary income support and drop out when better opportunities come up. By this token, an EGS provides “on demand” shelter from

economic risk to poor households, enhancing resilience. At the aggregate level, it acts counter cyclically and it sets an income floor. Work performed under the scheme also contributes to improving local productive assets.

Youth unemployment interventions typically focus on providing training, including entrepreneurial skills and attitudes. Successful projects offer a varied package of training services, job placement and counselling or, in the case of entrepreneurship promotion, linkage with microfinance, mentoring and business services providers. This opens up opportunities for fruitful interagency cooperation (e.g. Serbia). These kind of projects, however, are expensive and hard to scale up in poor countries, where the overall offer of jobs is scarce and entrepreneurship only a channel to involuntary self-employment in informal activities. Efforts to address youth concerns should go beyond the supply of labour. Employability initiatives should fit within national employment and investment strategies and should be supplemented by public employment programmes to target the most vulnerable. Decent work, i.e. quality of jobs, and participative voices, are fundamental to fully address youth distress.

Demographic trends and patterns of migration have a strong influence on development and poverty reduction efforts, including employment creation and food security. For this reason they should be adequately integrated in the design of development and poverty reduction strategies. While population dynamics are often assumed to be exogenously determined, they are not. They are influenced by economic opportunities, income and wealth, and they are shaped by policy on education and health.

In addition to protecting people from debilitating poverty, comprehensive social protection systems either through large cash transfer programmes or under the Global Social Protection Floor initiative, have the potential to provide households with sufficient security to take advantage of economic opportunities, possibly leading to the diversification and strengthening of livelihoods. At the same time, social protection contributes to stabilize demand during economic downturns, maintaining space for enterprises to prosper and generate jobs.

Country experience shows that a wide range of complementary policies and institutions are needed to combat poverty and inequality

Based on a review of 16 countries, a report released by UNRISD suggests that success in eradicating poverty is the result of a policy focus on long-term processes of structural transformation, not on discrete social policies targeting the poor or on economic growth per se. Successful countries, according to UNRISD, combined institutions for voice for the poor with rights-based, comprehensive social policies and with patterns of growth and structural change that could generate jobs that were adequately remunerated and accessible to all – regardless of income, gender, ethnicity or location.

This vision of development strategy cuts across the spheres of politics, the economy and society. It highlights the link between poverty and inequality, recognizing the central role of the labour market as an entry-point for redistributive and normative policies to address structural inequalities and the effect those have on social cohesion and nation building. This triad vision encompasses the full dimensions of the notion of decent work, including issues of rights and organized citizenship. It might provide a framework to organize contributions from the whole gamut of UN entities to a post-MDG poverty reduction agenda.

The challenge is to manage the tension between, on the one hand, a development agenda focused on a limited number of discrete, unambiguous and measurable objectives (which might well align with donors' idiosyncrasies and the limited capacity of recipients) and, on the other hand, the need for broader strategic and transformative approaches.

The value added of interagency coherence and cooperation

Inter-agency collaboration is not a 'nice thing to do' but rather a necessary tool and process to achieve scale, improve efficiency and enhance the impact and visibility of the UN system. Coherence and cooperation are fundamental to achieve the broad-based development objectives of the UN system and those set out in national development frameworks, including the goals of full employment and decent work. Effective strategies to generate decent and productive jobs should go beyond interventions in the labour market. The macroeconomic environment, governance, security, investment climate, education, training and social protection systems - all have a role. This requires different areas of expertise and consistency across different types of interventions.

The review of episodes of “voluntary” coherent UN action on employment and social protection issues (Nepal and Maldives) shows that it is possible for the UN system to prompt significant policy reforms, beyond its traditional domain of humanitarian assistance. Enabling factors include: a “policy moment” whereby there is strong consensus on the urgency of employment and social policy change; a common policy stance among agencies with different technical expertise; capacity to collectively provide data, analysis and an evidence-based menu of policy options; and fiscal and policy autonomy and ownership of those options by the government.

Interagency collaboration and coherence are also important to each agency to achieve its own distinctive mandate and objectives. As one of the cases reviewed indicated, it may facilitate cross-negotiations and policy synergies, whereby a difficult reform of the labour market legislation was made possible by means of strengthening social protection for workers and their families. Such spillovers are increasingly recognized by policymakers. By mandate or tradition, different agencies have distinctive links with different ministries or national development agencies. Enhanced interagency cooperation and a common policy stance can encourage whole-of-government approaches, hence more effective public policy as well as impact of ODA.

The challenges

Overall, the experience with cooperation and coherence is mixed. As the MDGs, UNDAF and the Delivering as One reform process advance, there emerge signs of more coherent programming of UN country-level activities. As a result, some higher priority seems to be assigned to employment and decent work issues; youth employment, for instance, figures prominently in many UNDAFs and it has special priority in some regions. There are examples of spontaneous cooperation in specific areas, such as, social protection and youth employment associated with a shift from project-based to programme and policy-based approaches. But for the most part implementation remains fragmented.

The impediments to coherence on the ground are numerous. Agencies have specific mandates and operate within distinctive normative frameworks, differently connected to the UN's overarching set of universal principles and declarations. There are analytical differences and policy rifts that make it difficult to agree on common frameworks and consistent prescriptions – for instance, areas such as minimum wage legislation and labour market flexibility remain highly contentious. Impediments also stem from organizational boundaries defined by inter-agency mistrust, competition for funding and mandate encroachment. Country operations are often driven by project based-outcomes rather than the broad policy frameworks and strategies that are needed for employment and decent work generation. Interagency cooperation and coherence could result in superior outcomes, but the performance and administrative incentives to cooperate are limited, while the transaction costs can be very high in terms of conflicting procedures and time spent in meetings.

A stronger spur comes when cooperation is a condition for the release of technical cooperation funds, as in the case of the MDG fund sponsored by Spain. Initial experience

shows some shift towards the adoption of broader policy approaches based on demonstration programmes, common programming tools and the full leveraging of the distinctive resources of each agency. Still when too many agencies are involved fragmentation remains, as each agency claims a piece of the pie, while the complexity of coordinating multiple actors may make programmes less flexible, delivery slower, and reporting more cumbersome.

At the country level, agencies have different resources, a different presence on the ground and different influence on governments, with the IFIs having an especially strong grab on “hard” economic ministries. The MDGs, UNDAF and the UN Country Teams provide a framework for convergence and collaboration, but the limited participation of the IFIs can leave a gaping hole in policy coordination. It is important to widen policy dialogue on the policies, programmes and action of each agency in order to maximize country level assistance. Where a technical agency is non-resident, there is a danger that the issues it represents – though included in the UNDAF – are left out from the implementation phase.

