

Social dialogue for development

Seminar report

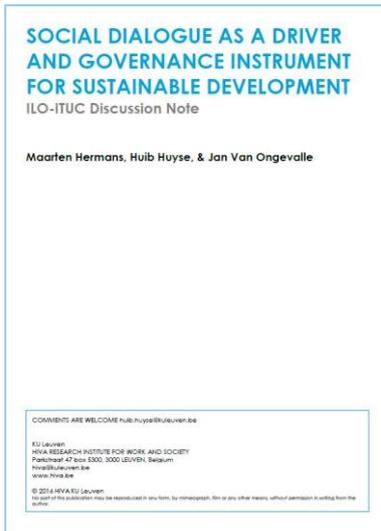
November 2016



Participants list

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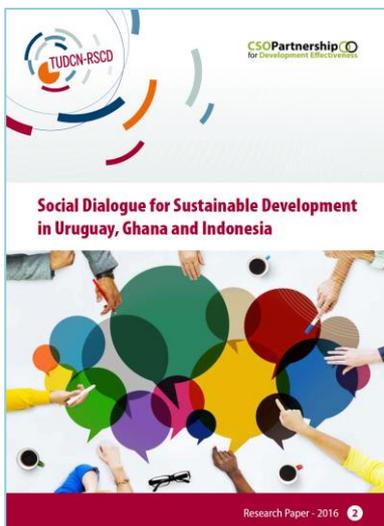
Related publications



Issue Paper: Social Dialogue as a Driver and Governance Instrument for Sustainable Development

This discussion note emerges from observations by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) that social dialogue, one of the core features of the Decent Work Agenda, is not well-known and understood within the development community, and its potential in contributing to sustainable development and its governance is not sufficiently tapped into. By bringing together leading resources on the topics of social dialogue and sustainable development, the note maps and examines what is currently known about the rich relationship between the two themes in a short and summarised way.

www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/ilo-ituc_discussion_note_nov_2016_en.pdf



Social Dialogue for Sustainable Development in Uruguay, Ghana and Indonesia

Three country case studies analyse social dialogue in its various forms, with particular focus on the formalisation of these dialogues at different administrative levels and its contribution to development. The studies are authored by national trade union specialists and include examples of good practice as well as of limitations of the different contexts. Conclusions and recommendations based on the analysis are also outlined. The studies are funded by the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness.

www.ituc-csi.org/social-dialogue-development



Global Partnership Initiative: Social Dialogue in Development

Global Partnership Initiatives (GPIs) are voluntary initiatives within the Global Partnership for Effective Development (GPEDC) that bring together development actors around a specific issue on effective development co-operation. The ITUC launched the GPI on Social Dialogue in Development at the Second High Level Meeting of the GPEDC and is in the process of

www.ituc-csi.org/SD-GPI

Seminar objectives

1. To present key elements of success for the contribution of social dialogue to development
2. To look into possible pathways to promote the role of social dialogue in development.
3. To promote a multi partner initiative to support social dialogue as an instrument for sustainable development.

THURSDAY 17 NOVEMBER

Morning Session: contextualising social dialogue

The seminar started with the welcome and opening words of Ms. Paola Simonetti, Development Policy Coordinator at the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and Mr. Kamran Fannizadeh, Deputy-Director of the Governance and Tripartism Department of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). This was followed by some introductory remarks by participants from the Development Cooperation Directorate General (DG-DEVCO) of the European Commission (EC), the Belgian Ministry of Labour and the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida).

Social dialogue and its impact. The importance of tripartism in the current development context.

The first session started with a presentation from Mr. Youcef Ghellab, Head of the Social Dialogue and Tripartism Unit of the ILO, who introduced the concepts of social dialogue and tripartism as well as the necessary preconditions for social dialogue to deliver. He explained how social dialogue is strongly supported in the different ILO documents and spaces and described how the ILO is working on social dialogue through action oriented research, trainings, capacity building, ratification of Conventions, but also promoting it in Member States through international labour standards, technical cooperation, knowledge generation and advocacy. Mr. Ghellab also highlighted the relevance of social dialogue to sustainable development, especially to Agenda 2030, as a means of implementation that can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 3, 5, 8, 10,16 and 17.

This presentation was followed by a round of comments which emphasised the various challenges of making social dialogue a reality in many countries. These included the problems associated with the weakness of institutional frameworks for social dialogue, the representation of informal economy workers within social dialogue and the regressions which the economic crisis has caused with respect to social dialogue in some countries in Europe.



