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Manpower Inc. Warns Untapped Youth Labor Pool Is Hindering Global Economic Recovery as Skills Shortages Become More Acute

December 3, 2010

LONDON, Dec. 3, 2010 /PRNewswire/ -- Manpower Inc., (NYSE: MAN) a world leader in innovative workforce solutions, today stressed that a multifaceted approach to tackling high levels of global youth unemployment is essential to preventing a "lost generation" of talent which will harm economic growth and exacerbate social problems, at the 2010 CNBC & Blackstone Global Youth Employment Agenda.

(Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20060221/CGTU012LOGO>)

David Arkless, Manpower Inc. President of Corporate and Government Affairs, was a panelist at a session titled "Multifaceted Approach to Affecting Youth Employment," with Manpower featured as a partner of the event. As global economic uncertainty continues in many economies, young people in particular are suffering high levels of unemployment in many parts of the world.

"Youth unemployment is a growing problem almost everywhere and the implications are frightening," said Arkless. "Not only are the social costs high, as youth with little hope for the future may see no alternative to criminal activities, but with shifting demographics and working populations getting older, the world simply cannot afford for the next generation to be left on the sidelines of work as we face a worsening talent mismatch."

One of the biggest challenges in tackling high youth unemployment is bridging the gap between the skills employers are looking for and what students are actually being equipped with for the workplace by educational programs. A 2009 OECD report on vocational and educational training attributed the often unsatisfactory student preparation to the difficulty of accurately forecasting the skills that will be in demand in the future.

Manpower's recent fifth annual talent shortage survey showed that skilled trades are the hardest positions to fill globally, and an August 2010 Manpower paper titled "Strategic Migration—A Short-term Solution to the Skilled Trades Shortage" argued that one solution to this skills mismatch was to promote positive attitudes toward skilled trades work among the young as viable career options to pursuing university degrees.

"Young people are increasingly shying away from skilled trades work but the stakeholders who rely on skilled labor need to emphasize the appeal of the work," added Arkless. "We need to bring honor back to the skilled trades so students and parents can see it is a potentially lucrative career path with the possibility of owning your own business."

The velocity of change in the world of work means it is increasingly difficult to predict where the demand for skills will be in the future, but Manpower advises young people to keep pace with change by continually upskilling, developing "soft" skills such as intellectual curiosity, empathy and strong communication skills, embracing lifelong learning and taking a pro-active approach to their own career development.

"The untapped youth labor pool is holding back the recovery, for instance in Germany, the economy is relatively strong, yet the Federal Labor Agency says skills mismatches are hindering growth," said Arkless. "It is imperative we get this right in order to ease the global talent mismatch and create effective solutions to youth unemployment."

Manpower works with organizations around the world to help young people increase their opportunities for employment and build more sustainable communities. Arkless is on the Board of Directors of Education for Employment (EFE), with whom Manpower also has a partnership to assist first-time jobseekers in the Middle East and North Africa. In addition, Manpower works with Qatar-based social organization Silatech and Manpower Canada helps young "at-risk" women find work or return to school.

About Manpower Inc.

Manpower Inc. (NYSE: MAN) is a world leader in innovative workforce solutions; creating and delivering services that enable its clients to win in the changing world of work. With over 60 years' experience, Manpower offers employers a range of solutions and services for the entire employment and business cycle including permanent, temporary and contract recruitment; employee assessment and selection; training; outplacement; outsourcing and consulting. Manpower's worldwide network of 4,000 offices in 82 countries and territories enables the company to meet the needs of its 400,000 clients per year, including small and medium size enterprises in all industry sectors, as well as the world's largest multinational corporations. The focus of Manpower's work is on raising productivity through improved quality, efficiency and cost-reduction across their total workforce, enabling clients to concentrate on their core business activities. Manpower Inc. operates under five brands: Manpower, Manpower Professional, Elan, Jefferson Wells and Right Management. More information on Manpower Inc. is available at www.manpower.com.

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