



► BRICS-ILO Cooperation 2025

April 2025

► BRICS and ILO: Cooperation between emerging partners

BRICS cooperation with the ILO has grown in recent years. They are committed to the spirit featuring mutual respect and understanding, equality, solidarity, openness, inclusiveness, and consensus. Since 2024, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia have joined the BRICS as members. Five additional countries will join as partners, bringing the total to 11. For the ILO, this represents an opportunity to expand multilateral work in all regions, as well as to strengthen relations with emerging partners. In 2025, Brazil assumed the presidency, with the main areas of Global South cooperation and BRICS partnerships for social, economic and environmental development.

BRICS LEMM 25 April 2025 – Brasília

The BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting (LEMM), under Brazilian presidency, focuses on two pressing issues shaping the future of work: Artificial Intelligence and Just Transition in the world of work. The LEMM Declaration reaffirms the commitment of BRICS+ countries to a human-centered approach to AI, ensuring that technological advancements comply with ILO labour standards, emphasizing occupational health and safety while promoting decent work. Additionally, the Declaration addresses the urgent need for a just transition, recognizing the role of BRICS countries to lead in shifting towards green jobs while preventing unemployment and reinforcing social protection. The LEMM also focuses on social dialogue which is key to fostering inclusive policies, with governments, trade unions, and employers collaborating to improve working conditions in the Global South. The ILO Director-General has stated: *"We are at a critical juncture and BRICS countries have a key role in Just Transitions and AI global governance, including the road to COP 30."*



Brazil

Brazil has been actively cooperating with the ILO in the past 2 years, focusing on Decent Work and Social Justice as covered in the new South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) Programme signed in June 2023, including the following areas: Gender and Race Equality, Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work; Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) at Work and Jobs and Social Protection. Brazil presided over the G20 last year with trilateral cooperation highlighted, and the outcome of the climate change working group fed into the just transition discussion under the BRICS presidency.



► Brazilian Presidency of BRICS

Guided by the motto “Strengthening Global South Cooperation for More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance,” Brazil’s 2025 BRICS Presidency focuses on **two main areas**: (i) **Global South Cooperation** and (ii) **BRICS Partnership for Social, Economic, and Environmental Development**.

Within this framework, Brazil proposes to concentrate political attention on the following six priorities: 1) Global Health Cooperation, 2) Trade, Investment and Finance; 3) Climate Change; 4) Artificial Intelligence Governance; 5) Reform of the Peace and Security Multilateral System; 6) Institutional Development. Regarding the synergies with the ILO, the Employment Working Group is covering two main themes: i) Artificial Intelligence in the world of work and b) Climate Change and its impact on the world of work and Just transitions. The New Development Bank, headed by Dilma Rousseff, former Brazilian president, will play an active role in the BRICS events.



Russia

Russia held the presidency of the BRICS in 2024, which lasted until December 2024. The country has contributed to the G20 training strategy. This included projects on skills and peer learning for CIS countries, Viet Nam, and Jordan, and support for peer learning. The projects enhanced skills and employability development systems and addressed countryspecific priorities. The Tenth BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers’ Meeting, held in Sochi in September 2024, focused on advancing cooperation to enhance labour market development across BRICS nations. The ministers are committed to strengthening vocational guidance, skills training, OSH, and lifelong education for all populations, aiming to equip workers with future-relevant skills. The meeting culminated in a declaration outlining strategies for improving employment services, promoting decent work, and addressing the evolving challenges of the global labour market. The Director-General of ILO joined virtually.

