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Outcomes of the work of the General Discussion Committee:
Decent work and the social and solidarity economy

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Friday, 10 June 2022, 4.10 p.m.

President: Mr bin Samikh Al Marri,
Government Vice-President of the Conference

Presentation and discussion of the outcomes of the General Discussion Committee: Decent work and the social and solidarity economy

The President

We now turn to the work of the General Discussion Committee: Decent work and the social and solidarity economy and its proposed resolution, which contains the Committee's conclusions, the text of which can be found in *Record of Proceedings No. 7A*. The summary of the Committee's proceedings can be found in *Record of Proceedings No. 7B*.

It is my pleasure to recall that the Officers of the Committee, all of whom are with us in the room here today, are: Mr Lee (United States of America), Chairperson; Ms Mbono (Cameroon), Employer Vice-Chairperson; and Ms Moore (Barbados), Worker Vice-Chairperson. The Reporter is Mr Jordan (Barbados).

I will begin by giving the floor to Mr Jordan, so that he may present to us the Committee's report. The Officers of the Committee will then take the floor.

Mr Jordan

Reporter of the General Discussion Committee: Decent work and the social and solidarity economy

It is a great honour for me and my Government, the Government of Barbados, to present to the Conference the outcomes of the work of the Committee, namely the conclusions and resolution of the General Discussion Committee: Decent work and the social and solidarity economy for adoption. Allow me to thank my group, the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries, and my region, the Americas, for nominating me to this role.

The outcomes of the work of the Committee and the accompanying conclusions and resolution are the result of the Committee's strong commitment to its objectives, the tripartite approach and some hard work over the past ten days. The delegates focused their attention on four points: first, what should be a universal definition of the term "social and solidarity economy"? Second, how can the social and solidarity economy (SSE) further contribute to decent work and sustainable development? Third, what can governments and workers' and employers' organizations do to promote the contribution by the SSE to human-centred recovery? And fourth, what actions can the ILO take to promote the SSE?

We held 11 plenary sittings, with one extended sitting. We had good discussions, which were sometimes tough, but we were always working to achieve the best outcome. In the true spirit of social dialogue, we deliberated on the issues and arrived at a set of conclusions.

The Committee managed to accomplish its work and to reach consensus on this important topic thanks to the untiring commitment of the Chairperson, Mr Adam Lee, the two Vice-Chairpersons, Ms Aline Mbono and Ms Toni Moore, and the Government members. I thank all the members of the Committee for their engagement and constructive inputs, sometimes till late hours of the evening. I also acknowledge the dedication of the Drafting Group members, who held four sittings, including an extended one. The Drafting Group proposed to the

Committee a set of draft conclusions for discussion that reflected the deliberations of the Committee.

Allow me to acknowledge the enormous efforts made by the Office in preparing and providing a comprehensive and forward-looking report, along with several accompanying documents. In particular, I wish to thank: the representative of the Secretary-General, Mr Vic Van Vuuren; the deputy representative of the Secretary-General, Ms Simel Esim; the coordinator, Ms Josée Laporte; and all the other staff of the Secretariat for their outstanding contribution and support, including the experts, translators, interpreters, technicians and all administrative staff.

This is the first comprehensive discussion on the SSE taking place at the International Labour Conference. It is also the first high-level debate in the United Nations system on this subject. Although the SSE is not new, its policy importance and visibility have grown significantly since the turn of the century. Governments, the social partners and other stakeholders have also recognized that a robust SSE can contribute to balanced, inclusive, resilient and sustainable economies and societies. The SSE has the potential to uplift persons facing vulnerable situations, including women, young people and persons living with disabilities. SSE entities can perform important roles. They can create and preserve jobs, provide social protection and offer a range of services for their members, workers, users and communities. For these reasons, the work of this Committee has been both timely and important.

I now have the honour of submitting to the International Labour Conference for adoption the outcomes of the Committee's work, namely the proposed resolution and conclusions. The proposed conclusions are structured in four parts. Part I, entitled "Introduction", recalls the links between the SSE and the ILO by directly referencing the ILO Constitution, including the Declaration of Philadelphia, relevant international labour standards and declarations that explicitly recognize the importance of the SSE in its various forms in promoting sustainable development, decent work, productive employment and improved living standards for all. Part II provides a clear and comprehensive definition of the SSE based on a set of values and principles. This is the first agreed tripartite definition of the SSE at the international level. Part III spells out the guiding principles to address challenges and opportunities to promote decent work and the SSE for a human-centred future of work. Part IV explains the role of governments and the social partners in fostering the economic, social and environmental contributions of the SSE. Part V, entitled "The role of the ILO", provides recommendations for Office action and key principles that underpin such action. An annex to these conclusions provides a non-exhaustive list of instruments of the ILO and the United Nations relevant to decent work and the SSE.