3. Proceedings

Session 1: Setting the scene

Antonio Graziosi welcomed UN colleagues at the ILO Turin training centre and emphasized the capacity building role of the centre, which is its contribution to the promotion of the Decent Work Agenda. Donald Lee (UNDESA) expressed his appreciation to all UN colleagues present in the meeting. The strong turn-out was a reflection of the importance of the employment and decent work agenda in the UN system. There has been significant progress at the global policy level in terms of integrating employment and decent work in the development debate – i.e. the inclusion of employment in MDG 1; the setting of employment and decent work as priority for the 2nd Decade on the Eradication of Poverty agenda; the launch of the Global Jobs Pact and the Social Protection Floor Initiative and the emphasis on job-intensive recovery and development at the MDG Summit in 2010. However, there remained a gap in the reporting of the work done to lay down the agenda for future work. This meeting provided an opportunity to develop a stronger and more coherent view on the promotion of Decent Work and further strengthen collaboration in this area. Aurelio Parisotto (ILO) emphasized the importance of policy coherence in achieving sustainable and employment-friendly development and growth. He identified some main constraints: unclear political will, institutional barriers, and a limited policy toolbox as set by the so-called Washington consensus. In the wake of the global economic crisis, however, there has been a shift towards a more pragmatic policy attitude and several steps have been taken toward closer system-wide collaboration through various platforms such as the MDGs, Delivering as One, the UN-CEB Joint Crisis Initiatives and the G20. This inter-agency technical meeting was an occasion to sharpen UN thinking, expand the set of common policy tools and frameworks, and generate some momentum towards greater interagency coherence and cooperation.

A series of World Café interactive table discussions allowed participants to engage in initial brainstorming on the main themes of the seminar.

One table discussion, hosted by Hamish Jenkins (UN-NGLS), addressed the question of how employment and labour policies could contribute to poverty reduction. The inter-agency collaboration around the implementation of the 2nd United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) constituted an opportunity to develop a “post-MDG agenda”. The first step was to set employment goals more firmly on the national political agenda. Politicians are deeply concerned about jobs, but the national development strategies supported by the international financial institutions (IFIs) do not place

employment substantively at the centre, especially as far as macroeconomic and sectoral policies are concerned. It is not enough to get support for employment and decent work from the labour ministries and some UN agencies. To “break the silos,” it is essential to get all relevant ministries on board especially finance and planning as well as the IFIS.

Two main sets of policy tools were discussed: pro-employment macroeconomic and sectoral policies; and social protection and public employment guarantees. Macroeconomic policies should move away from rigid inflation-targeting and ideological opposition to proactive fiscal policies of a developmental state. Employment targets could be used for macroeconomic policy formulation in cooperation with central banks. It would be useful to broaden inter-agency consensus on the role of sectoral policies (or industrial policy) as part of the effort to make growth strategies more employment-intensive. For growth patterns to be made genuinely more “pro-poor,” it is imperative to support not only the export-oriented dynamic sectors of the economy, but also the sectors where the majority of the poor worked. In low-income countries, this means strategies to raise farm incomes through investments in productivity, lower input costs and better linkages with other sectors in tandem with policies to encourage investments in productive capacities of local manufacturers. Higher farm incomes would raise demand for locally produced non-agricultural products, thus creating incentives for productive investment and a virtuous cycle of sustainable growth and sustainable poverty reduction. Stronger institutions for upgrading skills and productive capacities as well as negotiating on equitable distribution of the benefits of growth were central.

Concerning social policy, the recent process of cash transfers and public employment guarantee schemes helped to anchor social protection as an integral part of development strategy. While there were concerns that the resources directed to social protection could constitute a diversion of funds for production purposes, the macroeconomic benefits of social protection as an automatic stabilizer of domestic demand during economic downturns were now clear, as well as the impact on human capital and possibly the capacity of poor households to invest. Employment guarantees could also be a vehicle to improve infrastructure such as roads and irrigation which play a supportive role in raising overall productivity, notably in rural areas. A key question was the financing of such schemes in very poor countries, and the need for external financing to kick-start meaningful social protection floors through some form of sustained and predictable budget support.

Other issues included the need to explain the holistic concept of decent work among all UN colleagues. Too often, decent work is understood as being mainly about improving workers’ rights. In thinking of decent work, it is also important to keep the gender lens on and consider not only “production” but also “reproduction”. The economy and society benefit from reproductive activities that are usually carried out by women who do not get the economic recognition they deserve. A public employment strategy focused on providing decent work opportunities in the “care economy” should be given consideration. Finally, it was essential to integrate the environmental dimension in the decent work agenda. The “green jobs” agenda is gaining some traction, but mostly in the advanced countries and emerging economies that have comparative advantage in the development of clean technologies. What would a green jobs agenda in low-income countries look like, and which international support mechanisms would be needed to make it economically and politically feasible?

Another table discussion, hosted by Massimiliano La Marca (ILO), looked at the question of interagency cooperation and coherence. Participants acknowledged that those were increasingly perceived as key by each agency in order to achieve its own distinctive mandates and objectives. Coordination and collaboration were especially important for full employment and decent work, given the cross-cutting nature of those goals. Employment and working conditions should be the focus of policy action. However, they have complex

social and economic dimensions that involve different areas of expertise and therefore the intervention of different specialized agencies with different mandates. Achieving employment and decent work requires consistency of action across a wide range of domains. In the discussion it was noted that policy coherence should be pursued at different levels: international, national and regional or local level. An improvement of interagency collaboration at the national level could significantly contribute to improving coherence of national policies, hence their impact. National ministries could benefit in their effort to achieving their goals from a consistent UN framework.

Interagency collaboration nonetheless requires better common understanding of a problem and its solutions. Knowledge sharing between agencies and the discussion on alternative perspectives and on different instruments to achieve common goals was of fundamental importance for developing common operational frameworks and synergies. Together with the creation of common frameworks within UN agencies, there was also a need to strengthen functional incentive structures between and within agencies in order to encourage coherence of operations and results. Programmes and projects could be formulated and devised jointly. UNDAF could be shaped to reflect better interagency cooperation. Tools to achieve decent work and employment should be identified at the country level and should be constantly reviewed and renewed to guarantee their effectiveness. One of weaknesses of international cooperation was the fragmentation of interventions. Improved UN cooperation and coordination can greatly help national policy processes towards employment and decent work for all.

One table discussion, hosted by Amber Barth of the ILO, went over the expectations of the participants about the outcomes of the meeting. One main objective was to know more about what different agencies were doing in order to be able to translate general commitments into effective deliverables on the ground. To identify specific programmes and practices where synergies could be developed was one way to step up collaboration and overcome traditional boundaries. UNDAF was a mechanism that could be better used in that regard. To better bridge HQ directives and field operations was a common for all participants, as there appeared to be non overlapping issues and contrasting demands that made it difficult to translate HQ decisions into practice in field. Stronger advocacy and greater capacity to speak with one voice in inter-governmental fora were important outcomes, as well as identifying research gaps and sharing relevant knowledge. To bring together the different policy frameworks of each agency was an important mechanism to encourage cooperation. It was also essential to identify and spell out the incentives for cooperation and coherence.

