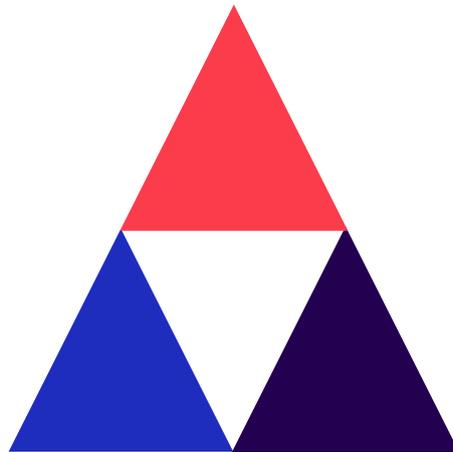




▶ **Technical meeting on the future of work in aquaculture in the context of the rural economy**

Note on the proceedings
(Geneva, 13–17 December 2021)



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▶ I. Introduction

1. The Technical meeting on the future of work in aquaculture in the context of the rural economy was held in hybrid format from 13 to 17 December 2021. The Governing Body of the International Labour Organization (ILO) decided at its 335th Session (March 2019) to convene the meeting and at its 337th Session (October–November 2019) that the purpose of the meeting would be to discuss issues relating to the future of work in the aquaculture sector, as well as to the promotion of decent work in the rural economy, with the aim of adopting conclusions, including recommendations for future action. In light of the travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was subsequently decided to postpone the meeting until 13–17 December 2021.
2. The Chairperson of the meeting was Mr Magnús Magnússon Norðdahl (Worker, Iceland). The Government Vice-Chairperson was Mr Fatih Acar (Turkey), the Employer Vice-Chairperson was Mr Henrik Munthe and the Worker Vice-Chairperson was Mr Kristjan Bragason.
3. The hybrid meeting was attended by 122 participants, including 40 Government representatives and advisers (from 22 countries), together with 35 Government observers (from 14 countries), as well as 10 Employer and 19 Worker representatives and advisers, and 8 observers from intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and invited international non-governmental organizations.
4. The Chairperson underlined the importance of aquaculture in meeting the challenge of ensuring food and nutrition security for an increasing global population. The sector had grown continually over the previous five decades, contributing to enterprise development, job creation and livelihood diversification, especially for the rural poor. Despite its socio-economic significance, the sector faced decent work deficits, such as informality and underemployment. The COVID-19 pandemic had further exposed the fragile nature of employment in the sector, with its impacts felt by businesses and workers alike. The realities of the sector must be taken into account in efforts to fully realize its potential for eradicating poverty and food insecurity and improving rural livelihoods. To ensure inclusive growth and decent work opportunities in the sector, sustainable production must be ensured and workers' rights guaranteed.
5. The Secretary-General of the meeting emphasized the aquaculture sector's importance as a source of income for many, mainly in rural areas. Women in particular constituted a significant proportion of the 20 million people employed in aquaculture. While the sector had contributed to the livelihoods of the rural poor through improved food supply, employment, and income opportunities, important challenges persisted. Decent and sustainable work must be achieved for the sector to reach its potential with regard to feeding the world's growing population and alleviating poverty. The meeting offered an opportunity to view aquaculture through the lens of the Decent Work Agenda, which was particularly urgent in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting was also occasion to set out a common vision for promoting sustainable enterprises and decent work, and realizing the sector's significant potential to contribute to food security and poverty reduction.
6. The Executive Secretary of the meeting introduced the report, prepared to inform the meeting's discussions. The report provided an overview of recent trends in aquaculture

production, described challenges and opportunities for the promotion of decent work, and analysed megatrends in the sector. Decent work deficits, including informality, low and insecure wages and incomes, and poor working conditions and occupational safety and health (OSH) practices, were prevalent. Casualization of wage employment and outsourcing practices had increased; and while most countries had legislation in place to regulate casual work, its application was often inconsistent.

7. Challenges to decent work in the sector were often compounded by an inadequate sustainable enterprise development, and limited access to financial services, technology and infrastructure. Many women continued to be involved in jobs marked by gender-based stereotypes and discrimination. In many countries, workers faced barriers to exercising their right to organize and bargain collectively. Improving the environmental sustainability of the sector, including by investing in skills, productivity improvement and decent jobs, would be key to the sector's long-term economic sustainability. The COVID-19 pandemic had further highlighted the importance of placing the promotion of decent work at the centre of recovery strategies and sustainable growth of the aquaculture sector.

▶ II. General discussion

8. The Employer Vice-Chairperson highlighted the important role of aquaculture in supporting livelihoods and economic development, especially in coastal communities. The sector accounted for half of the world's fish supply. As the global population continued to grow, and with resources from oceans limited, aquaculture was crucial to achieving the second Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on zero hunger. It also played an increasingly important role in meeting global demand for fish and other aquatic products. That notwithstanding, COVID-19 had affected the aquaculture sector significantly, with particularly negative consequences for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and business continuity, threatening the livelihoods and incomes of many. Discussions on the sector's recovery from the pandemic should be informed by the ILO Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient.
9. The pandemic had highlighted the vital role of the private sector in ensuring food security. With seafood dependence at an all-time high and wild catch stocks under pressure, it was important to optimize the contribution of the aquaculture sector. Short- and long-term impacts on the sector's ecosystem, such as the disruption of value chains, skills and worker shortages, should be examined, while also considering constraints and opportunities for private sector involvement. The business environment should allow enterprises to harness technological developments and adopt processes and practices that ensured environmental sustainability. The three main priorities for the Employers' group were: informality, productivity and skills. The conclusions to be adopted by the meeting should provide action-oriented guidance, implementable at the national level. Social dialogue remained the most effective tool for overcoming challenges and harnessing opportunities.
10. The Worker Vice-Chairperson emphasized the need to overcome labour and employment challenges in the aquaculture sector to harness its potential and ensure sustainability throughout the supply chain. Given the strain that COVID-19 had placed on the food supply chain, several governments had declared fisheries and aquaculture as crucial sectors. The pandemic had also shown the importance of providing key workers with social protection, a decent income and good working conditions. Aquaculture had a complex and fragmented

supply chain, characterized by the prevalence of informality, seasonality and subcontracting and a wide range of jobs, along with various systems and scales of production, ranging from small and informal to large and highly industrialized.

