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Iraq

Convenio sobre el servicio del empleo, 1948 (núm. 88) (ratificación: 1951)

Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88) (ratification: 1951)

convention (n° 88) sur le service de l'emploi, 1948 (ratification: 1951)

Convenio sobre la política del empleo, 1964 (núm. 122) (ratificación: 1970)

Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122) (ratification: 1970)

Convention (n° 122) sur la politique de l'emploi, 1964 (ratification: 1970)

Discussion by the Committee

Presidenta – Pasamos ahora al último caso en nuestra agenda por el día de hoy relativo a la aplicación por parte de Iraq del Convenio sobre el servicio del empleo, 1948 (núm. 88) y del Convenio sobre la política del empleo, 1964 (núm. 122). Para la discusión de este caso contamos con 19 oradores inscritos. Sobre esta base la Mesa decidió reducir el tiempo máximo de intervención de los delegados que hablan a título individual de 5 a 3 minutos. Invito primero al representante gubernamental del Iraq, Director general del departamento jurídico a que tome la palabra.

Interprétation de l'arabe: Représentant gouvernemental – Je prends la parole pour la première fois. Voilà pourquoi je saisis cette occasion pour vous féliciter d'avoir été élue présidente de cette commission. Nous sommes heureux de vous voir présidente de la commission à ce 100^e anniversaire de la création de cette commission. La délégation de l'Iraq a le plaisir de remercier l'OIT et la commission d'experts, ainsi que la commission pour les efforts consentis afin de promouvoir le travail décent et promouvoir les principes de justice sociale de par le monde. Nous saluons également les observations et les recommandations concernant l'application des conventions n^{os} 88 et 122. Nous considérons ces observations comme étant un outil important pour donner une impulsion aux réformes nationales et pour développer les institutions du marché du travail en Iraq.

L'Iraq est conscient que fournir des opportunités de travail productif et décent ne représente pas seulement un objectif économique; il s'agit d'un pilier fondamental pour la stabilité sociale, le développement durable et la paix sociétale. Sur cette base, le gouvernement a continué, au cours des années précédentes, l'exécution d'une batterie de réformes et de politiques visant à promouvoir l'emploi, à développer le marché du travail, à améliorer la protection sociale, à élargir le dialogue social, et ce en dépit des défis économiques, démographiques et des défis en termes de développement auxquels notre pays fait face.

En ce qui concerne la politique nationale de l'emploi, l'Iraq a élaboré une politique nationale de l'emploi pour les années 2026-2030, et ce par le biais d'un processus collaboratif élargi, qui a inclus les organes gouvernementaux concernés, les organisations d'employeurs,

ainsi que les organisations de travailleurs, et ce grâce à une assistance technique de l'OIT. Nous avons, lors de l'élaboration de cette politique, adopté une approche globale qui fait le lien entre le développement économique, l'emploi, le développement des capacités et la protection sociale. Cette politique vise à traiter les défis de taille sur le marché du travail, notamment le chômage, le travail informel, le manque de participation des femmes, et les inégalités géographiques dans les opportunités de travail. Nous avons accompli plusieurs étapes dans l'élaboration et l'exécution de cette politique. Nous finalisons actuellement les procédures de l'approbation par le gouvernement assurant une transition en douceur vers la phase de mise en œuvre avec des indicateurs de performance clairs et des mécanismes de suivi et d'évaluation périodiques.

Pour promouvoir la coordination et la complémentarité institutionnelle dans le domaine de l'emploi, la formation professionnelle, la santé et la sécurité professionnelle, nous avons élaboré une politique nationale qui vise à promouvoir la coordination entre et parmi les unités décentralisées chargées de ces questions dans les provinces. Nous avons accompli l'élaboration de cette politique. Elle sera soumise au gouvernement pour approbation. Cela va renforcer les systèmes nationaux relatifs à l'emploi et à la formation professionnelle.

Parmi les défis auxquels fait face le marché du travail et le secteur informel, il s'agit d'un défi qui n'existe pas en Iraq uniquement, mais plusieurs économies émergentes font face à ce défi. À cet égard, le ministère du Travail et des Affaires sociales a pris un certain nombre de mesures visant à encourager la transition progressive vers l'économie formelle. Parmi celles-ci le conditionnement de certains programmes de financement et de crédits destinés aux petites entreprises, à leur inscription aux régimes de sécurité sociale et de retraite. Cette approche contribue à renforcer la protection des travailleurs et le respect des exigences d'inscription aux systèmes de sécurité sociale et de retraites ainsi que le respect de la législation nationale.

Nous avons également entamé l'élaboration d'une stratégie nationale pour la transition vers l'économie formelle pour la période 2026-2030. En effet, nous avons créé un comité directeur tripartite qui inclut un nombre de ministères, d'organes gouvernementaux, des organisations de travailleurs, ainsi que les organisations d'employeurs, avec le soutien technique de l'OIT. Le gouvernement poursuit ses efforts afin de développer les institutions du marché du travail et améliorer les services fournis aux demandeurs d'emploi et aux employeurs, développer des bases de données et des mécanismes d'adéquation entre l'offre et la demande sur le marché du travail. Cela va contribuer à augmenter l'efficacité de l'emploi, à améliorer les opportunités d'accès au travail productif.

Le gouvernement s'intéresse particulièrement à la question de l'autonomisation économique des femmes, à encourager sa participation sur le marché du travail. Basés sur cet engagement, nous avons élaboré des programmes de formation professionnelle destinés aux femmes, afin de leur fournir des occasions de participer aux programmes de développement, aux projets, ainsi qu'aux programmes de microfinancement.

Ma délégation tient à souligner que des dizaines de milliers de femmes ont pu participer à des programmes de formation professionnelle au cours des années précédentes. Ceci reflète les efforts continus afin de les autonomiser et de leur donner davantage de choix économiques. En dépit de cela, nous sommes conscients que le chemin demeure très long. Ceci requiert davantage de travail pour traiter les obstacles socio-économiques qui limitent la participation des femmes dans les activités économiques. D'ailleurs, la politique nationale de l'emploi traite cette question par le biais d'une batterie de mesures destinées à cet objectif.

La coopération entre l'Iraq et l'OIT a été un élément très important dans l'appui des réformes nationales au cours des années précédentes. Par le biais du programme de travail décent et la coopération technique continue, nous avons mis en application un nombre d'initiatives qui ont contribué à promouvoir la gouvernance, à améliorer la performance des institutions du marché du travail et à élargir les opportunités du travail décent. Cette coopération a conduit à l'élaboration d'une politique nationale de l'emploi, à promouvoir des programmes d'emploi à forte intensité de main-d'œuvre, à améliorer l'environnement qui soutient les petites et moyennes entreprises (PME), sans oublier des programmes de transition économique équitable, et à intégrer les catégories les plus vulnérables sur le marché du travail, y compris les femmes, les personnes déplacées et les jeunes. La coopération avec l'OIT a également permis de promouvoir la gouvernance du marché du travail par le biais du développement des cadres institutionnels et politiques relatifs à l'emploi et de renforcer les capacités nationales dans divers domaines liés au travail décent.

