

## 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.

**Governing Body – 340th Session, October-November 2020**  
**Institutional Section**  
**Workers’ Group Comments**  
**DOCUMENT FOR BALLOT BY CORRESPONDENCE**

**GB.340/INS/7(Rev.1)**

**Mid-term Report on the implementation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality  
2018-2021**

The workers group acknowledges the efforts done by the Office, based on the guidance provided by the GB in March 2018 to implement the ILO Action Plan on Gender Equality. We can see positively that the ILO’s Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming identifies gender parity, including in senior posts and equal representation delegations, as priority areas.

We congratulate the Office for the work done to meet 50% of the targets, however, we see that half of the work still needs to be done.

As a result of the analysis, it comes clear that to achieve better results Constituents should increase efforts to achieve parity in delegations. In that sense, the workers’ group commits to improve the proportion of women at the International Labour Conference and in other meetings. The efforts and engagement of the labour movement for the ratification of C.190 will provide us also an opportunity to discuss internally about gender gaps and practices that hinder women participation in decision making processes. We welcome the support from the Office to encourage further participation of women worker representatives in ILO meetings and trainings.

Although there was some progress at the P5 level during 2008–12, this has stalled and since 2008 the gender gap for directors (D1 and D2) had increased. This trend should be reverted as soon as possible.

It is positive to make ILO monitoring coinciding with the UN SWAP monitoring, while ensuring timely and separate reporting to the GB. This separate reporting is crucial for the GB to provide guidance to the Office on the next steps, which are crucial to achieve parity at the ILO. The interaction with other UN agencies should also provide an opportunity to the ILO to mainstream the relevant ILS to improve gender equality.

The workers group believes it is important, in the way forward, to have clarity on which measures will be adopted to revert the percentages on the unmet targets. The analysis of unmet targets over time also reveals recurring multiple factors, and a critical element to overcome this scenario is management support and engagement. There is need for high-level leadership on gender equality.

In implementing the ILO Strategic Plan 2018–21 and in the P&B for 2018–19 and 2020-2021, gender equality and non-discrimination were one among four cross-cutting policy drivers. The P&B 2020–21 has one policy outcome (6) to achieving gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all in the world of work. These positive programmatic steps should be maintained and reinforced.

We are confident that with increased efforts, the unmet targets can be met or exceed in the second period of the implementation of the Action Plan on Gender Equality.

We agree with the decision point.

**Mid-term report on the implementation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21**

**ASPAG Statement for Screening Group on 9 October 2020**

1. ASPAG thanks the Office for the Mid-Term Report on the ILO's important Action Plan for Gender Equality. We welcome the achievements highlighted so far, and we thank staff for their efforts in meeting many of the targets set.
2. We appreciate that though some targets are not yet achieved – they are very close to being met. Some within just a few percentage points, and we would welcome a renewed push to meet those targets in the final year of this Action Plan.
3. We are pleased to see that gender parity has been achieved up to the P4 level (55% female staff), but we see we have stalled at the P5 level and above, and that more needs to be done.
  - a. Gender parity at P5 level and above must be a key focus for the ILO over the next year. Given we are at 38%, very close to our target of 40%, ASPAG hopes that the 40% target can be met under the timeframe of this Action Plan. Then we can focus on ways to go further towards achieving the UN goal parity level of 47-53% in the next Action Plan.
4. ASPAG would like to see a renewed commitment from the Office to meeting some of the remaining unmet targets, such as those outlined in the Accountability and Capacity sections of the report. It is disappointing that some relatively easy targets have not yet been achieved or statistics have not been made available – even some that are quite administrative in nature – such as, for example:
  - a. two meetings being held with Directors to discuss achieving gender target;
  - b. one-page scorecards;
  - c. up-to-date sex-disaggregated statistics being made available; and
  - d. reporting on participants in courses in Turin.
5. These action items need to be prioritized, noting our expectation they would have occurred prior to the pandemic. COVID only underscores the need for renewed emphasis on progressing gender equality, and we must collectively focus our efforts to do so.
6. Further, we are particularly dismayed that the two capacity-building events for social partners to improve gender parity in ILC delegations have not been held. This was a specific request of the Governing Body last year to ensure that more women attend ILC from all groups.
7. We must act now to improve the gender balance at the 2021 ILC and try to meet the 45% target sooner rather than later. While the pandemic continues, we should also harness the advantages that there may be in delivering these capacity-building events virtually, to reach more people than might have been reached pre-travel restrictions.
8. ASPAG notes all levels of ILO leadership need to drive these reforms. We look to the Director-General – as a strong advocate for gender equality at the ILO - to reinforce the need to deliver on the outcomes in this Action Plan sooner rather than later. We hope that the ILO leads the way in demonstrating its commitment to gender equality and promoting best practice.

9. ASPAG supports the Decision Point as amended to reflect the real purpose of the Action Plan which should be to ensure real and sustained improvements within the ILO.

