

August 24, 2023

**Welcome address by Lidia Mikheeva at the regional webinar of  
the Latin America and the Caribbean group of the International Association of  
Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (AICESIS).**

Dear colleagues!

I am happy to welcome you today to the regional webinar on gender equality and youth employment organized by the Latin America and the Caribbean group of the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (AICESIS).

As President of AICESIS, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation seeks to strengthen its work with the countries of the Latin American region, and I would like to express special gratitude to the Economic and Social Council of Curaçao for organizing the event. This is not the first regional AICESIS webinar organized by this continental group during our Presidency. It is particularly gratifying as the Council of Curaçao will take over the presidency in AICESIS in early November and will be challenged with a new phase in strengthening international social dialogue and further revitalizing the Association.

I am confident that the role of civil society institutions is to draw the attention of society and the State to the most pressing problems and to seek solutions to them, among other things. The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation fully shares the aspirations of the international community in promoting gender equality issues, and also pays special attention to the issues of youth employment and social adaptation, since it is young people who are the most socially active part of the population and the most vulnerable in terms of employment, at the same time.

As we know, gender equality is included in Sustainable Development Goal No.5: “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. It plays an important role in ensuring peace and harmony in society and full realization of human potential through sustainable development.

Russia is actively working in this direction both at the national level and through civil society institutions. The National Strategy of Action for Women for 2023-2030 was adopted last year, aimed at realizing the principle of equal rights and freedoms for genders in all spheres of life, as well as at increasing women's economic self-sufficiency and their involvement in the political sphere. In particular, there are plans to improve Russian legislation, conduct scientific research, and include measures in national projects and government programs. For this purpose, an interdepartmental working group has been assembled which includes representatives of the authorities, the academic and expert community and civil society.

Decent work for young people and their place in the social and solidarity economy is an equally important track which our country is actively working on. The national concept for the development of programs to integrate the young population into the labor market is based on a comprehensive legal approach to the problems of the youth, combining favorable economic policies and targeted measures to stimulate the labor supply and demand, including the level and quality of employment. The Russian Government has approved a long-term program to promote youth employment until 2030 with the aim of creating conditions for young people to realize their professional, labor and entrepreneurial potential. The program envisages a number of measures, including subsidies to employers for the employment of young people, such as disabled people, who are often challenged with finding job, as well as a better procedure for the formation and distribution of target figures for admission to vocational schools and universities to make them as close as possible to the needs of the labor market. In addition, the program includes assistance to young people who wish to move to the regions that experience labor shortage, in organizing practical training for students with individual entrepreneurs, and launching the Land of Masters project, which will provide an opportunity for personal close support for young adults in entrepreneurship. The program plans to embrace up to 200 thousand people annually with direct support measures, as a result of which the unemployment rate among the youth will decrease. The share of employed graduates should reach 85% by 2024, and 92% by 2030.

I am sure that social and economic councils, as a key mouthpiece of civil society, can and should become major actors in ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, as well as in the realization of the youth agenda, especially in terms of implementing comprehensive measures to promote youth employment.

The experience of Latin American countries in this regard is extremely interesting and relevant. We are to have a comprehensive exchange of ideas today, which will undoubtedly become one of the tracks for our future work within the Association.

I would like to express my gratitude to the organizers of today's webinar and wish fruitful work to its participants!