



European Union

Statement

**ILO Governing Body, 323rd session
(12-27 March 2015)**

**"Global employment and social challenges: Emerging trends and the role
of ILO"**

(GB.323/HL/1)

Geneva, 23 March 2015

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EU Statement

Thank you chair,

I speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The following countries align themselves with this statement: Turkey, Montenegro, Iceland, Serbia, Albania, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia.

We thank the Office for the document, providing a good basis for our discussion. We also thank Ms. Mohamed and Mr. Celik for the enlightening contribution.

Let me start with the challenges. Around the world, recovery remains slow, uneven and fragile and even with recent improvements, the risks of persistent low growth, insufficient job creation, deflation, low levels of investment and high unemployment continue to be a primary concern. Youth continues to suffer from unacceptable levels of unemployment.

If not addressed, they will significantly weaken our growth potential, thereby making it harder to achieve societal goals. At EU level, we can already see that the distance to the employment and poverty targets set in our EU2020 strategy for the present decade has increased since 2008 instead of decreasing. Restoring smart, sustainable and inclusive growth requires determined and systematic actions across a broad range of policy areas to reduce gaps between levels of wealth, poverty and inequalities.

Let me concentrate on what is new in our answers to these challenges.

First, investment in the real economy. To pave the way towards a strong recovery, we need to invest in our future. A new focus on investment has recently been decided in the European Union. With the plan being set up to un-lock long term financing and facilitate access to

finance for firms, in particular SMEs. Emphasis is placed on infrastructure, research and innovation.

Second, governance. Strengthening the employment and social aspects of our economic governance becomes a priority and we have taken initiatives to give a new start to social dialogue, which is essential.

Third, convergence. Restoring socio-economic convergence is an important task following the crisis years. Close coordination of economic and social policies is crucial to that aim and we are stepping up our efforts.

Fourth, global action. Global challenges require globally coordinated responses and actions. We have been encouraged by the comprehensive agenda of the G20 meetings under the Australian and Turkish Chairs.

How do we see the role of the ILO? We consider that with its tripartite structure and its focus on international labour standards it has a key role to play. We welcome the provision of evidence and expertise as well as the demand-driven support of the Office in assisting its Members, notably on social dialogue, wages, active labour market policies and adequate and sustainable social protection, with attention to quality job creation and the gender dimension. We welcome the ILO's involvement in the G20 meetings' preparation and invite it to further deepen cooperation with relevant international stakeholders.

Let me now turn to the future. The post-2015 agenda will give us the opportunity to address some of the most pressing global issues in a truly transformative manner. Foremost are the interrelated challenges of eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development in all its three dimensions. Concerning the social pillar, we fully support the objective that the agenda should leave no one behind.

We welcomed the report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing and the proposals of the Open Working Group, in particular concerning the role of decent work. They should be the main basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda. We also welcomed the UN Secretary General's synthesis report.

We share the attention given by the Office to the Third International Financing for Development Conference and to the negotiations on the UN framework Convention on climate change, that are closely connected processes.

We acknowledge the active role the ILO has taken to date on the post 2015 agenda, and we are confident it will continue with the same spirit and sense of responsibility in the upcoming phases. We agree that the Group of Friends of Decent Work for Sustainable Development provides a useful platform for discussions. It is clear, however, that the Office needs to engage all actors, public and private, in the mobilization and the effective use of resources.

An important area for further work will be to ensure well-defined indicators, allowing for implementation and monitoring of a final set of targets that are specific, measurable and achievable. The ILO has an important role to play in this regard. We must recognise the need to look beyond mere Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to broader measures of progress, including social, human and natural capital to address a more comprehensive idea of sustainable livelihoods and well-being.

The post 2015 agenda's most essential element is its effective implementation and ownership, which mostly takes place at the country level. National efforts need to be reinforced by cooperation and partnership on regional and global levels, including multi-stakeholder collaboration. We stand ready to engage with all partners and stakeholders, to ensure that the framework implemented can deliver results on the ground.

We acknowledge that making the UN system fit for purpose for post-2015 is especially relevant to the ILO, in doing so we ask the Office to look at the framework through the lens of implementing Ministries, particularly those in the least developed countries.

In this context, we support the draft decision contained in paragraph 49 of the document and ask the Office to inform the Governing Body about progress review.

Thank you, Chairperson.