**GB 340/INS7 Rev. 1: Mid-term report on the implementation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018-21**

We thank the Office for the Mid-term review on implementation of the Gender Equality Plan. Not all UN agencies prepare this type of analysis, and so the report and action plan are highly welcome initiatives that enhance institutional transparency. IMEC stresses the importance of an ambitious implementation with a view to achieving concrete results.

The ILO mandate covers gender equality and non-discrimination at work both as a principle objective and as a cross-cutting policy driver. The Action Plan aims to implement ILO core conventions in these areas and should be promoted as a priority. Additionally, the ILO Centenary Declaration stresses the importance on equality and non-discrimination, as do the relevant SDGs. Given the ILO's important mandate, the ILO should be a trend-setter and leader on gender equality. The COVID-19 crisis has had a disproportionately negative impact on women which needs to be taken into account.

- The Action Plan covers many important areas related to gender equality and we welcome the alignment with UN-SWAP. We also note the positive comments from UN women on progress made in advancing the Action Plan.
- However, IMEC notes with concern that while 29 of the 57 targets (50%) were met or exceeded, 24 of the 57 targets were not met (42%). This is a set-back compared to 2016-2017 when 20 of the 32 indicators' aims (63%) were either met or exceeded. In 2018-2019, higher proportion of targets that were not met were linked to key areas such as oversight, accountability and capacity. IMEC would like to seek further information from the Office to help understand this situation and make the necessary adjustments in the implementation of the plan.
- In general, the report does not systematically present a results framework specific to ILO, which includes an assessment of the progress made with regards to the targets set in the Action Plan.
- The Appendix provides a list of targets met, exceeded and not met but the presentation makes it a little hard to follow. A table might have been more helpful here. Clearer articulation of the statistics vs narrative would have been welcomed.
- The report does not include a lot of analysis of why some targets have been met and not others. We welcome the fact that there was very broad discussion of the need to, for example, have management support and engagement but we would have liked to see a more in-depth discussion of why there is progress in some areas and not others.

We also welcome the progress on the DWCPs, gender parity in P1-P4 and job vacancy descriptions.

- In general, there is little in the report to address how gaps or areas of challenge will be addressed. A key and concerning example, is the persistent stagnation of staffing at P5 level and above (Paragraph 20). With positions at these levels often being direct appointments, it is confusing why this organization is facing a negative trend in the last 10 years. The ILO should be a leader on staffing and gender equity. Without analysis, IMEC is wondering how does the Office propose to meet its existing targets in the coming year?

We also have some specific questions on the progress noted:

What are the plans for regions without dedicated gender specialists?

What measures will be taken to encourage all constituents to achieve gender parity in their ILC delegations?

Concerning the Results-Based Management, we wonder why the target related to project and programme proposals is expected to drop? Further information would be welcomed.

- Only 14% of global project and programme proposals meet the cross-cutting policy driver. The target is 35% so 14% seems quite low.
  - We recommend the Office move to the UN standard for measuring parity, rather than using its own older measure.

Oversight:

- Only 25% of audited field office reports identifying gender-related risks and mitigation action taken seems low given the target of 70%
- Several targets do not have information available. Could the Office explain why that is the case?

The ILO has within the multilateral system the mandate to promote decent work for all without any discrimination. It also has the best expertise in work-related issues and we expect more concrete and ambitious results and commitment from the Office.

IMEC supports the draft decision point in document GB.340/INS7 (Rev.1)



**Mid-term report on the implementation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018-21  
Consultations 9 October 2020  
EU statement**

- I speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. We thank the Office for the document GB.340/INS/7. The EU supports the focus of the ILO on gender equality. The EU also pursues gender equality in its policies, as evidenced in the Council Conclusions on *Gender-Equal Economies in the EU: The Way Forward* of December last year.
- The EU and its MS actively promoted clear and ambitious language on Gender Equality in the Centenary Declaration, with regular evaluation of progress made and ensuring equal opportunities, equal participation and equal treatment, including equal remuneration for women and men for work of equal value. Promoting gender equality and inclusive labour markets is a precondition for ensuring decent work for all and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 5 on gender equality and empowering all women and girls.
- The EU also supports a number of ILO projects that promote gender equality, including realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region; economic empowerment of women at work through responsible business conduct; or the Win-Win: Gender Equality Means Good Business project.
- ILO research shows that the progress on gender equality and women's empowerment in the world of work has been very slow globally, and has stalled or even been eroded in a number of areas. The Covid-19 pandemic has made this situation even worse.
- We welcome the progress identified in the mid-term report as many quantitative targets have been reached or even exceeded. We believe that the Action Plan complements existing initiatives and contributes to further institutionalization. It also identifies remaining areas for improvement and provides internal mechanisms to address these areas. It is commendable that the ILO conducts independent evaluations of the implementation of its own gender policy and its operationalization through its action plan. Internal accountability has been reinforced as a result of the Action Plan.
- Despite all of this, the mid-term report reveals a rather sobering picture and presents a number of challenges, especially when considered in the context of COVID 19. For example in the Europe and Central Asia Region, only 6% of project and programme proposals have met the set level of the crosscutting policy driver on gender equality and non-discrimination. Similar deficits also occurred in other regions.

