



The International Labour Organization
Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean
in collaboration with
The Government of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas



9th ILO Meeting of the Caribbean Ministers of Labour

DECENT WORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Nassau, Bahamas
3-4 March 2015

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 Nassau, The Bahamas, 3-4 March 2015, and considered key issues under the theme “Decent Work and Sustainable Development”, with the participation of the ILO Director General, representatives of the CARICOM Secretariat, UN Agencies and the Association of Caribbean States, 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, 14 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;” and Article 222 relating to the locus standi of private entities;

Reaffirming the relevance to the Caribbean situation 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);

Recalling the discussions of the 8th ILO Meeting of Caribbean Labour Ministers, 2013, entitled “The Caribbean and Labour 2013 and Beyond: Strengthening Decent Work for Development”, which underlined the importance of the role of Labour Ministries and gave priority to social dialogue and tripartism, productivity, modernization and the harmonization of legislation, policy coherence and movement of labour within the Community, training and education, and social protection;

Recognizing the relevance of the Conclusions of the ILO 18th Americas Regional Meeting, 2014 to the Caribbean Labour Agenda and noting in particular calls for the immediate, renewed and specific action to address the youth unemployment crisis, the formulation of policies to promote a just transition in the framework of the conclusions concerning achieving

¹ Adopted by Government representatives of the following member States and non-metropolitan territories: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curacao, 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.

decent work, green jobs and sustainable development, and the call for the ILO's continued promotion of effective social dialogue;

Recalling that the 2013 Conference Resolution on Sustainable Development, Decent Work and Green Jobs reinforces the principle of strong social consensus on the goals and road to sustainability and that social dialogue needs to be an integral part of the institutional framework for policy-making and implementation at all levels requiring adequate, informed and ongoing consultation with all relevant stakeholders;

Reaffirming the advantages of working together for a Caribbean-wide response, built on common policies, principles and standards, to address the emerging challenges and opportunities;

Commended the ILO for using the Conclusions of the 8th Meeting of Ministers of Labour as a working document to contribute to technical assistance programmes and convening a timely follow-up meeting to assess measures taken to address this agenda, and

Have endorsed and concluded that:

1. Legislative and regulatory frameworks

- 1.1. Access to quality justice at national and regional levels was an essential component in the achievement of Decent Work and Sustainable Development;
- 1.2. A review of the CARICOM Model approach to legislation be undertaken to determine whether a principles-based approach might be more effective;
- 1.3. A speedy, low-level, and cost effective system of dispute resolution to deal with issues arising from the workplace should be promoted and instituted at national level;
- 1.4. The ILO's suggested methodological approach to minimum wage fixing be made available to constituents to assist in their determination processes.

2. Child Labour Initiative

- 2.1. Countries, not yet signatory to the Regional "Free of Child Labour" Initiative² be provided with information sufficient to enable them to consider becoming a party to it.

3. Collaboration between ILO and CARICOM

- 3.1. Continued close collaboration between ILO and CARICOM and the Associate States was required, particularly on youth employment, technical, vocational education and training (TVET), environmental sustainability, and human resource development;
- 3.2. CARICOM-wide implementation of a common Labour Market Information System be continued based on the initial work undertaken by the ILO in eight countries and through an appropriate coordination mechanism;
- 3.3. The involvement of the regional social partners, based on the ILO approach to tripartite consultations, be implemented within all applicable CARICOM forums.

4. Social Dialogue

- 4.1. The success of social dialogue at the regional level requires the systematic institutionalization of national social dialogue processes and culture which embraces all policy areas;
- 4.2. The capacity of social partners must be supported to ensure that their interventions to such tripartite forums and consultations add substantive value.

² The Regional Initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour was launched in October 2013. The Bahamas, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago were the first Caribbean States to sign the Declaration on the Latin American and Caribbean Free of Child Labour Regional Initiative at the ILO 18th Americas Regional Meeting held in Lima, Peru in October 2014.

5. Employment

- 5.1. Bureaucratic requirements and rigidities that hinder business expansion, growth and productivity be reviewed and reduced;
- 5.2. Increased investment in the provision of quality education and training programmes in line with market demands, including start-up business programmes for college graduates, apprenticeships and internships be developed with the full participation of the social partners;
- 5.3. Regional certification to ensure consistency of qualifications should be instituted;
- 5.4. Opportunities for free movement of people within the CSME supported by sound immigration policies should be actioned;
- 5.5. Anticipation of skills needs through active labour market data be undertaken to address the problems of the mismatch of skills and employment opportunities.

6. Environmental Sustainability and Greening the Economy

- 6.1. Given the impact of climate change, including the impact on enterprises and the world of work, government-wide long-term policy development and implementation is essential for countries to be sufficiently resilient to meet the related challenges;
- 6.2. New business opportunities in response to and anticipating the impact of climate change should be encouraged and supported;
- 6.3. Education and skills-training policies be implemented to support the adoption of new working modalities brought about by the imperative of climate change.