TUDCN Open Coordination Meeting Report

Brussels, 24-25 September 2015

**24 September 2015**

The meeting started with welcoming words and the presentation and adoption of the agenda.

**Session 1: the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework**

This session aimed at providing an overall analysis of the outcomes of the two international processes, including weaknesses and strengths.

**María José Romero from Eurodad** highlighted that the outcome document lacks leadership, ambition and actions. It is too optimistic about the role of the private sector and the role of states in driving these processes was not recognized. In addition, the concepts of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and blended finance were endorsed without tangible commitments by the private sector. Therefore, no progress to be noted on private sector accountability. She however also acknowledged certain positive aspects, such as the new follow-up process which is different and stronger (an annual follow-up forum on FfD will soon be launched); the role of Civil Society at the global level and its linkages at national level (this was well covered by the press), the future campaign for a global tax body (towards the UNGA in 2016).

**Jan Van de Poel from the Belgian NGO platform 11.11.11** mentioned that civil society’s expectations about the FfD process were high and that the current crisis of multilateralism calls for a downward adjustment of those expectations. On the way forward, he stressed that the spill-over into New York (SDGs) and Paris (COOP21) needs to be ensured as well as the follow-up in UN debt work, tax committee etc.

The two presentations were followed by a questions and answers session in which participants raised the fact that the 0,7% commitment should be dealt with. Fiscal policy should be a priority and taxation and tax havens should be tackled. We need to reflect on strategies to put our issues on the agenda, involving the ILO.

Conclusions

The implementation of the SDGs will have its own process, including monitoring and follow up mechanisms ultimately connected to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF). The Addis conference had a positive outcome by the fact that it secured a follow-up process on FFD which is a lot wider than SDGs, specifically linked to goals and targets. This broader scenario is an opportunity for trade unions to work in a multi-layered and interrelated fashion, supporting TUs core priorities in these relevant processes. We already have reached achievements: Decent Work and full and productive employment for all was endorsed in the Addis outcome, including Social Protection and Public Services for All. This is true also for the 2030 Framework. These are very important points for TUs and we will need to build up cooperation and support the specific role of the ILO within the UN agencies in these fields.

**Session 2: What do TUs need to do: SDGs indicators and follow-up, how to foster agenda around DW, social protection and social dialogue at global, regional and national level.**

**Matt Simonds (ITUC/TUDCN)** presented the work on the SDG indicators. He informed that the work of the UN statistical commission on the indicators will be finalized by March 2016. Two indicators were set for each target, and some have been repeated under different targets. The ILO is in, but civil society and/or the TUs are no member as such. We have established a strong collaboration with ILO and ACTRAV and we are currently working together on the indicators. We only provided inputs on a those targets which are of greater priority for trade unions. We should use our document on the indicators to support our proposals vis-à-vis the national governments.

**Oscar Ernerot (LO Sweden)** presented the Global Deal. He mentioned that since 2012 the Swedish unions have been holding discussions with the PM, which resulted in the Global Deal that the unions are now linking to the 2030 Agenda. LO therefore thinks it would be good for the ITUC to adopt the Global Deal as a policy. The Global Deal revolves around the pivotal importance of decent work, social dialogue and tripartism as main pillars for development. This point was raised by the ILO, the Swedish government and the ITUC in the Addis Ababa conference. The ILO should take on the role of relevant UN body and strong partner within the Global Deal, in particular when it comes to ensure implementation of goal 8 of the 2030 agenda.

**Paola Simonetti (ITUC/TUDCN)** highlighted that the contents of the Global Deal are in line with our agenda on development. In Addis, a panel was held with Swedish, Belgian, Brazilian and South-African government representatives, the ILO General Secretary (Guy Ryder) and the ITUC’s Deputy General Secretary (Wellington Chibebe). It was the only event in Addis focusing not only on Decent Work but also on the role of Social Dialogue in development, and social dialogue as a means of implementation of the new development framework. The current challenge is how to bring it forward, building and facilitating alliances at governmental level. The Global Deal is mentioned in the draft resolution on ‘trade unions priorities for development’ which will be presented to the ITUC GC in Sao Paolo, together with the reference to the need to work jointly with ILO to ensure proper implementation of the 2030 Agenda at country level.

On the implementation of the SDGs at EU level: we have been invited by a group of European CSOs who are reflecting on the way forward. The idea is to set up an EU platform to monitor SDGs implementation: an “SDG Watch Europe”. They would like TUs on board. This will be discussed more deeply within the TUDCN WG on EU policies and together with the ETUC. Moreover, the EU Policy Forum on Development (PFD) launched a research on Post-2015, focusing on channels to improve CSO participation on SDGs monitoring. The research focuses on the following countries: Indonesia, Peru, Botswana, Lebanon and the Netherlands. We still need to look more into the question, so that we can propose country researches with the help of the regions.

