



# Labour dispute systems: Guidelines for improved performance



Industrial and Employment Relations  
Department (DIALOGUE)



International **Training** Centre

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The promotion of sound industrial relations is a critical part of effective labour market governance.

It requires an effective system for the prevention and resolution of labour disputes. There are times when the relationship between workers and employers and their respective organizations will be harmonious and cooperative; at other times there may be disagreement and conflict. Some conflict is inevitable in any employment relationship and accepted as normal. The inevitability of labour conflicts, however, does not mean that they should be ignored. Conflict can manifest as a dispute with negative consequences for the parties involved and the broader economy and thus needs to be managed.

Ideally, conflicts arising within the workplace can be prevented from escalating into formal disputes that then require the intervention of third parties, including State institutions. Strengthening dispute prevention and resolution within workplaces is thus of fundamental importance. However, it is also necessary to consider the various arrangements that can assist employers and workers and their organizations to resolve their disputes through processes such as voluntary conciliation and arbitration, without resorting to the court system.

In order to respond to growing demands from ILO members states to establish or revitalize mechanisms for labour disputes settlement, the Industrial and Employment Relations Department (DIALOGUE) of the ILO and the Social Dialogue Programme of the International Training Centre of the ILO have published a new practitioners' Guide to provide both constituents and industrial relations practitioners with practical information on how to set up effective dispute resolution institutions and services.

*Labour dispute systems: Guidelines for improved performance* considers different approaches to providing effective voluntary conciliation and arbitration services including within the labour administration and as part of State-funded commissions and bodies that operate with a greater degree of independence and autonomy.

Providing a voluntary, free-of-charge, and expeditious mechanism for labour disputes settlement through conciliation and arbitration requires an assessment of existing arrangements, this may be within an existing labour administration or an independent commission or boards. The Guide provides advice on the steps that need to be taken to either revitalize an existing system or establish an independent institution, ensuring that these operate efficiently and provide effective dispute resolution services.

## Content

The content of the Guide is as follows:

- CHAPTER 1 Overview of Industrial Relations
- CHAPTER 2 Assessment of Existing Systems
- CHAPTER 3 Revitalizing an Existing System
- CHAPTER 4 Establishing an Independent Body
- CHAPTER 5 Performance Improvement
- CHAPTER 6 Raising Awareness and Providing Information
- CHAPTER 7 Managing Conflict in the Workplace
- CHAPTER 8 Issues and Challenges

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