I believe it is fair to say that the conclusions presented before you today provide sufficient guidance to the constituents and to the Office on the promotion of decent work in and through the SSE for years to come. Therefore, I now have the distinct honour and privilege of submitting to the International Labour Conference for adoption, the resolution and conclusions concerning the SSE.

Ms Mbono**Employer Vice-Chairperson of the General Discussion Committee: Decent work and the social and solidarity economy
(Original French)**

This general discussion was an opportunity to address the important question of decent work and the social and solidarity economy (SSE) 20 years after the adoption of the Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193). The SSE is not something new. Actually, one of the first discussions of the ILO's Governing Body in 1920 gave rise to the ILO Cooperatives Unit (COOP), placing a positive emphasis on the role played by cooperatives as the main recognized form of the SSE at that time. Closer to our time, the 2019 ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work recognizes the important role of the SSE. In particular, the Declaration calls on the ILO, I quote, to "[support] the role of the private sector as a principal source of economic growth and job creation by promoting an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprises, in particular micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as cooperatives and the SSE, in order to generate decent work, productive employment and improved living standards for all". Our group welcomes the reference to this crucial text in the conclusions. Since the beginning of this general discussion, our group has called attention to the need to ensure an enabling environment for the SSE, to complement the ILO's work to promote sustainable enterprises. The conclusions rightly recognize the need to provide an enabling environment for the SSE, as a means of fostering productivity, skills development and entrepreneurship and creating quality jobs for all and a safe and healthy working environment, as well as the importance of support measures for disadvantaged groups and persons in vulnerable situations. Our group also welcomes the reference made to the need to promote and strengthen the complementarity between the social and solidarity economy and traditional enterprises.

This complementarity could generate a dynamic that would contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic growth, employment and decent work for all. The reference to sustainable enterprises throughout the conclusions, in particular to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, allows us to recall the importance of these complementarities and synergies for our objective, which is to strengthen the social and solidarity economy and the economy as a whole. The SSE does not function as an alternative to or in isolation from the private and public sectors. On the contrary, the enterprises, entities and organizations that operate in the social and solidarity economy have a distinct set of values and principles, several of which are shared by the rest of the private sector and public entities, sometimes in other forms such as corporate social responsibility or public-private partnerships.

One of the additional benefits of this discussion and the conclusions arising from it is that it affords better guidance to the work of the Office to provide an enabling environment for the SSE, complementing the ILO's work to promote sustainable enterprises. The objective was not to create a new ILO strategy or action plan for the SSE. It was also a matter of avoiding moving towards those who would certainly call for measures in favour of the SSE that could create unfair competition to the detriment of traditional enterprises, and, in particular, small and medium-sized enterprises. Fortunately, all delegates recognized that the SSE is a broad concept that encompasses various economic entities, definitions, values, principles and specific formats that often depend on the national context. This discussion has proved useful in clarifying what we mean by the SSE and finding a shared definition that acknowledges this diversity. The universal definition on which all constituents agreed makes specific reference to important points, including: the need for SSE entities and enterprises to aspire to long-term economic viability and sustainability; the recognition that SSE entities and enterprises are

operating in all sectors of the economy; its role in helping the transition from the informal to the formal economy; and the need to take the national context into account.

The Employers also appreciate that all groups shared the view that the SSE could provide opportunities, in particular through innovative solutions to ensure decent work, respond to the needs of disadvantaged groups and persons in vulnerable situations, help the transition from informality to formality and, lastly, strengthen lasting economic growth. The conclusions also reflect a balanced approach to the need for SSE entities to be productive in order to contribute to economic growth, sustainable development and decent work for all. As with all other enterprises, the productivity of SSE entities must also be encouraged and strengthened. We also welcome the convergence of views within the Committee recognizing that SSE entities face unique challenges, in addition to the difficulties that they share with numerous micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, linked in particular to gaps in governance.

We welcome the fact that the conclusions recognize the need to promote and respect tripartite social dialogue. As social partners, we welcome, of course, the active participation of SSE enterprises in institutional dialogue on matters having a direct impact on their interests. We also welcome the sharing of knowledge and experiences between SSE entities and social partners. Nevertheless, we recall that social dialogue is the exclusive preserve of the social partners. Employers' organizations can also envisage extending membership to social and solidarity economy entities that wish to join and providing them with the support services, as necessary. The inclusion of SSE enterprises in employers' organizations could potentially provide ways forward and create synergies that would make it possible to address systemic issues, such as informality, more effectively.