Afternoon Session: the role of social dialogue in development - what and how?

Presentation and discussion on the outcomes of research on social dialogue in development: TUDCN case studies and ILO-TUDCN issue paper.

The second session, facilitated by Diego Lopez-Gonzalez (ITUC), was aimed at introducing the current research undertaken by the Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN) and the ILO on the role of social dialogue for development. It consisted in a debate in which researchers/practitioners of social dialogue, who developed the TUDCN country case studies in Ghana, Indonesia and Uruguay, presented the main contributions that social dialogue has made to sustainable development in their country and the main challenges in this process.

The case of Ghana was presented by Mr. Prince-Asafu Adjaye from the Ghana TUC, who explained the positive contributions that social dialogue had on increases in the minimum wage and the way public institutions are governed. He focused on the national boards of pension and social security, but also on how employment conditions have improved when undertaking social dialogue at enterprise level. The main challenges he highlighted were related to the weakness in the institutions that promote social dialogue, the fact that 85% of the workforce is in the informal economy, and the lack of an adequate legal framework to support steady social dialogue.

Mr Rekson Silaban, from the Indonesian KSBSI union, explained how the commitments for a national Decent Work Country Programme, the rise in the minimum wage and the access to social security for all workers, including those in the informal economy, have been the outcome of social dialogue in Indonesia. He highlighted that social dialogue is a consistent and long-term struggle, which needs of good faith from all parties and a culture of dialogue to institutionalise it.

Mr. Julio Burgueño, from the PIT-CNT union in Uruguay, showed how important reforms undertaken through social dialogue (pensions, social security, youth, etc.) have contributed to progress in Uruguay in the fields of employment, and decreasing poverty and inequality since 2006. The Uruguayan Government has been promoting social dialogue since that year. It has organised 9 social dialogue roundtables on different issues, such as education, health, sports, sustainability, decentralisation, gender, etc. Mr Burgueño also underlined the importance of working through strong unified unions.

Following the presentation of the country cases, Mr. Huib Huyse, from the HIVA Institute of the University of Leuven, presented the research he has undertaken for the TUDCN and the ILO on *Social Dialogue as a Driver and Governance Instrument for Sustainable Development*, emphasising the contribution that social dialogue can make to the different SDGs, on the basis of five clusters, and introducing ideas for possible research topics.

After these presentations, a discussion ensued on important challenges which need to be looked at such as the representation of informal economy workers in social dialogue, possible unintended consequences of social dialogue and the multiplicity of social dialogue institutions which sometimes lack policy coherence.

What role for social dialogue in development policies?

The last session of the first day, facilitated by Marco Cilento (ETUC), was aimed at introducing and discussing the work that governments and institutions, represented in the meeting, are doing with respect to social dialogue in development.

Mr. Jean-Louis Ville, Acting Director of DG-DEVCO of the EC, highlighted the positive aspects of social dialogue and the importance of an enabling environment for parties to engage. He also emphasised the need to look at the details behind social dialogue constrains (which could be sociological, historical or economic) for a full dialogue to take place.

Ms. Therese Boutsen, from the Federal Public Service of Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue of the Government of Belgium, described the numerous programmes and initiatives of the Belgian Labour Ministry to promote social dialogue abroad. These include awareness raising at the workplace on the importance of social dialogue, funding of ILO activities, promotion of the Belgian social model, bilateral projects managed by Belgian social partners, and multilateral actions related to trade agreements, supply chains and international framework agreements.

Ms. Gun Eriksson Skoog, from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), introduced the work of Sida focusing mainly on their support to employment creation with decent working conditions. This comprises support to social dialogue from a democracy and human rights approach, strengthening the right to organise and improving the voice of workers, including those in the informal economy. An important amount of support is channelled to trade union organisations and specific support is given to the ILO.

Ms. Anne Kullman, from Sida, introduced the projects that they are undertaking with certain companies to improve industrial relations within the supply chain, especially in the garment sector. She emphasised the role of the private sector in this work and the interest of companies in embedding decent work and social dialogue within their supply chains.

Ms. Françoise Millecam from DG-DEVCO of the EC complemented with information on the support that the EC has given to social dialogue in several countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and an initiative that has been launched to explain the contribution of social dialogue to development to the staff in DEVCO. She also mentioned the short-term assistance that is given to social partners through a specific facility, and specific work on social dialogue and decent work.



