

Event: ILO/NEXUS Academy Workshop “Decent Work Across the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus in the Arab Region”

Date: September 9th, 2024

Venue: Amman – Jordan

Session topic: Opening session

Session time: 9 am (AMMAN)

Title: Opening Session

Length of speech/intervention: 5 minutes

Excellencies

Regional Director a.i. of the United Nations Development Coordination Office for Arab States Barbara Manzi

Worker and employer representatives,

Development and technical Partners, and fellow United Nations colleagues,

Distinguished guests,

1. It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this workshop on “*Decent Work across the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus in the Arab Region*”, a milestone event bringing together over one hundred participants working across the three pillars of the Nexus, co-organized with the Nexus Academy and generously supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.
2. I am confident that this is a quantum step in our collective journey towards a more just and stable future for our region, which is marred by protracted conflict, frail development indicators, and plummeting humanitarian conditions.
3. I take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to our development partners whose valuable support has enabled us to advance labour rights, decent jobs, and social dialogue across the Nexus, enabling sustainable solutions in our region.
4. I extend an especially warm welcome to the representatives of governments, workers and employers who have joined us from Jordan, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Yemen, and Iraq. You play a most vital role in promoting decent work and social justice within the Nexus, and your participation is key to the success of this event.

5. The important question here is: Why are we focusing on Decent Work in the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus in this event?
6. In our region, as is the case across the globe, recurrent and growing crises from armed conflicts, natural disasters and pandemics have had devastating socio-economic impacts. Indeed, between 2019 and 2023, unemployment in the Arab States increased by 14.8 per cent; the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training increased by 9.8 per cent; while the number of people living in extreme poverty increased by 36.5 per cent.
7. Taking a closer look, we find that unemployment, decent work deficits, and a breakdown in the social contract lie at the root of fragility. In crisis situations, employment opportunities, particularly for women and marginalized populations, become exceedingly scarce. The lack of access to decent work not only deepens existing inequalities but also forces individuals and families into desperate circumstances, leading to a cycle of poverty and social instability that is difficult to break without targeted intervention and support.
8. We firmly believe that promoting decent work by creating pathways from short-term livelihoods to long-term, sustainable and inclusive employment is key to mitigating these challenges and supporting societies in recovering and preventing future crises.
9. In 2017, the ILO reaffirmed its commitment to the Nexus through the adoption of Recommendation No. 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience, which provides a vital framework for preventing and responding to crises by addressing their socio-economic impacts.
10. In terms of practical measures in our region, over the past decade the ILO has mobilized US \$60 million in interventions in Arab States countries facing armed conflict and US\$ 307 million in countries facing population displacement. In the past two years alone, the ILO has created 82,157 workdays in Iraq, one million workdays in Jordan, and 4,000 job opportunities in Lebanon.

Distinguished guests,

11. To further support these and similar efforts across the globe, the ILO has launched the *Global Coalition for Social Justice*, based on the premise that social justice reduces poverty, inequality, and social tensions, thereby fostering more cohesive and productive societies. The Coalition brings together global leaders from governments and employer and worker organizations, UN agencies, NGOs, academia, among many others. They all work to spearhead social justice in their fora, towards realizing swift, just, and long-term recoveries from crises.

Partners and colleagues,

12. Today's workshop offers us a valuable opportunity to deepen our understanding of the role of decent work in crisis and post-crisis contexts. It aims to enhance skills in promoting decent work within the Nexus, share best practices, learn from each other, and build lasting partnerships that contribute to social justice, dignity, inclusivity, and peace.

13. I would like to emphasize that coordination and partnerships are among our most effective tools. Your presence here underscores the importance of collaboration in advancing decent work within the Nexus.
14. This event is also a unique opportunity to deepen our understanding of each other's work. In that regard, I encourage you to reach out to those in the room you do not meet often, to build further bridges for collaboration.
15. Before I conclude, I would like to acknowledge that the timing of our workshop overlaps with an important election day in Jordan: the parliamentary election on the 10th of September. I would like to reassure our Jordanian partners and colleagues that we fully understand that you may have to step out of the workshop to exercise your right to vote and fulfil your civic duties.
16. I wish you a fruitful and enriching discussions over the coming days, and I look forward to the outcomes of your discussions.