

**Committee on the Application of Standards**

C.App./PV.11

**Commission de l'application des normes**

9.06.17

**Comisión de Aplicación de Normas**

106th Session, Geneva, June 2017

106<sup>e</sup> session, Genève, juin 2017

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**Tenth sitting, 9 June 2017 (cont.), 5.10 p.m.**

**Dixième séance, 9 juin 2017 (suite), 17 h 10**

**Décima sesión, 9 de junio de 2017 (cont.), 17.10 horas**

*Chairperson: Mr Washington González*

*Président: M. Washington González*

*Presidente: Sr. Washington González*

**Discussion of individual cases (cont.)**

**Discussion sur les cas individuels (suite)**

**Discusión sobre los casos individuales (cont.)**

***United Kingdom* (ratification: 1954)**

Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)

Convention (n° 102) concernant la sécurité sociale (norme minimum), 1952

Convenio sobre la seguridad social (norma mínima), 1952 (núm. 102)

**A Government representative of the United Kingdom** shared information about the welfare system in the United Kingdom. As the United Kingdom had just held a general election, information could only be provided on the existing welfare law. Further information would be provided in the Government's report on the application of the Convention in time for the next session of the Committee of Experts in 2017.

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In relation to the key findings on Articles 16, 22, and 62 of the Convention concerning the adequacy of benefits, she indicated that her Government believed that its welfare safety net was adequate and that it balanced the requirements of a sustainable and affordable welfare system that supported the most vulnerable in society. Contribution-based benefits for unemployment and sickness represented one part of the overall welfare system that included a mixture of income-related and social assistance benefits, such as housing benefit and tax credits. The main rates of contributory Jobseekers Allowance and contributory Employment Support Allowance provided an income supplement to those who were not in work. Additional support was available for those on low incomes and with limited capital. Additionally, the welfare system was based on the circumstances of those in receipt of benefits and targeted at those most in need. When assessing the adequacy of the welfare system, it was important to consider the support system as a whole.

The Committee of Experts had made comments on the inclusion of Child Tax Credits (CTCs). The CTCs were not actually a form of social assistance, but social security. They were in the scope of the Convention and should therefore be included by the Committee of Experts in the relevant calculations when next considering compliance with the Convention. It was worth noting that many of those claiming contribution-based Jobseekers Allowance and Employment Support Allowance were also claiming other benefits such as Housing Benefit or Personal Independence Payment. Regarding the request of the Committee of Experts to undertake an actuarial study, she indicated that the Government regularly undertook assessments of the benefits it provided, including of the various income-related and social assistance benefits available for those on low incomes and with limited capital. Those studies indicated that working age contributory benefits along with income-related and social assistance benefits for those of working age accounted for almost 3 per cent of the GDP of the United Kingdom in 2016. She concluded by reiterating that detailed explanations on the welfare system in the United Kingdom would be provided in response to the comments made by the Committee of Experts.

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**Les membres travailleurs** ont rappelé que la sécurité sociale est l'une des principales institutions qui ait vu le jour durant le XX<sup>e</sup> siècle et représente, pour les travailleurs, l'une de leurs plus grandes réalisations et un acquis extrêmement précieux en ce qu'elle concrétise l'esprit de Philadelphie et représente un outil de lutte contre la pauvreté qui constitue un danger pour la prospérité de tous, où qu'elle existe. La sécurité sociale constitue un acte de civilisation affirmant qu'une société réellement moderne ne peut accepter que des femmes et des hommes puissent être livrés sans protection au risque et au besoin. Le cas du Royaume-Uni indique à quel point ces notions et principes doivent être rappelés et soulignés, y compris dans les pays les plus industrialisés, où la sécurité sociale a représenté, et représente toujours, un acquis majeur pour mettre les travailleurs à l'abri des aléas de la vie, notamment en leur assurant un revenu lorsqu'ils sont privés d'emploi. A vrai dire, l'importance des régimes de sécurité sociale n'est pas contestée. Ce qui fait plus souvent débat, ce sont les modalités et les moyens utilisés pour réaliser les objectifs assignés et dans quelle mesure ceux-ci sont atteints.