The presentations were followed by a debate which focused mainly on the role of the private sector in development, including the need to measure the developmental impact of the private sector, and the need for business accountability. The need to consider transnational social dialogue when talking about Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) and supply chains was also emphasised, especially through supporting the training of workers and managers, and creating an enabling environment to exercise workers' rights.

Following this discussion, Mr. Klaus Rudischhauser, Deputy Director-General of DG-DEVCO addressed the significance that DG-DEVCO gives to engaging with trade unions and supporting social dialogue. He emphasised the importance of the presence of social partners, and trade unions in particular, in different instances in global and regional forums, such as the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). He mentioned the publication of the proposal for a European Union (EU) Consensus on Development as the place to anchor the role of social dialogue and social partners in the EU development policy for the next 10 to 15 years, and the need to work on this in coordination with the DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and the DG for Trade.

FRIDAY 18 NOVEMBER

Morning Session: an agenda for social dialogue in international development policies

Following on from the discussion of the previous day on the role for social dialogue in development policies, Mr. Alexandre Kolev, Head of the Social Cohesion Unit at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Centre, presented the work that is being undertaken with respect to social dialogue. He introduced the different policy tools which are used to foster social dialogue within the work of the Development Centre and how these can support social dialogue by feeding with evidence and creating space for it. Mr Kolev also presented the technical and policy workshops that are undertaken to discuss with stakeholders. These focus on how analysis transforms into policy options for social dialogue to voice views and opinions. In addition, there are concrete questions related to the benefits of growth, and income and wealth distribution that the Development Centre is dealing with and which contribute to enhance the quality of social dialogue.

The presentation triggered comments on how to include informal economy workers, looking at the heterogeneity of the informal economy, and considering incentives for informal workers to participate in social interest mechanisms. Other comments related to social dialogue institutions in place which are not always used and which therefore face challenges in many countries. The OECD works with Governments directly, regardless of their commitment with social dialogue, but policy dialogue aims at bringing in the key stakeholders.

Initiatives and future steps for social dialogue in development.

The session on initiatives and future steps for social dialogue in development was presented by Angelika Muller, from the Social Dialogue and Tripartism Unit of the ILO, with the aim of discussing the next steps that could be undertaken with respect to research on the role of social dialogue in development. Ms. Muller presented the objectives for future research to be carried out with the different stakeholders present. She also introduced possible research pathways that could be undertaken on social dialogue and development around different topics such as the contributions of social dialogue to several of the SDGs (1, 5, 8, 10, 13, 16), social dialogue and the development effectiveness agenda, social dialogue and the informal economy, social dialogue in fragile states, and social dialogue in regional and sub-regional organisations.

On the basis of this proposal, the suggested topics were discussed and the participants agreed on most of these. Specific interest was given to the contribution of social dialogue to the SDGs and in particular the role of wages, social protection floors, gender equality and the link to sustainability. The focus on informal economy workers was also established as one of the important themes, although this will need to be further unpacked. Social dialogue in fragile states also had a specific mention, including the preconditions for social dialogue, consultation, ownership and the legal framework. Reference was also made to the role of social dialogue in trade agreements.

Social dialogue related initiatives and future pathways for a multi-partner initiative on social dialogue in development: actors, role, form.

This session, facilitated by Mr Claude Akpokavie (ILO), was aimed at discussing future pathways for a possible multi-partner initiative on social dialogue in development. In this context, Ms. Irene Wennemo, State Secretary at the Ministry of Employment of Sweden, introduced the Global Deal initiative launched by the Swedish Prime Minister. Ms. Wennemo emphasised that social dialogue is a win-win-win situation for unions, employers and Governments. The Global Deal is about inclusive growth making everyone benefit from globalisation and making the relation between the market and the State smoother.



Following this presentation, Ms. Paola Simonetti (ITUC), proposed ways of following up with the research in relation to an advocacy stream. She suggested using the research to support advocacy efforts towards the role of social dialogue in development, while building up a coordination with stakeholders. This could take place with respect to various institutions within already existing processes. At the United Nations (UN) level, social dialogue could be promoted as a cross-cutting element to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This could be put forward at the annual High Level Political Forum (HLPF) reviews of the 2030 Agenda. With respect to the GPEDC, social dialogue is relevant to the development effectiveness principles, and this can be upheld in the framework of the new Global Partnership Initiative on social dialogue that was introduced by the ITUC. Within the OECD, there is an annual Trade Union-Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Forum, which could also be used to explore future avenues for social dialogue in development. With regards to the EC, the Policy Forum on Development and the Partnerships Forum that will be held in 2017 are also spaces that could be used to work on these issues.

