



Arab Employment Forum

A Jobs Pact for Recovery and Growth

Guidelines for Thematic Working Sessions, 20 October 2009

Panel 5 Social Dialogue and Tripartism for Crisis Analysis and Response

Time: 16:00-18:00

Organizational Guidelines: Each Panel will consist of a Chair, a Facilitator, and tripartite discussants representing the perspectives of governments, workers and employers. The Chair will designate one of the panelists to serve as Rapporteur, reporting back to Plenary on day 3 of the Forum. The Rapporteur will be assisted by a pre-assigned Forum note taker, who will provide the meeting minutes to the Rapporteur by end of session.

The duration of each panel is two hours. The second half of the session will be dedicated to open discussion, while the first part will be led by the panelists themselves as per the below running order of speakers:

- Chair (10 minutes): The Chair will preside over the meeting and moderate the Panel discussion. The Chair will take a few minutes to open the session and introduce panelists. The Chair will also summarize key interventions and provide a wrap-up statement at the end.
- Facilitator (10 minutes): The Facilitator (s) will present highlights of the respective background paper(s) prepared for each panel and key issues for debate. Where there are two facilitators, they will briefly address these same issues (5 minutes each).
- Tripartite constituents (10 minutes/constituent): A representative from each of the Tripartite constituents will highlight key issues of concern, bringing to the fore priorities and challenges from the perspectives of governments, workers and employers.
- Other discussants (10 minutes): Other discussants representing academia and civil society may present their own take on the issue, providing an overview of their own experiences and lessons learned.

The remaining time (approximately 1 hour) will be dedicated to an open exchange of views moderated by the Chair towards a set of Panel recommendations.

Thematic Focus: This Panel will assess the role of social dialogue to promote employment and better labour market governance in the Arab region. It will survey the various forms (tripartite or bipartite) and structures of social dialogue in the region, examining the capacity of Arab social partners and the political will and commitment of Arab governments to engage in social dialogue. The Panel will also

trace the evolution of social dialogue mechanisms, including Arab country ratifications of ILO conventions addressing social dialogue over the decades, shedding light on regional experiences and lessons learned. The Panel will discuss the main impediments to Arab social dialogue, forming consensus around a set of recommendations for better social dialogue and tripartism in the region.

Issues for Debate:

1. What are the conditions for effective social dialogue in the Arab region? To what extent are fundamental rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining respected in the Arab region? Are workers' and employers' organizations strong and independent? Do they have the technical capacity and knowledge to participate in social dialogue? If so, to what extent are they effectively participating in and impacting socio-economic policies?
2. Is there Arab political will and commitment to engage in social dialogue? Is the institutional framework in place at the Arab states level for effective social dialogue to take place?
3. What are the main challenges impeding effective social dialogue from taking place in the region? How can individual Arab countries promote better social dialogue at the national level?