

TUDCN General Meeting 2018

Meeting report

Sao Paulo, 16-18 May 2018





The meeting presentations are available [here](#).

DAY 1 – WEDNESDAY 16 MAY 2018

The meeting was opened by TUCA- Secretary for Social Policies, Laerte Teixeira da Costa and ITUC Deputy General Secretary Mamadou Diallo. This was followed by a round of introductions from participants, the approval of the 2017 General Meeting report and the presentation of the agenda of the meeting.

SESSION I: REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVOLVEMENT OF TRADE UNIONS

The first session was an opportunity to look at the socio-economic context in Latin America, with the presentations from Rodrigo Martinez C., Senior Officer of Social Affairs, Social Development Division, at ECLAC and Pedro Silva Barros, Professor at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (PUC-SP).

Mr. Martínez focused his presentation on the importance of looking at the [Inefficiency of Inequality](#), and introduced participants to the latest CEPAL report that looks at the costs of inequalities. He explained how the Latin American region is losing weight in the global economy. Growth is lower than in other regions, there are few investments, and structural inequalities persist. Whereas poverty is being reduced, there is still a problem of vulnerability. Within the region there is also a problem with the financial resources allocated to social spending (social protection, health care, education, etc.) and tax evasion and avoidance.

Mr. Barros talked about the [UNASUR](#), a regional cooperation and integration space with well defined thematic agendas, and the related governance mechanisms in place, which includes a Citizen Participation Forum, enshrined in the UNASUR treaty. However, it is important to highlight that in the last years the level of seniority of government officials in regional organisations has been decreasing and so has the number of initiatives. This is mainly due to the political changes in the region. He also highlighted, amongst others, the low level of intensiveness and the fall in interregional trade over the last few years and the way supply chains are structured compared to other regions.

The two presentations were complemented by presentations from the ITUC regional organisations in Africa and Asia-Pacific on the situation in each region.

In the case of Africa the problems of increasing poverty, unemployment, child labour and the informal economy, as well as the low levels of social protection were highlighted. Africa is characterized by the export of natural resources. Current discussions on trade are around the ACFTA (Africa Continental Free Trade Area). ACFTA opens many opportunities for Africa, but there have also been missed opportunities as unions have not been consulted. Communication infrastructure and tax and tariffs are key issues that will need to be tackled within the new ACFTA. The issue of peace and security is also very important. African trade unions find it necessary to strengthen South-South exchanges to understand how regional integration is happening in other regions.

In the case of Asia-Pacific, the share of global GDP is growing and there is economic growth. However, there are still social, political and environmental challenges. These challenges include informal employment, youth unemployment, very high mortality rates, extreme poverty and persisting inequalities, including increasing income inequality. The development model in Asia is focused on economic growth and does not have redistributive aspects in place, access to social protection is low. In addition, the political environment has not been very favourable to the trade union movement. The role of supply chains is expanding in the region, and they are not providing decent work.



SESSION II: PROGRESS REPORTS

TUDCN members presented progress in their work since last year. The situation with respect to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and trade union engagement at country level was presented for different countries.

Overall, the usefulness of TUDCN materials for the work of the members was highlighted and special reference was made to the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) methodology and related country reports, and the advocacy oriented research.

The TUDCN Secretariat then presented the progress report for the last year in terms of:

- SDGs involvement, including the monitoring of the Financing for Development process;
- Social Dialogue for Development;
- Private Sector Accountability for development;
- Trade Unions Partnerships;
- Communication and Outreach;
- European Union Development Policies.

This was followed by the presentation of the progress reports from the regions: TUCA, ITUC-Africa and ITUC-AP.

The Latin American region reported on the progress with respect to the elaboration of SDG country reports, the participation in SDG related regional and national meetings and specific research undertaken as well as their work around South-South cooperation.

The African region reported on the capacity building for ATUDN members around the 2030 Agenda which included the development of SDG country reports and engagement in the UNECA Regional Forum on SDGs. Engagement in other foras was also mentioned, as well as the research undertaken on the State of African Trade Unions.

Regarding the Asia-Pacific region, the work of the AP-TUDCN has been consolidated and SDG country reports have been elaborated for several countries. Trade unions also engaged in the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and the preparatory CSO Forum organised by AP-RCEM.

