

India at G20 2nd Employment Working Group Meeting at Brasilia

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The two day 2nd Employment Working Group (EWG) meeting under the Brazilian Presidency commenced today in Brasilia. The G20 EWG's mandate is to address labour, employment and social issues for strong, sustainable, balanced and job-rich growth for all. As India is a member of the G20 Troika, represented by Ms. Sumita Dawra, Secretary, Labour & Employment, India is co-chairing the 2nd EWG meeting, along with Brazil and South Africa. The Indian delegation also comprises Mr. Rupesh Kumar Thakur, Joint Secretary, and Mr. Rakesh Gaur, Deputy Director from the Ministry of Labour & Employment.

The opening session began with speech of the Brazilian Minister of State for Labour and Employment, Mr Luiz Marinho. Following this, in her opening remarks, Ms Sumita Dawra, noted that the priority areas of the 2nd EWG at Brasilia align with the priority areas and outcomes of previous G20 presidencies including Indian presidency, and commended the continuity in the multi-year agenda to creating lasting positive change in the world of work. This not only sustains but also elevates the work initiated by the EWG during the Indian Presidency.

The focus areas for the 2nd EWG meeting is on (i) creating quality employment and promoting decent labor; (ii) addressing a just transition amidst digital and energy transformations; (iii) leveraging technologies to enhance the quality of life for all; (iv) the emphasis on gender equity and promoting diversity in the world of employment for inclusivity, driving innovation and growth.

On the first day of the meeting, deliberations were held on the over-arching theme of promotion of **gender equality and promoting diversity** in the workplace. The Indian delegation emphasized the need for creating inclusive environments by ensuring equal representation and empowerment for all, irrespective of race, gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic background.

In this context, Indian delegation **elucidated significant strides taken by India** in promotion of (i) gender equality in the workplace and beyond; (ii) steps taken for migrant workers; (iii) promoting reemployment of senior citizens, (iv) participation in work force of the differently abled and the marginalised. Some of these achievements showcased at day 1 of the 2nd EWG are the following:

1. To increase female labour force participation, India has enacted *Occupational Safety Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020* which entitles women to be employed in all establishments for all types of work with their consent at night time. This provision has already been implemented in underground mines.
2. In 2017, the Government amended the Maternity Benefit Act of 1961, which increased the 'maternity leave with pay protection' from 12 weeks to 26 weeks for all women working in establishments employing 10 or more workers. This is expected to reduce the motherhood pay gap among the working mothers.
3. To aid migrant workers, India's innovative policy '*One Nation, One Ration Card*' allows migrants to access their entitled food grains from anywhere in the Public Distribution System network in the country. We have also implemented multiple schemes to provide social security and welfare benefits while ensuring portability across states. These schemes provide for *affordable housing, enhanced employability through skill development and old-age pension to such workers*.
4. A landmark step in fostering inclusion in the workforce is the *e-Shram portal*, launched to create a national database of unorganized workers, especially migrant and construction workers. This

initiative, providing the *e-Shram card*, enables access to benefits under various social security schemes. The portal allows an unorganised worker to register himself or herself on the portal on self-declaration basis, under 400 occupations in 30 broad occupation sectors. More than 290 million unorganised workers have been registered on this portal so far.

5. India has also taken several steps to promote the participation of aged persons in the labour market; for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, including vocational training, skill development, and job placement services; & for traditionally marginalized and vulnerable groups.

On Day 2, the 2nd EWG will carry forward the agenda for discussions.

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