



International
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► Exchange with the United Nations treaty body chairpersons and special procedures mandate holders 2024 - published 2025

Extracts from the General report of the
2024 Report of the Committee of Experts
on the Application of Conventions and
Recommendations

F. Session with the United Nations treaty body chairpersons and special procedures mandate holders

37. An exchange was held between the Committee of Experts, four treaty body chairpersons or their representatives and two special procedures mandate holders, on the right to work in the context of environmental, technological and demographic transitions to mark the 80th anniversary of the ILO Declaration of Philadelphia and the 60th anniversary of the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), and its accompanying Recommendation.
38. The exchange was attended by Ms Laura-Maria Craciunean-Tatu, Chairperson of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights who also represented the Chairperson of the 36th annual Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies, Ms Suzanne Djabour; Ms Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame, Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Mr Khaled C. Babacar, Rapporteur of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, on behalf of the Chairperson, Ms Fatima Dialo; Mr. Daniel Fink, Vice-Chairperson of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture on behalf of the Chairperson, Ms Suzanne Djabour.
39. Two special procedures mandate holders were invited to join the meeting: Ms Claudia Mahler, Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons and Ms Astrid Puentes Riaño, Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.
40. In her introductory statement, the Chairperson of the Committee of Experts, Ms Dixon Caton, commemorated the adoption of the Declaration of Philadelphia 80 years ago and emphasized the Declaration's proclamation of economic security and equal opportunity for "all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex" which preceded the enunciation of the right to work in Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She recalled that one of the most significant ILO instruments from the point of view of the right to work was the Convention No. 122 which also marked its 60th anniversary this year, enshrining the commitment of Member States to declare and pursue, as a major goal, an active policy designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment. She underscored that the current environmental, digital and demographic transitions called for a renewed social contract, leaving no one behind and meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. She also referred to the ILO Global Coalition for Social Justice and noted that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had joined the Global Coalition with the flagship initiative on the human rights economy as a key intervention under the Coalition's thematic priority on realizing labour rights as human rights, ensuring human dignity and meeting basic needs.
41. On behalf of the Chairperson of the 36th Meeting of the Treaty Body Chairpersons, Ms Craciunean-Tatu emphasized the common aspirations and mandates of the Committee of Experts and the treaty bodies which were complementary, interrelated and mutually reinforcing. She noted that the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the ILO Director-General had held a high-level dialogue in November 2024 during which they had committed to deepening cooperation and operationalizing the human rights economy as a key intervention under the Global Coalition and its thematic priority on realizing labour rights as human rights, to work together through common messaging and joint country-level activities in several key thematic areas and to strengthen engagement between their respective human rights mechanisms and ILO expert mechanisms, of which today's exchange was an example. Ms Craciunean-Tatu finally noted the numerous references to human rights in the Pact for the Future and emphasized that the treaty bodies were ready to work with all stakeholders to ensure system wide commitment to human rights and enhanced coordination with international and regional human rights mechanisms.
42. With respect to demographic shifts and older workers, the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, Ms Claudia Mahler, noted that population ageing was a prominent feature of global demographic change generating a need to secure the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, including the right to work and social protection. She noted that the absence of a universal pension system left older persons economically vulnerable, inducing them to continue to work after reaching their retirement age due to financial constraints, especially in developing countries and rural regions. She added that in other cases, older persons continued to work because they continued to draw social and personal benefits from their work, including a sense of purpose, social status and even physical well-being. She called for flexible and human-

based retirement policies to address this phenomenon. She condemned age-based discrimination in recruitment, career advancement and separation from employment due to ageism as well as false and negative stereotypes about older workers' adaptability to digital technologies, which exacerbated intersectional discrimination against women, migrants, disabled persons or indigenous peoples. She regretted that the Pact for the Future did not contain sufficient references to older persons and called for the matter to be given the attention it deserved.

