



Caribbean

NEWSLINK

Newsletter of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean

January-March 2018



Planning ahead for better results

As the ILO began the new biennium 2018-2019, we look forward to stronger, deeper, more productive partnership with our Caribbean Constituents in pursuit of the Decent Work Agenda as we seek to contribute to peace and social justice for all.

The DWT and Office for the Caribbean convened its annual retreat to guide the Office's work for the year and indeed the biennium. This year the retreat took place at Mt. Irvine, Tobago from 18 to 19 January 2018. We reviewed the work of the last biennium, the successes and the shortcomings and looked ahead into how we can best support the constituents in the region to make progress on the SDG's by realizing the Decent Work Agenda.

Having scored a strong delivery for activities funded through the Regular Budget Supplementary Allocation (RBSA) and Regular Budget Technical Cooperation (RBTC), in the 2016-2017 biennium, it is our firm resolve and collective responsibility to match and move beyond those achievements in this new period and to seek to expand

partnerships and our resource portfolio. We expect to do so by addressing adaptive as well as technical challenges arising in our line of work.

In addition to the constituent specific requests, and expanding our work of building resilience through the Decent Work Agenda, as well as the promotion of the "Just Transition Guidelines" for countries that articulate environmentally sustainable economies and societies, we also intend to explore appetite and funding for a range of sub-regional areas including: Labour Administration Application; Labour Market Information; ISCO training; building work around the OECS Regional Strategy for Development of Statistics; the Virtual Policy Network on Youth Education and Employment (VPNYEE); Employers – CAMEO programme; and hosting of a Skills Academy in the Caribbean. In addition to the 19th American Regional Meeting in October 2018 to be held in Panama, we expect to host the 11th Caribbean Ministers of Labour meeting in 2019 coinciding with the ILO's centenary celebrations and the 50th anniversary of the ILO Office for the Caribbean.



ILO Directors meet in the Caribbean

The Meeting of ILO Directors took place in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad from 19 to 20 February, 2018. Directors of Offices in Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, Cuba, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and the Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development on Vocational Training (CINTERFOR) in Uruguay gathered in Trinidad and Tobago for the first time.

“This is the first time in recent history that this meeting has been held in the Caribbean”. Regional Director for the Americas and Caribbean José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs explained the decision, “Traditionally we have always held this meeting in Lima. Because of the geographical distance and linguistic divide we wanted to host this meeting in the Caribbean as a gesture of respect and solidarity for our colleagues and Constituents in this region.”



L to R: Claudia Coenjaerts, Director, ILO DWT and Office for the Caribbean (DWT-POS); José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, ILO Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC); Carlos Rodríguez, ILO Deputy Regional Director, LAC; and Dagmar Walter, Deputy Director, ILO DWT-POS.

The Regional Director and Deputy Regional Director met first with the staff of the DWT and Office for the Caribbean before being joined by the visiting Directors from Latin America.

On the first day, the Directors reviewed the main insights from the 2017 Labour Overview report which was launched earlier in the year. They discussed advancements in ILO’s work in the region and plans for 2018 including Country Implementation Plans along the three regional priorities:

1. productive development policies for inclusive growth and more and better jobs;
2. transition to formality;
3. respect for and application of international labour standards and legislation.

The afternoon session focussed on migration, youth employment and indigenous communities. The Directors also reflected on the Centenary celebrations and Future of Work. There was discussion on three major conferences in which the ILO participated:

1. the IV Conference on Child Labour held in Buenos Aires in November 2017;
2. the Organization of American States XX Conference of Ministers of Labour in Barbados in December 2017; and
3. the launch of the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) in Panama in January 2018.



Carmen Moreno, Director, Costa Rica, poses a question to the presenter

The meeting considered major upcoming events in which the ILO will participate: Summit of the Americas in April 2018 and G20 Meetings in Argentina.

On day two, directors and staff were treated to a riveting presentation by Daniel Zavatto, Political Scientist and Social Economist who spoke on the Latin American election super-cycle, political situation, corruption and impacts. He was followed by Dr Jessica Byron-Reid, International Relations Specialist and Professor at the University of the West Indies Mona campus, who gave a comprehensive overview of the political and economic situation of English-speaking Caribbean countries and key developments expected in 2018.

Following the presentations of these specially invited speakers, the meeting pursued with discussions on operational matters related to Programming and Budget; Human Resources management; IT; Finance, Administration and Security.



Claudia Coenjaerts, Director, ILO Caribbean Office, in exchange with Anthony Finnerty, Chief RAS, ILO, Lima



Enrique Deibe, Director, ILO-CINTERFOR



Pedro Américo Furtado de Oliveira, Director, ILO, Argentina with Gerardina Gonzalez, Director, ILO, Mexico



Claudia Ruiz and Maria José Chamorro, PROGRAM, ILO, Lima



Carmen Moreno chats with Anthony Finnerty



Philippe Vanhuynegem, Director, ILO DWT/CO-Andean Countries in conversation with Fabio Bertranou, Director, ILO DWT/CO-Santiago

There is an Alternative: Promoting the Social Solidarity Economy

The Green Market together with the International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Massy Group convened an event called “Re-imagining Trinidad & Tobago: There is an Alternative- A new compact between civil society and the private sector”. Spearheaded by the Founder of The Green Market in Santa Cruz, Vicki Assevero, it was a meeting of minds to shape an alternative path for Trinidad and Tobago in the context of social solidarity.