En termes de droits fondamentaux au travail, l'Iraq a poursuivi ses efforts afin de développer le cadre législatif en conformité avec les normes internationales du travail. Nous sommes en train d'élaborer un projet de loi sur la sécurité et la santé professionnelles. Nous sommes en train de finaliser les révisions législatives relatives au Code du travail et aux législations syndicales. Ceci contribue à renforcer l'environnement de travail et à protéger les droits et les libertés syndicales. Nous avons également pris des mesures importantes dans la lutte contre le travail des enfants. En effet, nous avons établi des mécanismes nationaux tripartites pour revoir les politiques et législations pertinentes. Nous avons élaboré une stratégie nationale de lutte contre le travail des enfants, en conformité avec les engagements internationaux de l'Iraq et les observations de l'OIT.

Dans le domaine de la sécurité et la santé professionnelles, nous avons mis en exécution des programmes pour consolider les capacités des inspecteurs du travail. Nous avons également lancé la campagne Travail sûr, dans le secteur du bâtiment et de la construction, qui a visé des dizaines de milliers de travailleurs et d'employeurs, l'objectif étant d'instaurer la culture de la prévention, de la conformité et de l'amélioration des conditions de travail. Développer le système de protection sociale représente l'une des priorités principales du gouvernement iraquien. À cet égard nous avons connu ces dernières années un progrès concret dans la mise en application de la loi de retraite et de sécurité sociale des travailleurs n° 18. Il s'agit d'un pas important sur la voie de l'élargissement de la couverture par la sécurité sociale. Ces efforts nationaux soutenus par l'OIT et les partenaires sociaux ont conduit à la hausse des personnes couvertes par la sécurité sociale à plus d'un demi-million de travailleurs, dont 161 000 travailleurs et travailleuses ont été couverts par la sécurité sociale entre 2024 et 2025. Nous avons pu créer un système de sécurité sociale optionnel, et ce pour la première fois; 38 513 travailleurs et travailleuses se sont affiliés à ce système de sécurité sociale durant la même période ce qui permet à un plus grand nombre de travailleurs et travailleuses de bénéficier de la protection sociale et favorise la transition vers l'emploi formel.

Nous avons également lancé des campagnes de sensibilisation et des programmes de soutien institutionnel dans les différentes provinces de l'Iraq afin d'encourager les personnes à s'affilier dans les régimes de sécurité sociale et à encourager le respect des législations pertinentes.

Le dialogue social représente un pilier fondamental adopté par le gouvernement iraquien lors de l'élaboration des politiques économiques et sociales. Sur la base de cela, nous avons créé le forum de dialogue social qui inclut le ministère de Travail et des Affaires sociales, les organisations de travailleurs, ainsi que les organisations d'employeurs. Ce forum est devenu le Forum tripartite national chargé de l'échange des informations et de consultations dans

divers domaines économiques, sociaux, ainsi qu'en termes de législation politique, programmes qui ont un lien avec le marché du travail. Nous travaillons actuellement à promouvoir l'institutionnalisation du forum en formant un secrétariat tripartite et en élaborant un règlement intérieur et à la mise en place du cadre juridique nécessaire au bon fonctionnement de ce forum.

L'Iraq, à l'instar de plusieurs pays qui sortent de conflits et de défis sécuritaires et économiques complexes, fait face à des pressions de taille causées par une croissance accélérée des habitants, une hausse du taux des jeunes dans la composition démographique, des changements économiques mondiaux, ainsi que l'impact du changement climatique sur certaines des activités économiques, sans oublier les transformations technologiques accélérées qui imposent de nouvelles exigences sur le marché du travail.

Malgré ces défis, le gouvernement iraquien poursuit sa vision de réforme visant à créer un marché de travail plus global plus pérenne, en garantissant la diversification de l'économie nationale, en réduisant la dépendance sur le secteur public en étant l'employeur principal, et en renforçant le rôle du secteur privé pour créer des opportunités de travail et créer un terreau fertile pour l'investissement et la production. Malgré ces défis, le gouvernement iraquien poursuit sa vision de réforme visant à créer un marché de travail plus global plus pérenne et inclusif en garantissant la diversification de l'économie nationale, en réduisant la dépendance sur le secteur public en étant l'employeur principal, et en renforçant le rôle du secteur privé pour créer des opportunités de travail et créer un terreau fertile pour l'investissement et la production. Dans ce contexte, le gouvernement œuvre au travail pour développement d'un système d'information sur le marché du travail et au renforcement des mécanismes de suivi, de statistiques et d'analyse. Ceci permet d'élaborer des politiques basées sur des données probantes et des indicateurs fiables, tout en renforçant la capacité des institutions publiques à répondre aux transformations économiques et sociales de façon plus efficace.

L'Iraq respecte ses engagements en vertu des dispositions de la convention n° 122, et cela ne se limite pas à adopter une politique nationale de l'emploi, il s'étend également à l'intégration de l'emploi productif et du travail décent comme objectif central des politiques économiques et sociales de l'État. Dans cette perspective, des efforts sont déployés pour renforcer la cohérence et l'intégration entre les politiques de l'emploi, de l'éducation, de la formation professionnelle, de la protection sociale, de l'investissement et du développement local, afin de garantir un impact concret et durable sur les possibilités d'emploi ainsi que sur la qualité des emplois.

Nous attachons une importance particulière aux jeunes, qui représentent une grande partie de la population par le biais de programmes d'adaptation professionnelle, le développement des capacités, l'appui au PME comme étant la force motrice du développement économique et social en Iraq. Dans le même temps, nous continuons à consentir des efforts afin d'encourager la participation de la femme dans l'activité économique non seulement par la formation et l'adaptation, mais aussi en éliminant les obstacles institutionnels et sociaux qui limitent sa participation, et en créant un environnement de travail sûr, équitable, qui garantisse l'égalité des chances entre les femmes et les hommes.

Nous sommes convaincus que la réalisation des objectifs des deux conventions – conventions n°s 88 et 122 – requiert un véritable partenariat entre les gouvernements, les organisations de travailleurs et les organisations d'employeurs. C'est cet esprit de partenariat que nous nous efforçons de consolider à travers les mécanismes de dialogue social tripartite, qui occupent désormais une place plus importante et jouent un rôle plus efficace dans le processus d'élaboration des politiques publiques en Iraq.

Nous soulignons que nous allons continuer notre coopération avec l'OIT et bénéficier de son expertise technique, ses programmes spécialisés. Ceci va contribuer à développer des législations nationales, à renforcer les capacités institutionnelles, à améliorer les indices du marché du travail et à promouvoir les opportunités de travail décent pour tous. La délégation iraquienne réitère son plein engagement à poursuivre la mise en application des recommandations émises par les organes de contrôle de l'OIT et à promouvoir la conformité aux normes internationales du travail et à fournir les informations et les rapports requis de façon régulière et transparente. Nous soulignons que la voie de réforme en Iraq est une voie continue, basée sur le dialogue, la coopération et le partenariat. Les progrès réalisés au cours des dernières années constituent une base solide sur laquelle s'appuyer durant la prochaine phase, en vue de parvenir à un marché du travail plus juste, plus équitable et plus capable d'offrir des possibilités de travail décent à l'ensemble des citoyens.

Pour conclure, nous remercions la Commission de l'application des normes, la commission d'experts et l'OIT pour leur soutien continu à l'Iraq, et nous aspirons à ce que cette coopération productive continue, afin de promouvoir les objectifs de justice sociale, de développement durable et de travail décent.

