

Lack of quality opportunities stalling young people's quest for decent work – UN report

21 November 2017 – Overall economic growth remains disconnected from employment generation, the United Nations International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)) has warned, noting that young people continue to suffer from persistent unemployment and lack of quality job opportunities.

Addressing these persistent labour market and social challenges faced by young women and men is crucial, not only for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth but also for the future of work and societal cohesion, said Deborah Greenfield, the ILO Deputy Director-General for Policy, in a [news release](#) announcing the agency's latest report on youth employment trends.

According to the [Global Employment Trends for Youth](#), while the estimated 70.9 million unemployed youth in 2017 is an important improvement from the crisis peak of 76.7 million in 2009, but that figure is expected to rise by about 200,000 in 2018, reaching a total of 71.1 million.

Furthermore, about 39 per cent of young workers in the emerging and developing world 160.8 million youth are living in moderate or extreme poverty (less than \$3.10 a day), and more than two in every five young people in today's workforce are unemployed or are working but poor, a striking reality that is impacting society across the world.

Worst affected are young women in the workforce, whose presence in the labour force lags behind by about 16.6 per cent compared to their male counterparts. Unemployment rates of young women are also significantly higher than those of young men, and the gender gap in the rate of young people not in employment, education or training is even wider, stated ILO.

Changing dynamics in the world of work

The ILO report also revealed changing dynamics in the employment sector with an increasing number of young jobseekers and young entrepreneurs taking to the internet to find new and diverse forms of employment, such as crowd work, which offer flexibility and expand income earning opportunities.

However, there are grave risks too, such as low incomes, no guarantee of job or income continuity, and lack of access to work-related benefits.

Young people often start their working lives in temporary employment with the knowledge that they may never attain 'job security'. They are more likely to transition to stable and satisfactory employment in developed and emerging economies than in developing countries, noted ILO, calling for greater investments in quality education and skills development.

At the same time, policies must take into account the fast changing world of work now driven by technology to enable young women and men be ahead of the curve, added the report.