Recent global economic and political instability has served to underline the shortcomings of our current development system and to further confirm the necessity for an alternate or complementary development paradigm. The social and solidarity economy (SSE) is a viable solution to re-balancing economic, social and environmental objectives. SSE refers to enterprises and organizations (cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations, foundations and social enterprises) which produce goods, services and knowledge that meet the needs of the community they serve, through the pursuit of specific social and environmental objectives and the fostering of solidarity.

At the local event, Canadian High Commissioner Carla Hogan Rufelds outlined the contribution of the Social Solidarity Economy to Canada’s GDP of 10%: on par with the contribution of the mining, oil and gas sector. She noted that the Canadian Civil Society represented roughly \$1 billion Canadian dollars per year in international assistance.

Special invitee Nancy Neamtan is the former CEO of “Chantier Social de Québec” - an organization that, over the past 25 years, has managed to create a unique ecology of social entrepreneurship and community development through a networked platform of over 6000 organizations supported by a variety of trust funds, credit unions, cooperatives and community bond issues. Additionally, Andy Broderick, Vice President of Community Investment at Van City, one of Canada’s largest credit unions and a leader in supporting social

enterprises, presented this successful model of the Social Solidarity Economy in Canada.

The two visiting Canadian experts delivered power point presentations illustrating the origins, rollout and impact of social entrepreneurship in their respective organizations. This included the notions of community economic development, social procurement, inclusive growth, and mentoring youth to join the sector.

This was followed by thematic discussions that emerged from participants’ declarations about their specific area of interest and the desire to convene a group discussion on it. Four facilitators oversaw group discussions on the open space concept. Some of the topics arising were:

- creating a network of NGOs;
- block chain- creating a community fund;
- creating a national Hall of Fame- a multimedia interactive cathedral to our best selves;
- food and nutrition security;
- CANARI on social entrepreneurship;
- private sector and NGO collaboration for greater impact; and
- restorative justice and others.

Attendees explored avenues for taking the next step towards formalizing social solidarity in Trinidad and Tobago, how impact is measured and nurturing good relationships. Participants agreed on some fundamental ways to take the action agenda forward for the benefit of the citizenry of Trinidad and Tobago.

In the 1980s, the ILO developed the concept of “social finance”, which covers a broad variety of microfinance institutions and services. In the 1990s, the ILO began promoting community-based protection schemes and mutual benefit societies in the area of social protection. More recently, the ILO has become involved in the promotion of “social enterprises” and “social entrepreneurship”.



Training in Econometric Modelling in Guyana supports the Green State Development Strategy and PAGE

Guyana has committed to become a green state and as such, initiated the development of a Green State Development Strategy (GSDS). Spearheaded by the Government through a participatory process, the United Nations agencies inclusive of the ILO, have been invited to provide technical support to the effort.

The GSDS is meant to be the national development plan which provides the long-term vision and guides Guyana's economic, social and environmental development. It will lay the foundation for an inclusive green economy, which should result in improved human well-being and social equity, whilst significantly reducing environmental risks.

Following the commitment to become a Green State, in March 2017, Guyana also joined the Global "Partnership for Action on Green Economy" (PAGE), which will support the transition to an inclusive green economy, reducing pollution and emissions and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

An important aspect of the PAGE partnership is the conduct of a green economy policy assessment or macroeconomic modelling exercise which is designed to assess the multidimensional impacts of green policies and investments in Guyana. These in turn will help inform the ongoing effort to develop the GSDS. More precisely, the model which is a customized System Dynamics (SD) model helps to:

- estimate investment required to achieve sustainable development targets;
- identify the policies that are essential for enabling the required investments; and
- assess the multiple impacts of the proposed policies using a range of economic, social and environmental indicators.

In this regard, a technical workshop on System Dynamics modelling for beginners organised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), took place in Guyana from February 26 to 27, 2018. The workshop was facilitated by Mr Andrea Bassi from UNEP. ILO Sustainable Enterprise and Job Creation Specialist, Kelvin Sergeant, participated in the workshop.

As this was the first PAGE mission to Guyana, some introductory sessions were provided including an explanation of the important role of green jobs and the central place of the ILO "Just Transition Guidelines" in the GSDS.

There was a lively conversation on green jobs attended by over 200 persons, among whom were mainly youths. This "green conversation" was organised by the Guyana Department of Environment and Conservation International facilitated the discussion. Presentations were also made by the ILO and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

Labour Survey bulletin launched in Guyana



Participants at the launch

On March 15th 2018, a workshop held in Georgetown, Guyana launched the first quarterly bulletin presenting the results of the third quarter of 2017 continuous quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS). Initially financed (for two quarters) by the Inter-American Development Bank, the LFS is one of the key tools used to track labour market dynamics such as unemployment, job creation and job destruction and the skills profile of the labour force. Approximately 4,000 households are included every quarter, thereby totalling about 15,000 individuals of whom roughly 11,000 are age 15 or above.

Guyana joins its CARICOM neighbours including Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago which continuously implement the survey.

The bulletin itself was prepared by Mr Diego Rei, Employment and Labour Market Specialist of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean, in collaboration with Mr Ian Manifold Deputy Chief Statistician of the Bureau of Statistics. Amongst the most significant results it shows a marginal decrease in the unemployment rate, which moved from 12.5 per cent in 2012 to 12.0 per cent in the third quarter of 2017.

