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*Audit and Oversight Segment*

**PFA**

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### SEVENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

## Discussions of high-level evaluations: Strategies and Decent Work Country Programmes

#### Purpose of the document

This document provides a summary of the findings and recommendations of three independent high-level evaluations conducted during 2013–14. The final section of each evaluation summary contains a set of recommendations requiring follow-up and sets out the Office response. The Governing Body is invited to take into consideration the findings, lessons learned and recommendations and to request the Director-General to ensure their appropriate implementation (see the draft decision in paragraph 140).

**Relevant strategic objective:** Relevant to all strategic objectives.

**Policy implications:** The final section of each evaluation summary contains a set of recommendations, the implementation of which may have policy implications.

**Legal implications:** None.

**Financial implications:** Existing staff, mission costs and incidental expenses.

**Follow-up action required:** Follow-up to the recommendations will be reported to the Governing Body through the Annual Evaluation Report 2014–15.

**Author unit:** Evaluation Office (EVAL).

**Related documents:** GB.322/PFA/6.



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## Introduction

1. This report presents a summary of the findings and recommendations of three evaluations undertaken by the ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL) between December 2013 and July 2014 as part of its rolling workplan for high-level evaluations. Using the OECD Development Assistance Committee's evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, these evaluations assess the performance of the ILO's strategies and actions to support member States and social partners to promote and realize the fundamental principles and rights at work (FPRW), the ILO's strategies for coherent decent work policies, and the ILO's strategies and activities for Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) in North Africa.
2. The high-level evaluations are based on desk reviews, independent evaluation missions, key stakeholder consultations and interviews, and internet-based surveys of constituents, stakeholders, and ILO and United Nations (UN) officials and technical cooperation staff. They provide accountability to the ILO Governing Body and highlight the lessons learned about factors affecting the ILO's performance and impact. The performance criteria and the ranking methodology that were used conform to the relevant ILO protocols.<sup>1</sup>

## Part I. Independent evaluation of the ILO's strategies on fundamental principles and rights at work (outcomes 14, 15, 16 and 17)

### Purpose of the evaluation

3. This evaluation, covering the period from 2008 to 2014, reviews the degree to which the FPRW strategic objectives have been achieved, namely:
  - (a) the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining is widely known and exercised (outcome 14);
  - (b) forced labour is eliminated (outcome 15);
  - (c) child labour is eliminated, with priority given to the worst forms (outcome 16); and
  - (d) discrimination in employment and occupation is eliminated (outcome 17).
4. The evaluation draws on the findings of 17 case studies, which enable a more in-depth analysis at the country level;<sup>2</sup> particular attention is given to the achievement of country programme outcomes and the creation of global products to determine how they have contributed to the realization of FPRW. A survey soliciting quantitative and qualitative

<sup>1</sup> The *High-level evaluation protocol for outcome strategy evaluation* and the *High-level evaluation (HLE) protocol for DWCP evaluation*; see also the *ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation*.

<sup>2</sup> Asia: China, *India*, *Indonesia*, Philippines, Sri Lanka; Arab States: Jordan; Africa: Egypt, *Senegal*, South Africa, *Zambia*; Europe: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia; Latin America: *Brazil*, El Salvador, Guatemala. Only the countries in italics were visited; the remaining reviews were desk-based.

assessments was sent out to national constituents in selected countries as well as to relevant ILO headquarters staff, decent work teams, country office programmes and project staff.

## Operational approach

5. For this evaluation, two aspects of the 1998 Declaration are particularly significant. The first is its statement that all ILO member States “have an obligation ... to respect, to promote and to realize, in good faith and in accordance with the Constitution, the principles concerning the fundamental rights”. The second is the 1998 Declaration’s recognition of:
  - ... the obligation on the Organization to assist its Members, in response to their established and expressed needs, in order to attain these objectives, ... to support these efforts:
  - (a) by offering technical cooperation and advisory services to promote the ratification and implementation of the fundamental Conventions;
  - (b) by assisting those Members not yet in a position to ratify some or all of these Conventions in their efforts to respect, to promote and to realize the principles concerning fundamental rights which are the subject of those Conventions; and
  - (c) by helping the Members in their efforts to create a climate for economic and social development.
6. Although this evaluation does not cover the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, two aspects of the later Declaration are significant in evaluating ILO strategies and action for the realization of FPRW. The first is its statement that the four strategic objectives of employment, rights, protection and social dialogue are “inseparable, interrelated and mutually supportive”. The interrelationship of these objectives is repeatedly referred to in the 2008 Declaration. The second is that the 2008 Declaration reiterates the relevance of the 1998 Declaration and states that FPRW are “both rights and enabling conditions” and that freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively are “particularly important to enable the attainment of the four strategic objectives”.
7. Lastly, the evaluation is rooted in the ILO’s results-based management framework. The strategies and indicators of the four FPRW-related outcomes of the Strategic Policy Framework (SPF) provided the background against which the various actions were assessed. The programme and budget was critically important to this evaluation because it provided the basis for the global outcome strategies, outcome-based planning, implementation management and reporting tools developed by the Office to document what it intended to do and has done in supporting its member States in realizing FPRW.

## Summary of findings

### *Relevance*

8. The strategies and actions reviewed are largely relevant to the global needs articulated in the annual reviews and global reports, as well as to the national needs expressed in DWCPs. This is in spite of some inconsistencies in high-level strategy statements orienting action towards the gaps identified through supervisory mechanisms.
9. The assessment of relevance focused on a comparison of strategies and actions on the one hand with constituents’ global and national needs on the other. A second measurement compared strategies and actions with gaps identified by the ILO’s supervisory bodies.

10. On examination, it was found that not all global outcome strategies are oriented to the needs expressed by constituents globally or to the gaps identified through supervisory mechanisms. However, some alignment with these mechanisms does occur, although it is neither automatic nor comprehensive.
11. The tripartite dialogue component of the DWCP programming process provides greater relevance because it enables FPRW-related needs to be voiced. Where this does not occur, the relevance of the DWCP could be compromised. However, broad descriptions of non-FPRW priorities could give the Office an opportunity to fill gaps in order to mainstream FPRW as pivotal elements for realizing decent work. The country case studies show that:
  - (a) the technical assistance and technical cooperation needs identified by the annual report appear generally to be met;
  - (b) technical assistance and technical cooperation are relevant to the global priorities set by the 2012 resolution of the International Labour Conference and in the pre-2012 plans of action;
  - (c) gaps in FPRW identified by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations are addressed by technical cooperation activities, although the linkage appears not to be entirely causal, and the outcome-related results reported in the implementation reports only sometimes correlate with the level of satisfaction recorded by the Committee; and
  - (d) Office support is relevant in responding to the gaps identified in FPRW categories where realization is inherently progressive. These include principles and rights dealing with child labour and discrimination.

### ***Coherence and value added***

12. There are examples of activities that combine the four principles of the 1998 Declaration, as echoed in the 2008 Declaration. However, as long as the FPRW outcomes are mirrored in separate organizational units, the 2008 Declaration's call for synergy is the only overriding incentive for managers to blend and combine outcome-linked funding from the regular budget. Similar constraints do not exist for the use of extra-budgetary resources, with various projects combining the principles within one project framework.
13. Projects linked to non-FPRW outcomes are supporting constituents' efforts to realize FPRW. These vary in depth and scope from project to project. There is no comprehensive strategy for mainstreaming FPRW into all of the Office's work, despite the policy mandate in the 2008 Declaration.
14. Observed activities in non-FPRW strategies and actions do have positive effects on FPRW-related areas. For example, combating HIV/AIDS discrimination in the workplace (as referred to under outcome 8) is very clearly related in all instances to outcome 17 on eliminating discrimination in employment and occupation. These linkages are not uniform and are not always monitored or acknowledged, but they either do occur or have the potential to occur.
15. The country case studies and surveys show mixed results in terms of the integration of fundamental principles and rights at work into UN programming documents. Although UN staff members demonstrated limited knowledge of the 1998 Declaration as such, they are aware of the four FPRW categories and their importance for the ILO. Synergies and coordination do occur, but this is probably more the exception than the rule. Institutional factors are reported to limit real operational synergy, and successful cases may be rare.

16. There is significant variation in the treatment of FPRW in DWCPs. There is no coherent strategic justification for the prioritization of different FPRW principles, nor should there be, since ILO policy sees constituent demand as the main driver of the content of DWCPs, despite the obligations in the 1998 Declaration.