Worker members – This is the first time that this Committee is examining in an integrated manner the application by Iraq of Convention No. 88 and Convention No. 122, together with related instrument on skills development and educational leave. The Worker members recall that Convention No. 122 established the overarching obligation to pursue an active policy aimed at full, productive and freely chosen employment. Convention No. 88 provides the essential institutional framework through effective public employment services while Conventions Nos 140 and 142 complement this architecture by strengthening skills development and lifelong learning. In this regard, the Worker members take note of the Government's effort to develop a new national employment policy and of the creation of a specialized team within the Tripartite High Committee for the Planning and Employment of the Labour Force.

We also note the launch of the digital Mehan platform which may represent an important step toward improving labour market matching and strengthening public employment services. However, the Committee of Expert has clearly highlighted persistent and structural challenges in the Iraqi labour market that remain insufficiently addressed. These include high unemployment, particularly among women and young persons, extremely low female labour force participation of around 10.8 per cent, which is one of the lowest rates in the world and widespread informality affecting more than two-thirds of employment. These figures point to deep and systematic deficit in access to decent and productive employment. The Worker members are particularly concerned by the continued exclusion of women from the labour market, as well as the high level of vulnerability among young persons, internally displaced persons and persons with disability.

These realities require targeted and inclusive employment policies supported by effective public employment services under Convention No. 88. We also note with concern that limited information has been provided on the concrete measures taken to address informality and structural barriers to labour market participation, including weak coverage of labour law and social protection systems, particularly in rural and peripheral areas. However, the Worker members note with concern more general and systemic problems that affect compliance with Convention No. 122. We recall the outdated and restrictive legal framework regulating trade unions and exclusion of independent trade unions from tripartite consultation. Without freedom of workers to form and join organizations of their own choosing, without inclusion of independent trade unions in national information and consultation, and without support to

collective bargaining it is not possible to effectively fulfil obligations under Article 3 of Convention No. 122 and Article 4 of Convention No. 88, namely tripartite consultation of employment policies and cooperation of representatives of employers and workers in the organization and operation of the employment service. The Worker members, therefore, underline that freedom of association is a precondition for compliance with Conventions Nos 122 and 88, as well as other ILO standards. We call on the Government to urgently address these gaps. While acknowledging ongoing international cooperation projects, including the ILO Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP), and related initiatives on employment-intensive investment and vocational training reform, the Worker members stress that these efforts must translate into coherent, measurable and nationally owned employment outcomes.

On vocational education and training, we note the information provided regarding institutional responsibilities under national legislation. However, we regret that absence of concrete data on outcomes, the status of key reforms such as the national Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council and the extent of structured consultation with social partners. A functioning skill system is indispensable for aligning labour supply with demand and for making employment policy operational in practice.

The Worker members also recall the importance of paid educational leave of the Convention No. 140 as a key enabling tool for lifelong learning and employability. Finally, they emphasize that effectiveness of employment policy under Convention No. 122 depends on strong coordination between public employment services, vocational training systems and comprehensive labour market information systems. At present, significant gaps remains in data availability, policy coherence and evidence-based implementation.

The Worker members, therefore, call on the Government to:

- strengthen the integration of its employment policy framework,
- urgently address the outdated restrictive legal framework regulating trade unions and adversely affecting representative tripartite consultation,
- reinforce its public employment services infrastructure,
- expand the meaningful access to training and upskilling opportunities; and
- ensure full and effective social dialogue in the design and implementation of employment policies.

Employer members – The Employer members recognize the obligations set out in Convention No. 122 on governments to declare and pursue an active policy designed to promote full productive and freely chosen employment. Such an active employment policy stimulates economic growth and development. It also assists employers in meeting their labour needs. As outlined in the Convention, the Employer members recognize that the policy must take due account of the State's level of economic development. The policy must also be pursued by methods that are appropriate to national conditions and practices. We submit that this must be the case for the Government of Iraq, which has experienced previous instability and war, and whose economy is overly dependent on oil exports.

We note that several ILO Conventions complement the requirement in Convention No. 122 regarding a national employment policy. This includes an effective public employment service to facilitate matching between labour supply and demand, as set out in Convention No. 88. It also includes comprehensive and coordinated policies and programmes of vocational guidance and vocational training, as set out in Convention No. 142. And finally, it includes the

provision of paid educational leave for workers to pursue vocational education and training, as set out in Convention No. 140.

At the outset, we wish to recall the particular importance of Convention No. 122. Convention No. 122 is a governance Convention. The Government ratified this Convention in 1970. The Committee of Experts has previously issued three observations in 2001, 2002 and 2023. We view compliance with this Convention as important for businesses, for workers and for the effective functioning of labour market institutions more broadly.

As stated earlier, the linkage between Conventions Nos 122 and 88 is well founded. As the Committee of Experts noted, Convention No. 122 establishes an overarching employment policy framework, while Convention No. 88 helps provide an institutional foundation through employment services that facilitate matching between labour supply and demand. The Government ratified Convention No. 88, a technical Convention, in 1951. The Committee of Experts has previously commented on this Convention once in 2017. In its comment, the Committee of Experts referred to Conventions Nos 140 and 142, both of which were ratified in 1978. Both Conventions are technical Conventions. This is the first time that the Committee has discussed the application of Conventions Nos 122 and 88 by Iraq.

The Committee of Experts raised four main issues in its observation. First, the Committee of Experts discussed the importance of the declaration and pursuit of a national employment policy in law and in practice. It relied on the concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which expressed concern about rising unemployment, the over-representation of disadvantaged and marginalized groups among the unemployed, low labour force participation of women, and the large informal economy. This data demonstrated that employment trends continue to lack despite the existing national employment policy.

In response, the Employer members note that the Government has taken steps to prepare a new national employment policy which includes measures related to employment and training. We understand that this is a refreshed policy from the one noted in the 2017 Committee of Experts' comment. We also understand that the Government is also in the process of reforming the Labour Code – Act No. 37 of 2015. The Employer members note that a specialized team within the Tripartite High Committee for the Planning and Employment of the Labour Force has been established for this purpose. The Employer members emphasize the importance of social dialogue and consultation between the social partners concerning the declaration and pursuit of the new national employment policy and labour legislation reform. The Employer members encourage the Government to continue to cooperate with the ILO in relation to its national employment policy, including through the Decent Work Country Programme, the employment-intensive investment programme and the PROSPECTS partnership. We encourage the Government to avail itself of technical assistance regarding the national employment policy and all impacted Conventions. These constructive developments should be acknowledged. However, we recognize that key challenges remain in the Iraqi labour market including high levels of informality, as well as low participation and underemployment of women in the labour force.

Second, and turning to Convention No. 88, the Employer members note the launch of the national digital Mihan platform to facilitate labour market matching. The Mihan platform connects jobseekers and vocational training graduates with employers to improve workforce integration. We recognize this development as having the potential in operationalizing employment services in practice. However, we note that limited information has been provided by the Government in that regard.

Third, in relation to Convention No. 142, the Employer members acknowledge information from the Government regarding the role of the vocational training and labour department under Law No. 182 of 2018. The law identifies labour market needs in terms of occupations, types of work and required skills, as well as develops the capacity of jobseekers through training courses. The Employer members recognize that the implementation of these initiatives, in practice, would enable workers to qualify for jobs suited to their skills. However, information regarding their application in practice remains lacking.