Mr Rei noted the significance of this undertaking, "Having frequent and up-to-date data accessible publicly allows for sound evidence-based decision-making. Beyond the summary picture presented in the bulletin, interested stakeholders can analyse further dimensions of interest to them. Moreover, the great job carried out by the implementing team, including the Guyana Bureau of Statistics, the Inter-American Development Bank, Sistemas Integrales and the ILO allowed for the collection of data adhering to the latest International Statistical Standards

and covering dimensions otherwise not fully investigated such as labour underutilization, informal employment and labour related income".

Amongst the invited speakers, Finance Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, Dr Hector Butts, said the LFS bulletin is critical and will aid in objective decision-making. "It can serve two major purposes, first at the level of managing microeconomic planning to determine the impact of labour in the generation of wealth in Guyana, [and] at the career planning level to permit youth and others to affect career planning against the background of projected needs for skills," said Dr Butts. The finance secretary also highlighted the dire need to utilise the data to enhance the Government strategic planning.

Mr Manifold, said "the report summarises the main findings and indicators for the period July to September 2017 which marks the first quarterly period under observation for the Guyana LFS. Up to July 2017, no such survey was regularly conducted in Guyana". In the past, the labour force was captured in the general census which took place within a 10 year timeframe or more, he explained, noting that now there can be continuous collection of data that would provide proper information on the labour force.

As Guyana embraces a quarterly recording of its labour force, Ms Sophie Makonnen, Inter-American Development Bank Representative to Guyana explained that the LFS is critical to productivity and to preventing Guyana from falling into a skills gap. "In other words, such an assessment should indicate where Guyana's workforce stands and enable policymakers to plan accordingly," said Ms Makonnen.

ILO and UNESCO host webinars on Youth Education and Employment

Following the launch of its Virtual Policy Network on Youth Education and Employment with an inaugural webinar in December 2017, the ILO hosted its second webinar on 15 February 2018 which explored ways of helping labour market (re)integration of youth at risk of involvement with juvenile justice. Preventative and restorative interventions were highlighted.

The Virtual Policy Network on Youth Education and Employment (VPNYEE) was launched within the context of the Caribbean Countries' implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, and more specifically within the United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (MSDF) in the Caribbean. Convened by ILO, UNESCO along with CARICOM and the Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC) the community of practice aims to ensure that youth educational and employment issues are mainstreamed in national policy discourse. The VPNYEE facilitates peer-learning opportunities and advocates for well-informed and evidence-based practices that support more effective quality education and youth employment in the Caribbean or in similar context elsewhere.

Mr Diego Rei, Employment and Labour Market Specialist of the ILO Office for the Caribbean and representative from UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean welcomed online participants and gave an update on the expansion of the VPNYEE web platform.

Ms Joyce Wong and Ms Uma Ramakrishnan of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Western Hemisphere Department presented on a 2017 research paper titled "Setting the scene: Crime and Youth Unemployment in the Caribbean". This eye-opening presentation was followed by a case study "The Grenada ASPIRE Youth Project and the Caribbean Development Bank experience with projects reintegrating young offenders. A review of lessons learned" delivered by Ms Lavern Louard-Greaves, Operations Officer (Social Analyst), with BNTF Caribbean Development Bank.

Subsequently, Mr Wayne Chance, Executive President of the non-governmental organization Vision on Mission, shared his personal experience of "Employment and Money Management Programme: the experience of Trinidad-based Vision on Mission. Key design elements for successful reintegration". Finally, Ms Michelle Segura, of UNICEF Belize presented on "Education, recreation and early warning" which showcased UNICEF's experience with at risk youth in Belize, lessons learned and approaches to programme design. Following these presentations was a question and answer session in which participants engaged directly with the expert presenters regarding ways to deal with the most vulnerable youth.

On 15 March 2018, UNESCO hosted the third webinar on the theme "Approaches to sustainable financing for Caribbean Youth Skills Development needs in Technical,

Vocational Education and Training (TVET)". ILO and UNESCO are alternating the role of host.

Dr Borhene Chakroun, TVET Section Chief at UNESCO headquarters welcomed participants and presented an update on the VPNYEE web platform. First among the presenters, Dr Robert Palmer, Skills Development Consultant gave an overview on a recent study on TVET funding in the Caribbean. This was followed by a presentation on "Emerging trends in output-based or cost-efficiency based approach to rationalize public funding for TVET" by Dr Borhene Chakroun. Next, Dr Matthew Greaves, Manager, Finance and Corporate Services, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council- Barbados shared his experience of TVET Funding mechanisms through industry levy or tax collection systems: Barbados Training Case Study. Finally, ILO's own Dr Hassan Ndahi, Senior Specialist, Skills and Employability delved into cost-sharing modalities in apprenticeship and work-based Learning Programmes. The interactive session following the presentations was rich in questions and contributions from participants.

For the first time the Global Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education for 2030 includes specific targets related to the need to expand TVET to promote youth transition from school to decent work namely: i) Target 4.3 calling for "an equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university" and ii) Target 4.4 calling for a "substantial increase in the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship". However, despite their good intentions, countries face challenges in investing adequately in skills development for their youth through expansion of good quality and relevant TVET, which remains largely underfinanced because it is more expensive than general education given its use of costly materials, equipment, and facilities.

In order for TVET systems in Caribbean countries to adapt to market demand and be able to achieve the youth skills development imperative under the UN-MSDF agenda, more agile and sustainable modalities of financing TVET systems are required. This webinar provided an opportunity for policy-makers, development partners, practitioners, CSOs, NGOs and private sector actors to take stock of existing approaches to increase funding for TVET through diversified or complementary sources.

