



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Theme in 2021: "Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development".

Panel Discussion Session: How do we get on track to end poverty and hunger, and transform towards inclusive and sustainable economies?

Session on SDGs 1, 2, 8, 17 and interlinkages among those goals and with other SDGs

7 July 2021 (15:00 – 18:15) (Geneva Time)

Question from the moderator:

As Director-General of ILO, could you share your perspective on how economic recoveries can be shaped to ensure more inclusive and sustainable patterns of growth that generate decent jobs, ensure equal access to basic services and social protection, and support carbon-neutrality and a better balance with nature?

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder's Talking Points

Thank you Madame Moderator

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for inviting me to this panel on SDGs 1, 2, 8 and 17. These are all interlinked goals, and we should, especially within the broader remit of the COVID-19 response and recovery, look at poverty, food security and decent work and in particular how we can shape the economic recovery the world now needs.

What I heard from the introductory remarks and the presentation of the Secretary-General's progress report underscores my views: What the COVID-19 crisis has shown is the validity of the 2030 Agenda in its entirety. However, even

before the crisis we were not on track. Now, sadly, the path to achieving the SDGs is even steeper – the goalposts have moved further away, also for SDG 8 and decent work.

We see that the labour market crisis is far from over, and employment growth will be insufficient to make up for the losses suffered until at least 2023.

The ILO's *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021* projects global unemployment to stand at 205 million people in 2022, greatly surpassing the level of 187 million in 2019. This corresponds to an unemployment rate of 5.7 per cent. Excluding the COVID-19 crisis period, such a rate was last seen in 2013. This comes on top of persistently high pre-crisis levels of unemployment, labour underutilization and poor working conditions.

The COVID-19 crisis disrupted economic activities around the world and caused the worst recession since the Great Depression. The pandemic has also put workers in informal employment at risk, since people have lost their jobs due to a lack of protection against illness or lockdowns. Young workers and women have been particularly hard hit by the labour market crisis.

This is a worrying analysis indeed. But we can address these challenges together. The ILO's International Labour Conference which just concluded last month unanimously adopted a Global Call to Action outlining measures to drive a human-centred recovery from the pandemic. The Global Call to Action commits countries to ensuring that their economic and social recovery from the crisis is fully inclusive, sustainable and resilient, and is leaving no-one behind.

How can this be achieved?

The ILO Call for Action provides the necessary elements in line with the 2030 Agenda: national governments and social partners need to work towards a job-rich recovery that strengthens worker and social protection and supports

sustainable enterprises. Naturally, this will need to take into account the specific national circumstances, but broadly speaking a job-rich and accelerated recovery must include investment in strategic sectors defined by job creation potential and social demand (such as health care, digital, green and rural economy). These need to be accompanied with measures for skills development and social protection.

It is important that we retain a specific focus and attention on inequalities. Unless we specifically address the inequalities that have deepened during this crisis there is a very real risk that the economic and social consequences will cause long-term scarring, particularly for disproportionately-affected groups such as young people and women, and the small- and micro-enterprises that provide most of the world's employment.

However, many countries will not be able to do this alone. Therefore, secondly, the Call to Action demands urgent, coordinated action in related areas, including international solidarity to ensure global and equal access to vaccines, treatments and preventive measures. It calls for improved international cooperation to increase the level and coherence of the support for national human-centred pandemic recovery strategies. It thus aligns with and supports the Secretary-Generals call for a decade of accelerated action to achieve the global goals.

Thank you. I look forward to our discussions today.