A cet égard, la convention n° 102 est un instrument particulièrement original qui a établi une définition internationalement acceptée du principe même de la sécurité sociale moyennant la fixation d'objectifs à atteindre et non pas uniquement des moyens à mettre en œuvre. Il s'agit donc d'une obligation minimale de résultat du chef des Etats, et la convention permet de mesurer les progrès effectués sur base des résultats concrets obtenus. Une autre caractéristique importante de cette convention est qu'elle est dotée d'une grande souplesse et offre un large éventail d'options et de clauses de souplesse, permettant une mise en œuvre progressive en fonction du développement économique. En outre, chaque pays a la possibilité de combiner prestations contributives et non contributives, régimes publics et professionnels, de sorte à assurer la protection minimale garantie. Elle a servi de modèle à l'élaboration du Code européen de sécurité sociale, instrument du Conseil de l'Europe, intégrant les normes minimales consacrées par la convention comme base initiale et dont

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l'application est contrôlée par la commission d'experts, ce qui témoigne de l'indépendance, l'impartialité et l'objectivité de celle-ci.

Le système de sécurité sociale du Royaume-Uni s'articule autour de trois niveaux: des prestations basées sur les cotisations, des prestations basées sur le revenu et, enfin, différents crédits d'impôts et prestations d'assistance sociale en fonction des ressources offrant une protection supplémentaire contre la pauvreté. Ce dernier aspect de la protection sociale a subi récemment une réforme qui a abouti à ce que l'ensemble des crédits d'impôts et prestations d'assistance sociale en fonction des ressources ont été fusionnés en un régime dénommé «crédit universel», considéré comme une prestation de l'assistance sociale plutôt qu'une prestation de sécurité sociale qui ne relèverait pas du champ d'application de la convention. S'il est vrai qu'un Etat Membre est libre de déclarer à l'égard de quelles prestations fournies par le système national de sécurité sociale il accepte les obligations découlant de chaque partie de la convention ratifiée, cette souplesse n'autorise pas le gouvernement à soutenir que les prestations d'assistance sociale ne relèvent pas du champ d'application de la convention, car l'article 67 de la convention a précisément été intégré pour évaluer si le taux de telles prestations est suffisant pour répondre aux exigences de ce texte. La commission d'experts a constaté que, en ne tenant pas compte des prestations servies par le crédit universel, le Royaume-Uni viole la convention en ce qui concerne les indemnités de maladie, les prestations de chômage et les prestations des survivants. Le deuxième point de l'observation porte sur le fait que les prestations basées sur les cotisations n'atteignent pas le seuil du risque de pauvreté d'EUROSTAT. Le gouvernement semble s'en accommoder puisque, dans la réponse qu'il adresse à ce propos, il estime qu'il maintient un filet de sécurité «approprié». Or une politique qui vise à maintenir le niveau de vie élémentaire des personnes qui reçoivent des prestations et qui ne travaillent pas en dessous du seuil de pauvreté absolu a pour effet d'utiliser la sécurité sociale comme un moyen de coercition économique à l'emploi. Cette politique appartient à une ère révolue qui est

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incompatible avec une vision moderne de la sécurité sociale dont un des objectifs est précisément de prévenir ou de réduire la pauvreté.

Certes, les remarques mentionnées ont été émises dans le cadre du Code européen de sécurité sociale, mais cette remarque a toute sa pertinence dans le cadre de notre discussion, et il convient d'inviter le gouvernement à procéder aux calculs nécessaires pour établir le coût en termes de pourcentage du PIB qu'engendrerait un relèvement de ces prestations, de sorte que le Royaume-Uni puisse satisfaire à ces obligations. Il convient d'observer que le régime du crédit universel risque de s'avérer insuffisant pour assurer aux personnes concernées un revenu décent car, selon les dernières estimations, la réforme entraînera une diminution de revenus pour un plus grand nombre de foyers (3,2 millions) et bénéficiera à moins de foyers que prévu (2,2 millions). Il s'agit d'un signal d'alarme à prendre au sérieux. Les nouvelles formes de travail et la multiplication des situations précaires doivent conduire à un renforcement de la protection sociale et non pas à un affaiblissement de ses dispositifs. Le gouvernement est dès lors invité à prendre les mesures nécessaires, de sorte à éviter que ce pays, qui a été le deuxième à avoir ratifié la convention n° 102, ne devienne aujourd'hui un piètre exemple de son application.