The fourth webinar is planned for 19 April, 2018 and will address the theme of "Stimulating demand for youth labour. Incentives, sectoral policies and diversification in the Caribbean". For details on upcoming webinars and to access the VPNYEE platform please contact us at: ilocarib@ilo.org

Belize commits to put the Decent Work Agenda at the centre

Belize has made significant strides in transitioning from the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 to the Sustainable Development Goals which now guide countries across the globe. At the national level, “Horizon 2030: National Development Framework for Belize 2010-2030” now guides long-term development planning in Belize. The strategic priorities by the year 2030 include democratic governance for effective public administration and sustainable development; education; economic resilience; a healthy citizenry; and environment. Building on this long-term development plan and to guide the implementation of the SDGs, the Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS) 2016-2020 was adopted. The strategy outlines a proactive role for the state in fostering an integrated, systematic approach to sustainable development.



The Conclusions of the 10th Caribbean Ministers of Labour Meeting in February 2017 in Kingston confirmed that success in the ambitious 2030 agenda generally will depend on policy coherence of economic and social policies and will require the use of effective social dialogue in the formulation of inclusive social and economic policies. Ministries responsible for Labour have an important role to play in promoting the Decent Work Agenda and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Government of Belize requested ILO support to put this in practice.

While the elements of decent work and job creation are clearly recognized in the GSDS, they have not been singled out in a coherent and integrated manner. Doing this would significantly strengthen the sustainability and impact of relevant policies. Promoting a National Labour and Employment Policy can be a means through which the employment and labour dimensions of the GSDS are further elaborated, integrated, and strengthened.

In October 2017, the ILO sponsored participation of Government and Employers’ representatives (workers were invited too but could not attend) in an Employment Policy Training programme run by the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin, Italy (ITC). In addition, and given the important role of training and skills in such a policy, representatives of the Employment Training and Education Services were also given the opportunity to attend the ITC Skills Academy.

An ILO delegation comprising the Director of the Decent Work Team and Caribbean Office, Claudia Coenjaerts and Programme Officer, Ingerlyn Caines-Francis, met with representatives of the Ministries of Labour and of Education in Belize on 29 January 2018, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the National Trade Union Congress on 1 February, 2018 to discuss the way forward for promoting the Decent Work Agenda in Belize.

Discussions focused on how to take the learning forward. It was agreed that the Labour Advisory Board, now fully functional, would play a central role while the ILO would provide continuous technical support tailored to needs as they arise.



ILO supports the National Insurance Scheme of Guyana in long-term sustainability and coverage extension

Over the past 47 years, the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) has provided to workers and their dependents a wide range of social security benefits under three branches – Short-term benefits, Long-term benefits and Industrial benefits. The NIS also offers reimbursement for Medical Care expenses both locally and overseas. Coverage is provided for employed, self-employed and voluntary insured persons. The Scheme is financed by social security contributions paid by both the employer and the employee subject to a maximum threshold. Over the years, the NIS has made regular and systematic upgrades to the pensions and to the ceilings. Investments are governed by the Prudential Investment Framework. The NIS is governed by a Board composed of 9 members and the last actuarial review was done in 2012 and covered the period 2007-2011.

The NIS has embarked on a process of reform which includes a review of its financial situation and the extension of coverage. Upon request of the NIS, the ILO is providing technical support to the reform process and has launched two major studies: i) 9th Actuarial Review of the NIS, and ii) Improving social security coverage to the self-employed. Two technical reports will be made available to the Government of Guyana during the course of 2018.

The Actuarial Review will provide an in-depth analysis that will assist the NIS in the reform and strengthening of the social security scheme. The review, which is in compliance with Section 37 of the Guyana National Insurance Act, will contribute to the improvement of the design and governance of the NIS by providing a complete diagnostic overview. It will also provide detailed financial information of the scheme at 31 December 2016 and will

include demographic and financial projections of the status-quo situation based on the present provisions. It will also explore reform options based on the findings and on discussions with national counterparts, including an assessment of the impact of such a reform on individual members. Overall the review will provide an assessment of the long-term financial sustainability of the social security scheme in both scenarios. The project will tailor the ILO model to the Guyana context so that further actuarial projections can be made by the fund.

The NIS involves compulsory social insurance coverage to all persons between the ages of 16 and 60 who are engaged in insurable employment. Affiliation to the NIS is mandatory for the self-employed and applies the same range of benefits for employees with the exception of industrial benefits. NIS statistics show that the social security coverage of the self-employed is very low and some 70 per cent of registered self-employed are not active contributors.

The ILO will support the NIS in identifying policies and practices that could increase the coverage rate and compliance. Based on both the review of relevant reports and statistics as well as on discussions with various stakeholders the report will provide the NIS recommendations clustered in two groups, Policy and Governance recommendations.

In photo: Dr. Surendra Persaud, Chairman, NIS Guyana (2nd from left) and his team meet with Senior Actuary Georges Langis, ILO (3rd from left)

EOC launches guidelines on Sexual Harassment

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) of Trinidad and Tobago launched its guidelines on Sexual Harassment on the occasion of International Women's Day 9 March 2018 during a panel discussion hosted at the Offices of the Attorney General, Government Campus, Port-of-Spain. The panel consisted of the Honourable Minister of Labour, Ms Jennifer Baptiste-Primus, EOC Chairman Lynette Seebaran-Suite and Vice-Chairman Dr Beverly Beckles, General Secretary, National Union of Government and Federated Workers (NUGFW) Ms Jillian Bartlett-Alleyne, and Director-Employers' Consultative Association (ECA) Ms Giselle Estrada.