To conclude in the same constructive spirit that has inspired us throughout this work and on this solemn day on which we adopt our conclusions, I will not recall here our serious reservations with regard to the Annex, a position that we have set out clearly to the Committee. I will simply thank my colleague the Vice-Chairperson, the entire Committee and the Office for their efforts and work which have allowed us to achieve this sound and balanced result. We will return to our respective countries with the satisfaction of having reached conclusions together that will bring real added value and offer the Organization a clear road map.

Ms Moore

Worker Vice-Chairperson of the General Discussion Committee: Decent work and the social and solidarity economy

The colour orange I am wearing today symbolizes a number of things: friendship; enthusiasm; energy; optimism; and joyfulness. At this moment, I am experiencing many of these positive vibes, as I stand here and deliver this statement on behalf of the Workers who participated in the General Discussion Committee: Decent work and the social and solidarity economy.

We started our work 12 days ago, expressing our satisfaction that, after a centenary of existence, the International Labour Organization, through this Conference discussion, was reconnecting with its roots. The mandate under article 12 of the ILO Constitution to work with cooperators translates today into the conclusions before us, which, although just coming out of the oven, have more than 100 years of history. The mandate handed down by the Declaration of Philadelphia is alive in these conclusions, which recognize that "all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity".

After several days of discussions, we have been able to construct the first ILO tripartite definition of the term “social and solidarity economy”. It is a definition that recognizes more than 100 years of resistance to exploitation and resilience; a definition that recognizes an alternative model to the dominant economic one; and a definition that puts people and the planet above mere profits.

We have witnessed millions of workers being pushed out of the economic system, hidden in numbers, left behind, invisible, deprived of rights, dispossessed and disenfranchised. But the power of hope is stronger than that of fear. And, as workers, our experience of struggle causes us to know that the only way in which hope can translate into meaningful change is when we come together: when we march together, when we stand together and when we fight together for our rights.

In these conclusions, we recognize the resistance of the indigenous and tribal cultures to colonialism. We recognize the millions of workers who have united to create worker-led cooperatives in the past century. We recognize those who, left abandoned by factory owners, had the courage to recover the factories under worker-led control. We recognize rural workers producing with agro-ecological techniques and using short-circuit methods for their products. We recognize the consumer cooperatives and the housing cooperatives. We recognize the hands of home-based seamstresses and women who sew for multinational enterprises. We recognize waste pickers finding a way to survive. We recognize overall a tremendous fight for dignity. And we recognize that the struggle continues.

These conclusions are, for us, a kind of a bridge between the past and the future. A bridge built on the foundations of social justice and decent work. We started building this bridge 103 years ago, and this bridge has allowed us to cross over a river of suffering and indifference and is ushering us towards a future of work. This bridge is built on a foundation of solidarity and is guiding us towards equality. When will we get to the other side of this bridge? Who knows? It is difficult to say; but what is clear for us is that we must keep marching across that bridge to overcome the river of inaction.

These conclusions give hope to the millions who work in the social and solidarity economy (SSE). The conclusions also serve to give us hope by creating a picture of what the future of work could look like. Achieving social justice for all means putting people’s and workers’ rights, needs and aspirations above everything else – keeping people at the heart of economic, social and environmental policies. The SSE can clearly contribute to this aim.

We made the point that many workers find in the SSE a way to survive. Here, I hasten to underscore the important difference between the words “survive” and “live”. These conclusions provide the ILO with a mandate to support the opportunity which we have, as its Members, to transform mere survival into real living with dignity and to transform the informal economy into the formal economy. The conclusions recognize the relevance of the SSE to the present and the future – its relevance to digital transformation, how it can contribute to a worker-led transformation, and its role in providing solutions to achieve environmental justice. In these conclusions, we see the relevance of the Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177), and its potential for protecting so many workers in the SSE and other enterprises who now work from home and who need to be protected.

Our Committee heard from my Minister of Labour, Social Security and Third Sector on several occasions, explaining what climate change means for an island like Barbados. For us, putting people and the planet first is not only a phrase, but an urgent call to action to achieve environmental justice. There is a recognition in the conclusions that different patterns of production and consumption aimed at reducing inequalities are needed; they are not just

words for us. And when I say “us”, I do not mean only us in Barbados, I mean all of us on this planet.

We have learned a lot from each other during this session of the Conference. We have learned a lot from SSE workers and other workers on the different realities confronting them. We have learned from those engaged in well-established cooperatives, from those that are worried about how taxpayer-funded public development cooperation might be used to support SSEs, from those who are struggling to be recognized as unions and to bargaining collectively, from those who have good social dialogue, from those who organize home-based workers, and from so many others.

We have learned a lot listening to the Employers’ concerns over interactions between SSE entities and more traditional enterprises. At this point, let me please thank my counterparts on the Employers’ benches. We had the opportunity to have both formal and informal exchanges and I really feel that we heard each other and that we recognized that, notwithstanding the differences in our visions, we have some common ground and we can both see our concerns reflected in the conclusions.

