

**Global Dialogue Forum on Employment Relationships
in Retail Commerce: Their impact on Decent Work and
Competitiveness**Geneva
22–23 April 2015

Points of consensus ¹**Challenges for ILO constituents**

1. Unlike many other sectors, retail commerce is important in every country. It is one of the largest employers around the world, representing an entry point into the labour market, particularly for young people and women who represent the majority of retail workers in many countries. Successful retail enterprises are just as necessary for continued employment as is a skilled, stable and motivated workforce with decent working conditions.
2. Few industries have experienced greater change in their waged employment over the last few decades than retail commerce, where highly varied non-standard forms of employment are becoming common practice. A wide range of factors are driving this process, from changes in economic circumstances and consumer preferences, globalization, to advanced technological innovations and the new forms of competition they have enabled, including an explosive growth in electronic commerce. In many countries, wages in retail commerce are below the average for the economy as a whole and the sector experiences a high labour turnover.
3. While non-standard forms of employment can contribute to business flexibility and help enterprises increase their competitiveness, decent work, including secure, predictable hours of work and income security, is similarly necessary for workers.

**Impact of non-standard forms of
employment on decent work**

4. Fundamental principles and rights at work, as defined in the 1998 ILO Declaration, apply to all workers in retail commerce, regardless of the nature of their employment relationship. Non-standard forms of employment should meet the legitimate needs of workers and employers and not be used to undermine labour rights and decent work,

¹ These points of consensus were adopted by the Global Dialogue Forum on 23 April 2015. In accordance with established procedures, they will be submitted to the Governing Body of the ILO for its consideration.

including freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, equality and non-discrimination, security of employment, and predictability of working hours and income.

5. The conclusions of the ILO Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Non-Standard Forms of Employment, held in Geneva on 16–19 February 2015, are fully relevant to the retail trade sector. Workers in retail commerce in non-standard forms of employment may face a higher incidence of decent work deficits and they may face barriers to collectively address decent work deficits along one or more of the following dimensions of work: (1) access to employment and labour market transitions to decent work; (2) wage differentials; (3) access to social security; (4) conditions of work; (5) training and career development; (6) occupational safety and health; and (7) freedom of association and collective bargaining. If left unchecked, these decent work deficits risk contributing to increased insecurity and greater inequality.
6. As in other sectors, these dimensions are often insufficiently addressed by regulatory frameworks, enforcement and labour market systems, active labour market policies or judicial systems. All of these should be similarly effective and accessible for all workers and employers in the sector.
7. Social dialogue, including collective bargaining, is widely acknowledged as a fundamental mechanism for achieving decent work. It is a vital element in reconciling social partners' interests, including the need for flexibility, decent employment, income security and predictable work. There is a need for social dialogue in retail commerce involving the social partners and policy-makers, to design and implement measures to ensure non-standard forms of employment in the sector are fully in line with Decent Work.
8. Such measures need to draw on existing good practices in the retail and other sectors, covering such areas as training, skills and human resource development and promotion, flexible working practices, and work organization.
9. Governments have an important role to play in facilitating and creating a climate conducive to sustainable retail enterprises that also safeguard decent work in retail commerce. Governments should also promote conditions that encourage transition from the informal to the formal economy.

Recommendations for future action by the International Labour Organization and its Members

In view of the discussion at the Global Dialogue Forum on Employment Relationships in Retail Commerce, the following future action was recommended:

10. Tripartite constituents should:
 - engage in social dialogue in order to promote decent work and sustainable enterprises and ensure equitable treatment for all workers, regardless of their employment status, taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable groups, according to national circumstances.
11. Governments should:
 - (a) engage social partners in defining non-standard forms of employment and in reviewing labour legislation and policies in retail commerce;
 - (b) as much as possible in collaboration with social partners pursue labour market and other policies with the goal to ensuring continuous progress towards decent jobs;

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- (c) ensure workplace compliance, enforce labour legislation and guarantee workers' rights.

12. The Office should:

- (a) continue to promote the ratification, effective implementation and better use of international labour standards relevant to the retail commerce sector and the fundamental principles and rights at work (FPRW), and build capacity of constituents to do likewise;
- (b) promote social dialogue, which includes collective bargaining, in retail commerce and develop capacity of tripartite constituents to engage in social dialogue;
- (c) work with member States to improve systems to collect and disseminate regular data on employment levels, minimum wages, wage structures, working hours, contractual arrangements and other relevant data on the basis of resolutions adopted by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians; and
- (d) pay particular attention to research and comparative analysis, map good practices and share knowledge on: the drivers of change; the employment-creation potential; the diversification of employment relationships; SMEs and large retailers; e-commerce and digitization; and the impact on decent work of non-standard forms of employment in retail commerce.