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11 June 2018

ITUC response to the ILO Article 19 questionnaire on Social Protection Floors

To Whom it May Concern:

You may find attached the ITUC response to the ILO general survey questionnaire on social protection floors. As the questionnaire is very extensive, we would like to draw to your attention to some particular considerations.

While some important achievements have been made to extend social protection in recent years, in line with ILO Recommendation 202, social protection coverage remains unacceptably low internationally, with less than 30% of the world's population having access to comprehensive social protection systems. Substantial coverage gaps in social protection exist in particular for women, informal workers, people on atypical/irregular contracts and vulnerable social groups such as ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. We are moreover very concerned by significant retrenchments to social protection that have taken place in other countries in recent years – in particular reductions in benefit levels as well as reductions in coverage – often with pressure from international organisations and international financial institutions. Such reforms are not only contributing to greater poverty and inequality in some countries, but are a threat to sustainable, inclusive economic growth.

Moreover, as indicated in the letter, the ITUC finds Recommendation 202, together with existing international labour standards in the area of social security, to set out a good framework for adequate, comprehensive social protection systems. Overall, these different instruments are complementary and mutually reinforcing, and the ITUC would be opposed to any consolidation of existing instruments.

The ITUC believes that the ILO should make it a priority to work more closely with governments to achieve the full ratification and application of the existing Conventions as well as implementation of Recommendation 202. In this regard, ratification of C102 should be more systematically included in Decent Work Country Programmes with the necessary ILO technical assistance to member states to help them ratify. Ratification should also be an important feature of the ILO Flagship Programme on social protection, where the ILO is providing technical support to governments for planning social protection reforms. We would also support the ILO to undertake more awareness-raising activities to promote its standards in the field of social protection. Finally, we would like the ILO to provide targeted policy advisory support to governments in order to counter ill-founded advice given by some international financial institutions to retrench social protection and to promote greater coherence between international organisations on social protection.

We hope that these considerations, along with the points reflected in the questionnaire attached, can be

useful as the ILO prepares its General Survey report. We stand ready to work with you further on the follow-up.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. B.', written in a cursive style.

General Secretary