

**Recovering from the crisis:**  
**A Global Jobs Pact**

**adopted by the International Labour Conference  
at its Ninety-eighth Session,  
Geneva, 19 June 2009**

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# PREFACE

On 19 June 2009, the International Labour Conference, with the participation of Government, Employers' and Workers' delegates from the ILO's member States, unanimously adopted *Recovering from the crisis: A Global Jobs Pact*.

This global policy instrument addresses the social and employment impact of the international financial and economic crisis. It promotes a productive recovery centred on investments, employment and social protection.

The fundamental objective of the Global Jobs Pact is to provide an internationally agreed basis for policy-making designed to reduce the time lag between economic recovery and a recovery with decent work opportunities. It is a call for urgent worldwide action: national, regional and global.

Heads of State and Government, Vice-Presidents, Ministers of Labour and leaders of employers' and workers' organizations from all regions voiced vigorous political support for the Global Jobs Pact at the ILO Summit on the Global Jobs Crisis held from 15 to 17 June 2009. It was strongly backed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his message to the Summit.

The Pact is a robust response by representatives of governments, business and labour – the actors of the real economy – to an unprecedented increase in global unemployment, underemployment and informal work which compounds pre-existing labour market problems addressed in the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

The damage to employment is causing hardship to many working women and men, families and communities, and worsening poverty. It is threatening the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, weakening middle classes, heightening risks to social cohesion and eroding confidence in decision-makers.

In addition, with 45 million new entrants to the global jobs market annually – most of them young women and men – some 300 million new jobs will need to be created from now to 2015 just to keep pace with the growth in the labour force. We also know from past crises that there has been a considerable lag in the recovery of employment.

All this explains why the global jobs crisis could linger on for many years unless more forceful and targeted decisions are taken now to accelerate employment recovery in step with an economic pick-up.

The Global Jobs Pact proposes a balanced and realistic set of policy measures that countries, with the support of regional and multilateral institutions, can adopt to strengthen their ongoing efforts to address the crisis while pursuing economic, social and environmental sustainability.

It presents an integrated portfolio of tried and tested policies that puts employment and social protection at the centre of crisis response. These policies can be tailored to national and local situations and many countries are already implementing some of them.

The Pact proposes measures and policies to:

- retain women and men in employment as far as possible, and sustain enterprises, in particular small, medium-sized and micro-enterprises;
- support job creation and promote investments in employment-intensive sectors, including green jobs;
- facilitate more rapid re-entry into employment and address wage deflation;
- protect persons and families affected by the crisis, in particular the most vulnerable, and those in the informal economy by strengthening social protection systems to provide income support and sustain livelihoods as well as security of pensions;
- accelerate recovery of employment and expand opportunities by acting simultaneously on labour demand and on labour supply; and to

- equip the workforce with the skills needed for today and tomorrow.

The Global Jobs Pact is based on the Decent Work Agenda and recalls that respecting fundamental principles and rights at work, promoting gender equality and encouraging voice, participation and social dialogue are also critical to recovery and development.

Adopted in an integral and coordinated manner, these policies can reduce social tensions, mitigate the negative impact of the recession on people, stimulate aggregate demand and reinforce both competitive market economies and a more inclusive growth process.

In sum, the Global Jobs Pact responds to both the people's agenda and the needs of the real economy.

Importantly, it calls for coordinated global policy action to maximize the positive impact on jobs and sustainable enterprises worldwide. Special attention is given to developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, and countries with restricted fiscal and policy space to respond to the crisis.

The Pact calls on donor countries and multilateral agencies to consider providing funding, including through existing crisis resources, for the implementation of its recommendations and policy options. It can contribute to tighter and more effective coordination of policies and delivery among all relevant international organizations, including the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, and the regional organizations and development banks.

In addition, the Pact reflects the ILO's commitment to give effect to the decisions of the United Nations Chief Executives Board (CEB) under its system-wide joint crisis responses initiative, as well as a contribution to the G20 and other governmental processes.

The ILO's tripartite constituents are committed to working together to contribute to the success of the Global Jobs Pact. Its success also depends on national and international decisions, by

governments, business, labour, parliaments, local authorities and civil society, as well as by donors and multilateral institutions. Together, we must overcome the global jobs crisis and deliver the responses that people expect from leaders in society.

