



## **The Hague Declaration on the Promotion of Workplace Compliance by Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions**

*We, representatives from Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (ESC-SIs), participating in the international conference on “Promoting Workplace Compliance including in Global Supply Chains: The role of Economic and Social Councils and similar social dialogue institutions”, hosted by the AICESIS-ILO-The Economic and Social Council of the Netherlands on 29-30 October 2015 in The Hague;*

*Recalling the Constitution of the ILO, which states that lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice;*

*Reiterating the fundamental principles on which the ILO was founded as described by the Declaration of Philadelphia<sup>1</sup> of 1944: "*

- a) labour is not a commodity;*
- b) freedom of expression and of association are essential to sustained progress;*
- c) poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere;*
- d) the war against want requires to be carried on with unrelenting vigour within each nation, and by continuous and concerted international effort in which the representatives of workers and employers, enjoying equal status with those of governments, join with them in free discussion and democratic decision with a view to the promotion of the common welfare."*

*Recalling the ILO Declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work of 1998, promoting principles and rights at work in four categories*

- 1) freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining**
- 2) the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour**

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<sup>1</sup> Declaration concerning the Aims and Purposes of the International Labour Organisation, adopted at the 26th session of the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation, Philadelphia, 10 May 1944

- 3) *the abolition of the worst forms of child labour*
- 4) *the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation*

*Considering that the Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions are established to advise the Executive authority/government and/or parliament on how best to ensure both complementarity and coherence between economic requirements and social needs and are determined to advance decent work and social justice for all.*

**In recognizing the above principles and rights, we affirm that:**

Workplace compliance is respect of international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work, the enforcement of national legislations, the creation of an environment and culture of respect for the rule of law and international standards in preventing labour law violations through various mechanisms, including campaigns and the promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility.

Workplace compliance is the concrete result that workers, employers and governments seek to achieve together through a set of strategies, actions and policies to improve working conditions, productivity, competitiveness, and social development, whilst considering the diverse development levels of all countries.

The development of decent work standards includes laws, regulations and standards in diverse areas such as freedom of association, collective bargaining, occupational safety and health (OSH), wages, agreed work arrangements, working time (including overtime), discrimination and harassment, maternity protection, employment contracts and paid leave.

The ESCs and SIs should give serious consideration to the promotion of work place compliance including in Global Supply Chains in their working agendas, consultation processes and advocate for it to become a priority in national development agendas.

The common goals of the ILO and the AICESIS were highlighted in the joint cooperation agreement concluded in 2012, the Hague Declaration on workplace compliance aims at giving effect to the agreement and mobilizing ESC-SIs on this strategic issue.

The importance of those best practices, such as the Better Work Programme, the Bangladesh Accord, International Framework Agreements, Compliance Plus (Sri Lanka) and international CSR Covenants at sectoral level are recognized in the promotion of transparency and accountability.

**We are determined to:**

Reinforce actions at the national level and with regard to different relevant players (Government, Parliament, representative organizations of employers and workers as well as other appropriate representative organizations of persons and groups concerned) in order to promote the recognition of the strategic importance of workplace compliance for both workers and enterprises and for society as a whole;

**We the ESC-SIs propose the following action:**

*As important platforms for both tripartite and enlarged consultations and deliberations on economic and social policies and for building national consensus, we the ESC-SIs will use our best endeavors to:*

- Further engage ourselves in the national debate about promoting workplace compliance including in global supply chains and enhance our competencies and role as forums for concertation on fundamental principles and rights at work;
- Mobilize all available resources (human, technical and financial) towards addressing the issue of workplace compliance including, if necessary, the creation of experts committees or working groups devoted to it, in accordance with the constitution of the ESCs-SIs;
- Enhance the role and the capacity of our members, especially the social partners, on work place compliance;
- Cooperate with:
  - Enforcement agencies, especially labour inspectorates, and other relevant institutions in order to activate mutually beneficial relations with them;
  - National and international organisations of employers and workers to strengthen their role and capacity to promote workplace compliance including in global supply chains.
- Facilitate discussions between the public administration and the social partners concerning voluntary compliance mechanisms and their impact in promoting work place compliance;
- Promote the implementation of international guidelines, such as the OECD guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the UN guiding principles on business and human rights and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of principles concerning multinational enterprises and social policy.
- Give due consideration to the guidance given by relevant ILO instruments in the area of Social Dialogue, especially Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144) / Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No.81) / Protocol of 1995 to the Labour Inspection Convention / Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129).

**We as members of the AICESIS propose the following action:**

- Facilitate exchanges of information, experiences and good practices between individual ESC-SIs concerning their contributions to national actions promoting workplace compliance;

- Undertake follow-up actions to the Hague Declaration , which will be presented at our General Assembly meeting in 2016 including specific initiatives aiming at reinforcing ESC-SIs' capacities to support the implementation of the Hague Declaration at country level.
- Send all the relevant documents and reports to the Secretariat General of the AICESIS on the work of ESC-SIs in promoting workplace compliance.

**We request the ILO, as a strategic partner, to consider the following action:**

- Promote exchange of experience amongst tripartite constituents with the support of broad platforms, including ESCs-SIs, in the formulation and implementation of integrated workplace compliance strategies, including in global supply chains;
- Analyse the trends on workplace compliance in the world, including in global supply chains, and provide policy tools and training to support national processes of social dialogue;
- Offer expertise to help ESCs-SIs to formulate strategies that aim at strengthening capacities of their members, especially the social partners, on workplace compliance.

*The Hague, 30 October 2015*