



Welcoming Remarks

**Hon. Ms Judith Nemadzinga-Tshabalala,
Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour**

G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting
George, South Africa

30 July 2025

**Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegation of Labour and
Employment from G20 Member States, Invited Countries, and
International Organisations
Representatives of the L20 and B20
Labour Experts and Officials Present
Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good morning and welcome to the Republic of South Africa.

It is with immense pride and a profound sense of duty that I welcome you to George for this august G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting. We gather here today as custodians of a shared responsibility—to confront the injustices that persist in the world of work and to forge pathways toward inclusion, dignity and shared prosperity.

This meeting marks the culmination of an extraordinary journey—one that began in earnest during the early consultations in Geneva, continued through the G20 Working Group sessions held in Gqeberha and eThekweni, returned to Geneva, and now finds its conclusion here in George. At each juncture, we were reminded that while our contexts may differ, our aspirations for fair, inclusive and sustainable labour markets unite us.

South Africa is a country of many possibilities. We are a resilient nation; one forged out of the bitter history of racial discrimination and exclusion. This year marks the 70th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter, wherein the democratic ideals and aspirations found expression. The Freedom Charter said there shall be work and security for all.

When opening Parliament this year in February, His Excellency Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa said that the 'key pillars of our foreign policy remain the promotion of human rights, peace and friendship, and the strengthening of fair trade and investment ties with other countries; and these are the principles that guide our Presidency of the G20, under the theme: Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability.

Allow me to express, on behalf of the South African government, our deepest appreciation to all delegations for your active engagement and sustained commitment throughout this journey.

I wish, in particular, to extend heartfelt congratulations to our Chairperson, the Honourable Minister Nomakhosazana Meth, for her outstanding leadership of the G20 Employment stream under South Africa's presidency. She has not only steered the work with vision and resolve but has kept the human face of our labour policy priorities at the centre of our deliberations.

Our Presidency has been anchored in four overarching priorities. First, fostering inclusive growth and youth employment, ensuring that no young person is denied a fair opportunity for decent work. Second, promoting gender equality in the workforce by addressing structural barriers and accelerating parity in both participation and pay and third, reversing the decline in the labour income share to restore dignity and stability to working lives. And lastly, harnessing digitisation to build an inclusive future of work, ensuring that innovation becomes an enabler—never a divider.

These priorities were not merely conceptual commitments, but the foundation for real, measurable progress under our leadership.

Honourable Ministers and esteemed dignitaries;

Today, we proudly present the Nelson Mandela Bay G20 Youth Target, which builds on the Antalya Goal by committing G20 members to reduce Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) rates by a further 20% by 2030, and to scale up youth employment strategies, skills development, and entrepreneurship.

Alongside this, the Brisbane–EThekweni Goal renews our pledge to close the gender gap in labour market participation by 25% by 2030 and reduce the gender wage gap by 25% by 2030 from 2012 levels, thereby reaffirming our commitment to economic justice through equality.

Our G20 Roadmap Towards and Beyond the Brisbane Target sought to:

- 1. Increase the quantity and quality of women's employment,**
- 2. Tackling the gender pay gap**
- 3. Promoting a more even distribution of women and men across sectors and occupations**
- 4. Promoting a more balanced distribution of paid and unpaid work between women and men; and**
- 5. Addressing discrimination and gender stereotypes in the labour market**

Let me also recognise the sterling leadership of Acting Director-General Jacqueline Molisane, Chair of the G20 Employment Working Group. She and her team, in close cooperation with our labour experts, have demonstrated excellence in diplomacy, coordination and substance. Their work has laid the foundation for a Ministerial Declaration that reflects both ambition and unity.

As we begin the proceedings, may we remember that our gathering is more than an event but an affirmation of multilateralism in action, of cooperation across difference and of the enduring belief that decent work is not a privilege for the few but a right for all.

Welcome once again. Now, I will hand back to our Chairperson, Deputy Minister Jomo Sibiya.

Thank you.