*Check against delivery*



Statement by

**Mr Anže Dolinar,**

**Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities**

**of the Republic of Slovenia**

at the

**61st Session of the Commission for Social Development**

**Agenda item 3(a) and (b)**

**General Discussion**

New York, 7 February 2023

Madam Chair,

Slovenia aligns itself with the EU statement.

At the outset allow me to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau, on your election and wish you a successful session.

We welcome the thematic focus on the creation of full and productive employment and decent work for all in the post-pandemic recovery and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and look forward to discussion on this session’s priority theme.

As we face the ongoing challenges posed and revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear that one of the most pressing challenges we must address is the impact it has had on the world of work and on future trends in inequality, especially in the labour market.

The pandemic crisis has underlined the importance of social justice as a precondition for resilience and sustainability in working life. The Slovenian government has focused its efforts on implementation of measures to ensure labour market responsiveness and managed to keep the employment high, one of the highest in EU area.

Access to formal work status is crucial to exercise the employment rights and rights arising from employment status. Governments should take all the possible measures to enable access to formal work status and empower workers to exercise their labour rights. We believe that particular attention should be given to most vulnerable groups, which, in the absence of adequate and timely measures, are more likely to be left behind.

We have adjusted the active labour market programs to support the needs of labour market during the pandemic and introduced various income support measures for vulnerable groups such as the self-employed, older persons, recipients of financial social assistance, families with children and persons with disabilities. All the measures kept Slovenia as one of the best performers in the income quantile ratio in the EU.

However, there are still some structural challenges we need to address and certain groups that still face risk of poverty, such as in-work poverty, long-term unemployed, people living in households without working members with dependent children, retired or self-employed women.

Madam Chair,

The Republic of Slovenia supports the comprehensive approach, based on a human-centred agenda to create full and productive employment and decent work, all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Moreover, Slovenian government has already made many steps and reforms to address challenges, arising from the impact of pandemic crisis.

However, we cannot let this crisis define us or our future. Instead, we should use it as an opportunity to build a stronger, more resilient society. One of the key ways we can do this is by creating decent work for all in a full and productive employment.

Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all is also essential for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Agenda's goal 8, which calls for sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, is central to achieving the other goals and targets of the Agenda, such as ending poverty, reducing inequality, and ensuring that no one is left behind.

To achieve this, we must take bold and decisive action. We must invest in infrastructure, education, and training, to create quality jobs and build a more resilient economy. We must also adjust labour laws and policies, where needed, to ensure that they are fair and adequately protect the rights of all those who work. We must also invest in social protections, such as health and long-term care, housing, and retirement benefits, to ensure that everyone has access to the necessities of quality life.

Madam Chair,

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the existing contradictions of our society and presented us with unprecedented challenges, but it has also presented us with an unprecedented opportunity. By creating decent work for all and full and productive employment, we can overcome the inequalities that the pandemic has exacerbated, and build a stronger, more resilient, and more just society. We should seize this opportunity and work together to achieve this vital goal.

Thank you.