- 11.** Working conditions in the sector were difficult and dangerous, and work was often underpaid and undervalued. In rural areas, there was little access to infrastructure and social protection. Many farms relied on unpaid family labour, including by women and children. More generally, informal labour was highly prevalent. Migrant labour was essential for the sector and forced labour had been identified as a serious problem in many countries. Workers were prone to occupational hazards. Protection of labour rights was lacking and enforcement of policies was poor. In many countries, labour inspectorates were weak, under-financed or non-existent.
- 12.** Over recent years, aquaculture had grown in line with demand for food. Significant gaps existed in data, however, with figures specific to the sector lost in general agriculture or fisheries statistics. It was thus difficult to analyse widespread sector-specific challenges and trends. Policy gaps also existed. Models were needed to identify best practices and propose solutions to decent work deficits; the sector's growth must translate into enhanced livelihoods for workers. While the current meeting would not be sufficient to discuss all aspects of work in such a complex sector, the adoption of conclusions would constitute a first step towards defining socially sustainable aquaculture and ensuring that workers were protected by existing labour standards, especially with regard to OSH, child labour, forced labour, gender equality, non-discrimination and freedom of association and collective bargaining.
- 13.** The Government Vice-Chairperson stated that the agri-food sector contributed to employment, constituted a significant source of export earnings, and was critically linked to several other sectors of the economy, in particular energy, tourism, manufacturing, and transport. It was also key for addressing chronic hunger and malnutrition, the negative effects of which impacted not only health, but also human capital, productivity and growth. The COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated existing challenges and could potentially have long-term impacts on food and nutrition security, health and jobs. The United Nations Food Systems Summit, held in September 2021, had emphasized the need to transform food systems for a better world, with many Member States underscoring the importance of decent work in that regard.
- 14.** Aquaculture was fast emerging as a promising sub-sector of agri-food, capable of sustainably addressing the problem of food and nutrition deficits. It had the potential to alleviate pressure on capture fisheries and land-based meat production to meet growing demand for animal protein. Sustainable and inclusive growth in aquaculture could increase income and ensure better livelihoods for many rural communities. The meeting was an opportunity to learn how employment and labour challenges were being addressed and how to tap the sector's potential to advance sustainable development, inclusive growth and decent work.
- 15.** The Government representative of India described India's growing aquaculture sector, which currently provided work for over 4.2 million people. Despite its potential for employment creation, the sector was characterized by informality and seasonal work. It was also marred by discrimination, child labour, forced labour, insecure wages, a lack of social dialogue and OSH concerns. India had taken steps to promote decent employment creation by enacting legislation on: a social security fund for informal and unorganized workers, OSH and wages. India had also ratified numerous ILO Conventions on decent work. The

Government fully adhered to those standards and was committed to ensuring decent work, in collaboration with workers and employers.

16. The Government representative of Turkey stated that although aquaculture production was generally on the rise in Turkey, restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic had negatively impacted exports and domestic demand. The sector was a key element of Turkey's exports. Turkish aquaculture companies and processing facilities were inspected regularly and monitored closely to ensure high-quality, safe products, which were certified according to national and international certification schemes. Turkey was a member of several international and regional organizations working on issues related to fisheries and aquaculture. Sustainability of production was crucial.
17. The Government representative of Tunisia said that fisheries were of paramount importance for rural development in Tunisia. Most aquatic surfaces were located in remote areas and constituted important sources of food for local populations. Yet, investment in aquaculture remained low, and low product prices made aquaculture production financially unsustainable. Since 2007, the Government of Tunisia had promoted training and upskilling for the aquaculture sector, and had boosted access to soft credit and financing. Young people had been provided with sector-specific training and encouraged to engage in aquaculture production.
18. The Government representative of Brazil underscored the significant economic potential for fish farming to contribute to food security, provided that decent work was guaranteed, and expressed hope that gender equality and better working conditions could be established for those working in the sector.
19. A representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) welcomed the timeliness of the meeting and the opportunity for discussions among the social partners.
20. A representative of Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) said that GSSI was a public-private partnership, comprising over 90 organizations representing the full seafood value chain, including non-governmental organizations, international organizations and companies. The Initiative had developed a benchmark for seafood certification programmes, based on the FAO *Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries*. The benchmark helped to create a level playing field for seafood certification to prevent unnecessary and harmful barriers to trade, and to increase market access opportunities for developing countries.
21. Responding to a need for more clarity on social responsibility and decent work in the seafood industry, GSSI and the Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative (SSCI) had collaborated to develop a social SSCI benchmark tool on fair social practices in seafood production, launched in May 2021. The tool, which was rooted in standards set in ILO Conventions and fundamental principles and rights at work, would guide the sector towards social seafood certification programmes. As well as decent work, GSSI was encouraging measures to tackle environmental and social responsibility challenges, and to that end had recently launched a programme entitled Measuring and Accelerating Performance of global seafood supply, a globally inclusive digital platform that compiled and accelerated all fisheries and aquaculture measures to improve sustainability, through common reporting anchored in the SDGs.

▶ III. Consideration of the proposed points for discussion

- 1. What have been the challenges and opportunities for the promotion of decent work in the aquaculture sector, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and those relating to the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda, i.e. international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work; employment (including productivity, recruitment, skills development); social protection (including social security, occupational safety and health, wages and other conditions of work); and tripartism and social dialogue? What have been the key drivers of trends and developments in the sector, in particular the impact of the evolving megatrends such as demographic transition, globalization, technological advancement, and environmental and climate change?**
- 22.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson said that each stage of aquaculture production had been impacted, or halted altogether, by restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a significant decrease in production. Fluctuations in demand were affecting business continuity, particularly owing to disruptions to and increased cost of transportation, along with a drop in the market price of fish. Transport blockages were resulting in unsold production, thereby increasing levels of live fish stocks, giving rise to higher feeding costs and risks of fish mortality. Aquaculture businesses therefore required targeted financial support.
- 23.** Challenges had also existed prior to the pandemic. The sector, by its very nature, often required operations to be based in rural areas, with implications for attracting a vibrant workforce, given the often declining rural populations and poor transportation and social infrastructure. Limited access to financial services affected industry competitiveness and productivity. Consideration should be given to the use of technology to allow the sector to grow to meet increasing demand. Labour and skills shortages were a problem, especially in developing countries. Environmental challenges must be overcome to secure the sector's viability. New standards must be set and implemented, in consultation with industry associations, on waste management, waste water treatment and protection of the natural ocean environment, among others.
- 24.** The prevalence of informality, particularly in Africa and Asia, was worrying; informality went hand-in-hand with poor labour administration, lack of inspection and non-compliance with labour standards. It was the main cause of the decent work deficit and lack of productive employment in aquaculture. Gender inequality was also prevalent: although women accounted for 50 per cent of the aquaculture workforce, managerial positions were mostly occupied by men, with women restricted to processing functions and therefore afforded

fewer opportunities than their male counterparts. While there was no global data on the prevalence and concentration of child labour in aquaculture, it was an acute issue in certain countries, which constituted a challenge to decent work. Efforts to address it should be conducted in parallel with action to curb informality.

