



International
Labour
Organization

► Policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in recycling





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► **Policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in recycling**

Meeting of Experts to discuss and adopt policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in recycling

(Geneva, 5–9 May 2025)

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► Sectoral guidelines

ILO sectoral guidelines are reference tools setting out principles that can be reflected in the design and implementation of legislation, regulations, policies, strategies, programmes, administrative measures and social dialogue mechanisms in specific economic sectors or sectoral clusters. Sectoral guidelines are adopted by meetings of experts, comprising governments, employers and workers. They can be implemented progressively to take into account different national settings and cultures, as well as different social, economic, environmental and political contexts.

Sectoral guidelines draw their principles from International labour standards (ILO Conventions, Protocols and Recommendations) and other sources, including Declarations, resolutions, conclusions and other policy guidance adopted and endorsed by the International labour Conference or the Governing Body of the ILO. They also draw on other International agreements and policies in the sector concerned, as well as relevant trends and developments in regional and national law and practice.

Sectoral guidelines focus on priority issues for governments, employers and workers that are unique to particular economic sectors and industries. While International labour standards normally deal with more general principles of labour law and practice, sectoral guidelines specify the principles and processes that could be implemented to promote decent work in specific workplaces or contexts. They also benefit from the expertise of practitioners in the relevant sectors in order to capture good industry practices and innovations.

Sectoral guidelines are not legally binding. They are not subject to the ratification or supervisory mechanisms established under International labour standards. Sectoral guidelines may therefore be aspirational in scope, may expand on principles set out in International labour standards and other International agreements and policies, and may be adapted to different national

systems and circumstances. International labour standards and other tools or guidance adopted or endorsed by the International labour Conference or the Governing Body therefore form the foundation on which sectoral guidelines are built. Since they are based on the full principles, rights and obligations set out in International labour standards, nothing set out in sectoral guidelines should be interpreted as lowering those standards.

► Background

1. At its 350th Session, in March 2024, the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization endorsed the proposal of the sectoral advisory bodies to hold a meeting of experts to adopt a code of practice to advance decent work in recycling. At its 352nd Session, in October–November 2024, the Governing Body decided to amend the title and purpose of the meeting to “discuss and adopt policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in recycling”.
2. These policy guidelines are divided into five sections. Section 1 sets out the purpose, principles, application and scope of the guidelines, as well as their intended users. Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 set out recommendations for governments, employers and their organizations and workers and their organizations to advance decent work in recycling according to the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda: promoting employment; respecting, promoting and realizing the fundamental principles and rights at work; developing and enhancing measures of social protection; and promoting social dialogue.

► 1. Introduction

3. While there is some variety in how countries and agencies define recycling, the term generally refers to the collection, sorting, valorization, processing, recovery and reprocessing of both hazardous and non-hazardous materials from households, businesses, shipbreaking, industrial sites, dumpsites and elsewhere, as well as the conversion of these into original or new products, materials, substances or energy.

4. Recycling is part of the circle of life. It is an essential service to the public that should safeguard health and the environment, as well as a key stage of the waste management value chain. It is also an important livelihood for millions of people.
5. A centuries-old economic and ecological activity, recycling has continued to expand as global population, consumption and waste generation have increased. In addition, there are important sustainability demands from markets and regulators.
6. As industrialization and urbanization have evolved, a modern recycling industry has emerged within broader advances in waste management infrastructures and systems, as a mix of formal and informal economy. Recycling today comprises a highly heterogeneous and diverse range of activities across all sectors of the economy, from manual waste-picking to the collection and recovery of waste and all the way to digitally enabled industrial symbiosis in the pharmaceutical industry.
7. Recycling and the wider circular economy can contribute to effective solutions to the triple planetary crisis of climate change, loss of biodiversity, and pollution and waste. Recycling creates value out of waste and contributes to generating decent work and economic growth. It is a critical part of sustainable development.
8. However, recycling is not automatically environmentally sustainable, nor is it inherently a socially just activity. While it can contribute to environmental objectives, some recycling activities can contaminate the environment, and many enterprises and workers in recycling operate in conditions of structural informality, often in poor working conditions and are therefore unable to realize their full potential and aspirations for green and decent jobs.

1.1. Purpose and principles

9. This document provides guidance on policy measures and actions that governments, employers, workers and other actors can implement to promote decent work opportunities and to address challenges in recycling operations in all sectors where recycling takes place.
10. Advancing social justice, including the protection and realization of fundamental principles and rights at work, is key to ensuring that workers involved in recycling activities and operations can pursue their livelihoods and carry out their jobs in conditions of equality, freedom, safety, health, social security and dignity. It is also key to realizing the significant contribution that recycling can make to job creation, economic growth, a more inclusive circular economy and sustainable development.
11. The guidelines draw on the principles contained in ILO Declarations, Conventions, Recommendations and Protocols; the resolutions and conclusions adopted by the International labour Conference, notably the conclusions concerning a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all; and the outcomes of relevant ILO sectoral meetings (see appendix).

1.2. Application, scope and users

12. These guidelines are intended to apply to all recycling operations, whether publicly or privately operated, in the formal and the informal economy, at the regional, national, local and sectoral levels.
13. Although informal and formal recycling activities coexist and intersect with one another in recycling value chains, these policy guidelines have been drafted with special attention to

recycling enterprises and workers in the informal economy. This is not only because of their large numbers but also because of the mandate of the ILO and the rest of the United Nations system to advance social justice and ensure that no one is left behind.

14. These guidelines cover recycling operations that have emerged as part of broader waste management, utilities sectors and supply chains, as well as recycling activities in all other sectors of the economy.
15. These policy guidelines are intended for use by:
 - ▶ government authorities at all levels and functions, including as policymakers, regulatory authorities and public providers of recycling services;
 - ▶ public and private employers and employers' organizations representing them;
 - ▶ recycling workers and workers' organizations representing them;
 - ▶ social and solidarity economy entities, including cooperatives, and other organizations of recycling workers;
 - ▶ international governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, community leaders, and education, training, innovation and research institutions whose work relates to the advancement of recycling and an inclusive and sustainable circular economy.
16. These guidelines recognize the need for an integrated, coherent and coordinated approach at various levels (international, national, sectoral, local and enterprise) and for the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders. They acknowledge the distinct and complementary roles of the different actors in the process of formulating and implementing policies and actions to promote decent work in recycling. In particular:

- a. Governments have the duty to adopt, progressively implement and enforce national laws and regulations, and to ensure that the fundamental principles and rights at work and ratified ILO Conventions and Protocols protect and are applied to all workers in recycling, taking into account other International labour standards. Governments are encouraged to take steps towards the effective implementation of national legislation and policies by promoting good governance, supporting sustainable enterprises through enabling environments, the creation of decent work, strengthening institutional capacity, and fostering constructive social dialogue. Governments are also responsible for waste management services overall of which recycling is a part.
- b. All enterprises have a responsibility to comply with national laws and regulations, wherever they operate, and to respect human rights throughout their operations, taking into account the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration), and when appropriate the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. This includes the rights and basic human values set out in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), as amended in 2022.
- c. Employers' organizations represent and provide information and support to enterprises, in particular micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), and contribute to promoting responsible business conduct and advancing the Decent Work Agenda.
- d. Workers' organizations represent and provide information and support to workers at the local, sectoral, na-

tional, regional and global levels, in particular regarding the respect of workers' rights and improvements in working conditions.

- e. A wider group of intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, communities and institutions that are involved in education, training, innovation and research can support decent work in the recycling industry by strengthening capacity, fostering partnerships, developing knowledge and promoting policy coherence and coordination.

► 2. Productive employment and decent jobs

17. Full and productive employment and decent work interventions are key to harnessing the potential for green and decent jobs in recycling, including by promoting:
 - a conducive, coherent and coordinated policy environment;
 - investment in infrastructure and systems;
 - sustainable enterprise development;
 - cooperatives and the social and solidarity economy;
 - responsible and sustainable business practices;
 - skills development and lifelong learning;
 - decent jobs for young people;
 - formalization;
 - a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all.

2.1. A conducive, coherent and coordinated policy environment

18. Policy coherence and coordination across a wide range of substantive policy areas are key to the effective promotion of decent work in recycling and the broader circular economy. These include:
 - ▶ macroeconomic and growth policies;
 - ▶ trade policies;
 - ▶ environmental policies;
 - ▶ employment policies;
 - ▶ industrial and sectoral policies;
 - ▶ science technology and innovation policies;
 - ▶ productive and sustainable development policies;
 - ▶ enterprise policies;
 - ▶ quality education, skills development and other active labour market policies;
 - ▶ social protection policies;
 - ▶ migration policies;
 - ▶ public health policies;
 - ▶ labour rights and social dialogue and tripartism.
19. Comprehensive, coherent, inclusive and gender-sensitive policies should be formulated and implemented, in consultation with representative organizations of employers and workers and through continuous social dialogue, in order to maximize public and private investment in recycling infrastructure and systems and for sustainable enterprise development, as well as to help cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy entities to prosper and create decent work opportunities. Those policies should follow a

human-centred approach; consider the specific conditions of countries, including their stage of development; their production, consumption and waste patterns; their economic sectors; and their recycling value chains in their entirety, including the types and sizes of enterprises throughout these value chains.

- 20.** Policies should set out ways to promote, respect and realize the fundamental principles and rights at work in recycling and the broader circular economy. They should also be aligned with fundamental principles and rights at work and take into account regional tripartite agreements relevant to an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises and decent work.
- 21.** As more and more ILO Member States adopt circular economy policies or update their waste management and recycling policies, it is critically important to foster a just transition and to integrate employment, social protection, social dialogue and the fundamental principles and rights at work, as well as other sustainable development objectives, into these policies. It is equally important to ensure that existing macroeconomic, sustainable development, employment, resilience to crises, and enterprise policies support the generation of green jobs and decent work in recycling.
- 22.** Policy coherence and coordination are needed vertically at the International, regional, national and subnational levels, including the local level, as well as horizontally across each level. This includes coordination between diverse ministries, administrations and agencies, in particular those responsible for finance, planning, environment, enterprise, trade, employment and labour rights, quality education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET), public health and social protection, energy and infrastructure, immigration, justice, consumer protection and product regulation.

- 23.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
- a. place full and productive employment and decent work for all at the centre of waste management, recycling, and broader circular economy policies;
 - b. design sustainable industrial policies and strategies for the recycling industry, in line with the specific conditions of recycling value chains and the types and sizes of enterprises operating therein;
 - c. set goals for the continuous improvement of the social, economic and environmental sustainability of recycling operations in order to ensure that recycling contributes to national sustainable development objectives;
 - d. review and revise macroeconomic, employment, enterprise, industrial, sectoral, innovation and education policies to ensure that they mobilize and direct investment towards recycling activities and are conducive to the creation of green and decent jobs in recycling and the broader circular economy;
 - e. ensure that trade and investment policies support employment and decent work outcomes, including through the facilitation of technology transfers, access to the materials to be recycled and access to markets for recycled goods;
 - f. design and implement policies that increase demand and potential for recycling so as to generate green and decent jobs for all (including design for recycling, source segregated waste management, the right to repair, extended producer responsibility, industrial symbiosis and other circular economy policies);

- g. establish or strengthen the availability of and access to basic labour market data in recycling, including information about the work carried out in the recycling value chain in the informal economy and carry out ex ante assessments of the employment and socio-economic impacts of policies on recycling, waste management and the circular economy in order to inform policy choices;
- h. integrate provisions for decent work in recycling and the broader circular economy into the agendas of the line ministries responsible for relevant sectors or policy areas, rather than assigning them to only one ministry;
- i. leverage public procurement to optimize decent work opportunities in waste management and recycling, including by providing support to MSMEs and cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy entities to enable them to participate in tendering processes, and ensure that labour clauses uphold working conditions and protect the safety, health, welfare and rights of workers, in line with the Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949 (No. 94);
- j. establish and strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of subnational authorities, including municipalities, to align with national legal frameworks and policies on decent work in recycling, in a way that takes into account local contexts;
- k. establish an environment for sustainable enterprises that enables them to grow, innovate, and advance decent work, and to establish and pursue environmentally sustainable business and production models;
- l. invest in the development, accessibility and uptake of technologies that can help enterprises and social and solidarity economy (SSE) entities enhance productivity,

promote decarbonization and improve working conditions and occupational safety and health (OSH) in line with international labour standards;

- m. promote cooperation at all levels, with the full involvement of the social partners, including:
 - i. at the international level, to assist one another in the promotion of decent work in recycling and the broader circular economy through assistance and capacity-building;
 - ii. through global and regional initiatives, including but not limited to triangular and South-South cooperation, on decent work in recycling and the broader circular economy;
 - iii. at the national level, whereby social partners cooperate with the authorities in developing, implementing, monitoring, reporting, evaluating and reviewing national policies on decent work in recycling in accordance with national practices;
 - iv. at the industry level, whereby social partners can have a key role through all forms of social dialogue, including collective bargaining, in ensuring decent work;
 - v. at the local level, whereby local authorities, employers, trade unions and research and training institutions should cooperate to effectively integrate recycling and the circular economy into local sustainable economic development;
 - vi. at the enterprise level, whereby social partners can work together through social dialogue and workplace cooperation in order to, among other objectives, limit adverse environmental impacts;

ensure that technological advancements contribute to productivity and decent work in recycling, forecast and support skills development for workers; promote access to social protection to all; and realize safe and healthy working environments, as well as other fundamental principles and rights at work.

2.2. Investments in infrastructure and systems

- 24.** Well-functioning waste management and recycling infrastructure and systems are critically important for ensuring decent work and higher efficiency and productivity of recycling operations.
- 25.** However, recycling infrastructure and systems are increasingly overburdened in many countries and cities, in which waste generation vastly outstrips recycling capacity, and where there is a public infrastructure investment deficit. Hence, renewed investments in both hard, soft and social and economic infrastructure and systems are urgently needed. Hard infrastructure includes roads, communications and energy and is particularly needed in underserved urban areas and rural areas. Soft infrastructure comprises transport services, business development and financial services. Soft infrastructure can help realize the benefits of investment in hard infrastructure, such as by facilitating access to finance for employers, entrepreneurs, and social solidarity economy entities, particularly to promote formalization, and making it easier for workers to access recycling facilities and safer to work there. Social and economic infrastructure in waste management and recycling involves providing decent working conditions, necessary skills and OSH measures.

- 26.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
- a. invest in, attract investments into, and promote the development of hard, soft and social and economic infrastructure and systems in order to improve both the efficiency and productivity and the decent work outcomes of recycling. This can include exploring opportunities for domestic resource mobilization; financing from International and regional financial institutions; context appropriate extended producer responsibility schemes; public banks; public-public partnerships; solidarity finance; private finance; public-private partnerships; and innovative financing instruments, such as blended finance, pooled funds and impact investing.
 - b. ensure that investments are accompanied by the expansion of training to facilitate knowledge transfer, such as skills development and training on modern technologies, business models, recyclable materials and recycling practices, and OSH practices related to new infrastructure, as well as by the extension of financial infrastructure and data management to advance productivity and sustainable practices;
 - c. ensure that the design, approval and implementation of infrastructure projects and systems:
 - i. are tailored to the country context, waste and recycling flows and institutional capacity;
 - ii. include the construction and maintenance of road networks to enable the geographical extension of recycling activities and foster job creation in recycling through greater connectivity and improved access to services;

- iii. provide equitable access to quality waste management services and decent jobs in recycling for all in the communities and territories under their jurisdictions;
- iv. improve access to water and sanitation facilities for recycling employers and workers, in view of the links between potable water, OSH and productivity;
- v. include designated spaces for sorting of recyclables to minimize workers' exposure to hazards from recycling operations;
- vi. extend coverage of mobile telephone and internet access in order to improve access to information and to promote innovation and new recycling practices;
- vii. pursue, where possible, employment-intensive methods of constructing and maintaining infrastructure, thus maintaining and creating decent job opportunities for all workers in recycling;
- viii. make use of local social value procurement practices that increase the demand for labour and locally produced input goods and services, with positive impacts on job creation and the empowerment of local communities;
- ix. are gender-responsive and offer employment opportunities for all, with particular attention to socially and economically marginalized groups;
- x. are climate-sensitive, climate-resilient, and include adequate mechanisms to address extreme weather events and any possible negative impacts on the environment or communities;

- xi. facilitate the use of recycled materials within infrastructure projects;
 - xii. enable the restoration and maintenance of existing public infrastructure via employment-intensive infrastructure programmes.
- d. encourage, assist and support enterprises and social and solidarity economy entities in the design and implementation of on-site waste separation and collection systems;
 - e. report on the type and quantities of recycled materials used in infrastructure projects and systems.

