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Resolution concerning effective ILO development cooperation in support of the Sustainable Development Goals¹

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization, meeting at its 107th Session, 2018,

Having undertaken a general discussion on effective ILO development cooperation in support of the Sustainable Development Goals,

1. Adopts the following conclusions;
2. Invites the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to guide the International Labour Office in giving effect to the conclusions; and
3. Requests the Director-General to:
 - (a) prepare a plan of action to give effect to the conclusions, for the consideration of the Governing Body; and
 - (b) communicate the conclusions to the relevant organizations at the global and regional levels for their attention.

Conclusions concerning effective ILO development cooperation in support of the Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) reaffirms the importance of international instruments relating to human rights and international law and integrates decent work into its goals and targets.

In support of the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, the International Labour Organization (ILO) should promote the understanding and recognition of its values, mandate and standards in its development cooperation and partnerships. This action is anchored in the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008) (Social Justice Declaration), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (1978). The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011), the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (2015) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2015) also recognize the importance of decent work.

Transparency and accountability should underpin ILO development cooperation, taking into account, as appropriate, the Busan Principles (2011) and the Nairobi Outcome Document (2016) of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

I. THE NEW DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION LANDSCAPE: RESPONDING TO A CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

1. The world of work is experiencing rapid change through, among others, technological transformation, globalization, climate change, demographic trends and labour migration. Yet poverty persists. While there are new opportunities to accelerate economic growth, poverty reduction, structural transformation and job creation and to promote respect for fundamental human rights, countries are also tackling a range of decent work deficits and income inequalities, including those faced by youth, women and persons with disabilities in the labour market. Access to decent work remains a challenge in the informal and rural economies. Crisis situations arising from conflicts and disasters have impacted many countries, leading to forced displacement. In particular, the large numbers of refugees may

¹ Adopted on 8 June 2018.

place unduly heavy burdens on the economies of host countries; these burdens should be reduced through international cooperation so as to ensure more predictable and equitable burden-sharing and responsibility-sharing.

2. Building on the four strategic objectives (employment, social protection, social dialogue and rights at work) of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, global challenges demand effective responses and innovative approaches which are adapted to country-specific realities. The Social Justice Declaration and the resolution on advancing social justice through decent work adopted by the Conference at its 105th Session (2016) provide critical guidance for shaping ILO responses through its development cooperation and assisting Members in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

3. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda implies massive resource mobilization. In this regard, full implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and of SDG 17 is imperative. Moreover, the value of official development assistance (ODA) remains fundamental to ensuring independent and transparent policies and instruments and the advancement of development cooperation. The 0.7 per cent commitment of many donor governments in allocating resources to development cooperation is important. Though ODA continues to be an important source of financing for development, there is an increased emphasis on domestic resource mobilization, multi-stakeholder partnerships, private financing and repositioning of international cooperation while fighting against illicit financial movements. To achieve the SDGs, there is a need for sustainable fiscal provisions and innovative financing instruments, including pooled funds, requiring greater policy coherence and support at all levels.

4. Financing for development is likely to depend on sustainable investment that can be achieved in countries. This implies a fundamental role of the ILO in raising the awareness of its constituents with respect to trade and labour linkages and supporting the participation and capacity of the social partners to engage in the development of trade and investment policies and programmes of multilateral and regional institutions and development banks.

5. The ILO's future development cooperation strategy needs to take into consideration the changing realities in the world of work, including the diverse forms of work and new forms of employment, while promoting the Decent Work Agenda.

II. AN ILO FIT FOR PURPOSE IN A REFORMED UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

6. The 2030 Agenda is based, among others, on respect for human rights, including gender equality, supported by the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental), endeavours to leave no one behind and places the ILO's Decent Work Agenda at its core. The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General's reforms to deliver the 2030 Agenda will bring about bold changes which will have profound implications for development cooperation.

