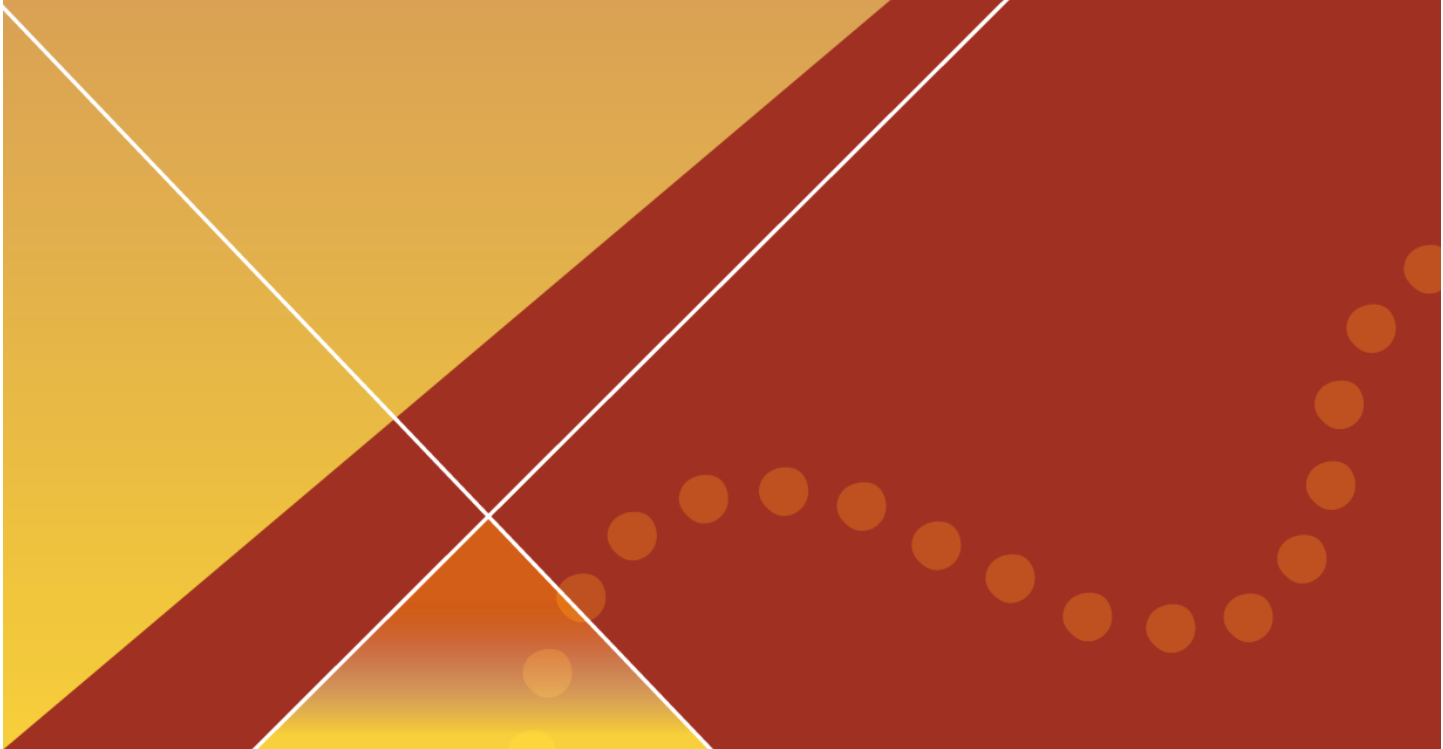


TASKFORCE ON EMPLOYMENT
MEETING, JULY 2014
CO-CHAIR'S NOTES



DAY 1

SESSION 1: PROGRESS TO DATE ON THE G20 AGENDA AND COLLABORATION

Australia welcomed delegates to Brisbane before providing a summary of the key decisions made in Paris at the last Taskforce meeting, the informal discussions in Goa and Geneva and the joint meeting with the Framework Working Group. Some of the key deliverables for the employment stream were noted including the country employment plans, the employment component of the growth strategies, and a collective commitment on women’s participation.

