

2nd Meeting of the Group of Friends of Decent Work for Sustainable Development

2 February 2015, 1.15 – 2.30 pm

Permanent Mission of Romania to the UN

The second meeting of the Group of Friends of Decent Work for Sustainable Development was organized at the occasion of the 53rd Commission on Social Development (CSoD) and was hosted by HE Ambassador Simona Miculescu from Romania in her capacity of CSocD's chair.

The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the implementation of the decent work targets, in particular in the area of social protection. Members of the Social Protection Interagency Coordination Board also participated in the discussions.

Ambassador Miculescu highlighted the essential role social development will play in the transition from MDGs to SDGs. She said that this is a core issue at the 53rd session of the CSocD, along with reflections on how to strengthen social development in the contemporary times and the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the World Social Summit (Copenhagen 1995). She also mentioned that issues related to youth, ageing, disability and Africa's development will be discussed.

Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola recalled that the OWG's outcome document brings a strong call for decent work for all and inclusive growth. The challenge ahead of us now is to discuss how to deliver on the promises of social protection for all and decent work for all. What are the means of implementation that could be mobilized in particular in least development countries? How can we monitor and follow up on the implementation? He insisted that social protection and decent work are key issues for all governments regardless of their level of development.

Mr Pascal Buffin, Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium, emphasized the need to further elaborate on the means of implementation and accountability mechanisms, stressing that implementation of social protection floors has been included as part of the discussions on Financing for Development leading to the Addis Ababa conference (July 2015).

The guest speaker, Mr Gilbert Hougbo, ILO Deputy Director General, asserted that the targets on decent work and social protection included in the OWG document are technically sound, measurable, action-oriented, doable and consistent with the related international agreements. As the focus shifts to implementation, he highlighted how the ILO can contribute in designing effective indicators based on labour statistics' definitions agreed by member states and datasets consolidated by the ILO.

He also mentioned that the ILO's supervisory structure could support the P2015 monitoring and accountability mechanisms and its tripartite nature constitutes a comparative advantage in building partnerships. Finally, Mr Hougbo said that in implementing the targets, it is fundamental to link the operational and the normative and to bring the internationally agreed labour standards in as a core reference.

Mrs Anne Drouin, ILO Chief Actuary, focused on the implementation of social protection floors. She recalled that the ILO's Recommendation 202 concerning national floors of social protection should

be the base for framing the target and to guide action at global and national levels. She presented core ILO indicators on social protection coverage that could be used to monitor progress. She showed ILO estimations demonstrating that the development of floors of social protection can be feasible even in low income countries.

In the interactive discussions, the representative of the European Commission reminded that European countries better equipped with social protection systems and decent employment policies were the ones that had better resisted to the economic crisis.

The Brazil's representative reiterated the consensus around the relevance of decent work and social inclusion as a priority of the post-2015 development agenda. He stressed that for those who just had come out of poverty, social protection and decent jobs were crucial in keeping them from crossing the line back into deprivation. More sustainable solutions should be in place to allow them to move to the formal economy.

The representative of Rwanda said that attention should be given to the role of job creation, in particular for the youth, and social protection programmes in fragile and conflict affected countries. She mentioned that Rwanda has made great progress in the universalization of health coverage and highlighted the importance of empowering youth through investment in innovation and science to enable them to create their own jobs.

The representative of Germany referred to the need to convert inefficient fossil fuel subsidies into social protection transfers and insisted on the utmost importance of shifting the understanding of social protection from a cost perspective to a vision of investing in people.

In his concluding remarks, the Ambassador of Angola called for enhanced coordination of the UN system to support member states in the implementation of the P2015 agenda and stressed the need to identify and mobilize reliable new sources of financing for investment in social protection.

The next meeting of the Group of Friends is tentatively scheduled to the week on 29 March - 1st April during the ECOSOC Integration Segment.