



L20 assessment of the G20 Labour and Employment Ministers Declaration of September 10

The Ministerial Declaration adopted by G20 Labour and Employment Ministers on 10 September commits to action on a series of crucial issues about the Covid-19 pandemic and the response measures; however, [the sense of urgency required to tackle the scale of the challenges is lacking.](#)

There is little new joint action and no solidarity initiatives like the **Global Social Protection Fund**. However, the text seems to be opening the way to progress on this matter, for instance, when it commits to “*ensure equitable and sustainable financing of social protection systems, working with the G20 Finance Track, as appropriate, evaluating the need to work towards an international response based on cooperation and solidarity*”. **Social protection** takes up significant space in the Declaration with recognition of how vital it is for all workers and families, the challenges it is facing currently, and commitments to provide social protection for all. Furthering work started under the German and Argentine Presidencies, Annex 2 is dedicated to setting principles for correct work classification that is recognised as a key challenge for social protection systems.

The declaration does not recognise adequately the need for **job creation**. The Ministers do promise that they will “*spare no effort to ensure that labor market and economic recovery efforts prioritize sustainable and inclusive growth in quality employment*” and to work with other Ministers to ensure that economic recovery has a job-centric focus. However, they do not call for macroeconomic policy adjustment, public investment or other emergency actions to create jobs.

There are very few references to **care economy** and no salient focus on its potential to create jobs, formalise existing jobs, and enable women to participate in the labour market, as well as to address urgent need to responding to the pandemic. The Ministers also fail to recognise the importance of investing in public services and in particular the urgent need to support and improve **health services**.

Climate change is completely absent, as if the LEMM was monothematic. The same stands for the need for **jobs** that would enable the transformation of the economy and a Just Transition. The pandemic is a crisis requiring urgent response but so is the climate crisis many years now. There are a few references to sustainability but there is no direct link to climate change.

The Covid-19 crisis is launching **inequality** to even higher levels. Nevertheless, the Ministers did not recall their own mandate to address the impact of income inequality and the falling labour income share from Antalya in 2015.

The L20 expects that the 2021 **Italian Presidency** prioritises decent job creation, social protection for all, care and public services and jobs for a Just Transition to a low carbon economy.



The Covid-19 is not declared an **OSH hazard** (probably because Ministers saw it as a national legislation issue) but there are references underlining the importance of safe workplaces and promises for action on national level.

The text refers to the commitment to **transition from informal to formal work** and makes eight references to measures applying “regardless of employment status”. It recognises the increased vulnerability of informal workers to the crisis, the prevalence of women in informal work, and it connects social protection for all and the transition from formal to informal work.

Also missing is **industry policy** to create jobs and deal with the intersecting crises of the pandemic, climate change and inequality.

Women and youth are in focus leading to good declarative statements and promises to deliver on commitments from Antalya and Brisbane. Women and youth have been affected gravely by the crisis and the LEMM recognizes their increased vulnerability committing to measures of support in across the Declaration and a G20 Youth Roadmap. The Roadmap aims at reaching the Antalya goal of reducing the share of young people who are most at risk of being permanently left behind in the labor market by 15% by 2025. To reach this target, they put focus on young people with low levels of skills and qualifications; those who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) and informal young workers. To this end, the Declaration develops auxiliary youth labour market indicators.

Ministers commit to “[p]romoting the use of **social dialogue**, with and between social partners” in both the design and the delivery of policy responses to the crisis and “as a means of increasing policy quality and ownership”. This is welcome and both the [ITUC](#) and the [TUAC](#) have provided evidence of it.

Although the Ministers understand the graveness of the situation and promise to work individually and collectively, most of the text reaffirms variations of old commitments without any breakthrough in **implementation and monitoring**. The Ministers will keep using the G20 Employment Plan Self-Report method which is not deemed adequate for making progress on implementation of commitments as it lacks peer pressure mechanisms or independent reporting.

The G20 LEMM is also a valuable forum to strengthen the cooperation between the **ILO and the OECD**. Ministers renew their confidence in both organisations to monitor the crisis and provide adequate recommendations.

Some of textual changes (comparing to the earlier draft) that could be attributed to the L20 policy advocacy this year include:

- Six references to **cooperating with Finance Ministers, other Ministers, and the Finance Track**. We would have a legitimate expectation that the LEMM under the Italian presidency would increase cooperation with the Finance Track and organize a joint Ministerial with Finance Ministers.
- Our suggestion to include a reference to **migrant workers** in the list of vulnerable groups that merit support
- Reference to **paid sick leave** which was not in the earlier draft (“Ensuring income security during sickness and quarantine, as appropriate, for example through paid sick leave and sickness benefits for workers in all types of employment.”)

- Reference to **front-line workers** and need to improve their working conditions “which may include addressing low pay, all forms of violence [...] and inadequate health and safety protection”, as we asked in our policy advocacy

Other promising references and policies to follow up:

- Terms like decent work and social protection are often followed by “for all” (it happens 22 times) giving an impression of further action in the Leaders’ Summit and in the future
- Reaffirmation of past commitments on decent work, job rich growth, quality employment for youth and women, and social protection with explicit references to Brisbane, Antalya, Bad Neunahr and Osaka goals
- “policy coherence” appears in the declaration many years after it eclipsed
- A reference to the ILO Centenary Declaration
- Three references to the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
- New working methods (referring to technology and COVID) and telework are welcomed for business continuity while respecting work-life balance and rights at work
- Annex 1 is a list of measures they commit to but lack a fully coordinated approach (no practical solidarity – measures to be used mostly at national level).

The L20 expect that the **2020 G20 Leaders’ Summit** builds on the foundations laid in this Declaration and further action by instructing other Ministers and the Finance Track to cooperate closer with LEMM as to provide a global job plan and “social protection for all” in the form of a Global Fund, and take action to implement past commitments on labour income share, formalisation, global supply chains, and a labour protection floor for recovery and resilience.

The L20 anticipate that the **Italian Presidency in 2021** takes action to implement past commitments and provide for a recovery with resilience based on decent work, climate action, social protection for all, investment in care and public services and an industrial policy that would enable transformation and a Just Transition to a low carbon economy.