Turkey provided an update on consultations for the 2015 agenda. These consultations have included meetings with the international organisations, relevant internal agencies and interest groups. Turkey will also take the preferences of the G20 membership into account. Issues which are being considered for inclusion in the 2015 agenda include sector-specific approaches to quality employment and disadvantage, as well as international migration.

Australia spoke on behalf of the G20 Framework Working Group, noting that although progress has been made towards the ambitious 2 per cent growth target there is still more to be done.

SESSION 2: EMPLOYMENT PLANS AND GROWTH STRATEGIES

Australia referred to analysis from the international organisations which showed the policy commitments put forward in the draft growth strategies would result in a 1.1 per cent increase to growth above projected levels over five years. This is short of the 2 per cent increase target. Around 700 commitments have been put forward in total, with many insufficiently quantifiable or outside the five-year window of the growth commitment. The OECD noted the limitations of the modelling, and commented that members should not place too much emphasis on outcomes if this comes at the detriment of the quality of commitments.

The impact of employment plans on growth strategies was of interest to several taskforce members, particularly with respect to quantifying the effects of policies on growth. The World Bank noted the employment plans are weighted toward supply side policies and could benefit from the inclusion of more reforms and policies related to labour demand. Members commented on the relationship between supply and demand side policies and the need to balance the two. Members also discussed the contribution which reforms to labour market regulations potentially can make to employment and growth.

Discussion of the employment plans was positive. While a significant amount of work has already been undertaken on these plans, members agreed that more remains to be done. It was noted that the level of ambition in some employment plans could be increased, and countries were encouraged to take a strategic approach when finalising their plan. The international organisations also offered to provide bilateral feedback on each of the draft employment plans following the meeting. Given the plans’ importance, it was agreed that they should form the first topic for discussion in the G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting.

Actions

1. *Australia to re-order the agenda for the Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting to place the employment plans as the first item for Ministers to discuss following the Social Dialogue.*
2. *Australia to continue to provide bilateral feedback on draft employment plans.*
3. *The ILO, OECD and World Bank to provide comments on individual countries’ employment plans bilaterally.*
4. *Countries to provide revised employment plans by 15 August for the G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting, before review of progress at the Summit.*

SESSION 3: FEMALE PARTICIPATION: OPTIONS FOR A COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT

Russia provided a presentation outlining current levels of female labour force participation in their country and potential results to be gained from closing the gender gap. Russia noted that actions to close this gap should be realistic and take the different economic and social situations of G20 member countries into account.

Countries discussed the need to reach a consensus on a joint commitment to increase female labour force participation. During the discussion countries spoke of the need to make an ambitious but fair commitment, ensuring other gender gaps such as the quality of employment were addressed, and carefully wording the commitment to recognize the different situations in member countries. Delegates agreed there was a need to look beyond any quantitative targets, measures or outcomes and embrace qualitative perspectives, including the creation of quality jobs.

Members discussed the possible formulation of a collective commitment on female participation, with the majority supporting a commitment to close gender gaps in labour force participation rates by 25 per cent by 2025.

Actions

5. *Australian co-chair to report back to Sherpas on the Taskforce’s progress on deciding upon a collective commitment, with the Ministerial Declaration text to be settled out of session.*

DAY 2

SESSION 4: SOCIAL PARTNERS AND ENGAGEMENT GROUPS 2014 RECOMMENDATIONS

The B20, L20, C20, T20 and Y20 presented their recommendations for the G20 employment agenda to the Taskforce. Common themes across the groups’ recommendations included job creation, reducing unemployment and increasing participation, particularly for youth and women. Job quality, social protection and labour regulation also featured prominently.

The B20, L20 and C20 provided differing recommendations on labour market regulation and social protection. The B20 argued current social protection systems and labour market regulations tend to protect those already in the labour market and do not encourage job creation. The L20 and C20 disagreed with this view, and argued that social protection systems are necessary to protect workers’ rights, and any relaxing of regulations or reductions in wages would harm jobs. The ILO expressed similar concerns about the implications of labour market deregulation for job creation and workers’ rights.