We have learned a lot during these days, from different parts of the world, through the contributions of the different regions and countries. We have gained perspectives regarding the differing national circumstances, regulations and practices.

We are satisfied that the conclusions provide good guidance. They recognize the importance of freedom of association and collective bargaining for all and provide a solid Annex with a normative framework that would allow for the design of strategies and policies to promote the SSE.

The conclusions recognize that there are crucial interactions between the SSE and the public sector, that public procurement plays a key role in the long-term resilience of these organizations and that the SSE is a tool for social inclusion, especially for many women, young people, unemployed workers, persons with disabilities, migrant workers and indigenous peoples.

But we recognize that for the SSE to thrive, we must commit through these conclusions to establish a conducive environment, based on international labour standards, consistent with the nature and diversity of the SSE, to promote decent work and sustainable development. A conducive environment that promotes universal social protection, lifelong learning and training, a safe and healthy working environment as a fundamental right and an end to violence and harassment.

These conclusions provide a good framework to establish decent work in the SSE. As we said during the discussions, the time of “there is no alternative” has passed. If we do not see an alternative, we must build it. The work has started. I would therefore like to call on all of us, all Members of the ILO, to think outside the box because the SSE is an outside the box alternative.

Let me just conclude with a little bit of relatively recent history. At the beginning of the year 2000, trade unions and other social movements, including those in the SSE, met in Porto Alegre, Brazil, to build the World Social Forum. I make mention of this because, at that moment, the SSE was exploding in Latin America and the Caribbean, as a result of people trying to survive neoliberalism and coming together into the SSE. The trade union movement and other social movements reacquainted under a common history and we came together under one slogan: “Another world is possible”.

Today, in the conclusions before us, we recognize that not only is another world possible, it is urgently necessary. Special thanks therefore to the Office, the interpreters and all those who supported us in making this set of concrete conclusions possible. On behalf of workers in the SSE and workers generally, I say thank you. Last but not least, a special thanks to this Conference, in anticipation of the adoption of the conclusions. Let us build together.

Mr Lee

Chairperson of the General Discussion Committee: Decent work and the social and solidarity economy

I have the honour, in my capacity as the Chairperson of the General Discussion Committee: Decent work and the social and solidarity economy, to present you with some observations on the proceedings of the Committee.

At the outset, let me say that this is the first time in the history of the ILO and the wider United Nations system that a high-level, comprehensive discussion on the social and solidarity economy has taken place. The discussion reflects the ILO's leading role in promoting the social and solidarity economy in the multilateral system. It stems from the ILO's social justice mandate enshrined in its Constitution, including the Declaration of Philadelphia. It also reflects the relevance of the social and solidarity economy to the ILO's mandate.

Our discussion provided a unique opportunity to elaborate a common tripartite vision on the social and solidarity economy. We have developed a universal definition of the term "social and solidarity economy", including its associated principles and values. We have elaborated guiding principles to address challenges and opportunities in respect of promoting decent work and the social and solidarity economy for a human-centred future of work. We have clarified the role of governments and the social partners in creating a conducive environment consistent with the nature and diversity of the social and solidarity economy to promote decent work and harness the fullest potential of social and solidarity economy entities, to contribute to sustainable development and sustainable enterprises, in line with international labour standards. We have provided guidance for the future actions of the ILO to promote the establishment and development of strong and resilient social and solidarity economy entities, while taking into account the diverse realities and needs of Members, including the varying degrees of development of the social and solidarity economy, and relevant international labour standards.

I would like to thank the two Vice-Chairpersons, Ms Aline Mbono and Ms Toni Moore, as well as all the Government delegates, for their engagement, cooperation and support throughout the Committee's work. I would also like to extend my thanks to the Office, in particular: the representative of the Secretary-General, Mr Vic Van Vuuren; the deputy representative of the Secretary-General, Ms Simel Esim; the Committee's coordinator, Ms Josée Laporte; and all the staff of the Secretariat, including the experts, translators, interpreters, technicians and administrative staff, for their commitment and excellent support to facilitate the work of the Committee.

Now, let me highlight a few points to complement the excellent accounts of the work of the Committee that you just heard from the Reporter, Minister Colin Jordan, and the two Vice-Chairpersons.

The two weeks of work of the Committee were productive, constructive and at times challenging, but always cordial and collaborative. The conclusions that we are submitting to the Conference for adoption are a testament to the commitment and excellent work of the Committee. Most importantly, they are vivid proof that it is possible to forge tripartite

consensus to put forward a common framework to promote the social and solidarity economy in line with the ILO's mandate for social justice and decent work and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The conclusions from this Committee will be instrumental in promoting greater coherence across the multilateral system, to mainstream international labour standards in pro-employment macroeconomic and industrial policies through global action on the social and solidarity economy. The conclusions will also help foster a greater recognition of the social and solidarity economy and recognize the social and solidarity economy as a relevant means of achieving sustainable development, social justice, decent work, productive employment and improved living standards for all. They will provide an important reference for the promotion of decent work in and through the social and solidarity economy at all levels.

