



**International  
Labour  
Organization**

**General debate  
2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**

**7 – 16 July 2020  
United Nations Headquarters, New York**

**Ms. Beate Andres, Special Representative to the United Nations and Director**

---

As the Secretary-General has pointed out in his report on “Shared responsibility, global solidarity – responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19”, the crisis is likely to have a profound and negative effect on sustainable development efforts. Latest ILO estimates indicate an accumulated loss of working hours of the equivalent of 400 million full-time jobs.

Many participants to the 2020 HLPF therefore called for new and bold policy responses to mitigate the crisis and to invest in sustainable development. The fragilities and fault lines exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic need to be tackled. The ILO welcomes this broad consensus and renewed commitment to the 2030 Agenda.

Interventions will differ depending on the stage of the recovery process. Decision-makers will have to make difficult decisions on how to use their scarce resources to enhance income security; create and retain decent jobs; strengthen the social and ecological fabric of our economies and transition towards a “better normal” – one that is human-centred, inclusive and accessible, gender-responsive, and environmentally sustainable.

The guiding principle of Leaving No One Behind of the 2030 Agenda has been brought into sharp relief by the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis in all member States, regardless of their development status. It has exposed the most vulnerable groups in societies and in particular women, youth, children, and workers in the informal sector. The pandemic is inflicting a triple shock on young people. Not only is it destroying their employment, it is also disrupting education and training, and placing major obstacles in the way of those seeking to enter the labour market or to move between jobs.

SDG Goal 8 on decent work and sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth straddles the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and it is therefore inextricably linked to many other Goals of the 2030 Agenda. Creating decent and productive jobs for all in a green, inclusive and resilient economy is the smartest path to recovery and to delivering on the goals of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. In so doing we need to marry the greening of our societies and economies with the opportunities offered by the digital revolution.

In many countries, therefore, governments, workers and employers have come together in a tripartite social dialogue and have successfully expanded or established a range of measures to protect enterprises and workers’ incomes, including in the informal sector, to expand social protection floors and to develop strategies for a just transition toward environmentally friendly economies.

These experiences have also been exchanged at the [ILO Global Virtual Summit on COVID-19 and the World of Work](#), which brought together 97 heads of States and other leaders from government, employers’

and workers' organisations to address the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Summit represents the unified contribution of the World of Work to the HLPF and the integrated COVID-19 response of the UN system. The Summit also concluded that the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (A/73/L117) should therefore be a priority objective of national policies and international cooperation.

In times of a global crisis, the international community needs to ensure that no country is left behind. This is the time for solidarity and for seizing the strengths of the multilateral system, as we also heard in the past days in our discussions here at the HLPF. Developing countries are even less equipped than developed countries to cope with the health and socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Protracted crises in these countries are likely to reverberate back into the global system. It is therefore beneficial for all member States to cooperate and to coordinate policy responses and assistance.

The ILO stands ready to work with member States and the multilateral system for a better and greener Future of Work as we recover from this crisis and to accelerate action to implement the SDG Agenda.

Thank you.