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Final Report

Global Dialogue Forum on Conditions of Personnel in Early Childhood Education

(Geneva, 22–23 February 2012)



Sectoral
Activities
Department

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

Sectoral Activities Department

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Introduction

1. The Global Dialogue Forum on Conditions of Personnel in Early Childhood Education was held at the International Labour Office, Geneva, 22–23 February 2012. The Governing Body of the ILO had approved the convening of the Forum at its 311th Session (June 2011), confirming a decision taken in March 2011 for the ILO to convene a Global Dialogue Forum on this topic in the first half of 2012, instead of 2013 as originally proposed. The proposal was based on informal consultations at the ILO through the advisory body for the Education and Research grouping in October 2008 and November 2009. Based on these consultations and decisions of the Governing Body, the Office had prepared an international study on early childhood education (ECE) in 2011, with a focus on the training of educators, employment and working environment in ECE,¹ which served as a major background source for the Forum’s deliberations.
2. The purpose of the Forum was to address issues identified in the international study prepared by the ILO.
3. The Chairperson of the Forum was Mr Sammy Nyambari (Government of Kenya). The Government Vice-Chairperson was Ms Leticia Munday (Department of Basic Education, South Africa). The Employer and Worker group Vice-Chairpersons were respectively Ms Carrie Murdoch (New Zealand) and Ms Haldis Holst (Norway). The Secretary-General of the Forum was Ms Alette van Leur, Director of the Sectoral Activities Department (SECTOR), the Executive Secretary was Mr Bill Ratteree, assisted by Mr Oliver Liang and Mr John Myers, and the Co-ordinator of the secretariat services was Ms May Mi Than Tun.
4. The Forum was attended by 62 participants, including 23 Government representatives² and 16 advisers, as well as 16 Worker and six Employer participants and one representative of an international NGO.

Report of the discussion

Opening statements

5. The Secretary-General of the Forum welcomed participants, stating that the report and the Forum were international “firsts” in this field, particularly due to their focus on professional training and terms and conditions of employment of ECE staff. The report came at a timely moment in reflections on the future of the sector. They built on other international reports and the holding of an international conference on ECE in recent years. The report and Forum should also be viewed in light of the accelerating deadline for realizing Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) objectives in 2015. The process of developing the report and the Forum was a collaborative one

¹ *Right beginnings: Early childhood education and educators*, Geneva, ILO, 2012, at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_171717.pdf.

² From Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Cameroon, China, Congo, Egypt, El Salvador, Haiti, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Malaysia, Niger, Panama, Poland, Qatar, Spain, South Africa, Tunisia and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

involving the Sectoral Activities Department and other ILO units, along with external contributors working on ECE. Thanks were due to those who contributed to the development of the report and Forum and continued collaboration among all in order to achieve the decent work objectives of the ILO would be desirable. The Chairperson, Mr Sammy Nyambari, Commissioner for Labour and Head of the Department of Labour in Kenya, and an alternate delegate and technical adviser for Kenya in the ILO's Governing Body since 2010, as well as key members of the secretariat, were then introduced.

6. The Chairperson underlined that the Forum was intended to consider its five agenda points covering specific areas where the participants could share their own experiences and knowledge. These areas included: trends in ECE; enrolment, governance and financing challenges in achieving universal access and quality for all learners; initial training and continual professional development of staff to ensure quality delivery of services; employment terms and conditions of ECE staff; and the forms and institutions of social dialogue (information sharing, consultation, negotiation and collective bargaining) among involved stakeholders and between employers and staff. Participants would be asked to give recommendations on future action to be taken by tripartite constituents of the ILO and by the ILO through adopting conclusions at the end of the two-day Forum that could influence further policy and development work, nationally and internationally. The aim of such forums was to foster a broader understanding of the issues, to promote consensus on how best to address them, and to provide guidance for action at different levels.

7. The Executive Secretary introduced the report, which focused on early childhood educational provision, policies, structures and human resources up to the age children begin primary education. The main focus was on the training, professional development, status and conditions of educators and social dialogue among stakeholders and between employers and staff/unions. It covered education rather than care, looking at education of children under 3 years old as well as those in the 3–6 years age range. Evidence showed that ECE was important as a means of narrowing the “opportunity divide” particularly for vulnerable groups, by improving school readiness, enrolment and better achievement, as well as reducing drop outs, creating economic and productivity returns and promoting fairness, and social justice. Demand and access had improved as enrolments in pre-school programmes increased over the past decade, but children from poor and rural households and those with special needs had less access. An increase in the number of countries with ECE policies, which were more multi-sectoral and comprehensive, was clear, as well as a trend of public provision in the developed world and private sector dominance in developing countries. However, ECE remained underfunded worldwide, and the impact of the economic downturn and austerity measures on ECE policies, funding and governance was of increasing importance. Initial teacher training standards and levels had improved, but more investment and adherence to standards along with strengthened links between initial training and continual professional development were needed. Despite substantial increases in the employment of educators, the relatively low status, remuneration and sometimes inappropriate teaching/learning environments pointed to decent work deficits in ECE that needed to be addressed so as to reduce educator profile imbalances and improve quality. Increased social dialogue capacity in the sector would help achieve a greater voice by stakeholders on policy reform, which would also be assisted by better data collection to guide policy/programmes.

8. The Employer Vice-Chairperson highlighted the increasing demand for quality education services. She stressed the importance of educators with proper qualifications, which the report picked up well. The report was, on balance, good and complete, though the approach to quality – especially the criteria to support quality improvement – could be strengthened, and data on outputs of ECE should also be improved. The returns on ECE were high and lasting, contributing to the development of the whole person, and therefore deserved the ILO's attention. Early childhood education was an investment. The combination of economic pressure plus the work of parents drove demand for quality in

the sector. There was a need to address cultural and linguistic obstacles to access, and since equity in access to quality ECE was important for all, this required educators with appropriate skills and qualifications, and also required a safe, appropriate and modern environment. Early childhood education had to be affordable and accessible for parents. There was a need to focus on broader measures and assessments in the quality of provision.

9. The Worker Vice-Chairperson thanked the advisory body and the Governing Body for the report and the GDF, which was very timely for national and international policy-making. She agreed with the employers' statement, and applauded the very good report. The discussion should be seen in the context of related international goals and events: the first EFA goal of 2015, the 2010 UNESCO World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education in Moscow, the 2011 Education International (EI) World Congress and strategy paper on ECE in Cape Town, the *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care* publication of the OECD, and the importance of working together as Employers, Workers, Governments and parents globally. Many participants at the Forum had just attended an EI European regional meeting on ECE and the impact of the economic crisis on the sector in Budapest, Hungary. In her own country, Norway, the Government and other stakeholders had recently launched a recruitment campaign for early childhood educators, including a website, TV and press commercials, using the slogan "The world's best job is vacant"; all stakeholders had agreed on the strategy and on the fact that quantity was not enough, but that quality services should be in place which required qualified staff.
10. The secretary of the Workers' group noted the value of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, 1966, and the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART) at global and national levels, and on World Teachers' Day. He trusted that the education sector would retain its prominence in the future work of the ILO.
11. The Government member of South Africa, speaking on behalf of the Government members, called for consideration of making ECE compulsory, and of setting standards for training, policy and guidelines for governments to deliver it. All children needed to have access to ECE and it was crucial that those providing such education should have the right qualifications. This entailed quality and other standards to address the needs of children and to ensure that they and their educators were well prepared. Policy and guidelines to assist governments in this regard were fundamental.

