



## Governing Body

322nd Session, Geneva, 30 October–13 November 2014

GB.322/INS/13/2

Institutional Section

INS

Date: 18 September 2014

Original: English

THIRTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

## Report of the Director-General

### Second Supplementary Report: Follow-up to the centenary initiatives

#### Purpose of the document

The document reports on progress with respect to the implementation of the centenary initiatives presented in the Director-General's Report to the 102nd Session (2013) of the International Labour Conference, as decided by the 319th Session of the Governing Body. See draft decision in paragraph 26.

**Relevant strategic objective:** All.

**Policy implications:** None.

**Legal implications:** None.

**Financial implications:** Yes.

**Follow-up action required:** Action to implement the initiatives in light of the guidance provided by the Governing Body.

**Author unit:** Office of the Director-General (CABINET).

**Related documents:** GB.321/INS/6; GB.322/INS/2; GB.322/PFA/1; GB.322/INS/3; GB.322/INS/5; GB.322/INS/6; GB.322/WP/GBC/1.

## Introduction

1. At its 319th Session (October 2013) the Governing Body discussed the seven centenary initiatives suggested by the Director-General in his Report to the 102nd Session (2013) of the International Labour Conference (ILC). The Governing Body instructed the Director-General to implement all of the initiatives in the light of the guidance provided and to provide progress reports annually to its October–November session and additionally as required. Discussion also highlighted the need for greater clarity on how the initiatives would relate to other programming instruments.
2. For that reason, this document should be considered in conjunction with the draft transitional strategic plan for 2016–17 and preview of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2016–17.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the implementation of a number of individual initiatives is reflected wholly or partially in other documents as indicated below. In this context, the document recalls and summarizes work already under way in respect of the governance, standards, enterprises and end to poverty initiatives, and sets out possible frameworks for the implementation of the green, women at work and future of work initiatives, on which the further guidance of the Governing Body will be essential.

## The governance initiative

3. This initiative has the objective of the completion of the reform and evaluation of the ILO's governance structures and instruments, and has four components:
  - the now completed reform of the Governing Body, which was the subject of evaluation at the 320th Session of the Governing Body,<sup>2</sup> and which will be further evaluated at this 322nd Session;
  - the reform of the ILC, which will be advanced by the new arrangements agreed for trial at the 104th Session (2015), including a session of two weeks' duration;<sup>3</sup>
  - the evaluation of the impact of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, which will be on the agenda of the 105th Session (2016) of the ILC;
  - reform of the Regional Meetings, which will begin in 2015.
4. Issues concerning the ILC, the Governing Body and Regional Meetings fall within the terms of reference of the Working Party on the Functioning of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference, whose report is before the Governing Body, as is an initial document on preparations for the evaluation of the impact of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization by the 105th Session of the ILC (2016).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> GB.322/PFA/1.

<sup>2</sup> GB.320/WP/GBC/2.

<sup>3</sup> GB.322/WP/GBC/1.

<sup>4</sup> GB.322/INS/3.

## The standards initiative

5. This initiative has the objective of establishing full tripartite consensus on the functioning of an authoritative standards supervisory mechanism and enhancing the relevance of international labour standards through a standards review mechanism, in line with the provision of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization that the Organization must “promote the ILO’s standard-setting policy as a cornerstone of ILO activities by enhancing its relevance to the world of work, and ensure the role of standards as a useful means of achieving the constitutional objectives of the Organization”. These matters remain the subject of intensive consultation and complex discussion in the Governing Body which will continue at its current session.<sup>5</sup>

## The enterprises initiative

6. This initiative has the objective of realizing fully the potential of the ILO to engage with enterprises to achieve the goals of the Organization. Following extensive discussions, the Governing Body agreed at its 321st Session (June 2014) the modalities of this wider ILO engagement with the private sector and that a progress report on implementation should be presented to it at its 326th Session (March 2016).

