

Written comments by Mthunzi Mdwaba on behalf of the Employers' group

INS 7

The Employers' Group is pleased to acknowledge the progress made so far by the ILO in promoting gender equality. We saw that most of the feedback and contributions we made at the last GB session on this (in March 2018) were taken into account in the mid-term implementation report.

We see a closer alignment between the ILO Action Plan with the UN gender strategies and plans. The inclusion of gender-responsive indicators for the ITC ILO is also commended.

We appreciated in particular the recent interviews to evaluate the Action Plan, as it provides an opportunity to improve the Plan. We agree with the observation that changing attitudes, building capacity and ensuring adequate human and financial resources are critical components of the Action Plan.

The INS 7 document surprisingly notes that there are no financial implications. However, implementing the 2020-21 phase of the action plan (as well as the 2018-19 phase) requires financial and human resources, and the custodian units of each indicator should have access to adequate resources to carry out the plan, if not already.

The overall monitoring indicates that the **Office is currently in a less favourable position** in achieving the set targets of the plan compared to the previous biennium. This is clearly of concern as the *unmet targets* have increased from 28 per cent (2016-17) to 42 per cent (2018-19). While some targets are more difficult to achieve as the Office can only influence the process and not control the results (such as targets that are constituents-related), other targets that are more internal in nature should be easily achieved (e.g. meetings with directors/chiefs to discuss their respective targets, one-page score cards, etc). However, the paper shows that meeting such internal targets have also lagged behind which may indicate that the Office is not prioritizing the required change. The unmet targets are particularly noticeable under the category of "accountability" and "capacity".

The paper further notes that **there are disincentives and a lack of control mechanisms for work that is not gender-responsive**, and provides an example of possibly withholding the approval of an appraisal for projects and programmes that do not integrate gender. The Employers' Group would not suggest using this approach, unless necessary, because:

(1) not all ILO capacity development efforts can be gender-responsive (e.g. building the institutional capacity of social partner organizations for which work is done at the organizational level and not individual level)

(2) such topic should be examined holistically by **the DC strategy** (GB. 340/POL/6) **not individually by this paper.**

In relations to **increasing the representation of female delegates** at the ILC and other meetings, the **Office should continuously work with constituents' organizations on gender diversity as a policy issue** so that decision-making is gender diverse and inclusive. The capacity building of EBMOs and WOs can eventually change the calculus in the representation of female social partner delegates at future ILO meetings. In parallel, targeted discussions to improve the gender representation at ILO meetings

may be beneficial. We would recommend that ILO Regional and Country Offices highlight the importance of gender diversity during briefings held for constituents on the ILC or regional meetings.

At the policy level, ACT/EMP has been working closely with EBMOs through its work on Women in Business and Management (WIBM). ACT/EMP's technical support in Latin America and the Caribbean on WIBM has led to concrete organizational change in EBMOs. The most notable example is Argentina where Union Industrial Argentina increased the representation of female board members from 1 to 11 in 2019. We also saw some gender equality progress in the Philippines.

To enhance accountability, we recommend for **all senior managers** to receive training on unconscious bias and for the Office to monitor and track the situation from the individual unit/office level.

It would be easy to be critical of these results but the figures obtained during these 2 years just goes to show how difficult it is to achieve equality between men and women, despite all the expertise and efforts made by the ILO. This situation is only a reflection of the difficulties encountered by companies in their efforts towards equality between men and women, which require strong commitments from leaders and a change of culture at all levels of the organization.