### **Effectiveness**

17. The Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations has noted cases where progress has been made in closing gaps in the realization of FPRW as a result of the Office's support to constituents. Case studies conducted by the evaluation suggest, however, that the supervisory body's ability to capture all this information is limited. Positive developments reflecting the Office's support for improvements in the realization of FPRW may well occur at a level that is not adequately shown by monitoring of ratified Conventions alone.
18. A review of project evaluations reveals generally satisfactory levels of effectiveness. However, ratings in the evaluation's survey of office directors and constituents are more mixed, with some unsatisfactory levels.
19. Common factors that contribute to the effectiveness of activities are cited and could be seen as good practices. However, evidence of the Office consistently using these factors in its activities to support constituents in realizing FPRW is mixed. Some factors reflect organizational effectiveness, others operational effectiveness. They include having locally based staff who are aware of constituents' needs and perspectives on the realization of FPRW, which enables the results to be embedded in those countries' institutions.
20. It is not possible to measure the effectiveness of the annual review mechanism in channelling technical assistance and technical cooperation because there are no strategic indicators that measure their delivery against requests for annual reviews.

### **Efficiency**

21. The Office's system of outcome-based workplanning is intended to enable field units to provide constituents with support from throughout the Office. Efforts have also been made to delink the management and reporting of results from organizational units through the creation of outcome coordinators, who are responsible for results and not necessarily organizational units. These efforts are constrained where programme and budget outcomes and the regular-budget resources that flow with them correspond to organizational units.
22. Since the realization of FPRW is closely connected to the supervision of the application of the fundamental Conventions, the Director-General's decision in 2013 to create the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch with responsibility for coordinating FPRW outcomes is fitting, provided that close substantive collaboration continues with other units.
23. It may be better practice to align country programme outcomes to several programme and budget outcomes, but this needs to be done with caution to avoid a proliferation of country programme outcomes, which has efficiency implications. In fact, resources are being allocated to support for FPRW, but are not recognized as such because of the way in which projects are linked to country programme outcomes.
24. The movement towards areas of critical importance and ten outcome areas as a programming framework helps to break down the divide between organizational units and gives more opportunity for broader reporting on results.

25. There are clear imbalances in extra-budgetary resources, with those available for the elimination of child labour leading the other FPRW categories, albeit that child labour has attracted substantially fewer resources in recent years. This difference is very obvious when resources are presented in terms of outcomes 14, 15, 16 and 17.
26. Currently, global products are infrequently used as a mechanism for improving efficiency, that is, providing common support for FPRW to constituents globally. They appear to be used as a mechanism for resource mobilization when resources are scarce. Multi-country projects are being used because of the efficiencies they offer.
27. The evaluation has noted examples of synergies with UN agencies and other stakeholders, but they are the exception rather than the rule and evidence of shared resources is weak. Collaboration is possible, but is based on the pragmatic self-interest of the organizations involved.

### ***Impact***

28. The ILO's actions have contributed to constituents' efforts to reduce gaps in realizing FPRW. For freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining and for forced labour, actions may be real but, particularly where gaps need to be remedied by legislative changes, their impact as shown in results can be slowed or blocked as a result of the politics inherent in national legislative processes.
29. Measuring the longer term, ultimate impact of the ILO's support for constituents' realization of FPRW presents a challenge, which has been met directly by the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour. Its efforts are admirable and should be examined and validated for use in the other three categories. This would be consistent with the strategy of building the knowledge base for each of the FPRW.

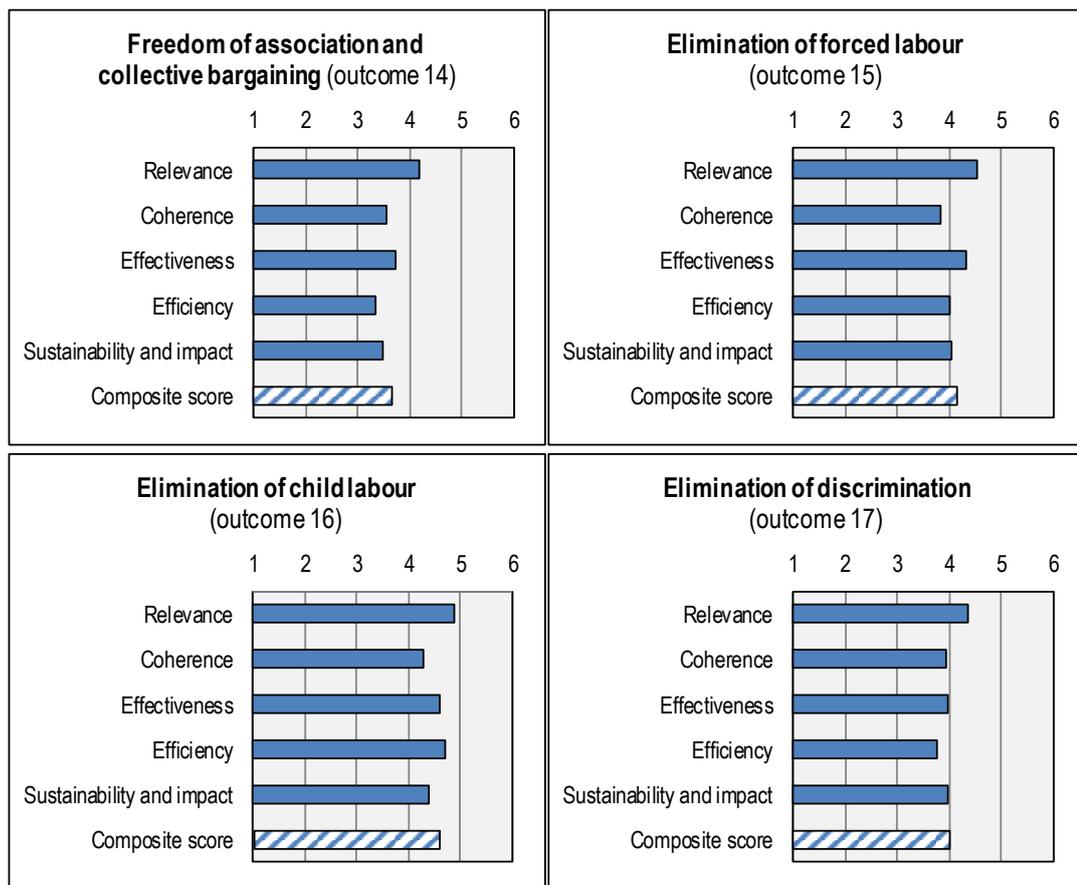
### ***Sustainability***

30. The development of adequate legal frameworks and institutional capacities for implementing FPRW is critically important for sustainability. It is broadly recognized that both have to be in place if there is to be any hope of sustaining the results. However, the fact that elements are developed individually to comply with monitoring requirements does not necessarily respond to this prerequisite, as it does not transmit the deeper understanding needed to strengthen sustainability.

### ***Overall performance***

31. Figure 1 depicts the overall assessments of each evaluation criteria in all four programme and budget outcomes related to FPRW (outcomes 14–17). The evaluation found that overall performance has been “somewhat satisfactory”, albeit with some variances in each criterion (in the range of “somewhat unsatisfactory” and “somewhat satisfactory”), with the exception of outcome 16, which leans towards the “satisfactory” range.

Figure 1. Overall performance of FPRW strategies by evaluation criteria and by outcome



Note: 1 = Highly unsatisfactory; 2 = Unsatisfactory; 3 = Somewhat unsatisfactory; 4 = Somewhat satisfactory; 5 = Satisfactory; 6 = Highly satisfactory.

### Lessons learned

- 32. Lesson 1:** Evidence collected by the evaluation team suggests that generally the 1998 Declaration is not well understood, even among the partners. This issue could be addressed by an all-encompassing FPRW strategy that includes all four categories as the basis for the Decent Work Agenda. Such a strategy would serve two purposes: (i) to help brand FPRW to ensure easier and wider recognition; and (ii) to provide a framework for constructing interrelated and complementary operational strategies for each of its four principles.
- 33. Lesson 2:** The capacities of established follow-up and supervisory mechanisms to capture follow-up activities and compliance should be strengthened. However, the distinction between the implementation of Conventions and the promotion of principles should be maintained and reinforced, although they must continue to be mutually reinforcing.
- 34. Lesson 3:** The “entry-point strategy” is a pragmatic and viable approach to improving the realization of rights. This was demonstrated repeatedly in case studies and the DWCP analysis. Programme and project designers’ use of relevant entry-point strategies is important, both in addressing the identified FPRW priority areas, and in advancing rights when it is tactical to do so.
- 35. Lesson 4:** Office support for ILO constituents’ efforts to realize FPRW can be fragmented, project oriented and drawn out, potentially undermining its effectiveness, impact and sustainability. This is because the implementation of FPRW takes time and effort. The

Office's results-based management system helps counter any lack of understanding of where action fits into the broader FPRW picture. However, the one-to-one restrictions of outcome-based workplanning that focus on action during a biennium have added to the complexity of strengthening linkages across programme and budget outcomes.

