

Investing in Human Capital

G7 Kurashiki Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting in Okayama

Japan, 22-23 April 2023

Kurashiki Ministerial Declaration

Preamble

1. We, the Ministers of Labour and Employment of G7 members met in Kurashiki, Japan on 22-23 April 2023, together with the Director-General of the ILO, the Deputy Secretary-General of the OECD, and representatives of the social partners and engagement groups.
2. We reiterate in the strongest terms our condemnation of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine, which is a clear violation of international law including the UN Charter. This aggression has caused untold harm to the people of Ukraine as well as rising food and energy prices that threaten millions with an increased risk of poverty, and has had significant social, economic, and labour market impacts in Ukraine and beyond.
3. In addition to the impact the war in Ukraine has on economic and social development worldwide, we recognized that structural changes such as demographic changes, digital transformation and green transformation, which we referred to as the 3D under the German Presidency, underscore the importance of supporting and investing in human capital and promoting decent work. While digital transformation and green transformation contribute to job creation, sustainability, and economic growth, they may also increase inequalities, job and income insecurity, poorer working conditions, and lead to inadequate coverage of social protection, especially for the most vulnerable. We need to support workers and businesses to adapt to the changes, promote innovation and ensure a just transition at every level. In addition, the crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and inflation, coupled with structural changes, have created uncertain futures for workers and their families and eroded real wages. We acknowledge that supporting and investing in human capital is necessary to enable individuals to have career aspirations and plan for the future in this uncertain time.

4. To respond to these challenges, a wide range of investments in human capital is important, including skill development and the development of an inclusive labour market to promote quality jobs, enable decent work, including along global supply chains, and leave no one behind. These investments will contribute to realizing a virtuous cycle of workers' well-being and social and economic vitality, which will lead to economic and wage growth in line with productivity, contributing in turn to further investment in human capital. We consider reskilling to support workers to adapt to those changes is an investment in human capital, and should not be seen as a cost.
5. Our mission is, by focusing on investing in human capital and decent work, to make the aspiration and skills of individuals the driving force of economic resilience, vitality, and innovation, and at the same time, encourage a society where individuals can have fulfilling work and lives. To this end, we adopt the G7 Action Plan for Promoting Career Development and Greater Resilience to Structural Changes.
6. We thank the international organizations, in particular the OECD and the ILO, for their important support, reports, and background studies. Our meeting follows the agreement under the German Presidency in 2022 to establish a standing Employment Working Group (EWG) within the G7.

I. Fostering the resilience of our labour market

7. As our countries recover from the pandemic but remain largely affected by the uncertainty of the global economic situation, we carefully listened to the voice of workers and employers and strengthened our commitment to investing in human capital, recognizing it is key to powerfully responding to the challenges of the post-COVID labour market, technological innovation, and climate and demographic change. Capitalizing on this momentum, we resolve to continuing to work together with the social partners to establish a resilient social infrastructure that can respond to a variety of challenges, enhancing social and economic sustainability and resilience, so that everyone can benefit from growth.

I-1. Labour market policies for the post-COVID-19 era and the current issues

8. We responded to the pandemic by expanding existing measures and introducing new measures in a broad, rapid and gender-sensitive manner, such as job retention schemes, unemployment benefits and income support, active labour market policies, and targeted policies for vulnerable people. These measures helped to mitigate the negative impact on workers, self-

employed and enterprises, and supported a quick economic recovery. To better respond to future shocks, we reaffirm the need to be adequately prepared with well-designed labour market policies, including support for workers to remain in, enter into and return to employment, and universal and adequate access to social protection, which is also financially sustainable. We emphasize the importance of timely, targeted, and temporary emergency response measures and of investing in the digitalization of administrative systems of relevant benefits and support for rapid and appropriate policy implementation. Although job retention schemes worked well in many countries, there were unexpected budget costs that placed a burden on the unemployment insurance system in some countries. It is important to learn lessons from the policy experience related to COVID-19 to be able to better respond to future crises without endangering the sustainability of social protection systems. We therefore also place importance on the combination of industrial policy measures focused on affected areas with labour market policy and social protection systems in order to especially support key workers, industries and services that are essential for our national economies and our people's daily lives. In doing so, we need to ensure decent work and good quality jobs in cooperation with the public and private sectors.

