

Recurrent discussion Committee on Social Dialogue and Tripartism

Date: 5 June 2026

► Draft conclusions concerning the third recurrent discussion on social dialogue and tripartism

I. Context and guiding principles

1. The world of work is being reshaped by technological change, demographic shifts, climate change, globalization. These developments impact workers, enterprises and societies, creating opportunities and challenges. They can enhance productivity, job creation and economic growth but also widen decent work deficits, undermine rights, increase inequality, and create instability. Moreover, geopolitical instability crises, conflicts, supply chain disruptions, cost-of-living pressures and economic uncertainty, and eroding trust in public institutions have produced further challenges.
2. Social dialogue and tripartism are founding principles of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and means of democratic labour governance for navigating transitions and achieving social justice as stated in the ILO constitution, decent work, sustainable enterprises, productivity, competitiveness, inclusive growth and resilience.
3. Social dialogue must be grounded in respect for freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, representative and independent employers' and workers' organizations, legal certainty, mutual trust and good faith. Fundamental principles and rights at work anchored in international labour standards are particularly important for the full realization of the Decent Work Agenda.
4. At the same time, social dialogue reflects each country's specific historical, cultural, political, economic and industrial relations context. It takes various forms and operates at different levels according to national circumstances, including through cross-border social dialogue in an increasingly complex globalized economy. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to social dialogue. It is shaped by the realities in which it is practiced, resulting in country-specific variations, legal frameworks, institutions, mechanisms and processes.
5. All forms of social dialogue play important roles. Timely consultation, exchanges of information through bipartite and tripartite cooperation can strengthen policy design and implementation, build trust, prevent disputes and support consensus-building among governments and representative employers' and workers' organizations. Social dialogue mechanisms contribute collectively to sound industrial relations, labour market stability and effective governance.

6. Collective bargaining is a fundamental pillar of social dialogue. It is a voluntary process between representative organizations of employers and workers conducted in good faith and in accordance with national law and practice. Governments play a role in supporting the development of machinery for voluntary negotiations between employers or employers' organizations and workers' organizations at any appropriate level. Measures taken by public authorities to encourage and promote the development of collective bargaining should be subject to prior consultation and, whenever possible, agreement between public authorities and employers' and workers' organizations.
7. Effective workplace cooperation can support occupational safety and health (OSH), productive workplaces, skills, and adaptation to change, and protect employment, business continuity and job creation, and could play a role in the prevention and resolution of labour disputes, particularly during periods of economic uncertainty and transformation. Workplace cooperation should respect freedom of association and collective bargaining and its outcomes and should not undermine the role of trade unions. It covers matters of mutual concern not within the scope of collective bargaining machinery.
8. The objective of the present Conclusions is to strengthen the effectiveness, inclusiveness, representativeness and impact of tripartite and bipartite social dialogue by enhancing the enabling environment, reinforcing institutions of work, expanding the reach and capacity of workers' and employers' organizations, and ensuring coherent and adequately resourced ILO action for practical and result-oriented outcomes.

II. Strengthening effectiveness and impact

9. Social dialogue is more than a process or institution. Its impact is measured by its ability to deliver practical outcomes: balanced, evidence-based policies, stronger trust, improved labour-market outcomes, and measurable benefits for workers, employers, enterprises, economic units and societies. To remain relevant, social dialogue should be adaptable and capable of generating solutions that respond to socio-economic realities and emerging challenges.
10. Across the world, governments, employers' and workers' organizations, have relied on social dialogue to advance decent work, address transformations in the world of work and build resilience and trust. In some countries, these efforts have contributed to concrete outcomes in a wide range of areas, including: wages and working conditions, OSH, social protection, skills development and lifelong learning, gender equality and non-discrimination, labour law and policy reform, access to labour justice, formalization, labour migration, domestic and care work, crisis prevention and response, productivity and digital and just transitions.
11. Tripartite mechanisms have been used to address issues raised by the ILO supervisory bodies. In some cases, their observations and recommendations have been taken into account and given effect, leading to tangible results and supporting the development of national legal, institutional and policy measures and initiatives.
12. Social dialogue, including collective bargaining and tripartite consultation on wage-setting, has contributed to fair and sustainable wage outcomes. They contributed to reducing wage inequalities and poverty, while cushioning the effects of cost-of-living and other economic shocks. They also have enabled the regulation of working hours and rest periods, as well as working time and work organization arrangements and other conditions adapted to economic and social realities.