While our work at this session of the Conference has almost come to an end, the real work has only just begun. The Organization and its Members need to address the challenges faced by the social and solidarity economy, and fully leverage the opportunities to promote its economic, social and environmental contributions. The outcome of this Committee provides a good basis for the realization of this objective.

The President

I thank the Reporter and the Officers of the Committee for their statements. I now open the floor for the discussion of the outcomes of the Committee's work.

Mr Kamruzzaman

Government (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Asia and Pacific group

The Asia and Pacific group is appreciative of the lively discussion on decent work and the social and solidarity economy (SSE) that took place over the last couple of days. The world of work is passing through a difficult time owing to the onslaught of the current pandemic. Naturally, during such a circumstance it can be easier to extend informed and meaningful support to workers in well-structured economic sectors, but it may not be as easy to extend similar support to SSE entities. Hence, it was timely for us to debate on the SSE to find an agreeable approach to address its challenges.

In the SSE, new and additional challenges, on top of those in our agreed conclusions, will continue to come to the surface in the next couple of years in the context of national circumstances. We are optimistic that the scope of discussion between Member States and the social partners will pave the way to calibrate our approach to such challenges. We must keep in mind that we still have a long way to go to realize the values of decent work in the SSE, for which the tripartite partners must commit to work together. The transition from the informal to the formal economy will remain at the centre of our focus on the way to achieving decent work for all. We believe successful transition will help to achieve the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We would now like to shed light on some aspects of the document. It is well structured, providing a definition, guiding principles, the role of governments, the social partners and the Office, and a non-exhaustive list of instruments in the Annex. The definition of the SSE is quite broad. It has captured well the aspirations of the tripartite partners in line with the academic delineations. We believe that the guiding principles have addressed the diversity of the SSE. They will provide guidelines and the direction for the future course of action. The roles of governments and the social partners have been harmonized for meaningful changes in the SSE. However, mutual trust, support and confidence remain important in realizing the

transformation to a world of decent work at a faster pace. The role of the Office is well defined. We hope that the Office will be able to mobilize resources to assist Member States in formulating policy and undertaking programmes to respond to the needs of the people, while advancing our efforts to realize the aspirations captured in the document.

The interlinkages and core relations among various social settings need to be factored in. This is likely to contribute to enhancing the efficacy of our approach. The continued drive for the well-being, progress and prosperity of societies across the globe shall be respectful of those values and cultures as integral components of the SSE. Our togetherness in diversity can take us to new heights in our pursuit for transformation to a world of decent work. The Asia and Pacific group supports the resolution.

Mr Essah

Government (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Africa group

Nigeria is happy to take the floor on behalf of the Africa group this afternoon, to give a short closing statement to mark the end of our Committee's work on decent work and the social and solidarity economy (SSE) and the adoption of our conclusions.

The process of preparing the resolution concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy is a product of a robust general discussion, debate and negotiation. Our contributions and experiences were factual and a summary reflection of our original perspectives. We were guided by a common goal to examine and analyse the concept of the SSE with the universally accepted definition, review evidence-based contributions of the SSE to global development in the broader context of the Sustainable Development Goals, and redefine tripartite relationships with regard to the SSE, in line with previous work done by the ILO, while outlining the way forward in terms of the promotion of the SSE.

Allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate the Chairperson of our Committee, the social partners, the regional spokespersons and the international non-governmental organizations and interest groups for demonstrating the capacity to engage in dialogue, work together and find common consensus over the last few days to produce this resolution for our consideration and adoption today. We thank the drafters, and indeed everybody, for their patience and understanding while negotiations were taking place and amendments to the text were being deliberated, sometimes beyond the expected time limit.

Africa participated fully and constructively engaged in the discussion that led to this proposed resolution, and we are delighted to be associated with this outcome in the first general discussion on this topic. We endorse the definition of the SSE and the guiding principles outlined in the report. This new definition was formulated not without due consideration of several contrary views. We were inspired to examine each viewpoint based on its merit and contribution to the creation of decent work, the formalization of the informal economy and development. In the end, the ambiguities about what should and should not constitute the SSE were given considerable attention, as reflected in the text that has been presented. Together, we made progress on how to advance the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda through the promotion of the SSE. Our conclusions recognize that giving due consideration to the new universally adopted definition will assist in formalizing the informal economy.