**The Employer members** welcomed the Government's announcement that it would report more fully on the application of the Convention in time for the next meeting of the Committee of Experts, including information on the ongoing revision of the social security system. They welcomed the inclusion of this technical Convention among the individual cases to be discussed by the Conference Committee. The Convention had been adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1952 and had been ratified by the Government in 1954. The United Kingdom had accepted Parts II–V, VII and X of the Convention. The Committee of Experts had considered the application of the Convention by the United Kingdom seven times since 1995, including in its most recent observations in 2016. This was the first time that the application of the Convention by the United Kingdom was examined in the Committee.

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The Convention was lengthy and complex, which could also be said about the comments adopted by the Committee of Experts. The Employer members wished to emphasize that the role of the Committee of Experts was to make observations on the application of ratified Conventions – in the case at hand, exclusively on Convention No. 102. The Committee of Experts' reference to other binding or non-binding instruments (including the European Social Code of Social Security and the European Social Charter) as well as to the assessment of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe had created confusion as to the standards against which the Government was being assessed. They understood that there was an agreement between the ILO and the Council of Europe. However, the application of the European Code of Social Security was subject to a reporting mechanism to the Council of Europe. The mandate of the Committee of Experts in relation to the foundational work of this Committee was the basis on which Conventions had to be assessed. The assessment of the requirements of Conventions should be assessed in a clear and transparent manner. However, the manner in which the current observations of the Committee of Experts were drafted created confusion, partly because the Committee of Experts had referred to the Code and the Convention interchangeably without providing an explanation about “the Code” and why it was referenced. They expressed the hope that the Committee of Experts, in order to ensure that the ILO supervisory system was transparent and user-friendly, would take these points into consideration.

Concerning the obligations pursuant to the Convention, the Employer members noted that two main issues had been identified by the Committee of Experts which required further response from the Government. The first was whether non-contributory benefits fell outside the application of the Convention, and whether social assistance benefits fell within or outside the scope of the Convention. The second issue was whether or not the level of benefits fell below the minimum obligation under the Convention. Depending on the outcome of the first issue, an analysis of the second was necessary. It would be helpful to know which minimum wages applied to be able to regard more fully the obligations under

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the Convention. In addition, the Employer members noted that the Government, in designing social benefit levels, had sought to find a balance between effective benefits on the one hand and incentives to work on the other. They had understood that the Committee of Experts had appeared to be critical of this motivation as being outdated and unreasonable. The position of the Employer members was that striving to maintain a balance between effective benefits and incentives within a sustainable system was in fact a legitimate and reasonable goal for the Government. The Convention was a flexible instrument and, in the view of the Employer members, allowed for such considerations to be made. They concluded by stating that they looked forward to additional information and data provided by the Government before the next session of the Committee of Experts to enable a clearer understanding of the compliance with the Convention.

**The Worker member of the United Kingdom (REED)** stated that current social security benefits in the United Kingdom had failed to meet the minimum requirements of the Convention. Recognizing that the Conference Committee's consideration of the record on social security in the United Kingdom was not best timed in light of its proximity to the general election, she clarified that underlying the technical issues raised in this case were inadequacies in the existing social security provisions in the United Kingdom.