9. The pandemic has brought about major changes in production and consumer preferences and the use of e-commerce and digital platforms, thus accelerating digital transformation, including the shift to teleworking and virtual communications. In addition, the pandemic accelerated ongoing structural changes and during the recovery, we experienced widespread labour shortages and, in some cases persistent withdrawals from the labour market. On the whole, the pandemic disproportionately negatively affected people across G7 economies based on gender, age, education and income levels, racial or ethnic origin, disability and migration status, sexual orientation or gender identity, and other factors. Women who took on the major burden of unpaid care work have particularly suffered from the pandemic, including career setbacks in some cases due to the COVID-19 containment policies. This has often led to a standstill and partial inversion in the development of female labour market participation, wages and job quality as well as negative effects on their pensions and balanced representation. In this context, and respecting the role of the social partners, we are committed to promoting appropriate improvements in working conditions, including real wage growth in line with productivity growth, the improvement of working environments for all, and providing adequate support for those with care responsibilities. We will continue to invest in the care economy to alleviate the burden of unpaid care work, ensure decent work and improve working conditions for those who perform paid care work.

I-2. Digital and green transformations and investment in human capital

10. We recognize that in addition to demographic change, digital transformation and green transformation can bring about inevitable social transformation for sustainable industrial and service development. These transformations have great potential to increase productivity, create new and better employment opportunities and improve job quality. Adequate upskilling and reskilling opportunities can help decrease the risk of job insecurity, skill mismatches, skill gaps and a shortage of skilled workers in our labour markets. We will renew our efforts to increase the availability of quality education and lifelong training opportunities, in particular for those most in need in our labour markets, including by strengthening the partnership between public employment services and the private sector.
11. Participation in training remains highly unequal in G7 economies, and the policies that address upskilling and reskilling of workers can sometimes fail to reach persons who are most at risk of job loss and exclusion from the labour market, including persons with disabilities. Thus, we reaffirm the importance of the G7 Action Plan for Inclusive Continuing Education and Training of Adults, adopted under Germany's Presidency of the G7 in 2022. Accordingly, we will work to promote a culture of lifelong learning and to ensure adequate investments in the acquisition and development of skills for a just transition for both workers and employers. We will pay particular attention to targeted groups, including persons with disabilities, low-skilled workers, youth NEET, those in energy-intensive sectors and in poorly digitalised small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and focusing on promoting equity in every dimension. We will therefore encourage measures aimed at reducing educational and skill mismatch, particularly among graduates and apprentices. We reaffirm our commitment to substantially raising the participation of low-skilled adults in Continuing Education and Training (CET) and to reduce the gap with other groups. We ask the OECD to provide us with an update on the agreed monitoring process under the 2022 German Presidency.
12. In order to enable workers to adapt flexibly to structural industrial changes brought about by digital transformation, green transformation and demographic change, and to ensure a just transition that benefits both workers and enterprises, we will work with the social partners and other relevant stakeholders to promote adequate wages and help workers transition to sustainable growing and emerging sectors. We stress that in order to facilitate these transitions it is crucial to support individuals through upskilling and reskilling measures, along with a combination of appropriate

social protection and the implementation of active labour market policies, including professional career guidance. It is also crucial to align upskilling and reskilling with not only the ongoing but also upcoming structural changes in the labour market.

13. We also shared the experiences of members with different backgrounds regarding measures aimed at maintaining and improving employees' motivation of upskilling and reskilling by specific support measures, specific effects and aims of upskilling and reskilling. To achieve a successful and sustainable just transition, we will continue to maintain a constructive dialogue with social partners including at the local level and with other relevant stakeholders. We emphasize that enterprises can play a major role by investing in lifelong learning, thus it would be beneficial to encourage enterprises, including through financial incentives, to promote employees' learning through measures such as granting time to study or training leave. It is also important for enterprises and their representative organizations to consult with workers' representatives in ensuring opportunities for lifelong learning for workers regardless of employment status and care responsibilities. In particular, we will support the vocational education and training and re-training of persons with disabilities, especially taking into account technological progress in the development of their IT skills, in order to facilitate their integration into the labour market. We welcome the World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES) G7 working group on Changing Labour Markets to complement the work of the Ministerial G7 Employment Working Group from a public employment service perspective.