25. The aquaculture sector afforded significant opportunities, in particular in respect of growth, employment and income, and could play an important role in post-pandemic recovery. If hotels, restaurants and other food services remained open and logistics blockages were resolved, demand for aquaculture products would increase worldwide. Aquaculture contributed significantly to rural development, and had the potential to provide quality employment opportunities in places with growing populations. The potential of new technologies and production processes should be harnessed to increase the efficiency and environmental sustainability of production systems, thereby broadening employment opportunities, lowering OSH risks, and increasing the quality of products. Lastly, the sector had a key role in boosting food security, thus contributing to the attainment of the SDGs.
26. The Worker Vice-Chairperson emphasized that the sector's growth must be regulated carefully, since it could have negative effects on environment, natural habitats and biodiversity. Risks associated with farming non-native aquatic species included the spread of disease and environmental damage, and the need for significant chemical input. Changes in land use in agriculture, of which aquaculture was part, rising demand for coastal land, and the growing need for water raised questions of water ownership rights, which were underdeveloped in most national jurisdictions. At the same time, aquaculture also afforded opportunities for climate change mitigation, for example, through seaweed and algae farming as a means of carbon sequestration.
27. The human dimension of the rapid expansion of the aquaculture growth required particular attention. Significant human rights abuses, including forced and child labour, were persistent and pre-existing problems, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the drivers of child labour in aquaculture were similar to those in agriculture, including piece-rate wage systems, contract farming arrangements, unfair pricing schemes on seed, fry and feed, among others, and inadequate safeguards in supply chains to ensure that prices paid by consumers translated into fair income for small and marginal farmers and farm workers, as well as lack of access to social protection. Those factors all contributed to family debt, poverty and social inequality, and hampered access to food and nutrition, healthcare and education.
28. The risk of falling victim to trafficking and forced labour, in particular for women and children, was heightened by climate change and related displacement. Extreme weather events were destroying income and livelihoods, particularly in climate-vulnerable and coastal marine areas. The physical and biological hazards of aquaculture were well documented: use of chemicals, including industrial detergents and antibiotics, was particularly concerning. Occupational safety and health issues were exacerbated by precarious employment arrangements, characterized by the lack of formal employment contracts, piece-rate wages, production quotas and pressure to work quickly. Formal, permanent employment contracts should be established, with collective bargaining rights, to build safe and productive workplaces.
29. Women workers, the invisible backbone of aquaculture production, were rarely chosen for leadership roles and thus had no voice in decisions related to working conditions. Such systemic discrimination made them vulnerable to harassment and violence, including demands for sexual favours in return for access to jobs and to the fish market. Jobs for women were often temporary, with no provision of health insurance, child care options or

severance packages. Post-harvest work in cramped, dangerous conditions in sheds and plants with no ventilation had OSH implications, rendered even more worrying by the pandemic.

30. Freedom of association was unattainable for most workers in the sector. In many countries, informal, temporary and seasonal aquaculture workers were unable to join unions, owing to the nature of their employment arrangements, anti-union action or legislative restrictions.
31. While significant attention had been paid to environmental aspects of aquaculture production, further analysis was needed to determine what made aquaculture socially sustainable. A truly sustainable sector could not be developed by the people who lived in poverty and worked in unsafe environment. Workers' rights must be protected and standards set and upheld with regard to the economic contribution of aquaculture to rural communities through decent work, living wages, fair prices, food security and access to goods and services. Such measures would build resilience in the face of seasonality and climate change, and would reduce dependence on fragile global supply chains. Employment and labour challenges must be addressed to enable aquaculture to raise rural communities out of poverty, create decent jobs, and contribute to the development of infrastructure and accessible social services.
32. The Government representative of Turkey said that Turkey's fish exports had decreased significantly during the pandemic, as had demand in the domestic market, resulting in loss and waste of fish products. A variety of campaigns had been led to promote sales, boost domestic consumption and support the sector, which had yielded positive results. The aquaculture sector provided jobs for some 52,000 workers in Turkey, many of whom in the processing industry were women. Over recent years, technological developments had been applied, in particular in cage and feeding systems. National legislation and regulations on fisheries and fish breeding had been updated to provide for changes in the technical aspects of employment.
33. The Employer Vice-Chairperson said that while there were clear points of convergence between the social partners, his group wished to underscore that seasonality and short-term work were not the root cause of decent work deficits in the aquaculture sector. Flexible and diverse forms of work could be beneficial for workers and employers alike. Informality was the main issue. The remote location of many aquaculture production sites was also problematic. Child labour was predominantly a problem at the national level in some countries, rather than a systemic issue across the global supply chain. SMEs, rather than multinational enterprises, were the predominant enterprise in the aquaculture sector, and should be the focus of any scrutiny with regard to upholding international labour standards.
34. The Worker Vice-Chairperson agreed that child labour must indeed be addressed, through a coordinated approach between employers and workers. The meeting should also focus on gender equality and women's empowerment. Efforts to make aquaculture truly sustainable from the social, economic and environmental perspectives were welcome. That notwithstanding, the employment contracts offered to many workers in the sector were precarious and insecure, which, worryingly, was creating an increasing degree of informality in the labour market. His group wished to hear specific examples of efforts by multinational enterprises to uphold international labour standards in their work and throughout supply chains as a whole.
35. A Worker representative from Ghana said that during the pandemic, child labour had increased, in particular in the informal economy, in Ghana. Schools had locked down,

children sent home, and in farming families, boys had taken jobs to survive, while many girls had fallen pregnant. Returning those young people to education after the easing of restrictions had been challenging. Lockdowns had also affected the aquaculture market, with the closure of restaurants and hotels, leading to a severe reduction in income for employers, yet workers had still been required to feed and cultivate fingerling stocks. Measures to try to maintain wages and rotate workforces to keep employment rates stable had compromised workers' rights.

2. What policies, measures and practices have worked, what has not worked, and what needs to be done to address the challenges and promote decent work opportunities in the sector, especially as concerns strengthening the capacities of all people to benefit from the opportunities of a changing world of work; strengthening the institutions of work to ensure adequate protection of all workers; promoting sustainable aquaculture, inclusive economic growth, the creation of sustainable enterprises, innovation, and the transition from the informal to the formal economy?

- 36.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson said that the main challenge in the sector was not informality but a lack of measures and policies to counter it and all other practices used to circumvent employer and company responsibilities. The encouragement of workers to register as contractors was worrying, and constituted an avoidance of responsibility and failure to respect international labour standards. More diverse and flexible working arrangements meant more precarious working conditions and more informality. The Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), included, among its guiding principles, the need to prevent and sanction deliberate avoidance of, or exit from, the formal economy for the purpose of evading taxation and the application of social and labour laws and regulations.
- 37.** History showed that progress was possible and changes could be made: some 100 years previously, child labour had been widespread throughout Europe, with harsh working conditions and low wages. Workers had unionized, and collectively taken action. Freedom of association and the right to organize and bargain collectively had been recognized, bringing a profound change to working conditions. The eight fundamental international labour Conventions had been adopted and continued to have a vital impact all over the world. Although freedom of association was a human right, governments had failed to guarantee it to aquaculture workers. National policies for aquaculture development must include components on human rights and decent work, and be developed with workers' participation.
- 38.** The ILO should establish a mechanism to ensure that the right to freedom of association for all agricultural workers, including seasonal and part-time workers, under the Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921 (No. 11), was extended to all workers engaged in aquaculture. Ratification of the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), should also be promoted to protect against precarious working arrangements and disguised employment practices. The ILO should promote and disseminate good labour practices, similar to the tripartite work on the development of

Guidelines for primary processing workplaces in the shrimp and seafood industry of Thailand. The ILO should also develop a code of practice on OSH in aquaculture. Particular attention should be paid to the impacts of climate change and ensuring environmentally sustainable aquaculture.

