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Institutional Section

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THIRD ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Matters arising out of the work of the 107th Session (2018) of the International Labour Conference

Follow-up to the resolution concerning effective ILO development cooperation in support of the Sustainable Development Goals

Purpose of the document

This paper proposes a plan of action (2019) to lay the groundwork for the preparation of the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy 2020–25, which should ensure comprehensive integration with the approach to the ILO Programme and Budget for 2020–21 and to the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2022–25, reflecting the outcomes of the centenary session of the International Labour Conference, as well as the evolving United Nations reforms.

In order to give effect to the conclusions concerning effective ILO development cooperation in support of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Governing Body requests the Director-General to take into account its guidance on the implementation of the proposed plan of action for the preparation of the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy 2020–25 (see draft decision in paragraph 32).

Relevant strategic objective: All.

Main relevant outcome/cross-cutting policy driver: All.

Policy implications: None.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: None.

Follow-up action required: Yes.

Author unit: Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV).

Related documents: Resolution and conclusions concerning effective ILO development cooperation in support of the Sustainable Development Goals, ILC, 107th Session, 2018; Report IV, ILC, 107th Session, 2018; GB.334/INS/4; GB.334/PFA/1.

I. Introduction

1. At its 107th Session (June 2018), the International Labour Conference (ILC) conducted a general discussion on effective ILO development cooperation in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopting a resolution and a set of conclusions.¹ This paper makes proposals to give effect to those conclusions through a plan of action that will lay the groundwork for the preparation of the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy for 2020–25. Development cooperation is integral to, as well as a key vehicle for, the implementation of the Programme and Budget for 2020–21 and in turn the Strategic Plan for 2022–25, which will reflect the outcomes of the centenary session of the ILC.
2. This paper should be read in conjunction with other papers before the Governing Body at its current session, including those on the United Nations (UN) reform,² and the preliminary overview of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2020–21.³

Conference discussion and conclusions

3. The Conference discussed four questions: (a) how ILO development cooperation could adapt to the new context and support constituents; (b) how the link between the ILO's added value and development cooperation can be strengthened; (c) how, within the UN reform process, ILO development cooperation can best support constituents in facilitating policy coherence and mainstreaming decent work in national development plans and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs); and (d) what are the roles of constituents and of the ILO in ensuring an optimal combination of partnerships and modalities for adequate funding of ILO development cooperation.
4. The conclusions include a set of guiding principles for future ILO development cooperation and address the implications of the current international development environment, including the SDGs, UN reform, the financing for development paradigm, partnerships, and the need for a programmatic approach. A roadmap with action points for the ILO, its tripartite constituents, and its development partners is also included to support future ILO development cooperation.
5. The Conference emphasized the importance of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization of 2008, agreeing that national needs and demands should guide the ILO's work while promoting a balanced approach to the promotion of decent work across its four strategic objectives. It reaffirmed ILO development cooperation as an integral part of ILO service delivery to its constituents at global, regional, national, and local levels, emphasizing that the Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) are for the ILO the primary vehicle for supporting countries in achieving decent work outcomes and the SDGs. The effective participation of the ILO and its constituents in the United Nations development system (UNDS) processes is key to ensuring the full integration of the DWCP into the UNDAF. For this reason it is critical that the ILO redoubles its efforts to help revitalize the institutions of

¹ [Report IV](#), ILC, 107th Session, 2018; [Provisional Record No. 7B\(Rev.\)](#), ILC, 107th Session, 2018; and [resolution and conclusions concerning effective ILO development cooperation in support of the Sustainable Development Goals](#), ILC, 107th Session, 2018.

² GB.334/INS/4.

³ GB.334/PFA/1.

social dialogue at all levels so that they remain relevant, effective, and fit for purpose, and contribute fully to the achievement of the SDGs.⁴

6. The Conference considered that both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and the financing for development paradigm require greater policy, programmatic and budgetary coherence within the ILO, with and between the constituents, in the UNDS, and between a broader spectrum of stakeholders, including international financial institutions, enterprises, development partners and other government ministries involved in the implementation of decent work policies and the SDGs.
7. A number of key principles to guide future ILO development cooperation were underscored: that such cooperation should “leave no one behind” and should create the conditions and enabling environments needed to ensure employment and income opportunities for all. The ILO Development Cooperation Strategy should maximize the development potential of the private sector by promoting an enabling environment for sustainable and resilient enterprises. A more programmatic approach to results and impact was required, together with a greater focus on strengthening institutional capacity in countries. Transparency and shared responsibility through social dialogue were regarded as principles that underpin all facets of development cooperation. In terms of partnerships, the ILO was to be guided by inclusiveness, innovation, and greater use of South–South and triangular cooperation (SSTC).