Point 1: The importance of ECE and key trends, issues and policies determining access and quality

12. The Worker Vice-Chairperson highlighted the importance of ECE not only for countries but also for every individual and child. ECE should be holistic and child-centred. The Workers' group believed that access should be improved for rural, minority and linguistically disadvantaged groups so as to reach every child, including the most marginalized ones. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was very widely ratified and confirmed that every child had rights, including the right to education. Early childhood was the best age in which to invest in education, as it gave the best return on investment. There was a need for more study on the *softer and less quantifiable* issues and the importance of putting children at the centre of education. National policies were needed, while better funding, especially public funding, and quality were essential to reinforce this foundation for education and ensure the best possible outcomes, staffing, qualifications and employment terms and conditions. As ECE was a fundamental right, it was a primary responsibility of governments. Governments should cooperate with individual parents, private providers and other partners; however, they should retain their lead role in the financing of ECE. There was a wealth of statistics confirming that ECE

investments were sound investments. Acknowledging the diversity of this education sector, constituents and the ILO were urged to develop guidelines and a framework for decent work for early childhood educators.

13. A Worker participant from Denmark noted that education was proclaimed as a basic human right and this should also apply to ECE. The need to ensure the best quality of ECE was stressed, as it was a foundation for the future of the child and society at large. The survey of business executives undertaken in his country demonstrated that the vast majority of them supported ECE and wished to ensure its provision on a larger scale; therefore, there was a need to create a global framework for ECE.
14. A Worker participant from Senegal stressed that social dialogue should be tripartite and therefore, there was a need to include trade unions in discussions on ECE policy, despite the fact that they were not the funding organizations.
15. The Employer Vice-Chairperson welcomed the fact that the background report to this Forum underlined the importance of ECE for economic and social well-being and individual development, as well as for the country's economic development. The quality of and affordable access to ECE should be ensured for all, not just some groups of society. Both private sector and public-private partnerships had a role to play in addressing this issue. Policies to deal with ECE required strong leadership and participation of government, workers and public and private employers. Governments had a clear responsibility for ECE funding. Funding for the sector should be perceived as an investment, not as a cost, and regulation to achieve adequate quality and access for all ensured.
16. The Government member of Spain noted that in the present economic climate governments were increasingly faced with more and more resource constraints. Therefore, it would be helpful to have a strategy for inclusion of large enterprises in financing ECE through public-private partnerships. Governments in most countries already financed compulsory education usually lasting for ten years; therefore it would be very difficult for governments alone to fund ECE. Guidelines for funding needed to include not only governments, but also large private enterprises, particularly concerning financing of educator training within ECE. Responding to questions from the employers and workers, he suggested that trade unions would be involved in and supportive of such an initiative, which would be in line with government and private enterprise cooperation at other education levels.
17. The Government member of Argentina commented that her country recognized that education was a fundamental right and that the importance of ECE was growing correspondingly. This resulted in a set of laws promulgated in Argentina being passed since the current Government began its mandate in 2003; for example, the National Education Act (No. 26206 of 2006), which made education compulsory from as early as the age of 5. Other laws had been passed to strengthen the rights of children and ensure greater provision of ECE for children up to 4 years old, such as the Promotion and Regulation of Child Development Centres Act (No. 26233 of 2007). These initiatives demonstrated an increasing involvement of the Government in ECE.

Point 2: Initial training and professional development of early childhood educators

18. The Employer Vice-Chairperson believed that initial training and professional development of staff was a key component of quality provision and ensuring a safe and healthy early childhood learning environment. Initial training needed to be relevant, and professional development needed to be ongoing, continuous and supported by research.

Training should also encourage management development and leadership with professional development also provided to current and future managers of ECE centres.

19. An Employer participant from Cyprus explained that her participation in the meeting was both as an employer and as a trained early childhood educator. Since the ECE sector was working with children during one of their most formative periods of development, educators had taken on a major social responsibility. For this reason, it was important that early childhood educators were well qualified for their roles. Part of this qualification was continual, lifelong learning that required substantial funding, not just from the private sector, but from governments.
20. An Employer participant from Germany shared her experiences from advising local authorities on ECE in the state of Bavaria. Early childhood education was very important but funding was a major problem. ECE required more buildings and spaces for the children, more qualified educators but also other staff, refinancing of local authority premises and services. There were insufficient local authority funds to satisfy the requirements. The private sector faced similar problems of funding. In addition, preparation time for early childhood educators each day was important as it gave them time to reflect on practice, as was further training. A decision had been taken in Bavaria that employers would give educators these preparation hours, an indication of improvement in ECE. Recognition of the importance of ECE was evident, but it was necessary to deal with the problems posed by implementation – how to ensure the delivery of training.
21. An Employer participant from Suriname asserted that her Government was aware of the importance of ECE. Draft legislation was being discussed in parliament, but concern was expressed that employers had not been a party to the development of that legislation in her country. It was crucial that governments involved employers and trade unions in such exercises. Employers had been involved in such projects (through corporate social responsibility initiatives) in the past in Suriname, but they had not been consulted in the present case. Tripartite consultation on such initiatives ought to become common practice, because employers and trade unions were the experts in the field of ECE.
22. The Worker Vice-Chairperson commented that the training and professional development of ECE staff should be on a par with that of other educators, namely school teachers – they must be trained teachers and specialized in ECE. The long-term goal in Europe was the requirement for early childhood educators to have a Masters degree. There was a need for additional skilled staff to better understand the needs of children. Continuous professional development was vital in order for staff to be able to interpret available data to better educate children in their early childhood. Professionals needed to be able to understand the framework curriculum and more importantly, be able to translate it into everyday life, incorporating children’s culture, traditions, language and daily needs into professional-level teaching.
23. The secretary of the Workers’ group stated that the training of early childhood educators should be seen as ongoing. Training did not stop with a certification or qualification. “Crash courses” of two to three weeks and similar schemes were inadequate and inappropriate. The training required for early childhood educators should be about the same amount of time as for other levels of education. The training also needed to be credible, adequate for the circumstances, and involve a form of induction and mentoring. Early childhood educators required continuing professional and pedagogical development throughout their careers. A discussion on ECE should recognize the importance and role of leaders in ECE centres. A clear policy framework was needed within the ILO on ECE to serve as a reference document for use by all constituents and stakeholders in the ECE sector. Currently, members of the EFA movement were reflecting on issues beyond 2015.

A policy document developed through the ILO would be timely as it would help shape the future of ECE policy. Social dialogue was also of great importance in that field.