43. With respect to environmental transitions, the Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, Ms Astrid Puentes Riaño, highlighted the interdependence of the right to work and the right to a healthy environment. She addressed the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution noting the systemic inequalities which exacerbated it, causing disproportionate effects on the most vulnerable. She emphasized the principles of universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights including the right to a healthy environment recognized by 164 UN Member States in addition to the 2021 Human Rights Council and 2022 UN General Assembly resolutions. She called for the universal ratification of the ILO's Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), highlighting the need for transformative policies in high-impact sectors such as mining, fossil fuel extraction and use, fisheries and agro-industry, and sectors particularly exposed to risks from heat waves and other extreme weather events. She emphasized that protecting a healthy environment in the world of work was an essential prerequisite for a just transition that advanced all human rights in an integrated and mutually reinforcing way and underscored the procedural aspects of the right to a healthy environment such as access to information, to public participation and to justice as crucial tools for enforcing labour and environmental rights in a holistic approach.
44. With respect to digital transition, Ms Irene Kashindi, member of the Committee of Experts, referred to the first discussion for the adoption of an instrument on decent work in the platform economy which was scheduled to take place at the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2025 and could lead, in June 2026, to the first international instrument on matters pertaining to the future of work, setting human-centric rules of the game in relation to the definition of platforms and platform work, the right to collective bargaining of self-employed platform workers, the approach to algorithmic management and the conditions of work in the platform economy including wages, working time and occupational safety and health. She emphasized that technological progress should benefit all workers, and referred to Action 34 of the Pact for the Future, which contained a commitment to invest in the social and economic development of children and young people, underscoring the instrumental role of employment policies in enabling the much-needed transitions from the informal to the formal economy as well as the role of the State in piloting employment policies in effective consultation with the most representative employers' and workers' organizations.
45. Mr José Roberto Herrera Vergara, member of the Committee of Experts, referred to the importance of the right to social security for building resilient and sustainable economies and a just transition as the recently released World Social Protection Report had revealed that 2.1 billion people were facing the ravages of climate change without any protection. He emphasized the role of universal social protection systems and the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), in this regard. He also recalled the crucial role of social protection in guaranteeing the right to work for older persons through inclusive policies that combined adequate pensions with incentives for active employment and investment in lifelong learning.
46. Ms Kamala Sankaran, member of the Committee of Experts, commemorated the 75th anniversary of the ILO Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), and the 50th anniversary of the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), in 2025, noting that migration flows were as old as humanity itself and had always been primarily influenced by the search for livelihoods and employment. She noted the commitment in Action 6 of the Pact for the Future to "maximize the positive contribution of migrants to the sustainable development of origin, transit, destination and host countries", while observing the increased risk of discrimination and xenophobia against migrant workers, which often resulted in a migrant worker pay gap and violence and harassment against migrants. She recalled the relatively low ratification rates of Conventions Nos 97 and 143 despite their topicality as well as the fact that, like for the UN Convention on migrant workers, ratifying countries were mostly countries of origin and not destination countries. She emphasized the importance of promoting fair recruitment, referencing in this regard the ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment and the UN Global Compact for Migration adopted in 2018.

47. Ms Monica Pinto, member of the Committee of Experts, commemorated the 35th anniversary of the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), by recalling that it was the first and only internationally binding instrument that recognized the right of indigenous peoples to self-identification and their right to participate in decisions over all questions affecting them, and noted that the key pillars of the Convention were the creation of a system of land rights and the recognition of consultation as a fundamental right, thereby highlighting the key role played by indigenous peoples in efforts to address climate change by mitigating environmental impacts through the sustainable use of resources. She concluded by saying that, as several comments by the Committee of Experts noted the physical and psychological violence suffered by indigenous peoples due to conflicts over land rights and the exploitation of natural resources, the Committee of Experts had the possibility by exercising its mandate to supervise the application of Convention No. 169, to defend the rights of indigenous peoples in order to promote alternative and sustainable solutions to the current environmental crisis.
48. Ms Craciunean-Tatu, Chairperson of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, underscored the great importance that her Committee attached to cooperation with the Committee of Experts, given that the mandates of the two Committees were complementary. She recalled the long-standing exchanges between the two Committees including joint statements and important ILO contributions to the General Comments Nos 18 on the right to work, 19 on social security, 20 on non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights and 23 on the right to just and favourable conditions of work. She also informed the Committee that the entry into force in 2013 of the Optional Protocol to the Covenant which allowed for the filing of individual complaints, had enabled her Committee to develop the justiciability of several rights including the right to social security which was crucial in the context of transitions. Finally, she invited the ILO to provide input to her Committee's upcoming General Comment on the environmental dimension of sustainable development which aimed at emphasizing the central position of human rights for balanced progress on all aspects of sustainable development.
49. Ms Gertrude Oforiwa Fefoame, Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, emphasized that the right to work needed to be exercised in line with the principle of inclusion of persons with disabilities through appropriate policies addressing ableism, stereotypes and discrimination. She emphasized that reasonable accommodation tailored to each individual's needs was essential in order to enable persons with disabilities to exercise their right to work by enabling accessibility, enhanced education, training and career development. She emphasized that persons with disabilities did not wish tokenism but rather open job market employment to accomplish their potential. Noting the issues reflected in the Pact for the Future she called for the digital transition to become a way to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities through accessibility of digital equipment, training and affordability, particularly in developing countries and rural communities with social protection playing a central role in this regard.
50. In their closing statements the Chairperson of the Committee of Experts and the representative of the Chairperson of the 36th annual Meeting of the Treaty Body Chairpersons, thanked the participants for the third exchange and expressed the hope that the thematic exchanges would continue in the future.