

Secretary, M/o Labour & Employment led the Indian delegation at First G20 Employment Working Group Meeting 2025 under South African Presidency

Discussions held on Fostering Youth Transitions to Decent Work, Inclusive Labour Markets, Better Jobs for Youth and Women, Decent Jobs for Rehabilitation/ Persons with Disabilities

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Ms. Sumita Dawra, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, led the Indian delegation at the first G20 Employment Working Group (EWG) meeting under the South African Presidency, held from 18-21 February 2025 at Port Elizabeth, South Africa. The delegation included Dr. Thelma John David, Consul General of India in Durban, South Africa, and Mr. Piyush Kumar Pathak, Deputy Director from the Ministry of Labour & Employment

MoL&E Secretary highlights India's policy reforms at the 1st G20 Employment Working Group Meeting 2025



Discussions were held on two priority issues namely, (i) Inclusive Growth and Youth Employment, (ii) Social Security and Digitalisation for an Inclusive Future of Work.

First G20 Employment Working Group meeting saw interventions from G20 member countries, emphasizing their respective policy approaches to employment, social security, and skills development. Invited member States including United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of the Netherlands and Kingdom of Norway also made interventions on priority areas. International Labour Organisation (ILO) and Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD) also made a presentation on global employment trends and best practices in labour market reforms.

During the intervention, Secretary highlighted India's major reforms aimed at job creation, labour market flexibility, and comprehensive social security. India, as the world's fastest-growing major economy, continues to strengthen its economic landscape through strategic sectoral investments, including agriculture, MSMEs, manufacturing, medical education, and infrastructure development. The focus on global supply chains and export-driven employment was underscored, with initiatives to enhance warehousing and air cargo facilities.

The intervention also emphasized India's positive employment trends, noting a decline in the unemployment rate from 6% in 2017-18 to 3.2% in 2023-24, alongside a significant rise in the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) and Worker Population Ratio. Labour market modernization was highlighted, particularly the four Labour Codes and other reforms aimed at improving labour welfare, expanding social security—including for gig and platform workers—formalizing employment, and increasing female labour force participation.

India's efforts in social security expansion were recognized, with coverage doubling from 24.4% in

2021 to 48.8% in 2024, as per the ILO's World Social Protection Report 2024-26. With the ongoing work with ILO on including 'in-kind' benefits and those of the states, the potential coverage of the country will go up further.

Secretary emphasized the success of the e-Shram portal, which has registered over 300 million unorganized workers, and the modernization of ESIC and EPFO schemes. The Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme was also highlighted as a key initiative to promote formal sector employment.

On gender inclusion, Secretary reiterated India's commitment to achieving **70%** female workforce participation by 2047, citing progressive policies such as extended maternity leave, crèche facilities, and equal pay provisions. India's increasing participation of women in high-growth sectors like IT, R&D, and engineering was noted as a critical driver of economic growth.

Youth empowerment through skill development was emphasized during India's intervention with a key focus on employability of graduates which has risen in last decade from 34% to 55%. India's global engagement in skills mapping with the ILO and OECD was underscored, along with bilateral agreements facilitating skilled labour mobility with major G20 countries.

Secretary reaffirmed India's commitment to fostering economic inclusion and empowering its youth, recognizing them as key drivers of national and global growth.

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