Symposium on Globalisation and the Future of Youth in Asia
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Globalisation and Youth Employment

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Globalisation and Youth Employment

• 1 out of every 6 person in the world today is between 15 and 24 years old
  – 1 billion young people between 15 and 24 years old
  – This is 18% of total world population

• World youth unemployment rate has increased from 11.7% in 1993 to 14.4% in 2003
  – 14.4% rate is more than twice overall unemployment rate of 6.2%
  – 88 mil unemployed youth = 47% of 186 mil unemployed globally
  – Youth unemployment can be as high as 25% in some countries
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• **Major policy priority for trade unions**
  – Integrating youth and youth employment
  – Must be placed high on agenda of government’s macroeconomic policies and effective implementation programme
  – Investment in education and training
  – Assist least developed countries to raise literacy and education levels
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• ILO Recommendation on Human Resources Development, Education, Training and Lifelong Learning
  – Employers must behave responsibly and provide opportunities to young people through training, career development and a safe and healthy work environment
  – ILO HRD Recommendation provides good framework for human resource development
  – Social partners, through social dialogue, should explore this Recommendation as a basis for promoting employment and decent work
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• General trend of youth employment in Singapore
  – Decline in labour force participation rate of young people between 15 and 24 years old
  – Labour force participation rate declined from 25.3% in 1993 to 13% in 2003 for those aged 15 – 19; and declined from 80.2% to 71.6% for aged 20 – 24
  – One key reason: Longer period that young people stay in the education system which has been steadily increasing over the years with better educational opportunities and economic growth
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• General trend of youth employment in Singapore
  – Unemployment among young people rose from 7% in June 1998 to 7.8% in June 2003
  – However, pace of increase was slower compared to overall average unemployment figure, which rose from 3.2% to 5.4% over same period
  – Generally, the young do not face a serious unemployment problem in Singapore
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- General trend of youth employment in Singapore
  - On average, younger workers who are retrenched take a shorter time to find another job compared to older workers as they have better skills and qualifications

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age, years old</th>
<th>No. of weeks taken to find another job</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 – 29</td>
<td>7.8</td>
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<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>12.3</td>
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<td>40 – 49</td>
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<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>15.8</td>
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Figures as at June 2003
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• General trend of youth employment in Singapore
  – While number of unemployed youth rose from 17,000 in 1998 to 20,000 in 2003, their share of total unemployed shrank sharply from 27% to 17% over same period
  – This partly reflects the ageing workforce and the delayed entry of youth into the labour market
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• General trend of youth employment in Singapore
  – Global trend of using more contract work becoming more discernible in Singapore
  – Viewed as an opportunity to gain as much experience as possible from different employers to enhance employability
  – Also some are concerned with the lack of certainty and stability
  – As economy matures, there may be a mismatch in expectations and realities among the young
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• Educational opportunities
  – With effect from Jan 2003, primary education is compulsory in Singapore (about 10 – 11 years of basic education)
  – Channelled into either technical or academic education where employment prospects are good
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• Unions’ role in promoting Lifelong Learning and Employability
  – Job creation and skills upgrading
  – Enhancing wages and employability through skills training/upgrading, employment assistance programme, job re-design and proactive review of employment policies
  – Advocating portable medical and skills training benefits
  – Strengthening social safety net
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• Unions’ role in promoting Lifelong Learning and Employability
  – Skills Redevelopment Programme which was started in 1998
  – Total training places to date: 187,316
  – Survey shows SRP achieved its target in reaching out to older workers and lower educated workers to go for training and skills upgrading to stay employable
  – Skills Development Fund
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• Employment Assistance Programme
  – SNTUC Joblink Centre was set up on Feb 2002 – one-stop job placement centre
  – Pre-counselling and training for job seekers
  – “Train and place” programmes
  – To date, 6,656 job interviews have been arranged
  – About 30% of job seekers at the Joblink Centre are unemployed and below age of 30 years
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• Union membership
  – A current challenge for trade unions in Singapore to stay relevant to changing and increasingly diverse profile of workers in knowledge-based economy
  – Increasing job churn and industry restructuring
  – Seamless Membership Scheme
  – Organising strategies must be adapted; recruitment campaigns etc
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• Union leadership
  – Trade unions must create opportunities for young people to achieve their aspirations, contribute ideas and participate actively in making decisions to shape the future
  – Induct more young men and women to serve in labour movement
  – Establish Youth Chapters in unions
  – Strengthen bonding and networking among young and senior union leaders through regular dialogue sessions and forums; engage the young at various levels and foster a greater sense of belonging
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• Union leadership
  – Training courses for young union leaders
  – Ong Teng Cheong Institute of Labour Studies
  – Structured leadership training programmes
  – National Level:
    • Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports
    • National Youth Council; Singapore Youth Awards, Outstanding Youth in Education Award etc
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• Conclusion
  – The young is our future
  – Integration into society through creation of employment and opportunities
  – Youth development and employment must be placed high on governments’ agendas
  – Employers must provide opportunities to the young to acquire experience and skills in a decent work environment
  – Unions need to re-strategise to attract more young members
  – Strengthen social dialogue at all levels
Thank You