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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPECOMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT**Working Party on Industry and Enterprise Development**Second Meeting of the Team of Specialists on
Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation

Geneva, Switzerland, 29 August 2002

REPORT**Background**

1. The Second Meeting of the Team of Specialists on Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation was organized by the Coordinating Unit for Operational Activities of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in connection with the First Regional Forum on Youth: "Security, Opportunity and Prosperity" held at the Palais des Nations on 26-28 August 2002.
2. Experts from Israel, Italy, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia attended the Meeting.

Organization of the Meeting

3. The Meeting was chaired by *Ms. Daniela Fiori*, SME Officer of the Italian Ministry of Productivity, in co-chairmanship with *Ms. Rachel Golden* (USA), and *Mr. Mihajlo Vasiljevic* (Yugoslavia). The Meeting was serviced by *Mr. Antal Szabó*, Regional Adviser on Entrepreneurship and SMEs.

4. After the welcoming address by *Ms. Larissa Kapitsa*, Director of the Coordinating Unit on Operational Activities, *Ms. Daniela Fiori*, Chairperson of the Team of Specialists on Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation, gave a brief overview of the activities carried out since the first meeting held in Geneva on the 11 February 2002.

5. The Chairperson reminded the participants that, according to the recommendations of the first meeting, a Questionnaire was prepared in order to assess target population, needs and the existing programmes/projects aiming at alleviating youth poverty and unemployment. The Triple E-Questionnaire (Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship) was distributed to all UNECE member countries early 2002 and made also available on the UNECE web-site. So far, only three Countries – Belarus, Bulgaria and Kyrgyzstan - sent the completed questionnaires back to the ECE secretariat.

6. The Chairperson highlighted the outcome of the First Regional Forum on Youth, especially the session of the Working Group on Youth Entrepreneurship, co-chaired by UNECE, Vice-Chairperson of the TOS on Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation and ILO. The Forum gathered excellent information on current practices in facilitating young entrepreneurship in the UNECE region. In spite of the fact, that all the documents were made available on the ECE web-site at <http://www.unece.org/operact/meetings/youth/papers.htm>, English and Russian translations and Executive Summaries of some of them would be needed to make these materials more accessible and more useful for everybody.

7. Some experts mentioned, that their countries forwarded project proposals to the UNECE secretariat. Representatives of Kyrgyzstan and Yugoslavia expressed their concern not getting answer to their proposals. The UNECE Regional Adviser on Entrepreneurship and SMEs informed the participants that these proposals need a further analysis and evaluation.

8. The TOS on Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation also expressed its concern on the lack of financial resources (seed money) to carry out the planned activities and confirmed the necessity to step forward from a voluntary basis approach to a more structured procedure.

Outcome of the Meeting

9. Following the remarks made by the Chairperson, the participants discussed further activities of the TOS on Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation.

10. All experts agreed that because of the complexity of the issues and the diversity of the problems related to youth and poverty alleviation in general, as well as due to the large differences in socio-economic situation amongst the UNECE member States, it is difficult for the TOS to design unified comprehensive policies and produce models and tools suitable for all. Nevertheless the experts agreed, that the TOS would focus on youth entrepreneurship in poverty alleviation, as they consider entrepreneurship and self-employment to be a key element in the development of the future generation.

11. The participants also agreed that due to the differences in quality and quantity of available information on the youth-entrepreneurship theme, each member of the Team would make a proposal to the TOS on countries and/or programmes to be involved in the first phase of activity.

12. The experts agreed that effort should be made to identify in each country an institutional counterpart (national coordinators) both from Government authorities as well as from youth organizations who could ensure the proper follow-up to the proposed activities. In this regard the Meeting of the TOS on Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation suggested to nominate national institutions and/or private counterparts (NGOs) to be involved in Youth programmes. The UNECE Secretariat is requested to send a circular letter to the member States concerning this issue.

