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Main points of *Global Employment Trends, August 2010*:

Up until 2007, the youth labour market trends were somewhat encouraging – youth unemployment rates were decreasing in six of nine regions; youth employment-to-population ratios were decreasing in all but two regions, a strong reflecting of increasing enrolment in education; working poverty remains a formidable problem but had been shown to decrease over the period 1998-2008; and the gender gap in the participation rates of young men and women has shown the tendency to decrease in almost all regions…. But the economic crisis clearly reversed many of these favourable trends and we have seen some dramatic records in the global figures that make it clear that young people have paid a heavy price over the past couple years. In 2009, 80.7 million young people were unemployed; this is the highest global number of unemployed youth ever measured by the ILO. The global youth unemployment rate increased by a record 1.1 percentage points over the crisis period compared to an increase of 0.7 points for adults, which supports the classic premise that youth are the "first out" and "last in" during times of economic recession. We do expect a longer recovery for youth than adults in the labour market. The global youth unemployment numbers and rates are expected to decline only in 2011 whereas the adult unemployment rate should show a decline in 2010.

Three questions

1. What can policies do to directly impact the situation of youth employment?

   There are numerous active labour market policies that benefit youth employment and a combination of such policies are applied in almost every country in the world. During the crisis, most developed countries "scaled up" the use of *employment subsidies* for enterprises hiring young labour, *community service programmes* aimed to keep young people engaged, *unemployment and social assistance benefits* to protect young people's incomes or help them stay in school, *skills development programmes* to enhance employability of disadvantaged youth. The strength of the apprenticeship programme in Germany is one of the main reasons that the youth unemployment rate did not show a significant increase during the crisis period. Other countries are taking lessons from this.

2. I think that an important area for unions to work on is:

   Labour market recovery remains highly dependent on the how governments react and in which areas stimulus and other support measures are focused, so in this regards the unions need to continue to stand up for equity in terms of who pays the price from recent government austerity measures. People can understand and accept difficult choices, if they perceive that all share in the burden of pain. You can call on governments to ensure that their reforms do not sacrifice the job-centred policies that are needed to reduce the risk of growing long-term unemployment, higher structural informality and skills' mismatch in the event of recovery. These measures include well-designed active labour market policies, targeted measures to support vulnerable groups, notably youth, training policies that serve the needs of recovery – in countries where this takes place – and employment-oriented social protection. In other words, it is your job to constantly remind the government to put people and jobs first in the recovery strategy.

3. An exercise for all participants of the Congress is:

   Remember the importance of keeping young people engaged and do your part in opening the door for them. Somebody gave you your first chance in the labour market – brought you in, mentored you, promoted you, gave you the possibility to gain confidence in your field and develop a career. Consider doing the same for a young person – either by bringing someone on yourself (if you are a manager and have any say in human resources) or working with employers and governments to promote a joint mentality of giving young people a fair chance. We will need targeted interventions if we are to keep our young people motivated.