- 24.** A Worker participant from Gambia noted that it was necessary to have specific professional training packages for ECE to suit the needs of children and that these training packages should not simply be modelled on primary education; they must be developed separately from training packages designed for primary school teachers, since ECE constituted a special area.
- 25.** A Worker participant from Senegal remarked that where there was no adequate training for early childhood educators, it would be more dangerous to the education of the children than not having ECE at all. The training of early childhood educators was as important as the right to education. It should not be seen as expenditure but as a worthwhile investment. Many children in Senegal worked in the informal economy and it would be desirable that they had the opportunity for more education. Where ECE was available, mothers were more able to work. For this reason, governments should recognize the value of ECE as a right and as a contributor to economic productivity. Early childhood education should be publicly funded. Senegal had a certificate for early childhood educators, but it only required a secondary school leaving certificate unlike Masters degree requirements of European countries. Teachers were poorly paid in Senegal and there was little social protection. ECE needed to take a holistic approach including health, food, psychological development and education. A strategic framework for ECE was required, inclusive of all stakeholders.
- 26.** A Worker participant from the United States underlined the importance of professional development of early childhood educators. There were two kinds of training. The first was the “sit and learn” type, often in a group teaching setting where experiences were discussed. The second type was the “reflective time” type, which occurred on a more personal and individual level. The second type raised the issue of “non-contact” time. The hours of work of an early childhood educator were long and that meant there was little time for “non-contact”, professional development time. Considering the role of ECE as part of a process of preparing children for the next levels of education, educators needed to be able to reflect “vertically” with the other levels of education. They needed to understand what was expected of their pupils at the next stage of their education. This involved recognizing that ECE was part of a longer process. Teacher contracts did not often address professional development issues, focusing mostly on salary and benefits. It was important to adequately prepare early childhood educators for working with children through ongoing professional development.
- 27.** The Government member of South Africa pointed out that firstly, it was vital to develop a clear curriculum as this would then determine what skills teachers should possess now and in the future, the level of their professionalism and their future skills development programmes. Demand and supply should be considered and retraining introduced with additional resources when over-supply occurred, as was the case in South Africa for primary (but not secondary) school teachers. The importance of educators’ training was reiterated, since those who guide must be adequately trained. Language issues were very important in her multilingual country; children should not lose their roots and original language and ought to be able to retain their diverse cultures. Language issues were important for teachers, especially for those who teach children at such a young age.
- 28.** The Government member of Kenya added that it was not just language that was vitally important for teachers, but also the need to recognize cultural diversity in curriculum development.
- 29.** The Government member of Tunisia commented on the abundance of statistics showing the importance of educators’ training and qualifications in ECE. Slightly more than 40 per

cent of all Tunisia's ECE staff were qualified – whether they were graduates (having completed a two or four year course beyond Baccalaureate level in ECE, including through the Higher Institute for Early Childhood Education, Carthage Dermech); or had passed through training centres for early childhood educators; or had received training from the ministry responsible for childhood – while other staff either had no training or very limited training. Since the revolution in 2011, the Government was aware that this was insufficient to guarantee provision of high-quality services, and it was committed to investing more in pre-school education (access and quality). ECE was 90 per cent privately funded, especially given the almost total withdrawal of local authorities from this sector in recent years. The quantity or quality of service provided by non-profit organizations was rather limited, especially in rural areas. Therefore, the State aimed to provide at least a minimum level of pre-school education in those zones, and encouraged NGOs to invest too, so that low-income families would also be guaranteed access to ECE. It was important to highlight that the primary and secondary education system was compulsory and free of charge.

30. A Government member of Cameroon commended the Office report. Developing countries had evolved with regard to initial and further training of early childhood educators, so he did not support earlier comments about such lapses in ECE. ECE did not exist in Cameroon when he was a child, but a stronger desire for ECE had developed, whether public or private. The problem remained the means to fund ECE. Cameroon knew what it should be doing but there was a need to take into account the children's state of development and the realities on the ground, in addition to encouraging cooperation and consultations with the authorities, trade unions, the private sector and parents on ECE in the country. The Government had already signed contracts with the private sector, however the organization of ECE required cautious progressive introduction of changes in ECE. The government was working with regional and international organizations on ECE and had been involved in Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) meetings such as the Triennale in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (13–17 February 2012).
31. A Government member of Kuwait called for training standards for early childhood educators that accounted for the diverse levels of national development and involved a targeted approach to quality and other issues.
32. The Government member of Argentina acknowledged the importance of training for the quality of ECE, as well as working conditions as an important factor for provision of quality of education. Argentina had developed a four-year post-secondary programme and had provided resources to crèche and kindergarten programmes, to the training of teachers and to provision of educational materials. The country had provided the best possible conditions with the available resources, and funding had been increased to continue the Government's efforts on behalf of ECE.

Point 3: Employment terms and conditions in ECE

33. The Worker Vice-Chairperson referred to earlier discussions emphasizing the importance of ECE to both the child and society at large. What should be done to ensure that early childhood educators' status, salary and conditions would be improved? They should at least have the same pay and conditions as teachers, but that was currently far from true, so that ECE employers could not attract, motivate and retain the best educators. The report's back cover summed up the situation: "conditions of service for ECE teaching staff tend to be inferior to their counterparts in other education sectors. Professional development and the allocation of non-contact time are often insufficient, and remuneration is poor". Real motivation came from pay, recognition, autonomy and trust. The same level of professionalism was required for ECE as for other educational levels, ECE teachers should be trusted to deliver quality education to each and every child, and therefore ECE

educators should have the same working conditions and remuneration as primary school teachers. The working environment should be professional and stimulating and encourage professionals to utilize their knowledge and experience to the fullest. Employers and governments were jointly responsible for ensuring good conditions, but the importance of professional autonomy also needed to be stressed, meaning that the professionals themselves would have responsibility for quality education, in turn requiring that they were granted trust. In Finland, one of the countries with the best results in the international OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study that assessed learning, the stakeholders were convinced that the greatest quality assurance was the quality of their professionals. As a result, teaching was one of the most popular and highly qualified occupations in the country. Gender aspects were very important – this was a predominantly female workplace, so there was a need to make it more attractive to men to provide other role models and achieve better gender balance. How to portray the profession and reward it therefore were important policy questions. For ECE jobs to be made more attractive to men, gender equality in general needed to be achieved so that more men interested in a career in education would be motivated to seek work with young children.

