

Youth employment action plan ends in Accra

ECOWAS (Economic Community Of West African States) Member States have been urged to establish a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the efficacy of their National Youth Employment Plans in responding to the youth employment challenges facing the region.

This was one of the recommendations of a four-day workshop jointly organised by the ECOWAS Commission and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to build the capacities of experts from Member States on the implementation of these plans. The workshop which ended on 10 May 2013 in Accra, Ghana also called for the effective supervision of the implementation of the plans.

Participants also urged Member States to operationalise their plans where they exist and undertake a study on the phenomenon of jobless growth, as well as jointly monitor the development and impact of their National Action Plans on Youth Employment in the region.

Moreover, they called for stakeholder sensitisation on the need to develop such plans where they do not exist, while decision-makers should be sensitized on the need to mainstream youth employment across policy and programme areas.

Furthermore, the participants encouraged Member States to popularize the outcome of the workshop, stress the importance of developing National Action Plans on Youth Employment to all stakeholders in Member States, and ensure the development and validation of National Youth Employment Action Plans within a short period in their countries.

Facilitate the exchange of experiences

They specifically urged the ECOWAS Commission to facilitate the exchange of experiences on youth employment programmes and initiatives amongst Member States, and designate focal points in the countries on National Youth Employment Action Plans.

The Commission was also urged to draw up a roadmap, with targets, on the process to develop National Youth Employment Action Plans.

It should also facilitate technical support for the development of National Youth Employment Action Plans in Member States, as well as towards the review of employment policies in Member States.

Participants also called on the Commission to facilitate the conduct of studies in Member States to identify high youth employment intensive sectors; and develop an advocacy plan for the development and implementation of National Youth Employment Action Plans.

Represented at the workshop were the Ministries responsible for Youth Affairs and the National Youth Councils or National Youth Associations in ECOWAS Member States, the ECOWAS National Unit in Ghana, the Ouagadougou-based ECOWAS Youth and Sports Development Centre, and the ILO, which provided technical assistance.

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