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Resolution concerning sustainable development, decent work and green jobs¹

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization, meeting in Geneva at its 102nd Session, 2013,

Having undertaken a general discussion on the basis of Report V, *Sustainable development, decent work and green jobs*,

1. Adopts the following conclusions; and
2. Invites the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to give due consideration to them in planning future work and to request the Director-General to take them into account when preparing future programme and budget proposals and to give effect to them, to the extent possible, when implementing the Programme and Budget for the 2014–15 biennium.

Conclusions concerning achieving decent work, green jobs and sustainable development

OUR VISION

1. The four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda – social dialogue, social protection, rights at work and employment – are indispensable building blocks of sustainable development and must be at the centre of policies for strong, sustainable and inclusive growth and development.

2. Sustainable development means that the needs of the present generation should be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development has three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – which are interrelated, of equal importance and must be addressed together.

3. Sharing a common global purpose, there are different approaches, models and tools available to each country, in accordance with its national circumstances and priorities to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions, which is our overarching goal.

4. A just transition for all towards an environmentally sustainable economy, as described in this document, needs to be well managed and contribute to the goals of decent work for all, social inclusion and the eradication of poverty.

5. Decent work, poverty eradication and environmental sustainability are three of the defining challenges of the twenty-first century. Economies must be productive to meet the needs of the world's growing population. Societies must be inclusive, providing opportunities for decent work for all, reducing inequalities and effectively eliminating poverty.

6. When referring to the greening of economies, enterprises and jobs, we consider it in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. This is one of the important tools for achieving sustainable development and could provide options for policy-making. In this context, we welcome the document “The Future We Want” adopted by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20).

¹ Adopted on 19 June 2013.

7. The greening of economies presents many opportunities to achieve social objectives: it has the potential to be a new engine of growth, both in advanced and developing economies, and a net generator of decent green jobs that can contribute significantly to poverty eradication and social inclusion. The greening of economies will enhance our ability to manage natural resources sustainably, increase energy efficiency and reduce waste, while addressing inequalities and enhancing resilience. The greening of jobs and the promotion of green jobs, both in traditional and emerging sectors, will foster a competitive, low-carbon, environmentally sustainable economy and patterns of sustainable consumption and production, and contribute to the fight against climate change.

8. Managed well, transitions to environmentally and socially sustainable economies can become a strong driver of job creation, job upgrading, social justice and poverty eradication. Greening all enterprises and jobs by introducing more energy and resource efficient practices, avoiding pollution and managing natural resources sustainably leads to innovation, enhances resilience and generates savings which drive new investment and employment.

9. Sustainable development is only possible with the active engagement of the world of work. Governments, employers and workers are not passive bystanders, but rather agents of change, who are able to develop new ways of working that safeguard the environment for present and future generations, eradicate poverty and promote social justice by fostering sustainable enterprises and creating decent work for all.

10. The path to environmentally sustainable development involves a wide range of efforts and activities from the ILO and member States, who have widely varying capabilities and ability to act in accordance with the reality of each State. In that context, cooperation, information sharing and joint action within the mandate of the ILO will be valuable.

11. We recall the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities as set out in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992).

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

12. In the transition to environmentally sustainable economies and societies, the world of work can benefit from some major opportunities, for example:

- (a) net gains in total employment from realizing the potential to create significant numbers of additional decent jobs through investments into environmentally sustainable production and consumption and management of natural resources;
- (b) improvements in job quality and incomes on a large scale from more productive processes as well as greener products and services in sectors like agriculture, construction, recycling and tourism;
- (c) social inclusion through improved access to affordable, environmentally sustainable energy and payments for environmental services, for instance, which are of particular relevance to women and residents in rural areas; and faces some major challenges, for example:
- (d) economic restructuring, resulting in the displacement of workers and possible job losses and job creation attributable to the greening of enterprises and workplaces;
- (e) the need for enterprises, workplaces and communities to adapt to climate change to avoid loss of assets and livelihoods and involuntary migration; and
- (f) adverse effects on the incomes of poor households from higher energy and commodity prices.