Session 2: Recovery patterns, employment-led growth and structural change

The session started with a presentation by Moazam Mahmood (ILO) on main patterns and policy options for recovery from the global economic and financial crisis. He expressed the concern of the ILO for the premature emphasis on fiscal consolidation given the current state of the world economy and the fact that private investments remain depressed. Global macroeconomic rebalancing had not taken place. Fiscal austerity could have deflationary effects and heavy labour market implications. He provided the example of Ireland where in hindsight the cost of rescuing bondholders had been too high. By bailing out the ‘risk takers’, the public sector has seen cuts in wages, pensions, and extension of the retirement age. In the US, quantitative easing returned monetary stimulus to the policy lexicon, while Europe was concerned with restoring the confidence of the capital markets in the single currency. The ILO was concerned for labour market effects. He noted that unit labour costs had been falling in all of the crisis-afflicted Euro countries, yet wages were still being cut even in those cases where there had been some signs of recovery. In Germany, wage growth had been inexistent while Turkey had seen few jobs created in spite of recovery.

Looking at the global picture, he underlined that macroeconomic rebalancing had to be achieved through improvements in wages, for example in China, to support domestic consumption and growth and in the US to restore household savings. Most countries and regions featured a drop in gross fixed capital formation, with little recovery at present. The ILO estimated the effects of fiscal stimulus and automatic stabilizers in G20 countries, suggesting 20 million jobs were created or saved over 2009 and 2010. In 16 non-G20 countries the estimates were of 5 million jobs created or saved. Projections for future growth showed that recovery will not close the gap with pre-crisis growth rates and, in addition current post-crisis growth rates will not restore the levels of jobs lost. Fiscal consolidation and debt recovery were important over the medium-term, however without an employment recovery, no stable and sustained growth could take place.

In opening the floor for discussion, Mr. Parisotto underlined that those issues were of concern to the wider development community. It was important for the UN as a whole to engage on those terms of the debate in order to forge a new policy drive in employment generation. One discussant expressed agreement with the analysis while, at the same time, seeking specific policy recommendations. Another raised the issue of the role of speculation in fiscal consolidation and bond pricing. The specific elements of fiscal packages necessary to achieve decent work were called for by a discussant. The role of quantitative easing was also discussed. A participant questioned the use of the phrase 'fiscal consolidation' pointing out that, at the moment, what was being debated was fiscal contraction, and whether that would lead to consolidation remained to be seen. Mr. Mahmood noted that liberal monetary policies might not be sufficient but each country had institutional and political constraints influencing the policy mix. While at the onset of the crisis, all countries had embarked simultaneously on fiscal expansion, now the policy responses were diverging and further stimulus in any single country could raise difficulties in dealing with capital markets. Beyond social fairness issues, he questioned the economic justness of public sector cuts in the wake of having bailed out capital markets. Mr. Parisotto concluded mentioning some specific policy instruments such as domestic progressive taxation, optimal combination of different components of public spending, financial reform and even taxation of international financial transactions. What was needed was a clear political will supported by evidence-based economic thinking.

Duncan Campbell (ILO) opened the second panel discussion of this session by submitting the notion of employment-led growth as a mode of economic survival that was practiced by 50 per cent of the world's labour force, i.e. those workers who were forced to create their own jobs and demand through survival-driven endeavours for themselves and their families. They were largely impervious to macroeconomic parameters and comprised what the ILO calls 'vulnerable employment', including own-account workers and contributing family members. He noted that growth trends have exhibited an increasing diversity, with developing countries experiencing faster and higher levels of economic growth in the wake of the global crisis than the high-income countries. From the labour market perspective, the crisis in the developing world had taken the shape not of higher unemployment, but through changes in employment status and an increase in vulnerability. As an example, he provided the case of Thailand and the 'added worker phenomenon', where formal sector employees upon losing their jobs enter the informal economy along with other members of the family.

The major problem of employment-led growth is that it is largely unproductive, failing to raise living standards and not contributing to enhancing livelihoods. At the same time, growth-led employment has failed to deliver. Mr. Campbell provided evidence from Asia where growth has become less labour intensive over time. The concept of wage-led growth was also mentioned, where changes in income distribution towards labour created an expansionary effect on economic growth, raising consumption and aggregate demand. Collective bargaining could play a role in counteracting growth-threatening downward wage pressures. Most developing countries, however, experience little paid employment,

weak or missing labour law enforcement, and lack of collective bargaining. For them, an income-led growth strategy – including wages and incomes from self-employment - was deemed as more helpful. This implied a set of policies directing resources to where the poor lived and worked, e.g. by means of improving access to credit for informal work; public-works programmes to set an income floor; increased social protection and tax transfers ensuring public delivery of critical services in health and education.

In the second part of his presentation, Mr. Campbell raised the issue of employment targeting. He presented it as an explicit political commitment from the highest levels of government to achieve an employment outcome within a specified time period. Similar commitments were a powerful way to focus policy attention to the issue of jobs. Often however, the targets were generic and did not account for the quality and productivity of employment. He proposed a notion of productive employment defined as the employment that was generating a flow of household income at least equal to the international poverty line. By this token, the poverty reduction goal embedded in the MDGs (MDG 1B) could be translated into a productive employment equivalent. He provided an example using data from Nepal. Similar exercises for sub-Saharan Africa suggested a GDP growth rate of nearly twice what was achieved in the first decade of the 2000s, in order to meet MDG 1B. He concluded emphasising that we must be concerned not just with growth figures but with the quality and pattern of growth. He stated that the resurgence of interest in industrial policy was very important in the search for a more effective policy mix. Pro-poor growth, in particular, had to start with an emphasis on rural areas and agriculture.

Alfredo Calcagno (UNCTAD) noted the convergence between ILO views and UNCTAD works on the idea of employment as a goal and not a residual of economic growth, and the need to use a variety of policy tools. Labour was not a commodity as any other, thus more flexibility through lower wages would not necessarily increase employment. Income policies were very important, and could be furthered using instruments such as collective bargaining and minimum wages and the government as a form of employer of last resort. He highlighted that governments were not deprived of fiscal space just because of growing deficits and high levels of public debt. There was room to manage the composition of public expenditure. Transfers to the rich or to the poor, for instance, had a different macroeconomic impact. Wages should follow productivity growth, and monetary policy could be kept expansive in order to help investment when there were no threats from excessive inflation. He asserted that the old paradigm where development was closely linked to the move from traditional to modern sectors should change and greater focus be given to increasing productivity and incomes in traditional sectors. He also mentioned the strengthening of linkages between demand and income, the taxation of extractive industries, and greater development of domestic markets as opposed to purely export-led growth strategies.

Michael Hermann (UNFPA) introduced the demographic dimension arguing that structural change also resulted from demographic change, in that the size of the population and its age structure influenced consumption patterns. The higher fertility rates of LDCs compounded the challenge of creating productive employment. Each year, over 15 million individuals join the labour force in the LDCs, and their populations were estimated to double by 2050. Poverty reduction strategies in the short term could include transfers but in the long term, it should focus on employment creation. He cautioned that environmental impacts of more growth should also not be ignored, underscoring the need for a shift towards a greener economy.

