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Evaluation of the plan of action to give effect to the conclusions concerning the second recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work, adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2017

Summary: This paper, which has been submitted for information only, provides an overview of progress in the implementation of the plan of action on fundamental principles and rights at work.

Author unit: Governance and Tripartism Department (GOVERNANCE).

Related documents: Follow-up to the resolution concerning the second recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work (GB.331/INS/4/3(Rev.))

▶ Introduction

1. At its 106th Session (June 2017), the International Labour Conference conducted a second recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of fundamental principles and rights at work, under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008. The discussions led to a [resolution and conclusions including a framework for action](#) for the effective and universal respect, promotion and realization of fundamental principles and rights at work, which were given effect via a six-year plan of action (2017–23), adopted by the Governing Body at its 331st Session in October–November 2017.¹
2. The plan of action is organized around three broad components identified in the framework for action: (i) realizing fundamental principles and rights at work at the national level; (ii) mobilizing ILO means of action on fundamental principles and rights at work; and (iii) taking into account other initiatives to promote fundamental principles and rights at work. It also identifies specific targets to be achieved around ratifications, Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) and national action plans or other relevant frameworks.
3. Paragraph 14 of the plan of action provides for an evaluation of its implementation no later than 2020. This current document is a self-evaluation of the plan of action. It recalls the main aspects of the plan of action; summarizes achievements and challenges in the implementation of its objectives and targets; and proposes a number of points concerning the way forward.
4. While the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the implementation of some initiatives scheduled for 2020 under the plan of action, different modalities have been deployed to minimize the negative impact. Furthermore, since the plan of action was being implemented for two full years prior to the onset of the pandemic, significant advances have been made in respect of the achievement of its objectives.

▶ Specific targets under the plan of action

5. The most significant achievement under the plan of action was the universal ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), following the ratification of the Convention by the Kingdom of Tonga, which was registered in August 2020. This is a historic achievement, as it is the first ILO Convention ever to have been ratified by all 187 Member States. This milestone calls for further progress towards universal ratification of the other fundamental Conventions. To date, the ILO has registered 12² out of 15 targeted additional ratifications of the fundamental Conventions, and 24³ out

¹ GB.331/INS/4/3(Rev.).

² C. 87 (Iraq); C. 98 (Viet Nam); C. 105 (Viet Nam); C. 138 (Suriname, Vanuatu, Myanmar); C. 182 (Cook Islands, Eritrea, Marshall Islands, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu).

³ Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Cook Islands, Djibouti, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, Malta, Mozambique, Namibia, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe.

of 57 targeted additional ratifications of the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (the Forced Labour Protocol).

6. The targets in respect of national action plans to promote, respect and realize fundamental principles and rights at work were not yet met. To date, 16 out of 20 targeted Member States have developed such national action plans.
7. Conversely, the achievement of the target in respect of DWCPs has exceeded expectations. Since the beginning of 2018, at least one or more of the fundamental principles and rights at work has been integrated, either as a priority or as an outcome, in 19 newly established DWCPs. The original target was 13.
8. Notwithstanding the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Office continues to follow up with those countries where the process of ratification or development of national action plan has begun. Guidance notes for country offices on all four fundamental principles and rights at work are also being developed, to promote their inclusion in DWCPs and other national frameworks.

Component I: Realizing fundamental principles and rights at work at the national level

9. This component focuses on strengthened policy, legal and institutional frameworks on fundamental principles and rights at work, and is linked directly to the specific targets to be achieved under the plan of action.
10. In addition to the achievements highlighted in the previous section, seven Member States promulgated legislation on the eradication of child labour, and seven others introduced lists of hazardous child labour. In the Philippines and Viet Nam, a national child labour policy was used as an entry point to also address challenges related to discrimination and freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.
11. A digital application offering online reporting options for non-ratifying countries is now available. In a number of cases, however, Member States reported technical difficulties in using the digital application, despite assistance provided by the Office. It would be timely to design and develop a new and more user-friendly online reporting tool, thus increasing the reporting rate and facilitating the elaboration and receipt of standardized country reports and their incorporation into a database.

Component II: Mobilizing ILO means of action on fundamental principles and rights at work

12. This component concerns the following four key areas: (a) Effective planning and resource mobilization, with a focus on developing partnerships to mobilize resources and intensifying collaboration within and across departments and field offices to ensure mainstreaming; (b) Building capacity and strengthening development cooperation, with a focus on addressing ratification and implementation gaps; (c) Enhanced research capacity with the view to developing and disseminating peer-reviewed and scientifically rigorous research; and (d) Effective standards-related action, with a focus on giving new impetus to the universal ratification campaign.
13. Within the framework of this component, the following key global capacity-building activities were organized, tools developed, research findings disseminated and development cooperation projects implemented with a view to achieving the objectives.

