



*Ensuring decent work, dignity and respect for all*

**Closing remarks by Minister TW Nxesi  
at the BRICS LEMM**

**29 September 2023**

**Honourable Ministers,**

**Distinguished guests and**

**Esteemed colleagues,**

As we reach the conclusion of the Ninth BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting (LEMM), which was preceded by the Employment Working Group (EWG) earlier this week, in our vibrant city of Durban, I am filled with optimism and gratitude.

A total of eleven ministers and a vice-minister attended this meeting from all corners of the globe. This gathering has been an exemplary demonstration of collaboration, commitment and the shared vision of our BRICS Countries.

I want to begin by extending my heartfelt appreciation to Deputy Minister Boitumelo Moloi for her excellent leadership in chairing the political discussion on the first day of our meeting. Her diligence and professionalism have set the tone for our proceedings.

I am also thankful to my co-chair Minister Lindiwe Zulu for the sterling job. Our portfolios are highly intertwined and her presence was important to deepen synergies as we try to improve the lives of our people.

Dear Minister, your efforts and contributions did not go unnoticed. I must acknowledge and express my deep gratitude to all the ministers, dignitaries and representatives from BRICS Member Countries and Guest Countries who have graced this occasion with their presence.

Your participation and insights have enriched our discussions and reinforced our commitment to fostering cooperation in the fields of labour and employment.

Our discussions over the past two days have been enlightening and productive. We have delved into critical topics such as labour rights, social protection and job creation, all of which are essential components of building

a just and equitable society. The presentations and contributions made by our esteemed speakers have provided valuable insights into these areas.

I must also extend my appreciation to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Social Security Association (ISSA) for their valuable contributions and presentations on important themes related to labour rights and social protection.

Our discussions on strengthening cooperation within BRICS and promoting a joint political statement have been particularly fruitful. The commitment shown by all member countries to collaborate more closely on international platforms sends a strong message about our shared goals and values.

The report presented by the BRICS Employment Working Group (EWG), under the leadership of DG Lamati, has been instrumental in guiding our discussions and shaping

our decisions. I commend the tireless efforts of the technical experts in facilitating our progress.

As we move forward, we are setting the stage for greater collaboration and mutual support among our countries. The proposed BRICS Productivity Ecosystem Platform and the discussion on funding requirements hold significant promise for job creation and economic growth within our countries.

In closing, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the people of South Africa for their warm hospitality and to the beautiful city of eThekweni for providing a conducive environment for our discussions.

As we adopt the eThekweni Declaration, we are not only making a commitment to each other, but also to our citizens who look to us for solutions that will improve their lives. I have no doubt that our collective efforts will bear fruit and contribute to a better future for all.

I look forward to our continued cooperation, and I am confident that the Russian Federation, as the next host country, will carry forward the torch of progress and unity within BRICS.

Today we hand over the baton to the next Presidency – now of an expanded BRICS with eleven countries. Next year, Honourable Kotiakov will preside over a different LEMM from the one we have today.

A larger group comes with its own dynamics but we are positive about maintaining excellent camaraderie and good working relations amongst the BRICS Partners.

Thank you, and may our shared vision for a brighter tomorrow guide our path forward.

I declare this Ninth BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting closed.

And, I wish everyone a safe journey home.