Chairman of the EOC Lynette Seebaran-Suite expressed the view that any legislation to be established by Trinidad and Tobago to deal with sexual harassment should include provisions which render employers liable for such incidents in the workplace. "If the employer is found not to have taken reasonable steps, the employer becomes liable to pay or reinstate the victim. This is an important legislative provision which must be in whatever legislation we come up with. The problem is, you make a complaint and then frequently find yourself under victimisation and you are forced out of the workplace."

The guidelines aim to assist employers and managers in better understanding the application of law while providing them with a legal framework for understanding the need to demonstrate leadership in the workplace in order to create a culture of zero tolerance for sexual harassment.

The guidelines include mechanisms to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, disciplinary action as well as protective and remedial action, among others. Seebaran-Suite acknowledged that sexual harassment in the workplace has been a hot topic of discussion in Trinidad and Tobago over the past year in particular and this buzz has helped to raise awareness that such behavior is not welcome. She further indicated that several countries in the Caribbean had already legislated for sexual harassment and added that the EOC's guidelines could help take Trinidad and Tobago to enforceable legislation.

Minister of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, the Honourable Jennifer Baptiste-Primus also participated in the panel discussion. She indicated that the issue of sexual harassment was being examined for inclusion within the Basic Terms and Conditions of Work Code, as mandated by the Industrial Relations Act.

Baptiste-Primus said her Ministry was cognizant of the need to outline basic terms and conditions of employment in a clear and meticulous manner. "Given the absence of legislation to treat with sexual harassment, we encourage initiatives aimed at raising awareness and encouraging the call for the development of sound workplace policies that



Claudia Coenjaerts, Director, addresses the launch

will discourage all forms of gender-based violence, particularly sexual harassment, from workplaces," said the Minister.

She reminded that the Equal Opportunity Act, 2000 includes provisions on discrimination in the workplace which embrace legislative mechanisms to address sexual harassment.

Claudia Coenjaerts, Director of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean, brought an international perspective to the panel discussion. "Internationally, both the ILO Convention 111 and 189 are especially relevant for addressing sexual harassment and a new instrument under exploration may elevate its significance in the context of Violence at Work."

While the ILO's international labour standards do not contain Conventions or Recommendations specifically on sexual harassment, this does not mean that the ILO has been shying away from this important matter. In fact, the ILO has been dealing with it under a general Convention on equality, and that is the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). This Convention is ratified by 175 member States, including all Caribbean countries. This Convention enumerates grounds on which discrimination is prohibited: race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin. Sexual harassment under this Convention is dealt with as a matter that stems from discrimination based on sex. While the Convention itself does not mention or define the term "sexual harassment", the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations has broadly defined what should be understood to be sexual harassment.

Violence in the world of work is a threat to the dignity, security, health and well-being of everyone. It has an impact not only on workers and employers, but also on their families, communities, economies and society as a whole. Indeed, violence at work and sexual harassment strike at the heart of the ILO's efforts to promote the right of all human beings "to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity".

T&T National Policy on Gender Development

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is proud to be associated with the National Policy on Gender and Development which was laid in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago as a green paper on 9 March 2018 by Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, Ayanna Webster-Roy.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago presented this National Policy on Gender and Development for adoption in 2018 as Government's official policy on Gender and Development. While there have been significant strides in gender equality and the status of women in recent years, this National Policy can be the catalyst "for the achievement of full equality between men and women, and their equitable participation in political, economic, social, cultural and family life. The Government therefore looks forward to the wide utilization of this policy document to guide gender and development in Trinidad and Tobago", according to Minister Webster-Roy.

The ILO was among numerous stakeholders consulted during the lengthy development and drafting of the Policy. The Policy also reflects solid research and a thorough analysis of the current development status of Trinidad and Tobago in order identify the needs and priorities of men and women, boys and girls, as well as the inequalities faced in accessing opportunities and resulting outcomes.

The National Policy on Gender and Development aims to promote social justice and sustainable development in Trinidad and Tobago by underpinning all Government policies with principles of equality, equity and human rights. These are fundamental ILO principles which resonate with tripartite constituents. The adoption of this Policy underscores the

Government's commitment towards attaining Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality.

Indeed women's economic empowerment is fundamental to gender equality. For most women, the most important source of economic empowerment and dignity is a job. Closing gender gaps in employment, ensuring decent work for all women and equal pay for work of equal value is therefore key to achieving gender equality.

According to Minister Webster-Roy, "This National Policy will benefit the citizenry of Trinidad and Tobago by providing the framework for inclusion of gender perspectives in all activities of government and civil society, thereby promoting the full and equal participation of men and women in the development process." Furthermore, the National Policy on Gender and Development will prompt legislative review and reform to strengthen the capacity of these legal instruments to guarantee equality and equity for men and women, boys and girls.

The ILO stands ready to provide further technical support to the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development for the implementation of the decent work elements of the National Policy on Gender and Development, while working along with other UN agencies.

The National Policy on Gender and Development is available for public comment on the website of the Office of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago: www.opmgca.gov.tt/genderpolicy

UN System celebrates IWD 2018

As the UN System in Trinidad and Tobago celebrated International Women's Day (IWD) 2018, the Port of Spain City Hall was transformed into a 'Women's City Village' for one day, on Wednesday 7 March, as part of a week of activities showcasing women. In a gesture of solidarity and unity to promote the rights of women and girls, the festivities kicked off with a power-walk around the emblematic Woodford Square located in the heart of the capital city. This was followed by the official opening of the City Village which showcased the initiatives, products and services of several rural organizations in a vibrant marketplace.