We also have to reflect on what we should and are able to do at country level on SDGs monitoring and follow up. According to the TUDCN General Meeting conclusions an idea was launched on a “SDG Watch”. Is this something that we should consider as one of our potential engagements?

After the presentation, the following points were put forward:

* The list of around 30 countries that are active in the UN Statistical Commission issue will be disseminated;
* The resolution for the ITUC General Council will be tabled in Sao Paulo, giving everyone the possibility of providing inputs. The current text calls for TUs political engagement in development, including SDGs implementation. It also covers the other TUDCN main pillars such as “TUs partnerships” and the “Regional Development Networks”;
* It is not yet clear if and how the initiative on “SDG Watch Europe” is related to the role of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). What is sure is that all the CSOs which are active in both are almost the same, with the leading role of the green constituency. Also it is clear that the EESC is trying to find its own role among the EU institutions around the SDGs monitoring and follow up.

**Session 3: Brainstorm on future pathways for TU engagement on the SDGs’ follow-up processes.**

On the basis of the debates and discussions in the morning, participants are requested to brainstorm on the following questions:

* How can we engage in the SDG follow-up process at national, regional and international level?
* What alliances can be made (with CSOs and government actors) to reach priority targets for the TU movement?

Conclusions

* We conducted an important work on SDGs indicators, now we should ensure support. Each of our organizations should engage with their respective governments in support of our priorities re indicators;
* It seems clear that the scenario is still very blurred on how national governments are ‘equipping’ themselves in order to keep the commitments enshrined in the 2030 agenda. Therefore, it will be necessary for TUs, in a preliminary phase, to retrieve information on what is going on at national level;
* There is a need to raise awareness within TUs on the 2030 agenda to make sure everyone knows how to implement this agenda. Therefore, we will need to reflect on communication tools (users friendly) that can disseminate knowledge and awareness within the organizations;
* When it comes to which kind of monitoring are we going to put in place, at what level, and on which goals and targets, all groups clearly agreed that a lot depends on the issues at stake and on the situation at country level. This could mean that the monitoring could focus on different goals (depending on the national context) but always screened through the lenses of decent work pillars. ILO Decent Work country programmes should be also an important reference for SDGs monitoring at country level as well as utilizing Social Dialogue structures (e.g. NEDLAC) ;
* It is important and necessary to look for and promote alliances with CSOs. However, as issues vary considerably in different countries, this needs to be done on an ad hoc basis
* Specifically at the EU level: we have to avoid overlaps with the work that the ETUC could do (if not already doing) on SDGs implementation (on EU internal social policies). On the other hand, EU development policies are a target for our network e.g. are they conducive/consistent to the SDGs implementation?
* This was an initial brainstorm on the way forward, and discussions will be still open. Specifically on this we are organizing a seminar in December together with ACTRAV to support further strategic thinking on future engagements for the network.

**Session 4: Update on Global Partnership on Effective Development Cooperation’s (GPEDC) Steering Committee/ evaluating the future role of the GPEDC and the TUs’ participation in it**

**Matt Simonds** recalled that TUs are part of the Steering Committee of the GPEDC since the high-level meeting of April 2014. In June, the GPEDC held its 8th Steering Committee meeting, in Mexico. The issue at stake in meeting was the second monitoring process of the Busan commitments launched by the GPEDC , and it would be useful for us to get involved. The two main priorities for trade unions at country level for this monitoring round will be: enabling environment for civil society and the role of private sector in development.

Conclusions

The monitoring process will be focused on a list of countries (in which the governments have agreed in participating) and we will work with the TUDCN regional development networks coordinators in order to select potential organizations that could participate to this process.

**Session 5: Which paths for South-South cooperation policies and TU engagement?**

**Giulia Massobrio (TUCA)** introduced the theme of South-South Cooperation.

[Qué caminos para la Cooperación Sur Sur? - Input para reflexionar y debatir](http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pptx/csa_coop_sur_sur.pptx)

**Antonio Lisboa (CUT Brazil)** presented the role of trade unions with respect to the BRICS. He mentioned that all of the BRICS countries currently encounter economic difficulties. The Declaration of Ufa (BRICS summit, July 2015) details a strategy which focuses on: the defense of multilateralism; increasing industrialization and the real economy; green projects; engagement for an ambitious Post-2015 agenda.