## The end to poverty initiative

7. The objective of this initiative is to bring together all relevant areas of ILO action in order to maximize the Organization’s contribution to ending world poverty, in the light of its constitutional mandate and of recognition that decent work opportunities offer key paths out of poverty.
8. A significant part of the ILO’s work already contributes to the fight against poverty and will do all the more so with emphasis placed in the current programme and budget on activities for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in the world of work. That focus is reflected in the areas of critical importance (ACIs) on the informal economy, the rural economy, social protection floors and unacceptable forms of work, as well as in ILO participation in major recent activities such as the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (Samoa, 1–4 September 2014) and the continuing African Union Ouagadougou +10 process on “Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development”.
9. The added value of the initiative is to ensure the coordination of these various areas of work in a coherent strategy with clearly defined, concrete goals. An important opportunity to do this, and to align the ILO’s anti-poverty contribution with the overall efforts of the international community, is provided by the process of elaboration of the United Nations post-2015 development agenda, and the sustainable development goals that it will contain. It is already clear that the overarching objective of the development agenda is to be the elimination of extreme poverty. The Governing Body mandated the Director-General to work to have decent work and social protection included as self-standing goals. Progress in the process of adopting the development agenda is reported to this session of the Governing Body.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> GB.322/INS/5.

<sup>6</sup> GB.322/INS/6.

10. The United Nations General Assembly will adopt the post-2015 development agenda in September 2015. After that, at its 325th Session (November 2015) the Governing Body will be in a position to assess the outcome, and decide how the end of poverty initiative should be used to define the ILO's contribution to the implementation of the development agenda.

## The green initiative

11. The objective of this initiative is to equip the ILO to assume fully its role in facilitating transition to a low-carbon sustainable development path through the integration of a practical decent work dimension.
12. To date, implementation has centred on the strategic action plan resulting from the 2013 ILC discussion on sustainable development, decent work and green jobs, which has been discussed at three successive sessions of the Governing Body.
13. At its 319th Session, the Governing Body requested the Director-General to allocate the required resources for effective implementation of the strategic action plan and, accordingly, the preview of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2016–17 and the draft transitional strategic plan for 2016–17 now before it include “just transition to a greener economy” as a cross-cutting issue. This reflects the four means of action in the 2013 Conference conclusions: engagement at global and regional levels; research and knowledge development, management and dissemination; country-level action; and capacity building. There is potential to mobilize additional technical cooperation in these areas in view of their budgetary implications.
14. As it becomes further recognized that climate change and related environmental issues, and policy responses to them, will impact increasingly on enterprises and labour markets, it will be incumbent on the ILO to ensure that the green initiative effectively addresses all relevant areas of ILO activity. The commitment to conclude a binding agreement at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris in 2015 means that the initiative will need to take into account the new conditions created by its outcomes and the opportunities they generate. In preparation for this, it would appear advantageous for the ILO to strengthen its institutional engagement with the UNFCCC secretariat.
15. With regard to the other three elements in the strategic action plan, in order for the ILO to make a significant contribution it is proposed that enhanced components include:
  - (1) an intensified programme of research and knowledge-sharing, including the publication of high-profile reports on green jobs, both on a global basis and with regard to defined issues, such as greening workplaces and just transition in specific industries;
  - (2) assistance to constituents in a number of countries on a pilot basis to promote the more in-depth application of a just transition framework;
  - (3) engagement in enhanced partnerships on climate change, including work with social partners to tackle sustainability issues in specific areas, such as textiles or e-waste.

## The women at work initiative

16. The objective of this initiative is to undertake a major stocktake of the status and conditions of women in the world of work, with a view to identifying innovative action that could give new impetus to the ILO's work to fulfil its constitutional mandate to promote full and lasting gender equality and non-discrimination.
17. The ILO has a long record of achievement in the field of gender equality and non-discrimination, with the fundamental rights Conventions concerned having been ratified by the great majority of member States. Nevertheless, women remain severely disadvantaged at work in several respects, with little evidence of sustained and irreversible movement towards full equality. Overall, women's labour market participation rates are 26 percentage points lower than those of men; the gender pay gap remains at an average of some 20 per cent; women continue to suffer from segregation in low-quality and undervalued jobs and to be over-represented in informal and non-standard forms of work, as well as unpaid family labour.
18. The initiative should improve understanding of the underlying causes of persistent inequality and what is required to overcome them, including by harnessing the opportunities offered by the processes of rapid change in the world of work. It will benefit from the significantly increased political attention now being given in many member States and internationally to the participation and place of women in labour markets. These issues are now centre stage in discussions on the United Nations post-2015 development agenda, at the G20, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and in the work by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) for the Beijing +20 process, amid clear recognition that higher women's participation in inclusive and fair labour markets is a prerequisite of growth and development.
19. It is therefore proposed that with a view to developing a comprehensive and strategic approach towards 2019, the initiative be pursued along three tracks:
  - (1) policy-oriented research as the basis of an initial consideration of the situation of women at work, and the obstacles to equality and empowerment. This would include forging links with leading academics and institutions with expertise in this field, as a basis for the selection of a limited number of thematic areas for rigorous examination;
  - (2) consultations with constituents and relevant stakeholders with a view to identifying obstacles to equality and the innovative action needed to overcome them. This might initially involve informal as well as formal tripartite contacts, resulting in a major tripartite forum on gender equality;
  - (3) advocacy and support to constituents in the implementation of the action identified as key to the attainment of gender equality.