She drew attention to four areas of concern. First, the current social security benefits did not provide an adequate safety net for the most vulnerable in society, and failed to even meet the lowest EUROSTAT at-risk-of-poverty threshold of 40 per cent of median equalized income in the United Kingdom and in the European Union as a whole. The findings of the Committee of Experts had indeed been supported by the latest national statistics, which had confirmed that 70 per cent of working-age adults in working families were in poverty. In addition, the value of out-of-work benefits had also failed to keep pace with earnings, with unemployment benefits falling from about 20 per cent of average earnings in the 1970s to less than 15 per cent at present. Second, although the Committee of Experts in their conclusions focused on out-of-work benefits, the United Kingdom was currently

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experiencing record levels of in-work poverty with more than 7 million people, including 2.6 million children, facing poverty despite being in a working family. Third, she stated that no attempt was being made to improve social security provision. Instead, recent government proposals had sought to cut the level of protection in future years with many working-age benefit rates due to be frozen until 2020 and support for families with children set to be reduced. In this context, she drew attention to the introduction of Universal Credit in the United Kingdom, which would be significantly less generous than existing tax credits, with cuts to the proposed level of work allowances. Fourth, the social security system had failed to keep pace with changes in the labour market of the United Kingdom, in particular the growth in insecure forms of work such as zero-hours contracts, agency working and the emergence of online platform work (so-called “gig economy”). Those in insecure work were significantly more likely to qualify for in-work benefits due to their low rates of pay but such workers faced serious difficulties in accessing benefits due to the fluctuating nature of their working hours.

She also drew attention to the concern that the current tax system in the United Kingdom might create incentives for employers to increase their reliance on forms of insecure work in order to reduce costs and avoid liability for employment-related taxation, in the form of national insurance contributions. Employers might also reduce their tax liabilities by employing individuals on a self-employed basis or even misclassifying workers as self-employed. She also addressed the question of the interpretation of ILO Conventions raised by the Employer members, by referring to the mandate of the Committee of Experts as agreed by the social partners in February 2015 and March 2017. The agreement confirmed that the Committee of Experts could undertake an impartial and technical analysis of how the Conventions were applied in law and practice by member States, while being cognizant of different national realities and legal systems.

In conclusion, she called on the Government to take all steps necessary to comply with the Convention, including increasing the levels of benefits. The Government, in consultation



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with national social partners, should carry out a review of existing social security arrangements with a view to alleviate poverty levels, assess whether existing rules incentivize the use of insecure work and ensure that all working people benefit from effective social protection. The findings of such a review should be communicated to the Committee of Experts.

**The Employer member of the United Kingdom (Mr SYDER)** requested the Committee to take into account the current situation in the United Kingdom as a result of the elections that had been held only one day prior to the discussion of the case in the Committee. Following the dissolution of the Parliament and until the formation of a new Government, civil servants could not take any action or make any announcements that showed affiliation to a political party (so-called “Purdah” rules), which necessarily restricted what the Government could do with regard to the case before the Committee. In the future, the Committee should consider the existence of national elections to form a government when selecting countries for supervision, due to the clear risk of prejudice to the country concerned, especially those countries that had rules similar to the “Purdah” rules. The Employer members of the United Kingdom had not sought the supervision of this case.

Moreover, given that the Committee of Experts had agreed to examine the European Code of Social Security, urgent clarification was required as to whether the social partners were expected to make future observations not only on the application of the Convention, but also the Code. Clarification was also required regarding the status of the Technical Notes prepared by the Office concerning the state of application of social security provisions of the international treaties on social rights ratified by the United Kingdom. The observation of the Committee of Experts included references to the European Code of Social Security and the European Social Charter, in accordance with the arrangements made between the ILO and the Council of Europe. However, the mandate of the Conference Committee was limited to supervision of ILO Conventions and Recommendations only, and the Government had been placed on the shortlist with respect to the Convention only. It was not the Committee’s

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mandate to supervise the observation of the Committee of Experts in respect of the European Code, which was the role of the Council of Europe. While understanding the logic of a coherent analysis of the European Code and the Convention, the dual observation made by the Committee of Experts rendered the supervision of the application of the Convention challenging.