- 39.** An international programme for the elimination of child labour in agriculture was needed. Efforts to meet the SDG target on ending child labour were under threat, in particular in western and central Africa, especially in rural, coastal and lake communities. There was an urgent need to address the worst forms of child labour and support governments, in designing and implementing, jointly with trade unions and employers' organizations, national plans against forced labour in aquaculture and fisheries. Aquaculture was globalizing; a large part of the sector was capital intensive and many of the decent work deficits identified in the sector also applied to large multinational companies. International business had a key role in setting the standard for decent work; multinationals must respect human rights throughout the value chain and in all countries in which they operated. The issues raised in the current meeting should be used to inform the development of ILO guidelines on decent work and sustainable aquaculture.
- 40.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson said that aquaculture sector particularities should be taken into account in policymaking, along with the specificities of national circumstances. Social dialogue was critical to ensure that policies responded to the direct needs of the social partners. COVID-19 restrictions, especially those linked to transportation, were affecting the sector, in particular owing to the perishable nature of aquaculture products, which resulted in increased operating costs for employers, who were also struggling to sell their products, which in turn affected employment. Financial support for employers was therefore still a necessity. A "blue" recovery should therefore be promoted, along with policy reform to create jobs immediately and provide short-term economic relief, while fostering long-term economic growth and resilience. Investments should be anchored in policies that supported sustainable international trade, and should facilitate the uptake of new technologies, while building social infrastructure to foster social inclusion and alleviate unrealistic expectations on employers.
- 41.** Efforts to achieve sustainability in the sector had, thus far, been made top-down, resulting in complex regulatory arrangements, licensing issues and quota systems that put pressure on companies, particularly SMEs. Sustainability measures must be developed through social dialogue and accompanied by essential capacity-building support. A sustainable business environment was needed, with an enabling environment for innovation, productivity growth and sustainable enterprises, including for SMEs. Policymakers must take account of the role of sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work.
- 42.** While significant attention had been paid to farming practices, working conditions and other requirements for aquaculture production, much less had been paid to understanding the skills required by the workforce to grow the sector. The introduction of new procedures and technologies required new and more complex skills and knowledge. Capacity-building should be provided through education policies, to ensure the availability of skilled workers. The rural nature of aquaculture posed significant challenges to worker retention, in particular owing to declining rural populations and lack of rural infrastructure and transport links limiting access to isolated work sites. Efforts should be made to boost the sector's public image and advocate it as an essential contributor to food security, quality employment, poverty alleviation and social inclusion, especially for rural communities.

- 43.** Informality was a major cause of lack of labour administration, inspection and compliance with national labour standards, as well as lack of access to social protection, which could only be overcome through a cross-sectoral and holistic approach. Child and forced labour were prevalent as a result of large-scale informality and other systemic challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the vulnerability of workers and employers in the informal economy, re-emphasizing the urgent need for a transition to formality with social protection policies at its heart. Guidance in that regard could be drawn from the recurrent discussion on social protection, which had taken place at the 109th Session of the International Labour Conference. International labour standards clearly distinguished between informality and casual and other forms of work. Diverse forms of work were essential in aquaculture; the sector, by its very nature, required a flexible workforce, in line with seasonality and changes in production. Diverse forms of work should be promoted as tools for the transition to formality and as generators of decent work.
- 44.** The Government Vice-Chairperson underscored the critical role of the ILO in helping its constituents to achieve an inclusive, sustainable, resilient recovery from COVID-19, protecting workers' rights in both the formal and informal economies. As the pandemic continued to disrupt labour markets, promoting equal employment opportunities for all should be a main focus. In line with the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, productivity should be promoted as a key driver of economic growth, job creation and shared prosperity.
- 45.** Given the importance of strengthening social justice and decent work, an integrated policy framework for the development of the aquaculture sector was required, taking account of the drivers of productivity, equitable growth and social and labour protection, anchored in the ILO Decent Work Agenda and the human-centred approach to the future of work. Sustainable enterprises and innovation were crucial to promote decent work. Technological advances could help overcome challenges related to working conditions and facilitate job creation. Investing in skills development would improve productivity and enable the workforce to respond to the changing requirements of the sector. Investments in infrastructure, including water and waste management were also essential.
- 46.** Governance gaps must be bridged, including by strengthening legislative frameworks to cover the aquaculture sector and promote rights at work, including: the elimination of forced labour, child labour and other unacceptable forms of work; the extension of social protection; and the promotion of decent incomes and wages and non-discrimination, equality and equal remuneration for work of equal value. Casualization of labour in the sector should be addressed, and comprehensive national social protection systems developed to cover all workers, including those in informal and insecure forms of employment. The development of adequate OSH systems should also be a priority.
- 47.** The Government representative of India said that the Government of India had introduced fixed-term employment, with guaranteed working hours and wages set through the Labour Code. New technologies were being used to fast-track the scale up of aquaculture productivity. Skills development for workers was essential to boost the transition from informality. Legislation had been enacted on: access to social security for informal and insecure workers; OSH protection and compensation for injury or death at work; equal pay for work of equal value, irrespective of gender; and prohibition of child labour. A robust labour inspection system was in place. He cautioned that international labour standards must not be used for protectionist trade purposes and should not be linked with trade and global supply chains. His Government was committed to continuing to promote the Decent Work Agenda in cooperation with the Workers' and Employers' groups.

- 48.** The Government representative of Brazil said that to tackle child labour in Brazil, incentives were in place to encourage vulnerable families to send their children to school. More must be done, however, including by promoting professional apprenticeships, to ensure that young people and adolescents would be adequately prepared to join the labour market. Although prohibited by national law, which reflected Brazil's adherence to the relevant fundamental international labour Conventions, child labour continued to be a challenge in all sectors of the rural economy. More must be done, through social dialogue, to identify and eliminate it, and other decent work deficits, across the supply chain. Brazil was consolidating its policies on gender equality to address discrimination against women. Regarding OSH, an internationally developed health and safety education application, AquaSafe, which could be accessed on a mobile telephone or laptop, was in common use among aquaculture workers in Brazil for monitoring, risk assessment, risk mitigation and registering the use of personal protective equipment, among others. It included an interactive questionnaire for workers to test their OSH and risk management knowledge.
- 49.** A statement was delivered on behalf of the Government the Islamic Republic of Iran, describing the impacts of public and private sector investment in broadening aquaculture activities through the development of agricultural wells. While the establishment of new aquaculture production sites had resulted in increased production required to meet the significant increase in demand and consumption, it had also had negative impacts, including fluctuations in the aquaculture market and risks to biosafety. Newly cultivated water resources were small but scattered over a vast territory, which had required the significant expansion of national veterinary and environmental organizations. Despite challenges related to supply chain and market access for such small and widely disbursed farms, they had flourished, largely thanks to the use of technologies, and had brought sustainable employment to many regions in the country. Education was key to ensuring sustainable employment in rural aquaculture. Regional cooperatives also had a role to play. It was important to encourage rural communities to value national interests, including respect for natural resources, environmental sustainability and biosecurity. The temperature stability of agricultural wells ensured optimum production, and contributed significantly to stable employment and thus access to welfare and social security.
- 50.** The Government representative of Turkey said that Turkish aquaculture facilities were subject to an environmental impact assessment, and a range of precautions were taken to prevent environmental and other types of pollution related to aquaculture. The use of modern technologies and feeding systems at sea, programmed feeding, monitoring and organic pollution were promoted. An increase in production sites and production capacities, along with rising demand for fish feed, had resulted in the use of innovative applications and high technology, in particular for developing feeding systems. The Government conducted research and shared information with international organizations, to encourage cooperation and coordination in developing and revising standards, particularly on the sustainability of the sector and environmental protection. Turkey had no cases of child labour in its aquaculture sector. All workers were registered and guaranteed access to social security. Every effort was being made to ensure gender equality and encourage women to take roles at all levels.
- 51.** A Worker representative from New Zealand described the work of his union, which represented around 600 aquaculture workers. More than 50 per cent of its membership was seasonal. Membership was predominantly based on on-shore processing sites, many in remote rural locations. The union had 10 collective agreements with major seafood employers in New Zealand, which were either partly or wholly engaged in aquaculture. Those agreements set industry standards and created economic security for union