Achievements and Challenges 2017-18

1. The SDGs are a priority for trade unions. The recognition of the 2030 Agenda among trade unions is increasing, as a stepping stone for upholding trade union priorities enshrined in the decent work agenda;
2. Full coherent approach and collaboration from labour organisations at national, regional and global level is working: the number of national country reports has doubled from last year;
3. Remarkable work is undertaken at national level. Trade unions are mobilising to initiate dialogue with national governments and other civil society actors, steering coordination processes. Serious challenges remain in many countries though. The support of the regional and global levels is key;
4. The global and regional progress reports have been endorsed.

SESSION III: TRADE UNION INVOLVEMENT ON AGENDA 2030

The TUDCN Secretariat presented the trade union engagement strategy on Agenda 2030, covering its three engagement pillars and related activities: i) mobilisation and engagement, ii) advocacy and implementation and iii) monitoring and reporting. The relevance of the 2030 Agenda for trade unions was also emphasised.

This was followed by a presentation from Vinicius Pinheiro, Director of the New York ILO Office, on the ILO's strategy on Agenda 2030, with a focus on their 2019 plans. Mr. Pinheiro highlighted the importance of 2019 for the ILO and its constituents, with [SDG 8](#) under review. 2019 will also be the year of the first Summit, that will review all of the SDGs. The full presentation from Mr. Pinheiro can be found [here](#).

Mr. Pinheiro presented the ILO's roadmap in preparation for the 2019 HLPF, which included the following elements:

- Engagement in 2019 VNRs, in particular on issues related to SDGs 8 and 10 – coordination with governmental agencies leading on the review process;
- Proactive engagement with United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) and Resident Coordinators (RCs) embracing work on SDG 8 and recognising ILO leadership in SDG8-related results groups;
- Monitoring – data and indicators;
- Need to articulate SDG 8 outcomes into United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) country priorities;
- Coordination with Regional Commissions – ensure we are co-leading on SDG8;
- Lead on the global/regional/national SDG 8 thematic reviews;
- Broadening the work of issues-based coalitions and partnerships.

In addition there is a proposal to the United Nations Department on Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) from ILO to lead the review of the SDG 8 chapter, by organising an expert group meeting (April 2019) – SDG 8 Review Multi-Stakeholder Thematic Dialogue. In preparation, the ILO will produce some related materials. In 2019, the ILO will also engage in the review of the following SDGs: SDGs 10, on the inequalities angle – wages, social protection; SDG 4 on education (also involving teachers), and to a certain extent, SDG 13 on climate change and SDG 16 that includes freedom of association. Regarding SDG 17, the ILO will engage with the partnerships initiatives.

The presentation from Mr. Pinheiro was followed by a discussion with participants, who showed a lot of interest in better understanding the United Nations Development System (UNDS) reform process and its implications in terms of the ILO mandate and ways of functioning (i.e. tripartitism). Concerns were also expressed about bringing a more critical analysis to the VNR process and related sessions.



Following the presentation and subsequent discussion, the TUDCN Secretariat introduced the work around enhancing social dialogue in the context of the SDGs. The approach implies outreaching to governments and institutions, as well as gathering country-based evidence to consolidate our asks. As we continue with this work it is critical to strengthen the advocacy efforts towards governments and relevant institutions and here the role of TUDCN members is very important. The institutional spaces for engagement will be the OECD-DAC, the GPEDC (implementing our Global Partnership Initiative) and the UN/HLPF. In addition internal discussions will take place (in the context of TUDCN activities) to discuss the conclusions of evidence-based research and better strategise. At the regional level dialogues with employers' organisations will be promoted through specific seminars or joint activities

After the presentations participants broke out into groups to discuss how to further trade union engagement on Agenda 2030.

Trade Union involvement on the 2030 Agenda

1. The ILO should better support trade unions at national level, both from the technical and financial point of view. The current design of the UN reform is challenging the role of the ILO within the UN system. Trade unions should reach out to the ILO at national/sub-regional level to ensure support in getting involved in policy dialogues. This would help VNRs process become more accountable;
2. The ILO should also be more supportive to trade unions in the context of the SDGs UN regional fora;
3. We will need to ensure coordination with the ILO in setting a road map towards 2019: thematic review on goal 8 (meeting of experts - April), HLPF (July), stock-taking Summit of heads of states (September);
4. Country reports will continue to be produced and updated. A Global Shadow report focused on the Decent Work Agenda will be produced for the 2019 HLPF;
5. More efforts should be devoted to the dissemination of the country reports in order to give them greater visibility at national level, at the UN Regional fora on Sustainable Development, and at the HLPF;
6. Our strategy to enhance social dialogue in the context of SDGs is endorsed. We will continue our research on social dialogue for a just transition and our engagement with key development stakeholders at the DAC. Regional dialogues involving employers on how we can foster a greater role for social dialogue in the implementation of the SDGs will be put in place. Considerations on the enabling environment for social dialogue and democracy building need to be strengthened (especially related to goal 16).

