



International Labour Organization
Regional Office for Arab States

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Arab countries commit to Social Dialogue in Rabat

Regional conference on social dialogue as part of the Arab Action Agenda for Employment

Beirut (ILO News) – Government, employer and worker representatives placed ‘social dialogue’ at the heart of the Arab Action Agenda for Employment in Rabat, Morocco on Thursday (December 16).

Delegates to the first-ever regional conference on social dialogue emerged with a set of policy recommendations to drive forward the Action Agenda, which was endorsed by 22 Arab states at the Arab Employment Forum (AEF) in Beirut, Lebanon in October 2009.

Organized by the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) and the ILO, the three-day conference highlighted regional and international experiences of social dialogue, Decent Work Country Programmes, public-private partnerships in the region, and social protection priorities.

“Social dialogue is dialogue that is meaningful and respects difference of opinion,” said Ahmad Luqman, Director of the Arab Labour Organization. “It favours flexibility, moderation, understanding and rapprochement. It serves multiple purposes and sectors within different countries, nations, regions and the world, especially in light of globalization and the technological and communications revolution that have brought about the global village.”

The meeting concluded with calls to establish and reinforce existing national frameworks for social dialogue through measures that include: mobilizing human and material resources, prioritising social dialogue in technical cooperation projects with the ILO, enacting legislative reform, launching awareness-raising campaigns, empowering employers’ and workers’ groups, addressing informal work conditions, and adopting a rights-based approach in line with international conventions.

Specific recommendations addressed the need to tackle the challenges of informality, providing social security coverage and creating quality jobs. A network of regional social dialogue experts will also be constituted to guide further steps.

“Our tripartite partners have endorsed a set of social dialogue principles, values and indicators that will support fair and equitable socio-economic progress for all in the region” said ILO Regional Director for Arab States Nada Al-Nashif.

Social Dialogue is one of six priority areas identified by the Arab Action Agenda for Employment, namely: decent employment, sustainable growth and recovery; enhancing management of labour migration, employment and development; building adequate social protection systems and protecting people; strengthening international labour standards and workers' rights; promoting social dialogue and tripartism for crisis analysis and response; and promoting sustainable enterprises for job creation and retention.

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