members, not only through higher wages but also subsidized transport, leave provisions for parents, and provisions for cultural inclusivity, among others. The agreements also provided security for seasonal workers through recognition of service provision and skills from season to season. Regarding OSH, elected representatives from the union participated in worksite health and safety committees. Social dialogue was ongoing, on wages, fair pay agreements, and minimum standards for collective bargaining. The union was also involved in the Government's tripartite plans for skills development in the aquaculture sector. It also contributed to the just transition to more environmentally sustainable aquaculture practices.

52. A Worker representative from Uganda, on the right to freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining and social protection, said that trade unions had negotiated social protection for aquaculture workers during the pandemic. The right to collective bargaining was particularly important for workers in the aquaculture sector.
53. A Worker representative from Norway said that aquaculture was the second most dangerous type of work in Norway, after fisheries. His union had worked in partnership with employers and the Government to develop OSH guidelines, and the national collective bargaining agreement contained provisions on safe working conditions. A joint initiative had been undertaken to bring down overtime, which was an important aspect of safety and health. Joint work was also done at the national and enterprise levels on other matters, including the prevention of sexual harassment. Tripartite cooperation on training and education ensured that adaptation to technological developments was as effective as possible for businesses and workers alike. Although much had been done to ensure that high standards prevailed in cooperation for safer and more sustainable aquaculture in Norway, challenges persisted with regard to cooperation at the global level.
54. A Worker representative from Ghana, said that a code of practice on OSH in aquaculture should be based on further ratification of the ILO Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184), and should focus on introducing or strengthening the role of worker health and safety representatives in aquaculture, since those systems were weak or lacking altogether in many parts of the aquaculture industry. Systematic OSH risk assessments by companies of all sizes would encourage cooperation between workers and employers to strengthen health and safety standards. The active participation of the workforce in risk assessment was crucial. Aquaculture workers should be protected by government labour inspection services, and marine and land-based aquaculture operations regulated by the same health and safety laws and government ministries and departments. The ILO should survey the situation of compliance and enforcement in aquaculture.
55. An Employer representative from Australia said that his company had set specific targets, including: maintaining and improving local community sentiment; ensuring equal pay for work of equal value irrespective of gender; achieving gender equality in senior leadership positions by 2026; creating zero tolerance to any form of modern slavery; ensuring zero harm to everyone; and creating a diverse, highly informed, engaged workforce with ongoing growth and development opportunities. Those targets would be met through blended work arrangements balancing the needs of workers and businesses, including flexible roster options and work arrangements, which allowed workers to balance work with caring responsibilities and personal development. Annual employee surveys were conducted to assess employees' satisfaction with their working arrangements. To be truly successful, business must reflect the diversity of the consumers and communities within which it operated.

- 56.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson welcomed the Government group's focus on skills, productivity, investment in infrastructure, governance and social dialogue. While his group agreed with the Workers' group on several aspects, the Employers objected strongly to the use of the term "insecure forms of work". Although in other discussions his group had not blocked the use of that terminology to avoid a stalemate and a failure to adopt conclusions, the Employers' group maintained the position that the terminology was not adequately defined and was used with derogatory connotations. His group therefore did not support its use in the Conclusions of the Technical Meeting.
- 57.** Furthermore, collective bargaining, while important, was not the only valid form of social dialogue and tripartite cooperation. In half of the 30,000 member companies of the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise, for example, there were no collective agreements. References to the "global" supply chain were also restrictive. In line with the ILO Centenary Declaration, references in the Conclusions should therefore be made simply to "the supply chain". Furthermore, while the Workers' group referred to "precarious work", "part-time work" and "seasonality", the Employers' group preferred "diverse forms of work". Such forms of work, while of course beneficial to employers, were often also beneficial to workers and considered preferable to full-time open-ended contracts. The Workers' and Employers' groups were, however, aligned on several issues, including child labour, forced labour, gender equality and informality.
- 58.** The Government Vice-Chairperson expressed commitment to continuing skills development and capacity-building for workers to make the aquaculture more sustainable and productive. Governments were also committed to promoting trade and ensuring a conducive environment for investment in new technologies. Many governments were investing in infrastructure for boosting the rural economy and developing industrial zones, which employers and workers were encouraged to use.
- 59.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson underscored the close collaboration between workers and employers around the world to improve working conditions in aquaculture, through social dialogue and collective bargaining. To promote proper, well-functioning social dialogue, the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining must be guaranteed. Collective bargaining, although not the only form of social dialogue, was at its very heart. Governments should ensure that workers could exercise their right to organize. Social protection was indeed critical for addressing informality and giving greater protection to vulnerable groups, such as migrants and seasonal workers. The 109th International Labour Conference had reaffirmed the key role of social protection in the protection of workers. According to ILO social security standards, including Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), and the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), among others, all workers, including those in aquaculture, should be provided with social protection irrespective of their employment status. Terminology on insecurity and insecure forms of work was clearly a point of disagreement. The term "insecure forms of work" had been included in both the ILO Global Call to Action and the Conclusions on inequalities in the world of work, adopted by the 109th International Labour Conference, and should therefore be included in the conclusions of the Meeting.
- 60.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson reiterated that his group would not accept the use of the term "insecure forms of work".

3. Taking into account the great diversity of aquaculture in terms of species farmed, farming systems and environments, in addition to context-specific economic and social factors and decent work opportunities and deficits affecting its development in different countries, what recommendations can be made for future action by the International Labour Organization and its Members (governments and employers' and workers' organizations) regarding the promotion of decent and sustainable work in the sector?