At their Summit in July 2009, G8 leaders declared that the Global Jobs Pact is “relevant to respond to the crisis at worldwide level and advance the social dimension of globalization”, and that “advanced, emerging and developing countries as well as international organizations should work together to ensure employment-oriented growth and promote social cohesion ...”.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council in July 2009 encouraged member States to make full use of the Global Jobs Pact in shaping their policy package. It also called on the United Nations to consider integrating the policy contents of the Pact into the activities of the Resident Coordinator system and country teams in support of national crisis responses.

The Pact looks beyond immediate recovery to the future. Four areas are highlighted: (i) a supervisory and regulatory financial framework serving the real economy, sustainable enterprises and decent work; (ii) efficient and well-regulated trade and markets working for all, without protectionism but with due regard to the situation of lower-income countries; (iii) shifting to a low-carbon, environment-friendly economy; and (iv) a development path that enables all – including developing countries – to place employment and social protection at the centre of their economic, social and poverty reduction policies, supported internationally.

The Pact, and the tripartite global commitment it represents, offers a unique opportunity for countries and the multilateral system to respond to the crisis with a shared vision for a productive and balanced recovery that protects the dignity of people and contributes to realizing a fair and sustainable world economy and globalization process.

Juan Somavia  
Director-General

August 2009

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization,

Having heard the Heads of State, Vice-Presidents, Prime Ministers and all other participants in the ILO Summit on the Global Jobs Crisis,

Having received the proposal made by the Conference Committee of the Whole on Crisis Responses,

Considering the important role that the Governing Body and the International Labour Office have in the implementation of resolutions adopted by the Conference,

Having in mind the Decent Work Agenda and the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization as ways of dealing with the social dimension of globalization,

adopts, this nineteenth day of June of the year two thousand and nine, the following resolution.

## RECOVERING FROM THE CRISIS: A GLOBAL JOBS PACT

### I. A DECENT WORK RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

1. The global economic crisis and its aftermath mean the world faces the prospect of a prolonged increase in unemployment, deepening poverty and inequality. Employment has usually only recovered several years after economic recovery. In some countries, the simple recovery of previous employment levels will

not be enough to contribute effectively to strong economies, and to achieve decent work for women and men.

2. Enterprises and employment are being lost. Addressing this situation must be part of any comprehensive response.

3. The world must do better.

4. There is a need for coordinated global policy options in order to strengthen national and international efforts centred around jobs, sustainable enterprises, quality public services, protecting people whilst safeguarding rights and promoting voice and participation.

5. This will contribute to economic revitalization, fair globalization, prosperity and social justice.

6. The world should look different after the crisis.

7. Our response should contribute to a fair globalization, a greener economy and development that more effectively creates jobs and sustainable enterprises, respects workers' rights, promotes gender equality, protects vulnerable people, assists countries in the provision of quality public services and enables countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

8. Governments and workers' and employers' organizations commit to work together to contribute to the success of the Global Jobs Pact. The International Labour Organization's (ILO's) Decent Work Agenda forms the framework for this response.

## II. PRINCIPLES FOR PROMOTING RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

9. Action must be guided by the Decent Work Agenda and commitments made by the ILO and its constituents in the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. We set out here a framework for the period ahead and a resource of practical



policies for the multilateral system, governments, workers and employers. It ensures linkages between social progress and economic development and involves the following principles:

- (1) devoting priority attention to protecting and growing employment through sustainable enterprises, quality public services and building adequate social protection for all as part of ongoing international and national action to aid recovery and development. The measures should be implemented quickly in a coordinated manner;
- (2) enhancing support to vulnerable women and men hit hard by the crisis including youth at risk, low-wage, low-skilled, informal economy and migrant workers;
- (3) focusing on measures to maintain employment and facilitate transitions from one job to another as well as to support access to the labour market for those without a job;
- (4) establishing or strengthening effective public employment services and other labour market institutions;
- (5) increasing equal access and opportunities for skills development, quality training and education to prepare for recovery;
- (6) avoiding protectionist solutions as well as the damaging consequences of deflationary wage spirals and worsening working conditions;
- (7) promoting core labour standards and other international labour standards that support the economic and jobs recovery and reduce gender inequality;
- (8) engaging in social dialogue, such as tripartism and collective bargaining between employers and workers as constructive processes to maximize the impact of crisis responses to the needs of the real economy;
- (9) ensuring that short-term actions are coherent with economic, social and environmental sustainability;
- (10) ensuring synergies between the State and the market and effective and efficient regulation of market economies including