- 34.** The secretary of the Workers' group stressed the importance of professional autonomy, the responsibility of professionals and how to apply their knowledge, which required high-quality training – these aspects were interrelated. Institutional autonomy was also important; trusting leaders and trusting teachers in exercising their autonomy was essential for quality education. In some institutions, evaluation was mainly by peers rather than external evaluators or inspectors. More resources were needed to ensure optimal conditions for children to learn. In many countries in Asia and Africa, there were children learning outdoors under trees, without basic resources such as toys or shelter. Therefore there was a need to develop a policy framework to promote a comprehensive approach to ECE. With reference to proposals on national curricula policies, such a policy should be seen as a framework rather than as a fixed concept for a curriculum; a policy framework that should be more responsive to children's needs and interests, and therefore be flexible and adaptable to local conditions.
- 35.** A Worker participant from Senegal noted that favourable conditions for the principal actors in ECE were far from being achieved at present. Teachers were being selected and recruited on one- or three-month or one-year contracts on condition that such contracts were renewable on the basis of not joining a trade union; this limited their fundamental rights as defined by ILO instruments on freedom of association. Fundamental standards on joining trade unions, using collective bargaining, not using forced labour, and prohibiting discrimination should be upheld as a means of addressing these problems in ECE. Pre-school teachers were not treated in the same manner as primary school teachers. ECE educators should have decent salaries, social protection, social dialogue, and decent work in general. The ILO should introduce decent work schemes in ECE, and there should be no discrimination between men and women in terms of permanent contracts. Every country should have an ECE curriculum, governments needed to better exchange information on strategy and policy, as this dialogue provided opportunities to learn from experiences in other countries so such knowledge could be applied, particularly in developing countries. On funding, given the considerable amounts contributed by parents for ECE, they should also be considered as stakeholders, and involved in evaluation of ECE. Parents should be subsidized and mentioned Brazil as an example where cash transfers and the social protection floor initiative encouraged parents to enrol their children in pre-primary education institutions.
- 36.** A worker participant from New Zealand shared experiences from her country in moving towards pay parity. Early childhood educators in state kindergartens received salary increases of 60 per cent over a four-year period, to match those of primary school teachers. This made the profession significantly more attractive to quality university graduates.

Recently, for the first time, postgraduate diploma courses for training early childhood teachers had been offered and were now available at many universities. The increase in qualified teacher numbers was having a significant impact on improving the quality of ECE.

- 37.** A worker participant from Denmark also referred to the importance of addressing the gender balance in the profession. Attracting more men into the profession was related not only to pay, but also to the social and professional status of the sector in society in general. In Denmark they were convinced that a focus on professional knowledge was the key to raising educators' status, and recognizing this through granting them the professional autonomy that allowed this knowledge to be applied. In his country, the early childhood educator qualification was currently a bachelor's degree requiring at least three years of university education and there had been a clear increase in male applicants in the past two years.
- 38.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson asserted that quality ECE required qualified practitioners to effectively implement the curriculum, safe learning environments and leadership and management to make best use of limited resources. Many countries struggled to recruit qualified practitioners especially those with linguistic and cultural knowledge and competencies so as to deliver education for all, engage all learners (including disadvantaged and minority communities and rural areas) and be able to improve quality and adaptation. As regards contact and non-contact hours, professionals needed time to reflect on their work and on how to adjust their work to improve the quality of children's learning. Remuneration was important as a way of rewarding quality and talent and ensuring quality ECE services. She agreed with the workers' statements about the importance of attracting and retaining ECE educators, and the importance of professional autonomy, which was widely supported by employers. Management also had the right to manage; this required that the institutions' managers also needed to be trusted, in the same way as the teachers. The sector had to recognize and reward performance, which linked back to her earlier point on the retention of talented educators. Occupational health and safety was also important in teaching and learning environments.
- 39.** An Employer participant from Cyprus was of the view that men had not been discriminated against in the ECE sector; it was rather their choice not to enter this sector. One reason for women preferring this profession (and men choosing not to) was the working hours, which were more convenient and compatible with family responsibilities.
- 40.** The Government member of South Africa, speaking on behalf of the Government members, noted the agreement among all parties that there was a difference in social status and in conditions of service between ECE practitioners in urban and rural areas and that there was a need for policy to ensure that such disparities were removed. Teaching remained predominantly female, and there was no real career progression. Social dialogue in the ECE sector was very important to ensure mutual understanding, but it was undervalued and efforts should be undertaken to make it better organized and structured. ECE policies could be developed and implemented, but it was also important to monitor them properly.
- 41.** The Government member of Spain observed that almost all children in the 3–6 year age group in Spain attended public or private education, but a much lower proportion of children between 0–3 years of age did so. The curriculum for children aged 3–6 was regulated whereas that for 0–3-year-olds was not and was much more diverse. It was difficult to carry out monitoring and inspection without a clear framework curriculum and guidelines; the only aspect currently regulated was health and safety, including food safety and provision.

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42. The Government member of Argentina noted that the figure for children aged between 45 days old and 5 years old enrolled in pre-school education was roughly 1.5 million children, of whom 1 million were in public kindergartens. Practitioners working in these schools had to hold a teaching certificate (four-year tertiary course). Social dialogue between governments, employers, trade unions, regarding primary school and pre-school educators was focused on discussions regarding wages (in her country, the salary system was the same for primary and pre-school teachers).
43. The Government member of Kenya shared experiences in her country on how the government has encouraged improved quality in the sector, for example by introducing degree courses for early childhood educators. Challenges persisted because salaries remained higher in primary education than ECE despite the fact that early childhood educators now held degrees while primary school teachers might hold diplomas. This disparity discouraged young people from choosing this profession.
44. A Government member of Cameroon referred to work carried out by her government and PAMODEC (Programme to support the implementation of the ILO Declaration) in her country to enhance improved access of girls to primary and pre-school education, given their previous underrepresentation at those levels. It was important to respect the two core ILO Conventions on equality – the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).
45. The Government member of China, herself a teacher/educator, remarked that in her country this was the best time in history to discuss ECE, because the Government had started to invest heavily in this sector. Monitoring regulations and quality of teacher training represented a key challenge – it was feasible in urban areas, but monitoring could not easily be done in rural areas. Another problem was the salary and social status of teachers, which was much lower compared to primary educators in China. Recently, the Government had raised the importance of ECE and teacher training, and had invested primarily in rural areas in central and western China. The issue of no-contact time was a relatively new concept in her country, especially in rural areas; educators tended only to have contact time with children, and rarely thought about the need to plan and discuss their work, or about curriculum development and professional development. She hoped to obtain useful information on this issue from the Forum in order to learn how to adapt their approaches.
46. The Government member of Tunisia shared recent experiences in her country, where private institutions predominated, representing 89 per cent of the total number of ECE institutions. In Tunisia, the directors of kindergartens or similar institutions had to have at least a university degree (or at least a Baccalauréat as well as a good understanding of business plans and appropriate training for a post as kindergarten director). Young investors were prepared to invest in such institutions, but they had little return on investment; so they often lost motivation and closed down such centres. Lack of investment and absence of infrastructure (renting premises that fulfilled current requirements was costly and complicated; materials were expensive) restricted the development of such institutions; in fact, many of them had been obliged to close within one to two years. Overall there was not enough money to cover salaries and overheads, as parents' contributions did not cover all costs. Hence, many children – especially in rural areas – currently could not benefit from this kind of education. After the revolution, the Government of her country intended to invest in ECE.
47. A representative of an international non-governmental organization, Voluntary Services Overseas International, shared lessons learned from his organization's initiatives on teacher motivation emerging from their experiences in 18 countries. First, low status was a key factor in discouraging entries into the profession and a challenge for retention. In his country, Nepal, for example, 40 per cent of early childhood educators left the ECE

profession because the social status and the salaries were inferior to those in primary education. Second, while gender equality was an important factor there was a need to look beyond gender to reduce discrimination in general by taking into consideration the issue of equality between social groups, for example in encouraging young people from disadvantaged and marginalized groups and linguistic minorities taking up the profession. Third, to add to the discussion on resources, the working and learning environment needed attention. In many countries, educational activities took place under trees without any shelter. Quality education required at least basic standards and infrastructure.