- 36. Lesson 5:** Local interest in closing gaps in FPRW activities encourages local action, naturally enhancing the relevance of the ILO's support, and also potentially increasing the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of their results. It would benefit the Office to identify local champions – individuals or institutions – with clear interests in prioritizing, realizing and supporting country-level work on FPRW. The Office should strengthen its efforts to recognize this dynamic, and design and implement its strategies and actions accordingly. This lesson has also been seen in regional organizations or bodies, where there is mutual interest in realizing FPRW. Thus, it could also be applied at the regional level.

## Recommendations

- 37. Recommendation 1:** Establish a strategy that strengthens the 1998 Declaration's concept and programme using methodologies that incorporate incentives in support of **FPRW outcomes** in non-FPRW work/projects. To be consistent with the policies set out in the 2008 Declaration, actions supporting the realization of each of the four FPRW categories under the 1998 Declaration should be executed so as to promote understanding and the realization of the others.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
FPRW Branch	Medium	Medium – following on from 2012 recurrent discussion	Yes

- 38. Recommendation 2:** Develop and implement a capacity-building strategy to increase technical, programming and operational staff's knowledge of the importance of FPRW as a basis for achieving country programme outcomes, Decent Work Country Programme outcomes and programme and budget outcomes. Initially, the FPRW Branch should work with other units to examine and catalogue the ways in which their work supports constituents in realizing the four categories of FPRW so that those techniques can be reused.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
FPRW Branch with non-FPRW technical units	Medium	Medium – a biennium	Yes – staff time

- 39. Recommendation 3:** In order to better understand and ultimately address challenges in the annual review under the follow-up to the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, **develop and implement entry strategies with criteria that measure performance, and systematically monitor annual reviews requested for technical assistance and/or technical cooperation to support the realization of FPRW.**

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
FPRW Branch	Medium	Medium – before next programme and budget	Yes – staff time

- 40. Recommendation 4:** Develop additional approaches to promoting the 1998 Declaration that are applicable to ratifying and non-ratifying countries. These should

be distinct from regular supervision of international labour standards, and extend beyond the system's current capability. Systematic country-level approaches should involve the social partners. They may include elements such as regional peer reviews, increased analysis, and viability studies to identify and describe gaps identified by national and regional constituents, regardless of the country's ratification status.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
FPRW Branch	Low	In the next biennium	Yes – staff time

- 41. Recommendation 5: The FPRW Branch should work with the Strategic Programming and Management Branch (PROGRAM) to ensure that the development of areas of critical importance and outcome areas will include specific indicators on the realization of FPRW.**

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
PROGRAM FPRW Branch	Medium	18 months	Not known

- 42. Recommendation 6: Work with the Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV) to develop, at headquarters and in the field, a strategy and capacity for preparing tender documents to respond to the apparent trends by donors to use competitive bidding.** Decentralized capacity should be available at all appropriate levels, and should include technical staff. Information about donors' tendering requirements should be made available at headquarters.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
PARDEV FPRW Branch	High	Ongoing	Yes – staff time

- 43. Recommendation 7: Develop and use national and local expertise to ensure sustainability and reduce support costs.** Consolidate knowledge and experience with national resources with a view to making their use more effective, efficient and widespread.<sup>3</sup>

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
FPRW technical units	Medium	Two years	Unknown

## Office response

- 44.** The Office welcomes the high-level evaluation's findings on the ILO's strategies and actions in support of FPRW because they are providing input for the strategic review and planning process currently being carried out by the recently established FPRW Branch. This review is being undertaken by five working groups focusing on: (1) global strategies and key external partnerships; (2) ILO policy advisory services, intervention models and internal partnerships; (3) resource mobilization; (4) research and knowledge management; and (5) communications strategy and campaigns.
- 45. Recommendations 1, 3 and 4:** The Office acknowledges the challenges associated with covering FPRW strategies under four distinct outcomes and corresponding country

<sup>3</sup> See GB.303/16(Rev.), para. 74.

programme outcomes, as well as under non-FPRW outcomes and/or annual reviews. However, a number of actions have been taken to address those challenges. First, the reform process combined the four FPRW categories under a unified management structure to ensure a consistent, coherent and complementary strategy. Second, the FPRW Branch's strategic review and planning process will lead to the formulation of a new operational strategy, which will incorporate the recommendations of this evaluation. Finally, the outcomes of the next programme and budget will no longer distinguish between the four FPRW, which should facilitate results reporting.

- 46. Recommendation 2:** This recommendation echoes one component of the FPRW action plan for 2012–16. A session dedicated to FPRW will now be included in the induction training organized by the Human Resources Development Department for new staff. Meetings with other units are under way to identify how FPRW can be increasingly promoted through their work. While the FPRW Branch of the Governance and Tripartism Department (GOVERNANCE) will take the lead in promoting work on FPRW across the Office, it should be recognized that, given the nature of such strategies, Office-wide involvement is required and will determine the extent to which these recommendations can be implemented.
- 47. Recommendation 5:** The key role of the ILO's results-based management framework in mainstreaming FPRW, allocating resources, and monitoring and reporting on results is recognized. The Office welcomes any comments on the observations in the evaluation report on how to best use the framework to support the realization of FPRW. The recommendation that specific indicators on the realization of FPRW be included in areas of critical importance and outcomes was acted upon in preparing the Programme and Budget for 2016–17. A useful process has brought together two branches – the Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch and the FPRW Branch – to establish and propose measurement criteria on equality and non-discrimination as a cross-cutting issue under each of the outcomes. Excellent cooperation also took place with staff managing the outcome on unacceptable forms of work in defining its FPRW content, measurement criteria and indicators. Similar collaboration took place to mainstream FPRW in other relevant outcomes.
- 48. Recommendations 6 and 7:** The recommendations of the report are fully accepted and will, together with the lessons learned and other key points in the evaluation, be incorporated in the guidance for the development and implementation of the FPRW strategy.

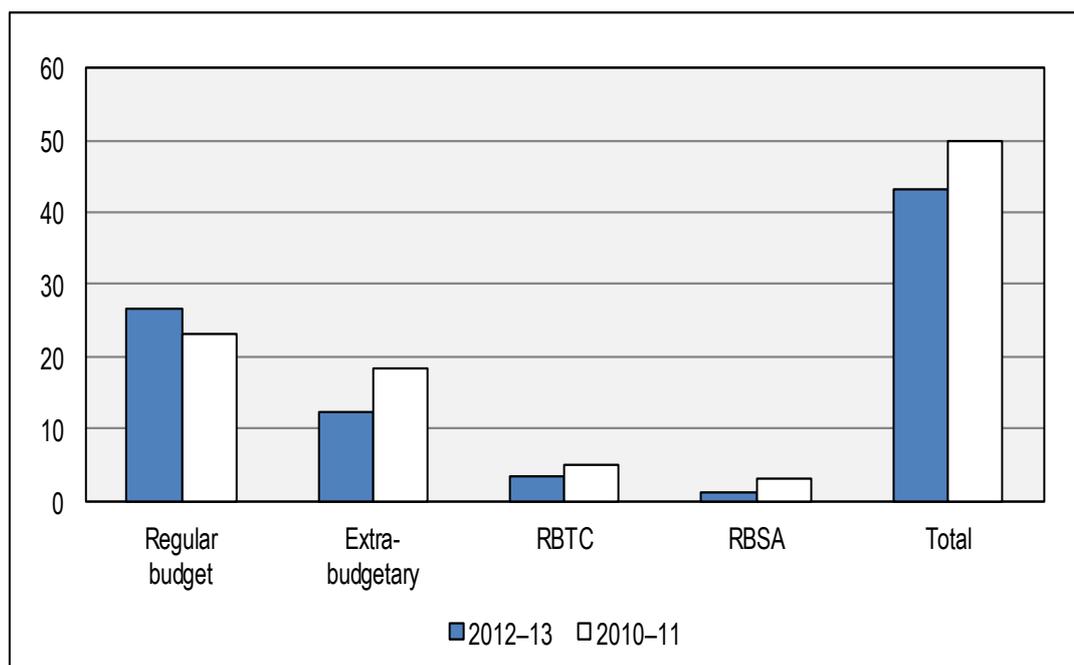
## **Part II. Independent evaluation of the ILO's strategy on policy coherence for decent work (outcome 19)**

### **Purpose of the evaluation**

- 49.** The independent evaluation of the ILO's strategy on policy coherence for decent work assesses the ILO's global strategy in supporting member States to adopt coherent decent work policies through integrated approaches and to identify major achievements and challenges in order to derive lessons learned and good practices. These are expected to facilitate decision-making on the future course of this area of the ILO's work.
- 50.** Case studies were prepared for seven countries: Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Indonesia, Philippines, Republic of Moldova and United Republic of Tanzania. In all, 103 interviews were conducted with ILO staff, constituents and UN partners.

