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Building the future of work together

Making Transitions Work

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In today's dynamic and volatile labour markets we are all navigating a growing number of work transitions. Transitions from education into work; from part time to full time work; from declining industries to expanding sectors and from roles and job skills where demand is waning, to posts which require a whole new set of aptitudes and skill sets.

In this new labour market reality people need a great deal more guidance and support – not just at the outset, but throughout their working lives. Private employment services meet many of these needs. They act as labour market intermediaries to match supply with demand; they empower workers by equipping them with the skills they need to find new work opportunities; they reduce informal work, and they promote inclusiveness and agility for workers, businesses and economies. In short, they make transitions work!

However, the employment industry can't do this all on its own. We need labour market policies that create an enabling regulatory environment in which to operate. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has been advancing labour market policies since 1919. As it celebrates its centenary this year it is looking to adopt a new declaration and set out a mandate fit for the 21st century.

We at World Employment Confederation call on ILO to adopt three key actions in order to secure productive and quality work in the decades ahead:

Firstly, they must **realise agency workers' access to fundamental rights, collective bargaining and decent work through a regulatory framework that ensures quality labour market allocation and matching.** Diverse forms of work, including agency work, foster adaptation, inclusiveness and participation in labour markets. When appropriately regulated, agency work provides access to quality employment, skilling and social protection.

The ILO Convention on Private Employment Agencies (No. 181) stands at the heart of decent labour market matching and secured transitions. It reconciles efficient labour market allocation with the protection of workers, and tailors workers' fundamental rights and labour conditions to the

triangular employment and recruitment model (within and across borders). The Convention recognises agency work as a model of a decent form of flexibility.

As labour market transitions increase, so policymakers need to create a regulatory framework to balance the interests of workers and businesses. The ILO should step up its efforts to deliver greater ratification and implementation of Convention 181 at national level.

Secondly, the ILO needs to **dedicate resources and programmes to research and promote effective cooperation between public and private employment services.**

Managing labour market inclusiveness and transitions should be efficient. Public and private employment services work best when they optimise their collaboration and complementarity in getting people into work. This ensures that public resources are focused on those workers who need it most, while also securing access to labour market support for all.

Public-private cooperation also delivers efficient and cost-effective active labour market policies. Partnerships already exist, but collaboration needs to be scaled up and positive outcomes shared more actively. The ILO should support public-private cooperation by dedicating resources, programmes and funds to it.

Finally, **the ILO needs to be clear that there can be No Future of Work without Social Innovation.** Regulations and protections should facilitate agility, but often, labour market policies and social structures are designed for a 20th century way of working. This often leads to unemployment, informality and fiscal risks.

We need social innovation to find new solutions for working, learning and providing social protection. Solutions that promote labour market participation, inclusiveness, security and employability in line with the realities of 21st century labour markets. The ILO has a role in guiding social innovation and creating conditions for people to work in new and different ways while also having access to new forms of social protection - including on lifelong learning.

The ILO Commission on the Future of Work recognises much of this in its recent report “*Work for a brighter future*”. It acknowledges the challenges that global transformations such as technology, demographic shifts and the transition to a low-carbon economy are placing on transitions throughout our lives, and asserts that, “*Supporting people through these transitions will expand their choices and provide the security to cope with change. It will empower people to shape their working lives and societies to harness the demographic advantages in some regions and create lifelong active societies in others.*”

The private employment industry is committed to supporting people of diverse backgrounds, ages, skill levels, lifestyles, genders, and capabilities in accessing the labour market. Members of the World Employment Confederation have already started to create new ways of working, learning and providing social protection, with initiatives such as: Prospect Statements for agency workers in the Netherlands wanting to secure a mortgage; a Job Fair Caravan in the Philippines offering training and HR support across the country; employment and transition services for military veterans in the USA; a special programme to encourage women’s participation into the labour market in Japan; dedicated refugee welcome centres in Germany; and support to help people from particularly disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Argentina access regulated and formal employment.

We are ready to partner with workers, businesses and policymakers at national, sectoral, regional and international level to develop more of such innovative solutions and enable the future prosperity of individuals, businesses and society as a whole.

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