II. Developing an inclusive labour market

14. Against the backdrop of a decline in the working-age population or the slowdown of its growth, we have made efforts to promote labour market participation. Focus on diversity and inclusion, including talent recruitment and retention, leads to greater innovation, productivity, performance and workforce well-being. We therefore share a strong commitment to advancing a labour market in which everyone, including under-represented groups such as older persons and persons with disabilities, can play an active role that matches their skills, career aspirations and interests. It is important to ensure that all persons willing to do so can fully engage in the labour market, and have access to decent work, good quality jobs and a good work-life balance. We stress the key role organizations which contribute to the social and solidarity economy play in fostering the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the labour market. We also share the recognition that enterprises, especially multinational enterprises, in line with their corporate due diligence, play an

important role in employing and supporting under-represented groups, such as older workers and persons with disabilities.

15. Supporting older workers to have an extended career: In the context of rapid population ageing, labour force participation of older workers is growing at a fast pace. Shortages of skilled labour underscore the importance of retaining older workers in the labour market and harnessing their full potential. Therefore, it is increasingly important to support workers to remain employable throughout their career, including by promoting more sustainable, healthier and better working environments. Therefore, we recognize the need to

-Promote adaptable workplaces that accommodate workers' needs as they age.

-Enable older workers to adapt their work styles, including through work arrangements reflecting older workers' needs and requirements responding to changes in their preferences and health conditions according to their age, and promoting in-work career change and other career opportunities as appropriate.

-Provide opportunities for lifelong upskilling and reskilling, especially addressing digital skills.

-Promote financial resilience of older persons by enabling longer and healthier working lives and thus building better old-age pension provisions and savings.

-Act to combat ageism that may exist in the workplace by effectively communicating and recognizing the valuable skills and experience that older workers bring to the labour market.

16. Advancing disability inclusion: We will work to ensure that persons with disabilities are provided with adequate support in order to participate fully in the labour market, which is also important as a vehicle for their social inclusion and independence. We also emphasize the necessity of working more to improve the quality of their employment to achieve meaningful engagement and participation. We believe that persons with severe disabilities, who may have faced significant barriers to employment, are now able to have more and more opportunities to play an active role in the labour market through the use of flexible working styles such as teleworking, robotics and AI, and cooperation between employment and welfare policy. We will continue to promote efforts towards a labour market and work environment that is more open, inclusive, and accessible to persons with disabilities in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We also welcome the OECD's new report "Disability, Work and Inclusion: Mainstreaming in All Policies and Practices" which outlines the importance of

a disability-inclusive approach to ensure equal treatment, equal skills development and equal labour market transitions for persons with disabilities.

17. **Accelerating gender equality:** We are committed to fully support the Gender Equality Advisory Council and its G7 Dashboard on Gender Gaps, making sure to update its methodology and indicators considering the constant evolution and persistent challenges. We recognize that gender gaps in labour market opportunities and outcomes still exist, such as the gender pay gap, occupational segregation and stereotypical views about gender roles especially at higher management levels. We recognize that women experiencing intersectional inequalities are even more vulnerable in the world of work. In order to promote gender equality, it is important to ensure all women's voices are heard by enhancing their leadership and participation in decision-making processes, including through social dialogue, and by eliminating unconscious bias and discrimination by individuals and enterprises. Furthermore, we acknowledge the importance of encouraging women's entrepreneurship including non-discriminative access to financing. It is also important to enhance women's access to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) training and education by, for example, increasing access to and funding for programs in these areas. We put an emphasis on establishing a working model that enables parents both to work and raise a family in a diverse and flexible manner including by strengthening childcare. We are committed to promoting the take-up of men's parental and care leave working closely with employers. In addition, we stress the importance of long-term care leave and access to inclusive and quality care options as well as addressing social norms that underpin women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care work.
18. We also underline the importance of promoting measures to prevent and respond to harassment and violence against all workers, especially to gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work. In addition, we should also encourage gender balance in all sectors, decent working conditions, and equal pay for equal work or work of equal value. We commit to cooperating closely with engagement groups on matters within their activities to further improve gender equality in the labour market. We acknowledge that intersecting factors such as gender, age, and disability result in even greater barriers to workforce participation and reiterate our commitment to an inclusive labour market.
19. **Supporting youth for successful labour market participation:** We acknowledge that some G7 countries face a high level of youth unemployment and NEET youth. In particular, youth often face difficulties in transitioning from education to the labour market because of, for example, skill mismatches

and skill gaps. Employment measures for youth require comprehensive and systematic support. This could include dissemination of information from the pre-employment stage and career orientation in schools, support for the selection and retention of suitable jobs, and employment support and career development to avoid unstable employment or becoming NEET. In particular, in order to facilitate the transition from education to the labour market, we emphasize the importance of vocational guidance as well as education and training, including quality traineeships and apprenticeships, skill development and career development support in collaboration with educational institutions such as colleges and universities, and with the active involvement of the social partners as well as the need to improve the literacy, numeracy, and digital skills of youth, as part of this overall approach.