2.3. Sustainable enterprise development

- 27. The promotion of competitive and sustainable enterprises is key to generating green jobs and achieving decent work, innovation, growth and other sustainable development outcomes. At the centre of sustainable enterprise development are policies that create an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises (see section 2.3.1) and uphold the fundamental principles and rights at work; strengthen institutions, good governance and the rule of law, encourage the creation and growth of enterprises and decent jobs creations, promote skills and entrepreneurship development, and facilitate access to business development services (see section 2.3.2); and facilitate access to financial services (see section 2.3.3), markets (see section 2.3.4) and new technologies (see section 2.3.5).
- 28. Sustainable enterprise development policies and interventions should respect fundamental principles and rights at work, be gendersensitive, accommodate the diversity of recycling enterprises and their position in the value chain,

and promote formalization. They should recognize that SMEs, cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy entities, as well as responsible and sustainable business practices, all play a role in generating green jobs and decent work opportunities and should be compliant with fundamental principles and rights at work.

2.3.1. An enabling environment for sustainable enterprises

29. An enabling environment for sustainable enterprises conducive to achieving fundamental principles and rights at work and sustainable development that supports responsible investment and contributes to the development of competitive and dynamic economic sectors can help raise sustainable productivity and competitiveness, foster business continuity and stimulate the generation of decent jobs and livelihoods. An enabling environment for sustainable enterprises entails an economic, environmental, social and political climate that improves the prospects of recycling businesses of all sizes, in particular MSMEs. It consists of a complex mix of policy, legal, institutional and regulatory conditions that affect business activities. The resolution concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises (adopted by the International labour Conference in 2007) and the resolution concerning SMEs and decent and productive employment creation (adopted by the International labour Conference in 2015) outline the basic conditions for sustainable enterprise development.
30. Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
 - a. identify major constraints to sustainable enterprise development in recycling, including elevated levels of informality, low productivity among MSMEs, weak governance frameworks (for example, inefficient and

overlapping regulation, red tape and corruption) and sectorspecific challenges such as price volatility. Efforts should be focused on addressing the underlying causes of these constraints in order to create an enabling environment that fosters sustainable enterprises;

- b. develop an enabling legal and regulatory environment for recycling that facilitates formalization and boosts sustainable productivity and competitiveness;
- c. formulate and implement policies that promote responsible business conduct and harmonized environmental, social and governance frameworks for recycling and other enterprises involved in recycling;
- d. promote both public-sector and private-sector investment in recycling enterprises that supports value addition as well as social and environmental objectives, in line with the UNGPs and the MNE Declaration;
- e. improve the access of recycling enterprises, in particular MSMEs and cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy entities, to information and business development services (see section 2.3.2), financial services (see section 2.3.3), markets (see section 2.3.4) and new technologies (see section 2.3.5);
- f. promote the productivity growth of MSMEs, including in the recycling sector, by supporting sustainable production and recycling, efficient material use, decent work and strong OSH standards as key enablers of enterprise sustainability and workers' health and well-being;
- g. pay particular attention to MSMEs and cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy entities, which are often labour-intensive and can face challenges in achieving economic viability, productivity growth and access to finance (see section 2.4);

- h. support skills development, including by increasing research and development capacity and encouraging collaboration between academia and public and private utilities, to meet the changing needs of recycling enterprises (see section 2.6).

31. Employers' and workers' organizations should:

- a. participate in national processes in order to advocate for and design policies that promote enabling business environments, and decent work, including green jobs, in waste management and recycling;
- b. provide services to their members that promote sustainable business development decent job creation, including green jobs, in the waste management and recycling industry, including through education and training, awareness-raising, and sector-specific services and knowledge products;
- c. promote responsible business conduct and respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, taking into account the UNGPs and the MNE Declaration.

2.3.2. Business development services

- 32.** Business development services can help advance the growth, job-creation potential and competitiveness of sustainable enterprises in recycling by providing business advice, information and support, facilitating access to markets, improving the business environment and addressing market failures. These services should be needs-oriented and gender-sensitive, support formalization, and should take into account labour market needs and the specific requirements of all actors in recycling value chains in both informal and formal settings, including MSMEs, cooperatives and other social and

solidarity economy entities. The Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998 (No. 189), provides guidance on business support services.

- 33.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
- a. provide a range of direct and indirect support services for employers and workers in recycling enterprises, including pre-start-up, start-up and development assistance; business incubators and development centres; information and advice services; consultancy and research services; legal, accounting and financial services; services to ensure compliance with environment, social and governance frameworks, and environmental management services;
 - b. ensure that, when support from the state for enterprises is provided, it should be responsible, generate decent work, including green jobs, and contribute to strengthening productive capacity, while also promoting effective social dialogue, respect for labour rights, and the protection of workers;
 - c. improve the sharing of knowledge and best practices and cooperation between sectors, enterprises and workers and the entire recycling value chain;
 - d. promote local partnerships to improve the delivery of business development services to recycling enterprises;
 - e. provide services that are gender-responsive and address the needs of workers who are disadvantaged in the labour market.

2.3.3. Access to financial services

- 34.** Access to financial services and financial risk management can support sustainable enterprise development and formalization, boost productivity and stimulate economic growth and the promotion of decent work principles. However, many recycling enterprises, cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy entities often face constraints that prevent them from gaining access to the financial services they need, including informality; the irregularity of cash flows; low savings and capital accumulation; no or limited collateral; high transaction costs; low productivity; and difficulty in meeting minimum environmental, social and governance requirements. Such constraints can undermine enterprise resilience, and the adoption of new technologies and modes of recycling. Savings, credit and insurance are particularly helpful in protecting workers against external shocks.
- 35.** Large multinational and national recycling enterprises typically access credit more easily than smaller enterprises, due to their higher productivity levels in many cases, greater financial stability, available collateral and established market presence and reputation. SMEs have more limited access to credit, based on their business and collateral, track record, cash flow and access to bank guarantees. Entrepreneurs and self-employed workers who are disadvantaged, including women and young people, often face additional barriers to accessing finance. Addressing these challenges is essential for promoting sustainable enterprise development, creating green and decent jobs, respecting fundamental principles and rights at work and building sustainable and resilient livelihoods in recycling.

- 36.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
- a. facilitate access to credit, in particular for MSMEs and cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy entities, and should effectively address discrimination in lending practices. Access to finance should be used as an incentive for, and promote advantages of, productivity growth, effective formalization, and realization of fundamental principles and rights at work;
 - b. strengthen the capacity of public banks, commercial banks, development banks, financial cooperatives and microfinance institutions, among other financing sources;
 - c. promote innovative means of finance, such as value chain finance, blended finance structures, results-based financing mechanisms, municipal bonds, local social value procurement and cross subsidies;
 - d. strengthen the capacity of alternative providers, which can reduce financial risk through prefinancing inputs and enhancing the creditworthiness of recycling enterprises;
 - e. promote access to insurance in order to increase resilience to fluctuating demand and supply of recyclables and price volatility;
 - f. foster links between formal, financial institutions and increase their capacities to serve recycling enterprises and individual workers in both formal and informal settings;
 - g. use incentives to address the challenges faced by MSMEs and to generate decent work in their operations. Such incentives include investment loans for circular activities, access to credit at lower interest rates, incentives to support the purchasing of new equipment for recycling operations and tax reductions;

- h. develop preferential access schemes and support funds for young and women entrepreneurs and people belonging to other groups who are disadvantaged in accessing finance, for instance by enhancing the capacity of financial service providers to serve them and by complementing financial products with business plan development, business management training and other non-financial support;
- i. increase financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills among recycling workers and recycling enterprises, including through education in schools and training programmes;
- j. promote the uptake of savings, insurance, financial risk management and other financial services through improved policy frameworks and targeted awareness campaigns.

2.3.4. Access to markets

- 37.** Increasing access to markets for recycling enterprises and workers can boost recycling rates and the transition to a circular economy; support the formalization of economic units and workers; provide reliable supplies for post-consumer recycled materials; create opportunities for diversification; minimize waste in the environment and local communities; and boost decent work creation. However, individual waste workers and recycling MSMEs, cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy entities often face significant challenges in accessing markets and selling the materials they recover in wider recycling value chains.
- 38.** As a result, many recycling workers and micro and small enterprises sell recovered materials for lower prices than they could achieve elsewhere, which contributes to low incomes

and poverty. Market access should be complemented by measures to promote fair trade and competition.

- 39.** Barriers to accessing markets arise from the distance of some workers, cooperatives and enterprises from recycling operations, as well as poor transportation infrastructure, high transportation costs (especially outside urban centres), a lack of internet connectivity and market information, and limited access to technology, entrepreneurial and business training and other business development services. Furthermore, the introduction by buyers and remanufacturers of stricter specifications concerning the type and quality of recovered materials may prevent some workers, cooperatives and enterprises from entering the value chain, especially when they only have access to lower-grade materials. Advancing social justice requires integrated public policies developed through a strong and effective social dialogue, promoting decent work, equality of opportunity, universal access to social protection, and the development of sustainable enterprises.
- 40.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:

 - a. implement circular economy and other relevant policies and strategies to create and expand markets for recycled materials and products that meet regulatory requirements and remanufacturing demand;
 - b. promote the development and implementation of awareness campaigns on responsible consumption;
 - c. link recycling policies to broader national policies in order to promote investment, trade and growth, waste management and the circular economy, the formalization of the informal economy and local development, and to help develop an integrated approach towards

improving market access and supporting linkages with local, national and International recycling industries and value chains;

- d. promote an enabling market environment for recycling enterprises and social and solidarity economy entities, for example by developing markets and stimulating demand for recycled materials and strengthening their links to input suppliers, financing agencies and commercialization channels;
- e. help enterprises and workers access timely and transparent market and price information in order to improve their decisions on what materials to collect and how and when to sell them, for example by investing in infrastructure and technologies;
- f. encourage workers and employers in the recycling sector to form and participate in organizations of their choosing, including SSE entities, and actively build the capacity of these organizations since they can help members to access market information, increase their bargaining power to negotiate with buyers, and facilitate business relationships with the public sector and larger enterprises by reducing transaction costs for both parties;
- g. provide technical and financial support for recycling enterprises and social and solidarity economy entities in order to reduce any negative social and environmental impacts of recycling operations and recycled materials, with a view to enabling recycling enterprises and cooperatives to comply with national environmental and labour laws and meet environmental, social and governance requirements and regulations for recycled goods in different markets.

2.3.5. Access to new technologies

41. Access to modern technologies and the best available techniques can help recycling enterprises and cooperatives to boost their productivity and recycling rates, prevent or minimize their negative environmental impacts, innovate to create new products out of old materials, facilitate their access to markets, standardize and monitor their recycling operations and improve their OSH practices.
42. The rate of adoption of recycling technologies and the best available techniques are often low, particularly in lower-income countries in which there is a greater reliance on manual labour. Barriers to technology transfer, including intellectual property and low access to finance, are compounded by a lack of training on how to operate these new technologies. Investments in expanding access to enabling technologies and the best available techniques, including for SMEs, are important in order to address the digital divide in recycling, promote OSH for all workers, reduce inequalities and advance a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all.
43. Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
 - a. analyse the impact of new technologies on productivity and their implications for the number, quality, health and safety of jobs in recycling, while also considering their impacts on the environment;
 - b. ensure the accessibility and affordability of new technologies and the best available techniques, including by providing financial and fiscal incentives, grants and funding to adopt and upgrade collection systems, sorting technologies, processing methods and sustainable manufacturing practices;

- c. support research and development partnerships between enterprises, academia and think tanks, including to enable the development of appropriate technologies, technology transfer and technology promotion for MSMEs and SSE entities;
- d. protect the right to education and invest in education and training, including in the areas of literacy, numeracy and other foundational skills, TVET, tertiary education, and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills, in order to enable workers to understand and operate modern technologies;
- e. optimize best available techniques and practices in order to improve OSH and address the hazardous nature of work in recycling.

2.4. Cooperatives and the social and solidarity economy

- 44.** Cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy entities play an important role in promoting decent work and have improved the living and working conditions of recycling workers in many countries, especially those vulnerable to the most serious decent work deficits in the informal economy. Social and solidarity economy entities put into practice a set of values that are intrinsic to their functioning and are consistent with care for people and the planet, equality and fairness, interdependence, self-governance, transparency and accountability, and the attainment of decent work and livelihoods. This is aligned with the broader aims of social and solidarity economy entities to serve the collective and general interest. It is also in line with the social and solidarity economy principles of voluntary cooperation, mutual aid, democratic and participatory governance, autonomy and

independence, and the primacy of people and social purpose over capital in the distribution and use of surpluses and profits as well as assets. Public policy and institutions should promote the respect of fundamental principles and rights at work in these entities.

- 45.** Social and solidarity economy entities include cooperatives, associations, mutual societies, foundations, social enterprises, self-help groups and other entities operating in accordance with the values and principles of the social and solidarity economy. They aspire to long-term viability and sustainability, including transitioning from the informal to the formal economy. The Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193), and the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), acknowledge the contributions of social and solidarity economy entities to poverty reduction, inclusive societies and formalization.
- 46.** Social and solidarity economy entities that operate in the informal economy and that are engaged in recycling activities face challenges similar to MSMEs in recycling and have limited capacities to respect, promote and realize the fundamental principles and rights at work. In various national contexts, they also face legal, fiscal, and financial barriers to their full development. This includes difficulties in scaling operations as well as barriers to formalization and advancing decent work. This is why formalization is key.
- 47.** Governments, in consultation with employers' organizations and workers' organizations, should:

 - a. identify and consult social and solidarity economy actors when designing and implementing coherent and integrated macroeconomic, trade, industrial, sectoral, employment, education, TVET social protection, labour,

environmental and public health policies that are conducive to the generation of green jobs and decent work in recycling and the broader circular economy;

- b. establish a conducive environment consistent with the nature and diversity of the social and solidarity economy in order to promote decent work and harness the fullest potential of social and solidarity economy entities to contribute to sustainable development, the circular economy and sustainable enterprises;
- c. ensure a level playing field by treating social and solidarity economy recycling entities in recycling in accordance with national law and practice and on terms that are no less favourable than those accorded to other forms of enterprise;
- d. take measures to promote anti-corruption and good governance, including through adequate whistle-blower legislation, facilitate registration, and simplify administrative procedures for the transition into the formal economy of social and solidarity economy entities and sustainable enterprises in recycling;
- e. support measures that enable formalization, access to information, finance, markets, technology, infrastructure and well-regulated and socially responsible public procurement, especially for categories of workers who are disadvantaged in the labour market and who are more at risk of serious deficits regarding fundamental principles and rights at work (see section 3.4);
- f. ensure, where appropriate, that measures to promote the social and solidarity economy in recycling foster social innovation, gender equality, sustainable productivity, skills development, entrepreneurship and collaboration, and also that such measures preserve and promote the

fundamental principles and rights at work and the rights, traditions and cultures of indigenous and tribal peoples;

- g. strengthen labour inspection and promote collaboration among labour inspectorates, social partners and social and solidarity economy representatives in order to prevent, discourage and sanction pseudo-social and solidarity economy entities, unlawful practices and rights violations, thereby protecting workers and preserving the autonomy and independence of social and solidarity economy entities;
- h. strengthen the collaboration, interaction and partnerships between social and solidarity economy entities in recycling and public administration at all levels.