South-South cooperation has an important role to play. However, there are big differences, e.g. China vs Brazil. Chinese cooperation is quite aggressive, especially in Africa, while Brazil bases its cooperation on technical matters, e.g. sending engineers and technical staff. Also important to note is that the Declaration of Ufa emphasizes that South-South cooperation doesn’t replace North-South cooperation. Other important elements are the official recognition of the TU forum (currently blocked by the conservative Indian government), the access to negotiations, and the social dialogue with the BRICS employers’ council. More exchange is needed between unions from different countries to improve knowledge on issues. The upcoming summit in India should get more Indian unions on board.

Following the presentation, remarks were made concerning the participation of affiliates to the Ufa summit, as well as, some reservations as to whether the BRICS are a good example of South-South cooperation, as they are all in the G20.

**25 September 2015**

**Session 1: Updates on TUDCN research studies on private sector and social dialogue (SD) in development**

**Diego López and Paola Simonetti** introduced this session aimed at sharing the current research work of the TUDCN and gathering possible feedbacks from the OCM participants. As decided at the General Meeting in Florence, “evidence based research” is currently undertaken in two areas: social dialogue and private sector in development. This research underpins the TUDCN advocacy priorities and it will be used in different fora where development policies are debated, i.e. OECD-DAC but also 2030 Agenda. For both themes we are undertaking country based studies which will be accompanied by an introductory chapter contextualizing the issue.

The target countries for social dialogue studies will be: Brazil, Ghana and Indonesia.

The target countries for the private sector studies will be: Senegal, Malawi, Zambia and specific programmes in Latin America. The research coordinators shared the contents, methodology and work plan for each case (see <http://www.ituc-csi.org/open-coordination-meeting-24-25> )

Conclusions

This research work was welcomed and appreciated by the participants in the OCM as nowadays there is a common approach in all the donor countries to progressively support private sector with ODA budgets. Suggestions were made to take into account ILO C94 (on public procurement) and include the gender dimension.

Updates on the studies on PS will be circulated in particular to the organizations in the donor countries concerned so as to facilitate exchange of information and to provide further inputs and orientations to the research.

**Session 2: Next TU-DAC forum – brainstorming on strategic approaches**

Matt Simonds and Paola Simonetti presented the steps towards the next TU-DAC forum. The DAC is the OECD body which brings together the donors (26) from OECD countries. We have been trying to establish relations with it since a couple of years. Last year the TUDCN organised a seminar with DAC delegates (TU-DAC Forum in Paris, October 2014), which successfully included social dialogue in its recommendations, which we need to pick up from. Our interest is to promote social dialogue in a development perspective, as a real means of implementation for the SDGs. We want donor strategies to reflect this approach, also when it comes to the role of business in development, highlighting the role of social partners on an equal footing. We are currently working with the DAC vice chairs (US, Germany and New Zealand) to orient the discussion on the agenda.

We thought of a “package” for a possible scenario for the next forum:

1. Developmental relevance of social dialogue at country level
2. National strategies for Youth Employment and the role of the social partners
3. How are donors contributing to Target 8 when supporting private sector led initiatives in development

After the presentation, the following comments and suggestions were raised:

* the Dutch government is one of the donors of the Asian Development Bank, so it would be useful to connect to the work that Dutch affiliates have done on this;
* need to claim back our position in social dialogue as TUs, which is different from NGOs. We need to scale up our efforts to forge an alliance with friendly donor governments that support social partners in development;
* we should mind the definitions: not private sector but “business” in development;
* we currently focus a lot on private sector programmes implementation, but we also need to look into their construction. We need to see whether in the donor country there is a good social dialogue climate/practice too (for example if Spain does a PPP programme with a water company in the South, it’s fundamental that TUCA contacts the Spanish unions to investigate this).
* There are obvious linkages with the work related to the “redefinition” of ODA- Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD). This is a specific and stand-alone work-stream of the DAC, that will not be possible to tackle in the TU-DAC forum agenda. However, the secretariat ensures that this theme will be followed up.

Conclusions

The draft agenda is endorsed by the OCM and the secretariat will follow up on this with the DAC vice chairs to finalize negotiations. Updates will be shared.

**Session 3: Update on “TU partnerships” and discussion on the next strategies**

Maresa Le Roux (CGSLB) presented the discussions of the TUDCN working group on “TUs partnerships” meeting of Wednesday 23 September ([Report from the Working Group on Partnerships, Brussels, 23 September 2013](http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/ppt/report_from_the_partnerships_wg_meeting_sept_15.ppt)). The main issues reported were:

* on organizational capacity assessment: we need to keep working on a model that could help us in adopting coherent approaches among unions. At the same time, this has to be an inclusive and bottom up process, connected to the “real” work of unions in development. Therefore, we propose to organize seminars centered on specific topics (i.e. informal economy, social protection, supply chains etc..) in order to share experiences and to draw conclusions from the organizational capacity perspective;
* on TUDEP: we should raise its visibility; produce a manual for facilitators for TUDEP workshops; put the Principles and the tool up front in other fora (GUF-TUSSOs meetings); reflect on its use in South-South and triangular cooperation