Session 3: Policy frameworks for growth, employment and social cohesion

This session was introduced by a panel including Sarah Cook (UNRISD), Cathy Pattillo (IMF) and Isabel Ortiz (UNICEF) (via videolink). Ms. Cook explained why UNRISD had chosen to focus on inequality in their recent report on Combating Poverty and Inequality. The main reason was dissatisfaction with the limitations of prevailing policy frameworks to address poverty, either the neoclassical macroeconomic growth model, the PRSPs, the MDGs or the “good governance” agenda. She underlined the concept of ‘transformative social policy’, which calls for a comprehensive set of policy interventions aimed at enhancing productivity and growth but in a more equitable way. The process and pattern of structural change must be one that produces productive employment. Inequality was not an issue in the prevailing approaches; in fact it has increased over the past 30 years, becoming a key obstacle to poverty reduction. Widening inequalities may lead to a lower local demand for consumption and are often major drivers of social conflict and unrest thus further undermining political stability, investment and poverty reduction.

She pointed out that the poorest countries were becoming more unequal as a result of their integration in the global economy. Further factors included the declining level of wages and structural underpinnings embodying power relations. Targeted interventions to reduce poverty were bound to fail unless those structural factors were addressed. Ms. Cook reported evidence that countries that had most success in reducing poverty over time have featured broad-based redistributive fiscal measures, provision of a universal basic level of social protection and explicit efforts at nation-building and social cohesion. Though this has included some targeted interventions, policies were more successful when the explicit objective was not poverty reduction but equitable social change. Determining what was socially and economically feasible depends on politics, thus she stressed the need for institutions to enable the voices of the poor to be heard. Attention must also be given to the potential and limits of distribution, and to the way in which the social contract is structured.

Cathy Patillo presented the work done by the IMF regarding the MDGs. She mentioned growing IMF interest in social dialogue in policy areas including the MDGs as well as in providing support to investment in infrastructure and social safety nets. The crisis being a huge setback to poverty reduction, she focused on what could be done at a macro level yet underlying that growth was a necessary but not sufficient condition. Low income countries should be made more resilient to different kinds of shocks. Strong global growth was essential as well as opening of markets in low-income countries in order for them to realise their full potential. The LDC share of trade in global markets remained low, and she suggested that barriers to trade from the LDCs themselves should come down further, and that the advanced economies should tilt their preference schemes in favour of LDCs. Investment in infrastructure was crucial, as gaps in this area constituted a major growth bottleneck. Large ODA sums were necessary, but even in the event of all aid promises being fully met, there was a need for new sources of financing including greater mobilization of domestic resources. Ms. Patillo referred to a recent IMF paper suggesting there was some modest but important space in LICs that should be used to rebuild policy buffers and enhance resilience to future shocks at the same time as allowing for some increases in real spending prioritizing infrastructure and social investments. She concluded with a mention of fragile states and the issues of nation-building and institution building, an area where closer cooperation among UN agencies was particularly useful.

Ms. Ortiz provided information on a UNICEF study on the evolution of social expenditures in the context of the wave of fiscal austerity. On average, a share of 25 per cent of the total stimulus measures in the countries examined in the study had reached the social sector. The review of public expenditures for 2010/2011 in 126 middle- and lower-

income countries showed that 44 of them were considering to cut public expenditure. Some of the measures under consideration included the phasing out of subsidies for food and fuel, in spite of the social implications this could have given that international prices were on the rise. Reductions of the public wage bill was another very popular measure mentioned, which generally contains cuts and caps to wages and thus affecting teachers and health staff. Further targeting of social protection transfers to the extreme poor was also considered. The implications of this emerging pattern for the achievement of the MDGs were very serious.

In the open discussion, one participant mentioned the impact of the weakening of trade unions and collective bargaining in the trend toward greater inequality debate and raised the issue of the negative role of increased movement of capital, suggesting the reintroduction of capital controls as a key policy tool to prevent financial instability and somehow shift the current asymmetry in the relationship between capital and labour. Another participant noted that still the majority of the countries in the UNICEF survey were indeed increasing public expenditures as a percentage of GDP. In response to a question raising doubts about the evidence of real economic recovery, Ms. Patillo said this was true for advanced countries however growth in lower-income countries had some robustness. Labour market data were very scant, still unemployment was not the main issue for LICs. Concern was rather for the expansion of underemployment and informal sector work. One participant asked about the prospects for LDCs to receive the necessary investment for their development, to which Ms. Patillo responded mentioning non-traditional lenders, domestic financing, as tax rates were currently quite low, and greater use of earnings from natural resources. Ms. Cook underlined that agriculture was the root of many inequalities in LDCs, enhanced by declining terms of trade and the volatility of commodity prices. Agriculture accounted for the largest share of employment while also featuring highly unequal wage levels. To counteract this would require going beyond the usual channels of collective bargaining and trade unions, looking forward to new social processes and movements.

Session 4: Rural development, employment and Decent Work

In introducing the panel, the moderator Loretta De Luca (ILO) pointed out that rural policies were at the core of combating poverty, generating employment and achieving the MDGs. She noted a recent change in the policy perspective. Rural areas were no longer seen as “difficult” to reach and develop; there was increasing recognition of their potential for dynamic change and development. Considerable cooperation and synergies across development agencies were needed to strengthen this new approach.

The first panellist, Eve Crowley (FAO), echoed such themes in her presentation. Agriculture was central to national rural development and key to raising the livelihood of the majority of the population in developing countries. About 3 billion people lived in the rural areas of those countries, including 75 per cent of the world’s poor. Agriculture provided 1.3 billion jobs for small farmers/landless workers, including jobs for 450 million wage workers and employed 60 per cent of all child labour. She noted that agriculture was dynamically related to the non-farm economy through a rural-urban continuum. According to an OECD study, agricultural development accounted for the largest share of contribution to poverty reduction in the 25 most successful developing countries. On the decent work creation front, FAO was promoting policies, services, technologies and skills for small producers to increase and diversify incomes, improve livelihoods, retain labour and access financial services. In the field of social protection, FAO promoted voluntary standards and codes of practice (pesticide, good agricultural practices, logging, safety at sea, right to food). Regarding standards and rights at work, FAO worked to reduce gender-based discrimination, child labour, and strengthen data collection, legislation, skills and

vocational training. Governance and social dialogue were promoted with producer and natural resource users' associations, encouraging participation in policy formulation. FAO integrated approach to country support rested on strategic approach for: a) strengthening policy, legislative and institutional frameworks, b) capacity development, and c) piloting programmes and institutional mechanisms. Ms. Crowley drew attention to several projects of FAO highlighting some policy lessons such as the success of their warehouse receipt system in Africa. Farmers produce food but typically do not get access to credit, however food stored in warehouses can be used as collateral for credit provided by microfinance institutions. Additional benefits also derive from increases in the stock value of the food, new income from off-season cultivation activities and improved food security. The Nature's way cooperative in Fiji, grouping around 120 shareholders, is another example of how collective action can help improve the quantity and quality of the products and ensure access to international markets. In the fisheries industry, post-harvest operators - who handle fish processing and marketing responsibilities after the fish are caught - are overwhelmingly women, who dry, smoke, load and sell fish. In The Gambia, women organized themselves into legalized, village-based groups that eventually grew into clusters of larger associations with national recognition, capable of influencing national and sectoral policies. In closing she stressed that better use should be made of existing mechanisms for interagency collaboration and partnerships and greater attention should be paid to scaling-up good practice and seeking more coherent and better integrated approaches at the country level.

