

Group of Friends of Decent Work for Sustainable Development

Terms of reference

Background

Decent work has emerged as a core issue in the discussions related to the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. The Rio+20 [outcome document “The Future We Want”](#) recognized the need to create an enabling environment for full employment, decent work for all and social protection. It urged all governments to address the global challenge of youth employment, adopt forward-looking macroeconomic policies and work to promote the transition to formality, gender equality and social protection floors. This message was further strengthened in the 2012 ECOSOC [Annual Ministerial Declaration](#).

Proposals for goals and targets in the areas of employment and social protection are currently under consideration by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals as part of a proposed goal that combines Sustained, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth with Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work for All and across various other goals such as poverty, education and equality. Specific targets have been proposed in the areas of full and productive employment and decent work for all; social protection systems and social protection floors; youth employment and skills development; micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurship; protection of workers’ rights, including migrant workers and elimination of child labour; employment formalization; gender empowerment. The OWG is expected to present its report to the UN General Assembly in September 2014 proposing a concrete set of goals and targets to be considered in the 69th UNGA negotiations leading to the adoption of the future development framework in September 2015.

The Group of Friends of Decent Work for Sustainable Development is created as an intergovernmental platform to promote and advance decent work issues in the upcoming negotiation phase of the sustainable development agenda at the 69th UNGA.

Objectives

The core objective the Group of Friends is to mobilize and coordinate political and technical support to promote employment, social protection and decent work for all as a top priority in the negotiations of the post-2015 development agenda.

Specific objectives include:

- To provide advice and guidance on goals and targets related to relevant decent work areas under consideration in the discussion of the post-2015 development agenda.
- To serve as a platform for regular exchange, dialogue and consultation among member state representatives, groupings and specialized agencies experiences and good practices to inform the policy debate.
- To coordinate positions in the area of decent work in consultation with relevant Permanent Missions in New York, Geneva and respective capitals.
- To enhance advocacy and outreach activities, and propose initiatives to advance decent work in the post-2015 development agenda.

Timeline

The Group of Friends will function from September 2014 to September 2015 (12 months), and host five official meetings at the ambassador level in New York:

- September 2014 - to conduct preliminary exchanges among Group members, and consider proposals for an initial Programme of Work
- December 2014 - following the release of the Secretary-General's Synthesis Report to discuss contents related to decent work, social protection and employment issues
- February 2015 - around the meeting of the 53rd Commission for Social Development (CSocD)
- May 2015 - around the ECOSOC Integration Segment focusing on employment and policy integration themes
- September 2015 - in line with final deliberations and adoption of an eventual framework by the UN General Assembly in New York

Membership

Participation in the Group of Friends is voluntary, informal and led by Member States. Membership is open to all UN Member States wish to actively participate.

Co-chairs

The Group of Friends will be co-chaired by two Permanent Representatives to the UN in New York representing a mix of developing and developed countries. The co-chairs will convene all meetings, oversee the elaboration and implementation of a programme of work and provide guidance.

Secretariat

The Secretariat for the Group of Friends will be provided by the ILO Office to the UN in New York. Under guidance of the co-chairs, the secretariat will provide support in elaboration and implementation of a programme of work, organization of events, meetings and advocacy activities, preparation of technical reports, background materials and briefings and dissemination of information. The secretariat can also rely on external support and expertise as needed.