



## 17th American Regional Meeting

Santiago de Chile, 14–17 December 2010

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### Conclusions of the Regional Meeting

1. We, the tripartite delegations of the Americas present at the 17th American Regional Meeting of the International Labour Organization, appreciate and value the Report of the Director-General, entitled *The Decent Work Decade in the Americas: 2006–15 – Agenda for the Hemisphere: Initial assessment and perspectives*.
2. We consider that the Report contains a valuable analysis of the developments that have occurred in our region with regard to decent work during the period under review. We underline the progress made on the Agenda, despite the consequences of the international financial crisis, which in some cases has had a temporary negative impact in certain areas. The tripartite delegations stress that the rapid recovery experienced by the countries of the region was based on sound macroeconomic fundamentals, as well as a set of counter cyclical public policies aimed at safeguarding employment and at the sustainability of enterprises. Many of these policies were implemented through social dialogue.
3. We note that the Report reflects the progress and deficit in the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda for the Hemisphere, providing a social and political overview that is necessarily framed by reference to the financial and economic crisis which has led to an employment crisis, with a global impact since 2008. Challenges remain with regard to the consolidation of democracy, the reduction of inequalities, and the strengthening of rights and of mechanisms of participation.
4. During the Meeting, it was reaffirmed that freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining are crucial to achieving the decent work goals set out in the Agenda for the Hemisphere. These rights have been universally recognized as fundamental rights, and are enshrined in ILO Conventions Nos 87 and 98. It was likewise recalled at the Meeting that the right to freedom of association applied equally to employers and to workers.
5. We stress that the Dialogues held highlighted the fact that severe inequality persists in the region, despite the economic progress made. Moreover, it was underscored that economic progress alone was not sufficient to reduce inequality and to create quality jobs. There was thus a need for private and public policies that placed employment at the centre of development strategies.
6. The Dialogues also drew attention to the fact that social protection has been a decisive policy in tackling the crisis and not an adjustment variable as in previous crises. In the current decade, recovery of the real minimum wage had largely been achieved in the region, though at levels that were still insufficient. South–South cooperation over the period constituted a demonstration of solidarity between developing countries, as well as a strategy to achieve the goals of the Decent Work Agenda for the Hemisphere.

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7. We consider that the Decent Work Agenda for the Hemisphere should be revised and updated, in the light of the fact that, since the last Regional Meeting, the ILO has adopted the tripartite resolution concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises (June 2007), the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (June 2008) and the Global Jobs Pact (June 2009), as well as of the progress and challenges presented in the Reports of the ILO Director-General of the International Labour Office to the 17th American Regional Meeting.
  8. We further recognize that the areas calling for progress and in-depth review through more effective social dialogue include the following:
    - the creation of new decent and productive work opportunities through the promotion and development of sustainable enterprises;
    - enhanced respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining;
    - promotion of ratification of the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102);
    - the promotion of economic competitiveness together with social cohesion, preserving and respecting the fundamental rights at work enshrined in the Declaration of 1998; and
    - the strengthening of labour market institutions.
  9. In the light of the above, we call upon the Office for its support through technical cooperation to develop regional programmes relating to:
    - strengthening the campaign for respect for freedom of association and the promotion of collective bargaining;
    - promoting an environment conducive to the development of sustainable enterprise; and
    - strengthening ministries of labour to meet the new challenges of the world of work.
  10. The representatives of governments and of the employers' and workers' organizations participating in the 17th American Regional Meeting of the International Labour Organization extend their gratitude to the Government of Chile for hosting the Meeting and for the hospitality offered to those attending it. This, together with the efficient organization of the Meeting, contributed to its success.