48. Employers' organizations should:

- a. advocate for the development of an enabling business environment that fosters collaboration between the private sector and social and solidarity economic agents, while ensuring that all enterprises, including social and solidarity economy entities, have opportunities to contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic growth based on objective criteria of quality, sustainability, and business viability;
- b. consider, where appropriate, extending membership to social and solidarity economy entities wishing to become members and provide them with adequate support services;
- c. consider facilitating the access of social and solidarity economy entities to business networks and partners that can contribute to their development, enhance their business potential, entrepreneurial and managerial capacities, strengthen their productivity and competitive-

ness, and facilitate their access to International markets and institutional funding.

- 49.** Workers and their organizations should:
- extend membership to social and solidarity economy entities wishing to become members and provide them with adequate support services;
 - increase the awareness of social and solidarity economy workers concerning their labour rights; extend outreach to enable them to join unions; support their organizing efforts and collective bargaining strategies; develop partnerships and alliances for them to achieve common goals; and increase their visibility.

2.5. Responsible and sustainable business practices

- 50.** Many regions have seen an increased presence of large enterprises – whether state-owned or private, multinational or national – that handle multiple waste streams or specialize in recycling specific materials, such as refining and recycling the precious metals found in batteries, electronics and cars. In addition, several manufacturers, fast-moving consumer goods companies and leading global brands have established ambitious targets for the use of recycled, renewable or circular materials in new products and the recovery of their used products. These commitments should include strengthening local value chains to foster inclusive and equitable growth within the circular economy.
- 51.** The MNE Declaration provides direct guidance to enterprises (including multinational and national, state-owned and private enterprises), governments, and employers' and workers' organizations in such areas as employment, training,

conditions of work and life, and industrial relations. All are encouraged to apply the principles of the MNE Declaration to enhance the positive contribution that enterprises can make to advancing economic and social progress and the realization of decent work for all, including in recycling and the broader circular economy, as well as to minimizing and resolving the difficulties which their various operations may cause.

- 52.** To advance responsible business practices and respect for fundamental principles and rights at work in recycling and harness the contribution of enterprises to social, economic and environmental goals, governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
- a. raise awareness of the MNE Declaration among employers and workers in the recycling industry;
 - b. promote good social practice taking into account the MNE Declaration and encourage enterprises operating in the recycling industry to implement its principles, including by promoting the establishment of frameworks and guidance that facilitate and support sustainable investments; respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work; the generation of employment opportunities; the best possible wages, benefits and conditions of work; skills development and vocational training; social security; and the transition to formality;
 - c. carefully study the impact of enterprises on employment, the other dimensions of decent work and the larger social, economic and environmental goals related to recycling and the broader circular economy;
 - d. provide guidance and support for employers and enterprises to carry out due diligence to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address the risks

of human rights violations in their operations or in the products, services or operations with which they may be directly linked;

- e. formulate specific guidance on environmental, social and governance frameworks and reporting in the recycling industry, including examples of best practice, in support of the accountability efforts of enterprises;
 - f. take appropriate steps to ensure, through judicial, administrative, legislative or other appropriate means, that when abuses by enterprises occur within their territory or jurisdiction any affected worker or workers have access to effective remedy.
- 53.** Building on the guidance of the MNE Declaration and the UNGPs, enterprises should:
- a. consider and implement sustainable measures that facilitate and support the creation of green and decent jobs, decent work, sustainable production and consumption and a just transition;
 - b. carry out human rights due diligence to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their actual and potential adverse impacts that relate to Internationally recognized human rights, which are understood, at a minimum, to be those rights expressed in the International Bill of Human Rights and the principles concerning fundamental rights set out in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), as amended in 2022. When gauging human rights risks, enterprises should engage in meaningful consultation with potentially affected groups and other stakeholders, as appropriate, taking into account the size of the enterprise and the nature and context of the operation, and engage in social dialogue with workers' organizations in recycling as an ongoing process;

- c. respect the right of the workers whom they employ to have all their grievances processed and ensure fair and accessible processes are in place to address workers' concerns in accordance with national legislation and international labour standards.

2.6. Skills development and lifelong learning

- 54. Skills development and lifelong learning underpin inclusive and sustainable growth and productivity, human-centred development and decent work in recycling and all other sectors of the economy. They also play a critical role in providing dignity and enabling people to realize their aspirations.
- 55. The Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), and Recommendation (No. 195), 2004, the Quality Apprenticeships Recommendation, 2023 (No. 208), and the ILO Strategy on Skills and Lifelong Learning 2030 contain important provisions and provide guidance that are critically important for promoting skills and lifelong learning for advancing decent work in recycling. To be effective, skills and lifelong learning should be complemented by social protection, including unemployment protection, and other inclusion and active labour market policies, including high-quality employment and social services.
- 56. TVET, as well as STEM skills, are key for empowering current and future recycling workers as recycling technologies advance and become greener and more digital. Training programmes that are particularly pertinent for recycling workers include those that cover the use of machinery and chemicals used in the recycling process; the safe and efficient handling of waste material streams; the best available techniques and digital skills; occupationally and environmentally safe and healthy working methods; and entrepreneurship

and management. Trainings offered in these contexts may include content related to decent work and fundamental principles and rights at work.

- 57.** Informal waste and recycling workers often lack access to education and training and face both financial and non-financial barriers to skills development. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by multiple and intersecting situations of vulnerability and exclusion, which reinforce inequalities and stigma and are barriers to formalization.
- 58.** When training is informal and is not conducted by properly trained trainers, workers end up lacking necessary skills, unaware of OSH standards, lack recognized qualifications and have only limited opportunities to find decent work. Informal and poor-quality training also affects the sustainability of recycling enterprises negatively since it does not adequately address skills mismatches, undermines informed decision-making, hampers the effective management of resources and reduces the uptake of recycling technologies.
- 59.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
 - a. develop skills standards, conduct skills needs anticipation and assessments, in partnership with labour, education and training institutions and with the active engagement of both the public sector (such as municipalities and state-owned waste management and recycling enterprises) and the private sector (such as recycling enterprises and enterprises with recycling operations in specific sectors), as well as with the active engagement of employers' and workers' organizations;
 - b. develop comprehensive and coordinated policies and strategies to expand opportunities and possibilities for learning for the recycling workforce. These policies

should take into consideration the heterogeneous nature of recycling and the different skills needs, depending on the materials that are recycled and the structure and dynamics of the recycling value chain;

- c. strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of public and private training institutions to ensure adequate training facilities and produce qualified teachers and trainers who can deliver qualified training programmes that respond to the needs of the industry, support the uptake of modern technologies and improve recycling processes;
- d. expand the outreach of national training institutions to recycling workers in both urban and rural areas and in both formal and informal enterprises and social and solidarity economy entities, using innovative approaches and ensuring equal quality education and certification of training programmes for all workers;
- e. foster partnerships between TVET institutions, employers' organizations and their member enterprises, and workers' organizations, as well as with other actors such as recycling research institutes and cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy entities;
- f. promote the upgrading of apprenticeships in micro and small recycling enterprises and social and solidarity economy entities in the informal economy in order to enhance the quality of apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning and ensure the provision of practical and relevant skills;
- g. provide children with universal access to free, public, compulsory, quality basic education, as well as early childhood education, where applicable, along with opportunities for knowledge and skills development. This is essential for

eradicating child labour, which is prevalent in recycling, as well as for establishing basic literacy and numeracy skills and building a foundation for lifelong learning;

- h. provide equitable access to quality skills and lifelong learning for adults, including basic literacy, numeracy, core skills, digital skills and requisite language skills, in accessible formats, as appropriate. A focus on adult education is especially important for the skilling, reskilling and upskilling of recycling workers, who may have been excluded from basic education;
- i. reduce financial and structural barriers, including language barriers, and eliminate systemic discrimination through targeted interventions in order to ensure equitable access to skills development and TVET, paying particular attention to the categories of workers who are disadvantaged in the labour market and at the base of the recycling pyramid;
- j. promote gender-responsive and inclusive learning environments, including through the provision of safe and accessible training facilities and transportation, separate sanitation facilities and dormitories, and childcare;
- k. establish a well-functioning and inclusive system for the recognition of prior learning for all within and between countries;
- l. provide technical skills training in accessible formats, as appropriate, for informal workers, MSMEs and social and solidarity economy entities in order to help them improve productivity and meet the required standards for recycled materials. This may include demand-based, flexible and inclusive, community-based training that is linked to economic opportunities in order to promote employment and income security for recycling workers;

- m. develop and support public and private training programmes for workers employed in largescale recycling activities by contributing financial support, a venue, transport, equipment and teaching materials or by covering the cost of scholarships, living expenses or the wages of trainees during training. Certification schemes should be considered in order to ensure that trainees receive nationally recognized and Internationally understood qualifications;
 - n. promote innovative, transparent, equitable and sustainable financing mechanisms, developed through social dialogue, with shared and differentiated responsibilities, as appropriate between governments, employers and workers, that enable and incentivize participation in skills development, promote employability, strengthen workers' capacity to benefit from decent work opportunities and support sustainable enterprises;
 - o. provide accessible occupational health and safety, environmental and sustainability training to workers, MSMEs, and social and solidarity economy entities, to improve decent working conditions.
- 60. Employers' organizations should:**
- a. contribute, given their essential role in identifying skills needs and gaps as well as collecting and analysing data on current trends and needs, to the development of training programmes that equip the workforce with transferable, technical and core skills that are adequate, relevant and equitable;
 - b. maintain close collaboration with the authorities responsible for training programmes and play an active part in the improvement of both general education and TVET for all enterprises in the sector;

- c. promote the development and updating of training programmes in accessible formats, including quality apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning that are relevant to the recycling industry, through active involvement or partnerships with education and training institutions to ensure accessibility and relevance;
 - d. promote capacity-building initiatives among their members, including MSMEs, to enhance understanding and compliance with International labour standards.
- 61.** Workers' organizations should:
- a. maintain close collaboration with the authorities responsible for training programmes and play an active part in the improvement of both general and TVET in recycling and in wasteprocessing enterprises, as well as in training for community development;
 - b. establish training as a priority issue and include it in the agenda for collective bargaining;
 - c. provide employees with support and advice on training matters and serve as a point of liaison between employees, management and training providers.

2.7. Decent jobs for young people

- 62.** The global youth unemployment rate is almost three times the adult rate – more than one in five young people are not in education, employment or training. The creation of full and productive employment and decent work for young people, including in the recycling industry and the wider circular economy, is urgently needed to ensure more sustainable, inclusive and resilient societies.

- 63.** In parallel, it is of paramount importance to make it more attractive for young people to work in recycling and the broader circular economy, including by ensuring that recycling offers learning opportunities, new digital and STEM skills, decent wages and incomes and decent working conditions.
- 64.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:

 - a. formulate and effectively implement integrated youth employment policies and strategies, in line with the resolution and conclusions entitled "The youth employment crisis: A call for action", which was adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2012, and the ILO Youth Employment Action Plan 2020–2030, and ensure that these policies and strategies incorporate the potential for employment generation in recycling and the circular economy;
 - b. anticipate and enable effective skills development and TVET for recycling and the circular economy by combining training on digital and technical competencies, business and financial management, leadership and other soft skills. A dual approach that combines off-the-job skills development with on-the-job training and work experience, as in the case of quality apprenticeships, could be particularly effective;
 - c. ensure that young people are targeted by active labour market programmes that complement skills development and TVET programmes (see section 2.6). This includes labour market information, subsidized employment, training and employment services (including orientation; counselling; and matching, mentoring and other placement services);

- d. support entrepreneurship in recycling and the broader circular economy, including through incubator programmes that provide financial and technical support for entrepreneurs and place a special emphasis on young women entrepreneurs and self-employed workers by addressing gender-based constraints in businesses. An integrated approach that combines training (such as training on business management and marketing), mentorship on the technical and financial aspects of recycling operations and training on information and communications technology, with financial support for start-ups, could be particularly effective in enhancing young people's engagement in recycling and the broader circular economy;
- e. encourage young entrepreneurs and workers to participate in established employers' and workers' organizations and in the establishment and functioning of their own membershipbased organizations, respecting the right to freedom of association and to engage effectively in social dialogue mechanisms so that they have a say in processes that affect their work and life;
- f. support successful young recycling entrepreneurs and workers in becoming agents of change for a sustainable and inclusive recycling industry and circular economy by sharing their success stories and experiences with their peers and communities;
- g. promote the modernization and technological upgrading of the industry by supporting innovative business models, such as circular goods manufacturing, industrial symbiosis and the use of digital and best available technologies, while improving sustainable productivity, incomes, working conditions and the dignity of jobs;

- h. engage young people in decision-making processes related to recycling and the circular economy in meaningful ways, including by facilitating their active participation in cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy entities and supporting the establishment of specific mechanisms that allow their voices to be heard, such as youth advisory committees;
- i. strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaborations, including by involving young people themselves, in order to promote action on youth employment in recycling and the broader circular economy.

2.8. Formalization

- 65. Formalization means ensuring that all economic activities by workers and economic units – including enterprises, entrepreneurs and households – are, in law and in practice, sufficiently covered by formal arrangements.
- 66. There are elevated levels of informal employment in recycling and other loops of the circular economy, especially in and around the cities of lower-income countries. Low public spending, insufficient provision of quality public services and limited access to these are key drivers of informality, along with low productivity of enterprises and challenges of compliance. Microlevel determinants such as low levels of education, as well as discrimination, poverty, lack of access to economic resources, finances and property and low levels of organization, can also lead workers to informal work. In addition, a balanced approach combining incentives with compliance measures, including adapting administrative procedures, is needed to increase incentives to formalization.

