

## International Labour Organization

### Statement to the G-24 Ministers and Governors Meeting

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(6min, 772 words)

I am encouraged by the focus of this year's Spring Meetings theme—"Jobs - The Path to Prosperity", which is well aligned with ILO's approach. For the ILO, employment is not merely an outcome of economic growth. Employment is itself a fundamental driver of growth. This is especially critical for developing countries where decent work—work in dignity, with voice and with rights—is essential for sustainable development and shared prosperity that leaves no one behind.

Global economic growth is projected to remain stable at 3.3 per cent in 2025, with global unemployment at 5 per cent. However, rising policy uncertainty is likely to constrain business investment and slow employment growth, while further limiting fiscal space, particularly in developing economies. This will hamper their efforts to invest in quality job creation and social protection—a critical concern for the 34 countries at high risk of or already in debt distress<sup>1</sup>.

Meanwhile, persistent decent work deficits continue, especially for developing countries. Informal employment affects 88.5 per cent of workers in low-income countries and 83.4 per cent in lower-middle-income countries. Working poverty remains high, with 62.6 per cent of workers in sub-Saharan Africa living on less than US\$3.65 per day. Productivity growth has fallen by half a percentage point from pre-pandemic levels globally, with low-income countries experiencing pronounced losses. Youth unemployment remains stubbornly high at 16.8 per cent in low-income countries, while the global jobs gap affects 402.4 million people. Women's jobs gap rate is 4.5 percentage points higher than men's.<sup>2</sup> These structural vulnerabilities prevent broad-based access to decent work and quality employment in developing economies. It is also important to set these uncertainties and challenges within the context of demographic, technological and climate transitions. This makes the task of building a strong economy for tomorrow even more complex given the shifting sands of today's economy.

For the ILO, jobs, rights and growth form an integrated framework on which to build for the future. These elements reinforce each other. They do not compete. Quality jobs drive economic growth, while rights ensure that growth is inclusive and sustainable. Economic growth creates resources for better jobs and stronger protection, while labour rights ensure fair distribution of economic gains. When workers benefit from fundamental rights, receive sufficient wages and have access to social protection, they contribute to a cycle of economic and social progress and inclusion.

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<sup>1</sup> IMF 2025. <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/dsa/dsalist.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> ILO 2025. [World Employment and Social Outlook](#), January 2025

Guided by this framework, the ILO advocates for economic policies that recognize employment outcomes as key objectives alongside macroeconomic stability and other goals. For example, fiscal policies can adopt counter-cyclical approaches focused on quality employment generation, even amid consolidation pressures. The employment impact of investments can be optimized together with better monitoring of labour market outcomes resulting from macroeconomic policy decisions.

Strategic sectoral investments become increasingly critical in times of economic volatility. Investments in the green economy, care services, education and digital infrastructure provide insulation from external economic shocks while generating significant employment multipliers and addressing critical development challenges.<sup>3</sup>

Labour rights and social protection systems are fundamental to economic resilience. ILO research shows that freedom of association and collective bargaining rights reduce wage inequality while creating positive spillovers for broader labour market stability.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, social protection systems generate substantial economic returns through their automatic stabilization effects, helping maintain consumption during downturns.<sup>5</sup> As such, a rights-based framework functions as an economic stabilizer that supports aggregate demand, facilitates necessary restructuring and adjustments, and enhances overall economic resilience.

The aforementioned social and economic challenges also require coordinated action beyond national boundaries, including through the Global Coalition for Social Justice, established by the ILO in 2023. The successful collaboration between the ILO and international financial institutions has also delivered concrete results. Our partnership with the IMF on sustainable financing for social protection has conducted joint work in nine countries. Similarly, cooperation with the World Bank on the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection reinforces social protection systems while enhancing employment policies.

Looking ahead, as World Bank President Ajay Banga has recently emphasized, "key to our approach is making job creation an explicit target".<sup>6</sup> The ILO is fully committed to collaborating on these areas and supports coordinated actions that address the specific challenges facing developing countries in a time of uncertainty and constraints.

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<sup>3</sup> ILO 2019, [Skills for a Greener Future: A Global View](#)

<sup>4</sup> Kucera and Sari 2022, Chapter 2: Globalization and freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, Handbook on globalization and labour standards

<sup>5</sup> Cardoso et al. 2023. [The multiplier effects of government expenditure: A multi-country study](#), August 2023

<sup>6</sup> Banga 2025, [Development is how we compete, grow and stay secure](#), April 2025