

▶ BRICS - ILO Cooperation

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▶ BRICS and ILO's Development Cooperation

In recent years, development cooperation between governments, social partners, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and private partners from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (the BRICS) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) has been increasingly active. The BRICS have shown that their large, fast-growing economies equip them to facilitate dialogue and cooperation, strengthening the concept of partnership for common development and advancing cooperation under the principles of openness, inclusiveness, solidarity and mutual assistance.

Brazil

Since 2005, Brazil has contributed more than US\$ 30 million to the ILO for projects in Brazil itself through Direct Trust Funds, as well as in more than 35 developing countries within the context of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC). These contributions are aimed at pursuing the ILO's four strategic objectives: rights at work, employment, social protection, and social dialogue.

In March 2009, the ILO Director-General and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil signed the "Complementary Agreement to the Technical Cooperation Agreement with Latin American and African Countries for the Implementation of the ILO - Brazil Partnership Programme

for the Promotion of South-South Cooperation". This Agreement serves as an umbrella for all ILO-Brazil initiatives, such as a large project to promote decent work in cotton producing countries in Africa and Latin America, and an initiative to promote the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work through South-South Cooperation. The new South-South Cooperation Programme to be signed in June 2023, covers the topics of Decent Work and Social Justice in for areas: Gender and Race Equality, Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work; Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) at Work and Jobs and Social Protection.

Since 2022, Brazil has supported the implementation of two projects to strengthen strategies to prevent and eradicate child labour, forced labour and human trafficking in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as to enhance the capacities of Labour Inspectorates to eradicate child labour in Portuguese Speaking Countries in Africa.

In October 2013, in cooperation with the ILO, Brazil hosted the III Global Conference on Combatting Child Labour. The latest edition of this Conference took place in May 2022 in Durban, South Africa, where the Government of Brazil and the ILO co-organized two side events on the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour. The Brazilian government is also an active contributor to SSTC through the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Initiative to Combat Child Labour.



Russia

In 2012 - 2021, Russia contributed [US\\$ 20 million for the implementation of the ILO-G20 training strategy](#), which included projects on skills and peer learning for Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, Viet Nam and Jordan, as well as SSTC, sharing knowledge with a wider group of countries. The projects also strengthened skills and employability development systems as well as addressed country-specific priorities. In October 2020, the Labour and Employment Ministers of BRICS Nations met in Moscow, Russia, to discuss recent global labour market issues and share experiences to move forward BRICS Member States cooperation in labour and employment. Since the adoption of the [ILO Governing Body Resolution GB.344](#) in March 2022 no additional funding has been provided.

► India

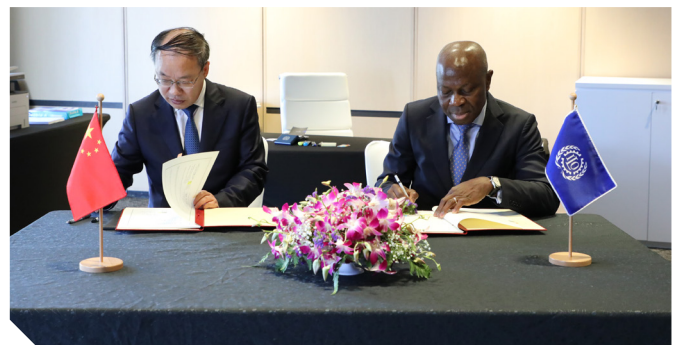
In November 2018, the Ministry of Labour and Employment, and the V.V Giri National Labour Institute, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the ILO's International Training Centre (ITCILO) to collaborate on research, training, education, publications and other opportunities on labour related issues (a renewal of its 2012 MoU). The agreement covers: a) implementation of collaborative training programmes and research into training methodologies and techniques; b) development of training modules; c) exchange of faculty members for skills upgrading, knowledge and information-sharing; and d) implementation of joint courses on labour studies.