- 67.** Informality poses a major challenge for the enforcement of legislation, the growth of sustainable, productive and efficient enterprises, the improvement of the livelihoods and working conditions of waste pickers and other informal workers, and the realization of their rights at work and social protection for all. Women, young people, migrants and other categories of workers who are disadvantaged in the labour market are overrepresented among informal recycling workers. Their work is often characterized by significant decent work deficits and is linked to the prevalence of poverty. The formalization of recycling, through integrated policy approaches, is therefore of critical importance to ensuring an inclusive and just transition to environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all, and to the circular economy for the creation of decent jobs.
- 68.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
- undertake a thorough assessment of the characteristics and drivers of informality, including by collecting statistics on the workforce and economic units, reviewing legal and policy frameworks and practice, and considering the decent work deficits in recycling;
 - develop and implement an integrated policy framework and establish strategies and incentives to facilitate the transition to the formal economy in recycling. Such a framework should be underpinned by an institutional coordination mechanism for effective implementation at local, national, regional and International levels, consistent with Recommendation No. 204 and the Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all. It should also take into account the diversity of actors and be tailored to context-specific drivers of informality;

- c. promote a business and investment environment that gives enterprises an incentive to formalize, including business entry reforms that reduce registration costs and simplify administrative procedures; simplify tax and social contributions assessment and payment regimes; and improve access to inclusive financial services, entrepreneurship and vocational training, business development services and markets;
- d. promote formal contracting, including through registration with the social security system, between the key actors in recycling value chains, which, when well designed and regulated, will improve sustainable productivity; embed quality standards, including those related to labour, environment and OSH; improve traceability; and encourage investment;
- e. promote access to education, lifelong learning, entrepreneurship training and skills development for informal workers, while recognizing and building on prior learning and the skills acquired through informal apprenticeships;
- f. strengthen OSH and labour inspection and mechanisms to promote compliance with national laws and regulations, ensuring that the recognition and enforcement of employment relationships in recycling applies to the informal economy as well, and extend the mandate and capacity of labour inspection to cover SSE entities, informal and unregistered sectors;
- g. create an enabling environment for employers and workers to exercise their right to organize and bargain collectively;
- h. foster social dialogue in the design and implementation of strategies for the transition to the formal economy;

- i. ensure access to adequate social protection coverage for all workers in recycling and, taking into account national circumstances, make social protection systems more sustainable, inclusive and effective, as enablers of formalization strategies (see section 4);
- j. prevent informalization by sanctioning the deliberate avoidance of, or exit from, the formal economy for the purpose of evading taxation and the application of environmental, social and labour laws and regulations;
- k. promote a favourable environment for sustainable enterprises and decent work creation, in particular for SMEs (see section 2.3.1) and SSE entities (see section 2.4), including through cooperation and assistance on capacity-building and knowledge-sharing;
- l. ensure that recycling companies comply with national laws and regulations in order to advance the formalization of workers and economic units and prevent the informalization of formal economy jobs.

2.9. A just transition towards a job-rich circular economy

- 69.** A just transition maximizes the social and economic opportunities of climate and environmental action in a way that is inclusive, by creating decent work opportunities, reducing inequality and by leaving no one behind.
- 70.** The transition to the circular economy entails a profound change of the current production and consumption patterns, the structural transformation of most economies and the complete conversion of most waste management and recycling systems. To safeguard social justice, this transformation must be governed by public policies in line

with the guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all. This is critical to harness the opportunities for full and productive employment and decent work, as well as to ensure that the transition works for all, with particular attention to workers in the informal economy, so no one is left behind.

- 71.** Although the overall global employment impacts will most likely be positive, the underlying shift away from extraction and manufacturing towards remanufacturing and services will result in significant job losses and transformation and have substantial implications for enterprises of all types and sizes in all regions of the world. Just as the transition to the circular economy comes with important opportunities for improving the efficiency, productivity and sustainability of enterprises and jobs, there is a significant risk that millions of MSMEs and workers will remain in, or enter into, the informal economy with limited possibilities to realize their full potential or their rights at work.
- 72.** Coherent policies to provide a just transition framework for all and promote the creation of more decent jobs should include 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.
- 73.** Since recycling is at the forefront of the transition to the circular economy, there is an urgent need to ensure that the transition becomes human-centred, economically viable, environmentally sustainable and just. Social dialogue, including collective bargaining, at the enterprise, local, sectoral and national levels is key for assessing the opportunities and resolving the challenges posed by the transition and

ensuring that it becomes better managed and will work to the benefit of all (see section 5). Active engagement and collaboration with local governments, including through city-networks and multi-level partnership initiatives, is critical to delivering inclusive climate action and promoting decent work in recycling.

74. The Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all contain important policy principles and approaches that have been incorporated into these policy guidelines. They should be used, together with the conclusions concerning a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all, which were adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2023, to advance a just transition towards more sustainable, inclusive and formal recycling operations and a circular economy that provides more and better opportunities for decent work for all.

► 3. Rights at work

75. International labour standards, including the fundamental principles and rights at work, are essential for a rights-based and human-centred approach to the development of a recycling industry and recycling operations that responds to the changing patterns in the world of work, protects workers and promotes sustainable, productive and competitive enterprises and economic units. However, recycling workers are often inadequately covered by labour and social security legislation because of decent work deficits in the informal economy. The effective enforcement of national labour laws that embody relevant International Labour standards is therefore of crucial importance.

- 76.** International labour standards of direct relevance to recycling and the circular economy are addressed throughout these policy guidelines and listed at the end of the document (see appendix), while the focus of this section is the fundamental principles and rights at work.
- 77.** The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), as amended in 2022, affirms the obligation inherent in membership of the ILO to respect, promote and to realize the principles concerning the fundamental rights, namely freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; the effective abolition of child labour; the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation; and a safe and healthy working environment.
- 78.** Fundamental principles and rights at work are universal human rights and immutable in nature. They are inseparable, interrelated and mutually reinforcing. They are key to human dignity and well-being and to the foundation of inclusive and just societies. They are important for ensuring that economic and social progress advance together in the pursuit of social justice. Fundamental principles and rights at work are rights and enabling conditions that are necessary for the full realization of the strategic objectives of the International labour Organization.
- 79.** The fundamental principles and rights at work are set out in 11 fundamental instruments. One of these, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), has been ratified by all Member States of the ILO. In the most recent recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work held by the International labour Conference at its 112th Session, in June 2024, governments, employers and workers agreed that the ratification and effective

implementation of all fundamental instruments, including the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced labour Convention, 1930, are areas of focus.

3.1. Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining

- 80.** Protecting and promoting respect for the right to freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining are particularly important to enable the attainment of the four strategic objectives of the decent work agenda, notably social dialogue and tripartism.
- 81.** Collective bargaining can play a key role in enhancing the performance of recycling enterprises, facilitating adjustments to economic shocks and strengthening industrial relations. It is an effective means of determining the conditions of work in recycling. Effective exercise of the right to organize and bargain collectively can also promote the fair distribution of productivity gains and the adequate remuneration of workers.
- 82.** The fundamental right to organize and bargain collectively is enshrined in the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). In practice, however, recycling workers may be excluded from the right to associate and bargain collectively due to elevated levels of informality, lack of good governance, inadequate legislative protection and insufficient mechanisms for the promotion of their rights. They are often unaware of their rights or lack the collective voice to demand that they be upheld. Additional challenges to the exercise of

these rights may include a lack of education and information; poor working and living conditions; unstable and temporary employment relationships; social ostracism and stigma; legal status in the national territory; and discrimination in general, as well as discrimination based on union membership or participation in union activities.

- 83.** Workers' and employers' organizations shall enjoy adequate protection against any act of interference by each other or each others' agents or members in their establishment, functioning or administration. In particular, acts which are designed to promote the establishment of workers' organizations under the domination of employers or employers' organizations, or to support workers' organizations by financial or other means, with the object of placing such organization under the control of employers or employers' organizations, shall be deemed to constitute acts of interference.
- 84.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
 - a. ratify and effectively implement fundamental and other ILO instruments relating to freedom of association and collective bargaining. This entails establishing integrated national laws or adapting existing laws to the needs of workers in recycling;
 - b. establish adequate machinery, including through the responsible authority and labour inspectorate, to guarantee the effective application, implementation and enforcement of laws relating to freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
 - c. formulate and implement measures for the establishment, growth and functioning of workers' organizations in recycling, as set out in the relevant ILO instruments.

In particular, requirements regarding minimum membership, minimum levels of education and minimum funds should not be permitted in order not to impede the development of organizations in the sector;

- d. ensure the respect of the right of employers and workers in recycling to establish and, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned, to join organizations of their own choosing without previous authorization. Such organizations should have the right to draw up their own constitutions and rules, elect representatives, organize their administrative activities, bargain collectively on behalf of their members and formulate their programmes. They should have the right to establish and join federations and confederations and any such organization should be able to affiliate with International organizations;
- e. protect recycling workers in law and in practice against arbitrary dismissal or unlawful retaliation or eviction based on their status or activities as leaders or members of workers' organizations, as well as against anti-union discrimination, by prohibiting such discrimination explicitly in law, establishing rapid appeal procedures, national laws and regulations, and effective and dissuasive sanctions against interference;
- f. eliminate restrictions on the rights of migrant workers to join or form trade unions and to be represented by trade unions, including for the purpose of collective bargaining;
- g. take appropriate measures to encourage and promote the full development and utilization of machinery for voluntary negotiation between employers or employers' organizations and workers' organizations;

- h. secure for all those engaged in recycling the same rights of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining as those granted to industrial workers and repeal any statutory or other provisions restricting such rights.

85. Employers' organizations should:

- a. facilitate access to workplaces by independent trade union officials for the purpose of carrying out lawful trade union activities and guarantee the access of trade union representatives to workplaces with due respect for the rights of property and management, so that trade unions can communicate with workers in order to apprise them of the potential advantages of unionization;
- b. remove hindrances, if any, to the organization of free, independent and democratically controlled trade unions, and refrain from any reprisal against workers for joining or actively participating in trade unions;
- c. make no attempt to establish a trade union under the control of management or discourage workers from exercising their right to form or join a union, including by making the employment of a worker subject to the condition that they shall not join a union or shall relinquish trade union membership;
- d. provide trade unions with such facilities, as may be appropriate, in order to enable them to carry out their functions promptly and efficiently. In this connection account shall be taken of the characteristics of the industrial relations system of the country and the needs, size and capabilities of the undertaking concerned. The granting of such facilities should not impair the efficient operation of the undertaking concerned.

86. Workers' organizations should:

- a. promote the education and training of workers, including on the benefits of collective bargaining, their rights and obligations;
- b. strengthen their outreach efforts to categories of workers who are more at risk of serious deficits regarding the fundamental principles and rights at work, in order to promote their organization and raise awareness about their rights and obligations within national law. This may be supported by transnational collaboration between trade unions and non-governmental organizations, community organizations, cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy organizations and the media in countries of origin and destination;
- c. address practical challenges in relation to freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, including issues concerning eligibility and the payment of dues by workers who are not employed on a permanent basis;
- d. strengthen their capacity, including by increasing the representation of their membership, in order to effectively engage in all related processes.

3.2. Elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour

- 87.** Forced or compulsory labour is a violation of the fundamental human right to work in freedom and to choose one's work freely. It contributes to the perpetuation of poverty and stands in the way of the achievement of decent work everywhere, including in recycling. The Forced labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) and the Protocol of 2014 thereto, which are accompanied by the Forced labour (Supplemen-

tary Measures) Recommendation, 2014 (No. 203) and the Abolition of Forced labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), stipulate that forced and compulsory labour must urgently be eliminated in all its forms and manifestations.

- 88.** The incidence of forced or compulsory labour in recycling can be attributed to the root causes of forced labour more widely, as well as certain characteristics of recycling operations and value chains. These root causes include inadequate labour and social protection, high levels of informality and poverty, debt and the lack of decent livelihood options, reliance on subcontracting, high turnover of temporary workers in lower-skilled roles, the physically demanding and labour-intensive nature of work, piece-rate pay systems, the low status of jobs, work locations and living environments in marginalized and impoverished neighbourhoods, low levels of literacy and the lack of awareness of rights among workers.
- 89.** Recycling work is often undertaken by people who are marginalized by society, experience discrimination and who can be more vulnerable to the risk of forced labour, particularly in the informal economy. Migrant workers, upon whom the industry commonly relies, are more likely to be engaged in forced labour.
- 90.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:

 - a. ratify and effectively implement the fundamental ILO instruments aimed at the prohibition and elimination of forced or compulsory labour, namely, Convention No. 29, the Protocol of 2014 thereto and Convention No. 105;
 - b. address the root causes and factors that heighten the risks of forced labour, such as informality, poverty, illiteracy, discrimination, inequalities and the lack of social

protection, and should strengthen the freedoms of all workers to associate and bargain collectively for decent work;

- c. develop an integrated and gender-sensitive approach that combines law enforcement and prosecution with employment-related and other social measures to promote the prevention of forced labour, the rehabilitation of victims and their compensation;
- d. adopt, review or strengthen anti-forced labour and anti-trafficking laws and regulations, with appropriate penalties and measures for remediation, such as compensation, rehabilitation and repatriation, where applicable and appropriate, to be accessible by all victims of forced labour, irrespective of their presence or legal status in the national territory;
- e. reinforce the capacity of judiciary and law enforcement officials, including labour and environmental inspectors, to identify, refer, investigate, prosecute and follow up cases of forced labour. Special attention should be paid to the specific situation of migrant workers, including their ability to stay in the country while pursuing their claims or to pursue their claims upon their return to countries of origin;
- f. reinforce the number, skills and resources of labour inspectors, including their mandate to conduct effective monitoring in the informal economy;
- g. develop, implement, monitor and evaluate national action plans on forced labour that address the prevention of forced labour, the protection of victims, access to remedy and the prosecution of perpetrators, and that foster effective partnerships between relevant government departments, social partners and, where relevant,

non-governmental and community organizations, cooperatives and other organizations in the social and solidarity economy, as well as media, academia and other actors;

- h. strengthen the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations to support efforts aimed at the elimination of forced labour, including through capacity-building and awarenessraising support. This requires providing guidance and training on best practices, including on human rights due diligence to promote responsible business conduct and effectively address the challenge of forced labour;
- i. improve governance for fair recruitment to ensure the protection of workers, particularly migrant workers, against fraudulent practices and abuses during recruitment and placement processes. This requires strengthening legislation on recruitment practices, in particular to address gaps in the coverage of the recycling industry and all aspects of the recruitment process; establishing mechanisms for the public registration, licensing or certification of recruiters; and prohibiting recruiters and employers from charging recruitment fees and related costs to workers and from confiscating, destroying or retaining workers' identity documents or contracts;
- j. conclude and ratify bilateral or multilateral agreements between countries of origin, transit and destination, as relevant, embodying International labour standards, in particular fundamental principles and rights at work, and provide for an oversight mechanism for the recruitment process of migrant workers;
- k. ensure effective coordination between relevant government ministries and departments, including immigration authorities, law enforcement and the judiciary, as well as

social partners, in order to prevent and combat forced labour and trafficking;

- l. support and provide resources for awareness-raising campaigns conducted by employers' and workers' organizations;
- m. consider the establishment and promotion of a confidential reporting mechanism for the identification and reporting of cases of forced labour;
- n. provide access to effective remedy, taking into account the UNGPs and the MNE Declaration.

91. Employers and their organizations should:

- a. ensure fair recruitment practices, including through human rights due diligence assessments of recruitment procedures, taking into account the ILO's *General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment, inter alia, taking measures to:*
 - i. provide all workers with clear and transparent written employment contracts that contain all significant conditions of employment in a language that they understand;
 - ii. ensure access to effective grievance and dispute-resolution mechanisms;
 - iii. ensure that no recruitment fees or related costs are charged to or otherwise borne by workers or jobseekers;
 - iv. refrain from confiscating, destroying or retaining workers' identity documents or contracts;
 - v. respect the rights of all workers, particularly migrant workers, to leave or change employment and safely return to their countries of origin;

- b. take immediate and effective measures within their own competence to prevent and eliminate forced or compulsory labour in their operations;
- c. respect national laws and collective agreements in relation to overtime.

