

KEY RESOURCES

International Labour Organization

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[International Labour Conference
Global Jobs Summit](#)

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ECOSOC

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[Juan Somavia's address to ECOSOC](#)

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The Global Jobs Pact and the Economic and Social Council

Summer 2009: The Global Jobs Pact at the United Nations

The ILO's Global Jobs Pact was adopted by the International Labour Conference (ILC) on 19 June. After negotiations between representatives of governments, business and trade unions of ILO member countries, it received unanimous approval. During the Conference, a special Global Jobs Summit was held involving heads of state and government, vice-presidents and ministers of labour, workers' and employers' representatives and other leaders, all of whom endorsed the Pact. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon also unequivocally supported the Global Jobs Pact. He addressed delegates at the closing sitting of the Conference and assured them he would deliver the message of the Jobs Pact to the UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and to the G8 Summit in Italy. "I will carry [the Pact] with me," he told delegates, "just as the Pact carries with it the hearts and hopes of people around the world." He concluded: "the Pact is ours together. And we will work to maximize its potential throughout the UN system."

During the summer, the Global Jobs Pact was taken across Europe and to New York where support for the Global Jobs Pact grew. Immediately after the ILC, it was presented to the [UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis](#) (New York, 24-26 June) which requested the ILO to present the Pact at the annual meeting of the [Economic and Social Council](#) in Geneva (6-31 July: see box below). During the ECOSOC High-Level Segment, ILO Director-General Juan Somavia addressed the Council and called on members to heed the struggle of workers, families and communities. He appealed to governments, agencies and organizations to set in place national and international agendas with the central objective of shortening the usual lag time of several years that follows growth recovery before employment recovers. By acting in a coordinated manner, he said, "we can build a world which is economically, socially, environmentally and politically sustainable."

Following Mr. Somavia's speech, the Brazilian delegation to ECOSOC proposed a [Resolution on the Global Jobs Pact](#). It was widely accepted and was adopted with over 170 co-sponsors.

ECOSOC is the principal body coordinating the economic, social, and related work of the 14 UN specialized agencies, functional commissions and regional commissions. It receives reports from 11 UN funds and programmes. It is the central forum for the UN system to review international economic and social issues, and to formulate policy recommendations addressed to Member States and the United Nations system. The Council is comprised of 54 member governments which are elected for three-year terms by the General Assembly.



The **Brazilian delegation**, the main sponsor of the draft Resolution on the Global Jobs Pact, explained that the potential of the Pact lies in its recognition that many of the challenges of the crisis are “economic and financial in their origins, but social in their consequences.” In the current downturn, tripartite collaboration is especially vital: “the participation of governments, workers and employers in the deliberations of the ILO attaches a level of legitimacy unequalled in any other international forum.” The delegation concluded that ECOSOC is, in their view, in a unique position to support and advocate for the Global Jobs Pact to become “a reference of concrete possible measures which also offer a concerted view that may add coherence to the response by the UN system to the crisis.”

ILO Priorities and the ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration

This year’s [Ministerial Declaration](#) (E/2009/L.12)– adopted at the conclusion of the ECOSOC High-Level Segment – is entitled “Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health.” Many of the points of action in the Declaration are directly related to ILO priorities.

Social protection for the most vulnerable sectors was a recurring topic at ECOSOC. The Declaration calls upon the international community to support States to promote full access to health and social protection for all. Furthermore, measures to promote “risk-pooling and pro-poor social protection schemes” should be implemented and support provided to developing countries “in building up and improving basic social protection floors” (paragraph 10).

Social protection is a fundamental ILO principle. Recently, a Social Protection Floor was identified as one of the nine crisis response initiatives in a Chief Executive Board (CEB) issues paper, “The global financial crisis and its impact on the work of the UN system” which was presented by Mr. Somavia in his capacity as Chair of the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP), a supporting pillar of the CEB. The ILO and the WHO are taking the lead in its implementation.

Working conditions in relation to health status, health equity and general well-being are also included in the Declaration. It states that employment and working conditions should be improved in order to reduce work-related hazards and the negative health effects of working environments (paragraph 37). Policies should be devised and implemented in accordance with ILO standards.

Gender and public health were also prioritized during ECOSOC. Areas for action include: promoting human rights in relation to public health, especially regarding gender equality and the empowerment of women; ensuring equal access of women and girls to education, basic services, primary health care, and economic opportunities; making efforts to counteract violence against women and girls and strengthening women’s roles in decision-making processes; and prioritizing maternal health (paragraphs 12-14). This final point was repeatedly made in the discussion, when many countries’ statements centered on rising global child and maternal morbidity and mortality.

2010 ECOSOC Ministerial Review

Gender will be the focus for the 2010 Annual Ministerial Review. This autumn, five regional preparatory meetings will be held, each one focusing on a different aspect relating to gender. The meeting on gender, employment and women’s entrepreneurship will be led by the ILO and will be held in Bahrain.

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