The second panellist, Rosemary Vargas, said that IFAD's goal was to promote productive assets and access to credit in rural areas and recalled the experience of some of their projects in confronting the issue of food security. In net food importers countries such as Benin, IFAD helped increase the local food supply more rapidly by helping introduce a new variety of rice resistant to draught and with a high yield and shorter growth time. In conflict-torn Madagascar, IFAD was implementing a programme to support rural microenterprise and regional economies through training of small rural entrepreneurs and apprentices in rural areas. She highlighted the key challenges: scaling up successful projects; involving the private sector; encouraging youth to remain in rural areas; reaching out to the policy level. The question was how to combine UN forces to tackle those challenges.

Several questions raised during the discussion had to do with the issues of the upscaling of good practice and the role of the private sector in this process. An enforceable national legislative framework and an enabling environment for business were critical conditions. The government could play a key role through appropriate sectoral, financial and technological policies. As an alternative to traditional microfinance, a participant asked whether equity-based financing or backing by public guarantees had ever been applied as a way to support product diversification and insure poor farmer against economic risks they could barely bear. The issues of land grabbing and land reform were also mentioned. It was noted that the experience with land redistribution had been mixed, as reforms were not accompanied by other elements for effectively creating sustainable productive endeavours. Engaging with international buyers in promoting strong and transparent linkages with local suppliers was another way to promote responsible and sustainable rural development. The critical importance of rigorous project monitoring and evaluation was raised, as the proper way to identify good practices.

Session 5: Innovations through Public Employment Programmes (PEP)

Public works programmes were used widely to confront emergencies in poor countries including natural disasters and the recent food and financial crises. Public programmes could also be used to provide relief and protection to structurally disadvantaged groups, in a way acting as a complement to "patient" policies and building of institutions that were

needed to lift the private sector. Marc Van Imschoot (ILO) gave some insights on the significant innovations taking place in the area of public employment in recent years, which were changing the scope of policy options to generate employment and strengthen social protection for the poorest and the most vulnerable. He presented the key features of 3 of the most successful schemes: the India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA); the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in South Africa - a multi-sectoral programme covering construction, environmental services, social services and community works; and the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia, which combined cash for work and cash transfer components. All three were large-scale national programmes covering millions of people, with a number of factors deeming imperative for their successful upscaling: political buy-in; a dedicated and capable local implementing agency; fiscal space and evidence on results. The introduction of statutory entitlements for the beneficiaries was a common novel feature: a legal provision establishing conditions of employment in the EPWP; a chart of rights and responsibilities for PSNP; and the legal entitlement to 100 days of work per household for NREGA, which gave the Government of India a *de facto* role as employer of last resort in the rural sector. Through IT, a number of innovations were also being introduced in the implementation, allowing more effective and transparent recruitment of workers, making of payments, and auditing and managing the programmes.

Mr. Van Imschoot noted that in this area there had been much constructive collaboration among the ILO, World Bank, FAO and UNDP in many countries. As one of the results, the first training course on Innovations on PEPs was launched at the Turin centre in October 2010 and a policy paper had been prepared. He concluded suggesting the need for joint research and investigation into the wider economic and social returns of those programmes in order to enhance their appeal vis-à-vis policy makers.

Mr. Esguerra reported his experience in designing a policy proposal to introduce a pilot employment guarantee scheme (EGS) in the Philippines modelled along the lines of NREGA. About 30 per cent of the Filipinos were living below the poverty line and 50 per cent of the labour force engaged in very precarious work. The new President had committed to a serious effort to reduce stubborn poverty including the introduction of emergency employment programmes. By means of providing a guarantee minimum income for the poorest households, an EGS could be a one-time stand-by intervention capable to push the labour market towards a fairer and more efficient equilibrium. Poor workers share their meagre incomes with the unemployed members of their families and communities, thereby reducing their own caloric in-take and productivity. Plausibly, the EGS could also contain the "added worker" effect where members of the families joined the informal labour market in anticipation of a reduction in income or a possible economic risk. In his opinion, the value of the guarantee was still largely unappreciated especially in terms of how it could minimize local elite capture, possible when there was rationing, at the same time as helping households avoid behaviour that could lead to poverty traps or cause them to forego high-return activities and investment in education. One constraint in the Philippines was the lack of an institutional counterpart for such a scheme. The Department of Labour and Employment had a view of itself as being mainly an enforcer of the Labour Code. The Central Bank was focused on inflation targeting, whilst the Planning Agency targeted economic growth. Like employment creation, poverty reduction was taking on the character of a residual outcome, not the first-order goal of public programmes and policies. Good design and evaluation could be a tool for advocacy of an EGS together with its targeting local areas under special distress: e.g. post-disaster resettlement and climate change preparedness; urban development to increase serviced lands and keep land prices within the reach of the poor in the urban areas; income-support for fisher folk in exhausted fishing grounds; entrepreneurial poor in coconut areas who hope to graduate from subsistence and embed themselves in more risky but higher-return agricultural value chains; post-conflict economic and community reconstruction in

Mindanao; frontline health workers linking women and newborns to scarce medical professionals and distance facilities and as a complement to the existing CCT programme. Most PEPs started as safety net programmes for specific groups of the population that were affected by severe income loss or structural vulnerabilities. Such programmes had several economic and social returns. The discussion highlighted the need to spell out the various economic and developmental spill-overs those programmes could have. At the household level, they helped increase household income and local demand for consumption while, at the territorial level, they could increase community assets and infrastructure affording greater increased access to markets, stimulating local economic development and opening up opportunities for entrepreneurial activities and human capital accumulation. It was imperative to convince finance and economic ministries that such programmes had concrete financial and economic returns. Stronger empirical research and solid evaluation methodologies were needed. There was also a potential to include a wider range of development conditionalities such as training components to increase employability of the workers.

Session 6: Decent work for youth development

Key Issues

Mr. Basten (IIASA) and Mr. Herrmann (UNFPA) presented the demographic issues. They showed the impact different fertility assumptions would have on the population of Least Developed Countries (LDCs). If fertility remained constant, there would be very rapid population growth and a very large young population which would make a resource crisis likely, particularly in African LDCs. A more realistic scenario that assumed some decline in fertility rates would account for some lowering of those countries' very high dependency ratios although most LDCs would still have a very young (and unskilled and uneducated) population by 2050. In other parts of the world in the past, notably South East Asia, population growth had provided an opportunity to take advantage of a growing workforce to boost economic growth. But the "demographic dividend" did not automatically guarantee economic growth. It required investment in human capital development and employment that was both productive and remunerative in order to generate a virtuous circle of investment in health and education, a more skilled and productive workforce and economic growth which in turn would generate resources to invest in social services and education. Investment in physical and human capital was critically needed, in particular in secondary and vocational education, if LDCs were to take advantage of their rapid population growth. It was especially important to invest in women's education because it had an impact on lower fertility rates. Although the population of the LDC was becoming increasingly urban, there remained a need to address the challenges of the rural setting in order to address the push and pull factors accounting for urban-rural migration and urbanization.

