

Caribbean NEWSLINK

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

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2019



ILO Future of Work Report shapes dialogue for First Biennial Caribbean Workers' Forum

With the First Biennial Caribbean Workers' Forum, the region's workers' organizations recently successfully established a new platform to build a decent and sustainable future of work for all.

The conference took place from 8 to 12 August 2019 at the Cipriani College of Labour and Cooperative Studies (CCLCS) in Trinidad and Tobago.

Under the theme "Wealth, Productivity and Social Protection: A conversation on the evolution of the 21st Century Caribbean Economy and the role of workers and their institutions", the event sought to help workers and their organizations gain clarity on the risks associated with the global trends in the world of work, as well as build their capacity to effectively cope with those challenges.

Organized by the CCLCS and the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development (MOLSED) of Trinidad and Tobago, the Forum was attended by workers' institutions such as trade unions, cooperatives and credit unions, as well as practitioners, activists, and academics in labour studies and associated fields.

The event paid tribute to the ILO Centenary and the Global Commission on the Future of Work Report. Several members of the ILO Caribbean team participated and shared information, insights and reflections.

In photo: Claudia Coenjaerts, left, shares a light moment with the Honourable Colin E. Jordan, Minister of Labour and Social Partnership Relations for Barbados, and Mr Victor Jones, Director of Suriname Labour College.

In addition to speaking at the Forum opening ceremony, Ms Claudia Coenjaerts, Director of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean, participated in a panel discussion titled “Decent Work for All- Job Security in an Uncertain Economy”. She was joined by Senator the Honourable Jennifer Baptiste-Primus, Minister of Labour and Small Enterprise Development for Trinidad and Tobago. The Honourable Colin E. Jordan, Minister of Labour and Social Partnership Relations for Barbados was also in attendance.

“One of the key takeaways of the Declaration adopted at the ILO Centenary Conference is that we need a human-centered approach to accompany the forces of change. Trade unions have a more critical role in this than is often recognized. They need to reassess strategies to reach beyond their traditional member base and support the collective organization within new forms of work,” said Ms Claudia Coenjaerts, Director of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean.



Ariel Pino in discussions with participants during his session on social protection.

Mr Ariel Pino, Social Protection and Occupational Safety and Health Specialist for the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean also delivered a presentation during the Forum proceedings. His session, titled “Closing the Gap: Social Protection for All”, focused on social protection as a human right and an economic and social necessity.

During his presentation, Mr Pino emphasized that social protection benefits - or social transfers - are powerful tools to combat poverty and inequality, and are an investment in social and economic development. As such, they are key to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets and leave no one behind.

“Social protection systems contribute to enhancing human capital and productivity, supporting the formalization of the informal economy and building social peace,” he explained.

“Social protection systems must therefore be an essential component of national development strategies to achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development with equitable social outcomes.”

The Forum also included a session titled “Greening of Jobs: the Decent Work Agenda in the Era of Climate Change”. Ms Ana Belén Sánchez, Green Jobs Specialist for the ILO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean joined the discussion via Skype with her presentation “Job Creation and Just Transition towards a Green (and a Blue) Economy”. During the session, Ms Sánchez spoke about climate change and how it impacts both the quantity and quality of jobs. She underlined the urgency of a just transition to a carbon neutral and resilient economy.

“Through inclusive social dialogue, evidence-based policies and regulatory frameworks, the Caribbean can be well-positioned to make a just transition to environmentally sustainable economies and societies,” she said echoing the Conclusions of the 11th ILO Meeting of Caribbean Ministers of Labour.

Following the success of the First Biennial Caribbean Workers’ Forum, organizers hope that the momentum will continue to empower workers and their organizations so that they have a stake in shaping a brighter future of work in their countries and across the region.



Senator the Honourable Jennifer Baptiste-Primus, Minister of Labour and Small Enterprise Development (MOLSED) for Trinidad and Tobago (centre) greets the Honourable Colin E. Jordan, Minister of Labour and Social Partnership Relations for Barbados (right), during the Forum.

ILO Caribbean specialists participate in pre-forum discussions

Setting the stage for the First Biennial Caribbean Workers' Forum, the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development (MOLSED) of Trinidad and Tobago in collaboration with Cipriani College of Labour and Co-Operative Studies, hosted a series of four open pre-conference conversations that were themed to the key ILO Centenary conversations. Sessions were held in Tobago first, then in Trinidad, and focused on the following four topics:

- 1) Work and society;
- 2) Decent jobs for all;
- 3) Organization of work and production; and
- 4) Governance at work.

The first of two Tobago sessions was held on 18 July 2019 and was aligned with the Future of Work Report's "Organization of Work and Production" theme. The local business community, worker representatives, academics and the general public came together to discuss how financing and innovation can prepare us for the future of work..

The event sought to identify the challenges that prevent small- and medium-enterprises (SMEs) from innovating and gaining access to funding. It also included discussions on the implications for workers, training and investment in employees.

Ms Virginia Rose-Losada, ILO Caribbean's Sustainable Enterprises Specialist, spoke at the session about how innovative resourcing such as crowd-funding, mobile apps and social bonds can help democratize financial access. She also highlighted their potential to help close the USD2.5 trillion credit gap faced by SMEs.