7. As a unique tripartite specialized agency of the United Nations, the ILO has a key role to play in the implementation of the processes of the UN development system (UNDS) reform to enhance the effectiveness of development cooperation. In a reformed UNDS, the ILO will have to grasp the new opportunities to strengthen its advocacy, outreach and visibility in order to proactively promote its mandate, normative role and social dialogue and provide technical expertise across the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda. The future approach to development cooperation should ensure that the ILO better serves its constituents, while empowering them to participate in national implementation processes in order to give them a genuine role in the reformed UNDS and contribute towards achieving the SDGs. An ILO fit for purpose today will secure its relevance tomorrow.

III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR FUTURE ILO DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

8. As the ILO approaches its Centenary, its development cooperation is an integral part of its service delivery to meet challenges in the world of work, build a global community with a shared future of decent work for all and support constituents in promoting the Decent Work Agenda within an overarching SDG framework. The ILO and other UN agencies play an important role in assisting countries in monitoring and implementing the objectives of the SDGs. The unique role of the ILO defined by its Constitution, its tripartite structure and its normative mandate, including its supervisory system, is fundamental to fulfilling this role and should be fully taken into account in any future system of funding and programming. A more effective and innovative approach to ILO development cooperation will be underpinned by the following guiding principles:

- (a) *Enhanced country ownership and relevance.* Development cooperation should be demand-driven, adapted to regions' and countries' specific needs, in particular decent work deficits as defined in national development frameworks, and identified through social dialogue processes with ILO constituents. As representatives of the world of work, the ILO's social partners need to be actively engaged in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda. Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) are for the ILO the primary vehicle for supporting countries in achieving the SDGs. The reassessment of DWCPs and their alignment with United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and national development plans is critical for the continued relevance of ILO development cooperation.
- (b) *The ILO's four strategic objectives.* The ILO's four strategic objectives should be promoted and integrated into the elaboration of DWCPs and UNDAFs, in coordination with UN Resident Coordinators.
- (c) *A more coordinated and coherent strategy.* Effective development cooperation requires greater policy, programmatic and budgetary coherence within the ILO, with and between the constituents, in the UNDS and among a broader spectrum of stakeholders, including international financial institutions (IFIs), enterprises, development partners and other government ministries involved in the implementation of decent work policies and the SDGs. ILO development cooperation should promote all the pillars of decent work in a balanced manner.
- (d) *The ILO's role enhanced in a more integrated UNDS.* The ILO's value added to development cooperation continues to be its balanced approach to the world of work through tripartism, social dialogue, social protection, standard setting and its supervisory function. The ILO's technical expertise spanning the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda is a key asset.
- (e) *The role of the private sector in sustainable development.* The private sector, including micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, is instrumental in ensuring growth, investment and the creation of decent and productive employment, and in providing social protection, underpinning the achievement of the SDGs, particularly SDG 8. Moreover, the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy and the conclusions concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises (2007) constitute essential tools. The ILO development cooperation strategy should maximize the development potential of the private sector by promoting an enabling environment for sustainable and resilient enterprises.
- (f) *Leaving no one behind.* In line with the underlying premise of the 2030 Agenda, ILO development cooperation needs to strengthen its focus on gender equality and the inclusion of persons with disabilities, youth and other disadvantaged groups excluded from the labour market and not benefiting from adequate social protection, by creating conditions and environments for

employment and income opportunities. The ILO should support efforts to promote access to decent work for the working poor and workers in the informal and rural economies.

- (g) *A programmatic approach for results and impact.* In order to achieve results and sustainability, development cooperation needs to take a longer-term, programmatic and focused approach, including through the ILO flagship programmes and other initiatives, bearing in mind long-term national development plans, as appropriate.
- (h) *A stronger focus on capacity development.* Effective development cooperation will depend on strengthened capacities of the ILO, its constituents, other national stakeholders and the UNDS, including the UN Resident Coordinator system, to mainstream and implement the Decent Work Agenda, while reinforcing national capacities of institutions responsible for receiving and providing development cooperation.
- (i) *Enhanced transparency and shared responsibility through social dialogue.* Improved transparency in ILO development cooperation is required to ensure financial transparency and accountability, effective participation of constituents through social dialogue and learning from results. The effective involvement of tripartite constituents and relevant stakeholders in the DWCP process and the UNDAF components is required in order to ensure shared goals and better results.
- (j) *Inclusive partnerships.* Engagement with the private sector and other stakeholders that promote decent work, including through public–private partnerships or other mechanisms, should promote understanding and recognition of the ILO’s core values, mandate and standards.
- (k) *Development financing.* To achieve the 2030 Agenda, the ILO should pursue innovative partnerships and financing, while respecting the principles of accountability and transparency, to fill the resource gap and deliver at the global, regional, national and local levels, including through pooled funding and multi-stakeholder alliances.
- (l) *Greater use of South–South and triangular cooperation (SSTC).* Drawing on the expertise of all constituents, SSTC is a strategic vehicle for promoting mutually beneficial learning and cooperation in support of the 2030 Agenda.