92. Workers' organizations should:

- a. advocate for strengthened legal frameworks that address forced labour, including the ratification of International labour standards and the development of national law and policy;
- b. monitor working conditions and instances of forced labour in recycling, report on violations and cooperate with labour inspectorates, law enforcement and other relevant government authority actions to ensure that victims are released, compensated and rehabilitated;
- c. educate workers about their rights and the risk of forced labour, provide training on how to identify forced labour practices and encourage workers to report possible cases of forced labour;
- d. increase outreach to categories of workers who are particularly vulnerable to forced labour, for example through partnerships with social and solidarity entities, non-governmental and community organizations or through help desks and information services;
- e. partner with specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations or International organizations to help support victims of forced labour and trafficking, for example with access to impartial legal advice, translation and interpretation services, accommodation financial support, access to counselling services and vocational training;

- f. establish bilateral, sectoral or regional trade union co-operation agreements, as well as alliances or coalitions with other stakeholders at International and national levels, in order to advance knowledge-sharing and innovation on addressing forced labour in recycling, develop human rights due diligence tools and demonstrate good practice that can be replicated.

3.3. Effective abolition of child labour

- 93. Child labour deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity and is harmful to their physical and mental development. It reinforces a cycle of poverty, in which more than 100 million children worldwide have inadequate education, food and nutrition and healthcare and are less likely to have decent work opportunities as adults. Eliminating child labour in recycling is key to realizing the commitment and obligation to eliminate all forms of child labour, as set out in the Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) and Recommendation (No. 146), 1973 and the Worst Forms of Child labour Convention (No. 182) and Recommendation (No. 190), 1999.
- 94. There are reports from many countries that children are working in waste-picking and other informal recycling activities. This includes picking waste in the streets and at dumpsites and sorting waste in their homes or at sorting centres. These children may work alone, in groups or with their family members, and they frequently live on waste dumps or in close proximity to them. The work is hazardous, as it exposes children to the risks of physical injury as well as heavy metals, toxic chemicals, pathogens and harmful organic compounds, which are particularly dangerous for children's health and well-being as their bodies are in critical stages of development.

- 95.** Children are also likely to suffer from social stigma, harassment and criminalization, and they generally do not have access to social, labour and health protection. Particular measures are required to protect child labourers who belong to disadvantaged groups at the base of the recycling pyramid in the informal economy.
- 96.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
- a. ratify and effectively enforce Conventions Nos 138 and 182, underpinned by the development, through tripartite consultation, of national policies, strategies and plans of action that have measurable outcomes and monitoring and evaluation frameworks;
 - b. pursue an integrated approach to effectively implement the above-mentioned national policies, strategies and plans, including by strengthening interministerial co-ordination and institutional capacities, improving the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations, and establishing or reinforcing partnerships and multi-stakeholder platforms;
 - c. establish or strengthen child labour monitoring systems, including community-based systems, that involve the identification, referral, protection and prevention of child labourers in recycling. These are particularly effective if pursued in collaboration with local authorities, labour and environmental inspection, law enforcement, education and social services, as well as with the active participation of employers' and workers' organizations, cooperatives and social and solidarity economy organizations and non-governmental organizations;
 - d. provide assistance to both state-owned and private recycling enterprises to establish or strengthen child labour

prevention programmes and promote human rights due diligence in their operations and supply chains;

- e. invest in measures to increase the productivity and incomes of recycling workers, including in the informal economy, in order to reduce incentives for the use of child labour. This may include financing the adoption of modern technologies or providing access to skills development and training, in particular improved TVET systems that match labour market needs. Access to savings insurance schemes and government programmes, such as providing start-up funds, loans or matching workers' contributions, can also help. These initiatives should encourage the access of children to education. These measures should also prioritize the formalization of jobs;
- f. strengthen comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection systems that set minimum standards for the provision, in particular, of family or child benefits, as well as contributory and non-contributory unemployment protection, that help to alleviate poverty, a key driver of child labour, and cushion the impacts of economic shocks on workers and their families;
- g. promote access to free, compulsory, quality basic education for all children, regardless of their gender, nationality, disability or other status, as well as early childhood education, where applicable, and raise awareness in communities in which child labour is prevalent of its harmful effects and the importance and benefits of schooling;
- h. raise awareness of national minimum age legislation in the recycling industry, including the distinction between acceptable youth employment and hazardous child labour, which should be banned for any person under the age of 18 years. This starts with the development of a national list of prohibited activities, including a national

hazardous child labour list, and may require establishing what light work (non-hazardous work, performed for a limited number of hours without interfering with school attendance) is permitted under national legislation, in line with Convention No. 138;

- i. reinforce the capacity of judiciary and law enforcement officials, including labour inspectors, to identify, refer, investigate, prosecute and follow up cases of child labour;
- j. improve OSH and working conditions for young people who are of legal minimum working age in their country, while pursuing prevention and withdrawal strategies for children, especially those who are engaged in hazardous work;
- k. address other underlying causes of child labour in recycling by introducing regulations limiting the practices that may incentivize the use of child labour. This includes reassessing piece-rate wage systems, recognizing the need to guarantee adequate minimum wages and promoting the operationalization of living wages in line with the conclusions of the ILO Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages, held in February 2024.

97. Employers and their organizations should:

- a. promote that their members conduct human rights due diligence in their operations, ensuring that the minimum age for employment or work is respected and that the recruitment of adult workers does not involve the recruitment of their children as family members;
- b. as set out in the ILO–IOE Child labour Guidance Tool for Business of 2015, take immediate and effective measures within their own competence to eliminate child labour;

- c. support MSMEs to comply with fundamental principles and rights at work;
 - d. take proactive steps to prevent and contribute to eliminating child labour, in coordination with governments, by engaging in negotiations on decent wages;
 - e. promote the conclusions of the ILO Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages, held in February 2024;
 - f. promote fair trade with buyers of recyclable materials with a view to preventing and eliminating child labour by improving wage and income outcomes for workers, and by incorporating clauses prohibiting the use of child labour;
 - g. collaborate with the ILO, governments and other stakeholders at International and national levels to advance knowledge-sharing and innovation on addressing child labour in recycling that can be replicated.
- 98. Workers and their organizations should:**
- a. strengthen their capacity to negotiate for adequate wages and for sustainable livelihoods and promote the operationalization of living wages, in line with the conclusions of the ILO Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages, held in February 2024;
 - b. raise social awareness through participation in campaigns and coalitions to eradicate child labour and ensure education for all children without discrimination;
 - c. support efforts to eradicate child labour in recycling and cooperate with relevant authorities and services on the prevention and elimination of child labour, including for the formulation of national lists of hazardous work forbidden to children;

- d. advocate for strengthened legal frameworks that address child labour, including the ratification of International labour standards and the development of national laws and policies in areas relevant to child labour. This includes decent work and adequate living wages that take into account both the needs of workers and their families and economic factors, in line with the conclusions of the ILO Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages (February 2024). It also includes access to free, public, quality and compulsory education for all, and universal social protection;
- e. monitor working conditions and instances of child labour in recycling, report on violations, and cooperate with labour inspectorates, law enforcement and other relevant government authority actions;
- f. educate workers and provide training on how to identify child labour practices and encourage workers to report possible cases;
- g. establish bilateral, sectoral or regional trade union co-operation agreements and alliances or coalitions with other stakeholders at International and national levels in order to advance knowledge-sharing and innovation on addressing child labour in recycling.

3.4. Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

- 99.** The fundamental rights of equality and non-discrimination in employment and occupation for all workers should be at the heart of efforts to promote decent work in recycling and the circular economy. The general acceptance of the principles of non-discrimination, equality and equal remuneration for work of equal value is reflected in the high ratification

rates of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), and the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100).

- 100.** In the recycling context, discrimination is often structural, inherent or institutionalized in social patterns, institutional structures, legal constructs and social policies that reflect and reproduce discriminatory practices and outcomes. Inequalities disproportionately affect certain groups and members of those groups, including persons belonging to one or more vulnerable groups or groups in situations of vulnerability who face exclusion and discrimination, often on multiple and intersecting grounds. These include women, migrants, persons who belong to specific ethnic minority groups, persons who suffer discrimination based on social origin, persons with disabilities, indigenous and tribal peoples and persons living with HIV.
- 101.** In order to eliminate discrimination on all grounds, including race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction and social origin, there is a need to adopt comprehensive legislation that contains explicit provisions defining and prohibiting discrimination in all aspects of employment and occupation. Moreover, proactive measures are typically necessary in order to effectively address the underlying causes of discrimination and de facto inequalities resulting from deeply entrenched discrimination and long-standing social exclusion.
- 102.** Due to its high levels of informality, recycling provides a means of earning a living for people whose opportunities have been limited by discrimination and other factors. However, workers belonging to at-risk groups are more likely to receive lower wages, poor terms and conditions of work and allocation to lower-skilled, lower-paid and/or more

hazardous tasks. They are also more likely to be exposed to violence and harassment and forced labour (see sections 4.2.5 and 3.2). At-risk groups are often under-represented in unions and other workers' organizations and may lack adequate healthcare and social protection, both of which exacerbate their vulnerability to exploitation.

- 103.** Women in recycling are likely to work in informal, lower-paid or unpaid roles or in the collection of lower-value materials, and may be exposed to health and safety hazards that particularly impact women, including their reproductive health. Women also frequently face workplace discrimination, including unequal pay for work of equal value, sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence and harassment, while taking on the bulk of unpaid care and household work. Furthermore, women often lack access to market information and may encounter cultural and legal barriers to owning property, controlling assets and accessing financial services. Nevertheless, in many places women are organizing to protect their rights and support one another to increase their incomes.
- 104.** In recycling, migrant workers usually move from rural to urban areas or across International borders. They may face elevated health risks due to their poor working and living conditions, be offered seasonal contracts and/or worse terms and conditions of employment, and be allocated higher-risk, less-skilled and lower-paid tasks compared with local workers. Workers who have been forcibly displaced face additional barriers to accessing work, particularly in the formal sector. These include lack of identification and legal documentation, restrictions on freedom of movement, restrictions of the right to work, limited rights at work, high rates of physical and mental health conditions and unpaid provision of care for other forcibly displaced family members.

- 105.** Despite the heavy consequences of discrimination, workers belonging to at-risk groups make a significant contribution to recycling as individual workers, through cooperatives and social and solidarity economy entities and as entrepreneurs.
- 106.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
- ratify and effectively implement Conventions Nos 111 and 100;
 - promote a zero-tolerance environment for discrimination by ensuring that relevant legislation, regulations and policies are in place and effectively ensure equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation, including equal remuneration for work of equal value;
 - ensure that social dialogue and other consultation processes related to recycling support the participation of groups that are vulnerable and at risk, and strengthen the capacity of at-risk groups to effectively participate through the most representative employers' and workers' organizations;
 - support the establishment and sound functioning of child and long-term care, family services and facilities for recycling workers, in order to allow both women and men to remain in employment;
 - contribute to the development of policies for the provision of adequate paid care leave and a more balanced sharing of work and family responsibilities;
 - promote access to gender-responsive and inclusive universal, comprehensive, adequate and sustainable systems of social protection with portable benefits, especially for at-risk groups. Equitable access to universal,

comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection has a significant impact on gender equality and fosters more inclusive societies;

- g. facilitate the registration and issuance of identity documents for all workers in recycling;
- h. take steps to counter social stigma and increase recognition for the contribution of recycling workers to society, economies and sustainable development;
- i. promote equitable access to opportunities in the recycling industry, including education, training and upskilling, recruitment processes, a range of financial services and start-up grants, markets, infrastructure, information technology and machinery, market information and entrepreneurial skills and advice;
- j. collaborate with social partners and, where relevant, non-governmental and community organizations, cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy organizations, academia and other relevant actors, in order to understand and address structural and systemic discrimination in recycling, and how it can be addressed;
- k. adopt targeted measures to promote decent work for at-risk groups of workers in recycling, including legislation and policies that protect the rights of migrants and refugees;
- l. invest in public waste and recycling utilities infrastructure, decent job creation and formalization programmes with a focus on women.

107. Employers and their organizations should:

- a. engage in social dialogue for the development and effective implementation of policies to prevent discrimination

at work and promote diversity and inclusion, including by ensuring that such policies cover all types of workers, irrespective of their contractual status and workrelated activities. Doing so may require employers to provide access to relevant guidance, resources, training and tools, as well as to ensure that all personnel are fully aware of these policies and that managers and supervisors have access to appropriate training to implement and comply with them;

- b. ensure that all workers enjoy equal opportunities and treatment in employment and occupation, including equal pay for work of equal value;
- c. promote the participation of women and other under-represented groups in leadership positions within their sphere of influence, including by removing barriers to their entry to and advancement in employment and careers and by combating gender stereotypes;
- d. contribute to the development of policies for the provision of adequate paid care leave and a more balanced sharing of work and family responsibilities;
- e. promote the establishment of mechanisms for the prevention, monitoring and reporting of any incident of discrimination in their operations, in consultation with representatives of groups of at-risk workers, in line with International labour standards;
- f. ensure safe, fair and effective reporting and dispute-resolution mechanisms and procedures in cases of discrimination and provide easy access to appropriate and effective remedies. There should be no interference with, or restriction of, the efforts of workers to attain appropriate remedies, whether judicial or non-judicial;

- g. take measures to ensure protection against the victimization of, or retaliation against, complainants, victims, witnesses and whistle-blowers, as well as access to legal, social, medical and administrative support measures for complainants and victims.

108. Workers' organizations should:

- a. engage in awareness-raising about rights with a view to changing attitudes and behaviours, and should extend such awareness outreach to operations and communities in which recycling activities take place;
- b. play an active role in the design, development and implementation of any prevention, protection and redressal measures in relation to discrimination;
- c. support efforts aimed at monitoring discrimination in the recycling sector, for example by establishing complaints procedures and participating in effective reporting and dispute resolution mechanisms and setting up gender committees;
- d. tackle the challenge of equality within workers' organizations and understand and address the root causes of discrimination with a view to ensuring that the membership base and leadership at all levels reflect the diversity of the recycling workforce, including the implementation of internal gender and diversity quotas, training programmes, and the creation of gender, migration and cultural diversity policies.