“There is an urgent need for collective and decisive action by all players in the financial sector so that we can make the future human-centered and what we want it to be, just as the Future of Work Report advises,” said Ms Rose-Losada as she concluded her presentation.



On 19 July 2019, tripartite constituents in Tobago participated in another pre-forum discussion to address how legislation can create better governance of work in the future. This was followed by the perspectives of representatives from trade unions, employers' organizations and the ILO.

During the session, Mr Shingo Miyake, ILO Caribbean Labour Law and International Labour Standards Specialist, highlighted



how Trinidad and Tobago could make better use of comments from the ILO supervisory body. The discussion continued with an overview of the country's ongoing legislative reform.

“Those comments suggested which laws could be improved and how. They would also open opportunities for ILO's technical assistance if desired,” explained Mr Miyake.

The tripartite representatives then held a working group session to discuss how laws could improve governance of the world of work in Trinidad and Tobago.

Following these sessions in Tobago, pre-conference conversations continued in Trinidad as participants gathered for a conversation on Work and Society held under the title “Happy Workers, Happy Society”. The discussion explored the engagement of persons in work, and by extension, in society. It sought to address the responsibility of job satisfaction for the worker. In other words, who should take responsibility for the way in which work is experienced. A very vivid debate was triggered by the contributions of the panelists representing labour, business, academia and the ILO.

“When trying to understand the way work is changing and the implications for the individual and society, there are three main aspects that are recurring: work and time; work, place and space; and valuing and measuring work,” said Ms Vera Guseva, ILO Workers' Activities Specialist. “These aspects and their implications are crucial for the understanding of the role of work for the individual and society,” she continued.

Culminating these more specialized discussion forums, the final session included a more detailed presentation of the Future of Work report by Claudia Coenjaerts, Director of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean. The Report puts forward a bold vision that seeks to steer the transformation to a future of work based on dignity, security and equal opportunity through three pillars of action: (i) investing in people's capacities, (ii) investing in institutions of work, and (iii) transformative investments that prevent a race to the bottom and short term fixes.

“To ensure a successful future of work, it is important that jobs are not seen as a simple commodity. The future presents opportunities, but the good will not happen by itself. What we need is decisive action,” said Ms Coenjaerts.



ILO Caribbean Director delivers keynote address at GAWU Conference

Celebrating the long-standing contributions of workers' organizations to Guyana's labour force was the main theme of this year's Guyana Agricultural and General Workers' Union (GAWU) Conference "100 years of trade unionism – a century of achievement".

The event paid tribute to the role that previous trade union leaders played by recognizing how they helped to shape Guyana's workers movement as an important pillar of its national history, and as a citizens' movement.

Conference organizers also took the opportunity to mark the ILO's Centenary Year by inviting Ms Claudia Coenjaerts, Director of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean (in photo insert), to speak during the opening ceremony.

During her address, Ms Coenjaerts discussed how the work of the ILO over the last 100 years has improved overall working conditions globally. She also highlighted the significance of the recent ILO Centenary Declaration, which was adopted in June at the International Labour Conference in Geneva, as it recognized the need to pursue social justice in order to achieve a decent future of work for all.

More specifically, Ms Coenjaerts emphasized that the Declaration reaffirmed the key role that the Decent Work Agenda plays in helping to advance the social reforms required to achieve the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. "The Decent Work Agenda is an excellent instrument to address that social dimension but we

have to take it seriously. We have to prioritize it and demonstrate that we care about ensuring that people matter in reforms needed for economic and environmental sustainability," she explained.



In her speech, Ms Coenjaerts showcased how the Guyana Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for 2017 to 2021, serves as a tool for addressing key national priorities. She identified several issues which are being addressed by the DWCP, including tackling poverty and inequality through improved working conditions and more respect for international labour standards; increasing prospects for sustainable livelihoods through improved social protection and better economic opportunities; and improving the climate of industrial relations and social dialogue.

“We have been working with many of you on these priorities, and we will continue to strive for a successful and timely realization of these ambitious goals,” she explained.

The Conference, which took place on 17 July 2019 in Georgetown, was attended by high-level representatives from a variety of workers' organizations, including Mr. Seepaul Narine, General Secretary of GAWU, and Mr Lincoln Lewis, General Secretary of Guyana Trades Union Congress. Other dignitaries in attendance included the Honourable Keith Scott, Minister within the Guyana Ministry of Social Protection, the Honourable Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, Leader of the Opposition for Guyana and Senator the Honourable Chester Humphrey, President of the Senate of Grenada.

ILO participates in the 30th Meeting of Heads of CARICOM Social Security Organizations

At the invitation of the National Insurance Scheme of Guyana, the 30th Meeting Heads of CARICOM Social Security Organizations was held in Guyana on 16 July 2019.

The annual meeting addressed important social security issues in the Caribbean to ensure that social security schemes make the necessary reforms to be financially sustainable in the long-term, adapt to the evolution of the labour market, extend coverage and address good governance to respond to the increased need of populations.

“Social security is one of the few public policies that has been providing welfare to billions of people for more than 100 years. Despite a few unsuccessful experiments, the majority of social security interventions have had positive impacts and the principles remain the same,” said Mr Ariel Pino, Social Protection and Occupational Safety and Health Specialist for the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean, who addressed participants during the opening ceremony.