At the time of the entry into force of the Convention in 1955, the Employers' group had highlighted that the option of choosing branches of social security was incompatible with the principle of specific and comparable obligations in the ILO Constitution, and that there should be different Conventions for each branch of social security. With more than 60 years having passed, supervising obligations set in 1955 against national circumstances in 2017 was clearly unsatisfactory. He therefore questioned the up-to-date status of the Convention and whether it should be the subject of the Standards Review Mechanism process.

The Committee of Experts had observed that current sickness benefits, unemployment benefits, and survivors' benefits fell below the permitted level prescribed in the Convention. He understood that the Government had disagreed on this point, insisting that social assistance benefits were not social security benefits and therefore should not be included in the calculation of overall protection levels. There was thus a clear conflict of interpretation, which was concerning because the Experts should not determine the meaning of the provisions of the Convention and then apply them. While anticipating that the Government would consider the Committee of Experts' comments, which provided non-binding guidance, he emphasized that the Government could balance its social security scheme in a manner determined at the national level while respecting its international obligations.

*The sitting closed at 6 p.m.*  
*La séance est levée à 18 heures.*  
*Se levantó la sesión a las 18 horas.*

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**11th sitting, 9 June 2017 (cont.), 6.30 p.m.**  
**11<sup>e</sup> séance, 9 juin 2017 (suite), 18 h 30**  
**11.<sup>a</sup> sesión, 9 de junio de 2017 (cont.), 18.30 horas**

*Chairperson: Mr Washington González*  
*Président: M. Washington González*  
*Presidente: Sr. Washington González*

## **Work of the Committee**

*PV 2 was adopted as amended.*

## **Travaux de la commission**

*Le PV 2 a été adopté tel qu'amendé.*

## **Trabajos de la Comisión**

*El acta 2 fue adoptada con las enmiendas correspondientes.*

**The Worker member of Australia (Mr PERICA)** indicated that the most significant shift in the world of work was the rise of precarious employment in the last two decades. In 2011, it was estimated that half of all jobs worldwide were considered precarious. The exponential rise in precarious employment provided a series of challenges for social security schemes. For example, where the scheme was based on a model of full-time, permanent work, it could exclude precarious workers when they were unemployed, sick, disabled or in retirement. Even when precarious workers were formally protected, the lack of continuity in employment might result in inadequate coverage or limited benefits during unemployment and retirement. Gaps in social protection of this character led to further precariousness, as workers were forced to enter unregulated forms of employment in order to survive. This was not consistent with the obligations under the Convention.

It was therefore vital for governments to review social security arrangements to ensure that the social safety net provided the support necessary for workers in precarious or insecure employment. The level of insecure work in the United Kingdom suggested that some

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analysis and review should be undertaken to ensure that these workers were protected by the social safety net. The number of workers in the United Kingdom in positions where they could lose their jobs at short or no notice had grown by almost 2 million in the past decade. More than one in ten workers now faced precarious employment conditions. Half of the biggest group of precariously employed workers, the self-employed, were in low pay and took home less than two-thirds of the median earnings. Two million self-employed people now earned below £8 per hour. The social partners in the United Kingdom should therefore undertake a review of the social security system to ensure that the growing numbers of insecure workers were adequately catered for by the social security system.

**La membre travailleuse de la France (M<sup>me</sup> ALEXANDRE)** a considéré fondamental de rappeler les dispositions du préambule de la Constitution de l'OIT et de la Déclaration de Philadelphie qui affirment qu'une paix universelle et durable ne peut être fondée que sur la base de la justice sociale, et que la pauvreté, où qu'elle existe, constitue un danger pour la prospérité de tous. La commission d'experts a considéré que le niveau des prestations de chômage est bien en dessous du taux minimum garanti par la convention. Une recherche indépendante menée par la Fondation Joseph Rowntree a démontré que les bénéficiaires de la prestation de chômage vivent avec un revenu bien inférieur au standard minimum permettant de vivre dans des conditions acceptables, de couvrir les besoins essentiels et de participer à la vie de la société. Les dernières statistiques officielles montrent que 70 pour cent des adultes en âge de travailler dans des familles au chômage vivent dans la pauvreté (évaluée à moins de 60 pour cent du revenu médian après la prise en compte des coûts de logement). Les jeunes adultes ont des niveaux de prestations particulièrement bas. En 2016, une personne en âge de travailler et célibataire demandant l'allocation chômage recevait 39 pour cent du revenu nécessaire à un niveau de vie minimum. Cette allocation a baissé de 41 pour cent depuis 2010. Les couples avec enfants reçoivent quant à eux 61 pour cent du revenu standard minimum, soit 62 pour cent de moins qu'en 2010. Les prestations de chômage, dans leur niveau et modalités, ont été modifiées par des réformes d'austérité qui