3.5. The right to a safe and healthy working environment

- 109.** In June 2022, the International labour Conference decided to include a safe and healthy working environment in the ILO framework of fundamental principles and rights at work, and it designated the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), as fundamental Conventions. This decision reaffirms the constitutional obligation of ILO Members to promote, respect and realize the principles contained in these two Conventions.
- 110.** The waste industry, of which recycling is a part, can be a hazardous sector in terms of fatalities, injuries and work-related ill health. Alongside agriculture, shipbreaking, construction and mining, recycling workers are exposed to a wide variety of biological, chemical, ergonomic, physical and psychosocial and radiation hazards and they often work in unsafe facilities and environments. These hazards vary significantly, depending on the type of operation, the specific work involved, the type of waste being recycled and the scale of operations or production. The ILO has developed OSH codes of practice (such as for construction) and guidelines (such as for shipbreaking), which provide guidance on protecting the OSH of workers who are involved in recycling in these industries.
- 111.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
- a. ratify and effectively enforce Conventions Nos 155 and 187;
 - b. establish or strengthen national OSH policies, programmes and systems that afford protection for all workers in

recycling, regardless of nationality, age, gender, disability or other status, and should build a national preventive OSH culture, in accordance with the relevant ILO instruments, including the fundamental Conventions;

- c. establish and strengthen the capacity of the authorities or bodies responsible for implementing national OSH systems; formulate and evaluate national OSH interventions; and establish mechanisms for intersectoral coordination among authorities and bodies relevant to the recycling industry and define their functions and responsibilities;
- d. develop and implement alcohol and drug policies and programmes that promote the prevention, reduction and management of alcohol- and drug-related problems in the workplace, without discrimination;
- e. develop new, or review and revise existing, employment and OSH laws, policies and guidance in order to include provisions on mental health in parity with those on physical health, and should integrate mental health provisions into legislation, policies and programmes on OSH in recycling;
- f. integrate measures to combat violence and harassment and its associated psychosocial risks into legislation, policies and programmes on OSH in recycling. Violence and harassment are a major threat to the OSH of workers and other persons in the world of work (see section 4.2.5);
- g. take into account the specific needs and challenges of groups who are more at risk of violations of their fundamental principles and rights at work in the development and implementation of OSH legislation, policy and programmes in recycling, including through targeted interventions;

- h. work towards greater OSH policy coherence and cooperation among occupational health agencies, environment agencies and other competent institutions with regard to regulation and enforcement. This includes ensuring that migrant workers who report OSH concerns are not targeted by immigration departments as a result;
- i. establish or reinforce reporting systems for the recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases, and should collect and analyse data (disaggregated by location, job category, sector, gender, migrant status, nationality and age), including by progressively developing procedures for including MSMEs and social and solidarity entities in the recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases;
- j. ensure that the enforcement of OSH laws and regulations is supported by an adequate and appropriate system of inspection and provides for adequate penalties for violations of the relevant laws and regulations;
- k. provide support to victims where violations of OSH laws and regulations have occurred;
- l. ensure the provision of adequate OSH services for all waste and recycling workers;
- m. ensure that comprehensive social protection schemes include coverage for recycling workers affected by occupational accidents and diseases, and extend portable employment injury protection to all workers, including migrant workers, where gaps in coverage exist;
- n. establish and maintain an education and training system adapted to the needs of the recycling industry and specific recycling value chains, with special attention to raising OSH-related knowledge and skills;

- o. support the progressive improvement of OSH conditions in recycling facilities and among MSMEs and cooperatives, thereby contributing to the promotion of sustainable enterprise development. This may involve, for example, providing education, training, information, instruction and advice and raising public awareness, as well as making investments in technology development and technology transfers in order to eliminate, control or mitigate risks;
- p. establish or reinforce classification systems for hazardous substances encountered or used in recycling, including establishing criteria for the importation, classification, packaging and labelling of hazardous substances, in accordance with the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals;
- q. monitor biological hazards and chemicals encountered in the industry, including the introduction of new substances or materials, as well as their effect on the health of workers and the environment. This includes determining safe levels of exposure of recycling workers to chemical substances and physical and biological agents, as well as promoting awareness and monitoring;
- r. address OSH issues related to climate change in order to help ensure safe and healthy work in the recycling industry. Regulations to protect workers from heat stress, such as setting the maximum temperatures to which workers may be exposed and making investments in infrastructure and universal and adequate social protection systems, are important policy responses to heat stress;
- s. ensure adequate testing and oversight of new and existing recycling and waste management technologies;

- t. establish confidential reporting channels and protection systems for workers who report OSH violations.

112. Employers' organizations should:

- a. promote that the workplaces, machinery, equipment and processes under their control are safe and without risk to health; that the chemical, physical and biological substances and agents under their control are without risk to health when the appropriate measures of protection are taken; and that, where necessary, adequate protective clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE) are provided to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, risk of accidents or adverse effects on health;
- b. establish and operate inclusive and gender-responsive OSH management systems to cover:
 - i. OSH policies, which should be specific to their enterprises and comply with national laws and regulations;
 - ii. responsibility and accountability, competence requirements and training, documentation and record-keeping;
 - iii. hazard identification and risk assessment, taking into account the specific risks to different kinds of workers and a gender perspective;
 - iv. planning and implementation of OSH controls, including preventive measures;
 - v. environmental management systems;
 - vi. monitoring, evaluation and the continuous improvement of OSH performance with the objective of lowering the incidence of fatalities, injuries and work-related ill health. The

establishment of a safety culture throughout all levels of the enterprise should be prioritized, with managers demonstrating commitment to the prevention of workplace accidents, injuries and diseases.

- c. establish workplace OSH committees with the participation of workers and/or their representatives, in accordance with national law and practice and/or collective bargaining agreements;
- d. conduct health surveillance and workspace inspections in order to monitor, and ensure the functioning of, measures taken to prevent occupational accidents and diseases;
- e. provide access to approved medical practitioners for the purpose of undertaking periodic medical examinations;
- f. ensure that all relevant OSH information is provided to workers prior to work commencing and as work progresses, including by providing relevant information, instruction and training for all workers, creating information resources in common areas and ensuring that all hazard warning signage and standard operating procedures are adequate, clearly visible and written in languages that workers understand;
- g. ensure that risk control measures and safety equipment are kept up to date, implemented and monitored;
- h. ensure that OSH measures do not involve any expenditure for workers;
- i. provide PPE, at no cost, to all workers, including all temporary, casual and seasonal workers, and effectively training workers on OSH and the use of PPE, which should comply with the relevant national standards and criteria approved or recognized by the competent au-

thority and should take into account the specific needs of women and all body sizes, upon request;

- j. when directly recruiting migrant workers, make sure that all necessary arrangements are in place to ensure that workers are provided with transport of an adequate quality to, and sanitary conditions at, the place of employment, as well as access to medical assistance, food and welfare facilities or resting facilities, as appropriate;
- k. ensure that all workers have access to adequate shaded areas; welfare facilities, including adequate and secure sanitary facilities; clean drinking water; food services; first aid and medical care; temporary shelter to be used during breaks; breastfeeding facilities in accordance with national legislation (see section 4.2.4). The establishment of such facilities should be adapted to the workplace and, where appropriate, should be replaced by agreed alternative measures through social dialogue;
- l. effectively implement emergency response systems based on national legislation to enable appropriate intervention in cases of emergencies to reduce exposure to hazards.

113. Workers' organizations should:

- a. cooperate with the employer in the field of OSH at the level of the undertaking;
- b. participate actively in OSH committees, where they exist, including in the design of measures to eliminate and prevent risks at the enterprise level;
- c. raise OSH awareness among recycling workers and local communities, including with regard to precautionary measures and the appropriate use of PPE, and ensure their participation in efforts to comply with OSH policies

and legislation and in the application and review of OSH measures.

- d. promote OSH trainings and negotiate OSH improvements for workers at the workplace.

► 4. Social and labour protection

4.1. Universal social protection

- 114.** Universal access to adequate, comprehensive and sustainable social protection, anchored in the International human rights framework and International labour standards, is essential for social justice, decent work and inclusive and sustainable growth and development. Social protection is a crucial factor for eradicating poverty, inequalities and social exclusion, strengthening resilience to crises and economic shocks, and contributing to sustainable enterprises and robust, wellfunctioning economies.
- 115.** Today, nearly half of the world's population are not covered by social protection at all and many more people are covered only partially. Recycling workers in the informal economy are disproportionately affected by inadequate access to social protection.
- 116.** Significant and concerted efforts are needed in order to guarantee universal access to comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection for all, including for workers in recycling, regardless of gender, nationality, age, disability or other status. Such efforts should focus on building social protection systems, in line with the relevant ILO instruments such as those specifying general provisions and minimum standards for social security benefits (including medical care,

sickness, unemployment, old-age, employment injury, family, maternity, invalidity and survivors' benefits), comprised of nationally defined floors that guarantee at least essential healthcare and basic income security and progressively providing higher levels of protection.

117. Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:

- a. ratify and implement the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), and other relevant International labour standards in law and practice. Given the high number of migrant workers in the recycling sector, it should be noted that in addition to Convention No. 102, the Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation) Convention, 1925 (No. 19), the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), the Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118), the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), the Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982 (No. 157), the Maintenance of Social Security Rights Recommendation, 1983 (No. 167), the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), and the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205), are particularly relevant instruments for extending social protection to migrants;
- b. analyse and identify the specific barriers faced by recycling workers in accessing social protection, bearing in mind the decent work deficits and the specific contexts and value chains of recycling;
- c. design and implement adequate legal frameworks and effective implementation mechanisms to guarantee the right to social security for all recycling workers by progressively building and maintaining nationally

sustainable social protection systems, so that everyone in both the formal and informal economy has access to comprehensive, adequate and sustainable protection over the life cycle, in line with ILO standards; promote and ensure the participation of representative organizations of employers and workers in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social protection policies and schemes in order to ensure that they adequately reflect the realities and needs of recycling workers;

- d. close gaps in effective protection through well-designed schemes, considering a mix of contributory and tax-financed mechanisms. Contributory schemes may require adjustments or the introduction of greater administrative flexibility and contribution modalities, including government subsidies, and may be complemented by tax-financed schemes for certain categories of workers or persons who do not have the capacity to contribute;
- e. coordinate and link policies to extend social protection, such as employment, enterprise, skills development and tax policies, with strategies to promote decent work and formalization in recycling;
- f. develop the efficient and reliable administration of programmes and delivery systems, including through initiatives to:
 - i. make social protection accessible for recycling workers who reside in remote areas, including by setting up mobile offices and single-window services and using digital technologies;
 - ii. simplify processes by reducing application or validation requirements for benefits;
 - iii. introduce collective registration processes in collaboration with recycling workers' organizations

(trade unions, cooperatives or other social and solidarity entities);

- g. encourage compliance with legislation and strengthen the enforcement of relevant legislation, including by facilitating inspections in recycling enterprises, at dumpsites and in the circular economy at large, and training labour inspectors to identify, address and support compliance with legislation;
- h. facilitate the acquisition and maintenance, including the portability, of social security entitlements, with a view to facilitating job transitions for all workers, including persons in temporary employment, part-time employment and self-employment, as well as migrant workers, including through bilateral and multilateral labour and social security agreements, without jeopardizing their access to social protection. This includes bilateral discussions on the portability of social protection entitlements in situations of cross-border displacement, such as those resulting from the transition to environmentally sustainable economies and climate-change impacts;
- i. ensure access to universal childcare services, medical care, maternity protection and the care of elderly persons and people with disabilities in order to strengthen the labour, social and economic protection of recycling workers and their families. This includes prescribing by law a period of maternity leave of at least 14 weeks and providing for medical care and income security during maternity-related leave periods and health protection at work during pregnancy and nursing periods in respect of work prejudicial to the health of the mother or child, covering all or some of the contingencies enumerated in the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183). Particular attention should be paid to ensuring

protection from discrimination based on pregnancy, maternity and family responsibilities. In addition, promoting paternity and parental leaves for fathers offers an important opportunity for both parents to contribute to child development and encourages the equal sharing of care responsibilities between women and men, in accordance with national laws and regulations. Well-managed childcare centres should be available and adapted to working hours and at a safe distance from dangerous and hazardous areas;

- j. ensure that recycling workers are entitled to adequate compensation in the event of occupational injury or disease and to survivors' and dependants' benefits in the form of a periodical payment. They should have access to appropriate services for rehabilitation and return to work;
- k. identify and pay particular attention to non-discrimination in the provision of social protection, including in terms of gender equality and the rights of people who belong to groups that are more at risk of violations of their fundamental principles and rights at work (see section 3.4).

118. Employers' organizations should:

- a. ensure compliance with social security legislation and, where appropriate, take further steps to establish additional measures for the protection of workers and their families through collective agreements or through other measures taken by direct agreement between the parties concerned;
- b. ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities to register workers and their obligations in terms of benefits and payment of contributions, and raise awareness so that workers are equally informed of their rights and obligations;

- c. fulfil their duties with regard to employment injury, prevention and protection, ensure that workers receive the necessary first aid and emergency treatment, and ensure that victims have access to the medical care and pharmaceutical supplies, rehabilitation or additional assistance that may be needed, as well as income security in case of temporary and permanent incapacity to work, as well as survivors' pensions for their dependants in case of death, in accordance with national laws and regulations;
- d. advance the effective implementation through social dialogue of applicable national laws and regulations on maternity protection and paternity leave, nursing breaks during working hours and access to childcare services.

119. Workers and their organizations should:

- a. raise their members' awareness of their rights and obligations with regard to social security schemes and encourage their registration and enrolment in such schemes, when necessary;
- b. promote the extension of social security to recycling workers through social dialogue.

4.2. Conditions of work

- 120.** Improving the conditions of work in the recycling industry is essential for reducing poverty, achieving decent work, stimulating economic growth, improving livelihoods and ensuring a just transition to the circular economy. In order to achieve these objectives, the specific challenges faced by recycling workers with regard to their terms of employment and conditions of work require particular attention.

- 121.** The organizational and structural characteristics of recycling work, such as long working hours, night work, unpredictable hours and low pay, mean that workers with family responsibilities face particular challenges. Policies and action to advance labour protection should take into account the contexts of specific recycling operations and value chains and the barriers faced by workers therein, in particular workers from groups who are disadvantaged in the labour market and especially vulnerable to violations of their rights at work.

4.2.1. Terms of employment

- 122.** Recycling workers are a heterogeneous group who are employed under different working arrangements and modalities. A common characteristic of recycling in the informal economy is the absence of a direct employment relationship between the workers concerned and the employer for whom they perform work.
- 123.** The terms of employment for waged workers vary considerably. Work arrangements are formed with waste collectors, middle agents, self-employed workers, recycling plants, cooperatives and other social and solidarity entities, as well as state-owned and private companies. While some workers are employed as permanent or full-time workers, many other workers are fixed-term contract, seasonal or casual workers who are hired on a temporary basis and usually paid on a per-day, per-task or piece-rate basis.
- 124.** The absence of direct employment relationships and the variation in the terms of employment for waged workers mean that the majority of recycling workers, including many migrant workers, lack access to adequate social and labour protection. This makes it important to advance decent work and ensure that various employment arrangements are

not used as a way to circumvent labour obligations and responsibilities, and that, through appropriate regulatory frameworks, they are conducive to full, productive and freely chosen employment.

- 125.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
- a. strengthen regulatory frameworks to cover all forms of employment that are prevalent in the sector;
 - b. strengthen the enforcement of laws and regulations in practice in order to ensure that different forms of work are used for the specific legal purpose for which they are intended, as well as to afford adequate labour and social protection with a view to addressing decent work deficits;
 - c. ensure that the same rights and minimum standards that are applicable to national recycling workers are also extended to migrant workers and refugees;
 - d. provide access to technical assistance and incentives to support enterprises to adapt their operations in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner with creation of decent work.

4.2.2. Hours of work

- 126.** For recycling workers, working hours can be excessive due to such factors as the irregularity of recycling work in some value chains, low incomes or the requirements of the job. Some waste pickers work at night, while many work alone and in isolation.
- 127.** Long working hours and the physically strenuous nature of some recycling work may lead to fatigue. Fatigue may be a contributing factor to dangerous occurrences or serious

accidents, because workers may not be alert or able to quickly respond to changing circumstances. In addition, prolonged fatigue may lead to long-term health problems and increased gender-related health risks.

- 128.** The regulation of working hours is essential for improving the health, work-life balance and OSH conditions of recycling workers and for promoting sustainable enterprises in the sector. It should include the establishment of maximum numbers of hours worked per day and per week, as well as regulations regarding working during night hours and ensuring sufficient uninterrupted rest periods, irrespective of the employment relationship and in accordance with national legislation.
- 129.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
- ensure that the regulations concerning hours of work, weekly rest and holidays with pay take into account the particularities of recycling and are in accordance with the Forty-Hour Week Convention, 1935 (No. 47), the Reduction of Hours of Work Recommendation, 1962 (No. 116), and the Holidays with Pay Convention (Revised), 1970 (No. 132);
 - determine the circumstances and limits within which exceptions to the normal hours of work may be permitted permanently, temporarily or periodically, taking into account the guidance provided in Recommendation No. 116;
 - take appropriate measures to ensure the proper administration of the regulations concerning hours of work by means of adequate inspections or through tripartite monitoring systems;
 - ensure the participation of employers' and workers'

organizations in social dialogue on the formulation and enforcement of regulations concerning hours of work.

