***ILO Statement for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction***

***Cancun, 22-26 May 2017***

***Disaster response:***

***Putting Youth at the centre of prevention and resilience***

The Sendai Framework marked a shift away from disaster management, towards disaster risk management and from a focus on recovery to prevention and preparedness.

The ILO’s decent work agenda, including a rights-based and employment-centred response to disasters, is a key dimension of national and international efforts to realize the Sendai goals.

The normative framework for Employment and decent work responses to conflict and disasters, to be adopted at the International Labour Conference in June 2017, will provide the updated guidance needed for such a comprehensive action adapted to local and national circumstances.

We know too well that efforts to eradicate poverty and to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals will remain elusive so long as disasters, whether of sudden onset or developing at a slow pace, erode peoples’ sources of livelihoods, assets, jobs and businesses, triggering instability and displacement. Their impact is significant particularly in fragile settings, with often long-term structural implications on governance and institutional capacity for resilience.

The ILO’s experience of technical cooperation with countries and tripartite constituents (government, employers’ and workers’ organizations) in disaster-prone countries clearly shows the importance of an employment-centred agenda in prevention and preparedness and for strengthening the resilience of nations and communities. It also points to the role that young women and men can play as proactive agents of change for recovery, preparedness and prevention, when empowered and supported.

This role however is often hampered by the increasing difficulties young women and men face in accessing decent work opportunities and in contributing to local and national development. More than 70 million young people are unemployed worldwide, and around 40 per cent of the world’s active youth population is either unemployed or living in poverty despite being employed. Six out of ten working youth in fragile settings are in informal employment or do not earn enough to lift themselves, their families and their community out of poverty.

We believe a paradigm shift that puts youth at the centre of prevention and resilience by focussing on their education, skills and employment opportunities and that enables their full engagement in local and national disaster risk management is the most effective way forward. The Cancun Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction provides an opportunity to identify and promote concrete action in this respect.

The recently launched [Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/databases-platforms/global-initiative-decent-jobs/lang--en/index.htm), and its priority focus on Youth in fragile settings, is the multi-stakeholder partnership that can realize such a paradigm shift by garnering collaboration of government, social partners, private sector, youth organizations, and 22 United Nations entities to scale up impact and action.

This is an action platform that puts focus on youth at the centre of humanitarian and development action, and promotes the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals with action on climate change and follow-up on the Sendai framework.

Global humanitarian and development action should tackle natural and man-made risks with increased effectiveness. In parallel, a people-centred approach should be nurtured helping local governance with bottom-up initiatives, supporting the needs and aspirations of local populations, especially young people.

Directing the energy and creativity of young women and men towards enhanced community resilience requires inclusive and sustained interventions of social and economic empowerment. Youth must be consulted and their voices heard at all stages.

Demand-driven skills training (from soft to technical skills), employment services, SME development, and the creation of job opportunities through local, economic, social and environmental investments are key elements of preparedness and disaster response.

Recent employment-intensive investment programmes in Haiti, Samoa and the Philippines introduced local resource-based approaches and youth contracting to promote infrastructure development and community works leading to positive impacts as regards to disaster preparedness and immediate recovery and reconstruction.

Certainly, **a paradigm shift** is necessary to support youth globally and their community-level engagements. The alignment of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction commitments and of those stemming from the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth is paramount to foster synergies by all actors, both public and private.