

Speech
G20 Labour Ministerial
IOE President Erol Kiresepi
1 September 2019, Matsuyama

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Dear Minister Takumi Nemoto

Dear Ministers and Heads of Delegations

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen

Dear Colleagues and Friends

Thank you for giving the Social Partners the floor at the beginning of this important meeting. The International Organisation of Employers, representing more than 50 million companies through representative and independent business organizations in more than 140 countries, also very much appreciated the opportunity to engage with the G20 Employment Working Group in their meetings in February and April.

This G20 labour ministerial meeting falls together with the high-level review on SDG 8. At the High-Level Political Forum in New York in July, all parties agreed that, despite progress, the rate of global progress with regards to SDG 8 has been, so far, sluggish and has not kept pace with the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda. An IOE-USCIB-Deloitte Flagship report shows limited results have been achieved particularly with respect to:

- increasing employment opportunities, especially for the young workforce;
- reducing informal employment.

All parties shared the notion of urgency. Much more ambitious reforms and much more determined action are needed to implement the agenda 2030 and to reach its targets.

The G20 can and must play a key role in promoting progress on SDG 8, sharing best practice and leading by example.

The underlying philosophy of SDG 8 is that “economic growth”, “full and productive employment” and “decent work for all” are fully interlinked. At the G7 labour ministerial in Paris in June governments and social partners jointly called for modernizing labour market to ensure that they are conducive for job creation, innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as to ensure

decent work for all. We also provide important guidance on future of work issues, most recently on the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work

Ministers, without a vibrant private sector there are no jobs, no decent work and no economic growth. Sustainable economic growth, based on productivity and an enabling environment for business together with decent work, are the pillars that underpin social justice. That is why we all recognized in the ILO Centenary Declaration the unique role of the private sector, of entrepreneurship, and, most importantly, the need for a proper business environment as a driver for decent work. We must effectively integrate the private sector as a key pillar of any successful action, especially in those economies where the business environment is increasingly restricted, leading to less creativeness, less innovation, less jobs and less opportunities. It is time for action, also from Labour Ministries on these areas.

The G20 has developed the appropriate road maps in this regard. In 2016, G20 Labour and Employment ministers agreed, for instance, on a G20 Entrepreneurship Action Plan. I also would like to remind you on your commitment from the G20 Labour Ministerial from 2013 to promote diverse forms of employment. We must now transform these commitments into action and follow-up on them also at G20 level. This means concretely:

1. **A regulatory and policy framework** which encourages companies to grow and employ people. What is needed is open, dynamic and inclusive labour markets that respect fundamental principles and rights at work, together with simple, transparent, flexible and predictable legal employment frameworks.
2. **More action on women's economic empowerment** is necessary. This includes removing legal restrictions that hinder women from participating in the formal labour market, improving access to finance for female entrepreneurs, increasing supportive mechanisms such as accessible and affordable child care and elderly care, and ensuring access from a very early age for all girls and women to compulsory, high-quality education systems.
3. **Better targeted initiatives aimed at increasing youth participation in the labour market.** This includes the creation of regulatory framework conditions that encourage the establishment of apprenticeship systems.

4. **More efforts to address the challenge of informality.** ILO Recommendation 204 provides a detailed road map, including lowering entry barriers such as those associated with the burdens of bureaucratic procedures.
5. **Education systems to align with tomorrow's labour market needs.** For example, ensuring access to compulsory, high-quality education systems that deliver proper acquisition and application of a broad range of essential skills.
6. **Effective lifelong learning systems and a new attitude to constant learning as a way to assure employability.**
7. **A “think-small-first-approach”**, which means that the possible impact of regulations and policies on SMEs are fully analysed before they are enacted or approved. What is needed is a “SME-mainstreaming” to ensure that their needs are fully embedded in policy making.

Ministers, Social Partners should be fully involved in labour market and education policies. Governments, employers and workers have a shared responsibility to shape labour market frameworks which are conducive for job creation and decent work. To achieve this balanced dialogue, it is key that employers and workers' organisations are more connected and heard at the UN. The link between UN decisions and their impact on the workplace must be better understood and strengthened. It is for this reason, we are advocating for a permanent UN observer status together with the International Trade Union. We count on your support in this regard.

We are looking forward to actively engaging throughout this meeting on the topics of demographic challenge, gender and the Future of Work. These are critical issues that must be addressed to ensure job creation, long-term growth and sustainable development.

Thank you.