

NINTH MEETING OF THE SRM TWG

(16-20 SEPTEMBER 2024)

Office note for information: Decent work in supply chains

- The ILO strategy on supply chains, as approved by the Governing Body, requires the Office to transmit an information note to the SRM TWG to facilitate its consideration of the need to ensure decent work in supply chains within its reviews, where appropriate, to ensure that the ILO has a clear, robust and up-to-date body of standards (GB.347/INS/8, output 2).
- For information.

18 September 2024

1. This note provides information to the SRM TWG to facilitate its consideration of the need to ensure decent work in supply chains within its reviews of the international labour standards, where appropriate, to ensure that the ILO has a clear, robust and up-to-date body of standards. It is relevant to the SRM TWG's work as it considers various factors within its reviews to ensure that the ILO has a clear, robust and up-to-date body of international labour standards that respond to the changing patterns of the world of work, for the purpose of the protection of workers and taking into account the needs of sustainable enterprises.¹
2. This note is framed within the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate to advance social justice and promote decent work. It is a contribution to the implementation of the ILO strategy on decent work in supply chains as approved by the Governing Body, by fulfilling the requirement in output 2, and to the implementation of ILO standards policy as set out in the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008).
3. As the Office indicated to the Governing Body in its discussion of the supply chains strategy,² the Office does not give any instructions to the SRM TWG (or any Conference committee). Rather, it provides information to facilitate the SRM TWG's consideration of the need to ensure decent work in supply chains within its reviews, where appropriate and within the flexible and responsive approach that it has taken in its work to date.
4. In February 2023, the ILO Governing Body adopted a strategy aiming to equip the Organization and its tripartite constituents to achieve decent work in supply chains,³ based on, and with a view to operationalizing, the building blocks developed by the Tripartite Working Group on Options to Ensure Decent Work in Supply Chains (June–July 2022).⁴ It recognizes the unique role of the ILO with its tripartite structure and its normative mandate, which equips the Organization to guide a globally relevant approach to enable its constituents to pursue decent work in supply chains, taking into account national context.
5. Output 2 of the strategy states that:⁵ *“The need to ensure decent work in supply chains is taken into account, where appropriate, in the work of the Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group (SRM TWG) and in future ILO standard-setting exercises”*.
6. Further explanation is provided in para. 9 of the strategy:⁶ *“Consideration will be given to the need to ensure decent work in supply chains in ILO standard-setting processes. The Office will transmit an information note in this regard to the SRM TWG to facilitate its consideration of the need to ensure decent work in supply chains within its reviews, where appropriate, to ensure that the ILO has a clear, robust and up-to-date body of standards. The note will also be used to ensure that the implications of ensuring decent work in supply*

¹ Terms of reference of the SRM TWG, [GB.325/LILS/3](#), Appendix, para. 8.

² [GB.347/INS/PV\(Rev.\)](#), para. 434 (Representative of the Director-General).

³ [GB.347/INS/8](#).

⁴ [GB.346/INS/PV](#), para. 298.

⁵ This is built on para. 3.A(2) of the building blocks: “Where appropriate, take into account decent work in supply chains within the Organization's efforts to keep a clear, robust and up-to-date body of international labour standards, fit for purpose and responsive to new challenges in the world of work, both in the Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group and in future standard-setting exercises, combined with an authoritative and effective supervisory system”.

⁶ [GB.347/INS/8, para. 9](#).

chains are taken into account by Conference standard-setting committees when undertaking future standard-setting exercises, where appropriate.”

7. As set out in paragraph 13 of its terms of reference, the SRM TWG shall be guided by six principles and considerations in fulfilling its mandate:⁷ (a) a coherent policy framework within the ILO standards machinery; (b) a clear, robust and up-to-date body of standards for the purpose of the protection of workers and taking into account the needs of sustainable enterprises; (c) the importance of clarity, transparency and consistency; (d) the adoption of decisions by consensus; (e) adequate flexibility of the mechanism, regular evaluation and adjustment as may be necessary; (f) negotiations in good faith, full confidence and commitment to the SRM objectives.
8. To facilitate the SRM TWG’s future work, where appropriate the Office will integrate considerations relating to the need to ensure decent work in supply chains into the technical preparatory notes.⁸ This may involve consideration by the SRM TWG of whether any specific challenges regarding the effective implementation of standards under review are raised in the context of supply chains and whether any specific challenges regarding the promotion of the ratification of the standards under review, or of related up-to-date standards, are raised in the context of supply chains.
9. The SRM TWG may wish to consider at a later point whether the issue of ensuring decent work in supply chains is adequately addressed in its work.⁹

⁷ *Terms of reference of the SRM TWG*, [GB.325/LILS/3](#), Appendix, para. 8.

⁸ Paragraph 8 sets out the Office original text, on which the Officers of the SRM TWG could not reach consensus. The proposed inclusion in this sentence of the words “...and under the [oversight][guidance] of the SRM TWG Officers...” following the term “where appropriate” was not agreed.

⁹ Paragraph 9 sets out the Office original text, on which the Officers of the SRM TWG could not reach consensus. The proposed replacement in this sentence of the words “...whether the issue of ensuring decent work in supply chains is adequately addressed...” with the alternative text “... how the issue of decent work in supply chains is taken into account, where appropriate...” was not agreed.