Recommendations and follow-up

13. The following recommendations were agreed upon and the following decisions were taken:

14. In order to facilitate the dissemination of information on Best Practices presented at the Youth Forum, the Meeting suggested that the UNECE secretariat would summarize in an Executive Paper (one page per each case including the contact person) all the documents received for the Forum on Youth.

15. The Chairperson of the TOS suggested that the UNECE secretariat would send a circular letter to all ECE Governments:

- to remind the member States to complete the Triple E-Questionnaire and return it to the secretariat as soon as possible;
- to ask member States to nominate National Coordinators on Youth Entrepreneurship and Poverty Alleviation, suggesting that they could be drawn from both the public institutions and the private sector;
- to ask all concerned institutions to forward to the TOS project proposals on youth entrepreneurship to be analysed and selected.

16. The Participants agreed to establish a **Sub-Group on Elaboration of Project Proposals and Selection Criteria** to be chaired by *Ms. Ronit Dolev* (Israel) with participation of *Mr. Denis Toichiev* (Kyrgyzstan), *Ms. Rachel Golden* (USA), *Mr. Andrew Fiddaman* (UK), and *Mr. Jurij Sosjurko* (Ukraine). The Sub-Group will work through e-mail and submit the criteria to the secretariat within two weeks (i.e. by mid September 2002).

17. Based on the output of the Sub-Group on Elaboration of Project Proposals and Selection Criteria, the second Sub-Group will prepare Recommendations on Selected Countries within 6 to 8 weeks, following the approval of the Project Proposal Criteria. The **Sub-Group on Elaboration of Recommendations and Country Selection** will be chaired by *Mr. M. Vasiljievic* (Yugoslavia) with participation of *Mr. A. Idrisov* (Kyrgyzstan), *Mr. V. Kostyuchenko*, *Mr. E. Kovalskiy* and *Mr. V. Khomenko* (Ukraine), as well as *Ms. M. Gannon* (USA).

18. In parallel with the previously mentioned two Sub-Groups, a third one will deal with evaluation of the Best Practices and Project Proposal Selection based on the papers presented at the Forum as well as submitted project proposals. The **Sub-Group on Best Practices and Project Proposals** will be chaired by *Ms. Rachel Golden* (USA). Members of this Sub-Group are the following: *Mr. S. Coropceanu* (Republic of Moldova), *Mr. A. Idrisov* (Kyrgyzstan), *Mr. Ya. Dontsov*, and *Mr. S. Sosyurko* (Ukraine), *Mr. M. Vasiljievic* (Yugoslavia).

19. It was agreed, that Mr. Antal Szabo, UNECE Regional Adviser, would provide coordination between the Secretariat and the Sub-Groups to facilitate the discussions and work among the participating experts.

20. A representative of Kyrgyzstan informed the participants of the Meeting about the high expectation of its Government in assisting young unemployed to get a job. He suggested that the TOS would include into its programme of work the elaboration of a UNECE Guide on How to Create an Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee on Youth Entrepreneurship. It was agreed that Kyrgyzstan would elaborate a draft proposal to be discussed during the forthcoming Meeting of the TOS on Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation. A representative of Ukraine informed the participants about the efforts undertaken in establishing a Youth Business Committee. Ukraine is ready to joint this initiative and contribute to the elaboration of a draft guide.

21. The representatives of Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine suggested that the TOS on Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation would organize sub-regional Forums on Youth, taking the First Regional Forum as a model. It was agreed that Ukraine, as a possible host country, will elaborate a project proposal in co-operation with the UNECE secretariat as well as with other CIS countries to organize such a Forum in Kiev in 2003 or 2004. The draft of the project proposal will be presented at the third Meeting of the TOS on Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation.

22. The Participants took note that the TOS would have its third Meeting in February 2003 prior to the annual session of the Working Party on Industry and Enterprise Development, which will be held in February 2003. The experts also recommended to convene a mid-term review meeting in a city, where more members can easily gather. The UNECE secretariat will inform the participants in due time on the date and the preliminary agenda of the third meeting of the Team of Specialists on Entrepreneurship in Poverty Alleviation.

