



International
Labour
Organization

World of Work Summit: Social Justice for All

14–15 June 2023, Palais des Nations, Room XX

► Concept note

Background

The International Labour Organization is established on the conviction that universal and lasting peace can be achieved only if it is based upon social justice. It is expected that the Sustainable Development Goals Summit in September 2023 will reiterate that, despite global, regional and national efforts, progress towards achieving the Goals is off track, due to economic and other shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise in the cost of living, as well as environmental, technological and demographic transformations. Such immediate and longer-term forces are exacerbating poverty, inequalities and injustices, decent work deficits and social fractures in many countries, reinforcing the mistrust in institutions and limiting access to opportunities such as education, financing and freely chosen employment.

If not urgently addressed, such challenges are likely to intensify in the coming years. As called for by the United Nations Secretary-General in *Our Common Agenda*, the international community urgently needs to align and support national responses to these challenges. The Summit of the Future, planned for 2024, will lay the foundations for more effective global cooperation to deal with today's challenges and future threats. A human-centred and rights-based approach is required to tackle short-term crises and long-term trends. This approach should prioritize the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability in equal measure. It should promote the realization of universal human rights and capabilities, international labour standards, equal access to opportunities, a fair distribution of the gains generated through value-added, and just transitions. The world will benefit from a Coalition which aspires to leverage capacities and improve coordination and policy coherence to increase the scale and impact of actions towards social justice across the multilateral system and beyond. Against this background, the ILO Director-General is proposing to forge a Global Coalition for Social Justice.

This timely initiative is in line with the UN Secretary-General's call for a new social contract and the foreseen World Social Summit in 2025. The Global Coalition for Social Justice represents an international effort to accelerate the advancement of social justice, particularly through the promotion of decent work. It will seek to promote, guide and amplify action in areas where greater solidarity, coherence and coordination are needed. In so doing, it will contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

World of Work Summit: Social Justice for All

Purpose and outcomes

The World of Work Summit 2023, convened around the central theme of "Social Justice for All", will be a high-level forum for global voices to address the need for increased, coordinated and coherent action in support of social justice, and will provide an opportunity to discuss and inform the proposal to forge a Global Coalition for Social Justice, which was welcomed by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office at its 347th Session (March 2023).

The Summit will act as a platform for:

- **In-depth debate:** The Summit will highlight the key role of social justice in creating a more sustainable and equitable world and will discuss strategies for increased and better-aligned joint action to advance social justice and ensure policy coherence.
- **Political commitments:** The Summit will provide a forum for participants to share their vision of, and priorities for, social justice and to showcase the actions they are taking and they commit to take to advance social justice. These informed actions and commitments will serve to build a road map for the future, in particular by setting the basis to forge the Global Coalition for Social Justice. It will also be an opportunity to showcase the effectiveness of a whole-of-government and of a cross-sectoral approach in advancing social justice.
- **Advocacy in other multilateral forums:** The Summit will contribute to informing discussions in other multilateral forums of the centrality of and strategies to achieve greater social justice, such as, in 2023, the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, the G20 and the summits of the BRICS countries.

The Summit is expected to produce the following outcomes:

- **The case for social justice is made and declared** at the highest level, to be positioned as a theme featuring in future global events (such as the Sustainable Development Goals Summit in September 2023, the Summit of the Future in 2024 and the World Social Summit in 2025) and in the post-2030 global development agenda.
- **A political commitment is voiced** by participants to step up their efforts and cooperation towards social justice, including through the Global Coalition for Social Justice called for by the ILO Director-General, with a view to accelerating progress towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, among other objectives.

Format and content

The Summit will be held over two days and will feature:

- addresses by Heads of State and Government, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the ILO Director-General and high-level representatives of employers' and workers' organizations to generate renewed momentum to advance social justice at the national, regional and global levels, in which they will share their vision of how to improve social justice in a coherent and coordinated way, the priorities they would like to see addressed by the multilateral system, and the concrete actions they are currently taking and plan to take to advance social justice, as an essential contribution to shape the Global Coalition for Social Justice;¹
- four panel discussions with high-level representatives of governments and employers' and workers' organizations, UN entities and other international organizations. The composition of the panels will strive for geographical representation, gender balance and inclusiveness. The themes of the panels are:
 - Addressing inequalities, informality and facilitating inclusion;
 - Fostering equal opportunities and full, freely chosen and productive employment for all through education, lifelong learning and skills development;
 - Jobs and social protection for just transitions;
 - Trade, employment and sustainable development: Advancing human and labour rights.

¹ All heads of delegations attending the International Labour Conference will have the opportunity to voice their support and priorities for social justice and for the Global Coalition initiative in the Conference plenary.

