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UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE CHINESE LABOR MARKET: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

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Currently, unemployment problems are among the most urgent in the country. Unemployment indicates that, first, public resources are not used to their full potential and, second, a part of the population has very low monetary incomes. Unemployment leads to an aggravation of social problems and social tension, causes an increase in crime, and has negative economic and social consequences. Maintaining a certain level of employment is a difficult task for any government in any country. The study of the problems of employment and unemployment contributes to the identification of the causes of unemployment, the development of an effective employment policy.

In the context of the development of crisis phenomena in the economy, not only the previously existing problems of employment of the population have become more acute, but also new ones have appeared, related to changes in the needs of enterprises for labor, the status of the employee himself, the appearance of real and hidden unemployment, etc.

The official surveyed unemployment rate for urban workers in China rose to historic levels in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, touching a nearly two-decade high of 6.2 per cent in February. Since then, the figure has gradually retreated to near pre-pandemic levels. In April 2021, the surveyed jobless rate stood at 5.1 per cent from 5.3 per cent in March. Beijing has set a target of creating over 11 million new urban jobs in 2021 and a surveyed urban unemployment rate of 5.5 per cent. China's official jobless indicators are released on a monthly or quarterly basis, but because they only cover part of the job market, it is hard to gauge the real state of China's unemployment situation. For the whole of 2020, China's surveyed jobless rate was 4.7 per cent compared with 5.5 per cent the previous year [1, 2].

In order to mitigate the effects of COVID-19, governments and other key stakeholders, including the private sector, need coordinated, timely, and sustained broad-based action.

Measures should build on and strengthen existing institutions while guiding workers and businesses on a sustainable development path for a more efficient and sustainable recovery. Policy measures should address the following objectives: expanding the scope and coverage of the social safety net; adoption of measures to preserve employment; continuation of business activities (especially micro, small and medium-sized enterprises); prevention of increasing vulnerability through gender-sensitive, inclusive, accessible and targeted measures based on social dialogue etc.

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LABOR MOBILITY IN CHINA: CHALLENGES AND TRENDS IN THE CONTEXT OF DIGITALIZATION

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Free trade, free capital flows, and free labor mobility are the ultimate goals of globalization. Among these, free labor mobility is the most difficult because of culture, politics, and sovereignty.

Trends in labor migration are usually determined largely by economic conditions and political orientation in destination countries. This was the case in 2019, where labor migration in China continued to respond to destination country labor demand and policy changes. In 2020, however, the usual drivers of migration were disrupted by the global pandemic caused by the new coronavirus disease – COVID-19. The pandemic has affected most migration flows and corridors around the world, resulting in reduced migration flows. In China, normally very busy migration corridors suddenly closed for several months. Origin and destination countries applied strict entry and/or exit regulations to control the pandemic within their borders [1].

Deployment and outflows of migrant workers fell across the region, particularly during the first months of the pandemic. At the same time, in response to the spread of the virus, economic restrictions, including lockdowns, were implemented in host countries, which led to the return of many migrant workers to their home countries, including those whose jobs disappeared.

The economy of the People's Republic of China is expected to recover fully in 2021. The PRC's growth, forecast at 1.8 % in 2020, is expected to rise to 8 % in 2021. For most Asian countries, full recovery is expected in 2021, although the pandemic-related contractions amount to 1 year or more of lost growth [2].

To address the impact of these significant changes, policies in the region will have to adapt. Measures must be taken to ensure the rights of migrant workers in the workplace and in the host country, and policies must be developed for countries of origin to support migrant workers in difficult situations, repatriate those who need to return, and assist them upon their return in these difficult circumstances becomes urgent.