The role of social dialogue and tripartism in the current development context

Brussels, 17-18 November 2016

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Overview

I. Background: Key elements of social dialogue

II. Social dialogue for sustainable development

III. Role of the ILO: Building strong mechanisms for social dialogue towards sustainable development
I. Background: Key elements of social dialogue

- Social dialogue and tripartism: essential values of ILO
- They are at the heart of its structure, policies and programmes
- Practised on a daily basis within all its bodies and meetings:
  - International Labour Conference
  - Governing body
  - Regional conferences
  - Sectoral and experts meetings
The ILO has a **constitutional obligation** to promote the practice of social dialogue and tripartism in member States.

Through various means:

- **International labour standards** (conventions and recommendations) and other instruments (declarations, resolutions, ....)
- Technical cooperation:
  - Decent work country programmes
  - Projects
- Knowledge generation/dissemination
- Advocacy
The ILO adopts a broad concept of social dialogue

**Key labour market institutions necessary for sustainable and inclusive development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bipartite social dialogue and CB</th>
<th>Dispute prevention and resolution</th>
<th>Tripartite social dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Enterprise or Sectoral/Inter-professional level</td>
<td>• Necessary for productive and peaceful work place</td>
<td>• Deals with policy issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deals with working conditions and terms of employment and relations between Ws and Es</td>
<td>• Promoting workers access to justice</td>
<td>• Consensus on social and economic issues which impact on employment and the labour market</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Improve labour relations and the organisation of the working process</td>
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<td>• Ensures policy coherence</td>
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Social dialogue and national traditions

- In promoting social dialogue and tripartism the ILO DOES NOT prescribe any specific model.
- The social dialogue framework must be adapted to national circumstances and local industrial relations traditions.
- Wide and reach variety of social practices across member States.
- However for social dialogue to be effective and deliver sustainable outcomes, some pre-conditions must be met.
Basic preconditions for successful social dialogue

- Freedom of association and collective bargaining (right to freely join organizations and to bargain collectively, protection against anti-union discrimination, etc.)

- Strong, independent workers’ and employers’ organizations (appropriate technical capacities)

- Appropriate legal and institutional support (legislation, labour administration, rule of law, etc.)

- Political will and commitment to engage in social dialogue
- Practice and experience (learning by doing)

This creates an enabling environment for successful social dialogue
II. Social dialogue for sustainable development

Social dialogue is a precondition for the promotion of **sustainable development**, because it:

- **Promotes ownership** for economic and social reforms – allows for the involvement of the actors of the real economy (social partners) in policy making
- **Fosters participation and inclusiveness**
- **Facilitates partnership** and a positive attitude towards problem solving
- **Increases the legitimacy** – facilitates the implementation of policies and reforms (e.g. LM, pension reforms)
- **Ease social tensions** during economic hardship and transition periods (post-war or post-crisis periods) – fundamental for **social peace** and social stability
- **Contributes to democratization** (South Africa, Tunisia, Central and Eastern Europe)
- **Contributes** to reducing inequalities and imbalances
ILOs emphasis on sustainable development

Social dialogue’s (and ILS’s) key role in achieving sustainable development is strongly emphasized within the ILO:

- The Declaration on Social Justice for a fair Globalization (2008) – “Promoting social dialogue and tripartism are the most appropriate methods for translating economic development into social progress, and social progress into economic development”

- The Global Jobs Pact (2009) – “Social dialogue is an invaluable mechanism for the design of policies to fit national priorities. It is a strong basis for building the commitment of employers and workers to the joint action with governments needed to overcome the crisis and for a sustainable recovery”

- International Labour Conference (ILC), Recurrent Discussion on Social Dialogue, 102nd Session (2013) -- “Social dialogue and tripartism constitute the ILO’s governance paradigm for promoting social justice, fair and peaceful workplace relations and decent work”.

Renewed commitment towards the principles of social dialogue and tripartism
International Labour Conference (ILC), *Decent work in global supply chains*, 105nd session (2016) Governments “should actively promote social dialogue and fundamental principles and rights at work, including freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining for all workers, regardless of their employment status, including in EPZs”
Agenda 2030 places **decent work for all** at the heart of policies for sustainable and inclusive growth and development. In particular Goal #8:

"Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all"

Goal 8 includes the following priorities:

- full and productive employment and decent work
- the gender pay gap - youth unemployment
- ending all forms of child labour - formalizing the informal economy
- entrepreneurship and micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises
- protecting labour rights and promoting safe, secure working environments
- migrant workers

*These priorities are enshrined in the Decent Work Agenda*
ILO Decent Work Agenda: key to sustainable development

Fulfilling the four pillars of decent work are crucial to achieving sustainable development…

…sustainable development is underpinned by social dialogue: a driver of decent work and a means to achieving the 3 other pillars.

