

## **BRICS – INDIA PRESIDENCY: 2016**

### **BRICS LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT MINISTERS' MEETING, NEW DELHI**

#### **Speech for Hon'ble MOS (IC) during the Inaugural Session**

**27.09.2016 : 10.00 AM.**

*Fellow Ministers, Officials from BRICS nations, Representatives from International Organizations, IHD, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. It is a matter of pride and pleasure for us to organize the BRICS Labour & Employment Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi under the Indian Presidency. I am extremely delighted to have you all for this meeting. For many of you, I believe, this is their first visit to India. I welcome one and all to India, more particularly to Delhi. I sincerely hope that you all are having a comfortable stay.
2. India attaches great importance to BRICS forum. To quote our Hon'ble Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi, " BRICS acts as a vital pillar of hope for this world full of political challenges, safety related challenges and economic challenges. "
3. For us, BRICS is about practical cooperation. Indian Presidency is working with a five pronged approach for cooperation. Its about Institutionalising cooperation; implementing and integrating our previous decisions and commitments while innovating new areas of cooperation and finally ensuring the continuity of these initiatives.
4. As you know that the First BRICS Ministerial Meeting held at Ufa, Russia in the beginning of this year recognized the importance of Labour and Employment pillar for promoting decent work and sustainable development

in BRICS countries. It also pitched for establishment of an Employment Working Group for focused attention on labour and employment issues. India is privileged that we got the opportunity to convene the forum of BRICS Employment Working Group, draft the TOR of the Group and organize the first formal meeting of the Working Group in July this year at Hyderabad, which, incidentally, happens to be my home town. Our officers had reached at a broad consensus on Social Security Agreement and networking of BRICS Labour Institutes during the meetings of the Working Group. I am indeed happy with the deliberations of the Working Group including the one that took place yesterday and and outcomes they arrived at. Our officials deserve our collective compliments for their efforts in achieving this.

5. I reiterate that India is committed to job security, wage security and social security for all. Therefore, while employment generation is our prime goal we are, at the same time, working towards enhancing the welfare of our workers through various initiatives.
  
6. We are committed to inclusive growth so that the benefits reach the marginalized sections and they become integral to the growth process. Two historic reforms have been introduced. India has put a complete ban on employment below 14 years of age and on employment in hazardous occupations below 18 years of age. We are now in a position to ratify the ILO conventions 138 and 182 concerning Child Labour. We have started the process in this direction.

7. In another significant step, the Government of India has presented the amendment to Maternity Benefit Act, raising the paid maternity benefit from 12 weeks to 26 weeks. The Bill has been passed Rajya Sabha and it would be introduced in Lok Sabha in the Winter Session, 2016.
8. BRICS forum has a unique advantage of having a significant set of common characteristics of labour market economic development as well as common challenges. It is therefore our endeavour to work for building responsible, inclusive and collective solutions to our common challenges in our respective national contexts and national sovereignty.
9. I am happy that our national social partners have been able to join us. We strongly adhere to the ethos of tripartism and I am sure that the universally accepted tripartite model will enrich our deliberations.
10. We are encouraged by the presence of International Organisations; ILO and ISSA. I am sure that in the years to come, the association of the international organisations with BRICS and more importantly with Employment track will grow stronger and we will be benefitted by their expertise and research.
11. It is imperative that together we work for concrete policy solutions to the challenges we face. My colleagues and I am here to help you whatever way you want us to. I am quite confident that we will have very constructive discussions in the next two days and significant work would be achieved. I once again welcome you all and wish a comfortable stay.

**Thank you.**