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ont participé à la paupérisation de la population. La presse a fait état de plus de 2 000 banques alimentaires au Royaume-Uni, lesquelles ont apporté trois repas par jour à 1,1 million de personnes en situation de pauvreté extrême, dont 436 938 enfants. Ce nombre de gens dépendant des banques alimentaires a augmenté et prouve que le niveau de pauvreté a augmenté, en partie notamment à cause de ce système de calcul de la prestation de chômage qui réduit les allocations à peau de chagrin. Cumulée aux règles drastiques encadrant l'octroi des prestations de chômage (par exemple l'obligation de trente-cinq heures de recherche d'emploi par semaine au Job Center, ou bien l'interdiction d'arriver avec plus de dix minutes de retard au rendez-vous du Job Center sous peine de voir sa prestation supprimée), la situation des chômeurs est d'une immense précarité. Les politiques d'austérité en complète contradiction avec les dispositions de la partie IV de la convention contredisent également les textes fondateurs de l'OIT qui stipulent que «la pauvreté, où qu'elle existe, constitue un danger pour la prospérité de tous» et que «la lutte contre le besoin doit être menée avec une inlassable énergie au sein de chaque nation et par un effort international continu et concerté dans lequel les représentants des travailleurs et des employeurs, coopérant sur un pied d'égalité avec ceux des gouvernements, participent à de libres discussions et à des décisions de caractère démocratique en vue de promouvoir le bien commun».

**An observer representing the International Transport Workers' Federation and the AFL–CIO (ITF/AFL) (Mr SUBASINGHE)** emphasized that, in current times, the protection provided for in the Convention was needed more than ever. The number of self-employed people in the United Kingdom had grown by 26 per cent over the last decade to 4.8 million, with 1.7 million estimated to receiving earnings lower than the national minimum wage. An ever-increasing number of workers were misclassified as independent contractors, as many companies in the gig economy did not recognize the existence of employment relationships with their workers, thus depriving them of their rights, including those relating to social security entitlements. National courts had recognized this in some cases, finding that workers had wrongly been classified as self-employed. The British tax

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authority also stated that it would take all necessary steps to ensure that companies who wilfully misclassified their workers would pay the appropriate social security contributions. He called upon the Government to clarify the law so as to deter the misclassification of workers in the gig economy by strengthening remedies and enforcement against misclassification, as well as establishing a strong statutory presumption of employee status. In terms of social protection, rather than redesigning the social security system to accommodate ever-increasing flexibility for employers, the Government should minimize insecurity at work. Even if platform-based drivers were classified as “workers”, they were often considered self-employed for tax purposes. Additionally, in terms of Universal Credit, it was unclear whether a “worker” would be considered as a self-employed independent contractor or as an employee. The Government had to act urgently to ensure that platform workers were adequately covered by the social security system. In this respect, he called on the Government to conduct a tripartite review of the social security system and to consider novel solutions, including the strengthening of government-managed or worker-negotiated portable benefits, in order to ensure that workers in the gig economy were given the social protection they deserved.