130. Employers and their organizations should:

- a. arrange working hours, in accordance with national laws and regulations, or as approved by labour inspectorates or collective agreements, where applicable, to include:
 - i. short breaks during working hours, especially when the work is strenuous, dangerous or monotonous, in order to enable workers to recover their vigilance and physical fitness;
 - ii. sufficient breaks for meals, taking into account the customs of workers working in a particular country or region;
 - iii. daily or nightly rest of not less than eight consecutive hours within a 24-hour period;
 - iv. at least one full calendar day of rest per working week.
- b. establish, in consultation with workers' organizations and in accordance with the applicable regulations, the circumstances and limits in which exceptions to normal hours of work may be permitted permanently, temporarily or periodically, as well as the rate of pay for any hours in excess of the regular hours of work, unless these are taken into account in fixing remuneration in accordance with custom;
- c. remunerate overtime work and night shifts at a higher rate or at higher rates than normal hours of work in accordance with national legislation and relevant collective bargaining agreements;
- d. when payment is on a task or piece-rate basis, engage in social dialogue, including in collective bargaining, with a

view to concluding a collective agreement, when appropriate, on the setting of these rates in relation to working time in order to ensure that workers earn a decent wage, without working excessively long hours per day, per week or within any collectively agreed reference period;

- e. keep a record, in a form acceptable to the competent authority, of the hours of work, wages and overtime for each worker and regularly provide this information in the form of a wage slip when paying each worker;
- f. consult workers and their representatives on how night work can be avoided and, if not, how it can best be adapted to the enterprise and its workers, and design rotating shift patterns to minimize the harmful impacts on health of night work in accordance with national legislation and relevant collective bargaining agreements;
- g. take the necessary measures to maintain the same level of protection against occupational hazards for night work as that provided for day work, including by providing lighting, welfare facilities and suitable emergency systems, while avoiding the isolation of workers as far as possible;
- h. take appropriate measures for the protection of workers who work alone or in isolation, including by conducting risk assessments for those who work alone or in isolation, in consultation with workers and their representatives, in order to ensure that suitable welfare, emergency or emergency contact arrangements are in place;
- i. carry out a fatigue risk assessment and write a fatigue management plan for all operations, in accordance with national laws if national laws so prescribe;

- j. enable recycling workers to exercise their right to annual leave with pay after a period of continuous service with the same employer, in accordance with Convention No. 132.

131. Workers and their organizations should:

- a. raise the awareness of workers in recycling regarding their rights and other issues with respect to hours of work, lone working, fatigue, night work, weekly rest and holidays with pay;
- b. participate actively in social dialogue, including collective bargaining;
- c. monitor working hours in recycling, report on violations, and cooperate with labour inspectors or other relevant government authorities to ensure compliance with labour law.

4.2.3. Decent wages and incomes

- 132.** The earnings of recycling workers vary widely by region, by type of work, by materials collected, by location in the recycling pyramid and by gender. Some recycling workers earn wages paid by their employers; others are own-account workers who earn incomes for example by selling recyclables. The concept of income is broader than the concept of wages and typically includes all receipts that are received by a household or its members, not just their wages. Income from recycling can be low and unpredictable due to price fluctuations, the lack of transparency on prices and variable access to recyclable materials.
- 133.** Achieving decent wages and incomes is an important means of reducing poverty and inequalities. Key International labour standards include the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131), Convention No. 100 and the Protection

of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95). Ensuring that recycling workers are covered by minimum wage legislation and that minimum wages are set at adequate levels is of pivotal importance. Collective bargaining systems and other relevant measures for adequate earnings and equal pay for work of equal value are instrumental for achieving this, as well as for ensuring just transition toward environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all.

134. Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:

- a. promote decent work that delivers a decent income, with a particular emphasis on workers in the informal economy;
- b. ratify Conventions Nos 131, 100 and 95 and implement them effectively in law and practice;
- c. adopt adequate minimum wages, whether statutory or negotiated. This includes setting a minimum wage level that takes into consideration the needs of workers and their families as well as economic factors; creating and maintaining the machinery for fixing and adjusting minimum wage rates at appropriate intervals in order to reflect changes in the cost of living and other factors; ensuring full consultation with social partners when setting and adjusting minimum wage rates; and implementing appropriate measures to ensure the effective application of minimum wages in recycling;
- d. use robust and reliable information and data for evidence-based wage-setting and periodic adjustments, including information and data on the needs of workers and their families, in particular the general level of wages in the country, the cost of living, social security benefits and the relative living standards of other social groups, as well as information and data on economic factors,

such as the requirements of economic development, the levels of productivity and attaining and maintaining a high level of employment;

- e. develop sustainable strategies to operationalize living wages based on the conclusions of the ILO Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages, held in February 2024;
- f. take measures to eliminate discrimination and to promote and ensure equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of equal remuneration for work of equal value, with the aim of closing the gender pay gap and ending wage discrimination, taking as a basis the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;
- g. take all practicable steps to ensure the use of fair piece-rate or output-based payment systems, where they exist, as well as the adequacy and cash value of any in-kind payments, and that workers are paid at least the equivalent of the minimum wage, irrespective of the pay system used;
- h. take all necessary measures to limit deductions from wages, to the extent deemed necessary, in order to safeguard the maintenance of workers and their families, in accordance with Convention No. 95, which allows for the partial payment of wages in the form of in-kind allowances in industries or occupations in which such payment is customary or desirable, provided that: (i) such allowances are appropriate for personal use and benefit the worker and his or her family; and (ii) the value attributed to such allowances is fair and reasonable;
- i. take into account and address the root causes of low productivity, informality, and low pay and low incomes in recycling;

- j. identify factors and conditions that are key for wage and income growth in recycling, including productivity growth and factors that ensure the coupling of productivity growth with wages and income growth;
- k. adopt measures to upgrade the skills of employers and workers, increase the sustainable productivity of low-productivity enterprises, foster the transition to formality and encourage sustainable practices.

135. Employers' organizations should:

- a. participate directly and on an equal footing in the fixing and operation of adequate minimum wages, whether statutory or negotiated, and should engage in collective bargaining over wages, including living wages, with a view to setting decent wages that take into account the needs of sustainable enterprises, as well as the needs of workers and their families, in order to afford them a decent standard of living;
- b. ensure that workers receive at least the minimum wage specified in collective bargaining agreements, or in the applicable national laws or regulations if there is no applicable collective bargaining agreement;
- c. ensure the adequate periodicity of the payment of wages;
- d. bring the details of wage conditions to the attention of workers, particularly with regard to the rates of wages payable, the method of calculation, the periodicity and place of payment and the conditions under which deductions may be made, and maintain relevant records.

136. Workers and their organizations should:

- a. participate directly in negotiations for adequate wages and for sustainable livelihoods and promote the opera-

tionalization of living wages in line with the conclusions of the ILO Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages, held in February 2024, and advocate for decent incomes and equal pay for work of equal value.

4.2.4. Welfare and well-being facilities

- 137.** Welfare and well-being facilities comprise feeding facilities, rest facilities, recreation facilities excluding holiday facilities, and transportation facilities to and from work where ordinary public transport is inadequate or impracticable. The Welfare Facilities Recommendation, 1956 (No. 102) defines key principles and standards for workplace facilities as part of OSH considerations. The Workers' Housing Recommendation, 1961 (No. 115) provides guidance for the housing of workers in the recycling sector, including those who are self-employed and aged, retired or physically handicapped persons. Measures to improve workers' welfare and well-being facilities should complement OSH measures in order to ensure that workers are safe, healthy, satisfied and engaged at work.
- 138.** The provision of welfare and well-being facilities in recycling varies considerably, but conditions are generally better for workers in formal employment at large establishments than for workers in informal enterprises and own-account workers on streets and dumpsites where facilities are often non-existent. Most informal workers in recycling do not have access to sufficient welfare and well-being facilities. For some recycling workers, living and working conditions are inseparable.
- 139.** There are close links between welfare and well-being facilities, the safety and health of workers and productivity. Adequate facilities and accommodations for all categories

of recycling workers, with appropriate ventilation, heating, sanitary facilities and potable water, are therefore essential.

140. Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:

- a. develop national policies to ensure the provision and maintenance of adequate housing and welfare facilities that guarantee decent living and working conditions for recycling workers. Minimum standards should be established, including with regard to the minimum space per person or per family; the supply of potable water; the provision of food; medical services; waste removal; sanitary and washing facilities; privacy; ventilation; and protection against heat, cold, damp, noise and fire;
- b. provide or encourage the provision of recreation facilities in a location convenient and accessible to workers;
- c. establish public services to improve the working and living conditions of workers, including the provision of health services, education, recreation, childcare and other social services and public transport.

141. Employers and their organizations should:

- a. promote reasonable access to clean and well-maintained facilities, in accordance with national legislation. These should be constructed and installed in compliance with the requirements of the competent authority, should be accessible to both women and men and fully accessible to persons with disabilities, should be adapted to the workplace and, where appropriate, should be replaced by agreed alternative measures through social dialogue:
 - i. an adequate supply of wholesome drinking water of suitable temperature;

- ii. sufficient sanitary, menstrual health and washing facilities or showers, as appropriate;
- iii. facilities for taking meals;
- iv. temporary shelter to be used during breaks;
- v. breastfeeding facilities;
- vi. accommodation for workers away from their homes;
- b. provide welfare facilities and recreational facilities, where appropriate, as determined through consultation with representative organizations of workers. These facilities should be provided with a view to avoiding the physical and psychological discomfort caused, in particular, by a crowded, unsafe, unhealthy and unstable living environment and a lack of privacy;
- c. provide or arrange, whenever possible, for adequate transport in good sanitary conditions, which are not overcrowded, to and from the workplace, where transport is unavailable or inadequate for the purposes required by workers.

142. Workers and their organizations should:

- a. engage actively in social dialogue;
- b. engage in awareness campaigns to promote the provision of adequate welfare facilities and accommodation for workers, in accordance with national standards established by the competent authority;
- c. monitor welfare and well-being facilities in recycling, report on violations, and cooperate with labour inspectors or other relevant government authorities to ensure compliance with labour law.

4.2.5. Violence and harassment at work

- 143.** Among waste and recycling workers, unorganized and informal waste pickers working on landfill sites and the streets are especially exposed to violence and harassment. Perpetrators may include local officials, service users, the public, other workers, family members, criminals or powerful vested interests. Violence and harassment against waste pickers takes various forms, including verbal and physical abuse, violent arrests, evictions, immigration status investigations, arguments over prices, transactional sex in exchange for protection or access to recyclable materials and recycling processes, rape, violent enforcement of gendered divisions of labour, competition over access to recyclable materials, intimate partner violence, theft, assault and murder.
- 144.** Discrimination-based violence and harassment may be rooted in harmful social norms based on gender or racial stereotypes or negative attitudes or stigmas about disabilities, skin colour or the way a worker looks (see section 3.4). Workers who are at a disadvantage in the labour market often have to work in jobs that are dirty, degrading and dangerous, which can reinforce discrimination, stigma and low social status. Power imbalances can mean that gender-based violence and harassment is particularly pronounced for women and non-binary people in the informal recycling economy.
- 145.** Effectively preventing and addressing violence and harassment at work is an essential part of ensuring equality and non-discrimination (see section 3.4) as well as of OSH management systems (see section 3.5) and should be an integral part of the risk assessment and management process for creating a world of work free from violence and harassment. The responsibility for prohibiting and preventing violence and harassment at work lies with the employer.

146. Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:

- a. ratify and implement in law and practice the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), taking into account the guidance in the Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206);
- b. adopt, monitor and enforce laws and regulations to define and prohibit violence and harassment in the world of work, including gender-based violence and harassment;
- c. ensure easy access to appropriate and effective remedies and safe, fair and effective reporting and dispute-resolution mechanisms and procedures in cases of violence and harassment in the world of work, such as ombudsmen and other protection against the victimization of or retaliation against complainants, victims, witnesses and whistle-blowers and legal, social, medical and administrative support measures for complainants and victims;
- d. ensure that workers have the right to remove themselves from a work situation which they have reasonable justification to believe presents an imminent and serious danger to life, health or safety due to violence and harassment, without suffering retaliation or other undue consequences, including loss of regular migration status and the duty to inform management;
- e. ensure that labour inspectorates and other relevant authorities have been adequately trained to deal with violence and harassment in the world of work;
- f. ensure that employers and workers and their organizations, as well as the relevant authorities, are provided with guidance, resources, training or other tools, in accessible formats, as appropriate, on violence and harassment in the world of work, including on gender-based violence and

harassment, with provisions for funding, development, implementation and dissemination of guidance, training and awareness-raising, as appropriate;

- g. hold perpetrators of violence and harassment in the world of work accountable and provide them with counselling or other measures, where appropriate, with a view to preventing the recurrence of violence and harassment and facilitating their reintegration into work, where appropriate.

147. Employers' organizations should:

- a. inform themselves about applicable International instruments, national laws and regulations and take appropriate steps to take into account violence and harassment and associated psychosocial risks in the management of OSH conditions;
- b. identify hazards and assess the risks of violence and harassment, with the participation of workers and their representatives, paying particular attention to the hazards and risks arising from working conditions and arrangements, work organization and human resource management, discrimination, the abuse of power relations and the gender, cultural and social norms that support violence and harassment;
- c. engage in formulating and implementing, in consultation with workers and their representatives, a workplace policy on violence and harassment that:
 - i. states that violence and harassment will not be tolerated;
 - ii. specifies the rights and responsibilities of workers and employers;

- iii. contains information on complaint and investigation procedures;
- iv. specifies the right to privacy of individuals and confidentiality, while balancing the right of workers to be made aware of all hazards;
- iv. includes measures to protect complainants, victims, witnesses and whistle-blowers against victimization or retaliation;
- v. establish violence and harassment measures to mitigate, control and prevent the risk of work-related violence and harassment.

148. Workers' organizations should:

- a. take part in the design, implementation and monitoring of workplace policies on violence and harassment;
- b. adhere to and respect the rules adopted by employers, refrain from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment, and cooperate and contribute to the awareness of the risks and the prevention of violence and harassment;
- c. increase their efforts through organizing, advocacy and representation of workers, particularly those in the most exploited, isolated and precarious work situations;
- d. ensure the provision of professional and psychosocial support for victims of violence and harassment at work;
- e. monitor violence and harassment at work in recycling, report on violations, and cooperate with labour inspectors or other relevant government authorities to ensure compliance with labour law.

► 5. Social dialogue and tripartism

- 149.** Social dialogue is crucial for forging a consensus on pathways towards decent work in recycling and the circular economy. Strong, independent and effective labour administrations and inspectorates as well as employers' and workers' organizations are a prerequisite for fostering social dialogue, promoting decent work in recycling, and ensuring a just transition to the broader circular economy.

5.1. Social dialogue

- 150.** Social dialogue should be based on freedom of association, should be conducted in good faith and, where applicable under the relevant ILO Conventions, should include the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining or, where appropriate, a recourse to consultations for all workers, regardless of their migration status.
- 151.** Many employers and workers in recycling face legislative, administrative and many other barriers in forming or joining organizations of their choice. Promoting their inclusion in social dialogue processes at all levels and removing the barriers that prevent them from doing so is key to ensuring that the collective voice of employers and workers in recycling is heard in processes that directly affect their work and life. Concerted and targeted action is needed to engage recycling workers in the informal economy in social dialogue processes, including those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, in order to ensure that no one is left behind.

