



# DECLARATION



labour

Department:  
Labour  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## BRICS LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT MINISTERS' MEETING

3 August 2018

Durban, South Africa

### Introduction

1. We, the Ministers of Labour and Employment from the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation, the Republic of India, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa, met in Durban on 2-3 August, for the fourth BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting (LEMM). Convening under the theme "Developing countries for inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity in the New Industrial Revolution", the meeting sought to ensure maximum synergy and continuity for BRICS collaboration within the labour market landscape.
2. We note that South Africa's Presidency of BRICS comes amid an environment of stabilising global economic growth and employment outlook; however, some labour markets still face diverse challenges with unemployment.
3. We further take note that the BRICS countries long identified the need for developing pragmatic economic cooperation and forging closer economic and social partnerships in order to increase inclusive economic growth amongst its members. In pursuance of these objectives, the South African Presidency focussed on *Youth Employment; Women's participation in the labour market and equal pay for work of equal value; Tripartism and Collective Bargaining; and Social Protection*.
4. We commend the progress and cooperation between our countries in labour and employment issues since the first meeting held in Ufa, Russia,

in 2015. The Member Countries continue to share knowledge and also implement joint programmes on matters of labour and employment, social security and social dialogue.

5. The Ufa Declaration established the Employment Working Group (EWG) which is an important gathering for senior officials and technical experts to deliberate matters of mutual interest. We thus recall that under the Russian Presidency, our countries resolved to formalise their collaboration through the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding cooperation in the social and labour sphere in order to foster mutual collaboration between Member Countries. We congratulate the South African Presidency for ensuring that this matter has reached its finality as well as the development of a working implementation plan to be handed over to Brazil in 2019.
6. We further recognise the importance of streamlining the work of the labour and employment working group with other streams as demonstrated by the meeting in Russia, where a joint labour and finance meeting was organised. Coherence and coordination of BRICS EWG with BRICS framework including relevant Working Groups like BRICS finance, education, economic/ trade as well as science, technology and innovation streams are essential.
7. The 2017 Chongqing Declaration established the BRICS Network of Labour Research Institutes. We re-affirm our support for the BRICS Network and its role in the pursuit of our objectives and broader international frameworks, including the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
8. We welcome the partnership with the International Training Centre of the ILO and call upon them to support the BRICS Network, including on the theme of youth employment in 2018/19. The next step for the BRICS Network, ITC-ILO, ILO and ISSA is the finalisation of the studies of new forms of employment. The network will also organise more regular face-to-face meetings and will also explore new learning technologies, including

virtual network, to deepen cooperation, exchange of information and capacity building.

### **Youth Employment**

9. Youth employment has become a common denominator in the labour market issue for all Member Countries. We thus commit to developing a comprehensive and coordinated approach, which will promote access to decent work for young women and men. For this to happen, it is essential that we make decent employment creation for youth a policy priority objective which cuts across economic, social and employment policies. Our actions in this regard will include the promotion of stable wage employment, as well as advocating sound pro-employment macroeconomic policies, including employment-intensive investment.
10. To achieve this cross-cutting ambition, we will facilitate inter-ministerial coordination between relevant Ministries, including those responsible for finance, economic development, trade, industry, education, as well as other Ministries. We also commit to work with other ministries to mobilise necessary resources for mainstreaming youth employment in government policies.
11. This endeavour will also require sound and effective labour market institutions that should make best use of modern digital technology. We will work towards increasing the effectiveness and impact of labour market information systems, public and private employment services, labour inspections, as well as active labour market policies in order to reach and serve all youth, especially those living in rural areas or engaged in the informal economy.
12. While we recognise that new forms of employment, such as those in the gig and platform economies, can provide job opportunities for youth, sustained efforts will be needed to ensure that those jobs are decent. More work is also needed to promote skills and training, entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprise development through innovative interventions and solutions in response to new labour market dynamics, both in traditional

and emerging sectors.

## **Social Dialogue**

13. Social dialogue is an essential component of good governance of labour related matters. We acknowledge its contribution in the Member Countries towards inclusive economic development, greater coherence between economic and social policies, and addressing key social challenges such as wage inequalities, regulation of non-standard forms of employment, compliance with labour laws, mitigation of the social costs of market-oriented reforms, and strengthening democracy.
14. The Member Countries face a number of challenges that affect social dialogue, such as widening inequalities, the changing nature of work and employment relationships, informal employment and an associated lack of workers' protection, and adjustments in public spending. We also note important global developments such as the New Industrial Revolution, which entails increased automation and digitalisation; demographic developments involving migration and refugee crises; as well as climate change that are posing important questions and challenges for the form and organisation of the world of work.
15. In response, we will work towards the necessary policy reforms to define employment relationships and review laws and regulations in response to the challenges brought by the Future of Work and digitalisation.
16. We will further explore avenues, in close cooperation with social partners, to improve social dialogue and collective bargaining to be more inclusive and representative of disadvantaged labour market actors such as youth, women, and people with disabilities. To make this possible, we also undertake to explore innovative ways of improving social dialogue and collective bargaining institutions. Furthermore, we will work towards strengthening labour administration systems to support social dialogue more effectively and building the capacity of social partners to participate in dialogue fora. This will include research on the needs that will emanate from challenges and opportunities from the New Industrial Revolution.

