

110th International Labour Conference (ILC) of ILO at Geneva

Plenary Session on 9th June, 2022

Address by Hon'ble Minister for Labour & Employment

Thank you Chair for giving me this opportunity to address the International Labour Conference of ILO.

2. India has in recent years, introduced technology and simplified systems with the objectives that each worker enjoys dignity and choice of employment with social security. Our Government is providing a unique Universal Account Number to each worker whether in formal or in informal sector to act as a portable identity for continued enjoyment of rights at work.

3. For evidence based policy making and to ensure last-mile delivery of services to the workers, Government of India, has launched surveys on employment demand, migrant and domestic workers to address the specific needs of such workers in the country.

4. Workers in formal sector in India are served by two major tripartite organizations called Employees' Provident Fund Organization and the Employees' State Insurance Corporation. Both these organisations serve to all kinds of social security benefits including medical treatment, pension, maternity benefit, unemployment etc.

5. India has a comprehensive institutional framework to provide for decent work. Indian Parliament has recently passed four labour Codes subsuming 29 Central Labour laws which has modernized and simplified the labour laws which have taken into account the future of work and issues of informal sector workers. In view of emerging platform economy, gig and platform workers have been given rights to avail social security benefits for the first time through setting up of a dedicated Social Security Fund. Adequate arrangements for financing of such schemes for informal sector workers have been made by way of contribution from Central Government, provincial Governments, Aggregators and penalties collected.

6. To address the concerns of informal sector workers, a digital portal in August 2021 was launched to register such workers with the intention to develop a national database. About 280 million workers' database has already been created with more than 400 occupations of workers. The database would lead to better dissemination of social welfare schemes for informal workers.

7. During Covid-19, India not only provided free vaccination to its entire population, but also extended free delivery of food and food-grains, health services and assured employment. Under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee programme, about 72 million households availed work under the scheme from April, 2020 to March, 2021 alone.

8. During this period, a new Scheme was started to incentivise employers to create new jobs and to re-employ those who lost their jobs during pandemic period by paying from the budget shares of both employees' and employers' at the rate of 12% of wages. In the same

period, cash transfers were made directly to bank accounts of 200 million women during Covid-19 pandemic period.

9. About 3.2 million street vendors were provided collateral free loans to help them resume their businesses under SwanidhiScheme.

10. India has made significant reforms to improve female labour force participation rate. Duration of maternity leave increased from 12 weeks to 26 weeks. Provisions for 'work from home' and crèche facility has been made in establishments with 50 or more employees by amending the existing Act.

11. To facilitate safe and orderly migration and for totalization benefit, India supports signing of labour mobility agreements (LMA) and the social security agreements (SSA). I am happy that ILO is in support of India's move and also taken positive steps in this direction.

Thank you Chair.

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