The resolution before us today is to provide a general guide and is by no means an instrument. The Office is to give effect to the conclusions by developing strategies and action plans for future consideration by the Governing Body in November 2022. We therefore invite all constituents to be guided accordingly and to prepare for our next engagement. It should

be noted that the broad nature of the conclusions allows Member States to take action in line with their national circumstances, and this is very important as our regions and countries are not at the same level of economic development.

The Annex was adopted by consensus as a broad reference, to provide information for governments and the social partners as to the range of actions taken by the ILO without having any prescriptive effect whatsoever.

Finally, permit me to conclude my remarks by thanking all Government members of our Committee, the social partners and the Office for the hard work that they all put into this process.

Ms Olivari

Government (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (Original Spanish)

The group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC) would like to express its thanks and appreciation to the Employer, Worker and Government members for the intense and enriching discussions in the Committee. We acknowledge in particular the quality of the statements and the efforts made to find common ground in order to reach a consensus.

It is the first time that a discussion has been held in the International Labour Organization on a document on this subject that will provide us with an initial framework for enhancing the value of the social and solidarity economy and its contribution to achieving sustainable development and social justice.

Accordingly, we were able to formulate a definition of the social and solidarity economy, based on these principles and values. We were also able to identify the challenges faced and the contributions that the tripartite constituents can make to promoting the social and solidarity economy with a view to achieving a human-centred future of decent work. We also considered what actions could be taken by the ILO to support the achievement of these objectives.

We would especially like to commend the work of the Chairperson, Mr Lee, who, with great integrity, patience and leadership, made it possible for the Committee to achieve its objectives. We would also like to acknowledge the important role played by the Vice-Chairpersons, Ms Moore and Ms Mbono, who presented their views eloquently, firmly and clearly, in a spirit of mutual respect and social dialogue.

We would also like to thank the Office for its tireless work and technical support that made it possible for the conclusions reached to be framed correctly. And, lastly, we would like to acknowledge the hard work of the team of interpreters and translators, without whom we would not have been able to complete our work on this set of conclusions.

We are very proud of this outcome and look forward to moving forwards on this new path. GRULAC supports the adoption of this document.

Ms Karvar

Government (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States (Original French)

I speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. Candidate countries Türkiye, North Macedonia, Serbia and Albania, and the European Free Trade Association

country and member of the European Economic Area, Norway, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

We once again warmly thank all those who contributed to the first-ever general discussion on decent work and the social and solidarity economy (SSE), and to its success. We believe that the outcome text will act as a point of reference across the multilateral system.

The final conclusions proposed for adoption today represent a tangible step forward in the development of the SSE, in accordance with the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008), as amended in 2022, the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019, and the Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient, 2021. These texts all recognize the distinctive role that the SSE can play in achieving sustainable development, social justice, decent work, and improved living standards for all. They are in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 and other associated SDGs, as well as the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights. We reaffirm our commitment to these objectives and express our strong belief that the SSE can be an instrument for addressing the global challenges we face.

One of the hallmarks of these conclusions is the definition of the social and solidarity economy. The definition seeks to capture the elements that are specific to the SSE and to accommodate the diversity of the enterprises and entities it encompasses. SSE entities are distinguished by the particular way in which they conduct economic and social activities and pursue entrepreneurial objectives. The ILO's definition complements existing definitions, such as those given in the European Commission's Action Plan for the Social Economy and in the Recommendation on the Social and Solidarity Economy and Social Innovation of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

We believe that the SSE can play a significant role in enhancing the meaning of work at a time when people aspire not only to decent but also to meaningful work. While we believe that this is captured to an extent under the umbrella of decent work, we still think that there is significant scope to further explore this concept in future discussions. The younger generation are the entrepreneurs and workers of the future and the idea of meaningful work may influence their paths, changing the shape of the world of work and building an economy that puts people and the planet at the centre.

We acknowledge and support the pivotal role the ILO can play in promoting the SSE in the world of work and beyond. We welcome the actions identified in the conclusions which urge the ILO to reinforce its leadership role through its efforts to promote increased awareness and understanding of the SSE across the multilateral system. This includes the provision of support and training to ILO constituents, assistance and guidance to Member States, and enhanced collaboration with relevant partners, in particular representative organizations of the SSE. These combined efforts will contribute to meeting the global challenges we have to face and to achieving a human-centred future of decent work. All actions undertaken by the ILO should seek to build on and strengthen existing relationships with other international actors.

At the conclusion of this first ever general discussion on decent work and the SSE at the International Labour Conference, there is a strong belief among all constituents that the full potential of the SSE is yet to be harnessed. We hope that the adoption of these conclusions will open the door to advancing the promotion and the development of the SSE within the ILO, the United Nations system and other multilateral institutions and lead to a broader recognition of its social, economic and environmental transformative powers.