Many of these were conceptualized and implemented through joint initiatives or through international or regional partnerships, and using development cooperation funds.

14. In collaboration with the International Training Centre of the ILO (Turin Centre), a five-day global Academy on fundamental principles and rights at work was organized in October 2019. It provided an opportunity for approximately 100 government, employer and worker representatives to learn how to promote the principles and rights across supply chains, in the informal and rural economies, in situations of conflict and disaster, and against the backdrop of a fast-changing world of work. The Academy comprised a mix of master classes and elective tracks in English, French, Spanish and Russian, and provided participants with concrete learning opportunities around the drafting of national policies and regulations, mitigating risks, and enhancing enforcement and compliance initiatives. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive and it was agreed that the Academy would be held once a biennium. The second Academy, originally scheduled for October 2020, will be postponed to 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
15. Within the framework of the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC), two global and one regional capacity-building activities were organized for governments, employers' and workers' organizations, businesses and civil society. In February 2020, 65 participants from over 18 countries gathered in Berlin, Germany to discuss effective measures to reduce the gender pay gap. Discussions focused on the impact and challenges of implementing measures aimed at reducing the gender pay gap, in particular pay transparency laws and collective bargaining. In April 2019, 50 participants from 13 countries met in Reykjavik, Iceland, to discuss the promotion of better indicators, statistics, data and policies to reduce the gender pay gap. The meeting reviewed different methodologies and tools used to measure the gender pay gap, focusing on appropriate policy measures to eliminate the unexplained portion of the gender pay gap. In June 2019, 50 participants from the Latin American and Caribbean region met in Lima, Peru, to discuss similar issues to those discussed in Reykjavik, but with a focus on experiences in the region. Following these three meetings, there were specific requests by participants for further peer-to-peer exchanges on specific topics, particularly in the use of tools developed by the different agencies to estimate the gender pay gap at enterprise level.
16. Training materials have been developed to support the Handbook on Assessment of Labour Provisions in Trade and Investment Arrangements. These materials are available in English and Spanish and have been tested in two regions (Asia and Europe). Positive feedback and insightful and instructive comments were gathered during a tripartite workshop held in Mexico City in February 2020, to guide the development of a toolkit of trade and decent work indicators, which will aid in linking trade to decent work outcomes.
17. A training toolkit comprising the following seven modules is now available on line through the Turin Centre's e-Campus: Collective bargaining; Policy and practice; Negotiation skills; Workplace cooperation; Grievance handling; Conflict dynamics; and Soft skills. Various modules were pilot-tested in countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Jordan, Myanmar, Pakistan and Viet Nam, in collaboration with the relevant field offices.
18. The Industrial Relations Database (IRData) has been expanded to include key statistics on industrial relations, including trade union density rate, collective bargaining coverage rate, and strikes and lockouts. A guidebook supporting constituents in the collection of data and in improving the quality and comparability of that data, and providing insights

regarding the various data sources that can be used, based on concrete country examples and good practices, was published in early 2020.

19. The following technical, thematic and issues briefs, available in English French and Spanish, have been widely disseminated through field offices and online: *Towards the Urgent Elimination of Hazardous Child Labour; Practices with Good Potential: Towards the Elimination of Hazardous Child Labour; Young Workers in Hazardous Occupations; and An Introduction to Legally Prohibiting Hazardous Work for Children.*
20. Global estimates of child labour and forced labour, published in 2017, received broad media attention. The figures were extensively quoted in electronic and print media and have been referred to as the most recent global data available to describe the prevalence and trends of child labour, forced labour and other forms of exploitation, summarized under the heading of “modern slavery”. Specifically, the reports were disseminated at various high-level events in 2018, and copies were shared with all participants and with diplomatic missions and other interested stakeholders through the ILO Office in New York. Media advisory press releases were issued on the Alliance 8.7 website and websites of participating partners. Social media messages were disseminated on Facebook and Twitter. A digital summary is available on the Alliance 8.7 website. Preparations for the next editions of the global estimates on child labour and forced labour are well under way. Both reports will be launched in September 2021, ideally during a side event to the United Nations General Assembly.
21. *The Global Wage Report 2018/19: What Lies Behind Gender Pay Gaps* was launched in November 2018. The global launch in Geneva was followed by regional launches in Bangkok, Cairo, Delhi, Lisbon, Madrid, New York and Paris. The media (such as The Associated Press, Reuters, Agencia EFE and Swiss and European newspapers were well represented at each of these launches. The report also received significant media coverage, was presented in conferences, workshops, and wage courses at the Turin Centre and was also promoted on social media.
22. In spite of challenges experienced in securing funds for the development of a methodology to measure discrimination in employment and occupation, the Office has expanded its knowledge base on inequalities in the world of work. For example, regarding discrimination against women in employment and occupation, the Office has carried out research into the effects of the unequal distribution of time spent in unpaid care work on women’s access to the labour market and their career progression, as well as into unfair working conditions in highly feminized sectors, including health and education. The Office has also analysed inequalities faced by indigenous and tribal peoples who continue to experience marginalization and exclusion as a result of discrimination in the world of work. While the global and regional estimates do not measure the extent to which these inequalities are due to discrimination, they highlight current patterns of inequality and increase the knowledge base for policymakers in addressing them. Additionally, a global survey on assessing HIV discrimination in the workplace is currently under way. The results of the survey, which covers 50 countries, will be launched in September 2021.
23. The 50 for Freedom campaign has been rolled out, in partnership with the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), at the global and national levels to promote the ratification and implementation of the Forced Labour Protocol of 2014, raise awareness of forced labour and share innovative practices to prevent forced labour, protect victims and ensure their access to justice. The initial goal of getting the first 50 countries to ratify the Protocol is within reach, with 45 countries having ratified to date. More than 53,000 people from all regions

