

The African Regional Ministerial Meeting

25 March 2012

ECA Headquarters

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,

**“Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as Drivers of Productive
Capacity and Job Creation”**

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

**in collaboration with the UN Economic Commission for Africa
(ECA) and the International Labour Organization (ILO)**

Discussant

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(AU) and UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)**

Honourable

Out-of school rate for girls is likely to cause lower education achievement. Alternative and after-school hours programmes are necessary to complement school curricula and to maximize children's potential for a successful transition from school to work. Completion of primary education is the springboard to a quality secondary education, which in turn prepares adolescent and young people for decent work. Secondary education content can expand an adolescent's ability to function as actor for development. Investment in preparing girls for secondary and university education is important.

Adolescents need a wide range of skills to be prepared for finding gainful employment. Increasingly skills-based economy and vocational or technical training, providing a second chance to children, victims of child labour or those who have emerged from school without the knowledge and skills they need to secure decent work, contribute to sustainable enterprise development and enable the children to fulfill their greatest potential contribution to their families, communities and development of their country.

Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished participants,




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To achieve social equality, promote sustainable economic growth and prepare skilled human resources to establish a positive environment and culture of entrepreneurship, the following is recommended:

- It is crucial that the right to education, health and decent work is extended to the poorest and most marginalised.
- It is important to invest in child development, beginning with early childhood through adolescence, in order to ensure that adolescents transit easily to adulthood, increasing their capacity for productivity.
- It is also important to focus on quality education with new modern technologies and to promote a positive environment for youth participation in the honouring of governments commitments made at global, regional and national levels as well as economic, social and SME policies. Participation helps youth to build their life skills in relation to the needs of the labour market and self-confidence and empowers them to lead, create, plan and execute their plans.

I thank you for your attention



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