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BRICS LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT MINISTERS DECLARATION

QUALITY JOBS AND INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

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 Ufa, Russian Federation, on 25-26 of January, 2016 at the first BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers meeting to discuss new areas of cooperation in labour and employment, social security and social inclusion, public policies.
2. Labour and employment policies are of critical importance to foster strong, sustainable and inclusive growth. We consider the expansion of BRICS coordination and cooperation on promotion of quality and inclusive employment, strengthening intra-BRICS dialogue and the exchange of experiences and information on labour and employment issues, social inclusion is an important step forward in our long-term cooperation for the benefit of our peoples and the international community.
3. We acknowledge the essential role of social dialogue and the importance of collective bargaining, so we welcome the contribution of social partners to the design and implementation of labour and employment policies. We consider the tripartite model of addressing labour and employment issues as efficient and effective as it helps to enrich our engagements and conclusions.
4. We will further enhance cooperation with international organizations (ILO, World Bank, ISSA and others) to address specific issues of common interest and provide support in working out of coordinated BRICS Strategy to promote decent work.

Quality and inclusive Employment

5. Quality job creation, based on introduction of new technologies and increasing of labour productivity, skills development, and social protection comprise three pillars, which contribute to inclusiveness of labour market and give vulnerable groups new chances for a decent living. We will strive to achieve the balance between these pillars based on integrative and comprehensive policy approaches, sharing experience, development of stakeholders cooperation, creation of a business friendly environment, and public-private partnerships.
6. We agree to focus our policies on increasing quality and inclusive employment through facilitation of:
 - Modernization of enterprises and sectors of economy and introduction of new technologies aimed at creating employment opportunities;
 - Development of occupational standards and qualifications;
 - Increasing quality of vocational education and training of workers in line with



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occupational standards and qualifications that consider current and future requirements of business;

- Labour mobility;
- Job search, collection and dissemination of information on job opportunities, especially on modernized productive jobs;
- Development of regulations covering new or non-standard forms of work that ensures full respect for workers' rights and access to social protection;
- Strengthening social protection of vulnerable groups and protection of the unemployed looking for job to prevent social exclusion or marginalization from decent work opportunities.

7. We recognize the importance of the implementation of a Decent Work Agenda within the BRICS countries.

Formalization of Labour Markets

8. Formalization of labour markets is a global priority and a priority for BRICS countries. Informality constrains our productivity, potential economic growth and efforts to improve the wellbeing of our people. Strategies to facilitate the transition to formality could include incentivizing employers and supporting workers who seek employment in the formal economy and strengthening labour inspection and enforcement.
9. We acknowledge the efforts made to date and we are determined to put greater emphasis on formalization of our labour markets. We welcome the initiative of the Russian Chairpersonship to develop a well-balanced medium-term Strategy of labour markets formalization as informed by the Recommendation on Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy (No. 204) adopted by the 104th International Labour Conference in June, 2015.
10. We consider ILO Recommendation No.204 to be an important instrument providing guidance to States on how to help workers and economic units to formalize their activity, as one of the means for promoting decent work and achieving inclusive development.
11. We agree to follow the ILO Recommendation No. 204 to pursue a threefold objective in their policies addressing informality; (1) to facilitate the transition of workers and economic units from the informal to formal economy, while respecting workers' fundamental rights and ensuring opportunities for income security, livelihoods and entrepreneurship; (2) to promote the creation, preservation and sustainability of enterprises and decent jobs in the formal economy and the coherence of macroeconomic, employment, social protection and other social policies; and (3) to prevent the informalization of formal economy.
12. We will use a set of integrated policies that work at both the macroeconomic, financial and labour market levels to reduce labour market informality and create quality jobs in the formal sector of the economy. Integrated approaches offer strong potential dividends for meeting the growth and employment goals of the BRICS.
13. We welcome a special emphasis made on such important elements as inclusion of



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business-enhancing measures within relevant strategies, strengthening of the capacities of social partners, perfecting of legislation, adaptation of diverse strategies according to national circumstances. We reiterate our commitment to implement policies to promote the creation of quality and productive jobs, including investment incentives, creation of business friendly environment, open access to financial resources. Social dialogue plays an important role in these processes.