have signed up on the platform. A variety of multimedia products has been developed, including videos featuring supporters and artists who helped to trigger a significantly high engagement rate on social media. Events were organized in a number of countries, including Argentina and Brazil.

24. At its 2018 session, the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations adopted a General Observation on the application of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), focusing on the grounds of race, colour and national extraction. At the request of the Governing Body, in 2021, the Committee of Experts will prepare a General Survey on gender-related instruments, including Convention No. 111. The findings of the Committee of Experts, both under the General Observation and the General Survey, should contribute to improve: (i) understanding of the provisions of Convention No. 111; (ii) knowledge of its effective application, both in law and practice in ILO Member States; as well as (iii) awareness of the challenges and opportunities for progress in its application.
25. Between 2017 and 2020, the number of countries under the International Programme on the Elimination of Child and Forced Labour (IPEC+) Global Flagship Programme has doubled, with ongoing projects on child labour and/or forced labour in 63 countries across all the regions. IPEC+ is supporting constituents in four mutually reinforcing target areas of action: empowerment and representation; public policies, governance, enforcement and protection; partnerships and advocacy; and knowledge and data. The programme is funded primarily by Brazil, the European Union, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.
26. The Office is seeking funding for a Global Programme on Labour Rights at Work, which will include projects with components focused on increased ratification and improved implementation of Conventions Nos 87 and 98, as appropriate. Within this framework, country-level activities and projects will receive priority in support of DWCPs and Country Programme Outcomes. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are included in DWCPs in Côte d'Ivoire, Guyana, India, Jordan, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Suriname.

Component III: Taking into account other initiatives to promote fundamental principles and rights at work

27. The component focuses on building or strengthening partnerships at the global, regional and national levels, with the aim of ensuring policy coherence and supporting the efforts of Member States to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets of particular significance for fundamental principles and rights at work, namely targets 8.5, 8.7 and 8.8. It also promotes strengthened partnerships with United Nations agencies and key stakeholders to promote fundamental principles and rights at work at all levels.
28. Alliance 8.7 continues to be active in all regions, supporting its pathfinder countries and working with various regional bodies and initiatives to advance action towards the achievement of SDG target 8.7. For example, the Regional Initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour has been organizing annual meetings to review progress, share experiences and develop joint action towards its objectives. Similarly in the African region, the African Union has adopted a Ten Year Action Plan on Eradication of Child Labour, Forced Labour, Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery in Africa (2020–2030), as part of its Agenda 2063. Within the framework of the Trade and Decent

Work Project, the Alliance 8.7 maintains a permanent dialogue with the European Union (Directorates-General for Trade, Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, and International Cooperation and Development). It also actively supports the efforts of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children to eradicate child labour and trafficking, as well as sexual exploitation. Additionally, there is ongoing close collaboration with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The collaboration focuses on strengthening the capacity of its 57 Member States to use public procurement as a means to prevent trafficking and forced labour.

