

ILO Input to the 2020 HLPF
under the theme
“Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of
action and delivery for sustainable development”

The COVID-19 crisis is likely to have a profound and negative effect on sustainable development efforts. A prolonged global economic slowdown will adversely impact the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.¹

The current COVID-19 pandemic therefore calls for a new perspective for policy responses to the crisis for sustainable development and the world of work. Going forward, the approach in terms of the 2030 Agenda, will need to be to manage the crisis, mitigate the negative effects on SDG achievements, and to use the 2030 Agenda framework to implement development pathways for resilient and sustainable societies and to build back better in the recovery.

Decent work and SDG 8 lies at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: it straddles the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and is therefore inextricably linked to many other Goals.

This means that failure to advance on SDG 8 would impede progress towards other Goals, including the eradication of poverty (SDG 1), reducing inequalities (SDG 10), promoting peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16), ensuring good health and well-being (SDG 3), and achieving gender equality (SDG 5). Conversely, progress on the other SDGs is a precondition for advancing towards SDG 8.

The UN General Assembly stressed that full and productive employment and decent work for all is one of the key elements of sustainable development, and should therefore be a priority objective of national policies and international cooperation.²

The guiding principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) of the 2030 Agenda has been brought into sharp relief by the potential socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis in all member States, regardless of their development status. This guiding principle has two dimensions: firstly, ensuring a focus on the most vulnerable groups affected in a society. This paper offers a first assessment of these vulnerable groups in the world of work. The LNOB methodology and analytical approach can be applied to design response and development cooperation programmes reaching the most vulnerable and this at risk to be left behind.

Youth are being disproportionately affected by the pandemic, and the substantial and rapid increase in youth unemployment seen since February is affecting young women more than young men. The pandemic is inflicting a triple shock on young people. Not only is it destroying their employment, but 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.

Secondly, in time of a global crisis, the global community needs to ensure that no country is left behind. This is the time for international solidarity and seizing the strengths of the multilateral system. 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. An approach also recognized by other multilateral organizations and processes such as the G20.³

¹ [UN Secretary-General Report : Shared responsibility, global solidarity : Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 \(Version 19, 27 March 2020\)](#)

² A/73/L.117: International Labour Organization Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/g20-leaders-summit-statement-on-covid-19-26-march-2020>

The full impact of the COVID-19 crisis is dynamic and still emerging. The [ILO brief on COVID-19 and the world of work \(27 May 2020\)](#) provides an updated situation estimate and analysis at the point of publication. An integrated policy framework is set out in the ILO Policy brief entitled [A policy framework for tackling the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis. \(ILO, May 2020\)](#). The integrated policy response rests on four pillars: (i) stimulating the economy and employment; (ii) supporting enterprises jobs and incomes; (iii) protecting workers in the workplace; and (iv) relying on social dialogue for solutions. The ILO impact analysis and policy framework are fully aligned with the [UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19](#).