“The ILO commends the important progress made in the governance of the social security organizations. New technologies are now available for workers and employers. More transparency exists and social security has become closer to people through awareness and sensitization,” he added.

Mr. Pino made technical contributions to the agenda addressing i) emerging forms of work and social security, ii) shock responsive social protection, and iii) trends in pension systems and reversing privatization of pension schemes. One of the meeting conclusions determined that the ILO will be conducting a training session on pension reform in December 2019. The 31st Meeting Heads of CARICOM Social Security Organizations is scheduled in Jamaica in 2020.

ILO standards help to guide regional meeting on Caribbean labour migration governance

The ILO was among the lead agencies that participated at the Regional Consultation on the Governance of Labour Migration in the Caribbean, held in Kingston, Jamaica from 16 to 17 September 2019.

The workshop, organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), brought together relevant organizations to create a network of national labour and migration specialists and regional experts. The main objective will be to share information, data, and experiences in labour mobility and migration policies in order to advise policy makers within their governments.

The ILO was represented at the event by Mr Lars Johansen, Deputy Director of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean, and Mr Francesco Carella, Labour Migration Specialist at the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for Central America in San José, Costa Rica. During the workshop, they delivered technical presentations together with IOM on the global frameworks for labour migration and the protection of migrant workers’ rights, corridors and trends on labour migration, and the relevance of a labour market information system for labour migration governance.



The event was followed by the Jamaica Labour Market Forum, organized by the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) with support from IOM. The Forum was dedicated to exploring how to harness the benefits of labour migration.

While delivering his remarks, Mr Johansen reminded participants of the ILO Resolution Concerning a Fair and Effective Labour Migration Governance of 2017. He also referenced the Resolution’s statement that, “well governed labour migration can contribute to sustainable development for countries of origin, transit and destination, and can provide benefits and opportunities for migrant workers and their families. It can balance labour supply and demand, help develop and transfer skills at all levels, contribute to social protection systems, foster innovation and enrich communities both culturally and socially. Poorly governed labour migration can bring risks and challenges, including for sustainable development and decent work, in countries of origin, transit and destination, especially for low-wage workers”.

WIN-WIN Project assesses research on women's entrepreneurship development in Jamaica

A workshop hosted through the UN Women / ILO Project "WIN-WIN: Gender Equality Means Good Business" was held on 30 September 2019 to validate research on the environment for women's entrepreneurship development in Jamaica.



Vanessa Phala, ILO Caribbean Senior Specialist for Employers' Activities, speaks at the WIN-WIN Project workshop in Jamaica.

“The research followed a methodology provided through the ILO Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED) Programme, which aims to empower women in starting and growing their businesses,” explained Ms Vanessa Phala, ILO Caribbean Senior Specialist for Employers' Activities, who spoke at the event.

“While Jamaica has a gender-sensitive policy for micro, small and medium enterprises, there is a gap in people knowing about it,” said Dr Leith Dunn, Head of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (University of the West Indies, Mona Campus) during her presentation on key findings from the research.

“WIN-WIN: Gender Equality Means Good Business” is a three year programme jointly implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UN Women, funded by the European Union (EU).

Launched in 2018, the programme promotes the economic empowerment of women by driving organizational change regarding gender equality as a necessity for competitive business performance.



Dr Leith Dunn, Head of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (University of the West Indies, Mona Campus), presents research findings on women's entrepreneurship in Jamaica.

ILO Caribbean shares insights during consultation to draft labour migration policy in Trinidad and Tobago

The Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development (MOLSED) of Trinidad and Tobago held a stakeholder consultation on 13 September 2019 to develop a national labour migration policy. During the event, the ILO was invited to share its perspectives on effective policymaking for labour migration.



Mr Lars Johansen, Deputy Director of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean, delivered a keynote speech during the opening session. During his remarks he highlighted important elements of well-developed labour migration policies.

“Key considerations for policies and improved governance for labour migration include a rights-based approach to protect migrant workers; consultations and social dialogue; clear information on labour market needs that lead to evidence-based decisions (based on data and fact, not on sentiment); gender-sensitive approaches; policy coherence; and international, regional and bilateral cooperation,” he explained.



Persistent gender gaps at work make it necessary to adopt transformative measures in Latin America and the Caribbean

In August 2019, the ILO released a new Thematic Labour Overview Report that features proposals to address the challenges of achieving equality in the future of work in the region. The Report identifies ongoing gender gaps and evidence that achieving equality between men and women at work is taking longer than expected.

Officially titled, “Women in the world of work: ongoing challenges to effective equality in Latin America and the Caribbean”, the Report finds that for every hour worked, women receive labour income that is on average 17 per cent lower than men with the same age, education level, number of children in their homes, condition of rurality and type of work.

It also advises that the situation requires Latin American and Caribbean countries to adopt a series of transformative measures. These new measures, the ILO contends, should focus on addressing challenges to labour market policies such as “invisible” factors that include stereotypes, behaviours and social norms.

The latest indicators featured in the Report show that while female labour participation rose significantly until 2000, it has since slowed down and has now reached 50.3 per cent -- 25 percentage points below men.