Mr Coovadia Employer (South Africa)

It has been a distinct honour for me to serve as one of the Employer representatives on the General Discussion Committee: Decent work and the social and solidarity economy. Let me at the outset thank the members of the Committee and its Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons, and the wonderful ILO staff, including the interpreters, for their thorough preparation and work, and everybody that contributed to the success of the Committee.

It has been my contention through the proceedings of the Committee that a social and solidarity economy must encompass the entire economy, including for-profit firms, non-governmental organizations, self-help associations, cooperatives and others. Collaboration between all sectors of the broader economy to promote and grow the social and solidarity economy will reduce inequality, address poverty and enable entry into the economy to those that currently do not have that entry.

It will also promote a culture of sustainable business practices across the economy, not just among social and solidarity types of enterprise, but across the economy and across all cooperatives and firms. My experience in South Africa is that all institutions and firms are striving to conduct themselves in ways that benefit all of society, including by looking after the environment, promoting the well-being of the communities in which they work, conducting ethical business practices, treating staff fairly and so on.

The outcome document is a good product of tough negotiations and demonstrates that different social partners are beginning to find common ground to the benefit of all of society. However, we need to promote even greater collaboration and define the social and solidarity economy more broadly.

Ms Ferguson Employer (United States of America)

First and foremost, I must express my gratitude to the members of the General Discussion Committee: Decent work and the social and solidarity economy, as well as to the Committee's Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons, the Office and the interpreters who facilitated our work. Debate was arduous and deliberations were, at times, lengthy, but they took place in a spirit of tripartism and consensus. I believe that the proposed conclusions put forward by the Committee are fair and meaningful.

The social and solidarity economy (SSE) is an integral part of many nations across the globe. In partnership with governments and within the private sector, it can further the goals of providing decent and productive work and promoting social and environmental objectives. Commitment to assisting in the development of an enabling environment in which sustainable enterprises and the SSE can thrive is key.

As social partners, we welcome the active participation of SSE enterprises in institutional dialogue on issues that affect their interests. At the national level, these issues may also raise important discussions between the social partners and the State through social dialogue, in order to find innovative solutions. This is necessary for the success of the SSE and corporate social responsibility on a larger scale.

So now we return home with the satisfaction of having fulfilled our duty by achieving an adopted set of conclusions, and also with the serenity that comes from having participated in a debate in which all parties – Governments, Workers and Employers – acted in good faith, determined to achieve a product that truly adds value and offers a better orientation to our

Organization. Congratulations on the adoption of the conclusions, and thank you for the opportunity to participate in the endeavour.

Ms George
Worker (India)

The adoption of the conclusions concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy is not only a milestone in the history of the ILO but also a milestone in moving towards formalization of workers in the informal economy, who today constitute 61 per cent of the global workforce.

Organizing in cooperatives, collectives and other entities of the social and solidarity economy (SSE) is one way of improving labour conditions and the livelihoods of workers generally, and workers in the informal economy particularly.

The conclusions of the Committee note the need for governments to work towards a legal framework which is supportive of SSE entities. Often barriers are too high for smaller SSE entities, when it comes, for example, to registration requirements or to accessing financial means and services.

In addition, we have now developed a common understanding of the distinct nature of SSEs, which are value based and have the potential to transform economies and contribute to the realization of decent work and the security of livelihoods. SSEs are not about the maximization of profit; SSEs place primacy on people and social purpose in relation to surplus, which serves the needs of SSE members, their families and communities.

Speaking as the representative of the Self-Employed Women's Association in India, with 2.2 million women workers and a country with 93 per cent of informal workers, the SSE plays a significant role for our workers, promoting sustainable livelihoods. We work with various such models, and this resolution will provide us with more opportunities for more resilient models.

The non-exhaustive list of instruments of the International Labour Organization and the United Nations provides important guidance for governments regarding SSEs when addressing the special needs of SSEs set up by workers in the informal economy, for example, the Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177), the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), and the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204).

Last, but not least, the General Discussion Committee: Decent work and the social and solidarity economy adopted a detailed list of what the International Labour Office needs to do to promote the establishment and development of strong and resilient SSE entities, among others by partnering with SSE networks.

We are looking forward to the follow-up to the conclusions concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy, which can contribute to changing the lives of millions of workers in the informal economy.

Mr Grondin
Worker (Canada)
(Original French)

The Canadian trade union delegation, and in particular the trade union delegation from Quebec, participated with a keen interest in the work of this Committee.

The social and solidarity economy remains an important means of economic development and decent work. In Quebec, it has developed in line with a number of our societal values, such as solidarity, gender equality, participation of young and older people and new arrivals, and regional development. Its effects are felt in almost all sectors of economic activity: from agriculture to finance, through the environment, health and culture.