Point 4: Social dialogue in ECE

48. The Employer Vice-Chairperson pointed out that from an employer perspective social dialogue was helpful for resolving issues at the enterprise level, and that this was more than just about collective bargaining. Social dialogue needed to reflect the autonomy of individual enterprises and the situation of the sector, including localities. Social dialogue played a key role in terms of information sharing and consultation and in establishing performance benchmarks as part of identifying and dissemination of good practice. This was a key area that was linked to good and effective professional practice, but doing it in a systematic way.

49. The Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the employers' statement that social dialogue was much more than collective bargaining. One should begin by definition of social dialogue in the sector, which should be regulated by law or through a collective agreement in which the parties have clarified which issues should be the subject of information-sharing, of consultation and of bargaining. Thus the rules and levels for dialogue were set before discussion, and rules to deal with agreement and disagreement were clear. Social dialogue should take place at all levels: at the enterprise or institution level, but also at the policy-making level, at regional level, because there may be different actors with different responsibilities. Having influence and dialogue around policy-making was a very important aspect of this, which should be included in every area; when there was dialogue from the outset, decision-making was much more effective and many more actors participate in the implementation of agreements. The main messages to retain were that social dialogue was fundamental in bringing the sector forward, that it must be a part of the whole process from policy-making through to implementation, and it should encompass bargaining and negotiating for employment terms and pay. It should function in public and private education, because much of the sector was private in many countries. One way of doing this was by ensuring the same level of organization on the private employers' side as for public employers. In her country, Norway, the trade unions encouraged private sector employers to organize themselves in a national employers' organization, and this provided a professional body with which to consult and bargain. It was a win-win situation. Decisions would be better, were more easily enforced and implemented, and enhanced motivation in the sector. Thus it was essential to regulate the system, agree on how it would work and never forget how to use it. Many countries believed that they had a well-developed system of social dialogue and supported it as a mechanism, yet the ILO report noted significant challenges to ECE social dialogue. All parties should recognize those challenges. Unions acknowledged their own responsibility to organize and ensure that workers in ECE could join unions, since one challenge highlighted in the report was the low level of unionization within the sector. Unions expected that freedom of association would be ensured by employers and governments, and the social partners could all confirm that the dialogue system they had established was good and functioned in all institutions. Norway had highly developed social dialogue, but some private early childhood institutions run by new providers did not want to sign a collective agreement nor join an employers' group often out of lack of knowledge or out of fear, but sometimes on principle. The Forum's participants should agree that if they were to develop a framework

for ECE through the ILO, it should say something about all three parties using, emphasizing and enforcing social dialogue in their countries to develop ECE.

- 50.** A Worker participant from the United States agreed with the idea that management had the right to manage. This should be matched by workers having the right to join a trade union and in fact private sector employees in the United States had greater opportunity to join unions than some public sector workers. In her country's legislation, three laws covered all private sector employees, but 50 state laws covered public sector employees. This divided the ECE workforce, the public from the private sector, and made it very hard for them to collaborate. The ECE workforce was underpaid and undervalued because it was disconnected from the rest of education. ECE could be better if more fully a part of the education continuum. Teacher unions in the United States were working on some innovative strategies in the area of collective bargaining and collective voice; organizing parents and workers together because parents were the end users, especially in ECE, and because it was vital for them to be represented in the workplace. Joint organizing efforts were built around advocacy for funding, for standards and for laws that would enforce and improve the quality of ECE.
- 51.** A worker participant from Saint Lucia highlighted the need for governments to recognize that they had to invest in ECE to develop their countries' human resource base effectively – attention had to be paid to the initial level of pre-school education. In order to advance the ECE agenda, the delivery of that service had to be seen as a partnership, and parents were a significant stakeholder in that process. In some countries, clarifying the importance of ECE as a concept was still needed, namely how it assisted children throughout their lives. The holistic development of children involved parents, children and the community; and they all had to understand what that meant in terms of raising healthy, well-adjusted children. Governments had to ensure the enabling environment, and that required mechanisms for the integrated management of ECE services. It should not be confined to education alone, but had to include social services and development, looking at children's needs as a whole, as well as the required resources, and in the process avoiding duplication of effort, to the ultimate benefit of each child. The idea of a regulatory and policy framework was important, and the monitoring of that framework was key to ensuring common standards at the national level, thereby bridging the rural–urban divide.
- 52.** A worker participant from Senegal supported statements made by African governments on progress in social dialogue and recalled Senegal's ratification of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), in 2004 and the establishment of a National Committee for social dialogue. This Committee ensured that there were sectoral committees for Social Dialogue in education and in other sectors across the country, and ECE (whether public or private) was considered as a stakeholder in this social dialogue. Such dialogue ensured social peace within enterprises, but also contributed to competitiveness, productivity and social cohesion.
- 53.** The Government member of Tunisia stated that social dialogue should be supported by all partners, to strengthen motivation and improve quality in ECE. In her country, the draft revised regulation covering ECE staff was currently the subject of a process of consultation and negotiation by various concerned parties, so as to allow staff opportunities to develop a career path and to enhance their status. The Government was aware of the importance of ECE staff and managers having a clear career path, which would ensure greater access to and higher quality of children's pre-school education. Governments and social partners were encouraged to share or publish more examples of good practice and experience in ECE, which would serve as a testimony and a source of inspiration for good practices elsewhere. Some publications on ECE and the results of studies undertaken in her country had been shared in the Forum, which was an ideal opportunity to publicize examples of good practices, positive experiences, useful publications and laws.

