

**Commission:** International Labour Organization  
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**Author:** Democratic Republic of the Congo

Since 1960, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been a part of the ILO. In collaboration with its tripartite components at the national level, the ILO now provides the nation with assistance in implementing its Decent Work Agenda through a variety of interventions (technical advice, project creation and execution, information and advocacy, and so on). Currently, six development cooperation projects are being carried out in the fields of youth employment, social protection, employability and skill development, labor administration, and combating the worst types of child labor. Since November 2022, the nation has led the 8.7 Alliance and submitted an application to become a member of the UN Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protections for Just Transition. A Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP 2021-2024) was signed by the nation and the ILO in November 2021.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has made significant strides on improving its labor market and social protection systems over the past decade. With the implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) and various development projects, the country has seen a reduction in child labor, an increase in youth employment, and improved labor standards. In 2030, the Democratic Republic of the Congo's economy has diversified, reducing its dependence on mineral exports. The agricultural sector was growing, supported by initiatives like PRODIVAC, which enhanced skills and employability, but droughts and floods have taken up more and more space. The lack of water is increasingly felt in this sector, which makes life difficult for the population. The unemployment rate has risen by more than 10% over the past 10 years, to 19.5%. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has focused on improving employability and skills development, particularly among the youth. Programs aimed at vocational training and entrepreneurship have been successful, leading to a more skilled and competitive workforce. The country has also made progress in aligning its education system with market needs, ensuring that graduates are equipped with relevant skills.

Social protection measures have been expanded, providing a safety net for the most vulnerable populations. Programs targeting child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking have been strengthened, with the DRC continuing to be a pathfinder country in the 8.7 Alliance. The most important problems that we still must solve are child labour and youth unemployment. The work scenario in the country is dire: more than 70% of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are unemployed. The jobs are too few for so many people. Young people must seek illegal employment, and the next step is entry into the world of crime. Moreover, due to delays in education, most young people have difficulty communicating if there is some "disadvantage" that hurts their work.

Furthermore, cobalt mining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has raised significant concerns around human rights and labor exploitation. This metal, crucial for the manufacture of lithium-ion batteries used in electronic devices and electric vehicles, is at the heart of a humanitarian crisis. In the DRC, where the world's largest cobalt reserves are concentrated, the extraction of the mineral is carried out under conditions that often violate the most basic rights of workers. The situation in the Congo is particularly alarming because of the use of child labour in cobalt mines, and the disproportionate need for cobalt for growing new technologies. Children, some as young as 7 years old, are employed in shifts of up to 12 hours a day, without adequate protective equipment, exposing themselves to significant risks to their health and safety. These child workers, along with other miners, face dangerous working conditions for minimum wage, sometimes as low as a dollar a day, without access to effective grievance or redress mechanisms.

The technological and digital transformations are indeed reshaping the labor landscape, raising numerous questions, especially in the DRC, where the challenges and opportunities may differ significantly from those in more developed countries. With the rise of remote work, the concept of the "office" is evolving. In contexts like the DRC, where internet access is still very limited, remote work has not been as widespread as elsewhere. Technological changes bring advantages, such as increased flexibility and new opportunities. However, they can also foster a sense of meaninglessness, especially if workers are not equipped to adapt. Emphasis has been placed on developing technical and digital skills, alongside the necessity for continuous training to adapt to the rapid changes in the

market. The ILO highlights the importance of creating decent jobs and reducing unemployment. Training for future professions due to artificial intelligence does not necessarily render educators obsolete. On the contrary, their roles are shifting towards that with learning facilitators, integrating essential digital and socio-emotional skills. The key is ensuring that workers, including those without access to advanced technologies, receive relevant education and training while preserving meaning and well-being in the workplace.

Despite the progress, challenges remain. The Democratic Republic of the Congo still faces issues related to political stability, infrastructure, and access to quality education in rural areas. Moving forward, the country will need to continue its efforts in promoting inclusive growth, enhancing labor standards, and ensuring that all citizens benefit from economic development. This is what the country will be looking for during this conference.

**Resources:**

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