Actions

6. *Australia to formally invite the social partners and engagement groups to a Social Dialogue with ministers and heads of international organisations.*

SESSION 5: SAFER WORKPLACES

The Turkish co-chair introduced this session by providing a short update on the outcomes of the meeting of the Sub-Group on Safer Workplaces in Istanbul during May. The ILO then gave a scene-setting presentation on the incidence of illness, injury and death in the workplace and the benefits of improving workplace safety, noting that these improvements could contribute to increasing the rate of economic growth. The ILO also noted that it was establishing a new flagship program on creating safer and healthier workplaces, and invited countries to participate in this program.

The United States then provided the Taskforce with an overview of the survey of national policies and priorities relating to workplace safety before leading a discussion of the draft G20 Statement on Safe and Healthy Workplaces. There was general support for the themes identified in the statement, though the B20, L20 and several member countries suggested specific changes to the statement’s wording, mainly with the intention of clarifying its language. During the discussions in this session, Turkey and the United States encouraged countries to consider including commitments on workplace safety in their employment plan. Turkey also noted that the social partners and a number of countries have asked for the G20 to undertake further work on workplace safety during 2015, and that Turkey was supportive of this.

Actions

7. *Turkey will circulate the results of the survey of G20 members’ national policies and priorities relating to workplace safety, and the ILO will circulate its analysis of the survey.*
8. *The United States will circulate a new draft of the G20 Statement on Safe and Healthy Workplaces which takes the comments provided during the meeting into account.*

SESSION 6: UNDEREMPLOYMENT AND INFORMALITY

The ILO provided a presentation on ‘Informality, Underemployment and the Quality of Employment’, which included a focus on trends in informality, working poverty, wages and job security. The ILO observed that G20 members should consider both the quantity and quality of employment in policy development, and noted a need to combine pro-employment macro-economic frameworks with inclusive labour market policies and social protection systems. Following on from the ILO, Argentina gave a presentation on the country’s experiences in addressing informal employment over the last decade.

Delegates discussed good practices in responding to informality, including their countries’ current priorities and perspectives on the issue. Common themes included measures to support transitions into formal employment and enforcing relevant workplace laws. Australia observed that there was support from Taskforce members for the G20 to emphasise issues around countering informality, and that including a strong statement on the topic in the ministerial declaration would provide a good starting point. It was agreed that the ILO would re-draft proposed policy priorities for inclusion in the ministerial declaration.

Actions

9. *ILO to circulate draft policy priorities on this theme.*

SESSION 7: ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT MINISTERIAL MEETING

Australia provided the Taskforce with an overview of the arrangements for the Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting. Australia noted the meeting’s logistical arrangements and deadlines for countries to register and provide advice on their requirements, as well as the intention for the meeting to feature interactive discussions between ministers. The Taskforce was reminded that the limit on delegation sizes is head of delegation plus five other delegates. Delegations are also able to register an interpreter in addition to this group of six.

DAY 3

SESSIONS 8 AND 9: MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

During these sessions the Taskforce had a full and intensive discussion of the body of the draft declaration for the Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting. Further discussions of the document, including its annexes, will take place out of session, in response to a revised draft which Australia will circulate.

Members also discussed the future form of the Taskforce on Employment. There was strong support from a number of countries for the Taskforce becoming a working group. However, some countries expressed a preference for a cautious approach to be taken on this issue, noting that the Taskforce is a maturing process.

Actions

10. *Australia will circulate a revised version of the declaration for consideration out of session*
11. *Australia to take up the issue of the Taskforce on Employment’s future and whether it will continue as a time limited taskforce or be elevated to a working group.*

CLOSING: OTHER ACTIONS

Australia closed the meeting, thanking all members for their participation and the international organisations for their work throughout the year.

The meeting closed at 12:30pm.