- a legal and regulatory environment which enables enterprise creation, sustainable enterprises and promotes employment generation across sectors; and
- (11) the ILO, engaging with other international agencies, international financial institutions and developed countries to strengthen policy coherence and to deepen development assistance and support for least developed, developing and transition countries with restricted fiscal and policy space to respond to the crisis.

### III. DECENT WORK RESPONSES

10. The above principles set the general framework within which each country can formulate a policy package specific to its situation and priorities. They equally should inform and support action by the multilateral institutions. Set out below are some specific policy options.

#### ACCELERATING EMPLOYMENT CREATION, JOBS RECOVERY AND SUSTAINING ENTERPRISES

11. To limit the risk of long-term unemployment and increased informality which are difficult to reverse, we need to support job creation and help people into work. To achieve this, we agree to put the aim of full and productive employment and decent work at the heart of the crisis responses. These responses may include:

- (1) boosting effective demand and helping maintain wage levels including via macroeconomic stimulus packages;
- (2) helping jobseekers by:
  - (i) implementing effective, properly targeted active labour market policies;
  - (ii) enhancing the competence and increasing resources available to public employment services so that jobseekers receive adequate support and, where they are

working with private employment agencies, ensuring that quality services are provided and rights respected; and

- (iii) implementing vocational and entrepreneurial skills programmes for paid and self-employment;
- (3) investing in workers' skills development, skills upgrading and re-skilling to improve employability, in particular for those having lost or at risk of losing their job and vulnerable groups;
- (4) limiting or avoiding job losses and supporting enterprises in retaining their workforce through well-designed schemes implemented through social dialogue and collective bargaining. These could include work-sharing and partial unemployment benefits;
- (5) supporting job creation across sectors of the economy, recognizing the multiplier effect of targeted efforts;
- (6) recognizing the contribution of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and micro-enterprises to job creation, and promoting measures, including access to affordable credit, that would ensure a favourable environment for their development;
- (7) recognizing that cooperatives provide jobs in our communities from very small businesses to large multinationals and tailoring support for them according to their needs;
- (8) using public employment guarantee schemes for temporary employment, emergency public works programmes and other direct job creation schemes which are well targeted, and include the informal economy;
- (9) implementing a supportive regulatory environment conducive to job creation through sustainable enterprise creation and development; and
- (10) increasing investment in infrastructure, research and development, public services and "green" production and services as important tools for creating jobs and stimulating sustained economic activity.

## BUILDING SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS AND PROTECTING PEOPLE

12. Sustainable social protection systems to assist the vulnerable can prevent increased poverty, address social hardship, while also helping to stabilize the economy and maintain and promote employability. In developing countries, social protection systems can also alleviate poverty and contribute to national economic and social development. In a crisis situation, short-term measures to assist the most vulnerable may be appropriate.

- (1) Countries should give consideration, as appropriate, to the following:
  - (i) introducing cash transfer schemes for the poor to meet their immediate needs and to alleviate poverty;
  - (ii) building adequate social protection for all, drawing on a basic social protection floor including: access to health care, income security for the elderly and persons with disabilities, child benefits and income security combined with public employment guarantee schemes for the unemployed and working poor;
  - (iii) extending the duration and coverage of unemployment benefits (hand in hand with relevant measures to create adequate work incentives recognizing the current realities of national labour markets);
  - (iv) ensuring that the long-term unemployed stay connected to the labour market through, for example, skills development for employability;
  - (v) providing minimum benefit guarantees in countries where pension or health funds may no longer be adequately funded to ensure workers are adequately protected and considering how to better protect workers' savings in future scheme design; and
  - (vi) providing adequate coverage for temporary and non-regular workers.