Mr. Miller presented the main conclusions of his paper on "Stimulating full and freely chosen productive employment for young people". He said that youth should not be seen as a problem but as an opportunity. In the recent decades there had been a declining participation of youth in employment driven by staying in school longer, particularly in East Asia. This was a positive trend. The recent financial crisis had reinforced such a long term trend, but mainly as a result of youth dropping out of both education and the labour market: "the discouraged worker effect". This had been strongest in the developed economies while, in poor countries, youth could not afford inactivity and had to enter the crowded informal economy. From his review of a large set of traditional programmes for youth employment, he had noted a strong focus on vocational education and training (1/3 interventions) and the promotion of entrepreneurship. The costs of those programmes were high and their success limited, as a large amount of resources were invested for very few young people placed. Self employment and entrepreneurship schemes resulted mainly in youth doing this, not because of choice but out of necessity. So very few expanded their

business and many were bound to failure. The critical question was whether those programmes were the most effective approach and if they could achieve the scale necessary to tackle the problem. He suggested to place more emphasis on direct interventions to create jobs in order to absorb young people, moving from supply to demand-driven programmes, including support for public and private sector job creation, wage equality, industrial policies and improving the regulatory environment to improve productivity in the informal economy. He mentioned the right-based approach of NREGA in India suggesting to use similar programmes to target vulnerable youth. The point was not to shut down conventional programmes and measures, but to broaden the policy approach to include a coherent and complementary set of supply and demand interventions.

Good practices – “Round robin”

A “round robin” interactive discussion permitted the participants to learn more about three model projects: The Joint Interagency Youth Employment and Management of Migration project in Serbia; the ILO-IFAD PROMER project Senegal and the FAO’s Junior Farmer and Life Schools programme.

Youth Employment and Management of Migration in Serbia (a joint Spanish Fund MDG programme), presented by Valli Corbanese, Development Consultant

The programme - implemented by IOM, ILO, UNDP and UNICEF - supports national and local institutions to implement youth employment measures and reduce the negative labour market impact of return and irregular migration. It started in the South Backa, Belgrade and Peinjski Districts in South Serbia in 2009. One objective was to strengthen the capacity of national and local institutions to design integrated labour market and social services and to pilot innovative employment programmes and social services. The programme targets disadvantaged young women and men, especially young Roma returning to Serbia under readmission agreements, as well as those at risk of social exclusion who are prime candidates for outmigration. As it involves a variety of social services for a differentiated target group, the engagement of different UN agencies is critical to its smooth functioning. The programme has also contributed to improving data collection and the monitoring of youth employment in the national labour force survey and it is supporting the development of a national employment strategy for youth employment and migration. In the discussion, participants raised several issues concerning the costs and returns of the set of active labour market policies (ALMPs) implemented. Evaluation of similar programmes in developed economies showed high costs of youth-targeted ALMPs, questioning the return to public programmes, particularly when the informal economy absorbed much of the gains. It was suggested that returns could be gauged by comparing costs of services/programmes per individual against the taxes paid by those individuals and the benefits in the form of lower unemployment insurance allocations. Another issue discussed was the role of indicators, performance monitoring and impact evaluation.

Creating rural decent jobs in Senegal through youth entrepreneurship, presented by Loretta de Luca, ILO

PROMER II is a large-scale programme financed by IFAD to promote the development of rural Medium and Small Enterprises (MSEs). ILO has responsibility for two major components: access to training and non-financial support services, and strengthening professional organizations, half of which are run by women and MSE representatives. In Senegal, the programme covers four rural localities and over 15 value chains (including cereals, textiles, apiculture, milk, mechanics, textiles and wood work). In addition to the provision of conventional training and business support services, the programme provides beneficiaries with a wide range of services covering occupational safety and health, child

labour prevention, gender awareness and basic elements of health insurance and social protection. The component dealing with the building of associations of local producers allows stakeholders to become involved in local policies and programmes to strengthen supply chains and improve local physical and social infrastructure. The participants discussed three challenges facing the programme. In response to the first - how to improve coordination and synergies with other UN agencies- suggestions included conducting a mapping of what other agencies were undertaking to determine complementarities and share machinery and facilities. The second question focused on how to mainstream the approach of PROMER in national policy, with discussants proposing to forge a multiagency common message and use it for large scale advocacy. The third question concerned how to leverage international support. Suggestions included utilizing the MDG acceleration framework, building bridges with national and international employers' organizations, and establishing linkages between local supply chains and counterpart supply chains in developed and developing countries.

**The Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) programme, presented
by Peter Wobst, FAO.**

The JFFLS approach developed by FAO has a unique learning methodology and a curriculum combining agricultural and life skills. Trained extension workers, teachers and social animators use a participatory methodology to pass on agricultural knowledge and life skills to young boys and girls from 15 to 18. These sessions are given two to three times a week in the field and classroom after regular school hours. The one-year learning programme follows the crop cycle; links are established between agriculture, nutrition, gender equality and life-skills knowledge so that young participants learn to grow healthy crops while making informed decisions for leading healthy lives. Participatory field activities include crop selection and cultivation, land preparation, pest management, cultivation of medicinal plants and income generation; local theatre, art, dance or songs are also integral aspects of each JFFLS day. The schools address a wide range of issues such as gender sensitivity, child protection, psycho-social support, nutrition, health, hygiene, sanitation, education and business skills; ad-hoc modules for child labour prevention and land and property rights can also be included in the curriculum of the JFFLS. The programme was piloted in Mozambique in 2004 and since then has been implemented in Burundi, Cameroon, DRC, Ghana, Gaza & West Bank, Kenya, Namibia, Nepal, Rwanda, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Through the development of agricultural skills, youth learn the importance of sustainable farming practices and the environment. Questions raised by participants included the importance of having different ministries and agencies working together at the local level and queries about the methods of monitoring and evaluation.

Interagency Cooperation on youth employment

The discussion on youth employment continued with the presentations of Gianni Rosas (ILO) and Markus Pilgrim (Youth Employment Network). The session was moderated by Donald Lee (UNDESA). Mr. Rosas focused on the lessons and experience learnt from the UN Joint Programmes and projects. A review of National Development Frameworks and PRS strategies showed that more than half now had youth employment as a priority. The same trend was seen in the new UNDAFs. There was growing interest on working together in the UN for example in the Arab States where the regional undg is developing a joint youth employment strategy. A UN Network on Youth Development issues had been established and for the International Year of Youth a joint statement was issued by 32 UN agencies. There was also a proliferation of donor funding and trust funds such as the Peace Building Funds. The most important was the Spanish MDG fund which provided funding for joint programmes on Youth Employment and Migration. Joint guidelines for funding were developed, which provided an opportunity for a common approach and programming framework. The guidelines emphasized mainstreaming youth employment in national

policies and promoted innovative approaches emphasizing the importance of a decent work approach to the joint programming. The process was not necessarily easy but it provided a unique learning experience and much improved policy coherence around youth issues as UN agencies and national institutions were really starting to work together towards the same goal.

