

Policy Advices of the 5th COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group Meeting

The COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group held its 5th Meeting on February 26th, 2015, in Ankara with the theme of “Activation Policies for the Poor in the OIC Member States” with the active participation of the member countries. The participants, during the Meeting, have discussed the activation policies and programmes with special focus on employer engagement in these programmes and the PES institutions. These issues were also highlighted in the analytical study prepared specifically for this meeting as well as in the answers of the member countries to the policy questions, sent to the Working Group focal points and participants before the meeting by the COMCEC Coordination Office.

The member countries of the Poverty Alleviation WG are kindly invited to share their views and observations on this document to the COMCEC Coordination Office by **April 24th, 2015**. Any comments received after this date will not be able to be incorporated into the Document. After incorporating the member countries’ contributions, this document will be submitted to the 31st Session of the COMCEC to be held on 23-26th November, 2015 as an outcome of the 5th Poverty Alleviation WG Meeting.

After the discussions on the above-mentioned issues, the Working Group highlighted the policy advices as below.

Policy Advice I: Increasing the capacity of the institutions providing Public Employment Services (PES) in the Member Countries through enhancing the quality and quantity of the human resources and developing information technology (IT) infrastructure of the PES institutions as well as ensuring an effective partnership with the relevant stakeholders in delivering activation measures

Rationale:

Public Employment Services (PES) aim to provide job search support, refer training programmes to the beneficiaries, and encourage entrepreneurship. The capacity of the institutions responsible for the PES in the member states is not sufficient to provide these services. Some important areas for increasing the capacity of PES institutions are given below:

- The quality and quantity of the human resources of the PES institutions in the Member Countries need to be enhanced.
- In order to have an advanced monitoring system for tracking the situation of the beneficiaries in the labour market, information technology (IT) infrastructure of the PES institutions need to be developed in the Member Countries.
- An effective partnership with the relevant stakeholders in delivering activation measures in the Member Countries need to be ensured to expand the outreach of the PES.

Policy Advice II: Promoting employer engagement in the preparation/implementation of the activation programmes through establishing a sound mechanism for ensuring the active involvement of the relevant stakeholders, and conducting employer surveys to identify the skill-needs in the labour market

Rationale:

Providing young graduates with the skills needed by employers is a prerequisite to ensure their employment in decent jobs. Designing activation programmes in light of the employers needs bear great importance in this respect. Therefore, active involvement of the employers in design of such programs can contribute to mitigating mismatch between young graduates’ skills and the needs of the employers. Some important measures for promoting employer engagement are given below:

- A mechanism might be set up, such as establishment of a Skills Development Authority, for ensuring the active involvement of the relevant stakeholders, including employers, in the design and implementation of the activation programs.
- Employer surveys can be used to identify the skill-needs in the labour market.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group: In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.

COMCEC Project Funding: Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office calls for projects each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the member countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For the above mentioned policy areas, the member countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office may finance the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include organization of seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparing of analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents, etc.

Capacity Building Activities: With the COMCEC Coordination Office's resources and Member Countries' own resources, some capacity building and technical assistance programs on the aforementioned policy areas can be organized in the member countries. These programs and activities may include organization of seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparing of analytical studies, and other similar activities.