“The Report we are presenting warns that gender differences constitute one of the most unjustifiable forms of inequality today. And it is clearly a fact that prevents against the possibility of building more prosperous, fair and cohesive societies,” said Juan Hunt, Regional Director (ad interim) of the ILO Office for Latin America and the Caribbean during his presentation of the Report, which highlights various dimensions of an “occupational segregation”.

“Active labour market policies are needed to support female labour integration, information and guidance services that meet the specific needs of women, training and education programs to improve their employability, as well as targeted programs that focus on meeting the requirements of women affected by inequality such as migrants, youth, rural women and agricultural workers,” said ILO regional economist Hugo Ñopo, who coordinated the data analysis featured in the publication.

The Report warns that if appropriate measures are not taken, the risk of growing gender gaps will continue. It closes with a series of ILO conclusions and recommendations on how to address the challenge of accelerating gender equality in labour markets.

The “Women in the world of work: ongoing challenges to effective equity in Latin America and the Caribbean” Report can be downloaded at https://www.ilo.org/americas/publicaciones/WCMS_715183

Youth unemployment rates: a challenge for the future of work in Latin America and the Caribbean

The unemployment rate of young people in Latin America and the Caribbean is around 18 per cent, the highest level since the regional averages began to take place almost 30 years ago. By all indications, the number will not be reduced in the near future, according to the latest estimates made by the ILO.

“We are talking about almost 10 million young people between 15- and 24- years-old who are looking to enter the labour markets but do not get an opportunity,” said Guillermo Dema, Regional Youth Employment Specialist at the ILO Office for Latin America and Caribbean.

“The ILO considers that the employment of young people is a priority issue, and it is even more urgent when we are going through a moment of unprecedented youth unemployment,” Dema added when asked about the labour landscape of this age group on International Youth Day which was celebrated on 12 August 2019.

The data on youth employment presented in the “Social and employment prospects in the world - Trends 2019” Report which was published earlier this year in Geneva indicate that the average youth unemployment rate in Latin America and the Caribbean was 17.9 per cent in 2018, and 18 per cent in 2017, the highest levels recorded since the outlook was launched in 1991, when levels were at 11.1 per cent.

The ILO Report contains a tool called “Data Finder” that allows you to observe the evolution of some labour indicators.

Capacity building in vocational training in the Caribbean featured at CINTERFOR Technical Committee Meeting

The 44th Technical Committee Meeting (TCM) of the ILO Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (CINTERFOR) recently took place in Montevideo, Uruguay from 5 to 8 August 2019.

The Meeting brought together experts from vocational training and human resource development institutions in Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain, and Cape Verde to exchange knowledge and experiences.

The gathering was attended by 256 participants from 23 countries, including Dr Hassan Bata Ndahi, Senior Specialist, Skills and Employability for the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean.

Participating institutions from the Caribbean included representatives from the Human Employment and Resource Training Trust/National Training Agency (HEART Trust NTA) of Jamaica and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council of Barbados and the Barbados Vocational Training Board.

According to the data, of an estimated total of 110 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24, 56.3 million are not part of the workforce, and are mostly students.

Of the 53.7 million that have already joined the workforce, at least 9.6 million do not get a job, equivalent to about 40 per cent of the total unemployed in the region. According to Guillermo Dema, there are other circumstances to consider, such as the quality of employment that young people can access.

“For young people it is clear what the future of work will look like. They are and will be people in society that face this crossroads of past problems such as informality or inequality, along with those of the future, where new technologies, climate change, population aging, or the forces of globalization. And we must certainly support young people to face these realities,” he explained.

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the importance of the full incorporation of youth in the labour market in several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in order to achieve equality.

“It is necessary to invest in youth employment now to overcome challenges that the future labour market will generate and to ensure that young people are able to sustain our economies and our future societies,” advised Dema.

At the meeting, Mr Ndahi and Mr Michael Axmann, Senior Specialist for Enterprises, Productivity and Skills, moderated Caribbean-focused discussion groups on trends and issues in vocational training in the Caribbean. During the sessions, the groups identified the following needs for the Caribbean:

- Improving apprenticeship systems in Barbados and Jamaica;
- Advancing social dialogue in vocational training by improving the skills of employers’ and workers’ organizations to be more effective in participating in related-policy discussions;
- Increasing use of information communication technology (ICT) in teaching and teacher professional development; and
- Strengthening capacity of training agencies to determine skills required by the labour market and to anticipate future skills needed.

“Participants considered issues relevant to vocational training in their national contexts. Their deliberations generated ideas that will help them to develop methods for improving vocational training that can help to build a stronger future of work in their respective countries,” explained the moderators.



ILO Caribbean leads discussions on strengthening employment services for persons with disabilities in T&T

The National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), San Fernando, Trinidad and Tobago, in collaboration with the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean, recently hosted a training titled, “Employment of Persons with Disabilities: Reasonable Accommodation”.

The training, which was held on September 19 2019 in Port of Spain, focused on helping employers to provide reasonable accommodation when hiring and retaining persons with disabilities. It also addressed how education and training, and other agencies/organizations can facilitate persons with disabilities so that they can find their way to decent employment.