Given the scale and urgency of these environmental and employment challenges, it is clear that the world will have neither the resources nor the time

to tackle them separately or consecutively. Tackling them jointly is not an option, but a necessity.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

13. The following principles should guide the transition to environmentally sustainable economies and societies:

- (a) Strong social consensus on the goal and pathways to sustainability is fundamental. Social dialogue has to be an integral part of the institutional framework for policy-making and implementation at all levels. Adequate, informed and ongoing consultation should take place with all relevant stakeholders.
- (b) Policies must respect, promote and realize fundamental principles and rights at work.
- (c) Policies and programmes need to take into account the strong gender dimension of many environmental challenges and opportunities. Specific gender policies should be considered in order to promote equitable outcomes.
- (d) Coherent policies across the economic, environmental, social, education/ training and labour portfolios need to provide an enabling environment for enterprises, workers, investors and consumers to embrace and drive the transition towards environmentally sustainable and inclusive economies and societies.
- (e) These coherent policies also need to provide a just transition framework for all to promote the creation of more decent jobs, including as appropriate: anticipating impacts on employment, adequate and sustainable social protection for job losses and displacement, skills development and social dialogue, including the effective exercise of the right to organize and bargain collectively.
- (f) There is no “one-size-fits-all”. Policies and programmes need to be designed in line with the specific conditions of countries, including their stage of development, economic sectors and types and sizes of enterprises.
- (g) In implementing sustainable development strategies, it is important to foster international cooperation among countries. In this context, we recall the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20), including section VI on means of implementation.

KEY POLICY AREAS AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR A JUST TRANSITION FOR ALL

14. The following elements constitute a basic framework to address the challenges of a just transition for all:

- (1) The greening of economies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication will require a country-specific mix of macroeconomic, industrial, sectoral and labour policies that create an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises to prosper and create decent work opportunities by mobilizing and directing public and private investment towards environmentally sustainable activities. The aim should be to generate decent jobs all along the supply chain, in dynamic, high value added sectors which stimulate the upgrading of jobs and skills as well as job creation and improved productivity in more labour-intensive industries that offer employment opportunities on a wide scale.
- (2) As the challenge cuts across several domains, there is a need for mainstreaming sustainable development across all areas and for cooperation and coordination between employment authorities and their counterparts in various fields, including finance, planning, environment,

energy, transport, health and economic and social development. Institutional arrangements must be adapted to ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders at the international, national, regional, sectoral and local levels in the building of an appropriate policy framework. Internal coherence should be sought among institutions at the national level, as well as within international institutions at the regional and global levels for the effective integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

- (3) Key policy areas to address environmental, economic and social sustainability simultaneously include:

Macroeconomic and growth policies

- (a) Macroeconomic and growth policies should promote sustainable production and consumption patterns and place full and productive employment and decent work for all at the centre of economic and social policies. Targeted fiscal policy measures, market-based instruments, public procurement and investment policies can create frameworks for enterprises and investors to adopt or promote more innovative economic practices, based on the sustainable use of resources, leading to more access to economic opportunity and more inclusive labour markets. These policies can have adverse income distribution effects, in particular related to energy poverty, and should be taken into account in the design of policies.
- (b) Appropriate laws, regulations and other policies aimed at environmental improvements that lead to resource and energy efficiencies and the prevention of environmental and social degradation can align private incentives with public policy objectives and can be cost effective in the long term. Legislative and regulatory certainty and the rule of law are needed in order to promote environmental and social sustainability, while stimulating innovation and investments in human, social and environmental capital. These are the prerequisites for long-term competitiveness and economic prosperity, social cohesion, quality employment and better environmental protection.