The ILO’s four strategic objectives…

SOCIAL JUSTICE

GLOBAL PEACE

Promote and realize international labour standards and FPRW

Enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all

Greater opportunities for women and men to decent employment and income

Social dialogue and tripartism
Social dialogue and SDG challenges

- Social dialogue is a critical element for addressing challenges identified in goal 8 but also in other goals:
  - Goal #1 End poverty
  - Goal #3 Healthy lives
  - Goal #5 Gender equality
  - Goal #10 Reduced inequalities
  - Goal #16 Peace, Justice, Inclusive societies and Strong Institutions
  - Goal #17 Revitalize global partnerships to achieve the goals

Social dialogue will be a critical means of implementation in the coming years in order to fully realize the SDGs
III. Role of the ILO: Building strong social dialogue mechanisms towards sustainable development

- The ILO assists member States in building strong and functional institutions and processes for social dialogue.
- To date, tripartite institutional arrangements exist in more than 85% of ILO member States.
- Some countries have one central institution for social dialogue (South Africa, Czech Republic) and some others have two (Brazil, Netherlands) or more (Mauritius, Kenya, Niger, Singapore).
- There is a wide range of institutional arrangements in respect of the mode of establishment, composition, mandate and competencies, structure and method of work, financing and strategy of communication.
- However, not all of these institutions are used effectively for policy coordination and concertation on development strategies.
Challenges for effective social dialogue

Challenges for the actors

- A State dominated social dialogue
- Restrictions (legal, ..) for the exercise of freedom of association and CB rights
- Weakness and excessive fragmentation of the social partners
- Respect of agreements
- Narrow membership base, leading to weak representation of interests of vulnerable groups in their organs (e.g. youth, women, migrant workers, self employed, informel workers, etc.)

Challenges on the institutional side

- Lack of supportive structures for Social Dialogue with appropriate resources: premises, staff and budget
- Lack of stability and sustainability of operation of dialogue (e.g in times of economic crisis)
- Lack of monitoring mechanisms of decisions/ agreements
- Weak integration of tripartite institutions into national policy making and governance
- Lack of commitment on the part of technical ministries towards social dialogue
Overcoming these challenges: The role of the ILO

**ADVISORY SERVICES**
- Reinforcing tripartite institutions
- Building dispute resolution and prevention mechanisms
- Promote the ratification and implementation of ILS (e.g. C144; C 87; C 98)
- Tripartite Consultation – ratified by 139 member States
- Promoting collective bargaining

**CAPACITY-BUILDING**
- Reinforcing the capacities of workers’ and employers’ organizations
- Support labour administrations

**KNOWLEDGE SHARING**
- Research
- Sharing of good practice
- Comparative Law

**TRAINING (ITC-ILO)**
- Academy on National Tripartite Social Dialogue (every two years)
- Negotiation skills
- Conciliation & mediation skills
- Labour Court Judges
### Examples of ILO assistance

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<th>Region</th>
<th>Area of ILO assistance</th>
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<td>Africa</td>
<td>Assisted countries in building effective governance structures based on tripartism to overcome crises, consolidate democracy and promote inclusive development</td>
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<td>Arab States</td>
<td>Assisted countries with the transition to democracy following the Arab Springs (Tunisia, 2013 Social Contract).</td>
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<td>Asia</td>
<td>Strengthening frameworks for social dialogue and creation of national tripartite social dialogue institutions (Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam).</td>
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<td>Central Eastern Europe</td>
<td>Helped countries to ease into the transition from a centrally-planned to a market economy through social dialogue.</td>
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<td>Latin America</td>
<td>Facilitated participation of representatives of employers and workers in institutions established to address issues of economic and social development after the end of military regimes.</td>
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Partnerships with other institutions

AICESIS
Capacity building and strengthening of social dialogue institutions

European Commission
Technical cooperation projects and research on crisis-related SD trends

Eurofound
Research on European industrial relations trends

Labour Administration Centres (e.g. ARLAC)
Training and capacity building
Partnerships with other institutions

- International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
- International Organisation of Employers (IOE)
- International Labour and Employment Relations Association (ILERA)
Conclusions

«Social dialogue and tripartism have played a major role throughout history. We think they will even more needed in the future to find appropriate solutions to the challenges posed by the transformation of the world of work»

Guy Ryder, ILO Director General, Singapore, 26 October

«Inclusive and decent work are important drivers of sustainable development and will feature prominently in the national development strategies that member States have called upon to fashion»

Guy Ryder, ILO Director General, Beijing, 12 July 2016
THANK YOU!

For any further information:

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