



ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
Inter-American Council for Integral Development
(CIDI)



**XIX INTER-AMERICAN CONFERENCE
OF MINISTERS OF LABOR (IACML)**

December 3 and 4, 2015

Cancun, Mexico

OEA/Ser.K/XII.19.1

CIDI/TRABAJO/ doc.18/15 Rev. 1

3 December 2015

Original: Spanish

**DECLARATION OF THE BUSINESS TECHNICAL
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON LABOR MATTERS (CEATAL)**

(Agreed at the meeting of CEATAL, held on Thursday, December 3, 2015)

IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE XIX INTER-AMERICAN CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF LABOR (IACML) OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS), to be held on December 3 and 4, 2015, the employers of the Americas, represented through the Business Technical Advisory Committee on Labor Matters (CEATAL), welcome the fact that the XIX IACML has been tasked with reflection on its theme “Achieving decent work with social inclusion and sustainable development in the Americas,” and, so as to contribute to that Conference, hereby present the following Declaration on the theme “Youth, Entrepreneurship, and Education”:

DECLARATION

The youth of the Americas are the present and future of our societies. They symbolize progress, equity, commitment, responsibility, and innovation.

According to ECLAC statistics, the population of the Americas includes 25.6 percent who are in the 15-29 year age range. Now is a crucial time for our Hemisphere to position youth as strategic actors for social, economic, political, and cultural transformation. These demographics represent a window of opportunity for the countries of the Hemisphere and signify a larger proportion of the population that is capable of working, producing, saving, and investing. But they also pose a challenge for countries of the Hemisphere now on a path to economic growth and poverty reduction, since going forward they will need people trained to cope with the transformations enabling them to take a decisive leap forward to development.

The situation of the Hemisphere’s youth today is disheartening. Many Latin American and Caribbean youth aged 15 to 24 lack economic resources. In rural areas, this figure stands at 41.5 percent and in urban at 20.7 percent.

In some countries, the poverty rate among youth exceeds 50 percent, many of whom also lack access to education (a third of the region’s youth) and do not work (one in five is not in education, training, or employment). The unemployment rate among youth stands at 14.7 percent.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (ASD) emphasizes the need to empower youth and afford them an environment that promotes the full realization of their rights and capacities,

assisting countries to profit from their demographics. Specifically, Goal 8 of the ASD calls on the countries to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

CEATAL is convinced that this ambitious objective can be achieved primarily through integrated and integral public policies especially promoting education, entrepreneurship, and investment.

1. **EDUCATION:** Education is a key factor of development. Through greater education, national social, economic, and cultural conditions can be improved. Higher educational levels are associated with improvements in other key factors of development and well-being, such as productivity, competitiveness, social mobility, poverty reduction, and the strengthening of citizenship, social identity, and, ultimately, social cohesion. Education—public or private—professional training, and apprenticeship within companies, play an essential part in enabling youth to enter the job market and to develop in adulthood. It is essential for education policies to be designed through dialogue with the private sector to ensure that youth have the qualifications companies require and that professional training systems offer education geared to new types of jobs linked to the constantly evolving needs of enterprises in constant evolution. We particularly highlight the Global Apprenticeship Network (GAN) as a successful example of alliances between companies, employer organizations and international organizations to promote and share best practices on apprenticeship programs.

2. **ENTREPRENEURSHIP:** Promotion of entrepreneurial initiative and self-employment among youth is fundamental so that they leave school not only to seek work but also to create it. Entrepreneurship is a key variable of economic growth, and its social value should be reaffirmed. In fact, a culture of entrepreneurship is not only for those seeking self-employment: the concept of entrepreneurship should be developed in everyone, as a way of thinking and acting. Our societies need workers with an enterprising spirit and governments with an enterprising attitude. We advocate the adoption by governments of the measures necessary to promote the necessary conditions for thriving and sustainable entrepreneurship. To that end, an enterprising spirit should be promoted as part of lifelong learning. The concept of creating, undertaking, risk-taking, and innovating is learned in school and should be included at the different stages of education and training. This approach should be taken decisively and in the short term in the education and training system. Efforts should also be stepped up to facilitate an environment promoting business development; to promote policies that foster conditions for business establishment and development, such as entrepreneur service points, expedited business start-up procedures, and simplified knowledge protection processes; and to promote a wide variety of forms of work and different forms of incentives so that new companies can employ optimal numbers of youth.

3. **INVESTMENT:** Businesses create over 90% of jobs, produce most of the goods and services needed to raise living standards, and constitute most of the tax base through which public services are financed. Youth employment cannot be generated directly through legislation. Neither can governments oblige employers to invest. Entrepreneurial activity results in job creation; accordingly, we should focus on creating a climate propitious to investment. The investment climate is influenced by different factors.- economic, legal, institutional and even cultural which affect the business climate in which enterprises operate. The investment climate can also be affected by macroeconomic, institutional and political uncertainty which generate major reductions in private investment.

Investment creates demand for employment. Governments should review all their actions and policies and reflect on whether they promote or impede investment through permanent dialogue with employer organizations.

CEATAL calls on the Ministers of Labor gathered at the XIX IACML to contribute, in coordination with other ministries and institutions and with collaboration from the OAS, the International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and all other relevant international institutions, to implementing the ASD and, in particular, by 2020, to a substantial reduction in the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (Goal 8.6).

CEATAL requests the OAS, the ILO, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and all other relevant institutions to support, utilizing the collaboration platform established through the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL), the ministries of labor and other ministries and public institutions in designing and implementing policies to promote youth employment, quality education, entrepreneurship, and a climate for investment.

CEATAL highlights and thanks the valuable and ongoing technical and political support of the International Organization of Employers (IOE) for coordinating and ensuring that the business perspective is reflected in the different activities, documents and political agreements made during the IACML of the OAS. CEATAL similarly highlights the valuable technical support provided by the Bureau of Employers' Activities of the ILO (ACT/EMP).

Finally, CEATAL thanks the Regional Office of the ILO for Latin America and the Caribbean for the support it provided so that the CEATAL delegation, with representatives from all the sub-regions, can participate in and contribute to the XIX IACML.