India

In November 2018, the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the V.V Giri National Labour Institute, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the ILO’s International Training Centre (ITC-ILO) to collaborate on research, training, education, publications and other opportunities on labour related issues (a renewal of its 2012 MoU). The agreement covers: a) the implementation of collaborative training programmes and research into training methodologies and techniques; b) the development of training modules; c) exchange of faculty members for skills upgrading, knowledge and information sharing; and d) implementation of labour studies joint courses. India collaborates with the ILO and UNOSSC to address climate change and apprenticeships in the Caribbean. An SSTC project between India, South Africa, China, Ethiopia, and Switzerland from 2022-2023 focuses on Skills. In 2024, the ILO launched a new project Feasibility Study for Skills Taxonomy, linked to the G20. The aim of this project is to update an international reference classification that would facilitate policies to match skills with labor market needs. This initiative would increase

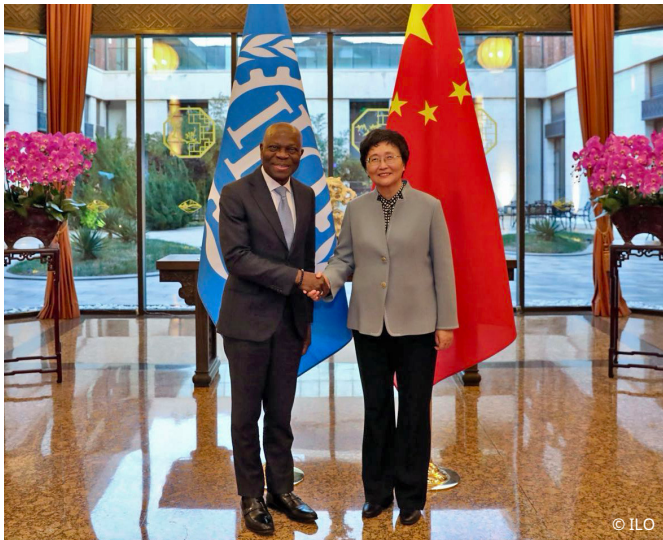


transparency in decision-making, particularly in terms of career guidance, recruitment, skills and migration policies, and facilitate related decisions by social partners.

China

The ILO and China have a long-standing partnership that has intensified in recent years thanks to SSTC and voluntary contributions by China to the ILO's Development Cooperation Programme, totaling US\$7.38 million between 2020 and 2024. With the first MOU signed in 2001, the ILO and Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS) signed an MOU for a strategic partnership focusing on the Decent Work Agenda in 2016.

In recent years, new SSTC partnership agreements were signed between the ILO and MOHRSS on skills development, employment, and social protection with total contributions of US\$ 4 million, 3 million, and 2 million, respectively, bringing benefits to tripartite constituents in Asia and the Pacific as well as Africa.



South Africa

South Africa has contributed as a development partner to the ILO through the IBSA Fund (India, Brazil, South Africa Forum). On September 29, 2023, the Ninth Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Labour and Employment took place in Durban,



South Africa, under the theme “Ensuring decent work, dignity and respect for all”, with the support of ILO and the International Social Security Association (ISSA). The Director General of the ILO, Gilbert F. Houngbo stressed that “growing inequalities and labour markets insecurities are hindering global economy recovery” that in the BRICS framework political commitments are needed to make decent jobs a reality for all”. He also mentioned that the South-South programme of the ILO would contribute to the BRICS Network on Productivity Ecosystems. Work in BRICS Countries: The South African Presidency has proposed the creation of a collaborative platform for BRICS Productivity Ecosystems in the context of the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2025. Currently there are ongoing studies in Brazil, China and South Africa funded by ILO's South-South and triangular cooperation regular budget.

Brazilian Presidency 2025: Employment Working Group Priorities

Under Brazil's BRICS presidency, the Employment Working Group has two main issues on its agenda: **Artificial Intelligence and Just Transition in the World of Work**. On **Artificial Intelligence**, the transformative impact of AI on the world of work in the BRICS+ countries raises major issues in terms of employment and employment policies. Indeed, AI must comply with ILO labour standards to ensure fairness, transparency and worker protection. Thus, the ILO is promoting a human-centered approach to AI, ensuring that technology promotes decent work, social protection and labour rights rather than exacerbating inequalities.