India cooperates with the ILO through the India Fund, in cooperation with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), with a particular focus on climate change and apprenticeships in the Caribbean. Apprenticeships are also the focus of an SSTC project between India, South Africa, China, Ethiopia and Switzerland taking place from 2022 to 2023. A partnership for the mutual exchange of good practices between India and Brazil is helping both countries social protection, especially methods for income redistribution through public financing mechanisms. This project is funded by the Regular Budget Technical Cooperation (RBTC) of the ILO. In addition, the close collaboration between India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) and the ILO to promote the Decent Work Agenda has shown positive results that can be scaled up through greater cooperation in the broader BRICS context. This is the case of the project "Viva Rio no Haiti" (2014-2018) funded by IBSA as a South-South intervention with the objective of sharing Brazilian experiences and validating their applicability in Haiti.

China

The ILO and China have a long-standing partnership that has intensified in recent years thanks to SSTC and voluntary contributions by China to the ILO's Development Cooperation Programme, which totaled US\$ 5.2 million between 2017-2022. The first MoU signed in 2001 between the ILO and Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS) deepened the cooperation in developing the labour market policies and institutions in line with international labour standards. In 2019, the ILO signed three MoUs with the Government of China and one with the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), all of which provide a solid basis for an expanded programme of development cooperation. In 2012, the first SSTC agreement between the ILO and China was signed, with China committing US\$ 1 million in support to South-South cooperation and the Decent Work agenda. In 2013, China and ILO launched their first South-South cooperation project on strengthening public employment



services and labour market information in Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR). More recently, in December 2022 the ILO and the MOHRSS signed a partnership agreement promoting the Global Development Initiative (GDI) with a focus on South-South Cooperation in employment. The agreement includes an initial contribution of US\$1 million.

► China, BRICS and the ILO

In 2017 and 2022, MOHRSS held the BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting (LEMM) and working group meetings when China held the BRICS Presidency. The ILO provided technical support and facilitated connections with the BRICS Network of Labour Research Institutes. Activities like the BRICS Knowledge series (2021) and the Structured Funding Dialogue on-Skills (2022) have increased mutual exchanges between the ILO and BRICS countries. The 2022 BRICS LEMM Declaration focused on green jobs, skills development and workers' rights protections, and proposes BRICS solutions to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and a human-centred inclusive recovery.

ILO-China Partnership Project on Strengthening Skills Development in ASEAN Member Countries (2018-2025)

Thanks to a US\$ 4 million financial contribution from MOHRSS, the project supports its development partners in ASEAN countries to formulate skills laws and regulations for mutual skills recognition in the ASEAN region. The project promotes knowledge sharing on skills development between skills centres and TVET institutions through SSTC. Under the project, a Skills Development Network was launched in November 2021. Supported by the ILO and MOHRSS, the Network brings together 22 TVET institutes from China, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar with plans to further expand. The Network has included the signature of nine MOUs signed between 18 member TVETs of the Network, facilitating peer-to-peer relationships. These bilateral partners organized workshops on topics including TVET management, quality assurance of TVET institutions, digitalization of TVETs, digital skills training and poverty alleviation through TVETs.

South Africa



Since March 2014, South Africa has financed three domestic ILO Programmes in public infrastructure and employment policy planning focusing on the development and promotion of appropriate employment intensive investment policies for Skills/Capacity Development through Direct Trust Funds with a total budget of US\$ 32 million. South Africa has also contributed as a development partner to the ILO through the IBSA Fund (India/ Brazil /South Africa).

► South African Presidency of BRICS (2023)

The First BRICS Employment Working Group (EWG) meeting was held from 21-24 February 2023 in South Africa to provide the building blocks for adopting the ministerial declaration during the BRICS LEMM. During the meeting, the ILO presented a background paper on the relationship between productivity and decent job creation, highlighting that low productivity and decent work deficits are more pronounced in small enterprises.

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work in BRICS countries: The South African Presidency has proposed the creation of a collaborative platform for BRICS Productivity Ecosystems within the context of the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2025. This initiative will support BRICS countries to put in place an evidence-based, integrated and long-term strategy aimed at achieving a virtuous cycle between productivity growth and decent job creation.