Finally, the Committee of Experts noted that the Government intends to denounce Convention No. 140 regarding the development and implementation of paid education leave policies to support workers' access to education and training. Like the Committee of Experts, we remind the Government that it must comply with Convention No. 140, as no denunciation is yet effective. We would also wish to remind the Government that denunciations can only occur during a narrow window following the expiration of an initial ten-year period from the date the Convention first came into force. Member States should, therefore, consider these windows carefully when ratifying ILO Conventions and make sure that they can implement the provisions through careful pre-ratification assessments.

The Employer members note that the goal of full, productive and freely chosen employment requires productivity, growth and enabling business environment for employment opportunities to be created. The Government must facilitate and create an enabling environment for business growth and resilience through a national employment policy regarding employment and training, including through robust employment services as well as vocational training and education. This will ensure that growth and productive employment can be created.

Interprétation de l'arabe: **Membre employeur, Iraq** – Tout d'abord, je voudrais remercier l'OIT pour son soutien continu à la République d'Iraq et pour les programmes de coopération technique et le renforcement des capacités, ce qui a contribué à la promotion du dialogue social et au renforcement des principes de travail décent. Nous aimerions également rendre hommage à la commission d'experts et à la Commission pour le soutien des États. Pour ce qui est de la situation de l'Iraq et la convention (n° 88) sur le service de l'emploi, 1948, et la convention (n° 122) sur la politique de l'emploi, 1964, nous aimerions indiquer que l'Iraq a actuellement lancé des réformes réelles pour développer le marché du travail, promouvoir les opportunités de travail et améliorer le cadre législatif institutionnel. En effet, le gouvernement, en collaboration avec les organisations de travailleurs et d'employeurs, a établi un dialogue véritable pour développer les législations actuelles, et notamment le Code du travail n° 37 de 2015, et cela pour répondre aux besoins du marché et du développement durable.

Actuellement, nous sommes convaincus que ce genre de dialogue va contribuer à l'amélioration des législations et à l'amélioration du marché du travail en Iraq. La création du forum de dialogue social a été un pas vers une collaboration tripartite véritable qui permet aujourd'hui de trouver des solutions à l'emploi et au marché du travail à travers le dialogue, et la cohésion et la collaboration pour répondre aux besoins du marché du travail en Iraq.

D'autre part, des efforts se poursuivent pour développer les services de l'emploi, les moderniser, pour établir un lien entre l'offre et la demande sur le marché du travail et répondre ainsi aux objectifs de la convention n° 88. À la lumière des défis économiques et des changements que vivent les pays, le progrès se poursuit et les employeurs en Iraq sont convaincus qu'atteindre les objectifs des deux conventions nécessite une collaboration entre le gouvernement, les employeurs et les travailleurs, avec une collaboration technique, un échange d'expertise et un renforcement des capacités. Ce travail se poursuit. Le progrès atteint

et la volonté tripartite qui existent aujourd'hui pour poursuivre la réforme méritent tout le soutien de votre part pour moderniser les opportunités de travail, le marché du travail pour répondre aux besoins de nos citoyens. Enfin, nous réitérons notre engagement à collaborer avec le gouvernement iraquien et avec les organisations d'employeurs et de travailleurs avec l'OIT pour respecter les deux conventions, n^{os} 88 et 122.

Interprétation de l'arabe: Membre gouvernemental, Lybie, s'exprimant au nom du groupe des États arabes – La Lybie a le plaisir de prendre la parole au nom du groupe des pays arabes, et nous aimerions rendre hommage et remercier le gouvernement pour son rapport sur les deux conventions: la convention n^o 88 et la convention n^o 122. Le groupe des pays arabe a suivi de près la présentation du gouvernement, et nous avons pris note de tous les efforts qui sont déployés actuellement pour développer les institutions du travail malgré les difficultés économiques, sociales et s'allier au développement, ce qui montre un engagement véritable vers le développement, la réforme et la promotion du travail décent.

Le groupe des pays arabe se félicite des progrès atteints, et notamment l'établissement d'une politique nationale de l'emploi 2026-2030, qui est le fruit d'un dialogue participatif tripartite, en collaboration avec l'OIT. Un tel engagement et une approche participative montrent l'engagement du pays vis-à-vis de la convention n^o 122, et reflète une vision nationale globale pour trouver des solutions tripartites aux problèmes liés à l'emploi. Nous saluons les efforts qui visent à établir un lien entre ceux qui cherchent le travail et les besoins du marché, ainsi que le passage du secteur informel vers le secteur formel, et l'augmentation du socle de la protection sociale.

Le groupe des pays arabe aimerait également rendre hommage aux efforts déployés par le gouvernement pour promouvoir le dialogue social tripartite, et notamment la création d'un forum national de dialogue social, qui représente un progrès véritable, un progrès institutionnel incluant toutes les parties concernées par le secteur de l'emploi. Enfin, nous encourageons l'Iraq à poursuivre sa collaboration avec l'OIT et la collaboration technique pour renforcer les institutions nationales, poursuivre la réforme et atteindre le travail décent pour tous.

Government member, Bangladesh – We note that Iraq continues to make sincere efforts to develop its labour market, institutions and strengthen employment policies. We recognize that Iraq endeavours to take action in the face of complex economic challenges, social conditions and accumulated development challenges. We would like to express our appreciation for the progress achieved in preparing the National Employment Policy for the period 2026 to 2030. We also note that this was developed through a participatory dialogue involving the workers, employers and governments. This reflects a commitment for the provisions of Convention No. 122, a commitment to address unemployment and skills development. We would also like to welcome the efforts made to strengthen labour market institutions, particularly to expand vocational training programmes and link them to the needs of the economy. We noted the measures taken to encourage gradual transition from the informal economy to formal economy.

We also note the expansion of social protection coverage and increase in the number of persons covered by social security. We noted the importance of the steps taken by Iraq to strengthen tripartite social dialogue particularly. The establishment of the National Social Dialogue Forum represents an important institutional development that we believe has the potential to enhance the participation of social partners in labour market and decent work policies.

Government member, Islamic Republic of Iran – The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran wishes to acknowledge the efforts of the Republic of Iraq in fulfilling its obligations under Conventions Nos 88 and 122. We recognize that Iraq operates within a challenging socioeconomic environment and we commend the tangible steps it has taken to strengthen its employment services and advance a coherent national employment policy. The development of the National Employment Policy for 2026–30 shaped through the consultations and in partnership with the ILO reflects a genuine commitment to inclusive and participatory governance of the labour market. We also acknowledge Iraq's continued efforts to expand vocational training, broaden social protection coverage and support the transition of workers from the informal to the formal economy, all of which are essential components of sustainable employment policy in line with Convention No. 122.

Furthermore, the establishment of the National Social Dialogue Forum is a meaningful institutional step that strengthens the voice of workers and employers in shaping decent work policies. The Islamic Republic of Iran encourages Iraq to continue on this path and stands in support of the constructive engagement between the Iraqi Government and the ILO supervisory bodies. We trust that the Committee's deliberations will contribute positively to Iraq's ongoing reforms efforts.

Miembro trabajadora, España – El Convenio núm. 122 exige consulta y cooperación en la elaboración de políticas de empleo. El Convenio núm. 88 se basa en instituciones del mercado laboral que respondan a las necesidades de los trabajadores y trabajadoras y de sus representantes. Por consiguiente, la aplicación de estos dos importantes Convenios depende de la existencia de organizaciones sindicales representativas que puedan participar libre y eficazmente en la gobernanza del mercado laboral. El informe sindical presentado en este caso plantea serias preocupaciones sobre la continua exclusión de los sindicatos independientes de importantes instituciones y mecanismos de consulta del mercado laboral iraquí.

