

On 19 June 2009 the International Labour Organization – in response to the prolonged global increase in unemployment, poverty and inequality, and continuing collapse of enterprises – adopted a Global Jobs Pact. The document received strong support during a preceding three-day ILO Global Jobs Summit, which brought together heads of state and government, vice-presidents and ministers of labour, and worker and employer representatives.

The Global Jobs Pact calls on governments of the ILO's 183 member States and organizations representing workers and employers to work together to collectively tackle – in line with the Decent Work Agenda – the worldwide jobs crisis.

The document warns that “the global economic crisis and its aftermath mean the world faces the prospect of a prolonged increase in unemployment, deepening poverty and inequality.... In some countries, the simple recovery of previous employment levels will not be enough to contribute effectively to strong economies, and to achieve decent work for women and men”.

The Global Jobs Pact stresses that the response to the crisis “should contribute to a fair globalization, a greener economy and development that more effectively creates jobs and sustainable enterprises, respects workers' rights, promotes gender equality, protects vulnerable people, assists countries in the provision of quality public services and enables countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals”.

Principles for promoting recovery and development include “enhancing support to vulnerable women and men hit hard by the crisis, including youth at risk, low-wage, low-skilled, informal economy and migrant workers” as well as “promoting core labour standards, and other international labour standards that support the economic and jobs recovery and reduce gender inequality”.

Among options that should guide efforts to avoid deflationary wage spirals, the Global Jobs Pact notes that “narrowing the gender pay gap must be an integrated part of these efforts”. It also highlights ILO's “recognized authority in key areas of importance to respond to the crisis and promote economic and social development, including on gender equality in the labour market”.

“This current crisis should be viewed as an opportunity to shape new gender equality policy responses”, states the Global Jobs Pact. “Recovery packages during economic crises need to take into account the impact on women and men and integrate gender concerns in all measures. In discussions on recovery packages, both regarding their design and assessing their success, women must have an equal voice with men”.