13. Collective bargaining has played a critical role in advancing gender equality by helping to close gender pay gaps, improve work–life balance, and secure provisions such as parental leave, equal pay for work of equal value, and measures to prevent discrimination and violence and harassment in the world of work.
14. Social dialogue including collective bargaining has contributed to higher productivity and competitiveness and supported the fair distribution of gains by reducing transaction costs, building trust, cooperation, and adaptability, while enhancing legal certainty, compliance and labour market stability.
15. Social dialogue has helped constituents anticipate and manage the effects of digitalization, artificial intelligence and other technological changes by ensuring that digital technologies are introduced and used in a fair, inclusive and human-centred manner, while supporting sustainable enterprises and adaptation to change.
16. Social dialogue has proven particularly valuable as both a preventive and response mechanism in periods of crisis, transition and major disruption. Social dialogue institutions helped identify risks early, prevented the occurrence and escalation of labour disputes, built trust between the parties, supported adaptability and inclusiveness, ensured balanced public policies and facilitated complex transitions in ways that protected workers, supported enterprise resilience, maintained economic and social continuity, and fostered sustainable development and peace.
17. At the same time, challenges remain.
18. Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining are under serious pressure in many countries. Restrictions on civil liberties and civic space, weak or under-resourced labour governance institutions, inadequate or ineffective labour dispute prevention and resolution systems, undue interference with employers' and workers' organizations, the bypassing of representative institutions, and legal or practical obstacles to effective representation impede meaningful social dialogue.
19. Workers and employers in the informal economy face persistent challenges and structural barriers to transition to formal economy and to exercise their right to organise and bargain collectively. The realisation of decent work and sustainable enterprises require active labour market policies and effective measures to the transition to the formal economy.

III. Ensuring an enabling environment fostering inclusivity

20. Effective social dialogue requires an enabling environment grounded in respect for freedom of association, the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, representative and independent employers' and workers' organizations, legal certainty, mutual trust, and good faith. The weakening of these fundamental rights and preconditions undermines both social dialogue and democratic processes. Independent and representative employers' and workers' organizations, contribute to more resilient societies, lower levels of inequality and greater trust in public institutions. Efforts to strengthen social dialogue should respect the autonomy and representativeness of employers' and workers' organizations and take account of various national industrial relations systems and practices.

A. Role of Governments

21. Governments have the primary responsibility to establish and maintain an enabling legal and institutional environment that facilitates social dialogue without dictating its outcomes. International labour standards, their ratification and incorporation into national law, including through engagement with the ILO supervisory system reinforce the legal foundations for

social dialogue. Governments should ensure that institutions of work are adequately resourced. Governments retain primary responsibility for creating stable economic conditions, effective labour market institutions and conducive environments for investment and enterprise development.

22. Member States, with the support of the ILO should:

- (a) respect, promote and realize freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- (b) ratify and effectively implement 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) and the Tripartite Consultation Convention, 1976 (No. 144);
- (c) establish and enforce clear legal and institutional guarantees in law and practice;
- (d) protect employers' and workers' organizations and their members from interference, violence, intimidation, and reprisals including through adequate legal safeguards and dissuasive sanctions;
- (e) support mechanisms for inclusive social dialogue on policies regarding transformations in the world of work, including formalization, labour migration, crisis prevention and response, and digital and just transitions;
- (f) promote the development and use of collective bargaining machinery at all appropriate levels, adapted to national circumstances and industrial relations systems, and developed in consultation with representative employers' and workers' organizations;
- (g) support meaningful negotiations, by giving effect to negotiated outcomes, and providing for dispute-resolution mechanisms that help parties reach agreements voluntarily;
- (h) encourage effective workplace cooperation to foster safe and productive workplaces, while respecting collective bargaining and its outcomes and without undermining the role of trade unions;
- (i) use tripartite social dialogue to consider measures to be taken to promote the ratification and implementation of international labour Conventions and Protocols, and address comments of the ILO supervisory bodies, including through labour law reforms and the adoption of other measures aimed at aligning national law and practice with ratified instruments;
- (j) ensure that institutions of work, particularly labour administration systems, including labour inspection and enforcement, and effective labour justice systems, are adequately resourced and accessible to all employers and workers, including MSMEs and those in vulnerable situations;
- (k) support and finance the ILO plan of action on social dialogue and tripartism, including through voluntary contributions, South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) and other partnerships.

B. Representativeness and inclusiveness

- 23.** Effective social dialogue requires strengthening the quality, legitimacy and inclusiveness of labour governance institutions, while fostering an environment where employers' and workers' organizations can expand their membership and reach in full autonomy. Recalling the resolution concerning tripartism and social dialogue adopted by the International Labour

Conference at its 90th Session (June 2002), which reaffirms the role of legitimate, independent and democratic organizations of employers and workers, Member States with the support of the ILO, should:

- (a) guarantee that all workers and employers can exercise freedom of association and benefit from the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- (b) ensure the meaningful involvement of representative employers' and workers' organizations in social dialogue processes;
- (c) establish procedures for the recognition of representative employers' and workers' organizations for the purposes of social dialogue or collective bargaining;
- (d) provide capacity building to enable social partners' effective engagement in collective bargaining at all levels as well as in other bipartite or tripartite social dialogue processes;
- (e) support representative employers' and workers' organisations in their efforts to expand their role in representing workers and economic units in the informal economy in social dialogue processes and institutions;
- (f) strengthen the representation and participation of women and groups disproportionately affected by, or at risk of, informality, including in certain sectors, and in types of economic units, such as micro and small enterprises and own-account workers, while preserving the role of representative employers' and workers' organizations and existing institutional frameworks;
- (g) enhance social dialogue structures in ways that improve effectiveness and avoid fragmentation and incoherence within national industrial relations systems and strengthen their representativeness.