IV. ROADMAP

9. Considering the guiding principles and the changes in the world of work, development cooperation, UN reform and the SDGs:

- (1) The ILO is called upon to:
 - (a) proactively promote and advocate for its unique value added, including its tripartism, normative action and social dialogue, in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the reform of the UNDS at the global, regional, national and local levels, including the integration of DWCP priorities into UNDAFs;
 - (b) strengthen the capacities of its constituents to effectively participate in achieving the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, focusing more on sustainable organizational and institutional capacity building, including with the support of the International Training Centre of the ILO. Flagship programmes and other initiatives should be utilized to this effect;
 - (c) support tripartite structures at the national level to promote constituent participation in the UNDAFs;
 - (d) deepen, expand and diversify partnerships, including with other UN entities, IFIs and the private sector, and promote engagement with innovative finance modalities and multi-stakeholder networks and alliances, such as those tackling forced labour, child labour and modern forms of slavery. The Office should identify the opportunities and risks

associated with forms of innovative finance mechanisms that are new to the ILO and report on them to the Governing Body for discussion and decision;

- (e) facilitate SSTC as strategic, efficient and win-win modalities of development cooperation to encourage peer-to-peer learning and use of local expertise;
 - (f) enhance resource mobilization through voluntary funding for its programmes from public and private development partners, domestic funding and UN funding modalities. The ILO should share its expertise and approach in this area with other UN entities;
 - (g) assist countries in addressing recommendations from the ILO supervisory bodies regarding the implementation of international labour standards, upon request;
 - (h) promote, at the DWCP and UNDAF levels, the comprehensive employment policy framework to promote full, decent, productive and freely chosen employment, as set out in the conclusions concerning the second recurrent discussion on employment adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 103rd Session (2014);
 - (i) assist member States in strengthening the capacities of labour administration and other institutions involved in the monitoring and enforcement of national labour laws;
 - (j) explore flexible, agile and innovative modalities for in-country delivery of services, driven by national needs and priorities, with effective participation of the social partners;
 - (k) continue to find ways to reach actors in the informal economy and keep supporting the transition from the informal economy to the formal economy;
 - (l) support the implementation of decent work in global supply chains, including with multinational enterprises;
 - (m) assist member States in initiating or improving the collection and dissemination of disaggregated economic and labour-related data and statistics, including by gender and disability, as a basis for measuring progress on decent work-related SDGs, targets and indicators for which the ILO is the custodian agency;
 - (n) make better use of data collection, results-based management tools and evaluation, including impact evaluations, to demonstrate what works, support the scaling up of interventions and enhance the visibility of the Decent Work Agenda;
 - (o) review the configuration of its field structure in the context of the reformed UNDS; and
 - (p) develop a plan of action as a follow-up to the Conference guidance and conclusions concerning effective ILO development cooperation in support of the SDGs.
- (2) Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should consider:
- (a) strengthening policy coherence, including the role of the ILO with IFIs, and align with relevant financing modalities in support of achieving decent work and the SDGs;
 - (b) promoting engagement with the private sector as the key driver of growth and jobs, while safeguarding the interests of employers and workers; and
 - (c) creating an enabling environment in which employers' and workers' organizations can develop and function independently.
- (3) The ILO's development partners should consider:
- (a) supporting the Regular Budget Supplementary Account; and

- (b) promoting the Decent Work Agenda and the role of the ILO when setting up or contributing to UN pooled funding arrangements and multi-partner trust funds.