Asimismo, destaca la preocupación por el trato desigual entre las organizaciones sindicales y la concentración de la representación en estructuras que no reflejan plenamente el pluralismo sindical. Los sindicatos independientes iraquíes han exigido igualdad de reconocimiento y participación en los órganos responsables de la planificación del empleo, la gobernanza del mercado laboral, la protección social, la formación profesional y los servicios de empleo. Así los trabajadores y trabajadoras deben tener la libertad de elegir a sus representantes y todas las organizaciones representativas deben poder participar en igualdad de condiciones. La cuestión no se limita a los derechos, afecta directamente a la eficacia de la política de empleo. Las instituciones del mercado laboral se fortalecen cuando se benefician de las diversas perspectivas y experiencias de los trabajadores.

Excluir a las organizaciones representativas debilita la consulta y sin duda reduce la confianza en las instituciones públicas. El movimiento sindical ha defendido sistemáticamente que un tripartismo genuino exige igualdad entre las organizaciones sindicales representativas y el fin de las prácticas que dan como resultado la exclusión la discriminación o el monopolio de la representación de la clase trabajadora. Así los convenios 122 y 88 no pueden aplicarse plenamente si se niega a las organizaciones representativas de los trabajadores el acceso equitativo a los procesos de consulta y toma de decisiones. La clase trabajadora iraquí merece una representación y participación genuina. Instamos por tanto al gobierno a garantizar la igualdad de trato para todas las organizaciones sindicales representativas, a reconocer a los sindicatos independientes como interlocutores sociales legítimos, y a garantizar su participación en todas las instituciones relacionadas con la política y los servicios de empleo.

Government member, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland – We thank the Committee of Experts for their report on Iraq's compliance of Conventions Nos 88 and 122 and the Government of Iraq for providing information on their implementation. The United Kingdom recognizes Iraq's constructive engagement with the ILO including through the Decent Work Country Programme. Ongoing efforts to develop a comprehensive national employment policy are welcome and would represent an important step towards enhancing labour force participation, particularly in the private sector. The launch of the digital Mehan platform is an additional encouraging example of digital innovation to support labour market matching. Iraq's ongoing collaboration with international partners to strengthen employment services and deliver livelihood interventions is also recognized. Initiatives focused on job counselling, skills development and promoting safe and inclusive working environments are supporting institutional capacity contributing to more effective and inclusive labour market participation. The United Kingdom notes the concerns raised by the Committee regarding persistent structural challenges in the labour market. High levels of unemployment continue with disadvantaged and marginalized groups disproportionately affected. Female labour force participation remains among the lowest globally and reliance on public sector employment remains significant alongside a large-scale informal sector where workers are not protected by labour laws or social protection. Continued efforts to strengthen Iraq's labour laws and working conditions will be essential to support economic stability and diversification and to foster much needed private sector development. This includes improving the effectiveness of public employment services, enhancing the capacity to match jobseekers with vacancies, strengthening coordination between employment services, training systems and employers and providing data and reporting.

The United Kingdom encourages the Government of Iraq to consider targeted and active measures within employment policies to support women's access to safe and decent work and increase the labour market participation of traditionally underrepresented groups, address informality of labour including through ongoing efforts to formalize the labour force and support registration, advance and implement a coherent integrated national employment policy that supports economic diversification and private sector development and finally continue to engage constructively with the ILO and avail itself of the technical assistance available. With sustained commitment and support from partners including the ILO, meaningful progress in improving labour market outcomes is achievable which will in turn support Iraq to increase private sector development critical to its economic diversification. The United Kingdom looks forward to Iraq's next report demonstrating concrete progress in addressing these challenges and in meeting its obligations under Conventions Nos 88 and 122.

Membre travailleur, France – La convention n° 122 impose de mener une politique de l'emploi visant à assurer à tous un emploi plein, productif et librement choisi. La convention n° 88 exige, quant à elle, la mise en place de services de l'emploi accessibles et adaptés aux besoins de tous les travailleurs et demandeurs d'emploi. Pourtant, la commission d'experts a souligné les difficultés persistantes auxquelles sont confrontées les femmes et les jeunes sur le marché du travail. Les femmes restent nettement sous-représentées dans l'emploi, tandis que de nombreux jeunes continuent de faire face au chômage, à la précarité et à des possibilités limitées d'emploi décent.

Les syndicats indépendants ont souligné que ces défis ne peuvent être relevés par des mesures isolées. Ils nécessitent des politiques de l'emploi globales élaborées dans le cadre d'une véritable consultation avec les travailleurs et leurs organisations représentatives.

Les femmes et les jeunes travailleurs sont souvent parmi les premiers touchés par le chômage et l'emploi précaire. Ils sont même sur-représentés dans les formes d'emploi précaires et sont plus exposés au risque d'exclusion des opportunités du marché du travail.

La convention n° 122 exige la mise en œuvre de politiques qui profitent à tous les travailleurs, et pas seulement à ceux qui bénéficient déjà d'un emploi stable. De même, la convention n° 88 enjoint le gouvernement à mettre en place des services de l'emploi accessibles à tous et capables d'aider les groupes vulnérables à accéder à des opportunités d'emploi. Le mouvement syndical a souligné que les politiques de l'emploi devraient être conçues en concertation avec les organisations représentatives des travailleurs. Cela est particulièrement important lors de l'élaboration de mesures visant à améliorer les opportunités pour les femmes et les jeunes. Nous réaffirmons fermement que les organisations de travailleurs possèdent une connaissance directe des obstacles sur le marché du travail et peuvent contribuer à des solutions plus efficaces et inclusives. L'avenir du marché du travail iraquien dépend de la garantie que les femmes et les jeunes ne soient pas laissés pour compte. Leur participation est essentielle au développement économique, à la stabilité sociale et à la croissance durable de l'emploi.

Nous exhortons le gouvernement à élaborer, en consultation avec des organisations de travailleurs indépendantes, des mesures ciblées visant à accroître les possibilités d'emploi pour les femmes et les jeunes travailleurs et à garantir l'égalité d'accès aux services de l'emploi conformément aux conventions n°s 122 et 88. Enfin, nous insistons auprès du gouvernement, l'enjoignant à organiser et tenir de manière effective cette fois, le forum sur le dialogue social promis par lui l'an dernier. Celui-ci devra réunir autour de la table toutes les organisations syndicales indépendantes du pays. C'est là la condition *sine qua none*, pour échanger et agir significativement sur la condition des femmes et des jeunes dans l'emploi.

Worker member, Finland – I speak on behalf of the Nordic Trade Unions. While this case concerns the application of Convention No. 122 and Convention No. 88 in Iraq, a deeper issue is at stake. These Conventions cannot be effectively implemented unless freedom of association is fully respected in law and in practice. Convention No. 122 requires an active employment policy promoting full, productive and freely chosen employment. Convention No. 88 requires a public employment service that functions effectively, fairly and in the public interest. Both Conventions also require the genuine involvement of Worker and Employer representatives in the design, operation and supervision of these policies and institutions. The requirement is explicit. Article 3 of Convention No. 122 mandates consultation with representatives of those affected, particularly employers and workers. Article 4 of Convention No. 88 requires cooperation with these representatives in organizing and operating employment services. These are not procedural details but essential conditions for implementation. Concerns going to the core of freedom of association in Iraq are, therefore, inseparable from this case. Freedom of association is a precondition for compliance with Conventions Nos 122 and 88. Where workers cannot freely establish and join organizations of their own choosing, consultation cannot be genuine. Where independent unions cannot function effectively, cooperation cannot be meaningful.