- (2) All countries should, through a combination of income support, skills development and enforcement of rights to equality and non-discrimination, help vulnerable groups most hard hit by the crisis.
- (3) In order to avoid deflationary wage spirals, the following options should be a guide:
  - social dialogue;
  - collective bargaining;
  - statutory or negotiated minimum wages.

Minimum wages should be regularly reviewed and adapted. Governments as employers and procurers should respect and promote negotiated wage rates.

Narrowing the gender pay gap must be an integrated part of these efforts.

13. Countries that have strong and efficiently run social protection systems have a valuable inbuilt mechanism to stabilize their economies and address the social impact of the crisis. These countries may need to reinforce existing social protection systems. For other countries, the priority is to meet urgent needs, while building the foundation for stronger and more effective systems.

## STRENGTHENING RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL LABOUR STANDARDS

14. International labour standards create a basis for and support rights at work and contribute to building a culture of social dialogue particularly useful in times of crisis. In order to prevent a downward spiral in labour conditions and build the recovery, it is especially important to recognize that:

- (1) Respect for fundamental principles and rights at work is critical for human dignity. It is also critical for recovery and development. Consequently, it is necessary to increase:

- (i) vigilance to achieve the elimination and prevention of an increase in forms of forced labour, child labour and discrimination at work; and
  - (ii) respect for freedom of association, the right to organize and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining as enabling mechanisms to productive social dialogue in times of increased social tension, in both the formal and informal economies.
- (2) A number of international labour Conventions and Recommendations, in addition to the fundamental Conventions, are relevant. These include ILO instruments concerning employment policy, wages, social security, the employment relationship, the termination of employment, labour administration and inspection, migrant workers, labour conditions on public contracts, occupational safety and health, working hours and social dialogue mechanisms.
- (3) The ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy is an important and useful tool for all enterprises, including those in supply chains, for responding to the crisis in a socially responsible manner.

SOCIAL DIALOGUE: BARGAINING COLLECTIVELY,  
IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES,  
STIMULATING ACTION

15. Especially in times of heightened social tension, strengthened respect for, and use of, mechanisms of social dialogue, including collective bargaining, where appropriate at all levels, is vital.

16. Social dialogue is an invaluable mechanism for the design of policies to fit national priorities. Furthermore, it is a strong basis for building the commitment of employers and workers to the joint action with governments needed to overcome the crisis and for a

sustainable recovery. Successfully concluded, it inspires confidence in the results achieved.

17. Strengthening capacities for labour administration and labour inspection is an important element in inclusive action on worker protection, social security, labour market policies and social dialogue.

#### IV. THE WAY FORWARD: SHAPING A FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE GLOBALIZATION

18. The above agenda closely interacts with other dimensions of globalization and requires policy coherence and international coordination. The ILO should collaborate fully with the United Nations and all relevant international organizations.

19. The ILO welcomes the G20 invitation to the ILO, working with other relevant organizations, to assess the actions taken and those required for the future.

20. We affirm our support to the ILO's role within the UN Chief Executives Board (CEB), which can help to create a favourable international environment for the mitigation of the crisis. We encourage the ILO to play a facilitating role to ensure effective and coherent implementation of social and economic policies in this respect.

21. Cooperation is particularly important on the following issues:

- (1) building a stronger, more globally consistent, supervisory and regulatory framework for the financial sector, so that it serves the real economy, promotes sustainable enterprises and decent work and better protects savings and pensions of people;
- (2) promoting efficient and well-regulated trade and markets that benefit all and avoiding protectionism by countries.

Varying development levels of countries must be taken into account in lifting barriers to domestic and foreign markets; and

- (3) shifting to a low-carbon, environment-friendly economy that helps accelerate the jobs recovery, reduce social gaps and support development goals and realize decent work in the process.

22. For many developing countries, especially the least developed, the global recession exacerbates large-scale structural unemployment, underemployment and poverty.

