

**FOR DEBATE AND GUIDANCE**

## SECOND ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**The sectoral dimension of  
the ILO's work****Sectoral overview of the follow-up  
to the Social Justice Declaration**

1. The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (the Social Justice Declaration) provides the cornerstone for the ILO's future strategic orientation. This paper is intended to stimulate initial discussion on how the sectoral aspects of ILO work can be better integrated in the discussions concerning the follow-up to the Social Justice Declaration. The paper raises some preliminary issues to be considered regarding the planning, policy coherence and delivery of the sectoral dimension of Decent Work Country Programmes.

**Strengthening the sectoral perspective  
of Decent Work Country Programmes**

2. The Social Justice Declaration embraces the concept of country programmes for decent work as an important means to make progress towards all strategic objectives.<sup>1</sup> For this reason, successful implementation of the Social Justice Declaration will rely on designing Decent Work Country Programmes relevant to the main social, economic and labour challenges facing member States and the social partners.
3. Strengthening the sectoral dimension of Decent Work Country Programmes would increase the ILO's responsiveness at the national level, particularly in countries highly dependent on a few sectors. In such countries, sectoral analyses would highlight the relative contribution of various sectors to the GDP and export earnings, underscore the role they play in national economic and social development, outline the size and composition of the labour force in major sectors, monitor developments in emerging industries and identify decent work challenges with regard to rights, employment quality, conditions of work, social protection and social dialogue. For key sectors of the economy, a brief overview of labour issues and of their interaction with national economic and social progress could also be envisaged. Such an analysis would be incorporated into the

<sup>1</sup> Social Justice Declaration, section II(A)(ii).

introductory section of each Decent Work Country Programme document. It would facilitate setting priorities, determining baselines and measuring progress in national efforts to implement decent work.

4. Including a sectoral perspective should be considered at the design stages of Decent Work Country Programmes, so that interventions would be better tailored to social and labour challenges facing the country. In addition to the relevant economic and social policies, the sectoral dimension encompasses a rights-based approach, which includes consideration of the state of fundamental principles and rights at work and an analysis of Conventions and Recommendations relevant to each sector.
5. The relevance of Decent Work Country Programmes could also be enhanced through more inclusive consultation processes at an early stage of their development. The involvement of national and sectoral organizations of employers and workers enables discussions to focus on sectors where the need is great, and where the government and the social partners are willing to work together. Such tripartite commitment is indispensable to achieving results. Without it, the potential impact of any ILO action would be greatly constrained.

## **Fostering policy coherence inside and outside the ILO**

6. The ILO should reinforce the understanding of the interactions between economic and social policies and their different sectoral impacts. As the Social Justice Declaration states, the ILO's strategic objectives are "inseparable, interrelated and mutually supportive".<sup>2</sup> The integrated approach to decent work needs to be strengthened, highlighted, understood and promoted by the social partners, governments and other actors.
7. A broader consultative process would foster better understanding of the Decent Work Agenda and increase policy coherence. Through the coordination of the ministries of labour, other ministries (e.g. finance, economy, agriculture, communication, education, energy, environment, health, industry, mining, tourism, trade) would be involved in the consultation process. The aim would be to increase recognition of the impact that policy decisions taken within their respective areas of competence can have on employment and working conditions.
8. The Office should facilitate greater policy coherence through knowledge sharing, in particular in relation to the formulation and implementation of Decent Work Country Programmes. Communication between sectoral specialists at headquarters and in the field on the importance of a sectoral approach should be improved. Ways need to be found to ensure better diffusion throughout the Office, of the outcomes of sectoral meetings and global dialogue forums, and encourage effective and coordinated follow-up, in order to reinforce the policy links between international social dialogue and country programming.
9. The MFA Forum<sup>3</sup> process provides an example of policy coherence, whereby – following discussions at the Governing Body – the Office cooperated both at country level and globally in the Forum and the Executive Committee, and contributed to drafting the guiding principles for transition, based on ILO principles and international labour standards.

<sup>2</sup> Social Justice Declaration, section I(B).

<sup>3</sup> A network established to address key concerns arising with the end of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement, see the box on p. 4.

