

# ILO Director-General welcomes BRICS commitment to ensuring decent work, dignity and respect for all

Speaking at the meeting of BRICS nations\*, Gilbert F. Hounbo emphasized the importance of inclusive and sustainable development, promoting labour rights for all, ensuring universal access to social protection systems, closing the skills gap in the informal economy and promoting sustainable enterprises. (\*Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa)

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ILO Director-General Gilbert F. Hounbo at the BRICS Ministers of Labour and Employment meeting

©Department of Employment and Labour of South Africa GENEVA (ILO News) - The Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Gilbert F. Hounbo, has welcomed the commitment by the Labour and Employment Ministers (LEMM) of the BRICS\* countries to reinforce positive links between decent work, productivity growth and employment creation.

“Strengthening labour rights, guaranteeing universal access to social protection and closing skills gaps in the informal economy can reignite a virtuous cycle between decent work, improvements in productivity and job-rich economic growth,” said Hounbo in his remarks to the ministers. “We’re talking about the respect, promotion and realization of fundamental principles and rights at work, extending social protection coverage and promoting inclusive skills policies that deliver training relevant to the needs of workers in the informal economy,” he added.

The Director-General stressed the need “to ensure the ratification and effective implementation of ILO Fundamental Conventions,” as well as promote “an inclusive and effective legal and institutional framework that provides adequate protection of all workers.”

Hounbo also emphasized that “a higher proportion of workers in BRICS countries are in informal employment. Commitments to close coverage and adequacy gaps in social protection coverage and to close skills gaps in the informal economy are particularly important to facilitate the transition from the informal to formal economy and create decent work.”

The [LEMM Declaration](#) , issued at the end of the Ministers' meeting, which took place on 29 September in Durban, South Africa, identifies four priorities for action: promoting labour rights for all and reducing decent work deficits; ensuring universal access to social protection and a minimum basic income; promoting decent work and closing the skills gap in the informal economy; and building sustainable enterprises and innovation.

“In light of the mega drivers, including technological advancements, climate change, demographic shifts, and changes in investment and trade patterns, as well as mutually reinforcing crises,” the BRICS member countries “commit to reducing informal work through the promotion of the transition from the informal to the formal economy, expanding social protection coverage, eliminating discrimination in employment and occupation, ensuring adequate and fair wages, and enhancing job security,” says the Declaration.

It also acknowledges “the necessity to exchange best practices and respect and advocate for labour rights to fortify the resilience of our labour markets.”

In the Declaration, the BRICS member countries pledge to bridge the skills gap for informal workers in their countries, to improve job quality and facilitate their transition to the formal economy. They commit to enhancing progress towards universal social protection for all by 2030. They also stress the need for policies that encourage and enhance labour productivity in various business sectors.

The Declaration welcomes the establishment of a BRICS Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work Platform, aiming to bolster collaboration within the BRICS bloc and foster economic growth, sustainable enterprises, productive employment creation, and poverty reduction.

*\*Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa*