

Joint press release on the current proposals for the modernization of the public sector and the proposed plans to abolish the Ministry of Labor

The organizations signing this joint statement express our utmost disapproval of the recently announced proposal by the Public Sector Development Committee to merge some of the existing ministries and abolish the Ministry of Labor, transferring its functions and roles to a number of ministries. We consider this proposal to be detrimental in terms of its effects on the labour market and on the labour parties, and do not take into account the principles and objectives of the existence of the Ministry of Labor and its role in serving labor market issues and production parties and maintaining social peace. Abolishing the Ministry of Labor is contrary to the approach of social dialogue and partnership between workers and employers with the government. It furthermore reflects a change in economic policy directions and options towards marginalizing and weakening the social protection system.

Accordingly, we warn against moving forward with these plans, namely, the abolishment of the Ministry of Labor and the transfer of the ministry's functions among a number of official bodies. This will cause chaos in labour market programmes, policies, and data collection. It will further weaken the ability of government agencies to meet their obligations to regulate the labour market and ensure the necessary protections for the parties to work and achieve decent working conditions.

We also warn against the government's overall approach to encourage investment and stimulate economic growth at the expense of weakening working conditions and social protections among workers. This has been the approach for the past three years, in which regressive amendments to labour and social security laws have been adopted. This approach and the decisions that ensue will inexorably lead to deepen social inequality, economic inequality and increase poverty rates.

We affirm that the success of any country in dealing with labor market issues resides in its support to the role of the Ministry of Labor in drawing up national labor policies, and strengthening its role as a main channel for social dialogue in the provision of social protection policies. Furthermore, the responsibilities of labor policies and their implementation are interlinked, interdependent, and indivisible. They include a set of functions imposed by the constitution, affirmed by national legislation and Jordan's obligations under the international conventions and treaties it has ratified. This is particularly relevant in areas related to labor and social protections,

employment, industrial relations, services related to occupational safety and health, minimum wages, vocational training services, human resources, social dialogue, and labor inspection, in which the Ministry of Labor has a key role in the processes of consultation, cooperation and negotiation with social partners, workers and employers, within the framework of the principle of the tripartite structure, which must be enshrined in the various functions of labor market management.

We call on the government not to adopt this proposal and instead strengthen the role of the Ministry of Labor within the recognized frameworks, standards, and experiences of the international community, to remain at the center of the broader economic and social decision circles. We furthermore call on the government to adopt a strategy based on considering the Ministry of Labor important player in the adoption of labor market policies and social dialogue that are driven by the main principles of good governance, participation, transparency, accountability and the rule of law.