In keeping with the theme "Empowering Rural and Urban Women", UN ECLAC Caribbean joined forces with the University of the West Indies, UNFPA, ILO, other UN agencies and local organizations including the Network of Rural Women Producers Trinidad and Tobago, in highlighting the contribution of rural women to national development. Globally, rural women represent a quarter of the world's population according to an ILO brief titled "Rural women at work: bridging the gaps" which was released ahead of IWD. The brief indicates that women work as farmers, wage earners and entrepreneurs. They represent an important share of the agriculture workforce yet their contribution to the rural economy is widely underestimated. They are concentrated in the informal economy in low-skilled, low-productivity, and low or unpaid jobs with long working hours.

In the Caribbean, it is recognized that women have achieved major progress in many areas of life, yet there is still much work to be done to achieve gender equality and autonomy for women and girls in the context of sustainable development. There is room for improvement with regard to women's access to and control over productive assets, such as land and capital. Institutional infrastructure must be strengthened, such as national women's machineries and effective gender policy frameworks, to promote the integration of gender perspectives in national development. The City Village targeted those women and girls who are sometimes left out of development initiatives. The event served as a platform to share some key success stories. In this regard, the event featured discussions and information about health and wellness, including sexual and reproductive health, food security, microenterprise development, entrepreneurship and financial management.



Celebrating rural women at work in Suriname

On the occasion of International Women's Day on 8 March, 2018 ILO Geneva headquarters hosted a panel discussion on the theme of "Rural women in the world of work- bridging the gender gap". The event focused on the significant contributions of rural women at work across the globe, including indigenous women, and highlighted actions required to achieve greater gender equality and empowerment.

The ILO estimates that rural women comprise a quarter of the world's population. Women also account for 41 per cent of the world's agricultural labour force and some 49 per cent for low income countries. Rural women work as farmers, wage earners and entrepreneurs however, as they are concentrated in both unpaid care and household work and their role in subsistence farming is often unremunerated, it is clear that their contribution to the rural economy is widely underestimated.

The interactive panel discussion served as a platform for collective reflection addressing challenges and opportunities in supporting the role of rural women as agents of change. Among the panellists were Mr Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General, His Excellency Mr Deepak Dhital, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations Office and International Organizations in Geneva; Mr Tarek Tawfik, Vice-Chairman of the Federation of Egyptian Industries; Ms Anja Westberg, President of the Agriculture Workers' Group of the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations; and our own Dr Fidelia Graand-Galon, Honorary Chair of the Maroon Women's Network of Suriname.

Dr Graand-Galon (*in photo, right*) is known for her outstanding contribution to rural women's empowerment

in her native Suriname. During the panel discussion she highlighted some of the main challenges facing Maroon women of Suriname which include: transport infrastructure; access to quality healthcare; education; access to internet and communications technology; poverty; poor investment opportunities due to lack of land rights; mercury contamination of many rivers by artisanal gold miners; sociocultural challenges regarding sexual harassment; challenges of stereotyping in crime etc.

Dr Graand-Galon also noted that women from rural, indigenous and tribal communities are often guardians of traditional knowledge. "This is critical for the livelihoods, resilience and culture of our communities. Their contributions are unique and vital especially in the context of natural resources management, agriculture and forestry - sectors that are critical for both mitigation of, and adaptation to climate change."

She has been the Honorary Chair of the Maroon Women's Network (MVN) since 2014 and responsible for international programmes. The MVN was established in 2000 when representatives of Maroon women were invited by the President of the Republic of Suriname together with other women's organisations to contribute their perspective in the drafting of government policy for 2000 – 2005. The Maroon Women's Network brings together several women's organizations from the interior to promote sustainable development of maroon women; to stimulate collaboration between maroon women and other maroon communities; and to create a good consultative structure of maroon women from the city and the interior through a network system.

The MVN has been successful in helping Maroon women to overcome some of the challenges experienced. Education and health issues are being addressed. Seminars and workshops are being conducted to raise awareness of the use of entrepreneurial

skills in the curation of artefacts, food production and participation in poverty-reduction programmes.

According to Dr Graand-Galon, "There was little awareness about the retention of African culture outside of Africa by Surinamese Maroons in their governing system, livelihood and matrilineal heritage system. We have been able to place Suriname on the map and promote greater sensitization about its cosmopolitan ethnic diversity." Indeed, cultural exchange has been an important promotion vehicle during Dr Graand-Galon's tenure as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Suriname to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr Graand-Galon commented that her participation in the panel discussion underscored the importance of working together with the rest of the global community of Indigenous peoples, using best practices to overcome poverty challenges in Indigenous communities using a results-based ILO decent work approach and programmes suitable for improved and efficient sustainable development of rural women in the world of work, bridging the gender gap socially, culturally and economically.

When asked what was the greatest takeaway emerging from the IWD panel discussion, Dr. Graand-Galon responded, "That all rural women globally deal with shared challenges and the challenge is for governments and multilateral organizations like the ILO to join hands with the target groups to effectively address and resolve the challenges worldwide. United we are strong and this builds confidence among indigenous women to overcome their challenges."

The ILO Caribbean Office is committed to promoting the inclusion of the Maroon Women's Network in both local and international fora as it furthers the empowerment of indigenous people.

CEC and CCL Members discuss strategies to influence CARICOM Social and Economic Policies

On 7 March 2018, members of the Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC) and the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) Working Group met in Port of Spain, Trinidad to implement decisions adopted at the Regional Bipartite meeting held in September 2017. The working group meeting facilitated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) addressed three pertinent regional issues, namely; (i) Contingent rights; (ii) Minimum labour standards; and (iii) Social Protection.

