

SPEAKING GUIDE FOR THE CHAIRPERSON



Ensuring decent work, dignity, and respect for all

Ninth BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting (LEMM)

28 – 29 September 2023

[Note: This guide provides a detailed script for the Chairperson of the Ninth BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting. Please ensure that the chairperson has access to this script well in advance of the meeting for review and preparation. The guide includes specific timings for each agenda item.]

Day 1: Thursday, 28 September 2023

LEMM SESSION I: POLITICAL DISCUSSION

Chair: Honourable Boitumelo E. Moloi, Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour, Republic of South Africa

DM Moloi: Good morning Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests and esteemed colleagues. I am honoured to serve as your Chairperson for this prestigious gathering, the Ninth BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting (LEMM). Programmed to take place during the course of today and tomorrow, the meeting serves as a high-level platform for the BRICS Member Countries (namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) to address critical issues related to labour and employment.

DM Moloi: I wish to recognise the Ministers present this morning, starting with our host Honourable Thembelani W. Nxesi, Minister of Employment and Labour, Republic of South Africa. Then, the Ministers of the BRICS Member Countries, namely,

- Honourable Luiz Marinho, Federative Republic of Brazil,
- Honourable Rameswar Teli, Republic of India,
- Honourable Anton Kotiakov, Russian Federation, and
- Honourable Vice-Minister Li Yong, People's Republic of China.

Furthermore, we would like to welcome the Ministers from the six Guest Countries, namely,

- Honourable Marta Elena Feitó Cabrera, Republic of Cuba,
- Honourable Richard Ramoetsi, Kingdom of Lesotho,
- Honourable Agnes Makonda Ridley, Republic of Malawi,
- Honourable Utoni Nujoma, Republic of Namibia, and
- Honourable July Moyo, Republic of Zimbabwe.

Also gracing this event are Honourable Stella Tembisa Ndabeni-Abrahams, Minister of Small Business Development; Honourable Lindiwe Zulu, Minister of Social Development; MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, KwaZulu-Natal, Mr Siboniso Duma; Honourable Gilbert F. Hougbo, Director-General of the International Labour Organisation; Honourable Abi-Ramia Caetano, Secretary-General of the International Social Security Association; Mr. Khulekani Mathe, Deputy CEO of Business Unity South Africa (BUSA); and Ms. Zingiswa Losi, President of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). We have the pleasure of welcoming the members of parliament who have taken time from their busy schedules to attend this meeting.

It would be a mistake not to recognise Mr Thobile Lamati, Director-General and Chairperson of the BRICS Employment Working Group and other senior officials present. Finally, we note the presence of development finance institutions, namely the New Development Bank and the Industrial Development Corporation, the Pan African Productivity Association (PAPA), representatives of Productivity South Africa as well as the African Regional Labour Administration Centre (ARLAC).

DM Moloi: This morning's political session will consist of a welcome address by the Honourable Premier, messages of support from the social partners and an address by the Host Minister.

DM Moloi: We will begin our proceedings with the MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, KwaZulu-Natal, Mr Siboniso Duma, a region known for its rich cultural heritage and economic potential.

MEC Duma speaks.

DM Moloji: Thank you, Mr MEC for your speech.

DM Moloji: Messages of support from esteemed individuals will follow in the order given in the Programme, starting with:

09:20-09:35 Mr Hougbo, ILO Director-General

Mr Hougbo speaks.

09:35-09:50 Mr Caetano, ISSA Secretary General of the ISSA

Mr Caetano speaks.

10:05-10:20 Mr Mathe, Deputy CEO of BUSA (on behalf of the Employers)

Mr Mathe speaks

10:20-10:35 Ms Losi, President of Cosatu (representing the Workers)

Ms Losi speaks.

10:35-10:50 Keynote Address by the Minister of Employment and Labour

DM Moloji: At this point, we are honoured to hear the Keynote Address by Honourable Minister Nxesi, highlighting the significance of our gathering.

Minister Nxesi speaks.

DM Moloji: Thank you, Honourable Nxesi.

DM Moloji: Ladies and gentlemen, it is time for a tea break.

DM Moloji: Honourable Ministers and delegates will attend the launch of the Jobs Fair.

DM Moloji: We will then reconvene for our next session at 14:00 which will be guided by Honourable Lindiwe Zulu, Minister of Social Development.

10:50-11:15 TEA BREAK

11:15-13:00 Visit to the Jobs Fair

12:30-14:00 LUNCH BREAK

LEMM SESSION II: Report by the EWG

Chair: Honourable Lindiwe Zulu, Minister of Social Development

Minister Zulu: Dear Ministers, I am honoured to take over from my colleague to conduct this afternoon's session.

14:00-14:30 Report by the Chair of the EWG

Minister Zulu: Under the leadership of Director General Mr Lamati as the Chair of the BRICS Employment Working Group, senior officials and technical experts held numerous meetings in Johannesburg, Port Alfred, Geneva and Durban, which served as the necessary building blocks for the Ministerial Declaration as well as to facilitate the discussions by the Ministers today and tomorrow. The Chair of the BEWG will provide a report on the work that was done up until this point. There will be no interventions for this item.