- 61.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson noted the crucial role of governments with regard to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Short-term measures to ensure a fast recovery of the private sector, including business continuity measures, to allow for a broad-based, job-rich recovery with decent work opportunities, must continue, especially given the transport and market bottlenecks currently being encountered by aquaculture farms.
- 62.** In the medium and longer terms, governments should provide a sound and coherent policy framework to support measures to ensure, among others: sustainable enterprise development; the promotion of inclusive labour markets; sustainable social protection systems; education and training; adequate social dialogue mechanisms involving Employers' federations; and productivity improvements. Such measures would drive the transition towards environmentally sustainable and inclusive economies and societies. The policy development environment must be agile and flexible, to respond to the rapid pace of change. Efforts were needed to tackle informality, which was undermining the potential of the sector and constituted an impediment to full, productive and decent work. Governments would need to promote the transition to formality, productivity growth, and a shift to higher-value production to tackle the most pressing decent work challenges.
- 63.** With regard to skills development, governments should maintain close contact with education and training institutions and private sector employers to ensure that students developed the skills and competencies required by employers. By investing in the provision of skills training to under-represented groups and underutilized workers, governments could contribute significantly to redressing diversity imbalances.
- 64.** The social partners had a central role in securing the future of work in the aquaculture sector by raising awareness, improving understanding, and providing guidance on developments relevant to the industry. They should also contribute to policymaking and implementation, engaging with SMEs and large-scale industry to understand the reality of the issues faced by the sector and to assess opportunities.
- 65.** The ILO should support government efforts to generate employment-intensive investment, promote an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprise development, boost productivity through diversification and innovation, and harness technological progress and digitalization. The Office should also support evidence-based policymaking by researching trends in the sector. The impact of COVID-19 on employment should continue to be monitored. A comparative analysis of the support provided to businesses should be conducted to optimize technical and financial support in future. Research should also assist Member States and social partners in assessing the sector's impact on job creation. Guidance should be provided, especially for SMEs, on how to include

new technologies in production processes, with emphasis on productivity ecosystems, which were at the heart of the future of work.

66. At the global level, the ILO should encourage investment in skills development and lifelong learning to facilitate successful labour market transitions and reduce skills mismatches. The social partners should be included in the design and implementation of policies in that regard. Identification of the need for capacity-building and cooperation on skills development should be systematically included in Decent Work Country Programmes. Development cooperation projects on aquaculture should be undertaken, working closely with private sector entities. The ILO should also strengthen its cooperation with relevant multilateral and regional organizations to ensure a strong and coherent approach to decent and sustainable work, including collective efforts to tackle child labour. Employment considerations should be included in policies on sustainable development. Lastly, the ILO should indeed prepare guidelines on OSH in the aquaculture sector, informed by analysis of sector-specific OSH risks and risk management.
67. The Worker Vice-Chairperson emphasized that respect for freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining were central to resolving decent work deficits and should be included in policies to promote social justice and create socially and environmentally sustainable aquaculture. Such policies must be developed with the participation of workers' organizations and should include human rights and decent work components. They should also provide for universal access to comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all workers in the aquaculture sector.
68. Governments had a duty to adopt, implement and effectively enforce national laws and regulations to ensure that fundamental principles and rights at work and relevant international labour Conventions were applied in the aquaculture sector. Multinational enterprises should conduct human rights due diligence and strengthen collective bargaining along supply chains to manage the potential and actual adverse human rights impacts of their operations.
69. The ILO should build the capacity of its constituents, nationally and internationally, to engage in effective social dialogue, including by: providing technical support and conducting regional meetings; developing policy guidance on decent work and sustainable aquaculture; developing a code of practice on OSH in aquaculture; researching existing labour inspection practices; strengthening development cooperation programmes; establishing an international programme to support the elimination of child labour in aquaculture and fisheries, including updating the *Guidance on addressing child labour in fisheries and aquaculture*, and conducting regional and national education and awareness-raising activities; strengthening cooperation with other United Nations entities; participating in the annual World Fisheries Day (21 November) and using public events and policy debates to promote the Decent Work Agenda for aquaculture and fisheries workers; participating in the work of the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture and the Joint FAO/ILO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and Related Matters. Ratification and effective implementation of the fundamental international labour Conventions and other international labour standards specific to agriculture and migrant workers must be promoted.
70. The Government Vice-Chairperson recommended the development of guidelines to support Member States' in promoting the transition to formality in the aquaculture sector. Partnership and collaboration on aquaculture between ILO and FAO should be strengthened to, among others, promote active collaboration between ministries responsible for labour and those responsible for agriculture and fisheries in designing and

implementing strategic compliance planning for labour inspectorates with a view to eliminating child labour, forced labour and other decent work deficits. The use of innovative practices and advanced technologies in aquaculture production and processing should be promoted, including through development cooperation projects and incentives for the adoption of technologies that reduced occupational hazards.

- 71.** The environmental impact of aquaculture activities should be monitored. Member States should be supported in the design and implementation of policy measures to promote a just transition to environmental sustainability in the aquaculture sector. Capacity-building and skills development for workers would boost productivity and strengthen sustainability in the sector. Member States must enforce legislation to ensure non-discrimination and equality and, in particular, close the gender pay gap, as well as to overcome challenges related to OSH and social protection. They must also develop legal frameworks to prohibit all forms of child labour and engagement of adolescents in hazardous work, and should take measures to strengthen labour inspection systems. A code of practice on OSH risks specific to aquaculture should be developed. Scientists, aquaculture professionals, workers' unions, employers' associations and government institutions must advocate the premise that the promotion of decent work in aquaculture was a shared responsibility.
- 72.** The Government representative of Mauritius noted that aquaculture was an important sector for Mauritius. Government laboratories monitored water quality to prevent pollution and protect the marine environment. The Government provided support, training and extension services to small-scale aquaculture farmers. Mauritius had only one large-scale aquaculture company, with around 50 full- and part-time employees. The rights of all aquaculture workers were protected by national legislation, namely the Employment Rights Act 2008 and associated Regulations and the Worker's Rights Act 2019, which prohibited child labour, set a minimum age for employment, regulated working hours and equal remuneration for work of equal value, provided for access to healthcare, and prohibited violence and discrimination at work. National legislation also catered for decent work conditions, training and adequate remuneration, as well as the establishment of trade unions. Mauritius had a national minimum wage to ensure that local and migrant workers enjoyed equal wages and allowances. Legislation on OSH guaranteed the safety, health and welfare of all workers at the workplace.
- 73.** A statement was delivered on behalf of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which explained that the country's aquaculture sector employed approximately 100,000 workers. The use of new production methods and advanced equipment in the sector had significantly reduced manual labour requirements, while increasing demand for skilled labour.
- 74.** The Government representative of Turkey underscored the importance of the uptake of new technologies and skills development in aquaculture, in particular to boost sustainability. Natural resources must be managed, governed and utilized to optimize national economic development and investment for the future. Sustainable development planning and investment must be long-term, and must seek to protect diversity.
- 75.** The Government representative of Tunisia described efforts to cooperate at the international level, which had benefitted enterprises and guaranteed the rights of workers in the aquaculture sector. The Government of Tunisia promoted social protection and health insurance to guarantee decent work and make the sector more attractive to women and young people. It also promoted opportunities for technical vocational education and training, among other skills development programmes.