Without genuine consultation and cooperation, implementation in law and in practice is simply not possible. The consequences for workers' daily lives are direct. Public employment services must be transparent, accountable and accessible. Workers must be able to trust that access to employment is based on objective criteria, not favouritism, patronage, political influence or unequal treatment. These are long-standing concerns raised by independent unions in Iraq. Without independent workers' organizations, there is no effective way to monitor whether employment services operate fairly. Without genuine trade union

participation, there is no credible guarantee that institutions respond to workers' needs rather than administrative or political interests. The mere existence of offices, laws or decrees is not sufficient to meet obligations under Convention No. 88. And the same applies to Convention No. 122. A national employment policy cannot be substantively compliant if those most affected by unemployment, informality and exclusion cannot participate through independent organizations of their own choosing.

If the workers' voice is restricted or monopolized, policymaking cannot reflect workers' realities, and consultation risks becoming a formality. This should be a central concern for this Committee. The absence of full freedom of association not only raises issues with respect to the very standards of freedom of association, it undermines the mechanisms through which Conventions Nos 88 and 122 are intended to function. And where the right to organize is not effectively guaranteed, the legal prerequisites for implementing these Conventions are not met.

Interprétation de l'arabe: **Membre gouvernemental, Maroc** – Je voudrais d'emblée remercier les membres de la commission d'experts pour leur rapport, pour leurs recommandations et leurs commentaires. Tout cela ne peut que contribuer à la bonne mise en œuvre des normes internationales du travail. Je voudrais également remercier le gouvernement pour ses explications et ses informations détaillées sur ces deux conventions.

Nous avons écouté avec beaucoup d'attention tout ce qui a été dit. Nous avons pris bonne note du fait que l'Iraq continue à développer des institutions axées sur le marché du travail, et qui nous dit que ces politiques sont basées sur le développement d'institutions permettant de régler les difficultés sociales et économiques. On nous a décrit également les politiques définies pour la période 2026-2030. Ces politiques ont été mises en place par une approche collaborative avec les employeurs et les travailleurs, et avec l'appui de l'Organisation internationale du Travail, ce qui témoigne d'un engagement clair en faveur de la promotion de l'emploi productif et libre ainsi que du développement des ressources humaines, conformément aux objectifs de la convention n° 122.

Nous nous félicitons de tous les efforts qui sont accomplis pour développer la formation professionnelle, la formation technique, et le lien entre cela et le marché du travail. C'est un processus de transition qui doit permettre de passer de l'économie informelle à l'économie formelle. Tout ceci a ouvert la voie à des mesures de protection sociale, et cela permet également d'élargir la participation des partenaires sociaux dans l'application des politiques concernant le travail décent. Pour conclure, nous considérons que les efforts entrepris par l'Iraq méritent notre appui et méritent un suivi de la part du Bureau pour qu'il puisse fournir une assistance technique et pour permettre la pleine et entière application de ces deux conventions.

Worker member, Australia – I take the floor on behalf of the Australian Trade Union Movement. We are deeply concerned by the Committee of Experts' observation that unemployment is increasing in Iraq. Unemployment disproportionately affects marginalized workers, including women workers and workers in rural and peripheral areas. In seeking employment, many are compelled to enter the informal economy where they are often receiving inadequate pay, do not have legal protections and are exposed to hazardous and unregulated working conditions.

The expansion of the informal economy is a systematic violation of fundamental labour rights, as well as a social justice challenge with far-reaching implications. As more workers are pushed into insecure and unregulated forms of employment, inequality deepens eroding social cohesion. Informality also places compliant businesses at a competitive disadvantage,

weakening the foundations of fair and sustainable economic development. Addressing informality is, therefore, critical to promote inclusive growth, strengthen democratic institutions, and advance broader social and economic stability. Women workers face particularly acute barriers to decent work, including structural discrimination, limited access to education and training and restrictive social norms constraining their labour market participation.

As a result, women are over-represented in informal and precarious employment where they are more vulnerable to exploitation and harassment. Targeted measures are essential to break the cycle of women's economic insecurity and exclusion. The Government has the obligation to pursue an active policy designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment under Convention No. 122, and to provide effective employment services to connect workers to opportunities for decent work under Convention No. 88. However, the Committee of Experts notes that the Government has not provided information on steps taken to address labour market challenges nor on measures to promote employment for marginalized workers. We urge the Government to engage collaboratively and report on labour market conditions, as well as on the development of a comprehensive national employment policy.

Addressing informality requires genuine social dialogue, meaningful worker participation and stronger labour market governance. Workers in the informal economy are among the most vulnerable and their voices must be central in any government engagement with worker representatives. Independent trade unions, however, report ongoing constraints as the Government continues to grant exclusive representation rights to a single union. The persistent restrictions on trade union pluralism continue to impede freedom of association. We urge the Government to ensure equal rights and protections for all unions in law and in practice and collaborate with them to extend legal, social and labour protections to all workers.

Worker member, Kenya – Convention No. 122 requires to pursue an active employment policy aimed at promoting full, productive and freely chosen employment. Convention No. 88 requires effective public employment services capable of helping workers access employment opportunities. However, the implementation of these Conventions cannot be discussed solely in terms of programmes, institutions or statistics. The central question is whether workers themselves are genuinely involved in shaping the policy that affects their lives.

Independent trade unions in Iraq have repeatedly stressed that employment policies are often discussed and adopted without effective participation by representatives of workers' organizations. This concern goes to the heart and purpose of both Conventions Nos 122 and 88. Employment policies cannot succeed when workers are absent from the decision-making process and employment services cannot fully respond to workers' needs if their representatives are excluded from labour market institutions. Workers are not merely beneficiaries of employment policies. They are principal actors in the labour market. They experience unemployment. They experience precarious work. They experience low wages and they experience informality on daily basis. Their organizations possess valuable knowledge and experience that should contribute to the development of employment strategies and labour market reforms. The trade union movement has also raised concerns regarding the exclusion of independent unions from committees and institutions responsible for shaping employment policies.

Such exclusion weakens trust, reduces accountability and undermines the legitimacy of labour market governance. Convention No. 122 recognizes the importance of consultation and cooperation in employment policy. Convention No. 88 similarly relies on labour market

institutions that are responsive to workers' needs. These objectives cannot be achieved without effective participation of representative and independent workers' organizations. No employment policy can be considered truly inclusive if workers are denied meaningful voice in its development and implementation. Therefore, we strongly urge the Government to recognize independent workers' organizations as full partners in the formulation, full partners in the implementation and full partners in the monitoring of employment policies and employment services.

Observer, Building and Woodworkers' International (BWI) – The Building and Woodworkers' International thanks the Government for its report and welcomes this opportunity for discussions under Conventions Nos 88 and 122. Convention No. 122 requires to pursue an active employment policy aimed at promoting full, productive and freely chosen employment, and Convention No. 88 requires effective public employment services, support workers in accessing employment opportunities. Successful implementation of these Conventions cannot be measured solely by the number of jobs created or the number of workers registered with employment services. The real question is whether workers are gaining access to decent work and whether they have a meaningful voice in shaping the policies that affect their working lives. The Committee has highlighted a number of significant labour market challenges facing Iraq, including high unemployment employment, widespread informality and the particularly low participation of women in the labour market.

