**SOCIAL FORUM 2019**

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Statement for the panel discussion “How education today can strengthen opportunities for the future”

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“The role of education and training for a better life and decent work”

My section is responsible for youth literacy and skills development. In this panel discussion, we are talking about the future. So I would like to discuss how we capture the demand for skills for the future and what kind of training and education we are trying to provide by helping our Member States.

First of all, I would like to mention that our focus is youth and adults, also we have colleagues working on children and the basic general education. However, the mandate of our section is technical and vocational education and skills development for youth and adults.

I would like to briefly introduce the policy and strategies we are using in order to help our member states, and then focus on the specific programmes and activities that we have been conducting.

UNESCO's Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 2016-2021 has three priority areas. The first one is youth employment and youth employability. Second, it focuses on equity and gender equality. Third, it is aimed at helping member states to transform their societies to greener economies, including further introduction of the digital space and digitalization in those countries.

UNESCO has a set of recommendations for member states to improve education and training systems of their countries. These recommendations concern access, inclusion, equity, financing, management, etc. But what makes our section slightly different from the rest of the education subsector is our aim to ensure the cross-cutting nature of our interventions. Vocational education is not exclusively the mandate of the Ministry of Education. For this reason, we try to work with other ministries as well in order to have a better understanding of the skills needed in the labor market, and to have a better understanding of the specific sectors, such as agriculture or industries.

In our work, we always aim to engage economic communities, such as industries, employers associations and trade unions. Whenever we provide a policy advice to our member states, we ensure engagement of those stakeholders, as well as non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and communities.

In relation to our recommendations, we are now preparing conceptual publications, focusing on the entitlement of lifelong learning, because we would like to ensure that every citizen has the entitlement to learning opportunities throughout their life. We have been trying to collect specific cases from member states, but this is not easy, because, unlike the educational sector, in most countries, there is no unified lifelong learning system. Very often, it is the combination of many different aspects. Some countries provide lifelong learning programs within the educational sector, while others provide relevant programmes under employment services or social protection sectors. We are working on compiling different practices in order to provide a better understanding of what policy actions and institutional arrangements would be needed to ensure lifelong learning entitlements.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight our current activities. We receive many requests from member states urging us to respond to the needs of the forth industrial revolution. In this context, we are exploring the possibility of providing a technical service to educational and training institutions to introduce emerging technologies, such as 3D printing, the use of drones and the use of Internet of Things. This is especially useful in order to manage the plant growth in the agricultural sector. In the previous presentation, there was a reference to the Fab Lab, and this is also what we are trying to do. We are encouraging training institutions to become technical prototype platforms in order to initiate innovative ideas or plans to meet the needs of the fourth industrial revolution.

Regarding the future skills needs, we have been helping some of the countries to forecast the kind of skills that might be needed in the future, disaggregated by occupation and by industries. There is plenty of information and data available under these variables, including the administrative data, labor survey data, censuses and other quantitative data. We are trying to use as many sources of existing data as possible and to build our forecast, focusing on the type of skills needed in the labor market. The lack of data is a serious challenge in low income countries, but even in those countries, people are using online job search platforms. So we are trying to obtain the big data from those private online platforms for our analysis, and thereby to provide a better information for job seekers and for education planners.