14. The introduction of new technologies and increase of job productivity is an important objective. It is necessary to ensure that the new technologies and increased productivity become the basis for job rich growth and contribute to the improvement of people's quality of life and to the respect of decent work.
15. Challenges and opportunities for creating quality jobs in formal sectors and increasing their availability for the job seekers differ by country. Nevertheless, we agree that the following issues constitute the basis for development of high quality formal jobs and increase of formal employment:
 - ✓ Integration of policies that promote job creation and income generation opportunities in the formal economy
 - ✓ Creation of formal employment opportunities through enterprise modernization and increase of productivity,
 - ✓ Development of labour market infrastructure,
 - ✓ Investing in skills that meet the demands of the formal economy,
 - ✓ Strengthening of labour inspection,
 - ✓ Strengthening of occupational safety and health,
 - ✓ Ensuring the fulfillment of workers rights and protection,
 - ✓ Extension of adequate social protection to all workers.
16. We see the consolidation of measures aimed at promotion of quality employment with those aimed at formalization of labour markets as a path to create conditions and incentives for the transition to the formal economy and job and income rich growth.

Labour and Employment Information Exchange

17. Information exchange is one of the BRICS priorities. We intend to share labour and employment information related to job creation, transition from informality to formality, labour productivity, youth and women employment, and other topics we may decide.
18. We welcome the inclusion of social- and labour-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a range of ambitious targets and results to be achieved by the international community in the social and labour and employment sphere. We strongly support these global goals that reflect the priorities of our governments in the social and labour sphere. We are ready to undertake comprehensive measures to achieve these ambitious targets recognizing that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is applicable to all, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. The First meeting of



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BRICS Ministers of Labour and Employment held in Russia in January 2016 further strengthens BRICS cooperation in the Labour and Employment area. Such SDG elements as promoting decent work and employment, extension of universal social protection floors as well as formalization of economy are expected to be considered under the BRICS agenda.

19. We commit to identify a set of labour-related harmonized indicators and work along with the BRICS Statistical Offices, which are engaged in the collection and publications of data, to enable us to track and reflect the progress made in implementing our employment agenda.
20. We will use the BRICS virtual secretariat, available at: <http://infobrics.org/>, a free resource available in the public domain for coverage of the labour and employment related activities undertaken by BRICS countries.
21. We welcome the initiative of the Russian Chairpersonship on creation of an information resource for social and labour issues of BRICS member-states, which will focus on the development of human resources, including development of modern efficient requirements to skills and qualifications.

Next Steps

22. We will present for the Leaders' consideration our Declaration, and recommend the Leaders to support our commitment to promote quality and inclusive employment, to develop integrated strategies for labour market formalization, informed by the ILO Recommendation 204 and to create a BRICS Labour and Employment information exchange system. We remain committed to implementing effective labour market strategies necessary to strengthen growth and job creation.
23. We agree to continue engaging in dialogue focusing on labour and employment related issues and propose to our Leaders that we convene BRICS labour and employment ministerial meetings on a regular basis.
24. We commit to facilitate the integration of labour market and employment policies with economic, financial, education, and health policies and this could be realized by Joint Inter-Ministerial working group meetings.
25. In recognition of the on-going labour, employment and social inclusion challenges, we recommend that an Employment Working Group be established. The Working Group will explore and prepare proposals on specific areas of cooperation to address labour market challenges, enhance information sharing and development of labour and employment policies. The Group will report annually to Ministers on progress in tackling these challenges, with an initial focus on promoting coherence among the BRICS policy tracks and developing actions to address issues such as supporting growth, labour markets formalization, labour participation, decreasing unemployment and reducing inequality. We ask the Working Group to focus on preparation of a Strategy of Labour Markets Formalization for our consideration.



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26. We welcome the Russian initiative to work out a draft Memorandum of Understanding between our Ministries regarding cooperation in the social and labour sphere as it will serve as a basis for further mutual collaboration of our Ministries.
27. We intend to strengthen our tripartite dialogue format for advancing labour market development and promotion of stronger labour market outcomes. We are grateful for the expertise provided by the ILO, ISSA, World Bank and other international organizations and will continue our cooperation with them.
28. We thank Russia's Chairpersonship for its leadership in organization of the first meeting of the Ministers of Labour and Employment and look forward to our next meeting under the Chairpersonship of the Republic of India.