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- 54.** A Government member of Cameroon emphasized that teaching was a strategic sector. Teaching and education was a long-term investment, and the benefits were not immediate. In his country, the Government had adopted a decree in 1974 on determining the professional categories of teachers in private education and fixing the minimum remuneration for them, which were to be agreed in collective bargaining agreements. Nurseries were free of charge, as were primary and secondary education. There were trade unions in private and public education so as to improve working conditions for both groups of workers. Cameroon's Government had established two structures: a joint committee for negotiating the collective bargaining agreement for private education; and ad hoc committees on the terms and conditions of teachers in public education, which included all stakeholders – Government, workers and employers. Social dialogue was being reinforced in Cameroon through law No. 2011/029 of 14 December 2011 authorizing the ratification of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). The reforms to be undertaken would involve the social partners in this work from start to finish.
- 55.** The Government member of Argentina stated that social dialogue in her country was a very important part of a very strong trade union tradition. Social dialogue was particularly important in the teaching profession, and the unions, employers and Government were currently discussing in their tripartite commission the wage levels to be set from the start of the next school year. Moreover, the Government of Argentina had proposed the inclusion of other topics within the discussion, such as the quality of teaching, absenteeism and teacher evaluation, among other things.
- 56.** The Government member of Niger noted that it was clear that in socio-economic development, particularly involving private enterprises, social dialogue was a key to promoting all socio-economic policies which determined the life of the nation, including both private and public education. In his country, social dialogue was functioning well and there were some 60 trade unions in the education sector, including ECE, primary, secondary and tertiary education. In December 2011, Niger's main trade union for teachers signed an agreement with the Ministry of Education and other partners, which had subsequently been signed by other unions and ministries. The Government supported social dialogue with stakeholders, and ECE was part of a broader social dialogue framework to deal with specific issues. Inspections of educational institutions were carried out at pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary levels and by region, although it was complicated to do full inspections. Management committees for school institutions, which had separate structures, constituted another important aspect for the Ministry of Education, all the more because parents' associations contributed significantly to the management of schools and to regulating some social problems. The Government also has to consider socio-economic, religious and cultural differences and the great disparity between rural and urban areas. There was a trend in large urban areas to give pre-schooling greater prominence than in rural areas. Minimum benchmarks should be considered in developing countries for ease of comparison – recommendations along these lines would facilitate tackling various dysfunctions encountered in those countries.
- 57.** The Government member of Kenya noted that in order for social dialogue to be effective and meaningful, it must be based on respect for the democratic process, tripartism and the institutions for dialogue. He added that more support should be provided to smaller and emerging trade unions. In his country there was considerable bias towards more established and prominent trade unions, which sometimes lacked knowledge of important issues such as gender discrimination. He urged constituents to encourage greater representation of the specific interests of rural, women and ECE unionists to achieve more inclusive social dialogue.

Point 5: Recommendations for future action by constituents and the ILO

- 58.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson stated that the Workers' group recommended that the ILO and its constituents develop policy guidelines on ECE and the promotion of decent work for ECE personnel during the 2012–13 biennium, based on the report and discussions in the Forum. The proposed guidelines could include, but should not be limited to the following:
- (a) ECE as a public good and a fundamental right;
 - (b) ECE financing to ensure quality, equity and sustainability;
 - (c) ECE governance, management systems and leadership;
 - (d) establishing and maintaining high teacher qualifications and licensing standards;
 - (e) developing and maintaining continuing professional development, reflective practice and professional autonomy;
 - (f) policies to enhance staff recruitment and retention, addressing gender and geographic imbalances;
 - (g) remuneration levels consistent with raising the status of ECE, promoting recruitment and retention;
 - (h) promoting social dialogue, decent work and international labour standards.
- 59.** The secretary of the Employers' group asked the Office to clarify to what extent it faced material and financial resource constraints in delivering the demands of constituents on this topic. In order to avoid any undue expectations, it was important for everyone to understand what flexibility the ILO had with regard to its resources devoted to future action in the ECE sector. The Employers' group also asked for clarification from the Office on whether a GDF could make recommendations on a specific activity. What could the ILO do, technically and financially? Did the ILO give priority to ECE as such (which would seem closer to the mandate of UNESCO) or should it focus purely on social and labour issues.
- 60.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson stated that the Employers' group agreed with many of the Workers' proposals on the idea of developing policy guidelines on ECE, especially highlighting the importance of the proposals on proper financing to ensure quality ECE provision, improving governance and leadership, establishing and maintaining high teacher qualifications and licensing standards, policies to enhance staff recruitment and retention, addressing cultural and gender imbalances, and promoting social dialogue and decent work. However, they suggested deleting the reference to international labour standards, and adding bullet points addressing cultural and linguistic diversity, monitoring and evaluation, and the autonomy of centres to run themselves and carry out their work.
- 61.** The Secretary-General of the Forum explained how the Office programmed its sectoral work – guided by the ILO's programme and budget – and pointed out that it had rather limited flexibility in order to ensure cost-effectiveness and close focus. The Decent Work Country Programmes were the most important mechanism to guide the ILO's work and to deliver services to constituents. The flexibility in terms of additional resources for ECE was restricted by requirements of other sectors that constitute the education and research grouping, and the specific level of resources allocated to it. Forum participants could recommend future action by the constituents and the ILO, which would have to be

approved by the Governing Body on the basis of a proposal from the relevant advisory body to set priorities (or to adjust them) and approve reallocation of funds accordingly. A proposal to develop guidelines would normally require a meeting of experts to discuss the draft guidelines. Work by the Office to develop guidelines and to convene a meeting of experts would inevitably entail a trade-off – by forgoing other work already planned for the education sectors as a whole, for example the promotion of the human resources good practices toolkit. The adoption of such guidelines by a meeting of experts would in turn have to be approved by the Governing Body.

- 62.** The Government member of South Africa, speaking on behalf of the Government members, provided their recommendations about the ILO developing a framework of guidelines on the following: (a) working conditions and conditions of service in ECE; (b) training/continuous development of ECE teachers and managers; (c) curriculum and minimum standards; and (d) teaching requirements. Such a framework would assist countries to develop their own policies and regulations. The importance of inter-sectoral collaboration to ensure that all aspects of education, security and protection of the child should be highlighted. The ILO should share good practices and undertake a baseline study to evaluate best practices and to indentify gaps and challenges. Social dialogue and evaluation was important and the participants at the Forum should reconvene a meeting to monitor progress in due course.
- 63.** A Government member of Cameroon supported the Worker and Government proposals and suggested cooperation in developing the framework with other stakeholders such as agencies working within ECE – notably UNESCO – but from an ILO perspective.
- 64.** The Government member of Azerbaijan suggested that each State should contribute to this common work and proposed that the ILO request all member countries to provide information on existing practices, including standards indicated in their legislation on ECE, and to put this information on the ILO website to bridge the information gap experienced by developing countries. The information should include also good and bad practices on governance and management, short reports on activities undertaken in each country, as well as scientific articles on ECE from around the world. The experience from Brazil and New Zealand of providing subsidies for families was illustrative; it would be important to create an attractive environment for the ECE, including favourable tax policies and benefit schemes, especially in rural areas.
- 65.** The Government member of Argentina supported addressing the issue of aid to families in vulnerable situations, and shared the experience of her country where the Government had in 2009 passed the Universal Child Allowance Decree (AUH 1602/09), which provided financial support to unemployed families that significantly facilitated universal access to ECE, given that parents had to certify their children’s vaccination status and educational participation in order to receive the allowance, showing that inter-sectoral policies could strengthen the ECE system.
- 66.** The Government member of Tunisia shared the experience from her country on a project that had been implemented in 2011 aimed at reducing regional disparities in the ECE sector. Six of the most disadvantaged governorates had been identified in which ECE would be provided to the families in greatest need. The Government provided subsidies – via voluntary organizations – to indentified institutions showing positive results and this project could be extended to other parts of the country. She supported the recommendation on sharing documentation and information on the website.
- 67.** A Government member of Cameroon recalled that the purpose of the Forum was to discuss the conditions of work, wages, hours and other benefits of ECE staff. Specifically, a study should be done on bad practices – lack of decent work, people being asked to work beyond working hours, poor pay and constraints to strengthening unions – in developing countries.

