

GB.340/POL/5

Enhancement programme of development cooperation for the occupied Arab Territories

On behalf of the Employers' Group, I would like to thank the Office for preparing a well-written report. The GB paper as well as the DG report to the ILC on the occupied Arab Territories are in many ways rather similar. They depict a dramatic situation in a hugely complex part of the world, politically and in the labour market.

I have four points to make with regards to the paper:

- Points 8 and 9 refer to the challenges smaller enterprises face. The report recognises their struggle to meet their obligations and are at high risk of suspending wages and terminating employment. **How can the ILO help to ensure business continuity**, beyond the fund for income support? We would be grateful if **more information can be provided at the next report on how the ILO can provide some guidance to develop an enabling environment for business to grow**. Can the ILO's *Jobs for Peace and Resilience* flagship programme (JPR) help give some guidance on a strategic approach for more peaceful and resilient societies through employment, decent *work* and social dialogue?
- The various ILO interventions has provided very substantial support to consultative processes, review processes, undertaking of studies and similar. Uptake at decision making/political level seem to be limited (also indicated in some paras). **We encourage more ILO interventions to focus more on employment, and less on consultative, debate oriented interventions**.
- We are pleased to see more serious coordination efforts being undertaken with other international agencies. We stated our encouragement on this front, at the last GB meeting on the occupied Arab territories. We welcome the work currently being done with WFP, UNICEF, UNDP and UNIDO. The **project proposal to support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in addressing and recovering from COVID-19 through the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund is good news** to us. The Employers' Group, through the Secretariat and Bureau can provide technical support on this, if needed. Please keep us regularly apprised on the status of the project. There is also added value in sharing information with UN Resident Coordinators, to strengthen the ILO's role as lead agency of labour and social issues.
- We also call on the ILO to provide more capacity building of social partners. For employers, we would like to see **more training, perhaps through the ITCILO, on upskilling, digitisation to help tap into international markets, and harnessing entrepreneurial and core/soft skills**.

We support the point for decision.