

Concept Note

Solution session at the Second World Summit for Social Development

Advancing Living Wages for Social Justice (Part 1)

The International Labour Organization (ILO), the Government of Colombia, the Government of Germany and the Government of Netherlands, are pleased to convene this solution session on the occasion of the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2).

This solution session will be held in two parts:

- **Part 1** (this session) focuses on the tripartite agreement on wage policies, including living wages, and the role of wage-setting institutions in advancing living wages for social justice.
- **Part 2**, organized as a separate event by the UN Global Compact, will focus on business approaches and experiences in advancing living wages.

Background and rationale:

Wage policies, including living wages, are essential to reducing poverty and inequality and advancing social justice, decent work and sustainable development. The most recent ILO Global Wage Report 2024-2025 shows that global real wage growth has increased, outlining important positive developments worldwide, but more remains to be done to strengthen wage policies and reduce inequalities.

In 2024, the ILO reached a historic tripartite agreement on a set of principles for estimating and operationalizing living wages within broader wage-setting processes, taking into account both the needs of workers and their families, and economic factors.

With growing global commitments to living wages – reflected, for example, in the Doha Political Declaration of the Second World Summit for Social Development – it is critical to align global and national efforts with ILO principles. This includes strengthening social dialogue and empowering wage-setting institutions, such as statutory minimum wages and collective bargaining. Ensuring national and/or local ownership, with participation of social partners, is also required for successful implementation.

In Part 1 of this solution session, partners will explore the role of wage policies, including living wages in reducing poverty and income inequality, and in building more resilient economies. Speakers will share experiences and ambitions for estimating and

operationalizing living wages through wage-setting institutions in ways that ensure national and/or local ownership while supporting sustainable development, economic growth and social justice. Part 2 of the session organized by the UN Global Compact will focus on the business approach and experiences in advancing living wages.

This solution session contributes to advancing the actions and expected outcomes of the Living Wage Initiative under the [Global Coalition for Social Justice](#), and includes the announcement of the Governments of the Netherlands and Germany joining its Advisory Board.

Objectives of Part 1 of the solution session:

- **Highlight** how effective wage policies, including living wages contribute to reducing poverty and inequality, driving sustainable economic and social development, and promoting decent work and social justice.
- **Emphasize** the importance of social dialogue and strong wage-setting institutions in estimating and operationalizing living wages, and strengthen collaboration among public, private, and civil society actors to overcome challenges and scale impact.
- **Promote collaboration** among governments, employers, workers, and civil society to overcome challenges and scale up impact.
- **Outline** the positive correlation between sustained wage growth and the need to increase labour productivity, emphasizing that this must stem from structural transformation and a comprehensive set of policy reforms that support economic growth. These should include measures in areas such as skills development, public and private investment, and the creation of an enabling environment for enterprises.
- **Showcase** practical experiences and innovations, and promote alignment of international initiatives, national policies, and enterprise-level practices with ILO principles.
- **Raise awareness** on the importance of local ownership with participation of social partners for successful implementation.

Tentative agenda:

Doha | Thursday, 6 November 2025 | 15:00-16:15 | Room 4

1. Opening and introductory remarks (15 minutes)

- Mr. Matthias Thorns, Vice-President, International Organization of Employers

- Mr. Plamen Dimitrov, President, Confederation of independent trade unions in Bulgaria
- Ms. Manuela Tomei, Assistant Director-General for Governance, Rights and Dialogue, International Labour Organization

2. First round of interventions: (25 minutes)

Theme: *Setting the Scene – Living Wages for Social Justice*

Speakers will share their roles and perspectives in advancing living wages:

- Ms. Li Andersson, Chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, European Parliament.
- Mr. Antonio Sanguino Páez, Minister of Labour, Government of Colombia.
- Mr. Farooq Ahmed Secretary General, Bangladesh Employers' Federation.
- Ms. Riefdah Ajam, General Secretary, Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA).

Reaction and moderation by:

- Ms. Manuela Tomei, Assistant Director-General for Governance, Rights and Dialogue, International Labour Organization.

3. Second round of interventions: (25 minutes)

Theme: *Ways forward – Insights in Advancing Living Wages*

Forward-looking insights will be provided by:

- Ms. Li Andersson, Chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, European Parliament
- Mr. Antonio Sanguino Páez, Minister of Labour, Government of Colombia.
- Mr. Farooq Ahmed, Secretary General, Bangladesh Employers' Federation.
- Ms. Riefdah Ajam, General Secretary, Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA).

Reaction and moderation by:

- Ms. Manuela Tomei, Assistant Director-General for Governance, Rights and Dialogue, International Labour Organization.

4. Remarks by the Governments of the Netherlands and Germany (10 minutes)

This segment will include the announcement of the Governments of the Netherlands and Germany joining the Advisory Board of the Living Wage Initiative under the Global Coalition for Social Justice. (5 minutes each)

1. Representative, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, Netherlands (TBD)

2. Mr. Thomas Stolle, Head of Division ILO and UN, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany

5. Final remarks and closing (5 minutes)

- Ms. Manuela Tomei, Assistant Director-General for Governance, Rights and Dialogue, International Labour Organization.

Total duration: 75 minutes