- 29.** Under the auspices of the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture (IPCCLA), an African regional workshop of rural workers' and small producers' organizations was organized by the ILO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Accra (Ghana) in September 2017 on experiences and good practices of organizing against child labour. Participants adopted the Accra Declaration, which was presented during a side event on rural economy at the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 14–16 November 2017). IPCCLA has held annual meetings since its creation in 2007. At the most recent meeting in December 2019, participants discussed further engagement in priority countries (Ghana, Malawi, Mali, United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda), some of which are also pathfinder countries of Alliance 8.7. IPCCLA agreed to use the Accra Declaration as the key document to leverage more attention by policymakers to the root causes of child labour in agriculture. IPCCLA is expected to provide an update about its activities at the Global Coordinating Group meetings of Alliance 8.7 in 2020, as a standing agenda item.
- 30.** A high-level launch of EPIC, the multi-stakeholder coalition led by the ILO, UN Women and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, took place in September 2017 during the 72nd session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. EPIC supports governments, employers, workers and their organizations to make concrete and coordinated progress towards the achievement of SDG target 8.5. Follow-up regional launches were held in Panama for Latin America and the Caribbean in January 2018, in Bangkok for Asia and the Pacific in February 2018, in Burkina Faso for Francophone Africa in December 2018 and in Jordan for the Arab States in December 2019. These launches have increased support, awareness and greater engagement of constituents for the objectives. To date, the Coalition has over 40 active members, with a steering committee comprising the governments of Canada, Egypt, Iceland, Jordan, New Zealand, Panama, South Africa and Switzerland. The IOE and ITUC are also members of this committee. Since its launch, various global peer-to-peer learning activities, already reported under Component II, have been organized by the Secretariat and its members. Furthermore, in 2018, 44 pledges were made by global leaders from governments, private sector companies, trade unions and civil society to take concrete action towards closing the gender pay gap.
- 31.** Funding is being sought for the Global Programme on Labour Rights at Work, which includes global and regional meetings to promote implementation of SDG target 8.8 to protect labour rights. These meetings will focus on freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. Within this framework, the following meetings will be organized: (a) five regional meetings in partnership with other international and regional organizations; and (b) an international, high-level symposium on Freedom of association and collective bargaining: Unlocking their promise for the ILO's next 100 years.

- 32.** To support the various SDG partnerships highlighted above, several ILO SDG Notes that include references to fundamental principles and rights at work are now available on the ILO website. In 2018–19, theme-specific Notes were prepared in respect of child labour and forced labour. These are available in draft form and will need to be updated in light of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and the Programme and Budget for the biennium 2020–21, as well as related developments such as the United Nations Decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.
- 33.** In 2019–20, the Child Labour Platform (CLP) expanded its cross-sectoral membership, and it currently includes companies from the apparel, automobile, cosmetics, food and beverage, telecommunications, trading and mining sectors. During the same period, the Platform started consultations on the elimination of child labour in supply chains in India, Morocco and Viet Nam. In November 2019, the CLP annual meeting took place in Paris with the participation of the Chair of Alliance 8.7 and representatives of more than 20 multinational companies.
- 34.** The Global Business Network on Forced Labour and Human Trafficking currently comprises 15 members and partners. Since its launch in June 2017, it has reached over 300 representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises from a variety of sectors to raise awareness (including on fair recruitment for national and migrant workers), share good practices and understand the challenges they face, particularly in terms of the policy environment. It organized webinars for its members on relevant topics, undertook a study and facilitated the participation of its members in global events.
- 35.** The IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour was organized by the Government of Argentina and held in Buenos Aires in November 2017. In addition to making 96 pledges, participants also issued a Declaration calling on governments, social partners, international and regional organizations, civil society organizations and all other relevant stakeholders to commit to specific principles and actions to eradicate child and forced labour. Since the Conference, efforts to eliminate child labour and forced labour have been reinvigorated and accelerated in many countries. The Conference also stimulated new partnerships, has enhanced action by the social partners at the national and global levels, and has propelled high-level advocacy and commitment at the global and regional levels. The renewed commitment and action following the Conference has also led to enhanced resource mobilization efforts at different levels. An update on preparation of the V Global Conference will be considered by the Governing Body at its 340th Session.
- 36.** The Decent Work for Sustainable Development Resource Platform was established and is used in training seminars, in cooperation with the Turin Centre. It includes specific thematic areas on child labour, forced labour, freedom of association, gender equality and non-discrimination, social dialogue and tripartism, and working conditions. Moreover, the resource library of the Platform contains good practices on fundamental principles and rights at work and a dedicated resource facility on international labour standards accessible through the NORMLEX platform.
- 37.** Although the World Bank’s environmental and social standard on labour and working conditions does not specifically reference the core labour standards of the ILO, the Office has provided comments on the guidance notes for this standard, and the Turin Centre is developing a course on applying labour standards in the safeguards of financial institutions. The target audience for the course is environmental and social sustainability specialists from multilateral and national development banks and commercial banks. The first course is scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2020.

38. In light of increased interest from several financial institutions in joint work related to the implementation of their lending and investing safeguards and the fundamental principles and rights at work, the Office is currently pursuing options with a view to establishing formal cooperation agreements with these institutions.

▶ Conclusions

39. During the COVID-19 global pandemic, it is important to recall that the fundamental principles and rights at work are indispensable enabling elements of decent work and social justice and are crucial to building back better. The Office will continue to implement the plan of action, adapting its tools and guidance as appropriate to ensure that fundamental principles and rights at work are promoted and safeguarded.