



The International Labour Organization,
Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean
In collaboration with
The Ministry of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development
of Trinidad and Tobago



8th Meeting of Caribbean Ministers of Labour

THE CARIBBEAN AND LABOUR, 2013 AND BEYOND: STRENGTHENING DECENT WORK FOR DEVELOPMENT

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
2-3 July, 2013

CONCLUSIONS

The Ministers of Labour and other high-level representatives of the Ministries and Departments of Labour of the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean,¹

Having met in Trinidad and Tobago, 2-3 July 2013, and considered key issues under the theme “The Caribbean and Labour 2013 and Beyond: Strengthening Decent Work for Development”, with the participation of the ILO Director-General, the CARICOM Secretary General as well as representatives of the Caribbean Employers’ Confederation (CEC) and the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL);

Encouraged by the fact that 21 delegations were present, 16 of which were led by Ministers,

Recalling the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, 2001, Article VI which states: “The Community shall have the following objectives: (a) improved standards of living and work; (b) full employment of labour and other factors of production; [and] (c) accelerated, coordinated and sustained economic development and convergence;”

Noting the relevance of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), the Tripartite Resolution concerning the Promotion of Sustainable Enterprises (2007), the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008), and the Global Jobs Pact (2009) to the Caribbean situation;

Recalling the discussions of the 7th ILO Meeting of Caribbean Labour Ministers, 2010, entitled “Coherence for Human and Social Development in the Caribbean”, which underlined the importance of the Labour Ministries’ contribution to human and social development through the Decent Work Agenda and the value of policy coherence in relation to labour migration, harmonization of legislation, social security systems, labour market information systems, technical vocational education and training, and entrepreneurial education in particular for young persons entering the workforce;

¹ Adopted by Government representatives of the following member States and non-metropolitan territories: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curacao, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Sint Maarten, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands.

Recognizing the importance of the Conclusions of the Seventeenth American Regional Meeting, 2010, which called for the updating of the Decent Work Agenda for the Hemisphere as well as for social dialogue to be used to make advances in and to review fully areas of importance such as the creation of decent and productive work opportunities through the promotion and development of sustainable enterprises; respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining; the promotion of competitiveness together with social cohesion, preserving and respecting the fundamental rights at work enshrined in the 1998 Declaration; and the strengthening of labour market institutions;

Recognizing the importance of integrating, in a comprehensive and coherent manner, policies for sustainable economic growth and development, and for full and productive employment and Decent Work, as a central goal of the post-2015 development agenda taking into consideration the special needs of women, youth, rural populations and vulnerable groups;

Acknowledging that each country and territory of the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean, while sharing certain historical and cultural similarities, is faced with different economic and social realities, and that there is scope for working together for a Caribbean-wide response to the emerging opportunities and challenges;

Have endorsed and concluded that:

1. Role and Importance of Ministries of Labour

- 1.1. Ministries of Labour have an important role in promoting and advancing policy coherence with the aim of making decent work a central goal of national and regional development efforts, and to ensure that it be an explicit goal in the post-2015 agenda;
- 1.2. Ministries of Labour need to ensure the integration of labour dimensions in trade, economics, finance, education, health and well-being, and environment, as well as to reinforce the importance of effectively engaging in social dialogue forums to ensure a tripartite input in these areas;
- 1.3. Ministers should meet more frequently to better prepare themselves to address the many issues which confront labour nationally, regionally and internationally. To this end they agree to:
 - 1.3.1. utilize information communications technology (ICT) to facilitate their meetings and enhance coordination;
 - 1.3.2. meet at the ministerial level at least once a year and twice per year at the technical level;
 - 1.3.3. utilize all fora when they meet to caucus on matters of importance to the world of work;

2. Legislation

- 2.1. Reviewing and modernization of labour law need to continue to ensure improvements in decent work;
- 2.2. Greater attention needs to be paid to the harmonization of legislation in support of economic integration and the creation of an enabling environment for

sustainable enterprises, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and a regional labour market;

3. Movement of Labour

- 3.1. Regulations governing intra-regional migration should facilitate the portability of social security benefits and documented migration;
- 3.2. Ministries of Labour should play a key role in developing an integrated labour market responsive to business needs while recognizing the needs of workers;
- 3.3. More robust systems of recognition of qualifications and consequent issuing of CVQ certification be implemented as a matter of urgency;
- 3.4. Seek mechanisms for affordable regional transport systems to facilitate the effective utilization of the region's human resources;

4. Regional Integration and Policy Coherence

- 4.1. Policy coherence in the areas of employment and human resource development must be developed to support countries to address issues of mutual concern including labour migration, job creation, enhanced labour supply, equity in the labour market and ensuring a skilled workforce;
- 4.2. A regional platform for the on-going sharing of information, experiences and lessons learned on labour, employment and related issues should be developed;
- 4.3. A regional human resource development strategy, a regional employment policy, a regional green jobs and green enterprises policy and a regional strategy for enhancing productivity should be developed;

5. Training and Education

- 5.1. Integrated labour market information systems with the input of the social partners should be established and strengthened to provide relevant and timely information and analyses so that education and training curricula and systems can be developed to promote a greater demand-driven approach to workforce training and development;
- 5.2. Systems for workforce education and training with emphasis on entrepreneurship education, particularly of young persons, are strengthened and technical and vocational education and training, including reform of curricula to place greater focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics are enhanced;

6. Social Dialogue and Tripartism

- 6.1. Social dialogue at the national and regional levels should be formalized and institutionalized to enable more effective input to economic and social policies at all levels;
- 6.2. Consideration should be given to the development of a regional social partnership mechanism to ensure tripartite social dialogue on all aspects concerning CSME;

7. Social Protection

- 7.1. In establishing social protection floors, national social protection systems should be evaluated;
- 7.2. Social protection floors should consider ILO Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) concerning National Floors of Social Protection which promotes a tiered system with a universal protection component that provides security in key areas, and additional and other protections through non-universal components;

8. Productivity and Competitiveness

- 8.1. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on productivity enhancement through, inter alia, the establishment and strengthening of Productivity Councils and by placing productivity growth on the agenda of Decent Work Country Programmes to support economic growth and job creation;
- 8.2. An appropriate enabling environment needs to be created to encourage movement from informal to formal employment and to foster innovative and productive work practices to ensure competitiveness levels in the region are heightened;
- 8.3. Statistical mechanisms must be established through Statistical Offices and Productivity Councils to produce internationally comparable productivity indicators to allow monitoring of productivity growth;

9. Employment and Trade

- 9.1. Activities related to the implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement and other trade agreements should be monitored and measured;
- 9.2. An integrated approach based on the Conclusions from the 102nd session of the International Labour Conference (June 2013) on Sustainable Development, Decent Work and Green Jobs needs to be implemented to transition to the Green Economy and to promote green jobs;

10. Future ILO Focus

- 10.1. Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) should, at their renewal, reflect key national development strategies and the conclusions outlined above.

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