The EWG also focuses on the issue of **just transition, climate change in the world of work**. All the BRICS countries, with the exception of South Africa, feature in the list of the top 10 countries in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, underlining their important role in achieving zero emissions by mid-century. For the ILO, this means guiding policymakers on how to shift workers from carbon-intensive sectors to green jobs without increasing unemployment, while strengthening social protection systems and also providing technical support ensuring compliance with labour standards.

Labour & Employment Ministerial Meetings (BRICS LEMM)

11th Meeting, Brasilia, 2025: This meeting provided an important engagement towards the Just Transition & AI agendas.

10th Meeting, Sochi, 2024: This meeting provided a valuable opportunity to build consensus on policies for a human-centered future of work, as set out in the ILO's Centenary Declaration.

9th Meeting, Durban, 2023: Under the presidency of South Africa, the outcome document of the Durban LEMM highlighted the importance of supporting a South-South network of productivity ecosystem, fundamental principles and rights at work and digitalization. Among other commitments, the document highlighted achieving universal access to social protection. It also welcomed the new members as observers.

8th Meeting, China, 2022: Under the theme "Foster High-quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development", the meeting included topics such as promoting green jobs for sustainable development, developing skills for a resilient recovery and protecting workers' rights in new forms of employment.

7th Meeting, India, 2021: Focused on four key pillars of labour and employment policies: promoting social security agreements amongst BRICS nations; formalization of labour markets; participation of women in the labour force and gig and platform workers.

6th Meeting, Russia, 2020: The meeting discussed the development of a preventive safety and health work culture, poverty alleviation through social and economic transformation; and the future of work in the digital economy. The "Declaration for the BRICS Leaders reaffirmed the importance of social protection.

5th Meeting, Brazil, 2019: Under the theme "BRICS: Economic Growth for an Innovative Future", the meeting discussed and addressed the inclusive future of work and promoting and productive employment for a sustainable social security system.

4th Meeting, South Africa, 2018: An MoU on Cooperation in the social and labour sphere was signed to facilitate knowledge sharing and joint programme implementation among BRICS countries on labour, employment, social security, and social dialogue.

3rd Meeting, China, 2017: Established the BRICS Network of Labour Research Institutes to facilitate a better understanding of labour market issues. The network aims to assist member countries in sharing knowledge and implementing joint programmes on labour and employment, social security, and social dialogue.

2nd Meeting, India, 2016: Focused on four key pillars of labour and employment policies: promoting social security agreements among BRICS nations. Formalizing labour markets; promoting women's labour force participation; and understanding the role of gig and platform workers.

1st Meeting, Russia, 2016: Declared the importance of the expansion of BRICS coordination and cooperation in the promotion of quality and inclusive employment, strengthening intra-BRICS dialogue, and the exchange of experiences and information on labour and employment issues.

11th Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Labour and Employment (LEMM) – Brazil, 25 April 2025

The 11th Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Labour and Employment (LEMM) takes place in Brazil in April 2025, with the support of the ILO. This high-level meeting builds on previous commitments to address shared labour and employment challenges across BRICS nations. The discussions focus on advancing labour rights, expanding universal access to social protection, and strengthening policies to bridge the skills gap, particularly in the informal economy. Additionally, the meeting emphasizes fostering sustainable enterprises and leveraging digital transformation to enhance productivity and decent work opportunities. Ministers adopt an Outcome Document reaffirming their commitment to advancing social justice and promoting decent work for all. The BRICS Productivity Platform, launched in collaboration with the ILO, will continue to be a key initiative to support these efforts. Key contributions are expected from the Director-General of the ILO and the Secretary-General of the International Social Security Association (ISSA), reinforcing the role of international cooperation – particularly South-South Cooperation – in achieving inclusive and resilient labour markets. Brazil looks forward to hosting this important gathering and strengthening collaboration among BRICS nations to shape the future of work in an evolving global landscape.

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