Building Sustainable Enterprises is one of the topics promoted during the South African presidency. It highlights the importance of productivity growth and decent work creation for achieving inclusive growth and emphasizes the need for a collaborative and holistic approach to address productivity and decent work constraints in BRICS countries. The goal is to understand the challenges facing these countries and introduce the concept of "Productivity Ecosystems" as a potential solution.

Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work is another important topic under this presidency. BRICS countries have implemented national plans and policy frameworks, as well as established committees and platforms for cross-sectoral engagement, coordination, and monitoring to combat forced labour and trafficking for forced labour.

The way forward:

The South African Presidency of the BRICS from 2023 will be focused on the theme: 'Ensuring decent work, dignity, and respect for all' with four priorities:

- Priority 1: Building sustainable enterprises, including new forms of employment and increasing productivity;
- Priority 2: Promoting labour rights and decreasing decent work deficits in the context of the recovery;
- Priority 3: Universal social protection and ensuring minimum basic income;
- Priority 4: Promoting decent work by closing skills gaps in the informal economy.

BRICS and ILO knowledge series 2020-2021

Development cooperation between both governments and private industry from the BRICS countries and the ILO has accelerated. BRICS countries require and expect capacity building support services tailored to their contexts and complementing their expertise – a view echoed in the recent ILO field operations review that calls for a reclassification of Member States in line with their specific development needs. The ILO created a knowledge sharing initiative that could identify key challenges that countries face in exchange of information and good practices among BRICS and the ILO. As BRICS countries are also important partners for developing countries in capacity development and interregional cooperation, this initiative is also aligned with the ILO's support of SSTC. For more information about the ILO and BRICS cooperation, the ILO's webpage and the South-South Meeting Point platform provide the latest updates and relevant documents on this topic.



► Ministerial Meetings on Labour & Employment (BRICS LEMM)

8th Meeting, China, 2022: Under the theme “Foster High-quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development”, the meeting included topics such as promoting green jobs for sustainable development, developing skills for a resilient recovery and protecting workers' rights in new forms of employment. BRICS attendees adopted the Ministerial declaration on the “BRICS Guidance on Protecting the Rights of Workers in New Forms of Employment”.

7th Meeting, India, 2021: Focused on four key pillars of labour and employment policies: promoting social security agreements amongst BRICS nations; formalization of labour markets; participation of women in the labour force; and gig and platform workers: role in the labour market.

6th Meeting, Russia, 2020: The meeting discussed the development of a preventive safety and health work culture; poverty alleviation through social and economic transformation; and the future of work in the digital economy. The “Declaration for the BRICS Leaders' consideration” was adopted, reaffirming the commitment to human-centered development, inclusive labour markets, and social protection systems.

5th Meeting, Brazil, 2019: Under the theme “BRICS: Economic Growth for an Innovative Future”, the meeting discussed and addressed inclusive future of work, trade liberalization and its impact on the BRICS labour market, governance of labour market data and promoting quality and productive employment for a sustainable social security system.

4th Meeting, South Africa, 2018: An MoU on Cooperation in the social and labour sphere was signed to facilitate knowledge sharing and joint program implementation among BRICS countries on labour and employment, social security, and social dialogue.

3rd Meeting, China, 2017: Established the BRICS Network of Labour Research Institutes to facilitate a better understanding of labour market issues. The network aims to assist member countries in sharing knowledge and implementing joint programs on labour and employment, social security and social dialogue.

2nd Meeting, India, 2016: Focused on four key pillars of labour and employment policies: promoting social security agreements among BRICS nations; formalizing labour markets; promoting women's labour force participation; and understanding the role of gig and platform workers.

1st Meeting, Russia, 2016: Declared the importance of the expansion of BRICS coordination and cooperation in the promotion of quality and inclusive employment, strengthening intra-BRICS dialogue and the exchange of experiences and information on labour and employment issues, including the formalization of labour markets. Recommended the establishment of the Employment Working Group for the preparation of a Strategy for Labour Market Formalization.

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