



YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND THE PROMISE OF SMES

Kempinsky Nile Hotel, Cairo, 27 June 2024

AGENDA

9:00-9:30 ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANTS

9:30-10:00 OPENING: WELCOME REMARKS

The welcome remarks will be delivered by representatives from the Egyptian Minister of Social Solidarity, Sawiris Foundation, and ESCWA.

[Medhat Abdelrasheed](#) (Ministry of Social Solidarity) opening remarks

[AbdelRahman Nagy](#) (Learning and Strategy Director, Sawiris Foundation) opening remarks

[Bryony Steyn](#) (ESCWA) opening remarks

10:00-11:00 SESSION 1: ARE THE CHALLENGES FACING YOUTH NEW OR AS ANCIENT AS THE PYRAMIDS?

Young people have always competed for employment upon graduation from school or university, and have always started at the bottom of the ladder. This session will explore if the challenges facing young people in Egypt are a rite of passage or if they are new and problematic in scale?

[Medhat Abdelrasheed](#) (Ministry of Social Solidarity) will present the changing landscape for young people.

[Bryony Steyn](#) (ESCWA) will briefly present the key findings from 'Youth Employment Dynamics in Egypt: Challenges and Opportunities'.

[Mohamed Ahmed](#) (Zewail City, youth representative) will present his concerns for employment after graduation.

[Farida Samir](#) (Pharos University, youth representative) will present her concerns for employment after graduation.

11:00-11:15 COFFEE BREAK

11:15-12:15 SESSION 2: YOUNG PEOPLE AND SMES – PROMISING POTENTIAL OR A DANGEROUS TRAP?

Young people are disproportionately employed in SMEs and are increasingly SME owners providing employment opportunities to their peers. This session will unpack the type of employment opportunities provided by SMEs to young people, and will question whether they can be the mobilizing force behind achieving greater youth employment in Egypt, or whether they risk trapping young people in unproductive and informal employment.

[Salim Araji](#) (ESCWA) will briefly present the key findings from 'Building tomorrow: SMEs Potential to Create Youth Employment in Egypt'.

[Abdulrhman Elhalafawy](#) (Owner of Cupmena, SME representative) will present their experience in offering employment opportunities, and the main constraints that they face.



12:15-1:15 SESSION 3: WHAT ABOUT SKILLS?

This session will explore if there is a labour market mismatch in the skills provided by young people and those demanded by companies. It will hear from youth and SMEs on their views of the skills mismatch and the training opportunities available to them to bridge any skills deficit.

Salim Araj (ESCWA) will present the potential entry-level skills in demand, using ESCWA skills monitor.

Diaa Eldin Mohamed (Executive Manager, MASS Health Care, SME representative) will present the options available to SMEs to provide skills training to new employees.

Ms. Malak Mohamed (Pharos University, youth representative) will present the options available to young people to accumulate skills for the labour market.

1:15-1:30 COFFEE BREAK

1:30-2:30 SESSION 4: BUILDING TOMORROW'S TOP LISTED COMPANIES

This session will explore how we can solve the challenges facing both young people and SMEs in Egypt to produce innovative, dynamic, and fast-growing SMEs that are a key source of high-quality employment for young people. It will provide practical policy solutions for policymakers, SMEs, and young people.

Bryony Steyn (ESCWA) will briefly present the policy recommendations from the two policy briefs developed.

Salim Araj (ESCWA) will wrap up the dialogue.

2:30 CLOSING LUNCH

The dialogue will close with a lunch that offers policymakers, young people, the private sector, and civil society organisations the chance to interact, share experiences and opportunities.