Industrial and sectoral policies

- (c) The greening of economies is a global challenge, but many environmental problems are sectoral and the search for solutions and the adoption of policies starts there. Numerous countries have used industrial policy to support the shift to greening their economy. As a complement to macroeconomic policies, industrial and sector-related policies and, when appropriate, public-private partnerships as well as public-public partnerships are effective in helping to improve both the environmental and employment performance of existing businesses and stimulating growth in green products and services. Efforts need to focus on key sectors that are most relevant for environmental sustainability and job creation in the national economy, such as agriculture, water management and sanitation, forestry, fisheries, energy, resource-intensive industries, recycling, waste management, buildings and transport. Targeted measures will be needed to formalize substandard, informal jobs in environment-related sectors, such as recycling and waste management, in order to transform these activities into decent jobs.
- (d) Sectors often have specific governance instruments and institutions. Because of these shared features, employers and workers engage in collective bargaining and other forms of social dialogue at the sectoral level, all of which present opportunities to pursue economic, environmental and social objectives in an effective way.

Enterprise policies

- (e) Governments should foster the greening of jobs through regulatory and non-regulatory frameworks that support environmental and social sustainability while stimulating innovation and encouraging investments both at home and abroad. Special attention is needed to ensure that such frameworks provide an enabling environment and assist micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), including cooperatives and entrepreneurs, in making the transition.
- (f) Most jobs are created by MSMEs, yet little information on making operations more resource efficient and environmentally responsible is specifically targeted to MSMEs. Providing such information in a format easily accessible at this level would greatly strengthen employers' capacity to enhance environmental and labour performance. Regulatory systems should have enforcement capacity and be structured to provide advice to business on how compliance can be achieved.

Skills development

- (g) There must be strong interaction between the world of work and the world of education and training. The greening of the economy must focus on skills development in order to succeed. Solid technical and vocational education and training systems need to involve industry and trade unions. Access to training helps workers develop the skills needed to transition to new types of jobs or to work with new materials, processes and technologies in their existing jobs. Measures to develop skills that support entrepreneurship, resilience, innovation in enterprises, including MSMEs, and their transition to sustainable practices are critical factors of success.
- (h) Education and training for green jobs presupposes an approach based on comprehensive lifelong learning. National skills development and employment policies linked to broader development plans need to incorporate education for environmental awareness with coherent skills strategies to prepare workers, in particular young people, for the future sustainable world of work. Education and training systems should be designed to meet the needs of youth, women, vulnerable workers and workers in rural areas, enabling them to contribute to and benefit from economic diversification and rural economic empowerment. Equally, training programmes need to target displaced workers, those who lost jobs due to greening, to ensure their swift re-entry into the labour market.

Occupational safety and health

- (i) Many economic activities for environmental sustainability present health and safety risks related to minerals, chemicals, pesticides and others. Ensuring that all, including green jobs, are decent, safe and healthy jobs is a key aspect of improving job quality. Switching from fossil fuels to renewables, for instance, entails changes in the occupational safety and health situation. Occupational safety and health standards and training must be an essential component of all skills training. Practical prevention measures should be adopted at the enterprise level based on risk assessment and principles of elimination and control of hazards. Policies and programmes under national systems for occupational safety and health should be continuously improved in light of the new challenges to ensure that green jobs are safe. Adequate capacity of the labour inspectorate is essential to ensure compliance.

Social protection

- (j) Sound, comprehensive and sustainable social protection schemes are an integral part of a strategy for transition towards a sustainable

development pattern, built on principles of decent work, social justice and social inclusion. They should provide workers displaced by technological change or those affected by natural disasters with income support as well as access to health care and basic services during the transition, and thereby reduce inequalities.

- (k) Special targeted assistance to groups, regions and occupations affected by the transition is essential. For example, public and private employment programmes can have large multiplier effects by combining employment generation, income support and conservation of natural assets. Social protection policies should be coordinated with vocational training and active labour market policies as an integral part of the policies necessary to ensure the social dimension of a sustainable economy.

Active labour market policies

- (l) In many ways the green transition will pose challenges similar to those of earlier transitions caused by technological revolutions, globalization and rapid changes in world markets. Active labour market policies can help enterprises and workers, including unemployed workers, meet these challenges. The anticipation of changing labour market demands, through sound labour market information and data collection systems, as well as social dialogue, is essential to helping governments, employers, workers and education and training systems identify the skills needed currently and in the future and to take appropriate measures to provide timely training. Employment services are important for brokering workforce transition to greener occupations and improving the match between labour demand and supply.