The workshop provided an opportunity to better understand the specific accommodation requirements to integrate persons with disabilities

into workplaces. Participants then identified actions that will lead to significant improvements.

Dr Hassan Bata Ndahi, Senior Specialist, Skills and Employability for the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean, led a session on the employment and recruitment of persons with disabilities.

“The employment of persons with disabilities is about human rights, equality and non-discrimination, and inclusive work environments,” said Dr Ndahi.

Also featured in the discussion were relevant United Nations Conventions, and other policy documents such as:

- ILO Convention 159 and its accompanying Recommendation;
- Code of Practice for Managing Disabilities in the Workplace;
- UN Convention on Rights of



Persons with Disabilities;

- Recommendation 195 on Human Resources Education and Training; and
- Guide on Promoting Diversity and Inclusion through Workplace Adjustments.

The workshop concluded with the formation of an advisory committee to strengthen placement services between the NCPD and employers, including employment services in Trinidad and Tobago.

Photo insert: Dr Hassan Ndahi, ILO Caribbean Senior Specialist for Skills and Employability, facilitates a session during the NCPD training on reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.



Caribbean countries take major steps to advance ILO Resilience Project

Constituents in Dominica, Guyana and Saint Lucia recently participated in key ILO Caribbean Resilience Project activities, confirming their commitment to strengthening how their labour markets adapt to climate change and the transition to greener economies.

On 12 September 2019, ILO Specialists hosted a workshop in Dominica with representatives from trade unions. The sessions were to sensitize workers' organizations to the Project as well as to the ILO's Just Transition Guidelines towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All.

The following day in Saint Lucia, Government representatives and the ILO achieved a key Project milestone by signing a Decent Work Agreement. The Agreement, which outlines the implementation of Project activities, was signed by Dr Cadelia Lane Ambrose, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Infrastructure, Ports, Energy and Labour (*in main photo, left*), and by Ms Claudia Coenjaerts,

Director of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean (*in main photo, right*). The signing was witnessed by the Honourable Stephenson King, Minister of Infrastructure, Ports, Energy and Labour (*in main photo, centre*).

Through the Agreement, the Project will advance cooperation to implement activities within its six core areas of work, which include labour market institutions and job creation; planning and assessment; skills development; social protection; enterprise resilience and recovery; and social dialogue.

In Guyana, ILO Specialists met with representatives from the employers' organization on 24 September 2019 to discuss enterprise resilience. The sessions identified relevant interventions to be implemented through the Project. Featured presentations included a focus on the benefits, challenges and impact of emerging forms of work on labour institutions.

Launched earlier this year, the ILO Caribbean Resilience Project targets

three countries – Dominica, Guyana and Saint Lucia. It seeks to strengthen the integration of jobs and the Decent Work Agenda in each country to improve how their labour markets prepare for, cope with and otherwise respond to climate events.

The Project will also work to help each country transition to 'green jobs' – a crucial component of the resilience framework in the region which can provide longterm environmental protection, economic development and social inclusion. It supports the efforts of tripartite national constituents to fully implement the globally agreed principles in the ILO "Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all".

For more information about the ILO Caribbean Resilience Project, please visit https://www.ilo.org/caribbean/projects/WCMS_714015

Future of Work Essay Competition winners attend ILO/ITC Future of Work Academy in Turin

Celebrating how youth envision an inclusive, prosperous and sustainable future of work for the region was the focus of the recent ILO Caribbean Essay Competition, organized in collaboration with the University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine Campus.

Open to undergraduate-level university students from across the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean, the contest sought innovative ideas on how the region can adapt to changes to the world of work as outlined in the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work Report.

“The Report explores how powerful forces such as globalization; the technological and digital revolution; global warming and climate change; as well as demographic shifts are having profound impacts on Governments, Employers, Workers and society as a whole – including youth,” explained Ms Claudia Coenjaerts, Director of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean. “We launched this Essay Competition to encourage young people in the Caribbean to propose solutions to the challenges identified in the Report.”

A pan-Caribbean panel of judges representing the Government, Employers’ Organizations and Workers’ Unions presided over 23 submissions before selecting the winners.

First place winner Mr Matthue Prescott, a national of Trinidad and Tobago, is a Bachelor of Science student in International Management (UWI Open Campus). His winning submission featured recommendations on how the Caribbean can adapt to future of work transformations while mitigating risks. He also cited efforts in Barbados that are advancing renewable energy and green enterprises.

Mr Omari Obaseki Joseph, who won 2nd place, is a national of Saint Lucia and a Bachelor of Science student in International Tourism (UWI, St. Augustine). Mr Joseph’s essay recommended that Caribbean countries invest in affordable, state-of-the-art information and communication technology (ICT) in order to create jobs, improve productivity and build more competitive economies.



First place winner Mr Matthue Prescott (centre) is congratulated by Essay Competition judges and ILO staff.

Mr Prescott and Mr Joseph received full scholarships to attend the ILO’s “The Future of Work” Summer Academy from the 12th to 23rd of August at the ILO International Training Centre in Turin, Italy. During the two-week course, they joined young people from around the world to participate in innovative dialogues, training, capacity building activities and knowledge management exercises connected to the Future of Work.