With respect to contingent rights, members noted that the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and the Protocol initially drafted by CARICOM provided adequate guidance on how to treat with matters relating to contingent rights. The working group further noted the outcome of the Myrie case on free movement of Caribbean Community nationals. In this regard, the working group resolved to engage the CARICOM Secretary General on the way forward to finalise the Protocol including urging member states to implement decisions of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) on this matter.

On the issue of minimum labour standards, the working group called for implementation of what has been agreed at the international level including the Resolution concerning fair and effective labour migration governance adopted at the International Labour Conference in 2017.

On social protection, the working group acknowledged efforts in implementing the CARICOM Agreement on Social Security (CASS) and noted that more work was required regarding its administration by social security institutions. A call for information-sharing, including statistics about the CASS, and awareness-raising was made. Additionally, a call to ensure the financial sustainability of the social security schemes in the region was reiterated and the need for each jurisdiction to build a complete and coherent social protection floor was addressed. The working group also supported the development of a CARICOM strategy on social protection.

Employers' Organisations in the region build capacity in Business Continuity and Disaster Management

The International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with the Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC), with funding from the European Union (EU) convened four (4) training workshops on Business Continuity and Disaster Management for members of the Employers' Organisations in Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Haiti between January and February 2018.

The training workshops are implemented within the framework of the EU-funded project that aims to facilitate participation of CARIFORUM civil society in the regional development and integration process. The aim is to capacitate Employers' Organisations to assist members in developing business continuity plans as a form of service.

Ms Vanessa Phala, Senior Specialist for Employers' Activities of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean facilitated the session on Impacts of Natural Disasters in the Region. Reports from the ILO missions to Dominica and St Maarten following Hurricane Maria were also shared with participants to highlight its impact and work undertaken to assist these two islands. Participants also shared their experiences and plans implemented to improve business resilience to natural disasters. Ms Phala further facilitated a session where participants discussed and ranked their business resilience to disasters. While in most of these workshops, members had business continuity plans, many of the plans required revision to ensure all lessons gained at the workshop are taken into consideration. The sessions on developing and implementing a business continuity plan were facilitated by Mr Robert Teelucksingh, Senior Consultant and Director of Tee Luck Singh & Associates Limited.

Representatives of the National Disaster Office were also invited to share the government strategy and plans to assist the business sector and members of the community before, during and after a disaster. These sessions provided an opportunity for participants to engage on how to improve coordination efforts with National Disaster Offices.

Participants eagerly completed exercises aimed at assisting them in designing a business continuity plan. They learnt how to set up a planning committee, conduct risk assessments and business impact assessments. The session further explored the various risks and vulnerabilities businesses face and how to manage them in a manner that would improve their resilience.

Mr. Teelucksingh is currently providing post-workshop assistance to participants in drafting and reviewing their business continuity plans. This assistance is being coordinated with the respective Employers' Organisation.

ILO facilitates a Social Dialogue workshop in Haiti

The Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC), the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) together with the Haitian Association of Industry known as l'Association des Industries d'Haiti (ADIH) hosted a workshop on social dialogue on 27 February 2018 at El Rancho Hotel in Port-au-Prince.

The workshop is part of a series of bipartite capacity-building activities targeting Employers' and Workers' Organizations under the project funded by the European Union (EU) to facilitate participation of CARIFORUM civil society in the regional development and integration processes. The project seeks to empower CARIFORUM labour, private sector and employers to fulfil their Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) obligations. The International Labour Organization (ILO) also provides technical support in implementing this project which comes to an end in April 2018.

Representatives of Haiti's business sector as well as trade unions and representatives from the Labour Ministry gathered in the Haitian capital to learn more about the fundamentals of social dialogue and how the ILO conventions, recommendations and guidelines apply to the Haitian labour context. Among those in attendance were the Haitian Minister of Labour, the Honourable Stephanie Auguste; President of ADIH Mr Georges Sassine; Executive Director of ADIH, Ms Beatrice Ilias; President of the Caribbean Congress of Labour, Senator Jennifer Isaacs-Dotson; National Project Officer of the Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC) Ms Brittany Brathwaite; National Project Officer of the Caribbean Congress of Labour, Mr Christopher Harper; Mr Rainer Pritzer ILO Senior Specialist on Social Dialogue and Labour Administration; and Ms Vanessa Phala, ILO Senior Specialist on Employers' Activities.

In her opening remarks on behalf of the ILO, Ms Phala outlined some of the pertinent issues arising from the workshops held earlier this year in Guyana (11 January), Jamaica (25 January), Antigua and Barbuda (29 January), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (1 February), and Saint Kitts and Nevis (20 February).

Ms Phala reiterated the role of employers' organisations in social dialogue and the importance of evidence-based policy recommendations. She noted that social dialogue was instrumental in creating good governance and supporting an enabling environment for achieving the Decent Work Agenda. In this regard, employers were encouraged to demonstrate genuine commitment, be adequately prepared and leave room for flexibility and compromise. Additionally, Ms Phala emphasised the importance of supporting and encouraging bipartite dialogue at the enterprise level as a mechanism to facilitate better understanding of management decisions, higher motivation of workers, higher productivity and smoother collective bargaining built on trust.

"Social dialogue has been part of the Caribbean industrial relations culture for decades, yet needs to be consistently embraced for dealing with issues at the workplace and in social and economic decision-making processes," explained Rainer Pritzer, ILO Senior Specialist on Social Dialogue and Labour Administration who led the interactive morning session.

