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Economic recovery efforts must focus on job creation, UN agency stresses



ILO Director-General Juan Somavia

18 June 2010 – The United Nations labour agency today stressed that job creation must be the priority of policies geared towards economic recovery, saying more than 210 million workers globally cannot find jobs – the highest worldwide figure ever recorded for unemployment.

“The only real recovery is a recovery without social deficit,” said the International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)) Director-General Juan Somavia in a message to the closing plenary of the ILO’s annual International Labour Conference in Geneva.

Held in the lead-up to the summit of the Group of 20 (G20) industrialized and developing economies in Toronto, Canada, at the end of next week, ILO’s 183 Member States expressed broad concern that the global economic recovery remained “fragile and unevenly distributed, and many labour markets are yet to see jobs recovery match economic recovery.”

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told reporters in New York today that he will travel to Toronto for the G20 summit.

“I will stress that we must not settle for an economic recovery that simply takes us back to pre-crisis conditions. We need to build back better,” Mr. Ban said.

He said he had written to all of the G20 leaders stressing the need for concerted action in three specific areas: inclusive growth, including a priority on job creation

and decent work; green growth – powering prosperity through environment-friendly technologies and growth that promotes healthy populations – investing in stronger health systems, including maternal and child health.

Delegates at the labour conference in Geneva called for the implementation of ILO's Global Jobs Pact, which was adopted at a crisis summit held during last year's conference and received strong support during the G20 summit in the United States city of Pittsburgh in September last year.

Speakers also backed Mr. Somavia's call for a "balanced" policy strategy aimed at securing a "jobs-rich" economic recovery, and his warning that recent deficit reduction measures, mainly in social spending, could "directly affect jobs and salaries" at a time of weak economic recovery and continued high levels of unemployment.

Delegates reiterated their call to the ILO to place productive employment and decent work at the centre of economic and social policies to strengthen the social dimension of globalization.

Delegates also called on the ILO to enhance its collaboration with the multi-lateral institutions, particularly the UN, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, strengthening policy coherence across financial, economic, trade, employment, social and environmental policies. Mr. Somavia noted that the ILO had seen no significant indications of a reduction in the global rate of unemployment this year, despite signs of an economic recovery.

Government representatives, employers and workers noted that the continuing lack of jobs placed a "terrible burden" on the unemployed and hindered efforts to create "the right environment for enterprises to create employment." Others cautioned against the premature removal of economic stimulus packages.

"The message of this conference is very clear – put jobs at the centre of the recovery. In terms of the G20 meeting in Toronto, this means keeping the leaders' commitment, under the chairmanship of President [Barack] Obama [United States] in Pittsburgh, to put quality jobs at the heart of the recovery," Mr. Somavia said.

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