IV. Strengthening ILO action and follow-up on social dialogue

- 24. In the context of the ILO reform, the International Labour Conference strongly reaffirms that social dialogue, including collective bargaining, and support for institutions of democratic labour governance remain at the centre of the ILO's mandate. This should be reflected in allocation of adequate, dedicated human and financial resources in program and budget proposals, while ensuring coherence, avoiding duplication and delivering impact for constituents.
- 25. The ILO is therefore called upon to give full effect to this resolution and assist Members in strengthening social dialogue in all its forms and at all levels in line with the ILO international labour standards through the following means of action:

A. Means of action

Standards-related action

- 26. To improve coordination between its standards-related work, technical cooperation activities and research, the International Labour Office (Office) should:
 - (a) promote the ratification and effective implementation of international labour Conventions related to social dialogue;
 - (b) based on guidance of the ILO supervisory bodies and constituent demands, support Member States in addressing barriers in law and practice that hinder the full realization

of freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

- (c) support labour administrations in driving effective tripartite consultations on labour law reform processes to ensure alignment of national legislation with international labour standards and good comparative practices.

Building capacity and strengthening development cooperation

27. The Office, with the support of the constituents, as part of its programme of development cooperation including through Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) and enhanced collaboration with the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin (Turin Centre), should:

- (a) enhance the capacity of governments, employers' and workers' organizations, to engage effectively in social dialogue at any level, including through training and support on collective bargaining, workplace cooperation, negotiation skills, as well as labour dispute prevention and resolution, including grievance handling, mediation and conciliation;
- (b) strengthen the institutional capacity and effectiveness of institutions of work, including labour administration systems, labour inspection, labour justice systems, tripartite social dialogue institutions and other mechanisms that support social dialogue and the implementation of labour rights;
- (c) support constituents in using social dialogue to address wages and working conditions, digitalization, just transition, skills and lifelong learning, OSH, decent work in supply chains, including in the context of trade, the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, as amended in 2022, human rights due diligence, and sector-specific challenges;
- (d) promote peer learning and the exchange of good practices, including in the context of SSTC;
- (e) support employers' and workers' organizations in their efforts to reach, organize and represent informal economy workers and economic units, including, where feasible and with appropriate capacity-building, through targeted outreach strategies, training programmes and tailored services;
- (f) support ILO staff in better integrating social dialogue and tripartism across the ILO's work.

Research and evidence

28. The Office should:

- (a) strengthen evidence-based research and practical knowledge on freedom of association and collective bargaining, tripartite social dialogue, workplace cooperation, access to labour justice, grievance handling and access to remedy, collective bargaining and productivity, representativeness frameworks, democracy and inequality;
- (b) develop and maintain databases related to social dialogue, including indicators on country-level compliance with freedom of association and collective bargaining rights and monitoring and evaluation of social dialogue outcomes;
- (c) expand the knowledge base on innovative social dialogue and industrial relations practices, including in relation to formalization, domestic and care work, organizing hard-to-organize groups of workers and economic units and gender equality;

- (d) undertake further research on the role of social dialogue in addressing major transitions affecting the world of work, including:
 - (i) digitalization and artificial intelligence, towards convening a Meeting of experts on social dialogue and artificial intelligence;
 - (ii) just transition;
 - (iii) peace, conflict prevention, resilience and social cohesion;
 - (iv) demographic shifts.

B. Coherence

29. The Office should:

- (a) ensure that its work is results-oriented, responds to the needs and priorities of its constituents, and focuses on areas with greatest potential impact;
- (b) incentivize integrated, cross-cutting interventions, that are field-led, strategic, responsive to constituent demand, and promote an enabling environment for freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining and investing in institutions of work;
- (c) strengthen engagement with the multilateral system, including United Nations entities and International Financial Institutions, to promote social dialogue as a driver for inclusive economic growth, productivity, social resilience and peace, while avoiding duplication with other organizations;
- (d) reflect the outcomes of these Conclusions in the further development and implementation of the integrated strategy for the promotion and implementation of the right to collective bargaining, endorsed by the Governing Body at its 349th Session (October-November 2023) and the ILO's Development Cooperation Strategy 2026-29 endorsed by the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March-April 2026).

C. Programme and budget and governance follow-up

- 30.** Future programme and budget proposals should operationalize these Conclusions by providing adequate regular budget resources to support freedom of association, the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, and social dialogue in all its forms.
- 31.** The Office should undertake to mobilize extra-budgetary resources to support the implementation of these Conclusions, aligned with constituents' priorities, the ILO's Development Cooperation Strategy 2026-29 and DWCPs, while avoiding duplication.
- 32.** Follow-up should include measurable indicators, monitoring and evaluation arrangements and regular reporting through established governance mechanisms, including a high-level evaluation of ILO action on social dialogue and tripartism.