## **Women's participation in the labour market: Equal pay for work of equal value**

17. Attracting and retaining more women in the labour market, and in better-quality jobs, features highly on the development policy agenda. We therefore acknowledge that more and better jobs for women are not just a matter of justice or fairness, but of “smart” economics. In the current context of demographic transitions and structural changes in the organisation of production and work, women can and must contribute to building more sustainable and inclusive economies and societies on conditions of equality with men.
18. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development commits member states to deliver on a number of related and ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as SDGs 5 and 8, which includes SDG 8.5 that calls upon countries to contribute to achieving equal pay for work of equal value by 2030.
19. Despite some important progress in the past decades, gender gaps in participation by women in the labour market, pay and income, and representation in sectors and occupations remain large and in some instances, are widening. To meet the ambitious goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, we commit to put in place policies that will accelerate the pace of progress towards the achievement of gender equality at work.
20. This ambition requires acting simultaneously on various policy fronts: reducing vertical and horizontal occupational segregation and boosting women's entrepreneurship; addressing discrimination in remuneration and valuing women's work fairly; enhancing the quality and safety of working environments, including by protecting women against gender-based violence; making it easier for both women and men to reconcile paid employment with family responsibilities; and increasing women's representation in employers' and workers' organisations.
21. Central to any of these efforts is the fight against discrimination and gender stereotypes. We commit to tackling this issue by adopting a multi-

dimensional approach, which may include sound legislative frameworks and their effective enforcement, awareness-campaigns for a wide audience, beginning from primary school, and workplace policies and codes of conduct for gender equality.

22. Due to the inter-relationship among the policy areas mentioned above, coordination among different government agencies is of the essence. Partnerships with workers' and employers' organisations, are also necessary as they will permit an exchange of good practices and learning from each other's experiences, and monitoring and assessing progress, such as the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC).
23. We commit to developing and implementing national and workplace policies aimed at improving the quantity and quality of women's participation in the labour force. We also commit to exchanging information and views on latest development on a regular basis with the use of the BRICS Network of Labour Research Institutes.

### **Social Protection**

24. We reaffirm our commitment to universal and sustainable social security systems, including social protection floors, as an integral part of our policies to promote inclusive growth, decent and productive employment, gender equality and social cohesion. Our countries have made significant progress in improving our social security systems, yet more efforts are necessary to close coverage and adequacy gaps, with particular attention to young people and women, the self-employed, workers in rural areas and in the informal economy, also with a view to facilitating their transition from the informal to the formal economy as per ILO Recommendation 204.
25. Ensuring adequate protection for workers across different contractual arrangements is essential for safeguarding their income security and effective access to health care; facilitating the mobility of workers; and for ensuring social justice and economic development. Further efforts to enhance governance and administration, such as by simplifying and streamlining administrative procedures and harnessing digital

technologies while protecting personal data, will facilitate compliance and achieve better results.

26. We also recognise the need to safeguard the sustainability and equity of our social security systems through a combination of different instruments, complementing social insurance by non-contributory schemes, and adapting financing mechanisms to changing forms of work and employment.
27. We recognise the essential role of social protection for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and for preparing our economies and societies for the future of work. In accelerating progress towards universal and sustainable social security systems, we are guided by international social security standards, particularly Convention No. 102 and Recommendation No. 202. We also acknowledge the value of professional standards for governance and administration, including the ISSA guidelines for social security administration.
28. Building on the previous Declarations of BRICS Summits and the LEMM, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we, with the support of the ILO and the ISSA, are committed to deepening social security cooperation among ourselves, and with other countries. In this regard, we will harness the BRICS Social Security Cooperation Framework to tackle current and future challenges, and accelerate progress towards reaching our joint objectives, with specific emphasis on cooperation on the improvement of the social security system, social security agreements, social security administration and promoting international standards and guidelines.

## **Way Forward**

29. We take note of the commitments made at the BRICS Summit held in Johannesburg from 25 to 27 July 2018 with a view to deepening cooperation and coordinating common voice at multilateral arenas between the Member Countries in order to promote development and strengthen global governance to jointly address our common challenges,

utilising the BRICS Common Position on Governance in the Future of Work.

30. In this regard, the South African Working Implementation Plan proposal on previous commitments to date is endorsed. Member Countries are called upon to undertake and concretise our efforts by developing practical steps to ensure that the labour and employment stream is beneficial to citizens of our respective countries.
31. We thank our social partners for their valuable contributions in addressing labour and employment challenges, and we commit to strengthening tripartite social dialogue processes for advancing labour market development and improving labour market outcomes.
32. We express gratitude technical partners such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Social Security Association (ISSA) for their contributions in supporting BRICS cooperation. We will continue our close cooperation with these and other international organisations.
33. Finally, we would like to show our sincerest appreciation to the South African Presidency for organising the Employment Working Group meeting at Mbombela in May, 2018 and the Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting at Durban in August, 2018. We look forward to our next meeting under the Presidency of the Federative Republic of Brazil in 2019.