## Operational approach

- 51.** The recognition of the importance of coherent policies within member States, and within and among international organizations, to achieve the goal of decent work has been growing since the 2004 report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization; the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Ministerial Declaration on Employment Generation and Decent Work (2006); and the European Commission's Communication on Promoting Decent Work for All (2006). The ILO's 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization was the impetus for further promoting the principle that efforts to promote the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda should be part of an integrated strategy at both the global and the national levels.
- 52.** Outcome 19 supports member States in pursuing an overall integrated approach to achieving decent work and encourages collaboration with other multilateral agencies in an effort to promote the mainstreaming of the Decent Work Agenda into their policies and programmes. It calls for the ILO to play a strong advisory and knowledge-management role through headquarters, the regional offices, decent work teams and country offices. The outcome is measured on the basis of two major indicators:
- (a) the number of member States that, with ILO support, make the goal of decent work increasingly central to policy-making; and
  - (b) the number of key international agencies or multilateral institutions that, through collaboration with the ILO, mainstream decent work into their policies and programmes.
- 53.** It must be stressed that the progress made by the Office in delivering on these two indicators has benefited substantially from contributions made under other SPF outcomes relevant to the policy coherence agenda. Evaluating and attributing contributions was a challenge because the expected results require a cross-cutting approach in the Office, and the topic of mainstreaming decent work did not lend itself well to the outcome-based structure.
- 54.** Total allocations for the biennium 2012–13 were US\$38,167,605 (excluding regular budget technical cooperation (RBTC)), an increase of nearly 16 per cent over 2010–11 allocations. Expenditures recorded for 2012–13 (including RBTC) were \$43,343,084, compared with \$49,725,056 (including RBTC) for the biennium 2010–11 (figure 2). Planned regular and extra-budgetary funds for outcome 19 increased in the past biennium, compared to the previous one. The amount of extra-budgetary funds has largely outstripped the planned amounts. RBTC expenditure declined by almost 30 per cent between 2010–11 and 2012–13.

**Figure 2. Expenditure on outcome 19 by source, 2010–11 and 2012–13 (US\$ million)**

Notes: RBTC: Regular budget technical cooperation; RBSA: Regular Budget Supplementary Account. All figures under planned resources are quoted from the programme and budget planning for the corresponding biennium (Programme and Budget for 2010–11, p. 71, and Programme and Budget for 2012–13, p. 79). Expenditure figures are sourced from final programme and budget implementation reports for the corresponding bienniums.

- 55.** Analysis of country programme outcomes suggests that most extra-budgetary technical cooperation (XBTC) support was received for regional and global initiatives, indicating that donor support for policy coherence and activities to mainstream decent work is still limited at national levels.

## Summary of findings

### Relevance

- 56.** The ILO has kept pace with global developments involving considerable dialogue with other international bodies. This led to ILO constituents adopting the Global Jobs Pact in 2009 and to the opening up of new avenues for joint initiatives with key international organizations (such as the European Union (EU), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the G20). The aim is to advocate for macroeconomic policies that address both the demand and supply sides of labour markets, and promote stable, inclusive economic growth and social cohesion. In general, the ILO has used these avenues well to promote the Decent Work Agenda.
- 57.** The ILO's country-level activities aimed at mainstreaming decent work are in line with the priorities identified at the regional and national levels. This process was facilitated by the fact that the second generation of DWCPs was developed in a much more consultative manner and were aligned with national development plans.
- 58.** In all the countries covered by this evaluation, the outcome strategy placed employment at the centre of development policies, with particular focus on strengthening social partnerships and social dialogue. This strategy is more relevant when DWCPs are based on thorough needs assessments, which, at times, have been found to be inadequate. While

there is a greater recognition of the role of decent work in poverty reduction, better elaboration of the link between the two is needed.

59. The outcome strategy and the country strategy mix are sometimes relevant to the tripartite constituents' priorities. The ILO tripartite mechanism and long-standing expertise in decent work are its key advantages and are valued by multilateral organizations globally. The ILO has undertaken initiatives, both independently and jointly with other international partners, that are relevant to the need to develop indicators to measure decent work, although a better assessment of the existing statistical capacities of each of the countries would have been useful.

### ***Coherence and complementarity***

60. Vertical coherence between activities at headquarters, regional offices and country offices has been mixed. While there are positive examples (such as the cooperation between the ILO and the IMF), better coherence is needed in the measurement of decent work. Multiple initiatives<sup>4</sup> aimed at measuring progress in terms of decent work call for better coherence within and among countries, with more attention to training and building local analytical and institutional capacities.
61. Horizontal coherence between the components of the outcome strategy in a given country could also be improved through DWCPs.
62. The outcome strategy is strongly complementary to other initiatives at the global level.<sup>5</sup> Locally, complementarity with other UN initiatives is strong, but less so with other international organizations' strategies, although there were examples of fruitful cooperation, such as with the IMF and the European Commission.

### ***Effectiveness***

63. As a result of its policy coherence initiatives, the ILO has been successful in building global alliances for decent work mainstreaming through initiatives such as: its efforts to mainstream the Decent Work Agenda in the multilateral organizations' response to the global crisis with the Global Jobs Pact; work with other agencies, such as the ILO–IMF policy dialogue for decent work, and inclusive, sustainable and equitable growth; the ILO's contribution to the post-2015 discussions, highlighting the priority of employment, decent work and inclusive growth; and activities initiated via the G20. This work was facilitated by the fact that many international organizations mainstream decent work concepts in their agenda, for example, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO),<sup>6</sup> the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)<sup>7</sup> and the European Commission.<sup>8</sup> The

<sup>4</sup> Such as the Global Jobs Pact scans, Studies on Growth with Equity series, and Labour and Social Trends reports.

<sup>5</sup> Such as the post-2015 agenda negotiations led by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), the UN joint crisis initiatives and the G20 response to the global crisis.

<sup>6</sup> A joint FAO–ILO website, *Food, Agriculture & Decent Work*, has been launched, providing resources on mainstreaming decent work in FAO policies and programmes (<http://www.fao-ilo.org>).

<sup>7</sup> The UNDP Executive Board endorsed the Global Jobs Pact as an institutional objective, integrating it into the organization's operational activities (2010).

Policy Integration Department<sup>9</sup> and the Statistics Department have been intensively involved in mainstreaming and measuring decent work. The ILO's joint project with the European Commission entitled Monitoring and Assessing Progress on Decent Work was used effectively to further strengthen these initiatives. However, to some extent, the lack of internal coherence poses a threat to the effectiveness of this initiative, with multiple assessments<sup>10</sup> in place concurrently.

64. The ILO has been successful in working with national constituents to achieve the mainstreaming of decent work concepts in national development plans and relevant policies. The depth of mainstreaming varies from country to country. With regard to mainstreaming decent work in sectoral policies, several areas stood out where most of the countries have registered significant successes.<sup>11</sup> In others, success was mixed or low. The ILO has been mostly effective in highlighting the decent work concerns of women workers in policies and programmes.
65. Initiatives to build institutional capacities in mainstreaming decent work have been mostly effective, but more focus is needed on sustainable institutional capacity building. Also needed are better assessments of the relative effectiveness of capacity building as opposed to legal and regulatory support at the outset. Overall, capacity building was found to be less effective if the enabling environment is inadequate.
66. Labour statistics have proved essential in promoting the mainstreaming of decent work and feeding evidence into policy-making. This work and the initiative on the development of decent work indicators and decent work country profiles were mutually reinforcing and supportive of national analytical capacity building. However, for the latter, more coherence in the approaches was, and still is, needed, coupled with better assessment of national ownership, sustainability design and clearer messages related to their purpose. Also, there is a need to promote the use of profiles and other tools for analysis and referencing by relevant ministries.
67. There is clear evidence of greater reflection of decent work concerns in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and joint UN programmes; the Chief Executive Board toolkit was useful in mainstreaming decent work into national policies and UNDAFs in the countries where it was piloted. However, the effectiveness of the toolkit's application remained low.<sup>12</sup>
68. South–South and triangular cooperation has proved to be an important avenue in promoting decent work mainstreaming, both via special programmes and under the umbrellas of formal regional alliances.

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<sup>8</sup> European Consensus on Development (2005) and the European Commission's Agenda for Change (2011).

<sup>9</sup> Since the reform process, the Multilateral Cooperation Department (MULTILATERALS) has subsumed some of the responsibilities of the Policy Integration Department.

<sup>10</sup> This includes decent work country profiles, Global Jobs Pact scans, the Studies on Growth with Equity series, and the Labour and Social Trends reports.

<sup>11</sup> Notable examples include: eliminating the worst forms of child labour; eliminating forced labour and trafficking; promoting youth employment; improved governance of labour migration; and anti-discrimination policies at the workplace.

