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## Building resilient societies through employment and decent work in the post-COVID-19 world

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the systemic nature of risk, demonstrating the potential to create cascading effects on the economy, society, and the environment. The profound disruption and instability it caused have had a devastating impact on the world of work, threatening the long-term livelihoods and wellbeing of millions of people and dramatically increasing the number of the extremely poor.

Mindful of the implications for the achievement of social justice and decent work for all and of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the International Labour Organization (ILO) is committed to ensure a human-centred recovery from the global crisis, one that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient. In a [Global call to action](#) adopted in June 2021, ILO constituents - governments and employers' and workers' organizations – have emphasized how the [ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work \(2019\)](#) provides the foundation for such a recovery, offering a positive vision and a road map for countries to “build forward better” by placing the aim of full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work, the needs of the most vulnerable and hardest hit by the pandemic, and support for sustainable enterprises, jobs and incomes at the heart of gender-responsive strategies to bounce back from the crisis.

The [Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection](#), launched by the UN Secretary-General in September 2021, aims to achieve a job-rich recovery and a just transition to a sustainable and inclusive economy by creating at least 400 million jobs and extending social protection to 4 billion women, men and children who are currently without coverage. The new initiative is based on the notion that employment and social protection policies need to work in tandem in order to ensure a human-centred recovery from the pandemic and to help societies face the challenges of a rapidly changing world of work as well as the transition towards the goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Climate change poses a fundamental threat to humanity by increasing and accelerating the risk of disasters and compounding socio-economic challenges in ways that affect livelihoods, exacerbate human security and undermine development progress. Urgent action is needed to reduce vulnerability and prevent a further deepening of inequalities by addressing underlying causes and building resilience of countries, particularly those that are also affected by other fragility factors, such as political instability and conflict.

Building resilience through decent work means ensuring a risk-informed world of work and seizing every opportunity – including those presented by crises – to promote inclusive job creation, workers' rights, universal social protection and social dialogue. In this context, the ILO recognizes the great potential of disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation and mitigation, for creating new jobs, while securing existing ones and protecting the environment.

Concrete examples of how this can be done include: the implementation of employment-intensive green works, which can provide employment and social protection for the most vulnerable through green infrastructure recovery or development; the integration of Nature-based Solutions, which creates jobs and increases resilience while simultaneously supporting nature; the setting up of environmentally responsive businesses and the development of skills for green jobs, which, likewise, help to generate employment while supporting the transition to a more sustainable future.

These approaches, among others, allow ILO constituents from disaster-prone and fragile settings to get directly involved in crisis preparedness and response measures to protect markets and the labour force. At the same time, they ensure that those who are most affected by climate change and recurrent disasters not only have a voice but are also offered decent work to build their own resilience through the rehabilitation and reconstruction of their lands and assets.

The ILO has decades of experience in dealing with the impacts of crises through employment and decent work. International labour standards such as Recommendation No.205 on employment and decent work for peace and resilience (2017) as well as crisis-specific strategies and approaches promoted in the context of the Decent Work Agenda provide clear directions on important building blocks of recovery and resilience-strengthening: job creation, social protection, enterprise support, education and training, institution building and social dialogue. The engagement of ILO tripartite constituents is essential for shaping a socially just but also resilient and environmentally sustainable recovery. The convening power and membership base of the social partners – employers' and workers' organizations – are an added value that must be harnessed to translate messages into practical action at employer, workplace and worker level.

In the new reality created by the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts in the world of work must be aimed at increasing equality and inclusion but also reducing disaster and climate risks in order to protect both livelihoods and the planet. International labour standards, the Decent Work Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, together with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement, provide a strong basis for placing people, employment and decent work at the centre of an environmentally sustainable recovery and development.