The changing context

8. These conclusions come at a crucial moment on the eve of the ILO’s centenary when the conceptual and strategic basis for its work will be reassessed drawing on the work being done in preparation for the centenary including through the Future of Work Initiative and with the guidance given by constituents. The conclusions set the task of determining how best to adapt ILO development cooperation in the changing context. They also come at a time when the UNDS is undergoing a profound reform to make it commensurate with the scope of the SDGs. The reform entails major changes in the way the UNDS will operate, especially at the national level.⁵ The Conference calls on the ILO to ensure that it is fit for purpose in a reformed UNDS, retaining its identity as a unique tripartite specialized agency, strengthening its advocacy, outreach and visibility in order to actively promote its comparative advantages, building on its normative role, tripartism, and social dialogue principles and practices.
9. The 2030 Agenda, the reforming UNDS and a transforming world of work hence provide the overarching context. The future Development Cooperation Strategy should effectively serve the needs of the constituents and be in full alignment with ILO’s overall programmatic frameworks and Strategic Plans. This is an opportunity for the ILO to further embed development cooperation in its overall work in response to the guidance and priorities set by the centenary session of the ILC in 2019. Regional meetings may also provide insights into how development cooperation, and in particular resource mobilization and partnerships, could work in specific regional and country settings.

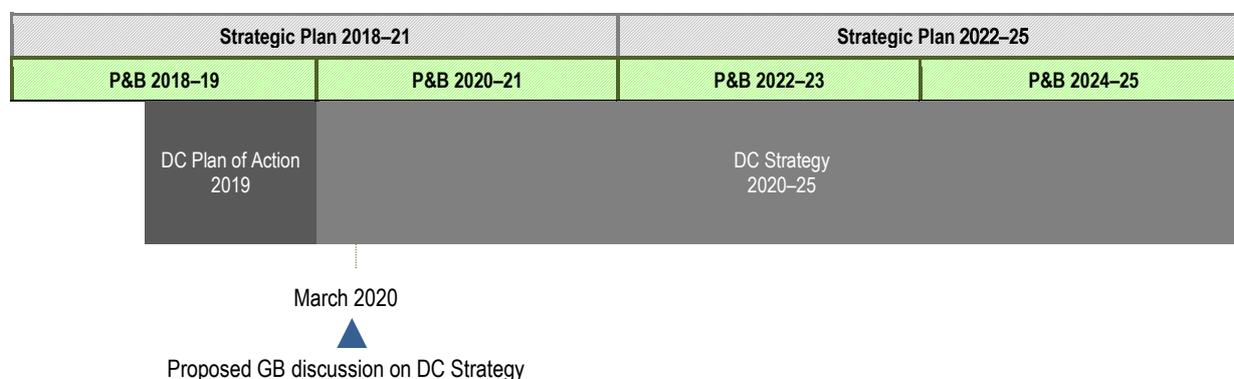
⁴ GB.334/INS/3/2.

⁵ GB.334/INS/4.

II. Plan of action 2019 – Towards the preparation of the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy, 2020–25

10. This plan of action lays the groundwork to prepare the new Development Cooperation Strategy. The ILO hence finds itself at present in a window between the close of its previous Development Cooperation Strategy (2015–18)⁶ and the adoption of a new programme and budget at the end of 2019, and of the next Strategic Plan for 2022–25. The chronology foreseen would be as follows: the plan of action will cover the preparatory work to be undertaken during 2019; the resulting ILO Development Cooperation Strategy for 2020–25 would preferably be submitted to the Governing Body, for example in March 2020, following the adoption of the Programme and Budget for 2020–21. Additionally, it would be necessary to remain agile and review the longer-term Development Cooperation Strategy after the 2020–21 biennium to ensure that it fully serves its constituents and supports the strategic focus of the ILO’s work, as defined in its new Strategic Plan.