<sup>12</sup> Independent evaluation: *Developing the UN CEB toolkit within the decent work campaign*, Dec. 2010, and country case studies under the present evaluation.

**Efficiency**

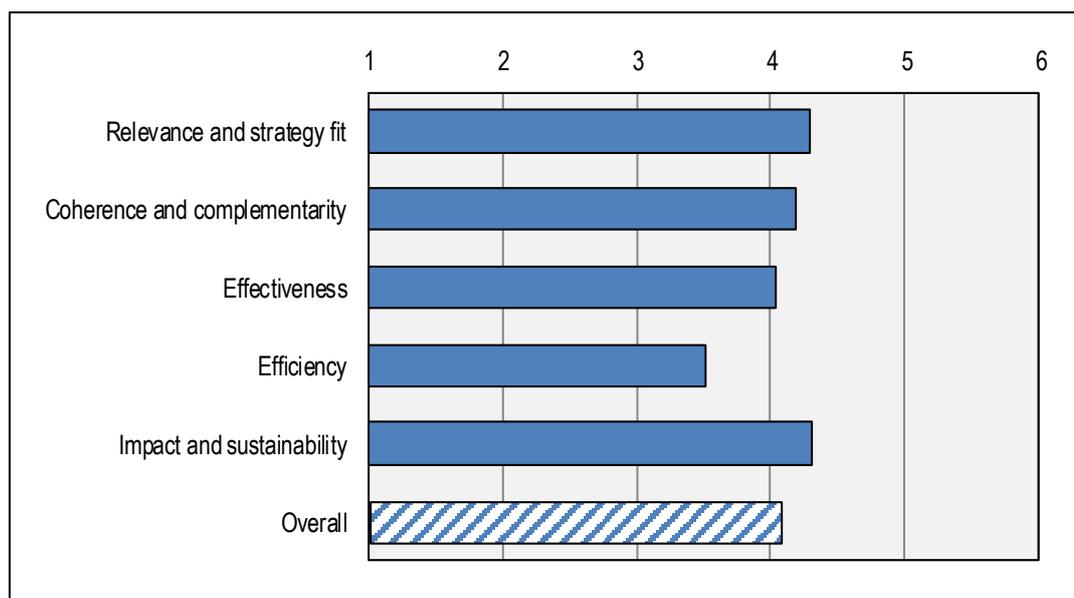
69. ILO vertical management arrangements have mostly worked well in terms of supporting greater mainstreaming of decent work. However, certain challenges persist, such as those related to vertical coherence and the availability of experts both regionally and locally to provide technical support in high-level collaboration as well as timely responses to national constituents' requests for technical assistance.
70. There are indications that financial resources are being used efficiently and some key global initiatives are leveraging resources. At the national level, the unrealistically short duration of projects (in relation to the outcomes defined), coupled with delays in approval, launch and transactions, reduces their time efficiency.
71. ILO visibility is rather low in some countries, ultimately hindering the extent to which decent work is being mainstreamed. This is largely due to the lack of a wider communication strategy. Furthermore, so far, the systems for organizational learning do not sufficiently support the sharing of knowledge and experience related to decent work mainstreaming.

**Potential for impact and sustainability**

72. International and multilateral agencies' mainstreaming of decent work at the policy level, including in the consultations relating to the post-2015 development agenda, is a sound basis for sustainability. At the national level, inclusion of decent work elements in national UNDAFs has progressed, but more integrated local-level UN programmes are required for sustainable mainstreaming, as seen in the case of the countries participating in the "Delivering as One" approach.
73. The sustainability of decent work mainstreaming activities aimed at the level of laws and policies is working in favour of long-term impacts, but more needs to be done to address implementation-related challenges.
74. The sustainability of the results in terms of measuring decent work is high in countries where national capacities either existed or were enhanced during the course of programme implementation. In others, more focus is needed on sustainable avenues for training and capacity building at national levels.
75. Key limitations to sustainability were: low national ownership and funding (in some countries); lack of the necessary expertise; lack of clarity related to the ILO's commitment to continue its support; and inadequate horizontal coherence within the ILO.

**Overall assessment of the strategy**

76. The overall scoring finds the performance "somewhat satisfactory", with a comparatively higher score on impact and sustainability (figure 3). This can be explained by the fact that the Office has been successful in embedding decent work in the programmes of several global and international agencies, with a high likelihood of their continued support. Similarly, a number of upstream activities mainstreaming decent work in national legislation and policies were noted.

**Figure 3. Overall performance of the strategy on policy coherence for decent work**

Note: The scoring uses a six-point scale where: 1 = very unsatisfactory, 2 = unsatisfactory, 3 = somewhat unsatisfactory, 4 = somewhat satisfactory, 5 = satisfactory, 6 = very satisfactory. The graph represents composite scores provided by evaluation team members, on the basis of constituents' feedback, and their own assessments from country case studies and from headquarters.

### **Lessons learned**

- 77.** The ILO's comparative advantage is optimized when technical advice and assistance is made available in response to emerging national situations and/or crisis situations. The Decent Work Agenda gains greater acceptance when governments recognize the deficit, and are open to dialogue and new policy approaches. At the same time, close interaction with other development partners, such as multilateral agencies operating in a country, helps to mainstream decent work concepts through a larger collaborative base.
- 78.** Engaging with a larger spectrum of government agencies will boost the ILO's visibility and will avoid situations where uncoordinated reforms are pursued by various ministries. More and closer engagement with civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations and think tanks will strengthen advocacy efforts and visibility.
- 79.** Well-coordinated actions between regional and national offices help to maximize impact. The experience with the decent work measurement activities (specifically, development of decent work country profiles) illustrates a contrasting picture, where parallel initiatives and indicators reduced the coherence of the approach and the extent of its impact in some countries.
- 80.** The One UN framework has proved to be effective in stimulating joint programmes between other UN agencies and the ILO, and has facilitated decent work mainstreaming.
- 81.** Capacity building itself does not produce relevant results if major structural issues are not solved. In such circumstances, resources for capacity building could be channelled in other directions, where more efficiency in results could be seen.
- 82.** Achieving the introduction of decent work mainstreaming in national legislation and policies is only a first step. Raising awareness around the reform agenda should receive

better recognition as an important component of capacity building and it should facilitate buy-in from users of the services.

- 83.** National statistical offices across member States have varied capacities, requiring different levels of engagement with regard to the development of decent work indicators and decent work country profiles. The process of identifying and developing indicators is more effective in countries with long-standing experience in working with the ILO to improve labour statistics.

## Recommendations

- 84. Recommendation 1: Continue with the current mainstreaming efforts at the global level, taking advantage of past experiences.** Undoubtedly, the concept of decent work as a means to human development has gained wider acceptance and the ILO has created strong allies in the Decent Work Agenda. The next step should be to collaborate with specific agencies on implementing this agenda at national levels. At the same time, assessing and fostering complementarities between global programmes and decent work mainstreaming initiatives is important.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MULTILATERALS and country offices	High	Medium term (next SPF period)	Yes

- 85. Recommendation 2: Develop strategies and processes to enable better targeting of multilateral agencies for mainstreaming decent work.** The ILO strategy for mainstreaming decent work in the policies and programmes of multilateral and financial agencies should follow a targeted and intensive approach. The focus should be on sustainable outcomes to be achieved jointly over a given period of time. It should be based on a clear match of mandates and scope for leveraging comparative advantages. Follow-up on results should be encouraged.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MULTILATERALS	Medium	Medium term	Yes

- 86. Recommendation 3: Further strengthen the ILO's comparative advantage in decent work and labour statistics.** Increasing the interest of multilateral and financial entities in empirical evidence on the linkages between decent work and sustainable socio-economic development calls for a defined role by the ILO. At the same time, constituents look forward to the ILO's support in strengthening their own capacities for measuring decent work. As such, the ILO needs to further build upon its comparative advantage in this area. Greater attention needs to be paid to ensuring the availability of experts at the regional and local levels.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MULTILATERALS, Statistics	High	Medium term (next SPF period)	Yes (budget for knowledge products and staff time)

- 87. Recommendation 4: Develop and announce a clear strategy on future approaches to measuring decent work.** The current lack of clarity about the decent work measurement portfolio needs to be resolved. Past evaluations and interviews with constituents during this evaluation also point to a multiplicity of analytical models. Although the products are appreciated for their quality, there is confusion on the use of various studies and analyses,

and what should be used as the ultimate reference for DWCP formulation or policy discussions. The Office needs to clarify this with country offices, while also offering them scope to report their achievements.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Headquarters (Deputy Director-General for Policy)	High	Short term	No