Since the late 1990s, Quebec has had a Social Economy Act, which provides a framework for action. The Chantier de l'économie sociale is an entity comprising the major stakeholders of civil society, including trade unions.

This mode of development is supported by citizens and organizations involved in more than 11,200 collective enterprises, with sales totalling 47.8 billion Canadian dollars and with almost 220,000 employees.

It is a different way of doing business, which aims to give back to the community and support the common good. It is directly related to the needs and aspirations of communities, particularly in regions far from large urban centres.

Gender parity on the boards of these organizations and the important role of young people also contribute to their sustainability.

One recent example illustrates the importance of this means of economic development. The establishment of six cooperatives of information workers enabled a number of francophone newspapers to be kept alive in Quebec. Given the positive impact of independent newspapers in our democracies, such a rescue operation represents a win-win situation for all of society – one that was carried out thanks to contributions from trade unions and the cooperative finance sector, which have long been involved in social dialogue in Quebec.

Therefore, we must support the establishment of laws on the social and solidarity economy the world over, without delay, and aim to establish agencies that can boost this mode of economic development.

I would like to close by noting the excellent work carried out by this Committee. As a first-time participant in a face-to-face session of the Conference, I highly admire the process of seeking compromises in order to secure viable and pertinent consensus-based decisions for all Member States and social partners. This showed that social dialogue is alive and well in this international organization: an example, indeed, of solidarity in action.

Mr Cordero
Employer (Argentina)
(Original Spanish)

I would like to thank the Director-General, Guy Ryder, whose legacy will always be with us at the ILO, the Chairperson of the Committee, the Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Employer Vice-Chairperson, the Office, the International Organisation of Employers, the Bureau for Employers' Activities, all the colleagues I have worked with on the Committee, the interpreters, the translators, all those working on site or remotely.

We were forced by the pandemic to lock ourselves inside despite our social nature and we came out of this confinement to find war, abuse and violence, which should all disappear from the face of the earth forever. Despite adversity, we came together and connected with hope to talk about the social and solidarity economy in pursuit of a better world.

The document we have achieved shows how important decent work is as a source of progress. It includes the social and solidarity economy within tripartism by ensuring that workers' and employers' organizations from the social economy are represented there.

Our document links the entities in the social and solidarity economy with other sustainable enterprises, whether large, medium-sized or small, and with governments. It provides a framework for the eradication of poverty, unfair competition, informality and unemployment, through decent work. It issues a clear call to action to the financial system to keep pace with the effective production of goods and services, the protection of the planet, decent work and social justice.

All this was achieved through a close and necessary link between our heads and our hearts. It is moving to know that the entrepreneurial spirit is alive today as we face adversity and is more relevant than ever as together we build a better world.

Ms Kainu
Worker (Finland)

In the conclusions before us today, the importance of public services is evident. The States have a responsibility to respect, to promote and to realize human rights, including, without a doubt, the right to life. Although there is no explicit reference to the concept of quality public services in the conclusions, the message is nevertheless clear. Well-functioning public services play an essential role in supporting the social and solidarity economy (SSE). This can be highlighted with a single example. The conclusions underline the importance of strengthening labour inspection and promoting collaboration among labour inspectorates, social partners and SSE representatives to prevent, discourage and sanction pseudo-SSE entities. Therefore, the conclusions can bring us closer to achieving decent work in the SSE.

Mr Gómez Ruiloba
Government (Panama)
(Original Spanish)

As has been said by others, this has been a long struggle that has lasted many years. For seven years our country has been asking for this Committee to be on the agenda of the International Labour Conference. And we've done it! Unfortunately, I could not be on the Committee, as I was chairing the Recurrent Discussion Committee: Employment; it would have been my dream and my passion as I was a child born into a family of cooperative members. I simply want to thank you and we hope that this will be just the first step, the first step towards these models of the social and solidarity economy contributing, above all in our country, to improving the distribution of wealth, which has been our true objective.

Many thanks, many thanks to all those who participated in this Committee, in which each and every one played their part in reaching agreements. We will never forget it, because today is an important day for us.

Conclusions concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy: Adoption

The President

Let us now proceed with the adoption of the proposed conclusions concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy, the text of which is contained in *Record of Proceedings* No. 7A.

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference adopts the proposed conclusions in their entirety?

(The conclusions are adopted.)

Resolution concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy: Adoption

The President

Let us now proceed with the adoption of the proposed resolution concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy, the text of which is contained in *Record of Proceedings* No. 7A.

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference adopts the proposed resolution?

(The resolution is adopted.)

I wish to thank all the members of the Committee and the Secretariat for the great results achieved. The topics covered by the discussion the Committee held this year will no doubt remain on the Organization's agenda in the coming years. The work that you have all done can no doubt be considered foundational for the ILO's future activities in this area.

(The Conference continues its work in plenary.)