Programmatic framework for ILO development cooperation



11. The plan of action gives effect to the roadmap contained in the conclusions by addressing four key areas to produce deliverables over the coming year, which are central to the future Development Cooperation Strategy and hence require adequate preparation: (1) provide services to constituents to ensure the achievement of national decent work outcomes; (2) deepen, expand and diversify partnerships and financing; (3) enhance efficiency, decent work results, and transparency; (4) promote policy coherence and ILO visibility. These are detailed below.

1. Area of focus – Provide services to constituents to support the achievement of national decent work outcomes

12. Development cooperation contributes to the achievement of targets set at the national level, in line with the main principle of national ownership underlying the Decent Work Agenda and the SDGs. Constituents hence need the organizational and institutional capacity to engage in key processes, to develop and to implement policies and programmes, including those prioritized in DWCPs and in UNDAFs. The Conference called on the ILO to strengthen the capacities of its constituents to effectively participate in achieving the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

⁶ GB.329/POL/5.

13. Action in this area would be centred on strengthening constituents' organizational and institutional capacities that enable them to fully play their role as the legitimate and representative voices of employers and workers – the key actors in the real economy – in pursuit of national decent work outcomes and SDGs. Social dialogue and effective tripartite participation in national strategic development processes, in Common Country Assessments and in DWCPs as integral parts of UNDAFs, will be essential.
14. ILO guidance on capacity development for constituents should hence be updated to reflect current capacity development approaches as well as the findings of the high-level evaluation of capacity development.⁷ The updated guidance could inform the development of an ILO capacity development strategy.
15. It is crucial to ensure that decent work is mainstreamed in national development strategies through the effective participation of constituents and tripartite social dialogue. Such strategies could be assessed in UN country analyses as the basis for the development of UNDAFs that adequately reflect DWCP priorities, which would in turn be supported by ILO development cooperation.
16. Of particular relevance here is the pilot initiative to develop a new generation of DWCPs that the ILO is implementing in four countries in 2018 and 2019, which will inform future decisions on improved processes and methodologies to ensure that DWCPs are effective vehicles for achieving decent work results in the context of the 2030 Agenda and aligned with the UNDAFs.⁸
17. Constituents' capacity to effectively engage with stakeholders and partners is key in this respect. Experience with the DWCP tripartite governance mechanisms would be further analysed to provide additional insights into good practices in social dialogue and into how the four strategic objectives have been effectively included and promoted through DWCPs and UNDAFs.
18. This involves the promotion of tripartism and the participation of the social partners in national strategies pursuing the 2030 Agenda, especially Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth and other relevant SDGs.⁹ It is necessary to demonstrate the ILO's added value deriving from its normative action, social dialogue, and tripartism, and to promote an integrated and balanced approach to the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda, including through continued ILO participation in the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) strategic result teams related to SDG implementation and UNDAFs.

Deliverables for 2019

- Identify and assess experience of new and existing DWCPs with respect to how they promote the decent work agenda and successfully align with UNDAFs through effective tripartite participation and social dialogue processes.

⁷ GB.334/PFA/7.

⁸ GB.334/PFA/1.

⁹ [Resolution concerning the second recurrent discussion on social dialogue and tripartism](#), ILC, 107th Session, 2018.

- Strengthen, where feasible the DWCPs, including the pilot DWCPs on their ability to effectively influence UNDAFs and mainstream decent work priorities.
- Promote awareness of such good practices among relevant UN system groups, including the UNSDG result groups.
- In close cooperation with the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin (ITC–ILO), continue to offer capacity development opportunities and tools for constituents and ILO staff on achieving the SDGs through the promotion of the decent work agenda and the role of the ILO in a reformed UN.
- Update and promote existing ILO guidance on capacity development for constituents, including on needs- and demand-driven approaches.