- 88. Recommendation 5: Aim at clearly positioning the ILO's mandate on the measurement and mainstreaming of decent work in the next SPF.** As the Office moves towards a new strategic framework beyond 2015 and identifies priority areas of work, it is important to translate its intentions with regard to measuring and mainstreaming decent work into measurable and reportable results. The corresponding organizational structure and results framework should, therefore, be clearly defined and aligned in the future strategic framework.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Headquarters (Deputy Director-General for Policy)	High	Short term	No

- 89. Recommendation 6: Prioritize assistance related to resolving structural issues over capacity building if such issues pose a major challenge.** This could prove instrumental in mainstreaming the Decent Work Agenda in more depth. Capacity building alone does not produce relevant results where there is an environment of weak regulatory frameworks governing all aspects of decent work, from sectoral laws and policies to those related to freedom of association and social dialogue. Improving these frameworks will set the capacity-building efforts on a more sustainable footing. Moreover, working on policy and regulatory issues together with the constituents is in itself an effective form of capacity building.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Country offices	Medium	Long term	Resource prioritization needed

- 90. Recommendation 7: Improve sustainability assessments at the design stage, with a special focus on designing initiatives with sustainability in mind.** The capacity-building needs of government implementation agencies are too large. This, coupled with the financial constraints and high staff turnover that many governments face, can pose a challenge in terms of sustainability. Therefore, a needs assessment should be conducted at the start so that such needs can be addressed more realistically.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MULTILATERALS and country offices	High	Long term	No

## Office response

- 91. Recommendations 1 and 2:** The Office fully agrees with the importance of continuing with its mainstreaming efforts at the global level. It has made significant progress in promoting decent work in recent years, in particular as part of the response to the financial

and economic crisis through work related to the Global Jobs Pact, UN joint crisis initiatives and support to the G20. These gains cannot be taken for granted, and the Office will focus its efforts on those organizations whose mandates and complementarity will ensure the greatest impact. The Office is also mindful that the finalization and adoption of the post-2015 development agenda will create new opportunities and challenges in mainstreaming the Decent Work Agenda. At the country level, collaboration with other UN agencies necessarily entails participating in joint programming in Delivering as One initiatives and continuing to harmonize DWCPs with UNDAF priorities.

- 92. Recommendation 3:** The ILO has made progress in enhancing its statistical activities since 2009 by strengthening the capacities of regional labour statisticians in Africa, the Americas and Asia. It has also redefined its corporate database and merged data with the ILOSTAT database. Huge gaps in data availability were identified and the Office has tried to enhance its presence at national levels by filling these gaps, and supporting countries in producing basic labour statistics and decent work indicators. In this task, partnerships with donors have been identified as crucial, as has the need to strengthen the Office's capacity to provide timely and relevant technical support in producing basic statistics through surveys, administrative registries and other sources, along with labour market information systems able to monitor decent work programmes in the field. By refining statistical concepts to better capture relevant variables in the world of work (such as work, employment, underutilization and informality) the Office managed to promote important changes in ways of defining and capturing information by countries, which need to be followed up and implemented in the field with the ILO's support. In this regard, it is important to see this task as very relevant in supporting mainstreaming decent work at the national level, since the task involves discussions with constituents and with other development agencies. The ILO is seen as the organization in charge of the statistical standards and definitions for decent work, and this role helps the mainstreaming efforts.
- 93. Recommendation 4:** In March 2013, the delegates to the 317th Session of the Governing Body discussed the ILO programme on measuring decent work, and noted that the preparation of the decent work country profiles would conclude at the end of the 2012–13 biennium and that evaluations of the work would be undertaken. Two such evaluations have taken place: an independent evaluation of the ILO–European Commission project, “Monitoring and Assessing Progress on Decent Work”, and a stocktaking exercise of the wider ILO programme on measuring decent work. An information paper on the evaluations has been prepared for the 322nd Session of the Governing Body (November 2014), which will be discussed in the Institutional Section. The Office is providing information to the Governing Body on the evaluation of the programme of work on decent work indicators and country profiles. It recognizes that it will need to further develop its thinking on how to best ensure the streamlining of the various analytical products that have been developed over recent years to meet constituents' needs.
- 94. Recommendation 5:** The evaluation of outcome 19 noted that the mainstreaming of decent work should reflect efforts across the strategic framework outcomes, and that the outcome was not a particularly good fit with the other 18 “thematic” outcomes. In the programme and budget proposals and draft transitional strategic plan for 2016–17, a number of key elements of the former outcome 19 related to ILO work with the multilateral system and work at the country level will be incorporated into the new governance outcome, “advocacy for decent work”. It will also highlight the Office's communication efforts to raise the profile of the Decent Work Agenda. The Office looks forward to guidance from the Governing Body on the future of the programme on measuring decent work to enable it to take a decision on its most appropriate placement in the SPF.

- 95. Recommendations 6 and 7:** Ensuring the presence of a basic institutional infrastructure and/or an appropriate enabling environment to ensure that capacity building will be useful and have an impact is an important issue that goes beyond the work undertaken under outcome 19. It touches on the Office's approach to support countries through DWCPs and technical cooperation projects. A number of evaluations, including that of the ILO–European Commission Monitoring and Assessing Progress on Decent Work project under outcome 19, have cited lessons on country selection and the pitfalls of a “one-size-fits-all” approach to programming and project design. The same applies to the issue of ensuring sustainability. The Office appreciates the observation in the evaluation that it needs to be more selective and strategic in its capacity-building efforts.

### **Part III. Independent evaluation of ILO Decent Work Country Programme strategies and activities in North Africa: 2010–13**

#### **Purpose of the evaluation**

- 96.** This high-level evaluation is the first cluster evaluation of the ILO's decent work strategies and activities in the North Africa subregion. The evaluation assesses the Office's support to the governments and social partners in Algeria, Egypt, Eritrea, Libya, Morocco, South Sudan, Sudan and Tunisia in their efforts to address decent work deficits. This has involved the evaluation of subregional strategic priorities, country strategies and roadmaps, technical cooperation projects and technical assistance activities carried out during 2010–13. The overarching question of the evaluation is whether the ILO's strategies and actions have effectively supported national constituents' priorities and efforts to fill decent work gaps.

#### **Operational approach**

- 97.** Within the context of the Arab Spring, the ILO was strategically positioned with a mandate and services that were expected to be in high demand. This, in turn, required the Decent Work Team for North Africa and Country Office for Egypt, Eritrea and Sudan (DWT/CO-Cairo) and the Country Office for Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia (CO-Algiers) to be adequately resourced and flexible, and the Regional Office for Africa (RO-Africa) and headquarters to be sufficiently responsive to resource gaps emerging during the exponential growth of opportunities and operations. These could not be met effectively with the same level of resources available to these offices before the uprisings. It also demanded agility and flexibility at both the country office and other operational levels.
- 98.** The ILO's interventions have responded to decent work deficits by facilitating entrepreneurship programmes, formulating policies to realize international labour standards and FPRW, and strengthening social dialogue. Unfortunately, the subregion's demand exceeded most efforts, but the relevance of the ILO's strategies and activities in the subregion is beyond question.
- 99.** The aftermath of the uprisings in North Africa required urgent assistance from the ILO, and presented new opportunities for work, both at national and local levels. These new opportunities focused on activities to provide informal work in both urban and rural areas. Such action is still the norm for many economies in the subregion. Thus, the ILO's strategies and programmes are in line with the future country programme outcomes

concentrating on rural and informal employment envisaged in the Programme and Budget for 2016–17, including also the areas of critical importance for 2014–15.

## Summary of findings

### *Relevance*

100. In the absence of fully fledged DWCPs – which, in some cases, were stalled at the draft stage just before the dramatic political unrest – the ILO developed non-binding roadmaps. These provided strategic direction and ensured the relevance and coherence of programme and project activities, and corresponding country programme outcomes that had emerged since 2011. The evaluation team found these activities eminently relevant to national priorities, despite the subregion’s high political and institutional instability.
101. Moreover, the evaluation found that these roadmaps and related country programme outcomes are relevant to the ILO’s mandate, programme and budget outcomes and the strategy for North Africa, 2011–15. They have resonated with the priorities and concerns articulated in governments’ national schemes and programmes for development, as well as with the social partners’ priorities. That is to say, the priorities of decent work and the need for employment, social protection and social dialogue have either been constant or in higher demand throughout the period. Fully fledged DWCP frameworks are still a priority. However, to be effective, the technical capacity of the ILO and its partners across the subregion needs to be addressed, in particular, in the areas of migration, human trafficking and social protection.
102. Despite the ILO’s efforts to develop timely strategies or roadmaps for North African countries undergoing transition, some of the key national constituents interviewed, such as UN country team members, important donors, UN partners and a few ILO staff members, had not heard of them. This highlights the fact that these strategies served an immediate and interim need in transitional countries without full DWCPs, and that partner institutions experienced a high staff turnover during the period. However, two issues need immediate attention: (i) unevenness of tripartite participation in the development of existing strategies and roadmaps; and (ii) the importance of internal and external communication in effectively achieving the strategic objectives in the strategies and roadmaps. The strategies and roadmaps still have relevance, particularly as they are aligned with current programme and budget outcomes, country programme outcomes and national priorities.