The participants welcomed the initiative. Mr. Patrice Lenormand (European Commission) supported the idea of the use of these spaces, including the ones they organise, and suggested the possibility of deepening current Framework Partnership Agreements with social partners to the regional or national level. In addition, other means within different areas in the EC were suggested, such as trade (Generalised System of Preferences + and respect for ILO and human rights conventions) and human rights (to support the enabling environment for social dialogue).

Mr. Kamran Fannizadeh from the ILO highlighted that the objective of the research is not purely theoretical but action oriented and welcomed the idea of connecting with the HLPF. He added that 2019 will mark the 100th anniversary of the ILO and there will be other relevant meetings in 2018, such as the International Labour Conference where social dialogue will be discussed. Also in 2018, a technical meeting on cross-border social dialogue will be held. In addition, the ILO is currently discussing global supply chains.

Mr. Alexandre Kolev from the OECD suggested bridging this social dialogue initiative with OECD-led platforms of MNEs from the North and South to bring the social dialogue perspective.

Conclusions and closure

The concluding remarks were made by Mr. Claude Akpokavie, Senior Adviser to the Deputy Director-General – ILO, and Ms. Paola Simonetti from the ITUC.

Mr. Akpokavie highlighted the important ways in which social dialogue has contributed to development, as a cornerstone for participation, democracy, accountability and more equitable societies. He also touched upon the role it plays in fragile societies and in times of crisis, making sure transitions (including climate and production transitions) happen in an equitable manner, so that decent work is created.

He summarised a number of challenges that were identified throughout the seminar, including the need to strengthen social dialogue actors and institutions, to develop better ways of integrating informal economy workers in social dialogue and to tackle cross border social dialogue in the context of global value chains. He also underlined the opportunities that the 2030 Agenda as the new framework for development creates and the importance of Goal 8.

Ms. Simonetti, stated that this seminar put together an initial core group that can move forward in research and advocacy alliance. She emphasised the need to promote policy coherence with respect to social dialogue, as it is linked to varied policies and is a cross-cutting modality that touches different institutions at national, regional and global level.

With respect to the research and advocacy initiatives, she remarked that the inputs will be taken on board. She insisted on the importance of advocacy and awareness to make social dialogue a widespread priority in development, and the need to include employers in this process. Finally, Ms. Simonetti suggested to support an alliance in the framework of the HLPF to vitalise a partnership initiative to implement SDG8 (see past experiences like “Friends of Decent Work”).

After thanking all the participants, the seminar was closed.



Notes

The Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN) is an initiative of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), bringing together affiliated trade union organisations, solidarity support organisations, regional ITUC organisations, the Global Union Federations (GUFs), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC). TUDCN's objective is to bring the trade union perspective into the international development policy debates and improve the coordination and effectiveness of trade union development cooperation activities.

Le **Réseau syndical de coopération au développement (RSCD)** est une initiative de la Confédération syndicale internationale (CSI) réunissant des organisations syndicales affiliées, des organisations de solidarité, les organisations régionales de la CSI, ainsi que les Fédérations syndicales internationales (les fédérations sectorielles - FSI), la Confédération européenne des syndicats (CES) et la Commission syndicale consultative auprès de l'OCDE (TUAC). Le RSCD a pour but de traduire la perspective syndicale dans les débats sur la politique en matière de développement international et d'améliorer la coordination et l'efficacité des activités syndicales dans le domaine de la coopération au développement.

La **Red Sindical de Cooperación al Desarrollo (RSCD)** es una iniciativa de la Confederación Sindical Internacional (CSI), que agrupa a diversas organizaciones sindicales afiliadas, organizaciones solidarias (OS), organizaciones regionales de la CSI, las Federaciones Sindicales Internacionales (FSI), la Confederación Europea de Sindicatos (CES) y la Comisión Sindical Consultiva ante la OCDE (TUAC). El objetivo de la red es aportar la perspectiva sindical a los debates políticos y mejorar la coordinación y la eficacia de las actividades sindicales relacionadas con la cooperación al desarrollo.



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