Rights

- (m) International labour standards offer a robust framework for addressing the challenges to the world of work associated with the greening of the economy and, more broadly, with the transition towards sustainable development and poverty eradication. Several international labour standards, including those covering freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, prohibition of forced labour, child labour and non-discrimination, social dialogue, tripartite consultation, minimum wage, labour administration and inspection, employment policy, human resource development, occupational safety and health, as well as social security are important in this regard (see Appendix).

Social dialogue and tripartism

- (n) Mechanisms of social dialogue, including the practice of tripartism and collective bargaining, serve as effective tools for the design of policies at all levels. Social dialogue can form a strong basis by building on the commitment of workers and employers to the joint action with governments needed in the transition process.

ROLE OF GOVERNMENTS AND EMPLOYERS' AND WORKERS' ORGANIZATIONS

15. Governments and social partners should individually and jointly work for a greener world by:

- (a) giving due consideration to advocating for the inclusion of decent work, social justice and the greening of all enterprises and jobs in policies and strategies for sustainable development and the eradication of extreme poverty at national and international levels as part of the post-2015 development agenda; and

- (b) actively promoting and engaging in social dialogue to forge consensus on pathways towards environmental sustainability which also advance decent work.

16. Governments should:

- (a) provide the policy and regulatory framework to enable sustainable enterprise development and promote inclusive labour markets, social protection, education and training, private and public investments and innovation that reinforce environmentally sustainable development and decent work, including combating unemployment;
- (b) foster effective institutional arrangements to ensure coherence across relevant policy portfolios as well as the consultation and participation of all relevant stakeholders for the formulation and implementation of policy at the local, national, regional and international levels; and
- (c) where possible, design and use efficient and effective monitoring and data collection tools and information systems to monitor and evaluate the impact of the greening of the economy on jobs and, where appropriate, share best practices with the ILO so that those best practices can inform the ILO's work in this area.

17. The social partners should:

- (a) raise awareness and understanding, as well as provide guidance among their members about developments relevant for the greening of enterprises and the creation of decent green jobs;
- (b) play an active role in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of national sustainable development policies, articulating the pivotal role of employers and workers in bringing about environmental sustainability with decent work and social inclusion;
- (c) promote the active participation of their members in social dialogue at enterprise, sectoral and national levels to assess opportunities and resolve challenges posed by transition; and
- (d) foster a culture of dialogue and workplace cooperation to improve resource efficiency, reduce waste and apply safe and clean technologies and working methods and improve job quality.

GUIDANCE FOR THE OFFICE

18. The ILO, based on its mandate and its core values, is in a unique position to provide leadership in promoting the Decent Work Agenda as a critical vehicle for achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Research, knowledge development, management and dissemination

19. The ILO should:

- (a) further develop its research capacity to become a centre of excellence to support evidence-based policy-making on sustainable development and decent work;
- (b) establish knowledge-sharing activities on successful approaches and good practices, for example, learning from the Green Jobs Programme, in integrating economic, social and environmental concerns at the national, local and enterprise levels;
- (c) carry out research aiming to assist member States and social partners to assess the impact of greening the economy on job creation, job transition and the quality of work, including through the compilation and wide dissemination of reliable statistics;

- (d) examine the provisions of international labour standards most relevant to achieving a job-rich, equitable, environmentally sustainable economy, and consolidate them for dissemination in a user-friendly form. We note that in paragraph 24 of these Conclusions, we request that the Governing Body consider the convening of a tripartite meeting of experts to give further guidance on issues related to the greening of economies, green jobs and a just transition for all;
- (e) provide guidance for MSMEs and cooperatives to green their production processes, including through greater energy efficiency and resource use, possibly in the form of a user-friendly toolkit. This work should be carried out in cooperation with national employers' and workers' organizations;
- (f) ensure that relevant information is widely disseminated in a user-friendly format to constituents; and
- (g) make sustainable development a cross-cutting issue in the ILO.