### *Coherence and value added*

103. The ILO’s two greatest comparative advantages are its tripartite approach and its normative framework for international labour standards. Applying these advantages more vigorously and conveying them more publicly is advisable, especially in the light of increased synergies with other UN agencies and joint programmes, and with partners that lack these quintessential assets. Nonetheless, it is evident from the surveys conducted that, in North Africa, ILO projects and technical assistance activities have contributed to a better understanding of the ILO standards, paving the way for more work to apply and realize FPRW.
104. The evaluation found a need for design and implementation approaches that are more systematic and based on country situation analyses, risk assessments and proper baselines to ensure greater coherence and effectiveness of donor support. Some external observers have perceived weak coherence in ILO operations: in part, because of insufficient information about the ILO’s work, as well as insufficient – or insufficiently clear –

representation. The decision by RO-Africa to assign the managerial responsibility for projects in North Africa (except Algeria) to the CO-Cairo and retain “political” representation for the Maghreb with the CO-Algiers, although well-intended, may have further exacerbated this perception.

- 105.** The ILO is aware of the capacity-related and organizational gaps that hinder the chances of greater coherence, synergies and value added among its activities in the subregion. Greater coherence was the subject of considerable deliberation within the ILO in North Africa, and decisions taken at its February 2014 retreat indicate a commitment to addressing this issue.

### **Effectiveness**

- 106.** The ILO’s interventions were not as effective as envisaged at their inception, largely because of issues such as weak tripartite involvement, low capacity in labour administration entities, cumbersome administrative procedures, limitations on internal resources, inefficiencies in financial and administrative support at headquarters, the tenuous political atmosphere within the countries and the ILO’s security concerns about working in crisis situations. This was aggravated by the fact that some of the technical cooperation and technical assistance activities are overly ambitious and of very short duration, limiting the possibility of achieving all of the intended results.
- 107.** Moreover, the effectiveness of the Office’s interventions has been hindered by inadequate communication and cooperation between the relevant ILO offices in the region, which created confusion about their roles and responsibilities among constituents, and diminished representation at the UN country team level. Limited country presence has caused the ILO to miss out on important opportunities commensurate with its mandate (that is, employment projects being carried out by UNDP and other multi-agency development programmes).
- 108.** That is not to suggest that Office personnel and project staff in North Africa have not been diligent. All staff members working in technical, programming, project management, administration or support positions have shown tremendous energy, competence and selfless dedication to their jobs. They have earned a reputation as being extremely effective and committed employees and public servants. Nonetheless, some staff members and their expertise have been underutilized, notably where technical specialists could be more involved in programming to ensure international labour standards, FPRW and gender issues are integrated across all projects.

### **Efficiency**

- 109.** In general, the DWT/CO-Cairo has demonstrated tremendous efficiency, especially in the light of the understaffing of administrative and operational functions, which have resulted in programme and project staff assuming multiple tasks. The sudden growth in programmes and many political and socio-economic shifts called for agile and resourceful management, which has engendered mutual appreciation and organizational solidarity among ILO colleagues across the region. Despite the shortage of capacity, the ILO was able to make significant contributions in policy and legislative reform, although the impact of these achievements will depend on future support and the required capacity. The signing of the Social Contract in Tunisia and the design of comprehensive national employment policies in Tunisia, Morocco and Sudan are good examples of the effectiveness of ILO technical advisory services. Noteworthy are two studies commissioned by the CO-Algiers, on challenges, prospects and policies for jobs and growth, and on estimates, trends and policies for the informal economy in Algeria. The evaluation team finds that ILO North

Africa has largely achieved its defined outcomes, within the exceptional constraints of the period and the unstable environment.

110. One consistent factor that impeded project efficiency was the frequent political changes and reappointment of ministers. The country case studies point out how political and institutional instability affected the efficient implementation of programmes and projects and impeded the achievement of the expected results. The high-level evaluation notes how tripartite coordination platforms such as steering committees which have been instituted in some projects is a good practice worth replicating in all projects to facilitate greater programme implementation efficiency, effectiveness and impact, as well as relevance and coherence.
111. Anticipated management changes in the DWT/CO-Cairo and CO-Algiers during this evaluation could present an opportunity to rededicate ILO resources to strategic priorities. Additional technical capacities in areas such as social protection, social dialogue, migration and human trafficking are needed to manage the expanding DWT/CO-Cairo, and to tackle the subregion's decent work deficits.

### **Impact**

112. The corresponding commitments and efforts of governments and the social partners will ultimately determine the results and impact of the ILO's strategies and actions. For most projects under this review, sustaining the momentum beyond the often too short project duration remains a challenge to achieving any meaningful impact.
113. The evaluation team observed the ILO staff's intense involvement in advisory services, applying knowledge products/tools, capacity building, and project management. However, some of these activities appeared dispersed and lacking strategic direction, which led to duplication of effort and minimization of synergies among projects and across agencies. This classic interagency vulnerability could hinder any prospect of impact, and may also undermine the sustainability of the results achieved.
114. The results, impacts and sustainability of ILO actions were difficult to gauge, due to a lack of monitoring and evaluation data at project and programme levels, both within the ILO and among national implementation partners. This evaluation was able to confirm findings from various other project and programme evaluation reports which attribute the lack of such data to: (i) low evaluability of projects' logical frameworks; and (ii) inappropriate or non-existent frameworks for monitoring and evaluation at the project, country and subregional levels. However, this has been remedied for projects executed in the second biennium under review.

### **Sustainability**

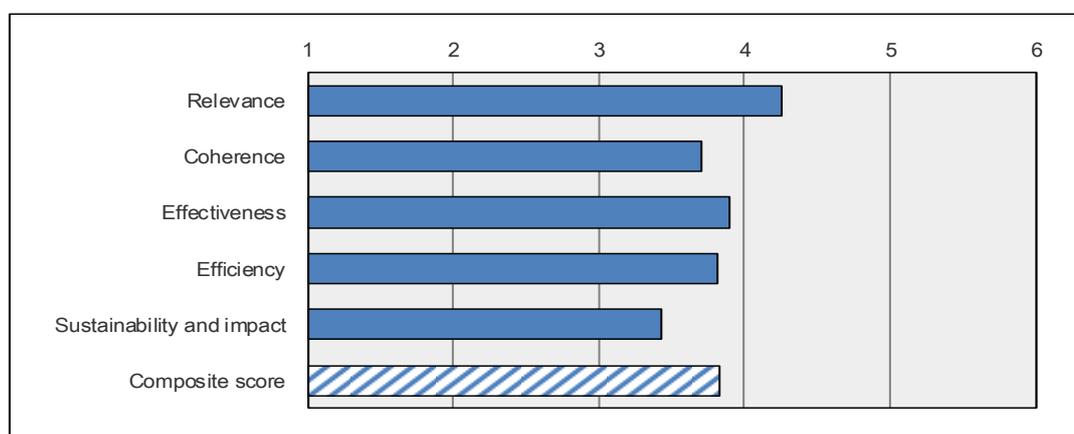
115. Finally, the low capacity of many government institutions, the high staff turnover, insufficient political will and commitment by governments, and the need for greater ownership of results by the social partners ultimately hamper sustainability. Moreover, the short-term duration of some projects and the limited focus and capacity of the ILO and governments for programming, follow-up and consolidation of results may undermine the prospect of sustainability. The high-level evaluation did not find explicit sustainability strategies in most of the operations it reviewed. In some cases, tactical decisions were made to produce results and ensure their sustainability. This is particularly common in capacity-building activities geared toward permanent staff of ministries, apparently in order to ensure continuity despite continuous government reshuffles and to ensure the sustainability of inputs.

**116.** In addition to fully engaging national constituents, some activities involve civil society organizations, which builds civic engagement during the projects, but also may run the risk of limiting their sustainability due to those organizations' limited financial and human resources and capacities. Nonetheless, their role as task implementers and in national steering committees and project advisory committees has aided ILO programme sustainability and project achievements, while advancing tripartism and enhancing local project ownership.

### Overall performance

**117.** The overall assessment of the evaluation criteria shows that relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency all rated close to or in the higher end of the “somewhat satisfactory” range. Impact and sustainability did not fare as well and scored closer to the range of “somewhat unsatisfactory”. The overall composite score falls close to “somewhat satisfactory”. This score is qualified within the context of the numerous constraints cited above.