The ILO was carrying out a review of those programmes and Mr. Rosas shared some of the main lessons. There should be a limited number of agencies involved, as too many agencies could bring fragmentation while a smaller number ensures closer cooperation and cohesiveness. Only agencies with relevant expertise and comparative advantage should participate. There are high transaction costs to the participating agencies. Decisions are taken by consensus not only within the UN partners but with national authorities and in some cases regional authorities. This slows down decision making. There is also a need to increase flexibility to be able to adjust the programme after the implementation had begun, something that was hard to do with the existing mechanisms. Obstacles to joint programming also derived from the fact agencies follow different administrative and financial procedures, thus slowing down delivery. He also mentioned the cumbersome nature of reporting, due to the need to provide multiple reports over the course of the year and across several agencies.

Markus Pilgrim presented his organization, the Youth Employment Network (YEN), as an example of interagency cooperation given its nature as a partnership between the UN, the ILO, and World Bank. Founded in 2001, the YEN is fully externally funded and is hosted at the ILO Headquarters in Geneva, with field offices in Dakar and Dar Es Salaam. He charted the evolution of the organization as it gradually shifted its focus from advocacy, technical assistance and capacity building for youth towards impact assessments, benchmarking of youth employment programmes and policies, and two specific operational programmes called the Youth-to-Youth Fund and the YEN Marketplace. Mr. Pilgrim assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the YEN, mentioning its interagency nature as a selling point. Among the weaknesses, he noted the organization's weak funding basis and low financial commitments from the multilateral partners. He suggested the need for greater support from UN DESA in contacting potential donors and called for financial contribution and support from a wider range of UN agencies.

Session 7: Policy coherence on the ground

This session discussed policy coherence and delivering as one at country level, focusing on institutional constraints as well as enabling factors for better coordination. The panellists underscored the importance of policy coherence in achieving the broad-based development objectives of the UN system and those set out in national development frameworks.

Ms. Gabriele Köhler emphasized that the ultimate purpose for policy coherence and the UN system to deliver as one is to improve and transform the human condition of disadvantaged groups and individuals in developing countries. As a starting point, the UN system should ensure its operational objectives are being led by the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Ms. Köhler went on to describe two recent policy coherence initiatives in Nepal and the Maldives, which prioritized employment and social protection. In Nepal, the enabling factor for policy coherence was spurred by the need to provide a peace dividend after emerging from a ten-year civil war. Emphasis was placed on labour market reforms, which was buttressed through support from governments and UN donor agencies, resulting in the establishment of a steering committee focusing on social protection, employment intensive growth, employment guarantee schemes and improvements in social pensions and child benefits. In the Maldives, the political moment for reform came about by a fiscal crisis marked by a 40 per cent budget deficit, social tensions, particularly around youth issues, and mounting tensions between the conservative government and the general population. As a result, the newly-established government

centred its policy coherence intervention on social protection measures by postponing privatization of social services, introducing a social protection floor into its development plan and securing a social pension system. Drawing upon these two examples, Ms. Köhler elaborated upon five enabling factors which help drive policy coherence. First, a policy moment must take place nationally which spurs the desire to change. Once this takes place, the UN system should be positioned to seize the moment and support governments with technical expertise. Second, there must be policy autonomy at the government level. In the case of Nepal, the autonomy was based on the desire to provide increased fiscal space and, in the Maldives, it was a result of a new ambitious government wanting reforms. Third, she explained that policy coherence around specific themes often resulted from a common “zeitgeist” or “spirit of the times”, which may explain why the two countries decided to focus on social protection and decent work. Fourth, the UN system must be able to provide unchartered policy content to underpin the policy level actions taken by governments. Fifth, the agents for change are often solidified by interpersonal trust and sympathy, without individual agencies vying for positions and greater visibility.

Ms. Köhler went on to highlight a number of persistent impediments to coherence. At the normative level she asserted that the UN system does not talk sharp. As an example, she questioned whether or not the UN system is truly committed to the principles contained in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights since agencies often times do not account for human rights in their country level programming. She asserted that the UNs comparative advantage and defining purpose is based on human rights and thus should provide the basis for all of its operational work. Ms. Köhler further explained that inconsistencies prevailed in the UN system between its analytical and technical work. For example, she questioned whether the UN is now committed to the Keynesian model or a different economic theory as it remains difficult to decipher clear and consistent policy messages which also translate into action on the ground. Another impediment is that the UN is often driven by project-based outcomes rather than development policies which have also been proven to lead to employment generation. Impediments also stem from organizational boundaries defined by inter-agency mistrust; competition for funding and mandate encroachment. Additionally, managerial and personal politics between individuals creates difficult barriers for effective coordination, particularly at country level. She emphasized that the success of country teams is often determined by inter-personal sympathies and thus the UN should be much more sensitized to this issue.

Providing a set of next steps, Ms. Köhler emphasized the need to build on the Millennium commitment and the human development concept as unifiers to guide increased policy discourse at regional and national levels. She indicated that such meetings should not necessarily be limited to the UNDAFs alone but should include broader development objectives based on normative principles that define the UN. In this regard, there is a need to rethink the notion of recipient country ownership, particularly in the case of clear violations of human rights. The UN must recapture its lead role in advocating for universal human rights and social justice in order to better inform and develop policy.

Jealous Chirouve (ILO-Lusaka) focused his intervention on issues surrounding policy coherence and Delivering as One in Zambia, exposing opportunities and challenges for better coordination in order to meet development targets. As a background, he indicated that in the past ten years Zambia had maintained a positive growth rate around 6.1 per cent with roughly 500,000 formal jobs. On the other hand, the informal sector remains high, over 70 per cent of the population is dependent upon work in the agriculture sector and poverty has not decreased. Zambia’s national plan (2011-2015) targets these persistent development challenges but he underscored that the macroeconomic strategy remains concentrated on maintaining single digit inflation without linking economic growth to decent work outcomes. He emphasized that employment and social protection are, however, included in the new poverty reduction strategy, which may lead to improved

policy coherence amongst UN agencies contributing to these objectives under the UNDAF process.

Turning to specific operational impediments at country level, he emphasized that while the MDGs and the UNDAFs provided a framework for collaboration, the lack of participation from the IFIs in these processes leaves gaping holes in policy coordination. He emphasized the importance of dialogue amongst the UN agencies and the IFIs to better coordinate and understand the policies, programmes, and actions of each agency in order to maximize country level assistance. He suggested that donor countries hold the potential to spur improved coordination amongst UN agencies by providing incentives through the funding of specific development themes. He reiterated the importance of the Resident Coordinator in ensuring coherence amongst UN agencies, but insisted that policy coherence on the ground must come from the top. In this regard, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of the programmes and priorities of each agency on the ground in order to coordinate and maximize development potential. There is also a need to forge better coherence at the administrative level within and between agencies in order to increase efficiency. On the issue of inclusion, he emphasized that non-resident agencies are often inadvertently left behind in the implementation phase, even if they are included in the UNDAF because of their lack of presence as well as the volume of meetings and reporting requirements. Therefore, special attention must be given to non-resident agencies to ensure that they remain active partners in country-level development processes.

