

13. The greater the adaptability of our economies, the greater the likelihood that economic growth will result in more employment. We therefore strongly support the elimination of structural rigidities in labour, capital and product markets, the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation, investment in human capital, reform of the tax/benefit systems to strengthen economic incentives and encourage employment, and development of an innovative and knowledge-based society.

14. We also endorse the G8 Labour Ministers' conclusions at their conference in Washington last February, namely to provide social safety nets that support employment, to prevent long-term unemployment by early action, to facilitate job search by offering labour market information and employment services, to promote lifelong learning and new forms of work organization, to ensure equal access to the labour market for all workers, including job entrants and older workers, and to take forward the social dialogue.

IV. Investing in People

15. Basic education, vocational training, academic qualifications, lifelong upgrading of skills and knowledge for the labour market, and support for the development of innovative thinking are essential to shape economic and technical progress as we move towards a knowledge-based society. They also enrich individuals and foster civic responsibility and social inclusion.

16. In support of these goals, we agree to pursue the aims and ambitions set out in the Cologne Charter.

17. Adaptability, employability and the management of change will be the primary challenges for our societies in the coming century. Mobility between jobs, cultures and communities will be essential. And the passport to mobility will be education and lifelong learning for everyone.

18. To this end, we support an increase in exchanges of teachers, administrators and students among the nations of the Eight and with other nations and invite our experts to identify the main obstacles to increased exchanges and to come forward with appropriate proposals before the next Summit. We call upon the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to study how different countries are attempting to raise education standards, for example by looking at best practices in the recruitment, training, compensation and accountability of the teaching profession internationally. We commit ourselves to explore jointly ways to work together and through international institutions to help our own countries as well as developing nations use technology to address learning and development needs, for example, through distance learning.

V. Strengthening Social Safeguards

19. As the process of globalization has gained momentum, it has brought with it important social and economic progress. At the same time, rapid change and integration have left some individuals and groups feeling unable to keep up and has resulted in some dislocation, particularly in developing countries. We therefore need to take steps to strengthen the institutional and social infrastructure that can give globalization a "human face" and ensure increasing, widely shared prosperity.

20. Social security policies, including social safety nets, must be strong enough to encourage and enable individuals to embrace global change and liberalization and to improve their chances on the labour market, while enhancing social cohesion. We recognize that faced with financial constraints, it is vital to strike a sustainable balance between social support programs and greater personal responsibility and initiative.