Engagement at the global and regional levels

20. The ILO should:

- (a) continue to work with relevant global and regional institutions to promote consideration of the Decent Work Agenda in macroeconomic policies in order to give practical application to the decent work dimension of the transition to more sustainable patterns of production and consumption and to facilitate tripartite contributions to it;
- (b) work with relevant global and regional institutions to develop reliable and consistent statistical data on the three dimensions of sustainable development in order to promote evidence-based decision making;
- (c) work with relevant global and regional institutions to promote decent work and employment considerations in the design of sustainable development technical assistance provided to countries; and
- (d) actively support constituents in advocating the inclusion of decent work, poverty eradication and a just transition for all to an environmentally sustainable economy in the post-2015 development agenda.

Country-level action

21. The ILO should:

- (a) integrate sustainable development, poverty eradication and the transition to an inclusive economy in Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs), and UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and promote their consideration in national development plans in line with the needs of constituents concerned;
- (b) where applicable, develop strategies to help member States to support the transition from informal to formal employment concentrating particularly in sectors that greatly impact the environment, such as agriculture, waste management and recycling, and building and construction;
- (c) deliver practical technical support for enterprise development and decent job creation in the context of the greening of the economy and adaptation to climate change including in cooperation with other international, regional and national organizations;
- (d) support member States in the development of comprehensive social protection systems, including social protection floors, in particular to protect those affected by the changes in the world of work;
- (e) promote and strengthen social dialogue at sectoral and national levels to promote a just transition for all and the creation of decent work;
- (f) help member States conduct voluntary employment assessments in order to assist them to promote the development of a workforce with skills that are

- relevant for jobs in emerging green sectors, or in shifting to more sustainable consumption and production processes; and
- (g) continue to ensure respect for fundamental principles and rights at work in an inclusive, environmentally sustainable economy.

Capacity building

22. The ILO should:

- (a) build and strengthen the capacity of governments and social partners on the opportunities, challenges and policy responses for an effective and just transition for all. This would include supporting awareness raising and better understanding of the issues involved;
- (b) build and strengthen the capacity of employers' organizations to offer services to their members, especially MSMEs, so that enterprises and their value chains are able to capture opportunities in growing markets for environmental goods and services; and
- (c) build and strengthen the capacity of workers' organizations to protect labour rights, participate in collective bargaining, ensure access to training, and enhance job quality in the transition to an environmentally sustainable economy.

The way forward

23. The ILO should prepare a strategic action plan linking decent work, eradication of poverty, sustainable development and green jobs. This should be a key objective which should inform the ILO's mandate for the future at the time of its centenary. The action plan should indicate how this work will be integrated into the programme and budget implementation and the Strategic Policy Framework (2016–21) providing clear follow-up mechanisms, indicating short-term, medium-term and long-term objectives.

24. Conditional on evidence-based analysis, the Governing Body may wish to consider the convening of a tripartite meeting of experts to give further guidance on issues related to the greening of economies, green jobs and a just transition for all.

Appendix

Some international labour standards and resolutions that may be relevant to a just transition framework

A. CONVENTIONS ON FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND RIGHTS AT WORK

- Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)
- Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)
- Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)
- Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)

B. GOVERNANCE CONVENTIONS:

- Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122)
- Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81)
- Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144)
- Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129)

C. OTHER TECHNICAL CONVENTIONS

- Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)
- Social Policy (Basic Aims and Standards) Convention, 1962 (No. 117)
- Paid Educational Leave Convention, 1974 (No. 140)
- Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142)
- Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No. 148)
- Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150)
- Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151)
- Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154)
- Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)
- Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161)
- Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170)
- Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174)
- Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187)

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195)
- Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998 (No. 189)
- Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193)
- Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)

E. RESOLUTIONS

- Resolution concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises – International Labour Conference, June 2007
- Resolution concerning promotion of rural employment for poverty reduction – International Labour Conference, June 2008