SESSION IV: ILC DISCUSSION ON EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The session was opened with an introduction, by Paola Simonetti from the TUDCN Secretariat, to the key elements for trade unions in the next ILC discussion on effective development cooperation. This was followed by a presentation by Enrico Cairola from the ILO/ACTRAV on this year's discussion. Mr Cairola noted that the last ILC discussion on the subject took place in 2006. The upcoming conference in Geneva, in the context of the UN reform process, brings a strategic opportunity to promote the role of the ILO in development. The ILO brings a very specific model based on its principles and mandate and has tripartism as a specific feature. This should be the key model to promote within the UN reform process for the ILO's role at country level.



What should we get out of this ILO discussion?

- A stronger ILO, and an ILO which is able to influence the SDGs, beyond SDG 8, across all the SDGs;
- An ILO that is able to bring social dialogue and its agenda, but also its standards across the SDGs;
- Need to build a new space, built by the constituents, highlighting the role of the Decent Work Country Programmes and how they can build up labour platforms in a country that is embedded in the UNDAF;
- Highlight the issue of the private sector – insist on the process of selecting the private entities and how the experience of the ILO can be used as a good practice for the Global Compact, for having private companies to contribute in reaching the SDGs.

A presentation on the Trade Union development Effectiveness Principles by the TUDCN Secretariat followed, to put forward these principles in the context of the ILC discussion on effective development cooperation.

During the subsequent discussion concerns were raised on the role of the private sector in development and the need for appropriate transparency and accountability mechanisms, as well as the impact of the UNDAF process at country level on the ILO agenda and tools.

Participants then discussed trade union contributions to the ILC discussion in groups

ILC Discussion on Effective Development Cooperation:

1. The contents of the briefing note are well received by the members.
2. The main demands remain:
 - Reaffirm tripartism and the normative framework as the main assets of the ILO development cooperation;
 - Uphold the role of the ILO and social partners within the UN system reform (DWCP in UNDAF);
 - Reaffirm the accountability of private sector engagement by the ILO.
 - Reaffirm the role of constituencies within ILO South-South development cooperation;
 - Strengthen tripartite monitoring on the allocation and utilisation of ILO development cooperation resources;
 - Ensure a more prominent role of the ILO within development policy-making arenas (UN, OECD, GPEDC...), as well as a steering role of the ILO among other CSOs in the context of the SDGs;
 - Prioritise an ownership-based capacity building of constituencies by the ILO in terms of financial and technical support, besides the support to social dialogue processes;
 - Give recognition by the ILO development cooperation system to the trade union development effectiveness principles, which are a reference for trade union international solidarity work.



DAY 3 – FRIDAY 18 MAY 2018

SESSION V: TUDCN 2014-2017 EVALUATION

The third day began with a presentation of the external evaluation of the TUDCN work during the years 2014 to 2017 by Paola Simonetti, who introduced the main conclusions which addressed the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the network. She also presented the final recommendations.

The group discussion focused on the financial sustainability of the network and the need to continue the conversation. There were also ideas around partnerships and a request to use the Open Coordination Meeting to have a space to share information about the international solidarity programmes (challenges and achievements).

SESSION VI: ITUC CONGRES 2018 – SIDE EVENT ON DEVELOPMENT

Diego López from the TUDCN Secretariat, presented the draft concept note for the ITUC Congress side-event on Development: “Rethinking Trade Union International Solidarity within the SDGs framework”. The objective of this side event is to contribute to position trade union international solidarity in the context of Agenda 2030. The idea for the side event was welcomed by participants.

During the discussion some suggestions were made on referencing the role of trade unions in donor and receiving countries, touching upon how to promote the SDGs in the trade union agenda of ITUC affiliates, creating a panel to put pictures and/or videos of trade union initiatives on SDGs

SESSION VII: TUDCN GLOBAL AND REGIONS WORK PLANS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the final session of the meeting the work plans of the regional networks in Africa, the Americas and Asia-Pacific as well as the global work plan of the TUDCN were presented. This was followed by a presentation of the final conclusions of the meeting by Paola Simonetti.

Setting the road map:

1. The evaluation report is noted and concrete steps are already in place following-up the recommendations.
2. The side event for the ITUC Congress was outlined and the recommendations will be taken into account in further development.
3. The global and regional work plans are endorsed

The meeting was closed by Mamadou Diallo.

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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