



B20 L20 joint statement

The B20 (business organisations of the G20 countries) and the L20 (trade union organisations of the G20 countries) express their deep concern at the gravity of the world economic situation: workers and companies face global market instability, including deepening unemployment and uncertainty in the labour market, and economic perspectives do not suggest any improvement. We therefore wish to seize the opportunity of social issues being put on the agenda of the G20 to draw the attention of governments to some major issues on which they have developed a common vision. The economic, social and financial crisis has indeed created space for discussing labour market and social protection challenges in a comparative perspective, within the G20. We think that a proper exchange of views in the G20, between the social partners and the governments, can help to tackle these issues and also help non-G20 countries to develop policies to address the employment situation in all its dimensions. We urge the G20 to make these issues a priority in order to reduce unemployment and prevent the risk of a growing share of the population losing faith in the global economy. In doing so, we echo the contribution of the International Organization of Employers and of the International Trade Union Confederation to the current debate on the same issues being held at the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Employment

Both the B20 and the L20 recognise the efforts made during the crisis by many governments to focus their action on the protection and the development of productive employment. However with the decline of growth across most of the G20 and worsening unemployment, priority now has to be put firmly on creating an environment conducive to enterprise and job creation. Policies implemented with G20 coordination and by G20 leaders should be consistent with this overarching aim. In order to achieve this, we support the mission of a G20 Task Force on employment, along the lines agreed by the G20 Labour Ministers in September 2011.

The situation of young people is particularly alarming in almost all countries, both developed and developing. Urgent efforts from governments and social partners are needed to provide real jobs, including apprenticeships and internships linked with training opportunities that provide qualifications, deepen work related skills and improve employability. We call on the G20 to make the youth employment situation their priority, and we are willing to contribute. Targets such as youth employment, entrepreneurship, the greening of jobs and the fight against the informal economy could be shared issues that the G20 might be willing to peer review.

Social protection

Business and workers' representatives have joint interest in the creation or the reinforcement of social protection, on the basis of strong shared principles. The discussion on the social protection floor in the International Labour Office in 2011 has shown that agreement exists on those principles.

The B20 and the L20 draw the attention of the governments gathered in Cannes on 3-4 November 2011 to the key elements that can make nationally-defined social protection floors relevant in all countries. This includes planning to ensure the sustainable financing of social protection floors nationally, the help that international organisations can provide in the capacity building necessary for implementation, the role of international as-

sistance in establishing social protection floors where none exist, the benefit of drawing conclusions from the experience of countries having defined sustainable social protection nets, the introduction of incentives to encourage formalisation of the economy and employment, the importance of both a demographic and a rights based approach to social protection and the need to design the floors preferably after consultation of social partners.

Fundamental principles and rights at work

The implementation of fundamental principles and rights at work is a responsibility of governments. Various ILO tools exist to achieve concrete improvements, including the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its follow-up.

As regards the B20 and the L20, we will contribute to the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights adopted by the Council of Human Rights of the UN last June and we recognise the relevance and usefulness of other international instruments on multinational enterprises including the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social policy. The ILO Declaration does not only cover the fundamental principles and rights at work, it also deals with matters such as employment promotion, safety and health, conditions of work and training. We therefore want to re-emphasise its importance and will support its promotion through our respective constituents in the G20 as an important means to build confidence in the actions of companies and to try and deliver concrete results in terms of competitiveness and for the people

Coherence of actions in the multilateral system

In recent years, some international organisations, including the ILO, the International Monetary Fund, the World Health Organisation and the World Bank, have increased their cooperation and joint research in domains which sometimes overlap. They have engaged in a number of structured joint projects on the ground. We can only approve such efforts to link their actions, and to achieve more effective results.

The B20 and L20 think that in addition to cooperation agreements signed between the International Labour Office and other organisations, concrete work between these bodies should be fostered, for instance on pilot joint projects voluntarily involving countries most hit by the crisis, or on particular items such as youth employment and social protection floors. Cooperation involving the ILO has the further advantage of enabling the contribution of the social partners as provided for under the constitution of the Organisation.

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