**Figure 4. Overall performance of decent work strategies in North Africa**



Note: The scoring uses a six-point scale where: 1 = very unsatisfactory, 2 = unsatisfactory, 3 = somewhat unsatisfactory, 4 = somewhat satisfactory, 5 = satisfactory, 6 = very satisfactory. The graph represents composite scores provided by evaluation team members on the basis of ILO staff's assessments, constituents' feedback, and their own assessments derived from document reviews, interviews and country case studies.

### Lessons learned

**118. Lesson 1:** The ILO's unique potential and competence ensures constituents continued engagement in programming and project planning, and delivery. In theory, this is the way to build ownership and improved implementation. However, this work is tremendously labour intensive, requiring a specific set of technical skills, close collaboration between specialists and enhanced capacities on results-based management project design.

**119. Lesson 2:** The Strategy for North Africa acknowledges the importance of social protection as one of its three pillars, but the ILO has not been able to deliver accordingly. Lessons from case studies indicate the importance and potential results of a dedicated social protection project in all countries, supported by appropriate specialists on decent work teams. All countries need support to improve social protection as an integral and indispensable part of the ILO development assistance package.

**120. Lesson 3:** Subregional and regional initiatives need to be under regular periodic review in order to ensure continued relevance to country-specific needs, and risk analysis that takes

into account existing capacities at the country and subregional levels to support proper implementation.

- 121. Lesson 4:** Since ILO training and knowledge products in the subregion are popular and effective, it would be judicious to invest in methods and assets to ensure the exchange of knowledge, maintenance and recording of evaluations, and timely follow-up. Among the knowledge products needed and requested across the region are ILO studies and policy advice on informal and rural employment. Also needed is more information on ILO standards and their operationalization, which should, where possible, be available in Arabic.
- 122. Lesson 5:** The present division of roles and functions between CO-Cairo and CO-Algiers is at first sight difficult to imagine in practice. The separation of political representations (handled in Algiers) and technical and administrative responsibilities (handled in Cairo) has created a false dichotomy that has placed further constraints on complementary subregional operations.
- 123. Lesson 6:** The ILO's rapid response to new opportunities created a need for stronger administrative and programming capacities. This sudden increase in the volume of operations managed by the DWT/CO-Cairo operations also created additional needs at the country office level for sufficient programme support resources to handle the volume of the Office's technical cooperation portfolio for the North Africa subregion.
- 124. Lesson 7:** Better communications with UN country teams, national constituents, social partners and selected media would make the ILO's work better known and enhance its relevance at the country level.
- 125. Lesson 8:** The ambiguities in the ILO's representational roles and functions have resulted in insufficient internal and external coordination, which has had a negative effect on the relevance and coherence of the ILO's operations in the subregion, and on external perceptions, which might have resulted in lost opportunities for ILO programming and service delivery.

## Recommendations

- 126. Recommendation 1:** A fully developed DWCP remains a goal and priority for most stakeholders. ILO programmes and projects in the subregion should evolve from crisis response mode to more sustainable interventions based on sound social dialogue and tripartite involvement throughout the programme or project cycle. This requires the development of medium- and long-term operational strategies and/or roadmaps within the DWCP framework and a subregional ILO decent work strategy that fully involve national constituents and social partners in the design and implementation of monitoring and evaluation processes.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO-Cairo, in close coordination with CO-Algiers and RO-Africa	High	Six months	Not known

- 127. Recommendation 2:** The ILO's North Africa operations should involve decent work team specialists more in the programming and project cycle, from inception through to evaluation. This practice calls for more frequent and better-integrated staff meetings for greater exchange of experience and expertise among ILO staff members across the subregion.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO-Cairo, CO-Algiers	Medium	Six months	Not anticipated

- 128. Recommendation 3:** The ILO should establish a subregional, Arabic-enabled knowledge-sharing platform to promote greater collaboration among decent work team specialists, country offices, project staff and tripartite constituents throughout the subregion. This platform would provide easier access to project implementation reports, evaluations, thematic studies and other knowledge products through a trilingual interface (Arabic, English and French) linked to and from the ILO website.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO-Cairo, CO-Algiers	Medium	12 months	Medium to substantial resources required, subject to facilities and support provided at headquarters

- 129. Recommendation 4:** Establish and maintain a training database to provide an essential tool to track, monitor, develop and report on capacity-building activities. Such a database would form part of a wider knowledge system designed and maintained with the participation of chief technical advisers, decent work teams and management to ensure user-friendly access to training materials.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO-Cairo, CO-Algiers	Medium	12 months	Some resources might be needed

- 130. Recommendation 5:** To operate *in* and *on* crisis situations, the ILO needs to address three key issues which are affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations in the subregion: (i) a shortage of skills to address the priority areas for the subregion; (ii) unrealistic start-up and implementation time frames for programmes and projects operating in crisis situations; and (iii) insufficient training, systems and equipment to operate in a wider range of logistical and security environments.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO-Cairo, CO-Algiers	Medium	12 months	Some resources might be needed

- 131. Recommendation 6:** Capacity and resources should be commensurate with the volume of the technical cooperation portfolio. In the case of the North Africa subregion, there is a risk that the disparity between the Office's capacity and the volume of the subregional programme and technical cooperation will hamper the achievement of the outcomes of the ILO strategy for North Africa. The ILO should address gaps in resources and in capacity in real time, instead of waiting for adjustments in the new biennium.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
PROGRAM and RO-Africa	High	Six months	Adjustment to existing resources needed

- 132. Recommendation 7:** The DWT/CO-Cairo needs to work with the national coordinators and the CO-Algiers to assist them in developing a communications strategy for the UN country team, national constituents and the general public. This would involve adopting a

dissemination policy to share success stories and so on, generating communication products and channels to feed the country office websites and fostering closer cooperation with select media.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO-Cairo	Medium	12 months	Not anticipated

- 133. Recommendation 8:** The ILO must address needs for representation in countries in the subregion where it does not have an office. This high-level evaluation has shown that the ILO should be better represented in the meetings of UN country teams, senior management teams and project coordination teams, with designated international staff members representing the ILO at important coordination meetings.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Headquarters and RO-Africa	High	Six months	Additional resources needed

## Office response

- 134.** The Office acknowledges the report of the high-level independent evaluation of ILO DWCP strategies and activities in North Africa and its findings, lessons learned and recommendations. These will help improve the implementation of the ILO programme inside and outside North Africa. While taking careful note of its findings, the Office has the following comments.

- 135.** The Office intends to take into account many useful findings, conclusions and recommendations of the report as it supports the decent work teams, country offices and the regional office in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating technical cooperation projects and DWCPs. These include:

- developing medium- and long-term operational strategies in a more participatory manner within the framework of a subregional ILO decent work strategy;
- conducting proper risk analysis, particularly in countries being affected by conflict, in order to make informed and timely decisions in response to programme management and delivery;
- improving the involvement of specialists in programming and the project cycle from inception through to evaluation;
- enhancing coordination and communications with UN country teams, and national constituents and social partners.

In addition, the Office takes note of the following:

- 136. Recommendations 1 and 2:** The Office will support the design of DWCPs in North African countries within the framework of the subregional ILO Decent Work Strategy in 2015, starting with Algeria and Egypt. It recognizes that the wider political, development and decent work context in these countries is now conducive to the design of medium- to long-term planning frameworks. In the preparation of DWCPs and technical cooperation projects, the Office will ensure the full participation of relevant technical specialists, technical cooperation project staff, stakeholders and UN agencies. In 2015, the Office will support the development of DWCPs in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia at a minimum.

- 137. Recommendations 3 and 4:** The Office acknowledges the importance of a subregional knowledge-sharing platform to promote greater collaboration among staff and tripartite constituents throughout the subregion and beyond. It will work with the relevant departments at headquarters to implement this recommendation. The DWT/CO-Cairo will also develop a training database to monitor, report and exchange information on its capacity-building training with the support of the RO-Africa and relevant departments at headquarters.
- 138. Recommendations 5, 6 and 8:** The RO-Africa recognizes that it needs to be more agile in the current fluid regional situation. The Office has already adopted different approaches in managing projects, but will also investigate using scenarios and other methods to remain flexible and responsive. These recommendations will be reviewed, taking into account the specific context of each country and in line with the recommendations of the ILO field operations and structure review as well as relevant ILO guidelines.
- 139. Recommendation 7:** The Office concurs that it is important to have a good communications system, and to develop and implement communications plans in line with the global communication strategy to reach the ILO's constituents, partners and stakeholders. With the support of the global and regional communication teams, DWT/CO-Cairo and DWT/CO-Algiers will develop and implement the country offices' communications plans.

### **Draft decision**

- 140. *The Governing Body requests the Director-General to take into consideration the findings, lessons learned and recommendations (paragraphs 37–43, 84–90 and 126–133) of the three high-level independent evaluations presented in this summary and to ensure their appropriate implementation.***