These challenges require comprehensive and coordinated policy responses that place decent work inclusion and equal opportunities at their centre. The BWI therefore welcomes efforts to develop national employment policies and strengthen employment services. We also note the importance of ensuring that vocational education and training programmes are aligned with the labour market needs and support workers, particularly young women, young people and persons with disabilities and other groups facing barriers to employment. For workers in the construction, building materials and wood sectors these issues are especially important. Employment opportunities generated through reconstruction, infrastructure development and investment must translate into decent jobs, adequate training opportunities and sustainable livelihoods rather than precarious and informal work.

To achieve decent work, workers also need representative organizations capable of defending their interests in participating in labour market governance. Independent trade unions have raised concerns regarding the exclusion of representative workers' organizations from important labour market institutions and consultation processes. They have also highlighted the need for equal treatment among trade union organizations, genuine trade union pluralism and the recognition of independent unions as legitimate social partners. The BWI underlines the importance of effective social dialogue mechanisms that bring together governments, employers and representative workers' organizations on an equal basis. Such dialogue is essential for addressing unemployment informality, labour market inequalities, skill shortages and other employment challenges facing Iraq. Decent work requires rights, representation and participation. We therefore urge the Government to continue developing its national employment policies in consultation with the social partners, strengthening employment services and skills development programmes and assure the full participation of independent workers' organizations in employment policy, employment services and labour market governance, in accordance with Convention Nos 88 and 122.

Observer, Education International (EI) – Conventions Nos 122 and 88 are clear. Employment policy must be built on genuine consultation. This is not optional. Yet in Iraq, independent trade unions report restrictive regulations and the lack of functioning of the tripartite dialogue forum. Consultation remains irregular, limited and too often symbolic and

this must change. Representative workers' organizations have the right to participate fully, regularly and meaningfully in consultations on employment policies, labour market reforms, vocational training and continuous professional development and social protection. Anything less undermines the very purpose of the Conventions we are discussing today. Policies designed without genuine workers' participation will not respond to the realities experienced in workplaces and communities. Representing education workers, Education International wants to stress that education, competencies and skills are central to employment policies. Without sustained investment in public education, in teachers and in inclusive training systems, Iraq will not address the development challenges mentioned by the Government such as unemployment, informality, geographical disparities, climate change, child labour and gender equality.

Genuine tripartite social dialogue is essential to designing policies that work. That means that all representative and independent unions must be at the table, not a selective few. The Government stressed that Iraq is committed and in a momentum for promoting decent work for all and reform for the labour market governance. The principles of Conventions Nos 122 and 88 must now be reflected in practice.

Interpretation from Arabic: Government representative – Before I start reading the prepared text I had before me, I have to admit that this interactive debate should continue, and we receive these observations with openness and appreciation. We have nothing to hide regarding the realities, challenges, and measures we are undertaking. Each time, we consult with the organizations concerned.

On the other hand, I listened to some of the remarks. I had the feeling that we were discussing Convention No. 87 and not Conventions Nos 88 and 122 when it comes to the right to organize, freedom of association and the freedom of trade unions. In Iraq we have a Constitution and the Constitution guarantees freedom of association and trade union pluralism. There is a law to enforce them. There are specific situations, there are challenges and there are measures taken. With regard to the enactment of the Trade Union Organization Law, this is being pursued in cooperation with the ILO

In 2018, Iraq joined Convention No. 87 out of conviction, out of belief in the importance of the multi-nature of the trade unions and the trade unions participated in drafting the clause in the Constitution. Of course, there are different views and there are conflicts. We are a developing country. We are in a region affected by conflicts and crises and now because of the ongoing crises in Iraq, we find ourselves in a situation where oil exports have ground to a halt and, this has a knock-on effect on the employment market. As far as trade unions are concerned, my impression is that some of the remarks that have been made are not up-to-date. We do not have independent and non-independent trade unions. All trade unions in Iraq are independent. There is no intervention whatsoever or interference on the part of the Government in the work of trade unions. There are organizations that are more representative and there are organizations of a different nature. The Government does not boycott or put certain trade unions in different power with other ones. All these organizations are present and they have the approval of the Government and I urge the Worker members to inquire about these issues and be more informed when it comes to social dialogue. The forum for social dialogue comprises all trade unions, all organizations regardless of their size and we consult them when it comes to the adoption of policies. The ILO is aware of this process. There is also continued discussion with the Parliament and the Select Committee in Parliament on this issue. Now I go back to my prepared statement.

At the conclusion of this discussion, we would like to express our appreciation for members of the Committee and all participants, governments, employers and workers. We listened carefully to all the views expressed and all these remarks are welcome when it comes to extending help to strengthen employment and decent work. Equally, it is important to evaluate the situation in countries based on what is actually on the ground, the results and the reforms undertaken, not overlooking the challenges and the extraordinary situations that we have to deal with.

Over the past few decades, Iraq was subject to wars, conflicts, terrorism and economic crises, all of which have left their impact on the labour markets, on the institutions, on the economic infrastructure. However, the Government has not viewed these challenges as grounds for scaling back its international commitments. On the contrary, it has turned them into a driving force for pursuing meaningful and concrete reforms. The drafting of the national employment policy and the development of the labour market are not empty promises. There are measures that are being completed within a time frame in cooperation with the ILO. Therefore, the delegation of Iraq is of the opinion that, what happened over the past few years is a true progress in the implementation of Conventions Nos 88 and 122. We would like to affirm that there is institutional and political will, a serious one, to ensure that we have full employment that is productive and decent.

We have listened to some of the remarks which focused on the challenges. We are not in a state of denial when it comes to these challenges. However, we should not turn a blind eye to the progress achieved. We rely on technical assistance, and we believe this cooperation with the ILO is an indicator. We should not overlook the importance of the reforms that have been achieved. We are not seeking special treatment. We look for a balanced and fair assessment of what is being achieved on the ground.

We also believe that dealing with unemployment, the informal sector and the situation of women and development of skills are deep rooted problems and they cannot be resolved overnight. I think this process takes time and requires a cumulative effort and a long-term policy. That is the path that we have chosen in Iraq.

The delegation of Iraq renews its full cooperation with the ILO, the supervisory bodies and is ready to continue its dialogue with the social partners. I would like to assure you that the Government will continue with the reforms when it comes to employment and social protection, vocational training and social dialogue in line with our international commitments. I would like to make it crystal clear that we do not find ourselves in a position where we defend what our intentions are. On the contrary, we assert our position through achievements, reforms, new policies and I believe our cooperation with the ILO bears witness to that progress. Therefore, we believe that the path we have chosen is a positive one and is worthy of support and technical assistance.

We hope that the conclusions of this Committee will reflect the progress achieved and the type of cooperation we have had.

Employer members – Before outlining our recommendations, we wish to echo the Government's comment that many of the interventions that we heard on this case related to issues that were outside of the scope of the Conventions referenced by the Committee of Experts in its observation. We wish to remind the speakers that we are here to address the Government's application of Conventions Nos 88 and 122 in law and in practice. In closing and with respect to the Conventions at issue, we would like to reiterate the importance of governments' compliance with Conventions Nos 88 and 122.