Trade unions could provide peer training for ECE staff on such issues so as to improve their conditions of employment.

- 68.** The Government member of Egypt spoke about problems of sustainability of ILO projects in developing countries. There were too many ILO projects in Egypt (such as eliminating child labour via education) that were successful during implementation, but after they were completed the Government was unable to provide funding to sustain these projects.
- 69.** The secretary of the Workers' group agreed with the Employers about sticking to the competencies and mandate of the ILO, but the Workers considered it necessary to frame guidelines within the context of the sector, using basic data and trends. Such guidelines would have great value in that they would allow the ILO to be in a better position to engage in global dialogue and debate on ECE, and not be at variance with the findings of the report. Regarding social dialogue, decent work and international labour standards, the Workers emphasized their wish to retain the mention of international labour standards because it was the co-responsibility of the ILO to promote these standards (and they were in the mandate of the ILO). Page 54 of the report (English version) referred to the most relevant international labour standards. A proposal was made to include the word "relevant" in front of "international labour standards" so that it did not refer to them all. The Workers agreed with the Government members on the importance of sharing data and with regard to the sustainability of projects. These points could go into the guidelines as basic principles of knowledge/experience. It seemed that all participants were in favour of developing such guidelines and if developed, they could be sustainable and useful to the constituents.
- 70.** The secretary of the Employers' group referred to the proposal to include "relevant international labour standards". The Employers held a different position with regard to labour standards in that they did not endorse all standards, of which the majority lay dormant. Therefore, the Employers did not want to give the impression that they were ready to endorse all standards or even "relevant" ones, and in any case some might be relevant to the Workers but not to the Employers. It was premature to discuss such issues before a meeting of experts on the guidelines, there were no international labour standards specifically relevant to ECE, and therefore the word "relevant" was not helpful.

Consideration and adoption of draft points of consensus

- 71.** Having reviewed an initial Office draft, prepared on the basis of discussion in plenary, the Forum adopted points of consensus, which included amendments agreed during the closing session. At the request of some participants, the discussion on paragraphs 16 and 17 of the original draft was put on record.
- 72.** In paragraph 16, the Employer Vice-Chairperson requested that the original draft text be deleted, as it went into too much detail. The Government Vice-Chairperson said she had no problem with keeping the draft text and the Worker Vice-Chairperson emphasized her strong support for the paragraph to remain, as it was at the core of the ILO's work and therefore very important. The secretary of the Employers' group noted the reference to "international labour standards" and to "international standards on teachers" in general, which were too vague or too prescriptive, and suggested that in order to avoid long negotiations in the short time available, the best option was to delete the paragraph. The Worker Vice-Chairperson preferred to replace the detailed enumeration of rights and principles by a reference to the 1998 ILO Declaration. The secretary of the Employers' group agreed, suggesting "effective social dialogue depends on respect for the

1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.” The Government Vice-Chairperson concurred.

73. Under paragraph 17, the Employer Vice-Chairperson proposed to amend the last bullet point, to read “Promoting social dialogue and decent work in accordance with the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work”, thereby deleting the reference to “relevant international labour standards”. The Worker Vice-Chairperson reluctantly accepted changes to the last bullet point, but she declared that the Workers expected the forthcoming meeting of experts to engage in further debate on identifying the relevant international labour standards. The Government Vice-Chairperson agreed.

Closing remarks

74. The Employer Vice-Chairperson thanked all delegates. Quality ECE should be viewed as an investment with lasting social and economic returns for individuals, communities, families and society in general. The discussions regarding establishing quality ECE and the focus on addressing issues so as to achieve quality provision of ECE for all had been impressive. The Forum had identified the need for policy guidelines on the importance of ECE and on the conditions for personnel involved with ECE. Any future work on this topic should be done on a tripartite basis. Social dialogue had a large role to play and each country should find its own model and path towards establishing this dialogue.
75. The Worker Vice-Chairperson noted the importance of this Forum in bringing discussions on ECE forward, especially in an ILO context. Like the title of the report, the Forum had a responsibility to ensure young children get the “right beginning”. The Forum had helped in achieving this goal, and the Workers were looking forward to the Meeting of Experts to carry this work forward.
76. The Government Vice-Chairperson thanked all participants and looked forward to the development of the guidelines.
77. The Secretary-General expressed her appreciation for the engagement of participants and quality of the discussion. The final adopted points of consensus provided a good basis for moving forward on ECE challenges, and once again demonstrated the value of tripartite social dialogue in addressing sectoral issues, proposing solutions for constituents and guiding the ILO in its supportive work.
78. The Chairperson likewise thanked the participants for a rich and productive discussion, as well as the secretariat for its contribution to the success of the meeting, and closed the Forum.

Consensus points of the Forum ¹

Introduction

1. Government, Employer and Worker representatives participated in the Global Dialogue Forum on Conditions of Personnel in Early Childhood Education, held at the ILO, Geneva, on 22–23 February 2012. The Forum examined strategies and policies to help constituents in ILO member States to improve the provision of universally accessible and quality early childhood education (ECE) services, the status and conditions of personnel in ECE.
2. The Forum exchanged a wide range of views and experiences on: the importance of ECE and key trends, issues and policies determining access and quality for all learners; initial training and professional development of educators; ECE employment terms and conditions; and social dialogue to determine policies and working conditions in ECE. The Forum also recommended future actions by constituents and the ILO to strengthen ECE policies and measures.

Policies determining access and high quality of early childhood education

3. The evidence is clear that early years education is a good investment for all further educational development, social inclusion and development, recognition and respect of children's rights and improved economic returns for individuals and society. Considerable progress has been made in enrolling more children in ECE programmes. To achieve universal access and quality objectives, governments, who have the major responsibility for organization and funding of ECE, should devote more resources and policy attention to ECE as the foundation level of education. Recognizing the existence of public and private providers, in order to complement government investment, alternative funding and delivery models could be considered within the necessary regulatory, quality and accountability frameworks expected of any level of education.
4. Stronger leadership by government and greater cohesion in ECE policy, ensuring coordination and good governance across levels of ECE provision – national, regional, local, public and private – are vital to the further development of quality ECE programmes. Participation of constituents and stakeholders is essential to realizing this objective. Access can be improved with targeted programmes for vulnerable groups.
5. There is a need for more comprehensive research and data, particularly concerning educators and other staff, to more effectively develop, apply, evaluate and reform ECE policy and practice.

Initial training and professional development of ECE educators

6. Quality improvements require a greater policy focus on curricula as the basis for developing professional training and appropriate pedagogy.

¹ Approved by the Governing Body at its 316th Session, (November 2012).

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7. High-quality ECE provision is dependent on adequate investments and respect for teacher education as a continuum – initial training, induction and continual professional development (CPD) that is constructed on sound foundations, of which:
 - initial education for all educators, comparable with that of school teachers, based on the highest qualification levels, certified by authorities, in relation to curricula;
 - sound induction plans and management support for new educators.
 8. Educator training policies and programmes need to increase provision to all ECE staff, especially in remote and disadvantaged areas, and better link CPD with initial training and appropriate pedagogical approaches. Professional development and practice require adequate non-contact time. Professional development should also be extended to ECE leaders, administrators and support staff.

