UNESCAP Fourth Session of the Committee on Social Development

(1) good practices on new and innovative approaches to facilitate young people's transition from school to work;
(2) regional priorities and areas for policy support, research and capacity-building needs and opportunities for multi-stakeholder and South-South cooperation with regard to enhancing education and employment prospects for youth in Asia and the Pacific; and
(3) broad programmatic direction of the work of the secretariat on youth, given the mandates and frameworks referred to in the background document; and
(4) feedback on the concept of the proposed Youth Toolbox.

The Philippines Government's programs have been geared toward providing Filipinos with the necessary knowledge and skills to achieve their goals. The K to 12 program for instance, adds two more years in basic education that will equip learners with skills that will prepare them for the future, whether it be: employment, entrepreneurship, skills development or higher education. Contributing to this objective is the Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program, a conditional cash transfer program which provides cash assistance to poor families to enable them to send their children to school regularly.

To help out-of-school youth gain broader access to economic opportunities, the Philippines has also been implementing the Aboj-Alam program, which translates to Knowledge Within Reach. This is a maiden initiative that aims to map out-of-school youth nationwide and match them with appropriate interventions in education and skills training.

Other investments have also been made on TVET programs in order to equip millions of graduates from various courses with skills relevant to different industries. Moreover, the Philippine Government institutionalized the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) to support the development and maintenance of pathways and equivalencies and provide access to qualifications and assist people to move easily and readily between the different education and training sectors and between these sectors and the labor market. In terms of higher education, the Philippines has been working continuously to eliminate substandard and non-compliant programs, while developing programs in high demand and emerging fields.

The Philippines also implements programs that help at-risk youth to be job-ready in terms of acquiring the skill sets required by employers such as life skills, technical and company internship through the JobStart Program. Further, advancements in ICT have been harnessed to disseminate timely labor market information (LMI) and provide a web-based job portal to improve the job search process through a computerized job matching and referral facility. The Philippine Talent Mapping Initiative also aims to create the most comprehensive workforce profile of the country and is supplemented by the ongoing skills measurement activity supported by the World Bank through the Skills Toward Employment and Productivity (STEP) survey.

A Career Guidance Advocacy Plan, 2013-2016 was also formulated by key government agencies in the Philippines to ensure that students, parents, industries, and training institutions are provided with appropriate and timely knowledge on the realities of the labor market for more informed career decisions.
In terms of cooperation in the region, we encourage knowledge-sharing and the conduct of fora where the youth, the academe, training institutions, and the industry groups can all participate and ensure that policy issues on school to work transition can be threshed out.

On the development of the Youth Toolbox, this is a welcome initiative to provide information for both the youth and policy-makers. However, it is suggested that engagement of the industry groups and employers be also included in the platform. Information from employers and industry groups may be helpful in terms of finding out the skill sets they require for certain jobs, or the adjustment in policies that may have to be made in order to facilitate smooth transition from school to work among the youth.