Tentative agenda – Subject to changes

► Wednesday, 14 June 2023

Time	Session
9.45–10.20 a.m.	Opening: Addresses by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the ILO Director-General
10.20–11.30 a.m.	Addresses by Heads of State/Government, Employers' representative and Workers' representative
11.30 a.m.–1.00 p.m.	Panel: Addressing inequalities, informality and facilitating inclusion
2.00–3.20 p.m.	Addresses by Heads of States/Governments
3.20–4.40 p.m.	Panel: Fostering equal opportunities and full, freely chosen and productive employment for all through education, lifelong learning and skills development
4.40–6.40 p.m.	Addresses by Heads of State/Government

► Thursday, 15 June 2023

Time	Session
9.30–10.40 a.m.	Addresses by Heads of State/Government
10.40 a.m.–12.10 p.m.	Panel: Jobs and social protection for just transitions
12.10 p.m.–12.50 p.m.	Addresses by Heads of State/Government
3.00–4.30 p.m.	Panel: Trade, employment and sustainable development: Advancing human and labour rights
4.30–5.20 p.m.	Addresses by Heads of State/Government
5.20–5.30 p.m.	Closure by the ILO Director-General

Panel: Addressing inequalities, informality and facilitating inclusion

Wednesday, 14 June 2023, 11.30 a.m.-1.00 p.m.

Background

The multiple crises the world has faced in recent years have highlighted the extent of pre-existing inequalities and the consequences. These crises have led to further increases in different types of inequality, and the most disadvantaged populations have often been the hardest hit. For hundreds of millions of people, inequality means that they cannot enter the labour market, that they are trapped in informality, that their incomes are too low to meet their or their families' needs, that they have no access to healthcare and that they cannot save for retirement or cover the costs of unforeseen life events. Entrenched and intergenerational inequalities can impede the upward mobility of individuals in society. Furthermore, the consequences of high levels of inequality and informality transcend individuals and families: they have harmful effects on the pace, sustainability and inclusivity of economic growth, erode democracy and social cohesion, and increase risks of social unrest and political instability. Significant wage and income inequalities also slow down poverty reduction, which requires a combination of higher economic growth and fair distribution of the gains generated through value-added.

Given their multiple harmful effects, preventing and reducing inequalities and informality has become an essential priority for many countries of the world. It is one of the foundations of the 2030 Agenda, and this objective is reflected in various interrelated Sustainable Development Goals. In 2022, ILO constituents adopted a comprehensive and integrated ILO strategy to reduce and prevent inequalities, highlighting the multidimensionality and complexity of inequality and its linkages with several interrelated drivers and dynamics that manifest themselves differently across countries. Consequently, addressing inequality and informality requires combined, coordinated and coherent interventions that address these different drivers, in line with international labour standards, based on evidence and tailored to the specific circumstances of each country. This mix of policies needs to prioritize employment creation, protection of workers' rights, non-discrimination and non-stigmatization, equal opportunities, access to basic needs and essential services (such as water, food, shelter, health services, energy) and fair distribution of the fruits of progress to combat inequality and realize social justice.

Expected outcomes

The panel discussion is expected to:

- raise awareness of the necessity to take action to reduce and prevent inequality in the world of work;
- identify practical solutions, potential innovative approaches and best practices to promote social justice in this area;
- foster collaboration among policymakers, representatives of workers and employers and international organizations, and promote social dialogue to address these issues effectively.

Participants (to be confirmed)

- Ms Karien van Gennip, Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, The Netherlands;
- Mr Shri Bhupender Yadav, Minister of Labour and Employment, India;
- Mr Jorge Luis Araya Chaves, Executive Director of the Costa Rican Union of Chambers and Associations of the Private Business Sector (UCCAEP);
- Mr Plamen Dimitrov, President of the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria (CITUB);
- Ms Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Under-Secretary General of the United Nations;
- Ms Fatima Rabab, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States;
- Mr Paul Ladd, Director, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD).

Format

The panel discussion will be moderated by a renowned journalist, Ms Nozipho Tshabalala, who will introduce the topic and guide the discussion. Each panellist will be given an opportunity to present their perspectives on the topic and share their experiences and best practices. The panel will focus on the following areas (these are not necessarily the final questions the moderator will ask the panel):

- Removing the structural barriers that prevent women, youth, migrant workers and other groups exposed to discrimination from benefiting from equal opportunities and treatment is essential for social justice. The last few years have further exposed discrimination based on gender and other or multiple grounds as a persisting and long-lasting source of inequality. What are the key structural barriers that need to be overcome? What role can stakeholders play in eliminating discrimination?
- Income inequality is a critical form of inequality; it reveals and drives many other dimensions of inequality. What is the role of wage policies and social dialogue, including collective bargaining, in reducing income inequalities and in ensuring that all workers have a just share of the fruits of economic progress? What can be done to increase the labour earnings of non-wage workers often at the low end of the income distribution?
- Increasing productivity and narrowing the productivity gaps across enterprises can contribute to reducing inequalities. What can be done to foster productivity? How to ensure that productivity gains are fairly shared? What is the role of governments, employers and workers and their representative organizations?
- Policies that can effectively prevent and reduce inequalities vary from one country to another. Workers in the informal economy are twice as likely to be poor, usually lack labour protection and are exposed to the most serious social justice deficits. Structurally, informality limits job creation as well as the capacity to ensure needed redistribution through social transfers and tax systems. What actions can be taken to reduce inequality in a context of high informality?
- Inclusive social dialogue, based on full respect for freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, can play a strong role in formulating policies that lower inequalities. Yet many workers, such as those in the informal economy, migrant workers and domestic workers, have little access to social dialogue. What can be done to make institutions of social dialogue more inclusive so that it can advance social justice and a fair distribution in respect of these workers?