

CIVIC CHAMBER OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Honorable Chair, Mr. Aka Aouélé, and esteemed participants of the AICESIS workshop, I am grateful for the opportunity to present today and I am very happy to see all of you.

Inequalities go against social justice. When certain groups of people are excluded from work opportunities, the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals remains far away.

Social dialogue must underpin all the initiatives to tackle inequalities related to employment. Because only when governments work side-by-side with representatives of employers and workers can truly sustainable solutions to inequalities be crafted and effectively implemented.

Social dialogue has often produced agreements on the concerned matter, with civil society organizations in many cases acting as the ultimate auditors of such.

Let me briefly introduce you to the Russian experience of combatting inequalities through social dialogue. Speaking of the federal level government initiatives, one of the efficient solutions to tackle inequalities came into existence in 2018, in the form of so-called “national projects” The implementation of national projects initiated by Russian President Vladimir Putin started in 2019.

They include "Demography", "Labor productivity", "Health Care", "Education" and others. The key tasks of the national projects are outlined in the President’s decree "On the national development goals of Russia until 2030" and include preserving the health and well-being of citizens, developing opportunities for the realization and development of their talents, creating a safe and comfortable environment for life, tasks of digital transformation, and, opportunities for work.

In order to track progress, the government has established a monitoring system at all levels of executive authority, from municipalities to the federal centre.

The system is used to monitor over 3,000 indicators in real time and helps the government react to challenges, sets a timeframe for the implementation of national projects and promptly adjusts activities in case of shortcomings, including those indicated by the businesses and citizens.

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and regional civic chambers in their turn oversee the implementation of the national projects goals on the federal and regional levels respectively. It is to this end that a Coordination Council on National

Projects and Population Preservation has been created under the auspices of the Civic Chamber.

The Council actively participates in the formation and implementation of a unified plan to achieve national development goals, practically speaking, it holds the respective government agencies accountable for the proper implementation of the national projects. Every year, the Civic Chamber prepares a special Report on the progress of national projects implementation that is later communicated to the President.

Nevertheless, development of the labor market is primarily affected by the decisions made in the area of legal intervention which includes both the Employment Law and the Labor Code. Of course, it also largely depends on the initiatives of the Ministry for Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation and breakthroughs which may be successful or weak in promoting investment, job creation, small business development, less administrative barriers etc.

This list can be long, but the most important is that the labor market situation, unemployment, and job creation all directly depend on a lot of decisions and factors which are external to the labor market.

And one of the most problematic issues is the disability employment gap, that, perhaps, is the most affected by the factors external to the labor market. Legislation has made discrimination against disabled people in the world of work unlawful, but the employment gap persists, requiring policy interventions to reduce inequalities.

The Russian Government is constantly increasing financial obligations to the nation without abolishing any guarantee or benefit for workers and for those not covered by employment relationships such as retirees, children, and, namely, the disabled people.

In assuming such obligations, the Government has introduced the Accessible Environment Program in 2011. And it was the first such a program in Russia that has embarked on interventions to promote creation of jobs for those with disabilities.

The Ministry for Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation started implementing this program by agreement with various social partners. While not confined to promotion of jobs, the Accessible Environment Program envisages creation of the entire transport infrastructure to support movements of disabled individuals beyond their homes and will, wherever possible, bring a full range of high quality rehabilitation techniques within their reach just as an access to the mass media, Internet, and education opportunities.

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation along with its regional counterparts plays a significant role in promoting the social dialogue between employers, local governments and NGOs, with the latter being one of the key factors in addressing the issue of social and labor adaptation of people with disabilities.

The list of labor market issues that can be solved via the social dialogue is long. So far, I have touched upon only couple of them, and have demonstrated how the social dialogue helped tackle these issues in the Russian realm.

I believe that together, having united our experience, we will be able to promote equality in the world of work with implementation of effective tripartite mechanisms and further engagement of the civil society organizations in the development of concerned laws.

Thank you!