Early childhood education employment terms and conditions

9. Excellence in ECE requires a high professional and material status for educators and other staff, in effect the construction of a decent work framework for the sector. Successful recruitment and retention of adequate numbers of qualified ECE educators to meet the expanding enrolments and quality demands of the sector requires a comprehensive recruitment and development strategy developed at the national level focusing on a number of key policies:
 - quality and relevant initial training and continual professional development as the basis for recruitment and continued employment;
 - a career structure responding to individual staff needs and motivations, built around an agreed teacher appraisal system;
 - respect for professional, managerial and institutional autonomy;
 - remuneration and other benefits comparable to other occupations with equivalent professional qualifications;
 - attractive teaching conditions that emphasize low child–staff ratios, a safe working environment, and the necessary infrastructure and equipment to support high learning outcomes.
10. A recruitment strategy should especially target urban–rural and gender disparities, as well as ethnic–minority diversity, so as to ensure qualified staff for all regions of a country, and to encourage more men to take up the profession. To this end, special career and other incentives may be necessary.
11. High professional status depends on a certain level of job stability to underpin quality service provision, job satisfaction, recruitment and retention.
12. Current remuneration levels of ECE educators and other staff do not reflect the importance of work in this increasingly vital education sector. Salary levels should rely on agreements between employers and employees or their representatives, where applicable.
13. Workload in ECE should be designed to account for the full range and variety of teacher responsibilities, particularly ensuring adequate non-contact time for professional development and reflective practice, especially important in rural areas. It is vital that

employers, public and private, ensure a safe and healthy teaching and learning environment in line with national laws and regulations.

Social dialogue in early childhood education

14. There is a general consensus that social dialogue – all forms of information sharing, consultation and negotiation–collective bargaining between representatives of governments, employers and workers on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy – is essential to healthy ECE policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. Social dialogue on the broad policy and operational issues of ECE should fully engage the social partners, and where relevant, should provide a greater collective voice for stakeholders, including parents. It should also apply within ECE systems and institutions between employers, public or private, and trade unions representing educators and other ECE staff on such issues as professional development and terms and conditions of employment.
15. The diversity of national experiences implies diversity in the frameworks or processes for social dialogue in ECE.
16. Effective social dialogue depends on respect for the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

Recommendations for future actions by constituents and the ILO

17. The Forum recommends to the Governing Body that the ILO, in consultation with its constituents and relevant international organizations, draft policy guidelines on the promotion of decent work for ECE personnel, and in this regard to convene within the biennium 2012–13 a meeting of experts, which will consider, with a view to adopting, these draft policy guidelines. The Forum recognizes that, should this proposal be adopted by the Governing Body, the adopted programme of activities for the education and research sectors will have to be amended to accommodate and reflect this emerging priority.

The proposed guidelines may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- ECE as a public good and fundamental right;
- ECE financing as an investment to ensure quality, equity and sustainability;
- ECE governance and inter-sectoral coordination, management systems and leadership, including institutional autonomy;
- establishing and maintaining high teacher qualifications and licensing standards in relation to curricula and teaching/learning requirements;
- developing and maintaining continual professional development, reflective practice and professional autonomy, including for leaders and managers;
- evaluating educators and practitioners to support quality practice;
- policies to enhance staff recruitment and retention-addressing gender and geographic imbalances and cultural and linguistic diversity;

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- remuneration levels consistent with raising the status of ECE, promoting recruitment and retention;
 - employment terms and conditions;
 - promoting social dialogue and decent work in accordance with the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

18. The Forum also encouraged the ILO to consider methods for sharing and evaluating good practices and to identify gaps and challenges in the promotion of decent work for ECE personnel.

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Liste des participants
Lista de participantes

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Ms Wedad Al Mjaimi, First Technical Instructor of Kindergarten, Ministry of Education, Kuwait

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SOUTH AFRICA AFRIQUE DU SUD SUDÁFRICA

Ms Leticia Munday, Director, Human Resource Planning, Department of Basic Education, Pretoria

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M^{lle} Raja Belhaj, administrateur à la Direction générale de l'enfance, ministère des Affaires, de la Femme et de la Famille, Tunis

**BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA
RÉPUBLIQUE BOLIVARIENNE DU VENEZUELA
REPÚBLICA BOLIVARIANA DE VENEZUELA**

Sr. Carlos Enrique Flores Torres, Consejero/Agregado Laboral, Misión Permanente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela en Ginebra, Suiza

**Members representing the Employers
Membres représentant les employeurs
Miembros representantes de los empleadores**

Ms Helen Doelwijt, Executive Secretary/Legal Adviser on Labour Issues, VSB Vereniging, Paramaribo, Suriname

Sra. Marta Estruch, Directora Académica, SNA Educa, Santiago, Chile

Ms Carrie Murdoch, Manager, Education, Skills and Trade, Business NZ, Wellington, New Zealand

Ms Carola Pahmeyer, Consultant/Lawyer for Employment Law, Kommunalen Arbeitgeberverband, Munich, Germany

Ms Marina Sparsis, Director and Owner "Marina's Playschool" Private, Kindergarten, Nicosia, Cyprus

Members representing the Workers
Membres représentant les travailleurs
Miembros representantes de los trabajadores

Ms Jenny Davies, Executive Officer, New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa, Wellington, New Zealand

M. Attu Diaw, Secrétaire général, Syndicat national de l'enseignement élémentaire (SNEEL), Dakar, Sénégal

Ms Marguerite Gustave, ECE Specialist, St Lucia Teachers' Union, Castries, Santa Lucia

Ms Zenaide Honorio, School Principal and member of Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores em Educação
Brazil, Brasilia, Brasil

Mr Omar Ndure, School Principal and past President/member, Gambia Teachers' Union, Banjul, Gambia

Additional members representing the Workers
Membres additionnels représentant les travailleurs
Miembros adicionales representantes de los trabajadores

Mr Allan Baumann, Executive Committee member, the Danish National Federation of Early Childhood Teachers
and Youth Educators, Copenhagen, Denmark

Ms Haldis Holst, Vice-President, Utdanningsforbundet/Union of Education, Oslo, Norway

Ms Tish Olshefski, Senior Assistant to the Secretary/Treasurer, American Federation of Teachers, Washington,
DC, United States

Representatives of non-governmental international organizations
Représentants d'organisations internationales non gouvernementales
Representantes de organizaciones internacionales no gubernamentales

Education International (EI)
Internationale de l'éducation (IE)
Internacional de la Educación (IE)

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Mr Purna Kumar Shrestha, Education Policy and Advocacy Adviser Policy Group VSO International, London,
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International Organization of Employers (IOE)
Organisation internationale des employeurs
Organización Internacional de Empleadores

M. Jean Dejardin, conseiller, Organisation internationale des employeurs, Genève, Suisse

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