76. The Government representative of Brazil said that incentives could be used to promote uptake of technologies to eliminate health and safety risks linked with the use of machinery and equipment. This meant monitoring OSH, in cooperation with scientists, employers' organizations and workers' unions. Governments, in particular in developing countries, should ensure access to education for all school-aged children, including in remote areas. To guarantee decent incomes, employment contracts could not make workers' wages dependent on productivity. To secure OSH, workers must be properly informed and trained with regard to how to perform their work. For those working alone or in remote areas, self-rescue training and adequate personal protective equipment should be provided.
77. The Employer Vice-Chairperson pointed out that collective bargaining was not the only method of conducting social dialogue. Similarly, regarding human rights obligations for companies, due diligence was only one of many tools listed in the United Nations *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy.
78. The Worker Vice-Chairperson welcomed the broad agreement among the parties in the meeting; a united approach to addressing challenges was critical for ensuring the growth of the aquaculture sector. The conclusions issued by the meeting would help to guide the sector's work and would constitute a first step towards developing long-term strategies, initiatives, policies, and programmes for truly sustainable aquaculture. Respect for human rights and the elimination of decent work deficits must be at the centre of all developments in the sector. In that regard, collective bargaining was a fundamental right.
79. The Government Vice-Chairperson said that governments were committed to creating an enabling environment for a fast recovery of the private sector from the impacts of COVID-19. His group was committed to sustainable enterprise development, which required education, training and skills development for workers, which would also boost productivity. Governments were setting policies to facilitate the transition to formality in the aquaculture sector and to work with the social partners in this regard. The Government group supported the proposal that the ILO should develop a code of practice on OSH in the aquaculture sector.

▶ IV. Consideration and adoption of the draft conclusions

80. The meeting nominated representatives and advisers from each group to form a working party, which met on the afternoon of 16 December 2021, to examine the draft conclusions drawn up by the Office on the basis of the discussions held over the previous days.
81. The members of the working party were: Government representatives – Mr Fatih Acar (Vice-Chairperson, Turkey), Mr Rupesh Kumar Thakur (India), Mr Skandrani Yassine (Tunisia) and Mr Wellington Yudji Kaimoti (Brazil); Employer representatives – Mr Henrik Munthe (Vice-Chairperson), Mr El Sayed Torky and Mr Sadegh Mozafari Khorgoo with Mr Matias Espinosa and Ms Sanchir Tugschimeg (ACT/EMP) as advisers; and Worker representatives – Mr Kristjan Bragason (Vice-Chairperson), Mr Andrews Tagoe, Mr Jorgen Kaurin and Mr Peter Hurst with Ms Maité Llanos, Mr Kirill Buketov and Mr Rafael Peels (ACTRAV) as advisers.

82. The draft conclusions on the future of work in aquaculture in the context of the rural economy, as revised by the working party, were submitted to the meeting for adoption on the afternoon of 17 December 2021.

The future of work in aquaculture in the context of the rural economy

Challenges to and opportunities for decent and sustainable work and key drivers of change

Proposed paragraphs 1 and 2

83. Paragraphs 1 and 2 were approved.

Proposed paragraph 3

84. At the recommendation of the working party, paragraph 3 was deleted.

Proposed paragraph 4

85. The Employer Vice-Chairperson said that his group agreed with the proposed addition of the new penultimate sentence to read, "Women constitute a significant proportion of the aquaculture workforce, especially in processing, but they are underrepresented in positions requiring higher skills.". In the last sentence, after "regardless of", the words "the workers' legal status and" should be deleted.
86. The Worker Vice-Chairperson said that although his group would prefer to include a reference to workers' legal status, for the sake of consensus it would accept the deletion proposed by the Employers' group.
87. The Government Vice-Chairperson concurred.
88. Paragraph 4 was approved as amended.

Proposed paragraph 5

89. The meeting agreed to amend the final sentence of the paragraph to read "Further efforts are needed to ensure occupational safety and health for the aquaculture workforce.".
90. Paragraph 5 was approved as amended.

Proposed paragraph 6

91. Paragraph 6 was approved.

The future of work in aquaculture and a just transition to decent and sustainable work

Proposed paragraph 7

92. The Employer Vice-Chairperson proposed, in the third sentence, after "with women disproportionately represented", replacing "in insecure forms of work" by "in work arrangements that are".

93. After informal consultations, the Worker Vice-Chairperson said that, although it was clear that work in aquaculture was very much characterized by insecure and precarious working arrangements, his group could agree to the proposed amendment, in a spirit of compromise and consensus-building.
94. The Government Vice-Chairperson concurred.
95. Paragraph 7 was approved as amended.

Proposed paragraph 8

96. Paragraph 8 was approved.

Proposed paragraph 9

97. The meeting agreed to amend the end of the final sentence of the paragraph to read “and access to universal, comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection.”.
98. Paragraph 9 was approved as amended.

Proposed paragraph 10

99. The meeting agreed to amend the first sentence of the paragraph to begin, “Recognizing the universal right to education,”.
100. Paragraph 10 was approved as amended.

Proposed paragraph 11

101. The Employer Vice-Chairperson explained that despite some discussion in the working party with regard to the positioning of paragraph 11 in the conclusions; a consensus had not been reached. His group wished to retain the paragraph in its proposed location, in line with the equivalent paragraph’s position in the Conclusions on the future of work in urban passenger transport, as adopted in September 2021. The Workers’ group, on the other hand, had wished to see it moved to the section on recommendations. The Workers’ group had proposed to delete the words “and the value of workplace cooperation” from the first sentence. In a spirit of compromise, the Employers’ group could agree to that deletion, on the proviso that the paragraph remained in its original position in the text.
102. Following informal consultations, the Worker Vice-Chairperson said that although there were precedents for the inclusion of such a paragraph among the recommendations in the conclusions of previous technical meetings, his group could agree to the Employers’ proposal to retain its current position, with the deletion of “and the value of workplace cooperation”.
103. The Government Vice-Chairperson concurred.
104. Paragraph 11 was approved as amended.

Recommendations for future action by the International Labour Organization and Members

Proposed paragraph 12

105. Subparagraphs (a) to (d) were approved.

106. On subparagraph (e), following a proposed revision by the Office, the social partners and the Government group agreed, after the words “safety and health at work”, to amend the text to read, “and access to universal, comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection”.
107. Subparagraph (e) was approved as amended.
108. Subparagraph (f) was approved.
109. The Employer Vice-Chairperson pointed out that the text presented to the meeting had not been updated in line with the working party’s agreement on the redrafting of subparagraph (g), which had been adapted from the ILO Centenary Declaration, and would read, “supporting the role of the private sector as a principal source of economic growth and job creation by promoting an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprises, including through investments and innovation, in particular for micro-, small and medium sized enterprises, as well as cooperatives and the social and solidarity economy, in order to generate decent work, productive employment and improved living standards for all;”.
110. The Worker Vice-Chairperson said that although some members of his group felt that the wording of the subparagraph could be stronger, it would not object to the drafting as proposed by the Employers’ group.
111. The Government Vice-Chairperson accepted the Employers’ proposal.
112. Subparagraph (g) was approved as amended.
113. Subparagraph (h) was approved.
114. Proposed paragraph 12, as a whole, was approved as amended.

Proposed paragraph 13

115. The Representative of the Legal Adviser had been asked by the working party to provide guidance on the legal implications of a proposal by the Employers’ group to insert the word “workers” after “ensure that fundamental principles and rights at work and ratified international labour conventions are applied to all”.
116. The Representative of the Legal Adviser said that there was no legal objection to such an addition, which was based on the wording used in the conclusions of the 105th Session of the International Labour Conference (2016) concerning decent work in global supply chains. However, it was equally possible to not include the word “workers” as certain fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour conventions also applied to employers. Depending on its understanding of the intention of the paragraph, the meeting would need to decide whether the provision should apply to workers only, or whether such an application was too restricted.
117. Following informal consultations, the Worker Vice-Chairperson and Government Vice-Chairperson agreed to the Employers’ group proposal to add the word “workers” after “all”.
118. Paragraph 13 was approved as amended.