Minister Zulu: I invite DG Lamati to take the floor.

Mr Lamati speaks.

Minister Zulu: Thank you, Mr. Director General.

LEMM SESSION III: Labour Rights
Chair Honourable Lindiwe Zulu, Minister of Social Development

Minister Zulu: Labour rights encompass the fundamental principles and protections that ensure the dignity, safety, and fair treatment of workers in the employment relationship. They are a cornerstone of social justice, advocating for equitable and respectful treatment of employees across various industries and sectors. They not only safeguard workers' well-being but also contribute to the development of sustainable and thriving economies by fostering a harmonious and productive workforce. Upholding labour rights is essential for building a just and inclusive society that values the contributions of workers and recognises their inherent worth.

14:30-14:40 Presentation by the ILO on the theme: Ensuring Labour Rights at Work

Minister Zulu: Without much further ado, we will now delve into discussions on Labour Rights, with a presentation by Mr Hougbo, ILO DG, on Ensuring Labour Rights at Work.

Minister Zulu: Over to you, Sir.

Mr Hougbo speaks.

Minister Zulu: Thank you, Mr Hougbo.

Minister Zulu: I now invite your comments in alphabetical order, starting with the Federal Republic of Brazil. Then we will take statements from Guest Countries in the sequence that appears before you.

Minister Zulu: (Calls the BRICS Ministers to speak and thanks them for their contributions)

- Federative Republic of Brazil
- People's Republic of China
- Republic of India
- Russian Federation
- Republic of South Africa <<**Minister Nxesi speaks for South Africa**>>

Minister Zulu: (Calls the Guest Ministers to speak and thanks them for their contributions)

- Republic of Cuba
- Kingdom of Lesotho
- Republic of Malawi
- Republic of Namibia
- Republic of Zimbabwe

Minister Zulu: The Honourable Ministers' responses from BRICS Member Countries and Guest Countries provided valuable perspectives on this critical topic.

Minister Zulu: Ladies and Gentlemen, we now will conclude our official proceedings for the day, leaving you with ample time to prepare for the evening's festivities.

Minister Zulu: Please join us at Dukkah Restaurant & Bar, 59 Florida Rd, Durban, for a dinner hosted by the Host Minister. DG Lamati, please come forward to provide the logistical details regarding how the Honourable Ministers and delegates will reach the venue.

Day 2: Friday, 29 September 2023

09:00-09:10 Opening Remarks by Minister Nxesi

LEMM SESSION IV: Social Protection

Chair: Honourable Thembelani W Nxesi, Minister of Employment and Labour

09:10-09:35 Presentation on Social Protection by the ILO and ISSA

Minister Nxesi: Social protection encompasses a range of benefits, such as social insurance, welfare, healthcare, and unemployment assistance, aiming to provide a safety net for those facing hardships or crises. Social protection is not just about addressing poverty. But it is a fundamental human right that promotes dignity, resilience and inclusion. By ensuring that people have access to essential services and financial support when needed, social protection contributes to reducing inequality, enhancing economic stability and fostering social cohesion within societies. It plays a vital role in promoting well-being and empowering individuals and families to lead more secure and fulfilling lives.

Minister Nxesi: We will now gain insights from Mr Marcelo Caetano, Secretary General of ISSA and Ms Laura Thompson, Assistant DG for External & Corporate Relations of ILO.

Mr Caetano and Ms Thompson speak.

Minister Nxesi: Thank you ILO and ISSA for the excellent presentations.

09:35-10:45 Responses BRICS Member Countries

Minister Nxesi: I now invite your comments in alphabetical order, starting with the Federal Republic of Brazil. Then we will take statements from Guest Countries in the sequence that appears before you.

Minister Nxesi: (Calls the BRICS Ministers to speak and thanks them for their contributions)

- Federative Republic of Brazil
- People's Republic of China
- Republic of India
- Russian Federation
- Republic of South Africa <<Minister Zulu speaks for South Africa>>

Minister Nxesi: (Calls the Guest Ministers to speak and thanks them for their contributions)

- Republic of Cuba
- Kingdom of Lesotho
- Republic of Malawi
- Republic of Namibia
- Republic of Zimbabwe

Minister Nxesi: The Honourable Ministers' responses from BRICS Member Countries and Guest Countries provided valuable perspectives on this critical topic.

Minister Nxesi: Ladies and Gentlemen, we will now conclude this session. Minister Zulu and I will now swap places, Honourable Minister please proceed with the next session.

LEMM SESSION VI: Jobs & Economic Growth
Chair: Honourable Lindiwe Zulu, Minister of Social Development

Minister Zulu: Good morning everyone. This session touches on the most important aspect that interconnects labour rights, social security, sustainable businesses and the welfare of our people. Therefore, this session focuses on jobs and economic growth and is subdivided into two areas. We shall begin with a presentation by the ILO on Closing the Skills Gap in the Informal Economy through Innovation and Enhanced Productivity and then proceed to the proposal for the establishment of a BRICS-wide Productivity Ecosystem Platform.