2. Area of focus – Deepen, expand and diversify partnerships and financing

19. The 2030 Agenda implies massive resource mobilization: a variety of sources – national, international, public and private finance – need to be mobilized to achieve the goals, since official development assistance (ODA) alone will not suffice to achieve the SDGs by 2030. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda sets out an overarching financing framework for global development efforts, which includes improved domestic resource mobilization, the alignment of private financing with sustainable development, and a renewed commitment to both concessional and non-concessional international cooperation targets. It is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda and promotes a shift from development funding to financing the achievement of development objectives at the country level, including by aligning diverse domestic and international financial flows.
20. Financing for development will largely depend on sustainable investment achieved in countries. This implies a fundamental role for the ILO in raising awareness among its constituents and partners of the role of the national financial sector, as well as of the links between trade and labour, and supporting the capacity of the social partners to engage in the development of trade and investment and labour policies and programmes of multilateral and regional institutions and development banks.
21. At the same time, increasing competitiveness in the international development arena is generating pressure to demonstrate added value and creates incentives to improve organizational performance. It is hence necessary to deepen, expand and diversify partnerships, including with other UN entities, international financial institutions (IFIs), and the private sector. It is equally necessary to promote engagement with innovative finance modalities and multi-stakeholder networks and alliances, and to ensure sustainable fiscal provisions. Though relatively small, ODA remains fundamental to ensuring independent and transparent policies and instruments and the advancement of development cooperation, and can be used to leverage other funding, including domestic.
22. The ILO should promote its fundamental principles and rights at work and share good practices with other members of the UNSDG result groups. For instance, the group on Strategic Partnerships works on the harmonization and operationalization of common UN partnership approaches, including in areas such as multi-stakeholder partnerships, South–South cooperation, and engagement with the private sector. This could involve shared due diligence processes and common MOUs for use with companies, foundations, non-profit organizations, and risk management and transparency frameworks, and advancing multi-stakeholder participation through minimum standards for UNDAFs that are informed by,

and monitored with, a range of partners, including citizens, civil society, trade unions, foundations and others.¹⁰

Deliverables for 2019

- Present to the Governing Body an overview of relevant existing forms of innovative finance mechanisms assessing their potential for ILO engagement, guided by its mandate and tripartite governance, and describing the opportunities and risks associated with them. This paper could be submitted to the Governing Body in March 2019.
- Identify good practices in ILO partnerships with the private sector and make them available to the UNSDG Results Group on Strategic Partnerships. The high-level evaluation of public–private partnerships (PPPs) in 2019, if confirmed, may offer additional lessons learned that merit promotion.
- Identify the key lessons learned from existing partnerships with UN entities, IFIs and multi-stakeholder networks and alliances, with the aim of maximizing the ILO’s added value in future partnerships and facilitating such alliances.
- Collect evidence to inform baselines and targets in the next Development Cooperation Strategy.
- Consolidate good practices in SSTC and develop an ILO framework for measuring its results and impact, and promote them in the UNSDG results group as well as at the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South–South Cooperation (BAPA+40 Conference).

3. Area of focus – Enhance efficiency, decent work results, and transparency

23. The focus of this action area would coincide to a great extent with the ongoing ILO initiative for enhanced results-based management and guidance, including the ILO results-based Evaluation Strategy 2018–21.¹¹ The ILO needs to analyse concrete ways to make better use of available data to demonstrate what works and enhance the visibility of the Decent Work Agenda, as was also requested and highlighted in the ILC discussion on development cooperation. The ILO has experienced growing demand from constituents for practical tools grounded in solid impact evaluation and policy-oriented and evidence-based research, including for reporting on achievements in relation to the 2030 Agenda.¹² This requires strengthening of the ILO’s policy-oriented research to support its strategic objectives and the achievement of the SDGs in the context of the future of work and also in the light of the Knowledge Strategy for 2018–21.¹³

24. The commitment to transparency in turn also supports results-based management and accountability efforts. For example, the ILO has since 2016 made financial data on voluntary

¹⁰ GB.334/INS/4.

¹¹ [GB.332/PFA/8](#).

¹² GB.334/PFA/1.

¹³ [GB.331/PFA/4](#). See also Information Note on the implementation of the knowledge strategy presented to the Governing Body at its current session (GB.334/PFA/INF/2).

contributions received over the period 2012–17 available through the International Aid Transparency Initiative. Transparency is also supported by the supply of data to the OECD Development Assistance Committee, and by the availability of ILO dashboards including those showing decent work results, development cooperation data, and information on evaluations.