Proposed paragraph 14

119. Following a request by the Employers’ group to insert the words “up-to-date” before “international labour standards”, which had not received the support of the Workers’ group, the working party had requested guidance from the Representative of the Legal Adviser.

120. The Representative of the Legal Adviser clarified that as long as an instrument was not withdrawn, or abrogated by the International Labour Conference, it could still be ratified and reports on its application were requested. While for reasons of resource availability the Office tended to prioritize the promotion of up-to-date instruments, there was no legal objection to promoting others, such as the Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921 (No. 11), which had been assigned interim status by the Cartier Working Party on Policy regarding the revision of standards (1995–2002), and was pending review under the Standards Review Mechanism. The decision as to whether to exclude such instruments from the scope of the conclusions of the meeting was therefore at the discretion of the meeting participants.
121. The Worker Vice-Chairperson expressed his group's objection to the addition of "up-to-date".
122. The Government Vice-Chairperson added that, since governments could choose to ratify instruments that were not classified as "up-to-date", those instruments should also be included in the scope of the Conclusions of the meeting.
123. The Employer Vice-Chairperson said that in discussing his group's proposed amendment to subparagraph (a), consideration must be given to the list of instruments included the annex to the Conclusions.
124. Following informal consultations, the Employer Vice-Chairperson withdrew his group's proposed amendment.
125. Subparagraphs (a) and (b) were approved.
126. On subparagraph (c), the Employer Vice-Chairperson, pointed out that the working party's agreement to delete ", including through regional meetings" from the end of the subparagraph had not been reflected in the text currently before the meeting.
127. Subparagraph (c) was approved as amended.
128. On subparagraph (d) the Worker Vice-Chairperson, supported by the Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Government Vice-Chairperson, pointed out that the working party had agreed to add ", with a view to promoting sustainable aquaculture;" after "decent work for all" at the end of the subparagraph.
129. Subparagraph (d) as approved as amended.
130. Subparagraph (e) was approved.
131. On subparagraph (f), the working party had considered amendments proposed by both the Workers' and the Employers' groups. While the substance had been agreed, the wording required further revision.
132. The Employer Vice-Chairperson proposed replacing "informing" by "guiding" and deleting "on OSH" from the end of the subparagraph. The subparagraph would thus read, "conduct research on existing and emerging OSH risks with a view to guiding future action, including the elaboration of a Code of Practice on OSH in aquaculture;".
133. It was so agreed.
134. Subparagraph (f) was approved as amended.
135. Subparagraphs (g) to (i) were approved.

136. Regarding subparagraph (j), the Employer Vice-Chairperson pointed out that a consensus had been reached in the working party to add, at the end of the subparagraph, “followed by capacity-building activities at all appropriate levels.”
137. The Worker Vice-Chairperson added that the working party had also agreed to delete, from the beginning of the subparagraph, “Develop a strategic framework including an”.
138. The Government Vice-Chairperson confirmed that his group had agreed to both of those proposed revisions during the working party’s deliberations.
139. Subparagraph (j) was approved as amended.

Instruments

140. The Employer Vice-Chairperson expressed concern that such a long list of instruments and standards had been presented to the groups for consideration at very short notice, and those who were not well versed in the content of those instruments and standards had been unable to participate in a discussion on their relevance. Both the Employers’ and Workers’ groups had been heavily reliant on guidance from the Secretariat to reach an agreement on the content of the annex.
141. The Adviser, International Organisation of Employers concurred; there had been insufficient time to review the list comprehensively. The Secretariat should provide an explanation of how each of the standards and instruments listed was relevant to the aquaculture sector. The Employers’ group wished to delete the section of the annex entitled “International Labour Conference”. It also wished to include a footnote stating that the inclusion of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), and Employment Relationship Recommendation, 2006 (No. 198), in the annex was not supported the Employers’ group in this technical meeting.
142. It was so agreed.
143. The Worker Vice-Chairperson agreed that the annex had indeed been presented at too short notice to allow for an informed discussion. For future technical meetings, the Office should provide a list of potentially relevant documents in advance, as a background paper to the meeting, which would allow all participants to do the necessary reading in good time to ensure an inclusive discussion.
144. The annex was approved as amended.
145. The Conclusions were unanimously adopted, section by section, as amended.

▶ V. Closure of the meeting

146. The Secretary-General of the meeting congratulated the meeting on the adoption of the conclusions; social dialogue had, once again, prevailed. The conclusions constituted a road map for the promotion of decent and sustainable work in a key sector for the rural economy, which also contributed significantly to food security and nutrition around the world. She thanked the Chairperson, the three vice-chairpersons, all participants and members of the secretariat, for their contributions to the successful running of the meeting.
147. The Worker Vice-Chairperson expressed gratitude to the Office and all participants for a constructive discussion, and a positive outcome, despite the complex circumstances and

dynamics of a hybrid meeting format. The Workers' group looked forward to the implementation of the conclusions and to continuing cooperation.

- 148.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson welcomed the adoption of the conclusions, which referred to several issues of considerable importance to the Employers' group. Hybrid meeting format was indeed challenging, but the outcome had been positive. He commended the cooperative spirit of the Chairperson and the other participants, in particular the vice-chairpersons of the Workers' and Government groups. Lastly, he thanked his group's advisers, whose contributions and guidance had been invaluable.
- 149.** The Government Vice-Chairperson said that the adoption of robust conclusions was testament to the strong interest in such an important sector. He expressed appreciation to the Chairperson and the social partners for their constructive approach to the work of the meeting, and thanked the Secretariat for the advice and guidance offered throughout. His Government had been honoured to serve as spokesperson for the Government group. Aquaculture was a particularly important sector in Turkey's economy, contributing significantly to exports, as well as national rural development and food and nutrition. The adoption of the conclusions was a demonstration of the strength of social dialogue, and of all parties' commitment to ensuring that the sector became more inclusive and reached its full potential for the benefit of all.
- 150.** The Chairperson thanked the tripartite delegations and vice-chairpersons, as well as all other participants, for the spirit of mutual respect in which they had conducted their work. He expressed appreciation to all members of the ILO Secretariat who had facilitated the meeting. He welcomed the results of the meeting, which had recognized the potential of the aquaculture sector to generate productive employment, alleviate rural poverty and contribute to food security and nutrition for the rapidly growing global population. The COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the importance of the sector and afforded an opportunity for reform. Challenges had been identified, and the critical need to address decent work deficits had been underscored. The balance between environmental, social and economic sustainability had also been emphasized. The progressive transition to formality should contribute to reducing decent work deficits. Equality of opportunities for men and women, and the creation of an inclusive workforce had also been highlighted as a key area for action. Congratulating all participants on their constructive approach, he declared the meeting closed.

Geneva, 17 December 2021 (hybrid)