**Diego López and Paola Simonetti** introduced the updates on capacity development/organizing. An overview of the current activities was provided, which includes national organizing activities for unions in the Dominican Republic, Oman and Bahrain, as well as an upcoming activity for the Asian pilot countries (Indonesia and the Philippines). The TUDCN secretariat is currently working with the colleagues from the Global Organizing Academy (GOA) to strengthen TUs’ capacity to contribute to the GOA work. We jointly devised a template which will help in conceiving actions at country level. This is an important work in order to promote a coherent approach among unions on capacity development.

Conclusions

The proposal from the working group on “TU partnerships” are endorsed and the secretariat will follow up.

**Session 4: Overview on opportunities with EU financial programmes and exchange of information on TU strategies**

**Joan Lanfranco (ITUC/TUDCN)** presented the publication on development education initiatives to raise visibility of TUs as actors in their own right on development education and awareness raising.

There was a first call for contributions in July. The collation of trade union projects and materials and the drafting of the publication will take place between July and December 2015 and the design, layout, translation and printing will be done in early 2016.

There will be a new Call for Proposal from the EU early in 2016 and this brochure would enhance visibility on what TUs are doing in this respect. It will also be a tool for advocacy.

The TUDCN has been invited to the European Commission’s DEAR stakeholder conference, where there will be around 70 representatives of DEAR stakeholders. The intention is also to create a DEAR stakeholder group and TUDCN wants to be a part of that in order to make sure the TU voice is heard in the debates.

**Jeffrey Scott Vogt (ITUC Legal Unit)** presented the EIDHR Call for Proposal on “HR – TU engagement in GSP monitoring” (GSP = Generalized Scheme of Preferences) and the contents of the project proposal that the ITUC is elaborating.

TUDCN members will be kept informed on whether we are successful with this, for possible collaboration in the programme implementation.

**Diego López and Paola Simonetti** informed on the participation of the TUDCN in the European Commission’s Call for Proposal “Reinforcing institutional and operational capacities of CSO umbrella organizations for coordinated actions at global, regional and/or national level (2017-2020)”, to ensure continuity of the current programme. The new programme would be on the basis of a Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) and its full submission should occur in October-November. The programme implementation could then take off at the beginning of 2016.

Conclusions

Relevant material contributing to the elaboration of the publication on development education should be urgently sent to Joan.

TUDCN members will be kept informed on the outcomes of the call for proposals.

**Session 5: final conclusions and setting TUDCN Work-plan 2016,**

**Paola Simonetti** presented the final conclusions of the meeting

*On SDGs/ 2030 Agenda:*

* Each of our organizations should engage with their respective governments in support of our priorities re indicators. The TUDCN online working group serves as a tool at everyone’s disposal to gather intelligence and exchange information;
* We do not yet know how governments will implement the SDGs, so the first activities will be centered around finding out what is going on at national level. From now until the next General Meeting this information will have to be collated, after which an assessment will have to be made on the line(s) to follow;
* The secretariat will work on tools to answer to the need for awareness raising on SDGs within the network;
* A seminar will be organized in December, together with ACTRAV, to support further strategic thinking on future engagements for the network on the 2030 Agenda.

*On GPEDC:*

The monitoring process will be focused on a list of countries (in which the governments have agreed in participating) and we will work with the TUDCN regional development networks coordinators in order to select potential organizations that could participate to this process.

*On South-South cooperation:*

In conclusion of the discussions on South-South cooperation, it is agreed that the TU Partnership should integrate the South-South component better.

*TU-DAC Forum:*

* There were positive responses to the research we are conducting. The findings of the research on the private sector in development will have to be shared in order to facilitate more targeted research;
* The secretariat will finalize the agenda of the forum with the DAC members. The TUDCN commits itself to keeping everyone informed on the following steps in this process.

*On Partnerships:*

* With respect to organizational capacity assessment we will be following up the work on the completion of the tool, for which we will schedule thematic seminars;
* On the TUDEP we will continue to support seminars at regional level, and will also work on visibility. It has to be made more appealing in the overall communication.

*On EU programmes:*

* It is essential that everyone sends Joan any materials which might be useful for advocacy and also for awareness raising (internally, but also with a view to financing).
* Finally, the new programme of the TUDCN has been submitted. We will now have to follow the EC calendar.

Paola Simonetti finally explained the TUDCN work plan until December 2016.

[PPT TUDCN Work Plan 2015 - 2016](http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pptx/tudcn_work_plan_2015-2016_ocm.pptx)

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