III. Enhancing work engagement and promoting decent work

20. We recognize the importance of promoting decent work and improving work engagement for greater job satisfaction, job performance, and productivity. We note that work engagement depends on factors such as autonomy, task variety, task significance, decent and adequate remuneration, employees' health and well-being, a safe and healthy working environment and receiving adequate resources from their organizations (e.g., recognition, opportunities of career development). We also underscore the importance of workers being valued and respected by leadership and being given the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the organization. We commit to taking the following actions to support workers and enterprises to improve work engagement and to promote decent work.
21. **Reducing inequality:** We recognize the negative impact of inequalities in our labour markets, economies, and societies. The pandemic has deepened inequalities between certain groups, and the current high levels of food and energy prices accelerated by the ongoing Russian war in Ukraine have placed additional stress on the most at-risk in many countries. Decent work, particularly for those most at-risk, is essential to addressing inequalities and increasing work engagement. We reiterate our commitment to reducing all barriers to decent work by ensuring that policy frameworks are in place to combat all forms of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, and by implementing policies and programs that support equal participation in the workforce by under-represented populations.
22. **Promoting adequate wages for workers:** While there are many factors contributing to workers' engagement, fair and attractive remuneration is one of the essential factors shaping decent work. We acknowledge that in order to

ensure that the benefits of economic growth are fairly shared, it is important to provide employees with adequate remuneration including through collective bargaining, fair job evaluation, and effective enforcement of laws related to wages and hours at work. We must continue to promote adequate wages and support transition to sustainable growing and emerging sectors in accordance with workers' choice, through investment in human capital including upskilling and reskilling.

23. **Ensuring occupational safety and health:** We welcome the inclusion of a safe and healthy working environment in the ILO framework of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the integration of relevant occupational safety and health (OSH) conventions in the ILO core labour standards. We reaffirm the need to consider how a changing work environment, due to digital, demographic and climate changes may impact workers' safety and health. Considering the ageing population and advancements in medical technology, we need to pay more attention to those who work while receiving medical treatment. We will continue to respond to the needs of older workers with appropriate safety and health measures. We commit to supporting employers and workers by promoting collaboration between labour policies and health and welfare policies to ensure safe, healthy and accessible workplaces, including through effective social dialogue and workers' participation. We also reaffirm the importance of developing policies to ensure occupational mental health and we commit to working on building an integrated mental health and work policy.
24. **Promoting health and well-being at work:** Promoting health and well-being at work not only improves workers' health. It also leads to a more productive workforce and decent work, along with greater economic benefits. The G7 members have contributed to workplace well-being through measures such as regulation, financial incentives, dissemination of information, and certification and award schemes. We acknowledge the importance of continuing to share good policy practices, especially those which strengthen employers' incentives to promote health and well-being at work. Similarly, addressing women's health needs (for example, relating to menstrual health or the menopause) can improve the overall health and well-being of female workers, promote gender equality and create a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture, bringing benefits for employees and employers.
25. **Improving human resource management and supporting career development:** We acknowledge the importance of career development policies for promoting greater worker engagement. Support for career development needs to be provided to both workers and job seekers. It should take place throughout working lives, starting with career guidance for young

people in school and TVET (technical vocational education and training). Workers should have access to equal opportunities and tools to progress in their careers, as well as transparent promotion and advancement opportunities. We will collaborate with a broad range of stakeholders including private enterprises, trade unions, employers' organization, public employment services, and public and private providers of vocational training to broaden the provision of career guidance and secure the quality of career service to motivate workers while enabling lifelong career development. We also acknowledge the important role of good management practices and good leadership managers in promoting and supporting career development. We agree that more attention should be given to SMEs, where training opportunities and management skills can be limited.