We believe that compliance is critical to ensure meaningful opportunities for both workers and employers to create an environment that creates sustainable growth. In addition, compliance with Convention No. 122 is critical to ensuring the broader effectiveness of the ten core ILO Conventions. The Employer members call on the Government to advance the integration and coordination of a national employment policy along with employment services, vocational training and education, taking into consideration national conditions and practices. The Employer members call on the Government to continue to engage in social dialogue with social partners when advancing the integration and coordination of the national employment policy, and to do so in a manner to effectively address the labour market challenges faced by workers and employers in Iraq.

The Employer members thus request the Government to:

- provide information on the development and implementation of the new national employment policy;
- provide explanations for how the national employment policy is coordinated with the public employment service and how that service contributes in practice to the implementation of the national employment policy;
- provide specific information on measures aimed at women, young persons and vulnerable groups including the concrete impact of those measures on labour market participation and employment opportunities;
- continue to ensure meaningful consultation with the most representative social partners through the development of the national employment policy and labour law reforms in line with Article 3 of Convention No. 122;
- provide information on the functioning and coverage of the public employment service network including in the region of Kurdistan, as well as the cooperation mechanisms between public and private employment agencies;
- provide information on the reforms and initiatives undertaken to align vocational education and training with labour market requirements, especially as it relates to vocational training and human resources development for women, young persons and persons with disabilities;
- provide information on efforts to improve labour market information systems including collection analysis and dissemination of disaggregated statistical data;
- provide information on the consultations with the social partners relating to the denunciation of Convention No. 140 and
- continue to seek ILO technical assistance to support implementation, reporting and coordination between employment policy and employment services institutions.

Worker members – The Worker members thank the Government of Iraq for its participation in this discussion and all delegates who took the floor. The Workers members regret, however, the absence of a full tripartite representation from Iraq during this discussion as meaningful tripartite participation is fundamental to the work of the ILO and to the effective examination of cases before the Committee. The discussion has confirmed the significant and persistent structural challenges facing the Iraqi labour market as highlighted by the Committee of Experts in relation to the application of the International Labour Organization employment service Convention No. 88 and the employment policy Convention No. 122 together with related instruments on skills development and lifelong learning.

Despite the Government's effort to develop new national employment policies and initiatives such as the Mihan platform, unemployment remains high, particularly among women and young persons. Labour force participation especially for women remains extremely low and informality continues to affect the majority of workers. These are not marginal concerns. They point to deep structural deficiencies in the functioning of the labour market and in access to decent and productive employment. The Workers' group remains particularly concerned by the continued exclusion of women from the labour market and the persistent barriers faced by young persons, internally displaced persons and persons with disability. These groups requires targeted and effective policy measures supported by well-functioning public employment services under Convention No. 88.

We also note the continued lack of detailed information on concrete measures to reduce informality and extend labour law coverage and social protection, particularly in rural and peripheral areas where decent work deficits are most acute. While we acknowledge the ongoing international cooperation initiatives, including those supported through the International Labour Organization's Decent Work Country Programme and related projects, the Worker members stress that such initiatives must be fully integrated into a coherent national employment policy framework with clear targets, measurable outcomes and effective coordination between employment services, skill systems and labour market institutions. With regard to vocational education and training, the Worker members reiterate their concern over the absence of information on results achieved, institutional reforms and structured social partners involvement. A responsive and well governed skill system remains essential for translating employment policies objectives into real labour market outcomes. The Worker members also recall the importance of paid educational leave under Convention No. 140 as an integral component of lifelong learning and employability. Any steps away from this framework risk weakening workers' access to skills development at a time when it is most needed.

Ultimately the effectiveness of Iraq's employment policy under Convention No. 122 will depend on its ability to ensure coherent coordination between policy design, public employment services, vocational training systems and reliable labour market information supported by meaningful social dialogue. The Worker members, therefore, urge the Government to intensify efforts to address structural labour market weaknesses, strengthen implementation capacity and ensure that policy commitments are translated into tangible improvements in employment opportunities and working conditions for all.

In conclusion, we urge the Government to:

- finalize and implement coherent national employment policies aimed at full productive and freely chosen employment and decent work and strengthen policy coherence and align employment policy, vocational education and training, and labour market requirements;
- strengthen the public employment service network, including in the region of Kurdistan, and report on the impact of the Mihan platform as a facilitator for labour market matching;
- conclude the ongoing legislative reforms applicable to trade unions and tripartite consultation and ensure the environment conducive to freedom of association in full compliance with the application of international labour standards;
- develop and implement targeted measures to increase employment of women and young workers as well as other marginalized or disadvantaged groups including persons with disabilities and internally displaced persons and ensure their equal access to employment services;

- take concrete steps to reduce informality by extending labour law coverage and social protection, particularly in rural and peripheral areas and supporting the transition to formal employment;
- strengthen labour market information systems and improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of labour market data to support the development and oversight of employment policies and services;
- report to the ILO on the result and impact of technical and vocational education and training reforms and measures to promote access to paid educational leave consistent with the applicable international obligations;
- ensure the full and meaningful involvement of all representative workers' and employers' organizations in the design, implementation, monitoring and review of the national employment policy in the organization and operation of employment services and in labour market governance through structured and regular social dialogue in line with the principle of Convention No. 122 and Convention No. 88.

We therefore request the Government of Iraq to avail itself of ILO technical assistance in order to bring its legislation in full compliance with Conventions Nos 88 and 122.

Presidenta – Damos por concluida la discusión de este caso. Agradecemos la participación del representante gubernamental y de todos los oradores que tomaron la palabra.

Conclusions of the Committee

The Committee took note of the oral information provided by the Government and of the discussion that followed.

The Committee took note of the significant, persistent and deep structural deficiencies in the functioning of the labour market and in access to decent and productive employment, such as high unemployment, particularly among women and young persons, and extremely low labour force participation.

Taking into account the discussion, the Committee invited the Government to take effective and time-bound measures in consultation with the most representative workers' and employers' organizations to:

- **advance the integration and coordination of employment policy, employment services and vocational training policies within a coherent national framework, supported by strong social dialogue and robust labour market information, to effectively address the country's employment challenges;**
- **provide information on the development, content, implementation, and results of the national employment policy, including its contribution to addressing unemployment and increasing labour market participation, particularly the specific measures taken to promote employment for groups in vulnerable situations, such as young persons, women, internally displaced persons, and persons with disabilities;**
- **provide information on how the national employment policy is coordinated with the public employment service and how that service contributes in practice to the implementation of the national employment policy;**

- provide information on the reforms and initiatives undertaken to align vocational education and training with labour market requirements, including any efforts to support skills development, apprenticeships, recognition of prior learning, and effective job-to-livelihood transitions, especially as it relates to vocational training and human resources development for women, young persons, and persons with disabilities;
- provide information on the functioning and coverage of the public employment service network, including in the region of Kurdistan, as well as the cooperation mechanisms between the public employment service and private employment agencies;
- strengthen labour market information systems and improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of disaggregated labour market data to support the design, implementation, monitoring and review of employment policies and services, and provide information on progress achieved;
- provide information on the results and impact of technical and vocational education and training reforms and related skills-development measures; and
- strengthen the full and meaningful involvement of the most representative employers' and workers' organisations through effective consultations and social dialogue regarding employment policy and employment services and provide specific examples of consultations held with the social partners and their participation throughout the employment policy process.

The Committee requested the Government to provide detailed information to the Committee of Experts by 1 September 2026 on the actions taken to implement these recommendations and the progress made, and to avail itself of ILO technical assistance.