- With regard to oversight and accountability, we note that most of the targets were not met and therefore strongly encourage the ILO to increase its efforts to address this.
- Only 25 % of field office reports identified gender-related risks and mitigating actions taken. Regrettably, no audit has yet been designed on internal sexual harassment control and response procedures. Up-to-date sex-segregated statistics in accordance with the targets should also be provided in a timely manner. Gender equality and non-discrimination in country programmes should be enhanced in terms of both human and financial resources.
- The ILO's Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming identifies gender parity, including in senior posts, as a priority area. We welcome the positive development in the women's overall share of regular budget professional positions. However, the situation at higher grades has deteriorated since 2010 which is a concerning development. It is also apparent that we all have further work to do with respect to women delegates and advisers accredited and registered in the International Labour Conference and in regional meetings.
- Decent work for all remains a strong priority for all parties. We look forward to the ILO report at the next ILC on Inequalities and the World of Work, including analyses on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to equality and non-discrimination at work. We welcome the views of the Office as well as other Governments, Employers and Workers
- With regards to the decision point, we need a little more time to coordinate also within IMEC, as Johanna mentioned as IMEC burdensharer, on a potential amendment of the decision point according to our statements

# **ILO Governing Body - 340<sup>th</sup> Session**

## **Decision by correspondence (21/10)**



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

**Agenda Item:** Mid-term report on the Implementation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018-21  
**Agenda Section:** Institutional Section (INS)  
**Agenda Ref:** GB.340/INS/7

### **UK Written Statement**

The UK supports the IMEC written statement.

The UK welcomes this mid-term review of the 2018-21 ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality and shares the Office's concern that progress on gender equality and women's empowerment in the world of work has been very slow globally and, in some cases, has reversed.

The UK is one of the first countries in the world to introduce gender pay gap reporting and is committed to eliminating the gender pay gap entirely.

To support more mothers – and fathers - to return to and remain in work, the UK has doubled the amount of free childcare available to working parents of three and four-year-old children, introduced shared parental leave and the right to request flexible working.

And we are supporting returners – i.e. those who have taken extended time out of employment for caring responsibilities - to re-enter the labour market. Through this programme of work, we have awarded some £1.5 million to sixteen organisations supporting returners in the private sector and have also launched public sector programmes that target key workforces, such as social workers and police investigators.

The economic empowerment of women and girls is central to achieving genuinely inclusive growth and is fundamental for the full realisation of human rights. If half its population faces unnecessary barriers, no country can achieve sustained economic development. Women's economic empowerment has positive impacts on economic growth, firm performance and human development outcomes.

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic will exacerbate gender inequality and there is a risk we will see a significant reversal in gender equality gains.

Women will be hit hard by the economic fallout. They tend to earn less, save less, and hold less secure jobs so are less able to weather economic shocks. Female-headed households are particularly vulnerable.

When we talk about Building Back Better, it must include Building Back Better on gender and place women and girls at its heart.

So the ILO must continue to promote gender equality through the implementation of the ILO Strategic Plan 2018-2021 - both through its programmes and also within the Office to ensure improvements to meet targets under each of the six UN-SWAP categories. The UK would welcome further information on the concrete ways in which the action plan would strategically position the ILO in the United Nations reform, as proposed in the original decision point b.

At this mid-point of the current action plan, we underline the importance of the delivery of the targets that have not been met.

The UK is keen to identify ways of sharing lessons learned from UK policies to increase gender equality in the labour market, such as the gender pay gap reporting, childcare policies, flexible working, parental leave and support to those returning to the workforce.

Finally, recognising that gender equality and the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work are distinct, but given the fact that violence and harassment is one of the root causes of gender inequality, the UK welcomes the adoption of the Violence and Harassment Convention last year and would like to know whether the Office plans to build the monitoring of violence and harassment into the final stage of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018-21.

## **Comments concerning the decision on GB.340/INS/7(Rev.1)**

The Russian Federation supports the original draft decision proposed by the Office.

In this context, it should be taken into account that with respect to decisionmaking (decisions by correspondence) the Special arrangements for the 340th session of the Governing Body found in document GB.340/INS/1 provide for the following: «In the context of the COVID-19 response, since March 2020 the Governing Body has been taking a series of decisions by correspondence on urgent, non-controversial or routine matters. This has proved a particularly efficient and pragmatic way of taking decisions in these exceptional circumstances».

The introduced amendments go beyond technical or editorial changes and significantly affect the meaning and the scope of the decision. Amendments of such nature call for substantive consultations among tripartite constituents. We, therefore, prefer that this matter be deferred until the next session of the Governing Body when conditions, hopefully, allow the holding of a thorough and inclusive discussion on the draft among all interested delegations.