## Practical steps

10. A sectoral approach would require a strengthened capacity among national actors and ILO staff, both in the field and at headquarters, to examine decent work through a sectoral lens, so that issues of deep concern in specific economic areas are not overlooked in national programmes. Decent Work Country Programmes priority setting would involve not only the selection of issues on which to focus (e.g. fundamental rights at work, youth employment, occupational safety and health, skills training), but also the principal sectors in which programmes should be targeted. Efforts are under way within the Office to determine a set of decent work indicators for use in developing pilot decent work country profiles and it might be useful to mainstream a sectoral perspective in their application.
11. The Office and the tripartite constituents should strengthen their research capacity and knowledge base on social and labour issues in specific sectors in order to develop evidence-based policy approaches suited to national circumstances. The knowledge base would highlight good practices that could be shared among member States. Such an approach would rely on making a fuller collection and use of sectoral economic and social data, both nationally and internationally.
12. In the context of the field structure review, it is necessary to consider how best to provide guidance and support to field offices and constituents in carrying out more detailed sectoral analyses of the national economy and the challenges faced in specific sectors. This would strengthen the sectoral approach in the regions and further improve coherence between the field and headquarters.

## Planning and programming

13. It is not yet certain how the recurrent discussion process<sup>4</sup> will influence programming decisions. However, it is clear that Office-wide implementation of the Social Justice Declaration will need to address this issue. Thought should be given to the possible interplay between the outcome of the recurrent discussions and the current four determinants of the Office's work programme, namely: the Strategic Policy Framework; the programme and budget; Decent Work Country Programmes; and, in the case of the Sectoral Activities Programme, decisions taken by the Governing Body based on recommendations by the Committee. While it appears that these four determinants will feed into the recurrent discussions, it remains to be considered how the results of the recurrent discussions will feed into the Governing Body's programming decisions. Of particular interest to members of the Committee would be the timing and scope of decisions related to the Sectoral Activities Programme, and the relation of those decisions to the outcome and indicators in the programme and budget.

## Forging new partnerships

14. The Social Justice Declaration specifically commits the ILO to developing "new partnerships with non-state entities and economic actors, such as multinational enterprises and trade unions operating at the global sectoral level".<sup>5</sup> The Sectoral Activities Programme has longstanding experience in liaising with key sectoral actors at global and national levels, including Global Union federations, multinational enterprises and multi-

<sup>4</sup> Social Justice Declaration, annex, section II(B).

<sup>5</sup> Social Justice Declaration, section II(A)(v).

stakeholder initiatives. One example of an integrated sectoral approach at country level is provided in the box below.

**What does an integrated approach look like?**

“Improving the competitiveness of the textile and clothing sector through decent work”, a sectoral initiative within Morocco’s Decent Work Country Programme, offers an example of how an integrated approach can be developed at country level. The programme aims to improve the productivity and competitiveness of the national textiles and clothing industry, as well as individual enterprises, through improved social dialogue and better working conditions.

The programme, supported by the ILO, is managed by a tripartite steering committee, which includes the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the National Agency for the Promotion of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, the textile and clothing employers’ association and the three most representative trade unions. A national plan of action has been adopted and pilot programmes in several enterprises have been implemented. At the national and enterprise levels, the ILO has developed a partnership with the MFA Forum, a multi-stakeholder initiative comprising, inter alia, the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers’ Federation and major international buyers for textiles and clothing, including Inditex (Zara Group), Levi’s, Marks & Spencer, Next and Mango, which have come together to create a Morocco Buyers’ Group.

A multidisciplinary Office team has supported the implementation of the initiative. The team includes specialists drawn from the Subregional Office in Cairo, the Employment Sector and the Sectoral Activities Branch and benefits from inputs from a number of other units in the Office including the Bureaux for Employers’ and Workers’ Activities.

15. In its sectoral work, the ILO seeks to promote the Decent Work Agenda through collaboration with the UN and its specialized agencies, at both global and national levels. It brings the social and labour issues relevant to sectoral policy-making to the attention of the UN system and provides opportunities for sectoral Global Union federations and employers’ organizations to interact with other UN agencies. The ILO can thus complement the work carried out by other UN agencies while taking account of their policies in its own work.
16. The ILO can actively contribute to implementing an integrated approach through the CEB *Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work*. A focus on the sectoral dimension facilitates cooperation with agencies whose policies and programmes have an impact on specific sectors (e.g. UNESCO, UNEP, UNWTO, UN-Habitat, WHO, IMO, FAO, UPU, ITU) and the Millennium Development Goals. UN Development Assistance Frameworks and the “Delivering as One” initiative offer opportunities for collaboration at the country level. Such collaboration needs to be strengthened to ensure that member state priorities, as defined and developed in Decent Work Country Programmes, are implemented in close collaboration with the other UN organizations concerned.

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*Submitted for debate and guidance.*