

ECOSOC 2012 Ministerial Declaration addresses productive capacity, employment and decent work

Declaration aimed at eradicating poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the millennium development goals

07/10/2012



At the conclusion of its 2012 High-Level Segment the United Nations Economic and Social Council adopted a Ministerial Declaration on the theme of “promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the Millennium Development Goals”.

The Declaration is based on a [report prepared jointly by the ILO and the UN](#), which stresses that policies to boost productive capacities and decent jobs are critical both in the short-term, to curb the dramatic effects of a prolonged jobs crisis, and in the longer term, to make economic growth more sustainable, inclusive and equitable.

The [ILO report](#) examines global labour market trends, providing an assessment of progress towards meeting employment and decent work-related goals and commitments. It highlights measures and institutions that have proved effective in encouraging job and enterprise creation, in boosting skills and productive inclusion, in supporting successful labour market transitions and ensuring workers have adequate social protection and a fair sharing of earnings. The report underlines the inter-linkages between those measures and the progress towards poverty eradication and other internationally agreed development goals. It argues the need for immediate, coherent and globally coordinated macroeconomic policies to boost output, quality jobs and incomes, in line with the principles and objectives of the Global Jobs Pact. It also calls for distinctive initiatives to address the special labour market vulnerabilities of young women and men, to build nationally defined social protection floors for social and economic resilience, and to support a just transition to a greener economy. It discusses the important role that UN agencies, international institutions and donors can play in assisting governments in designing and implementing realistic and cost-effective measures in a coordinated manner, while engaging business, civil society and trade unions.



The Ministerial Declaration addresses each of these themes, expressing deep concern at the ongoing adverse impacts, particularly on development, of the world financial and economic crisis, observing that the global economy is entering a challenging new phase with significant downside risks, including the turbulence in global financial and commodity markets and widespread fiscal strains, which threaten global economic recovery, and stresses the need to continue to address systemic fragilities and imbalances and the need for continuing efforts to promote productive capacity, employment and decent work.

The Ministerial Declaration, adopted by consensus, includes 50 paragraphs in all, spanning many issues and taking a comprehensive view of the subject. The following are some of the more salient points.

Expressing commitment to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, the Declaration expresses support for efforts to promote sustainable development and to put productive employment at the heart of actions to restore growth and promote a job-rich recover, calling for reinforced cooperation and coherence within the UN system and together with the international financial institutions. It calls for policies based on the Global Jobs Pact and stresses the need to provide social protection for all members of society, noting the recent ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202).

It emphasizes the need for “more effective government involvement so as to ensure an appropriate regulation of the market that promotes productive capacity, full employment and decent work,” ... while recognizing that “a dynamic, inclusive, well-functioning and socially responsible private sector is a valuable instrument for generating economic growth and reducing poverty,” ... emphasizing the need “to foster a dynamic and well-functioning business sector, while improving income growth and distribution and raising productivity”. It calls attention to “the needs of micro, small and medium-sized businesses, with particular emphasis on women, rural populations and the poor”.

It calls for strong policies “to enhance the employability of women and youth and ensure their access to full and productive employment and decent work,” ... “encourages Member States to adopt and implement human resources development strategies that ensure a strong link between education, health, training and employment, help to maintain a productive and competitive workforce and are responsive to the needs of the economy, ... and “advocates effective labour market policies and legislation, as appropriate, that support statutory or negotiated minimum wage systems, acceptable conditions of work, strengthened labour standards, institutions of collective bargaining and labour administration, in order ... to avoid deflationary wage spirals, increase demand, promote economic stability, reduce poverty and inequality and achieve social justice”.

The Declaration stresses the need “to increase vigilance and to achieve respect for international labour standards and reaffirms ... commitment to promote opportunities for full, freely chosen and productive employment as well as decent work for all, with full respect for fundamental principles and rights at work under conditions of non-discrimination, equity, equality, security and dignity”; stresses “the importance of promoting and protecting the rights of women workers, to take action to remove structural and legal barriers to, as well as eliminate stereotypical attitudes towards, gender equality at work, and to initiate positive steps towards promoting equal pay for equal work or for work of equal value”; and recognizes the “need to improve opportunities for young people to gain access to productive employment and decent work through increased investment in youth employment, active labour-market support and public-private partnerships, as well as through the creation of enabling environments to facilitate the participation of young people in labour markets, in accordance with international rules and commitments”.

[Read the full text.](#)