Mr Pritzer introduced the general context and Social Aspects Chapter of the Economic Partnership Agreement. Participants were then exposed to social dialogue institutions in the Caribbean, followed by specificities of tripartite social dialogue at the national level and bipartite social dialogue at the enterprise level. In the afternoon session, Mr Pritzer gave an overview of comments from the ILO supervisory bodies on the implementation of the eight (8) Core Conventions in Haiti which included what needs to be done to improve social dialogue at national and enterprise level. Additionally, a question and answer session allowed for buoyant discussion on burning issues raised by the wide cross-section of participants.



New Workers' Activities Specialist joins the Decent Work Team



Ms. Vera Guseva, a national of the Russian Federation, joined the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean as the Specialist for Workers' Activities in February 2018.

Prior to this, Ms. Guseva worked with the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), ILO Headquarters in Geneva from 2013, as a Technical Specialist. In that capacity she provided advice to the Workers' Group of the ILO Governing Body, the International Labour Conference, as well as their Secretariats, and workers' organizations at large on issues particularly linked to social dialogue, fundamental principles and rights at work, occupational safety and health, labour inspection and compliance.

Ms. Guseva worked for 8 years with the Federation of independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR) in various positions from Junior Officer to the Deputy Head of the Federation's International Department, before joining the ILO.

She holds a Master's degree in law from the Academy of Labour and Social Relations in Moscow and a Master's degree in teaching from the Moscow State Linguistic University.

The ILO DWT and Office for the Caribbean bids farewell to Deputy Director

Ms Dagmar Walter was promoted Director of the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team South Asia and Country Office India, ILO DWT/CO-New Delhi, as of 22 February 2018.

Ms Walter joined the Caribbean office as Deputy Director 1 July 2014. She fostered office efficiency and team spirit for more integrated technical assistance to constituents at national and CARICOM levels. Key areas included: formalization; knowledge development through data and research; gender equality; inclusive workplace health promotion including HIV/AIDS policy; child labour and youth employment; capacitated social partners; and "Just Transition" to environmental sustainability for climate resilience and a greener future of work.



Covering six UN Country Teams, she participated in the development of the Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework for the Caribbean as the vehicle for implementing the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals in the region. Ms Walter was also the Chairperson of the UN Local Salary Survey Committee in Port of Spain.

Ms Walter wishes to take the opportunity to sincerely thank the Caribbean constituents, stakeholders and development partners for the fruitful collaboration and enriching professional and human experiences.

UPCOMING EVENT

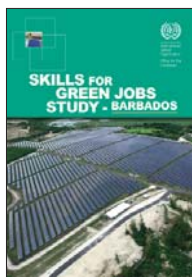
Towards Setting an International Labour Standard: Violence and Harassment in the World of Work

Date: Thursday 26 April, 2018

At the end of 2015, the Governing Body of the ILO took a decision which launched standard-setting process on “violence and harassment against women and men in the world of work”. A first discussion will take place at the 107th Session of the ILO Conference in June 2018. Join us for this webinar and learn more about the ILO standard-setting process towards international labour standard(s) that would help to eradicate violence and harassment in the world of work.



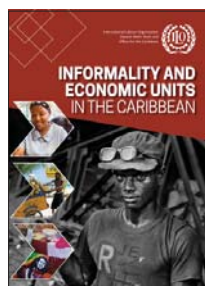
INFORMATION RESOURCES



Skills for green jobs study – Barbados

This study aims to create a baseline to support further policy dialogue with stakeholders on the green economy, and more specifically, green jobs and their related skills in relation to education and labour market adaptation, and concrete action to facilitate the economic and social transition for sustainability.

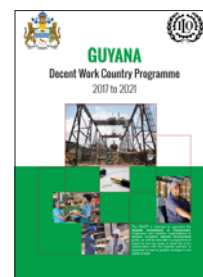
978-92-2-131628-2 (print)
978-92-2-131629-9 (web pdf)



Informality and economic units in the Caribbean

This Study seeks to synthesize four national studies on Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Saint Lucia to determine the reasons for economic units to function informally and the frequency of informal economic units. It is intended to draw some general conclusions about the prevalence and forms of informal economic units in the wider Caribbean region, so as to design a regional strategy for formalization that is sufficiently customized to be relevant to the individual countries.

ISBN: 978-922-130003-8 (web pdf)



Guyana - Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) 2017-2021

The second DWCP for Guyana follows an initial Programme that covered the period 2012–2015 and has acknowledged the many lessons learned from the previous implementation experience. It is intended to represent the tripartite commitment of Government, employers' and workers' organizations to achieve Guyana's national development goals, as well as articulate a programme of action for the key areas in which the ILO's collaboration with the tripartite partners is expected to lead to positive changes in the world of work. It supports national operationalization of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as employment and labour issues lie at the heart of development and poverty eradication. In 2016 the ILO held consultations with constituents to discuss specific areas of need as well as to explore possible areas of cooperation and strategic partnership.

INTERNATIONAL OBSERVANCES

- 28 April: World Day for Safety and Health at Work
- 01 May: Labour Day
- 03 May: World Press Freedom Day
- 17 May: International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia
- 29 May: International Day of UN Peacekeepers
- 05 June: World Environment Day
- 12 June: World Day Against Child Labour
- 18 June: 20th Anniversary of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles & Rights at Work
- 20 June: World Refugee Day
- 23 June: United Nations Public Service Day
- 27 June: Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day

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