In the ensuing discussion, several suggestions were made for improved engagement within the UN system with the aim of forging better coherence. One discussant stated that whether or not all agencies, governments and IFIs ever come to an agreement on a single policy framework, the main objective that the UN should strive for is to better understand each other. While policy disagreements may always persist, the importance lies in understanding each position. Similarly, another discussant said that, even though there are several development frameworks, the UN should strive for better coordination and structure. Another discussant insisted that the change agent to bring about policy coherence must come from the national level as change cannot happen at the project level. Another discussant indicated that many of the issues raised in the session may warrant discussion in other UN bodies such as HLCP. Further, he emphasized the importance of policy dialogue and said the challenge is to continue to multiply policy meetings in order to forge better coherence. Another discussant called for a renewed focus on policy. The UN system should determine which policies work and thereby forge a consensus on how to address those specific development challenges in a coordinated way. A discussant stated that the UN system must determine how headquarters can more effectively provide feedback on policy at country level. Addressing the issue of better engagement with the IFIs, a final discussant suggested that national governments could play a more decisive role in ensuring dialogue with the all development partners at country level.

Session 8: Moving forward – Breakout group reflections

The final session of the meeting distilled ideas and suggestions for practical ways to move forward.

Quality research on employment and decent work is needed to develop a stronger knowledge base and greater capacity to assist countries move out of poverty. Focus on coherence can lead to a more integrated policy thinking, paving the way for closer operational interagency collaboration. Topics relevant to policy design include the financing of social policy, the quality of public investment, the labour market behaviour of earners and dependents within poor households, and the availability of reliable labour market and poverty statistics and indicators. Thorough assessment of the impact of public programmes is critical. Joint research efforts among UN agencies could help gain critical

mass and improve dissemination of results, breaking the monopoly by the Bretton Woods Institutions.

Knowledge sharing and capacity building – There are several knowledge tools and handbooks on decent work (ILO, UN-NGLS, UN-Habitat, FAO) that should be better disseminated possibly through the web portal developed under the CEB Toolkit for Mainstreaming Decent Work. New ones should be developed, e.g. guidance notes for UNCTs, policy-makers and stakeholders which include reference to good practice. The curricula of the UN Staff College could be expanded to cover issues of policy design in employment and social policy areas. Capacity building in adopting heterodox policy approaches would be especially helpful.

Advocacy and policy dialogue – The forthcoming UN Summits and Conferences provide an opportunity to advocate for decent work and strengthen UN collaboration; e.g. the topics of productive capacities, rural incomes and youth employment are particularly relevant to LDC4, while decent green jobs is a key theme for Rio+20. Holding an interagency policy dialogue on rural employment and decent work would be of special interest. Policy coherence events should be held at the regional level to tap into the resources of development banks and regional organizations and support work around the regional priorities set up by UN regional teams.

Interagency collaboration - It is important to bring more on board in a more practical way the BWIs who, depending on country contexts, may not be active members within the UN team. The role of donors is critical in providing incentives to collaborate. The experience with the Spanish MDG fund should be replicated; ultimately, policy coherence is a cost-saving mechanism for donors wishing ODA to have an impact.

Distinctive suggestions to strengthen the plan of action for Full Employment and Decent Work under the 2nd UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty include: reaching out to regional organizations such as the European Commission, the African Union and OECD POVNET; involving more closely other agencies dealing with systemic issues - from trade and finance to human rights; developing common advocacy tools; and better monitoring of the activities carried out under the Plan.

Conclusions

Mr. Parisotto expressed his appreciation for the rich debate. The meeting had highlighted the centrality of the labour market in the action to eradicate poverty. Inequalities and poverty were unrelenting in many countries; often they were not created by the labour market but could be addressed through interventions in the labour market. There appeared growing consensus on the potential to put productive employment at the core of the development agenda. It was necessary to pursue discussions on macro-economic policy. Further, there was a need to deepen thinking on meso-level reforms and stronger industrial, agricultural and labour market policies. Evidence on the impact of policies and programmes was imperative in order to inform policy design. The UN system should devote more resources to strengthening its capacity for research, data collection and analysis and promote dialogue to make policy frameworks for development more coherent. Finally, decent work was about jobs as much as rights; this too was a topic for research, analysis and joint action. Mr. Lee concluded reiterating the commitment of UNDESA on developing research, policy briefs and advocacy on employment and Decent Work within the UN General Assembly.

Appendices

Agenda

Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
09:00-10:30	<p>Welcome and Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antonio Graziosi, ITC-ILO • Aurelio Parisotto, ILO • Donald Lee, UNDESA <p><i>World Café - Setting the scene</i></p> <p>☺ 10:30 – Group photo</p>	<p>Innovations in public employment programmes</p> <p>PEP country cases (video)</p> <p>Lessons learnt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marc Van Imschoot, ILO • Jude Esquerra, Institute for Popular Democracy <p>Debate</p>	<p>Opportunities to further inter-agency collaboration - Group reflections</p>
11:00-12:30	<p>Recovery patterns</p> <p>Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moazam Mahmood, ILO <p>Employment-led growth and structural change</p> <p>Expert Panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duncan Campbell ILO • Alfredo Calcagno UNCTAD • Michael Herrman UNFPA <p>Debate</p>	<p>Decent work for youth development (1)</p> <p>Key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve Miller, consultant • Stuart Basten, IIASA <p>Round Robin - Presentation of case studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Wobst, FAO • Valli Corbanese, UN Joint Programme, Serbia • Nteba Soumano, ILO-IFAD Project, Senegal 	<p>Opportunities to further inter-agency collaboration - Presentations</p> <p>Conclusions and ways forward</p> <p>Closure</p>
14:00-15:30	<p>Rural development, employment and decent work</p> <p>Presentation of case studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eve Crowley, FAO • Rosemary Vargas, IFAD <p>Debate</p>	<p>Decent work for youth development (2)</p> <p>Expert panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gianni Rosas, Youth Employment Programme, ILO • Markus Pilgrim, Manager, YEN • Steve Miller, consultant <p>Debate</p>	
16:00-17:30	<p>Policy frameworks for growth, employment and social cohesion</p> <p>Moderated discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Cook, UNRISD • Cathy Pattillo, IMF (videolink) • Isabel Ortiz, UNICEF (videolink) <p>Debate</p> <p>☺ 20:00 – Group dinner</p>	<p>Policy coherence on the ground</p> <p>Presentation of case studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gabriele Köhler, consultant • Jealous Chirouve, ILO Lusaka <p>Debate</p>	

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