25. Operations are an additional focus, and the effective delivery of services will remain a priority. The exploration of flexible, agile, tailor-made and innovative modalities is crucial to the in-country delivery of services, driven by national needs and priorities and with the effective participation of the social partners. The Office's strength also depends on having a competent and committed workforce. The ongoing UN reform and the implications for the ILO in terms of field structure, country presence and the composition of UN country teams may require increased agility in operations¹⁴ and managing the workforce, as well as effective talent development, motivation and training strategies.¹⁵
26. Operational agility and flexibility also concern ILO business processes for partnerships, and resource mobilization will need to adapt to changes in partnership modalities and strategies, including as part of UN reform. The ILO initiatives on results-based management and strategic budgeting will further strengthen evidence-based results and reports, which will in turn add to enhancing transparency.

Deliverables for 2019

- Identify innovative practices in operational modalities at the country level that have enhanced flexibility, agility and innovation in ILO in-country service delivery with the aim of informing analyses of efficient ILO field configuration within the reforming UNDS.
- Assess the feasibility and continue initial steps for measures to enhance ILO transparency and compliance with international transparency initiatives and propose a way forward.

4. Area of Focus – Promote policy coherence and ILO visibility

27. This action area would focus on Organization-wide advocacy and communication efforts to promote policy coherence in support of the Decent Work Agenda, including in international policy fora, such as the G20, BRICS¹⁶ as well as with UN agencies. This had already been identified as a priority area for action as follow-up to the Conference resolution of 2016 on Advancing Social Justice through Decent Work.¹⁷ Policy coherence is also key to continue positioning the ILO strategically in the reforming UNDS, especially at the national level. Efforts in this regard will build on ongoing and planned initiatives in relation to the Future of Work Initiative and UN events. Results data will aid national, regional and global discussions reporting on progress towards the SDGs. For example, the 2019 High-Level

¹⁴ GB.334/INS/4.

¹⁵ GB.334/PFA/1.

¹⁶ Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

¹⁷ [GB.329/INS/3/1](#) and [GB.331/INS/9](#).

Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)¹⁸ will discuss evidence-based global progress on *Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*, in particular on SDG 8 and SDG 17, including through voluntary national reviews (VNRs). Member States should be assisted in building their statistical capacity to measure and monitor the evolution of key labour market variables. This is critical for measuring impact at national level and can also be aggregated globally for reporting purposes.¹⁹ Member States and the social partners could be encouraged to participate in the VNRs as well as in other monitoring efforts including at regional and global levels.

28. These are strategic opportunities for the ILO to further raise the visibility of the Decent Work Agenda, its role, methods, and partnerships. Advocacy will be focused on actors at national, regional and global levels, including with key development partners, IFIs and UN agencies, and will involve closer attention to knowledge and information sharing. It is important to seize opportunities such as the communications campaign for the ILO Centenary to promote the ILO's unique added value to both the reforming UN and the impact of Agenda 2030.
29. The ILO's added value as a normative and tripartite agency that practises social dialogue in pursuit of the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda will be promoted, inter alia, through its continued full engagement in the UNSDG results groups.
30. Enhanced policy and budgetary coherence is also a priority to demonstrate how the ILO operates internally. In this regard the ILO could learn from its experience of some large and longer-term multi-disciplinary development cooperation programmes at the global and country level. This experience could inform the longer-term, programmatic approach to development cooperation that the ILC resolution calls for. The ILO's internal policy coherence would in turn benefit policy coherence at the country level and increase its external visibility.

Deliverables for 2019

- Advocate the mainstreaming of the ILO's added value in briefing and training programmes for UN Resident Coordinators, UNCT members and other UN staff. This applies in particular to courses envisaged in the Secretary-General's implementation plan for the inception of the reinvigorated Resident Coordinators system. ITC-ILO would be well placed in this regard, where relevant in collaboration with the UN Staff College.

5. Implementation and monitoring

31. This plan calls for action across the Organization as a whole, across the three portfolios, at headquarters and in the field, and in close cooperation with the Bureaux for Employers' and Workers' Activities. The work will be coordinated by the Office of the Deputy Director-General for Field Operations and Partnerships.

¹⁸ At the HLPF 2019 the following goals will be reviewed: SDG 4, SDG 8, SDG 10, SDG 13, SDG 16 and SDG 17.

¹⁹ GB.334/PFA/1.

Draft decision

32. *In order to give effect to the conclusions concerning effective ILO development cooperation in support of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Governing Body requested the Director-General to take into account its guidance on the implementation of the proposed plan of action for the preparation of the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy 2020–25.*