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Topic: Joint ILO-OECD study prepared for the G20 labour ministerial meeting in Paris on 26-27 September.

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What is the unemployment rate in Azerbaijan?

The world may face a "disastrous lack of jobs" by late 2012 if developed and developing countries do not take exigent and radical measures to reduce unemployment, a joint report by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reads.

According to some reports, the number of unemployed people worldwide has today reached some 200 million people. Some compare the scale of these figures with the period of the Great Depression. The report indicated that developing and developed countries lost 20 million jobs since the beginning of the global financial crisis in 2008. This might not be the limit, as another 20 million jobs may have been lost by late 2012.

Azerbaijan's labor market, according to official data, was not affected by the global financial crisis and its negative trends. The State Statistics Committee indicates an increase in employment in Azerbaijan and a creation of new jobs across the country. Under the State Program on social and economic development for 2009-2013, 190,412 new jobs, including 139,697 permanent jobs, opened in Azerbaijan from January 2009 to July 1, 2011.

During the first half of 2011, Azerbaijan created 43,790 new jobs, including 32,461 permanent jobs. Of these, 13.4 percent fell to the share of new enterprises and organizations, 12.4 percent to existing businesses and organizations, 0.2 percent to enterprises which restored activity, and 74 percent of jobs were created by individuals.

Some 73.4 percent of the newly formed jobs are accounted for by the country's regions: 20.1 percent in Aran, 14.6 percent in Ganja-Gazakh, 6.9 percent in Sheki-Zagatala, 6.5 percent in Guba-Khachmaz, 6.4 percent in Lankaran, 6.0 percent in Absheron, 4.2 percent in Upper Karabakh, 3.9 percent in Nakhchivan, 3.6 percent in Shirvan and 1.2 percent in Kalbajar Lachin economic regions.

As expected, the greater responsibility and major burden of implementing measures to reduce unemployment fell to the private sector. According to statistics, 96.3 percent of new jobs opened in Azerbaijan in the non-state sector, and permanent jobs are concentrated in the non-oil sector, of which 5.3 percent were opened in construction, 5.8 percent in trade and repair, 2.6 percent in the processing industry, and 1.7 percent in agriculture and other sectors.

Today, the official unemployment rate is 5.5 percent in Azerbaijan. The rate is lower than the global rate of unemployment, which the ILO predicted to be 6.1 percent, or 203.3 million in 2011.

Consequently, economic progress does not automatically mean an emergence of new and decent jobs. To ensure that economic growth benefits all people, and that good, decent working conditions are developed, macroeconomic policies of any country must focus on serious measures in the labor market.

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