Press Release

Tech Summit to bridge gap between education and employment for young people in the Middle East and North Africa

Region has highest youth unemployment rate in the world – 39 million new young people to absorb in the workforce by 2030

AMMAN, 25 June 2019 - A two-day Tech Summit kicked off today in Amman, featuring tech-enabled solutions to connect learning to earning for young people in the Middle East and North Africa.

The summit, organised by UNICEF and NetHope, in collaboration with youth and nine United Nations agencies and non-governmental organisations from the “No Lost Generation” initiative, brings together young people from all over the Middle East and North Africa region, private sector companies, development and humanitarian experts, academics and donors.

The summit is being held under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya bint El Hassan, President of the Royal Scientific Society of Jordan and Chairman of the Board of Trustees - Princess Sumaya University for Technology. In addition to HRH, speakers include Thierry Marigny, Chief Executive Officer of Orange Jordan.

“We must create employment opportunities that are worthy of our talented young people,” said Princess Sumaya in her opening remarks. “It is inconceivable that we should squander our greatest asset – the youth of our region – through neglect and poor planning. Let’s all help to build an empowered future for our people, based on knowledge, opportunity and innovation.”

“This summit is a step towards the future for us young people in the region,” said Salam Freihat, 25, one of the youth participating in the summit. “I have been waiting for this opportunity to showcase my tech skills to companies and institutions. Helping to organise the summit has empowered me to work with my peers to find solutions to our common challenges together.”

The Middle East and North Africa region has the highest youth unemployment rate in the world, at nearly 30 per cent in North Africa and over 22 per cent across the rest of the region. For female youth, unemployment rates are even higher, reaching up to 40 per cent across the region.

Bridging the gap between learning and earning is one of the main challenges that young people face once they finish their education. New employment opportunities are much needed: between now and 2030, there will be an additional 39 million young people to absorb in the workforce in the region.

“Young people around the region are keen to find solutions to the challenges they face in securing paid and dignified employment,” said Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa. “This summit offers a unique opportunity to engage young people in creatively finding change for themselves and their peers. But it’s a drop in the ocean and much more needs to be done in this critical area.”

“This Tech Summit will feature promising tech-enabled solutions that leverage the power of technology and partnerships to connect young people in the region to
lifelong learning and dignified work,” said Leila Toplic, Lead for the “No Lost Generation” Tech Task Force at NetHope. “These solutions come from all over the region and the world and offer a diverse set of opportunities and resources such as online learning, mentoring, co-working spaces, internships, and freelance work among other initiatives.”

“Orange Jordan is committed to empowering youth through education, training and employment, where the private sector has an important role to play. Through our growth-mode accelerator program, ‘BIG’, Orange Jordan has helped six startups access growth opportunities. We have also partnered with several institutions on education, including UNICEF, and with universities, offering students scholarships,” said Theirry Marigny, CEO of Orange Jordan. “This month, in collaboration with Simplon Co., Orange Jordan will inaugurate a ‘Coding Academy’ – the first of its kind in the Middle East. The academy will provide free training courses in programming languages for young people to help them create opportunities in the field of technology.”

Young people have played an active role in organising the summit to reflect their needs, ideas and solutions. The summit is the first of its kind to engage, involve and connect these young people - especially the most vulnerable - to opportunities and to recognize their leading role in developing their own capacities.

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**Notes to editors:**

This press release was developed with youth participating in the No Lost Generation Tech Summit

Under the leadership of UNICEF and NetHope, the NLG Tech Summit was made possible by the following partners: the Youth Steering Committee, the International Finance Corporation, the International Labor Organization, the International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps, the Norwegian Refugee Council, UNESCO, UNHCR, the World Food Program and World Vision.

**About the NLG Tech Summit**

The No Lost Generation (NLG) Tech Summit is a two-day event, co-led by UNICEF and NetHope, focused on tech-enabled solutions that connect Learning to Earning for vulnerable adolescents and youth across the Middle East and North Africa.

The NLG Tech Summit will be held June 25 –26 in Amman, Jordan, at the Amman Marriott Hotel. It showcases tech-enabled solutions and models that provide pathways for vulnerable adolescents and youth to learn and connect them to opportunities to access dignified employment.
The NLG Tech Summit is the latest in a series of events designed to bring together youth, private sector companies, development and humanitarian experts, academic institutions and donors to leverage technology and cross-sector collaboration to connect learning to earning for young people in the region, particularly those affected by the crises in Syria and Iraq.

NGL Tech Summit website: https://nlgedtech.com/

About UNICEF
UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere.

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About NetHope
NetHope empowers committed organizations to improve the world through the power of technology. NetHope, a consortium of nearly 60 leading global nonprofits, unites with technology companies and funding partners to design, fund, implement, adapt, and scale innovative approaches to solve development, humanitarian, and conservation challenges. Together, the NetHope community strives to transform the world, building a platform of hope for those who receive aid and those who deliver it.

For more information about NetHope, visit nethope.org

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About No Lost Generation
The No Lost Generation initiative is an ambitious commitment to action by humanitarians, donors and policy makers to support children and youth affected by the Syria and Iraq crises.

For more information about No Lost Generation, visit nolostgeneration.org