- 152.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
- a. actively promote and engage in social dialogue when implementing the recommendations included in these guidelines, at all stages from policy design to implementation and evaluation and at all levels from global, regional, national, sectoral and local to enterprise levels, in line with applicable International labour standards;
 - b. develop and implement integrated policies to promote the establishment, growth and effective functioning of the organizations of employers and workers in recycling, to ensure their participatory voice and contribution to socio-economic development and a just transition to environmental sustainability and the circular economy. These policies should respond to the particular challenges of recycling and take full account of the legal and practical implications of outsourced, temporary and migrant workers, workers in the informal economy and own-account workers;
 - c. eliminate legal barriers to the full application of the rights of workers to form and join organizations of their own choosing, including by ensuring that legislation establishing machinery to encourage and promote such organizations exists; by removing requirements regarding minimum membership, minimum levels of education and minimum funds or residency requirements; and by addressing challenges that in practice impede the implementation of the legislation, including through financial or material assistance, education and training programmes, campaigns on rights, awareness-raising with respect to the particular needs of certain categories or groups of workers, such as migrant and women workers, mass media initiatives, local stakeholder seminars, field visits and school curricula;

- d. eliminate legal barriers to the full application of the rights of employers to form and join organizations of their own choosing, including by ensuring that legislation establishing machinery to encourage and promote such organizations exist;
- e. establish new, or strengthen existing, social dialogue mechanisms and take appropriate measures to ensure that employers' and workers' organizations are genuinely involved in social dialogue at all levels. Such action includes ensuring that employers and workers are not only able, through organizations of their own choosing, to contribute to externally initiated proposals, but are also able to participate actively and propose measures, programmes and activities that shape their socio-economic situation. Participation extends beyond mere consultation and should lead to concrete ownership of initiatives by and for recycling workers. The involvement of women and young people in negotiations and other decision-making bodies and processes should also be encouraged;
- f. promote the establishment and growth of cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy entities by creating a level playing field in terms of the legal and administrative framework governing their formation and operation, consistent with the guidance provided in Recommendation No. 193. Empowering entrepreneurs, employers and workers in different recycling value chains and operations to organize into formal associations, such as social and solidarity economy entities and other membership-based organizations, including women- and youth-led organizations and networks, may increase their capacity to effectively engage in industrial relations and contribute to improved productivity, working conditions and decent work;

- g. provide leaders of such organizations with the appropriate education and training to enable them to adequately manage the activities of their organizations, including by advocating on behalf of and representing their members in social dialogue processes.

153. Employers and their organizations should:

- a. increase outreach and engagement in recycling and develop or update services, according to the changing needs of existing and new members in the emerging circular economy;
- b. engage in social dialogue, in all its forms, with governments and/or with workers and their organizations;
- c. advocate for the removal of any practical barriers that impede the rights of employers and workers to form or join organizations of their own choosing;
- d. promote sound workplace cooperation and the establishment of independent mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of disputes between managers and workers;
- e. promote the active participation of their members in social dialogue at all levels in order to seize opportunities and address challenges, including for MSMEs;
- f. form networks and partnerships to advocate for better governance at all levels.

154. Workers' organizations should:

- a. adopt innovative and inclusive organizing techniques and strategies to expand membership to informal recycling workers. This includes technologies to connect with and organize workers across diverse workspaces, value chains, sectors and countries;

- b. take measures to ensure and strengthen the participation of all workers in trade unions, including migrant workers, in particular women and young people and other groups of workers who are disadvantaged in the labour market;
- c. engage in social dialogue with employers and their organizations in order to avoid disputes and, should disputes arise, to reach fair settlements by means of conciliation;
- d. strengthen relationships and build alliances with representative collectives of workers, such as informal waste pickers and home-based workers at the national and global level;
- e. consider best practices from other industries that actively promote effective social dialogue.

5.2. Strengthening institutional capacity

- 155.** Institutions of work ensure that workers are afforded freedom and dignity, economic security and equal opportunity, but structural barriers such as insufficient resources and/or their inefficient allocation, fragmentation, and informality, may limit their effectiveness. These institutions are the building blocks of just societies and include laws, regulations, employment contracts, employers' and workers' organizations, collective agreements, labour administration and inspection systems and social security institutions. When well-designed and operational, they also help labour markets and economies perform better.
- 156.** It is critically important to strengthen the capacities of labour administrations and inspectorates, as well as of employers' and workers' organizations, to enforce labour laws and ratified International labour standards and to better serve the

needs and protect the rights of all those working and operating in recycling and other loops of the circular economy. Such capacity strengthening should focus on the institutional level and include the capacity for cooperation between different actors within and between countries, and at the International, regional, national, sectoral and local levels.

5.2.1. Labour administration and inspection

- 157.** Labour administration systems comprise all public administration bodies responsible for and engaged in labour administration, whether they are ministerial departments or public agencies, including parastatal and regional or local agencies or any other form of decentralized administration, and any institutional framework for the coordination of the activities of such bodies and for consultation with and participation by employers and workers and their organizations.
- 158.** Labour administration and its services are critical for ensuring the promotion and respect of fundamental principles and rights at work and for the creation of a conducive environment in which sustainable enterprises can operate. labour administration can also play a crucial role in making decent work in recycling a priority at the International and regional levels and within the broader government agenda on waste management, recycling and the circular economy.
- 159.** Furthermore, well-funded and well-functioning labour inspection institutions are a mechanism of crucial importance for ensuring the effective enforcement of labour legislation and the protection of workers in recycling, and they contribute to promoting productivity at work.
- 160.** Several ILO Conventions define the commitments of governments to maintaining effective labour administrations and labour inspectorates, including Convention No. 81 and the

Protocol thereto of 1995 and accompanying Recommendation No. 81; the Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88); and the labour Administration Convention (No. 150) and Recommendation (No. 158), 1978. These instruments define key functions, while providing the flexibility for governments to design labour administration and inspection systems that are appropriate to national socioeconomic context, and also affirm key principles for their operation, including social dialogue and cooperation and coordination among different actors.

- 161.** Governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
- a. develop an integrated strategy for decent work in recycling, including to provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities of different administrations and agencies, including coordinating and supervisory roles;
 - b. promote efficient bureaucracies that are corruption- and harassment-free, are transparent and consistent in the application of rules and regulations, protect and enforce contractual obligations and respect the rights of employers and workers;
 - c. establish and maintain well-functioning labour administrations that are adequately resourced and able to exercise their powers and perform their functions. This includes the capacity and mandate to:
 - i. prepare, administrate, coordinate, check and review national labour policies;
 - ii. prepare, develop, adopt, review and enforce labour standards, including relevant laws and regulations;
 - iii. promote labour relations;
 - iv. promote employment (including equal opportunities), vocational guidance and vocational training;

- v. conduct research into and study of conditions of work and employment, including factfinding and collection and processing of statistical data;
 - vi. contribute to the preparation of national policy relating to International labour affairs;
 - vii. discharge other typical functions, including those related to minimum wage-fixing, social security and OSH;
- d. provide the necessary financial, human and technical resources for labour administrations to conduct research and studies on labour matters in recycling, including statistical research, planning services and the monitoring and evaluation of labour policies;
- e. mandate labour administrations to prepare and implement policies and regulatory frameworks to govern the changing nature and amount of recycling and other work in the circular economy arising from technological advances;
- f. adapt and redesign policies in order to ensure that labour administration services cover all categories of workers and adequately address their specific needs with respect to collective labour relations and decent work. This includes progressively extending services to workers in the informal economy to support their formalization and in non-standard forms of employment, strengthening capacity for social dialogue with the most representative organizations of employers and workers, and designing strategic policies and approaches for targeting groups that are more at risk of decent work deficits and human rights abuses, including migrant workers;

- g. establish and maintain well-functioning labour inspection institutions, ensuring that labour inspectors are adequately resourced and able to exercise their powers and perform their functions. This includes the capacity to:
 - i. ensure the right of free entry of inspectors to workplaces and to order measures with immediate executory force to eliminate imminent dangers to the OSH of workers;
 - ii. enforce sufficiently dissuasive sanctions;
 - iii. provide corrective, developmental and technical advice;
 - iv. develop prevention tools;
 - v. promote workplace best practices;
 - vi. facilitate cross-border cooperation, while ensuring that labour inspectors are not called upon to carry out immigration enforcement;
- h. develop and strengthen relationships and mechanisms for coordination between labour administrations, labour inspections, key ministries and agencies at all levels and social partners in order to advance progress in a number of areas, such as by promoting decent work in the informal economy in recycling, strengthening the information base on the recycling industry and ensuring that employment measures meet the needs of the recycling labour market;
 - i. harness advances in information and communication technologies, digitization and innovative approaches to improve the internal working methods of administrations and labour inspectorates; increase the range and accessibility of services that they provide; adapt and modernize

the process of enforcement of labour standards; enhance the collection of statistical data; and improve the dissemination of information on labour matters. In doing so, governments should ensure that digitalization policies and strategies are commensurate with the human and material resources allocated for their implementation, taking into consideration national conditions.

162. Employers' and workers' organizations should:

- a. cooperate with labour administrations and inspectorates and promote engagement between these administrations and inspectorates and their members in order to foster compliance and enable them to perform their functions;
- b. take part in collaboration and partnerships for research and innovation that strengthens the capacity of labour administrations and inspectorates, including through the use of statistical data, innovative approaches and information and communication technologies.

5.2.2. Employers' and workers' organizations

163. The institutional capacity of trade unions to organize waste and recycling workers and the capacity of employers' organizations to organize and provide services to recycling enterprises and entrepreneurs are currently limited in many countries and should be enhanced. This includes strengthening their convening power and ability to bring diverse interests to the table and to adopt innovative strategies and techniques for organizing and reaching out to informal recycling enterprises and workers that are disadvantaged in the labour market and at the base of the recycling pyramid.

164. The ILO responds to the capacity-development priorities expressed by employers' and workers' organizations in many

countries. Specific training for the representatives of employers' and workers' organizations to enhance their institutional capacities is organized by the ILO's International Training Centre. This includes training courses on the topics covered in this document, as well as on decent work in the circular economy and on circularity in specific sectors of the economy.

165. Employers' and workers' organizations should:

- a. encourage recycling enterprises and workers to form and participate in employers' and workers' organizations and actively support the capacity of these organizations;
- b. harness technology and innovation to support employers' and workers' organizations to reach workers in the formal and informal economy, thereby expanding their access to information, support, opportunities and membership;
- c. raise awareness and understanding and provide guidance among their members about developments relevant to recycling and the circular economy and the potential and need for green and decent jobs and a just transition;
- d. publicize and share innovative and effective strategies and good practices that employers' and workers' organizations in various parts of the world have used to reach out to, organize or assist enterprises and workers in recycling and the broader circular economy.

► Appendix

Non-exhaustive list of ILO Declarations, International labour standards, resolutions and guidance relevant to advancing decent work in recycling

Declarations

[Declaration of Philadelphia \(1944\)](#)

[Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work \(1998\), as amended in 2022](#)

[Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization \(2008\), as amended in 2022](#)

[Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work \(2019\)](#)

[Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy \(MNE Declaration\), sixth edition, 2022](#)

International labour standards

Fundamental

[Forced labour Convention, 1930 \(No. 29\) and its Protocol of 2014](#)

[Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 \(No. 87\)](#)

[Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 \(No. 98\)](#)

[Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 \(No. 100\)](#)

[Abolition of Forced labour Convention, 1957 \(No. 105\)](#)
[Discrimination \(Employment and Occupation\) Convention, 1958 \(No. 111\)](#)
[Minimum Age Convention, 1973 \(No. 138\)](#)
[Occupational Safety and Health Convention \(No. 155\)](#)
and [Recommendation \(No. 164\), 1981](#)
[Worst Forms of Child labour Convention \(No. 182\)](#)
and [Recommendation \(No. 190\), 1999](#)
[Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety](#)
and [Health Convention \(No. 187\) and Recommendation](#)
[\(No. 197\), 2006](#)

Governance

[Labour Inspection Convention \(No. 81\)](#)
and [Recommendation \(No. 81\), 1947, and the Protocol](#)
[thereto of 1995](#)
[Employment Policy Convention \(No. 122\)](#)
and [Recommendation \(No. 122\), 1964](#)
[Tripartite Consultation \(International labour Standards\)](#)
[Convention, 1976 \(No. 144\)](#)

Technical

[Forty-Hour Week Convention, 1935 \(No. 47\)](#)
[Labour Clauses \(Public Contracts\) Convention, 1949](#)
[\(No. 94\) Protection of Wages Convention \(No. 95\)](#)
and [Recommendation \(No. 85\), 1949](#)
[Migration for Employment Convention \(Revised\) \(No. 97\)](#)
and [Recommendation \(Revised\) \(No. 86\), 1949](#)

[Protection of Migrant Workers \(Underdeveloped Countries\) Recommendation, 1955 \(No. 100\)](#)
[Welfare Facilities Recommendation, 1956 \(No. 102\)](#)
[Workers' Housing Recommendation, 1961 \(No. 115\)](#)
[Reduction of Hours of Work Recommendation, 1962 \(No. 116\)](#)
[Employment Injury Benefits Convention, 1964 \[Schedule I amended in 1980\] \(No. 121\)](#)
[Minimum Wage Fixing Convention \(No. 131\) and Recommendation \(No. 135\), 1970](#)
[Holidays with Pay Convention \(Revised\), 1970 \(No. 132\)](#)
[Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 \(No. 142\)](#)
[Migrant Workers \(Supplementary Provisions\) Convention \(No. 143\) and Migrant Workers Recommendation \(No. 151\), 1975](#)
[labour Administration Convention, 1978 \(No. 150\)](#)
[Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 \(No. 156\)](#)
[Employment Policy \(Supplementary Provisions\) Recommendation \(No. 169\), 1984](#)
[Occupational Health Services Convention \(No. 161\) and Recommendation \(No. 171\), 1985](#)
[Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 \(No. 168\)](#)
[Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 \(No. 169\)](#)
[Chemicals Convention, 1990 \(No. 170\)](#)

[Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 \(No. 181\)](#)
[Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises](#)
[Recommendation, 1998 \(No. 189\)](#)
[Maternity Protection Convention \(No. 183\)](#)
[and Recommendation \(No. 191\), 2000](#)
[Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation,](#)
[2002 \(No. 193\)](#)
[List of Occupational Diseases Recommendation,](#)
[2002 \(No. 194\)](#)
[Human Resources Development Recommendation,](#)
[2004 \(No. 195\)](#)
[Employment Relationship Recommendation,](#)
[2006 \(No. 198\)](#)
[Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 \(No. 202\)](#)
[Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy](#)
[Recommendation, 2015 \(No. 204\)](#)
[Violence and Harassment Convention \(No. 190\)](#)
[and Recommendation, 2019 \(No. 206\)](#)
[Quality Apprenticeships Recommendation, 2023 \(No. 208\)](#)

Resolutions

[Resolution concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises, 2007](#)
[Resolution concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy, 2022](#)
[Resolution concerning a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all, 2023](#)

Guidance

[Conclusions of the ILO Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages, 2024](#)

[Safety and health in construction \(Revised edition\), 2022](#)

[Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all, 2015](#)

[Safety and health in shipbreaking: Guidelines for Asian countries and Turkey, 2004](#)

Other international instruments

[United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011](#)

Other guidance

[ILO-IOE Child labour guidance tool for business, 2015](#)