## The future of work initiative

20. The objective of this initiative is to enable a far-reaching reflection on the major trends impacting on the world of work, what their implications are for the way work is organized and performed in the future, and what this means for the ILO in the pursuit of its social justice mandate in its second century of existence.
21. This initiative generated particularly strong interest from constituents at the 102nd Session (2013) of the ILC and in the Governing Body, and is recognized as responding to a real

need at a time of considerable uncertainty in the face of rapid changes in the world of work. Nevertheless, a number of important initial issues must be addressed if the initiative is to be successful.

22. While an exercise centred on the future of work appears particularly appropriate to mark the centenary of the ILO, the scope and level of ambition of the initiative need to be determined from the outset. In this regard, given the historic character of the occasion and the evident interest in the initiative, it would seem appropriate to make it the centrepiece of events to mark the centenary, including at the 108th Session (2019) of the ILC. In this way, the centenary would not be purely ceremonial in nature, but rooted firmly in substantive consideration of the future direction of the Organization's work. This scenario implies a high level of ambition, requiring considerable academic inputs and an appropriate organizational framework over the next five years.
23. In this context, the initiative would benefit from the involvement and contributions of the widest possible range of actors with interest in, and expertise on, the work issues. The ILO's tripartite constituency must stand at the core of the effort, but it must equally engage intellectuals, research institutions, civil society, individual personalities and others. Similarly, while the International Labour Office would need to be responsible for overall management of the initiative and for key inputs, it would not itself undertake the bulk of the substantive work in house. Rather, the initiative would entail, above all, harnessing and tapping into the high degree of relevant interest, work and knowledge that is present in universities and institutions around the world.
24. The initiative will need to be implemented within an agreed organizational framework which, in the light of guidance from the Governing Body, could include the following components:
  - (1) a limited number of broad thematic issues to be taken up by the initiative and which would provide a basic structure for its content. The views of the Governing Body on the identification of those themes would be essential, bearing in mind the need for the initiative to address issues with a longer time horizon and a higher degree of prospective vision than is typically the case for ILO technical work, but without becoming an exercise in speculative futurology;
  - (2) an initial phase of outreach to interested potential contributors outside the tripartite constituency and of mobilization of that tripartite constituency, with a view to generating a wide and participatory process of reflection;
  - (3) the subsequent establishment of a high-level advisory panel or commission to consider the outputs of the process of reflection and to draw on them for the publication of a centenary future of work report;
  - (4) the organization of future of work events in member States in the first half of 2019, culminating in that year's session of the ILC, which could devote a major part of its agenda to the consideration of the issues arising from the initiative, with the possibility of it adopting a Centenary Declaration.
25. In view of the significance of the substantive issues involved, and the institutional importance of the process outlined above, consideration could be given to the Director-General devoting his Report to the 104th Session (2015) of the ILC to the future of work initiative, with a view to obtaining the views of constituents on the broad themes to be addressed, on the most appropriate procedural roadmap for the initiative and on the concrete results to be expected at the 108th Session (2019) of the ILC.

**Draft decision**

**26. The Governing Body decides:**

- (a) to provide guidance to the Director-General with regard to the framework suggested in this report for the implementation of the green initiative and the women at work initiative;*
- (b) to indicate its views on the future of work initiative, in particular as concerns the thematic issues to be taken up by the initiative and which would provide its basic structure; and*
- (c) to consider the next annual report on progress regarding the centenary initiatives at its 325th Session (November 2015).*