

US

Proposed Workforce Policy Proposal for Pittsburgh Summit

Workers in G20 countries continue to face significant obstacles to finding and securing stable employment. With unemployment rates likely to continue rising through next year, unprecedented strains are being placed on developed and developing nations alike and their workforces.

G20 leaders took important steps in London to recognize the severe impact of the global economic crisis on employment. The leaders pledged that fiscal stimulus efforts would focus on job creation, restoring growth and support for the most vulnerable, and requested that the International Labour Organization (ILO) assess the actions taken by member states and those required for the future to ensure that workers' needs are met.

The Pittsburgh G20 Summit will build on these measures by extending a formal invitation to the ILO to attend the upcoming G20 leaders meeting. We recommend that G20 leaders engage ILO Director Somavia and other international organization representatives to determine how best to tailor existing policies, or adopt new policies, to address the worsening impact of the global economic crisis on workers and speak to the public's increasing anxiety about the crisis.

In addition to discussing immediate responses to the employment crisis, we believe that conversations about future growth strategies should acknowledge that the rate of post-crisis economic growth will in part rely on the ability of workers to adapt to changing market demands. Such an acknowledgment can address the understandable public concern on workers' challenges and evolving needs in the globalizing economy.

We recommend that the G20 consider the following measures for Pittsburgh:

- Ask the ILO and Other Organizations to Report on the Employment Review Requested in London: The ILO, in consultation with other organizations, will be completing its report on crisis-related employment activities before the Pittsburgh Summit. Discussion of the report will provide the leaders both a sense of what actions have been undertaken to date, as well as where further individual state or coordinated action is needed to support workers as national unemployment rates continue to rise. We anticipate that the report will note the G20's aggressive and coordinated action in Washington and London.
- Affirm Job Creation and Support for Workers as a Central Goal of Ongoing Recovery Efforts: A considerable portion of the G20 member states' recovery spending will be spent out over the next year. Following up on the London Summit communiqué, G20 leaders could affirm that job creation remains a principal goal of these efforts and that we should continue to focus on expanding income, benefit and training supports for unemployed workers.
- Support the Goals of the ILO Global Jobs Pact: 183 ILO member nations have adopted the ILO Global Jobs Pact, a comprehensive document outlining principles and policy options for sustainable, employment-oriented economic growth. G20 leaders could commit their nations to support and adopt key elements of the Jobs Pact policy

framework, and call on international institutions to consider the goals of the Jobs Pact in their crisis and post-crisis policy-making and analysis efforts.

- Recognize the Importance of Skills Development to the Sustainable Economic Growth: In creating a vision or strategy for future growth, G20 leaders have an opportunity to highlight skills development from basic education to retraining as a critical foundation for sustainable growth. G20 leaders could note the importance of incorporating training programs into new economic investments, particularly in the areas of clean energy, health and infrastructure, and pledge to dedicate a significant amount of training funds to ensure more workers, including underrepresented groups like women and those with disabilities, have the ability to enter those fields.
- Call on the ILO to Convene its Constituents to Develop an Employment-Based Training Strategy for G20 Consideration: The G20 could recognize the importance of engaging employers and workers in the design and implementation of effective skills development training, and call on the ILO to engage its constituents to develop an employment-based training strategy. The G20 also could call for member states, in partnership with labor organizations, private foundations and NGOs, to engage employers in developing new national approaches to job training programs and ensuring that government-supported skills development programs meet the needs of employers both in the short and long-term. Such efforts could focus on those most vulnerable to economic changes, including the chronically unemployed, women, youth, and people with disabilities.
- Call for a G20 Workforce Ministers Meeting in Early 2010: G20 leaders may want to consider directing their labor ministers and education officials to discuss their responses to the jobs crisis and the role of labor policy in developing future growth strategies. The U.S. Department of Labor would be willing to host a G20 labor ministerial conference in January 2010. The conference agenda could build on both the ILO employment assessment and the Pittsburgh leaders discussions by focusing on effective implementation of fiscal stimulus for workers, as well as designing a sustainable future growth strategy based on innovative job creation, social safety net, and skills development policies. We recommend devoting a portion of the agenda to education and job training, with senior education officials leading those conversations. The leaders could direct the labor ministers and education officials to produce recommendations for G20 consideration.