26. Promoting high quality care-related jobs: Care work is essential for human well-being and sustainable economic growth but remains under-recognized and undervalued. Care-related jobs, which were at the forefront of the fight against the pandemic, are often characterised by poor working conditions including low wages, which results in a shortage of care workers in many countries. As women make up a large share of the care workforce, the low pay and poor working conditions that characterize the sector are factors that can contribute to labour market gender inequality. It is necessary to enhance the quality of care jobs by improving working conditions such as wages, health and safety including prevention of long working hours, career progression and development, access to social protection, professionalization, skill development, and credentialing.

27. Ensuring compliance with Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: We emphasize that securing the labour rights of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining is the foundation of decent work, and plays an important role in promoting wage growth. We respect and actively promote those rights the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour, the effective abolition of child labour, the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation and a safe and healthy working environment, which are the fundamental principles set forth in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. We will ensure that workers and their representative organizations can exercise these rights, in law and practice, including through strengthening enforcement mechanisms where appropriate and by supporting innovative multilateral partnerships to increase global attention to and support for social dialogue, freedom of association and collective bargaining. Ensuring effective social dialogue and decent work in global supply chains is critical to reaching just transition for all.

- 28. Building more resilient and sustainable global supply chains:** We underline the importance of achieving human rights, decent work, and the protection of the environment in global supply chains. We remain committed to ensuring that human rights, including the banning of human trafficking, and labour and environmental standards are respected in corporate operations and in business relationships, and to promoting decent work including through technical cooperation. We continue to fulfil our important role in achieving better outcomes for people and the planet through a smart mix of mandatory and voluntary measures, including legislation, regulations, incentives and guidance for enterprises, as affirmed under last year's G7 presidency. We commit to promoting decent work in global supply chains in line with the authoritative frameworks of the UN, the ILO, and the OECD. We reiterate our commitment in the G7 Wolfsburg Employment Ministerial Declaration that we work on a coherent and coordinated G7 approach and stand ready to engage constructively in discussions at the UN and the ILO in close consultation with all relevant stakeholders to explore ideas and options for a consensus-based legally binding instrument at the international level that adds value to the existing legal and policy approaches and is implementable. We also call on others to join us in these efforts including through Alliance 8.7.
- 29. Way forward:** We, the G7 Labour and Employment Ministers, value the LEMM and the standing Employment Working Group as important venues to promote the overall G7 agenda. We thank the Japanese Presidency and look forward to the Italian government assuming the 2024 G7 Presidency and to continue working together to drive action.

Appendix: Action Plan for Promoting Career Development and Greater Resilience to Structural Changes

1. Structural changes, such as demographic change, digital transformation and green transformation have a significant impact on labour markets and can increase uncertainty in careers and lives. Due to a shift of skills needed in the labour market, gaps in supply and demand for skills and unequal or limited access to training exist. It is necessary to increase the resilience of careers by tackling these gaps in skills and training, and providing workers with the confidence and necessary skills to succeed in a rapidly changing work environment.
2. Access to and take up of training should be improved for older workers, workers with disabilities, youth NEET, low-skilled workers, the unemployed, non-standard workers, low-income workers, and workers in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly women among these groups. It is important not to leave behind these groups and to target workers in sectors that are likely to be adversely affected by changes in skill needs.
3. An effective and comprehensive “learning process” can include the following elements:

- identifying relevant skills for career advancement, and / or to adapt to changing skills needs in the current job,

- identifying suitable reskilling or upskilling opportunities,

- receiving support such as training leave, access to public employment services including career guidance, financial aid, advice and childcare support, and results of their skill evaluation,

- finding a job and workplace to utilize the skills, which can then lead to sustainable career development.

Cooperation among stakeholders including governments at all levels, workers, and enterprises is essential in this process. Appropriate training methods will need to be continuously developed. In addition, for the sustainable growth of both workers and enterprises, it is important to strengthen enterprise-led training, alongside promoting workers' autonomous, independent, and continuous choices in upskilling and reskilling.

4. In order to strengthen a skill development system that tackles skill gaps and enhances career development and resilience to structural change, it may be necessary to promote the following efforts:

