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Topic: Achieving Sustainable Development Goals 8 and 9

**Position Paper**

Belarus is a former USSR country. The country, which gained its independence in 1991, is located in northern Europe, while Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Russia and Ukraine form the neighboring countries of Belarus. Alexander Lukashenko has been the leader of Belarus since 1994, that is, the longest-serving president in Europe. From the dissolution of the Soviet Union to 1994, the closure of many factories and businesses, the increase in unemployment and the rise in inflation created a serious economic collapse in the country. In these conditions, rebellion movements started against the first government that separated the country from the Soviets. Support for Lukashenko, who promised that the old Soviet system would be modernized and re-applied, gradually increased. The new Belarusian constitution, enacted in 1994, paved the way for the first democratic presidential elections in July. Lukashenko won the Belarusian presidential election on July 10, 1994 by overwhelming majority. The Republic of Belarus is an export-oriented country with a developed service sector and agriculture.

The largest share of Belarus' economic growth belongs to the industrial sector. Approximately one third of the national income is provided by the industrial sector. There are 200 different industrial branches operating in the country. From the beginning of the 90s until the XXI century, Belarus made a gradual transition from the Soviet economy to the market economy. And in this process, the main priority has been to prevent shock reforms from causing shock effects on the people and to prevent the negative effects of the country's production potential. Currently, Belarus resolutely pursues the model of a market economy with state control in certain areas. Thanks to this approach, annual economic growth has been realized at the rate of 5.8% -11.4% since the 2000s. It consistently maintains its leadership position in the chemical and petrochemical, information and communication technologies, automotive and agricultural machinery, agriculture and light industry markets in the CIS region. It surpasses all CIS countries in terms of information technology service. It has shown significant developments in the field of high technology, and especially in the production of optics, laser devices and automatic control systems.

In line with the 8th and 9th goal, we are ready to takes steps on a policy in which decent working conditions are consolidated, employees receive equal wages for equal labor regardless if they are women, men or disabled individuals, additionaly supporting their healthcare, transportation, productivity and sociality, creating workplaces where mobbing is eliminated and the rights of the employees are guaranteed by law. We aim to ensure that working conditions are decent by frequent inspections of workplaces and to eradicate child labor and modern slavery. Growing our economy by supporting local institutions and industrialization and innovating infrastructures at regular intervals are the steps we will certainly take in line with these goals. We believe that we can achieve these goals if we cooperate with other countries too.

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