Following the training, Mr Prescott shared some of his most memorable experiences from the Summer Academy.

“The capacity building aspect of the training helped to reaffirm my beliefs that I already had about the future of work, but I was able to put them into their proper context. There was a lot of additional information that I needed to know in order to continue to complete this picture of the world in my head as it concerns decent work and the world of work. I needed a lot more information and I believe that the course over the two weeks filled in the information,” he said.

“I also gained a lot of empathy in terms of how I feel about workers and people in general as they prepare themselves for the future of the work. I also feel a lot more empathy for the situation that a lot of people are in currently around the world – not just in the Caribbean – with regards to their working conditions,” he continued.

Mr Joseph also expressed how the training helped to expand his perspective on shaping the future of work.

“Overall I think this was a very good experience for me. I definitely feel better equipped and energized to help participate in creating a better Caribbean and by extension, a better world,” he said.

“My most valuable and interesting experience was seeing how different problems such as automation or youth unemployment manifest themselves differently around the world,” explained Mr Joseph. “We assume that they pan out the same everywhere else. However, we tend to forget factors such as political climate or culture affect not only how the issues manifest themselves, but also the approaches to solving them.”



Second place winner Mr Omari Obaseki Joseph shares his thoughts on attending the ILO Summer Academy on the Future of Work.



Colombia study tour gives Caribbean participants new insights on linkages between productivity, competitiveness, innovation and sustainability

In order to learn about a new area of work, many people find it effective to engage in conversations with those who have experience in that field. Listening and learning from others may not provide all the answers, but it can help to gain greater understanding.

Following this approach, the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean provided support for Mr Kenneth Foe-A-Man from Suriname and Mr Edison Sumner from Bahamas to travel to Barranquilla, Colombia from 11 to 14 August 2019 for an intense three-day study tour.

The learning opportunity was designed to give them a first-hand look at how Colombia, and more specifically the Colombian Caribbean region, is working towards promoting productivity, competitiveness and innovation.

Introductory sessions featured one-on-one meetings with the Ministry of Trade and Commerce, the National Department of Planning, Regional Competitiveness Centres, as well as organizations that promote science and technology.

The meetings led into a two-day academy on productivity and working conditions, which was organized by the ILO's Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) Programme, in partnership with the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The workshops covered topics such as (i) concepts of productivity, (ii) the link between productivity and working conditions, (iii) social dialogue and productivity, (iv) pro-productivity policies and programmes in Colombia, (v) the OECD Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) policy index and its current use in Latin America and the Caribbean, (vi) increasing productivity within supply chains, and (vii) ILO's SCORE Programme.

While the academy was crafted for a mainly Colombian audience, with some participation from Bolivia and Peru, it remained an enriching learning opportunity as English interpretation was provided. Many issues covered were transferable to other country contexts, as the Colombian

Caribbean shares some similarities with the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. Participants gained the opportunity to foster closer regional ties through networking and informal exchanges.

“These three days have been intense but very interesting. I take away a wealth of information and insights from the various presenters and organizations present. For one, I take back the approach and results from a programme like SCORE that aims to tackle enterprise productivity from a perspective of better working conditions,” said Mr Sumner as he reflected on the study tour.

Increasing productivity is a key concern for several Caribbean countries. In November 2018, Suriname approved the creation of a Centre for Innovation and Productivity (CIP) tied to the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Trade with the aim of boosting overall aggregate productivity in the country through policy, advocacy and research. In February 2019, during a meeting with ILO Caribbean staff CIP Board members emphasized a request for technical support of its initial planning as part of Suriname's next Decent Work Country Programme for 2019 to 2021.

In The Bahamas, the National Tripartite Committee has started consultations and preparatory work for the creation of a National Productivity Committee. Their efforts aim to draft an Act for Parliament to lay down the basis for the establishment of the committee by the end of 2019. They have requested support in gathering information on the committee's function, structure, management and funding.

“In addition to these learning opportunities, in a few months' time, we plan to complete a compilation of good practices and lessons learned from a variety of organizations across the globe that are pro-productivity and have a tripartite governance structure,” explained Ms Virginia Rose-Losada, Sustainable Enterprises Specialist at the ILO Office for the Caribbean.

“The study aims to include examples of where workers, employers and government representatives have engaged jointly to tackle some of their country's most pressing issues impacting firm and national aggregate productivity. We hope to organize webinars to share those findings so if productivity is your thing, watch this space!” she concluded.

Jamaica nominates Labour Advisory Council Secretariat as focal point for multinational enterprises

In August 2019, Jamaica's Labour Advisory Council (LAC) gave approval for its Secretariat to become the national focal point for the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration). The Council is comprised of representatives of workers' and employers' organizations, and is chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Security.



To prepare the Secretariat for this new capacity, LAC members had previously participated in an ILO International Training Centre (ITC) course titled "Multinational enterprises, development and decent work: the approach of the ILO MNE Declaration" held in Turin in May of this year.

Enhancing the impact and contribution of the MNE Declaration to inclusive growth and decent work at country level, requires firm commitment from tripartite constituents. Governments, as well as employers' organizations and workers' organizations are therefore encouraged to appoint national focal points on a tripartite basis to promote the use of the MNE Declaration and its principles at the national level.