Minister Zulu: In the context of labour and employment, the interplay between jobs and economic growth hinges on the concept of productivity and the synergy between various actors. A productive workforce is the bedrock of economic prosperity, as it drives innovation, efficiency, and competitiveness. To nurture and harness this productivity, a well-structured productivity ecosystem is essential. This ecosystem involves collaboration among businesses, educational institutions, government agencies, and workers themselves to foster skill development, entrepreneurship and technological advancement.

10:45-12:00 Closing the Skills Gap in the Informal Economy through Innovation and Enhanced Productivity

Minister Zulu: Let me allow Ms Laura Thompson, Assistant Director General for External & Corporate Relations of ILO, to share insights on this topic and will then invite all Ministers to make inputs.

Ms Thompson speaks.

Minister Zulu: Thank you, Ms Thompson.

Minister Zulu: Responses from BRICS Member Countries and Guest Countries will further enrich our understanding. I now invite your comments in alphabetical order, starting with the Federal Republic of Brazil. Then we will take statements from Guest Countries in the sequence that appears before you.

Minister Zulu: (Calls the BRICS Ministers to speak and thanks them for their contributions)

- Federative Republic of Brazil
- People's Republic of China
- Republic of India
- Russian Federation
- Republic of South Africa <<Minister Nxesi speaks for South Africa>>

Minister Zulu: (Calls the Guest Ministers to speak and thanks them for their contributions)

- Republic of Cuba
- Kingdom of Lesotho
- Republic of Malawi
- Republic of Namibia
- Republic of Zimbabwe

Minister Zulu: The Honourable Ministers' responses from BRICS Member Countries and Guest Countries provided valuable views on this important matter.

Minister Zulu: We will pause for a tea break before continuing with discussions on the BRICS Productivity Ecosystem Platform. Please enjoy the break!

12:00-12:30 TEA BREAK

Minister Zulu: Please welcome back from a well-deserved leg stretch. We will

12:30-12:50 BRICS Productivity Ecosystem Platform by Dr Joni Musabayana, ILO

Minister Zulu: Dr Joni Musabayana of the ILO Office in Pretoria will make a presentation on the BRICS Productivity Ecosystem Platform.

Dr Musabayana speaks.

Minister Zulu: Thank you, Dr Joni Musabayana. I now invite comments from the BRICS Ministers only in alphabetical order, we shall start with the Federal Republic of Brazil.

Minister Zulu: (Calls the BRICS Ministers to speak and thanks them for their contributions)

- Federative Republic of Brazil
- People's Republic of China
- Republic of India
- Russian Federation
- Republic of South Africa <<Minister Nxesi speaks for South Africa>>

Minister Zulu: (Calls the Guest Ministers to speak and thanks them for their contributions)

- Republic of Cuba
- Kingdom of Lesotho
- Republic of Malawi
- Republic of Namibia
- Republic of Zimbabwe

Minister Zulu: Thank you Honourable Ministers for the support of the idea of a BRICS Productivity Ecosystem Platform. As BRICS Partners we shall work on the modalities and report to the Ministers on the developments.

13:25-13:40 Presentation of the Draft Declaration and a Joint Statement of Labour & Employment Ministers by Mr Lamati, Director General

Minister Zulu: Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen. We are urging towards the end of this Ninth BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting under the South African Presidency. And, it is the norm and practice of the BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers to consider the text of a Draft Declaration as recommended by the EWG. The adoption of the Declaration will be by acclamation unless the Honourable Ministers feel there is a need to make any remarks. In addition, there is a Statement of Labour and Employment Ministers.

Minister Zulu: I will invite Mr Lamati, Director General to present the most important elements of the draft text that the technical experts have worked on early in the week.

Mr Lamati speaks.

Minister Zulu: Thank you, DG Lamati. Distinguished Honourable Ministers, may I kindly invite you to raise your flags in a symbolic gesture of adopting the eThekweni Declaration.

Minister Zulu: (Invites the meeting to applaud the adoption of the eThekweni Declaration.)

Minister Zulu: The Joint Statement of Labour & Employment Ministers is also duly noted.

13:45-13:50 Statement of the Next Host Country of the LEMM

Minister Zulu: The Russian Federation will assume the Presidency of BRICS in 2024. We will also hear the statement from the Next Host Country. We invite Honourable Minister Kotiakov to take the floor.

Honourable Minister Kotiakov speaks.

Minister Zulu: Thank you, Honourable Minister Kotiakov.

Minister Zulu: Ladies and Gentlemen, my journey as the co-chair of this Ninth BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting now comes to an end as Minister Nxesi takes over to closing remarks and this will effectively mark the adjournment of our meeting. Over to you Minister Nxesi.

13:50-13:55 Closing remarks by the Hon. Nxesi, Minister of Employment and Labour

Minister Nxesi speaks.

Adjournment of the Meeting.