

**G8 Social Partners Consultation**  
**Rome**  
**26 June 2009**

**Statement by the International Labour Organization**

Last week, at the International Labour Organization's annual conference in Geneva, governments, workers and employers jointly adopted a Global Jobs Pact following a three-day Jobs Summit that included more than 10 Heads of State and Government, numerous Ministers of Labour, as well as workers' and employers' representatives. Their tripartite commitment validated the G8 labour ministerial convened here in Rome at the end of March, whose theme was "People First: Tackling together the human dimension of the crisis."

The ILO gratefully acknowledges the key role played by the Italian Government, notably Minister Sacconi, in helping shape and guide the agenda for the March ministerial. We recall that, earlier this year, many thought the wizards of Wall Street and their fellow alchemists in global financial markets would somehow get us out of the mess that they got the rest of us into. By contrast, the G8 labour ministerial made clear that those suffering the most from the economic downturn must also constitute the engine of growth to get us out of this crisis – one enterprise and one job at a time.

Significantly, just days after the G8 labour ministerial in Rome, the G20 leaders' summit in London adopted and endorsed the same theme of putting people first. This was no coincidence. And the summit leaders called upon the ILO to work with other relevant international organisations – among them the OECD and IMF represented here – to "assess the actions taken and those required in the future."

Faced with the prospect of a prolonged financial, economic and social crisis, urgent action was required to stimulate recovery, generate jobs and provide protection to working people and their families everywhere. Employment re-generation typically lags economic recovery by at least a few years, and sometimes longer. The Global Jobs Pact is therefore the most urgent, genuine and wide-ranging response to a crisis ever adopted by the ILO, itself born out a greater calamity 90 years ago this year. The Jobs Pact is also the first truly coordinated, global response – over 180 member states and their Social Partners – to the current economic crisis, a worldwide response set in motion here in Rome less than three months ago.

If I might quote from Minister Sacconi's Chair's Summary of the G8 labour ministerial, "...*People First* is the key word of a set of policies that aim to create jobs, support income, enhance social protection systems and invest in skills." The Global Jobs Pact is exactly that. Based on Decent Work principles, it also strengthens respect for international labour standards and seeks to improve social dialogue mechanisms. It is important to remember that, in putting people first, we must enable them to act as full contributing partners – hence, the ILO's emphasis on Freedom of Association, for both workers and employers. After all, the Social Partners – trade

unions and employer organisations – do not just represent the real economy; their members make it happen.

The tripartite Global Jobs Pact is not an international legal obligation, but a common-sense accord on common policy approaches. It paves the way for shaping a fair and sustainable globalization based on better policy coherence and coordination, supported by ILO expertise and technical-cooperation programmes.

Under Italy's leadership, Minister Sacconi and his G8 counterparts helped conceive and launch the idea of a tripartite Global Jobs Pact. We trust that the G8 leaders will now endorse it. This would undoubtedly raise the profile of the Pact and encourage other international fora to adopt it as well.

George Dragnich  
Executive Director for Social Dialogue  
International Labour Office  
Geneva, Switzerland