“The Ministry looks forward to further discussing with the subregional office towards the establishment of a mechanism for sensitizing MNEs on Jamaican Labour Laws, as well as creating a space for tripartite discussions on matters affecting workers and MNEs,” stated Ms Colette Roberts Risten, Permanent Secretary of Jamaica's Ministry of Labour and Social Security in the letter of designation.

Other countries that have appointed MNE Declaration focal points include Côte d'Ivoire, Norway, Portugal, Senegal and Sierra Leone. The addition of Jamaica to this list, makes it the first in Latin America and the Caribbean to take such a step.

As a first action, Jamaica's MNE focal point is preparing an awareness-raising event in October 2019 with the technical support and guidance from the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean, as well as ILO Multinational Enterprises and Enterprise Engagement Unit (MULTI).

Trinidad and Tobago hosts dialogue on National Cooperatives Policy and Cooperative Societies Act

The Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development in Trinidad and Tobago held consultations with financial and non-financial cooperatives to gather input on the National Policy on Cooperatives and the proposed Amendments to the Cooperative Societies Act 81:03. The sessions were held on 11 in Port of Spain and 17 September 2019 in Tobago.

The Act, which was passed in 1971 seeks to guide and supervise the development of cooperatives. Since then, only one amendment has been made in 1997. With 309 cooperatives across the country and over half a million members, the Cooperative Movement in Trinidad is a key player in ensuring social and economic wellbeing. The sector is faced however with new challenges such as digitalization and decreased interest by youth. These issues, among others are sought to be covered in the new legislative framework.



Ms Virginia Rose-Losada, the Sustainable Enterprises Specialist from the ILO Office for the Caribbean (*in photo*) was invited to both sessions to share insights from an international perspective.

“The aim of this work is not only to bring the legislation to the realities of today, but moreover to what may be the world for the next 10, 15 or 20 years down the road,” said Ms Rose-Losada during her intervention.

While credit unions remain the backbone of the cooperative movement in the country, Ms Rose-Losada concluded her remarks by encouraging all cooperatives, financial and non-financial to have their voices heard to ensure the Policy and the Act cater for all types of cooperatives.

By the end of the year, the Ministry hopes to submit a new Policy and amendments to the Cooperative Societies Act to Cabinet.

Suriname advances development of strategic plan for stronger compliance and labour inspection

Over the last two years, Suriname has adopted a series of labour laws and labour law amendments. With their ever-more important role and the rapid modernization of the world of work, the Government has recognized the need to refocus and strengthen its Labour Inspectorate.

At the request of the Inspectorate-General, the ILO Decent Work Team (DWT) and Office for the Caribbean has embarked on a process to provide guidance that can help Suriname achieve this goal. This exercise is central to a strong implementation of the soon-to-be-signed Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP).

To initiate the process, ILO staff hosted a workshop from 7 to 9 August 2019 with Labour Inspectorate staff. The training followed a new methodology developed by the ILO designed to guide strategic compliance plans for labour inspectorates in member States. This methodology is even more relevant for Caribbean countries who traditionally have small administrations with multiple functions.

The session began with an overview of the current state of the labour inspectorate, which led to the identification of relevant issues, targets, key actors, stakeholders, possible alliances and influences that impact its effectiveness. Participants then produced a chart of possible, necessary and feasible interventions, which included priority areas and approaches.

Barbados seeks to strengthen capacity in tripartite conciliation and mediation of labour disputes

At the request of the Labour Department supported by employers' and workers' organizations of Barbados, the ILO Decent Work Team hosted a five-day workshop in July 2019 that focused on improving conciliation and mediation techniques among tripartite constituents in that country.

While this type of workshop is one of the most frequently requested in the Caribbean, it had been over 10 years since Barbados participated in such a training. Designed for labour officers, as well as representatives from workers' and employers' organizations, the "Negotiation and Conciliation Skills and Techniques" session was well-attended by over 30 participants; of which 26 were women and seven were male.



The workshop also featured a discussion on how to achieve improved compliance through partnerships, capacity building and promotion. In this realm, participants highlighted the agriculture sector, construction sector, security services, supermarkets and retailers as key stakeholders who could benefit from stronger compliance measures. They also identified technical areas of occupational safety and health (OSH) as well as social inspection and minimum wages as key areas for improvement. Training for labour inspectors, employers and trade unions was equally identified as a priority.

As a follow-up to this inaugural session, ILO staff and the Suriname's Labour Inspectorate will host a briefing and feedback session in the coming months with social partners to ensure a fully tripartite process.

The group displayed a high level of experience and understanding, as approximately half of the participants had some experience in either negotiations or conciliation.

“The workshop provided me with immense insight on how mediation and conciliation contributes to the peaceful and orderly resolution of conflicts that arise in the workplace,” said Ms Doreen Dean, Deputy Secretary General – Principal, Barbados Workers' Union Labour College.

“All of the information received was timely and relevant, and the structure of the workshop was excellent and very interactive - presentations, practical exercises, group work, individual exercises and role play. I was indeed fortunate and very appreciative to be part of the training. The Barbados Workers' Union intends to use this training material in its programme at the Frank Walcott Labour College. I look forward to participating in future training programmes,” she continued.