- i. Aligning skills development and lifelong learning policies with other policies and social dialogue
 - ii. Anticipating skill needs for digital and green transformations from both a short and a long-term perspective, and sensitization of youth to new occupations and skills
 - iii. Targeting measures to disadvantaged groups, including promotion of employment opportunities and career advancement
 - iv. Creating innovative mechanisms to improve access to and participation in lifelong learning including both financial and non-financial incentives
 - v. Fostering an integrated approach with other policy measures such as career guidance, job matching, social protection and active labour market policies, recognition of prior learning, and incentives to digital and work-based learning
 - vi. Supporting enterprises, particularly SMEs, for the improvement of human resource management practices, staff planning, and skills utilization, including through the involvement of the social partners
- Strengthening career development will require coordinated actions by stakeholders. The role of stakeholders in supporting career development can include the following elements, considering respective responsibilities and jurisdictional structures of each G7 member.
 - **Governments at all levels**
 - Collaborate with all stakeholders, in particular the social partners, to identify and collect labour market information for public dissemination, including data related to skills needs.
 - Promote the alignment of lifelong learning policies, training delivery and training content with skills needs.
 - Help identify skills needs arising from growing and emerging industry sector trends and strategies.
 - Provide sector-specific vocational training.
 - Strive to eliminate time and financial barriers to training through strengthening support for workers including providing financial incentives for individuals.
 - Provide support to help workers to participate in career development programs, such as subsidies for paid training leave and other financial assistance and childcare.
 - Support people affected by structural changes to find new jobs, through appropriate active labour market policies, in particular those most in need of training and facing barriers to participating in training.
 - Collaborate with the social partners to help workers adapt to structural

changes, such as rapid technological change and longer work careers, and avoid disruptions to their career paths, including through relevant training and career guidance.

- Support organizations responsible for career development, such as accessible Public Employment Services.
 - Maintain and strengthen well-trained human resources development personnel to support career development of workers.
 - Promote dialogue with local stakeholders including the social partners and provide vocational training that caters to local needs.
 - Evaluate the impact of vocational training implemented in the region, and use the results to continuously improving training.
 - Promote the role of each stakeholder listed below through policies.
- **Public Employment Services**
 - Identify the skill needs of local labour markets and the skill composition of workers at these local levels, and share information with central and local authorities, local enterprises and the social partners.
 - Engage with the social partners and relevant stakeholders to develop policies to address the specific needs of the different industries and regions that are expected to be highly impacted by structural change.
 - Support autonomous career development and provide appropriate vocational and career guidance to workers, including not only the unemployed but also those who are currently employed and wishing to change jobs.
 - Collaborate closely with local vocational training facilities and private training institutions, and provide information for training opportunities and subsidy programs that match the career plans of workers.
 - Reach out to vulnerable and under-represented groups and ensure that they have the same opportunities and access to fulfil their training needs.
 - **Enterprises (Large Enterprises/SMEs/Emerging Enterprises)**
 - Identify current and future skill needs and develop strategies to invest in them in line with short and long-term business requirements.
 - Enhance workers' motivation for lifelong skills development by appropriately recognizing and rewarding the acquired skills of workers who have undergone upskilling and reskilling, including by exercising management leadership.

- Enhance workers' capacity and availability to undertake training according to their preferences and capabilities, including through paid leave for training and work-based training.
- Leverage opportunities provided by government for eliminating time and financial constraints for workers.
- Provide workers with career guidance in order to facilitate their engagement in lifelong learning and sustainable careers.
- Collaborate with training institutions (including higher education institutions) to take into consideration the actual needs of the labour market in their curricula.
- Pay special attention to gender bias and inequality especially in STEM fields and empower women in their careers and to achieve positions of leadership.
- **Social Partners**
 - Encourage and support employers, including SMEs, to promote training opportunities for older persons, workers with disabilities, youth NEET and low-skilled workers, and particularly women among these groups.
 - Support greater involvement of workers and their representatives in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of skills development and lifelong learning policies and programs, including apprenticeships.
 - Facilitate recognition of skills/prior learning and their reflection in career growth and other motivational mechanisms to engage in training.
 - Promote inclusive career development opportunities, such as continuing education and training as well as paid leave, being included in collective bargaining agreements.
 - Collaborate with training institutions (including higher education institutions) to take into consideration the current and future needs of the labour market in their curricula.
- **Private training institutions and public vocational training institutions**
 - Promote consistency between the content of training and the skill needs, based on local and national trends in the labour market and public policies for skills development and lifelong learning.
 - Design flexible training courses that can easily respond to structural changes such as digital transformation and green transformation, develop capacities of trainers, and provide teaching materials.

- Collaborate with enterprises and provide training according to their skill needs, taking into account the constant evolution of the world of work.
- Provide more flexible training methods to ease the constraints of participation which workers face, such as time and cost, including by increasing online training offerings and allowing training in shorter durations with course modules.