We recognize the need to:

- (1) give much greater priority to the generation of decent work opportunities with systematic, well-resourced, multidimensional programmes to realize decent work and development in the least developed countries;
- (2) promote the creation of employment and create new decent work opportunities through the promotion and development of sustainable enterprises;
- (3) provide vocational and technical training and entrepreneurial skills development especially for unemployed youth;
- (4) address informality to achieve the transition to formal employment;
- (5) recognize the value of agriculture in developing economies and the need for rural infrastructure, industry and employment;
- (6) enhance economic diversity by building capacity for value-added production and services to stimulate both domestic and external demand;
- (7) encourage the international community, including international financial institutions, to make available resources for countercyclical action in countries facing fiscal and policy constraints;



- (8) keep commitments to increased aid to prevent a serious setback to the Millennium Development Goals; and
- (9) urge the international community to provide development assistance, including budgetary support, to build up a basic social protection floor on a national basis.

23. Governments should consider options such as minimum wages that can reduce poverty and inequity, increase demand and contribute to economic stability. The ILO's Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131), can provide guidance in this respect.

24. This current crisis should be viewed as an opportunity to shape new gender equality policy responses. Recovery packages during economic crises need to take into account the impact on women and men and integrate gender concerns in all measures. In discussions on recovery packages, both regarding their design and assessing their success, women must have an equal voice with men.

25. Giving effect to the recommendations and policy options of the Global Jobs Pact requires consideration of financing. Developing countries that lack the fiscal space to adopt response and recovery policies require particular support. Donor countries and multilateral agencies are invited to consider providing funding, including existing crisis resources, for the implementation of these recommendations and policy options.

## V. ILO ACTION

26. The ILO has recognized authority in key areas of importance to respond to the crisis and to promote economic and social development. The ILO's capacity for research and economic and social data analysis is important in this context. Its expertise should be at the centre of its work with governments, social partners and the multilateral system. It includes, but is not limited to:

- employment generation;
- social protection design and financing models;

- active labour market programmes;
- minimum wage setting mechanisms;
- labour market institutions;
- labour administration and labour inspection;
- decent work programmes;
- enterprise creation and development;
- international labour standards – implementation and monitoring;
- social dialogue;
- data collection;
- gender equality in the labour market;
- workplace programmes on HIV/AIDS; and
- labour migration.

27. The following activities can only strengthen the practical work outlined above:

- improving countries' capacity to produce and use labour market information, including on wage trends, as a basis for informed policy decisions, and collect and analyse consistent data to help countries benchmark their progress;
- collecting and disseminating information on countries' crisis response and recovery packages;
- assessing the actions taken and those required for the future, working with other relevant organizations;
- strengthening partnerships with regional development banks and other international financial institutions;
- strengthening country-level diagnostic and policy advisory capacity; and
- prioritizing crisis response in Decent Work Country Programmes.

28. The ILO commits to allocating the necessary human and financial resources and working with other agencies to assist constituents who request such support to utilize the Global Jobs Pact. In doing so, the ILO will be guided by the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and accompanying resolution.

For background information on the ILO's response to the crisis, see:

Statement by the Director-General of the International Labour Office to the International Monetary and Finance Committee and Development Committee (Washington, DC, 20–21 October 2007)

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Statement by the Director-General to the International Monetary and Finance Committee and Development Committee (Washington, DC, 12–13 April 2008)

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Statement by the Director-General to the International Monetary and Finance Committee and Development Committee (Washington, DC, 10–11 October 2008)

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Report on the High-level Tripartite Meeting on the Current Global Financial and Economic Crisis – Chairperson’s conclusions, March 2009

[www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_104129.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_104129.pdf)

Statement by the Director-General to the International Monetary and Finance Committee and Development Committee (Washington, DC, 25–26 April 2009)

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Tackling the Global Jobs Crisis Recovery through Decent Work Policies – Report of the Director-General to the International Labour Conference, 98th Session, 2009

[www.ilo.org/global/What\\_we\\_do/Officialmeetings/ilc/ILC\\_Sessions/98thSession/ReportssubmittedtotheConference/lang--en/docName--WCMS\\_106162/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/What_we_do/Officialmeetings/ilc/ILC_Sessions/98thSession/ReportssubmittedtotheConference/lang--en/docName--WCMS_106162/index.htm)

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