2021 declared **International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour**

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has unanimously adopted a resolution declaring 2021 as the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, and has asked the International Labour Organization to take the lead in its implementation.

The resolution highlights the member States' commitments "to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms."

The UNGA acknowledged the importance of the ILO's Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 (No. 182) – which is close to universal ratification by the ILO's 187 member States – as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It also recognized the importance of "revitalized global partnerships to ensure the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the implementation of the goals and targets related to the elimination of child labour."

Argentina took a lead role in advocating for this global commitment, as a follow up to the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour, which took place in Buenos Aires in November 2017. Seventy-eight countries co-sponsored the resolution.

"We hope that this will be one more step to redouble our efforts and our progress to advance, day by day, towards a world in which no child is subjected to child labour or exploitation and a world where decent work for all will be a reality," said Martin Garcia Moritán, Argentina's representative to the UN.

The ILO has been working for the abolition of child labour throughout its 100 year-history, and one of the first Conventions it adopted was on Minimum Age in Industry (No. 5, 1919).

The organization is a partner in Alliance 8.7 and serves as the secretariat of this global partnership for eradicating forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour around the world.

Substantial progress has been achieved in recent years, largely because of intense advocacy and national mobilization backed by legislative and practical action. Between 2000 and 2016 alone, there was a 38 per cent decrease in child labour globally.

ILO ESTIMATES FOR 2016

- 152 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 were in child labour, almost half them, 73 million, in hazardous child labour.
- Hazardous child labour was most prevalent among children aged 15 to 17. Nevertheless, up to a fourth of all hazardous child labour (19 million), was carried out by children under the age of 12.
- Almost half (48 per cent) of the victims of child labour were aged 5-11 years; 28 per cent were 12-14 years old; and 24 per cent were 15-17 years old.
- Child labour is concentrated primarily in agriculture (71 per cent) – this includes fishing, forestry, livestock herding and aquaculture – 17 per cent in services; and 12 per cent in the Industrial sector, including mining.

"The struggle against child labour has gained extraordinary momentum over the past two decades," said Beate Andrees, Chief of the ILO's Fundamentals Principles and Rights at Work Branch.

"Yet, 152 million children across the world are still in child labour. We obviously need to scale up action further, and the decision by the General Assembly to declare 2021 the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour will be a great help in focusing attention on the millions of girls and boys still toiling in the fields, in the mines and in factories."



Rainer Pritzer transfers to ILO, Geneva

After a 10-year tenure as Senior Specialist, Social Dialogue and Labour Administration for the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean, Mr Rainer Pritzer has moved to a new role at ILO Headquarters in Geneva.

As Senior Specialist Social Dialogue in the Governance Department, he will stay connected to the work he did in the Caribbean as he continues to focus on similar issues, now with a more global perspective.

“It is likely that I will still cross paths with some of the constituents in the Caribbean. They are always welcome to contact me in Geneva,” Mr Pritzer explained.

In Photo: ILO Caribbean Director Claudia Coenjaerts (right) presents Rainer Pritzer with gifts made by Trinidad and Tobago artisans, during his farewell event organized by ILO Caribbean colleagues.



INFORMATION RESOURCES



100 years of social protection.
The road to universal social
protection systems and floors
Vol. 1: 50 country cases

This book is a compendium of 50 country good practices in building national social protection systems including floors. It documents how countries in Africa, the Americas

and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe have achieved universal coverage in the areas of child and maternity benefits, disability and old age pensions, health and others. <http://bit.ly/ilo100secsoc>

ISBN Print: 978-92-2-132823-0

ISBN Web PDF: 978-92-2-132824-7



Working on a warmer planet: The effect
of heat stress on productivity and decent
work

This report shows the impact of heat stress on productivity and decent work for virtually all countries in the world. It presents innovative solutions based on social dialogue to promote occupational safety and health for the most vulnerable groups of workers.

ISBN Print: 9789221329671

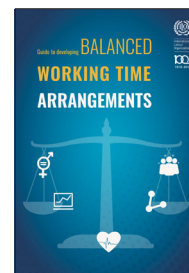
ISBN Web PDF: 9789221329688

INTERNATIONAL OBSERVANCES

- International Day of Rural Women - 16 October
- World Food Day - 17 October
- 50th Anniversary of the ILO DWT and Office for the Caribbean - 20 October
- International Day for the Eradication of Poverty - 20 October
- United Nations Day - 24 October
- Universal Children's Day - (third Sunday in November)
- International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women - 29 November
- World AIDS Day - 2 December
- International Day for the Abolition of Slavery - 3 December
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities - 5 December
- Human Rights Day - 11 December
- International Migrants Day - 20 December

Guide to developing
balanced working
time arrangements

This guide or manual is designed to assist organizations, both private and public, to make informed decisions regarding how to structure working time arrangements in a “balanced” manner for the mutual benefit of both workers and enterprises.



ISB Print: 978-92-2-133240-4

ISBN Web PDF: 978-92-2-133240-4

ISBN Epub: 978-92-2-133241-1

ISBN Mobi: 978-92-2-133242-8

ILO VACANCIES @
<http://erecruit.ilo.org>