**The Worker member of Sweden (Ms NYGREN)**, speaking on behalf of the trade unions in the Nordic countries, agreed with the observation of the Committee of Experts that the level of social security in the United Kingdom was significantly low and did not meet the minimum rates required by the Convention. There was a wealth of evidence that those on sickness benefits in the United Kingdom fell well below a minimum income standard required to provide individuals with a decent standard of living. The social security system provided for different forms of benefits for those unable to work due to sickness, subject to different qualification criteria. There were serious problems with these benefits: (i) the level of statutory sick pay was low; (ii) those in low-paid and insecure work were at risk of losing out on the Statutory Sick Pay; (iii) the entitlement was income related and employed workers had to earn £113 per week to qualify; (iv) those employed in insecure work, including zero-

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hours contracts and agency work often lost out because they earned not enough to qualify; and (v) the Statutory Sick Pay only applied from the fourth day of sickness.

She deplored that, despite the concerns that the existing level of benefits contributed to high poverty levels, the Government had introduced further cuts in 2017. Workers receiving the Employment and Support Allowance that were expected to be able to return to work within a rather short time, had had their benefits cut by nearly 30 per cent since April 2017. While the Convention provided for the progressive increase in the level of social security, the development in the United Kingdom seemed to go in the opposite direction. Regarding the comments made by the Employer members of the United Kingdom about the status of the Convention, she recalled that although the Convention had been adopted in 1952, the case at hand had proven that the Convention and its application were very much needed for leading a life in dignity in case of illness. She therefore urged the Government to adjust the national legislation to meet the requirements set out in the Convention.

**The Government representative** thanked the Conference Committee for its careful consideration of the issues raised by the Committee of Experts as well as the information submitted by her Government. She affirmed that her Government had taken due note of all the comments and questions made, and undertook to address these, as appropriate, in the report to the Committee of Experts

**The Employer members** noted that the submissions of the Government had been brief in light of the national circumstances surrounding the recent elections. They encouraged the Government to provide the required information to the Committee of Experts, including the requested statistics to enable it to better analyse the situation concerning the application of the Convention by the United Kingdom. They looked forward to further consider the application of the Convention, once this information had been submitted.

**Les membres travailleurs** ont souhaité revenir sur certaines positions exprimées durant la discussion, selon lesquelles la convention serait devenue «obsolète», en indiquant

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que, si chaque pays qui ne respecte pas une convention invoquait cet argument, aucune convention ne serait respectée. En outre, ils ont considéré utile de rappeler que la recommandation n° 202 sur les socles de protection sociale adoptée en 2012 réaffirme l'importance de la convention n° 102 et indique, dès son préambule, que ces normes conservent toute leur pertinence et continuent d'être des références importantes pour les systèmes de sécurité sociale tout en encourageant à davantage de ratification de cette convention à jour. Comme cela a encore été réaffirmé durant la dernière réunion du mécanisme d'examen des normes d'octobre 2016, il a été à nouveau recommandé d'encourager la ratification de ce texte. Quant au mandat de la commission d'experts, celui-ci est décrit en détail dans son rapport, et les employeurs et travailleurs en ont reconnu l'étendue. Dans le cas du Royaume-Uni, la commission d'experts s'est contentée de rappeler l'existence de l'article 67 de la convention et le sens de cette disposition sur la base des documents préparatoires. Il ressort de cet examen que la signification à donner à cette disposition ne peut souffrir d'aucune discussion. Le seul point qui doit retenir l'attention est la violation de la convention par le Royaume-Uni et l'invitation qui doit être faite au gouvernement de prendre les mesures nécessaires pour respecter la convention. Cela passe par une révision du régime actuel de sécurité sociale en concertation avec les partenaires sociaux, avec comme objectif de réduire sensiblement les niveaux de pauvreté via une augmentation des prestations de sécurité sociale; et de s'assurer que le système actuel n'entraîne pas une augmentation des formes de travail précaires, mais plutôt garantit à tous les travailleurs une protection sociale effective et efficace. Il est primordial que le gouvernement accorde toute la priorité à ce dossier, car la question de la pauvreté et l'état de dénuement ne peuvent être laissés sans réponse. Il en va de la cohésion sociale et de l'équilibre de l'ensemble de la société.

(...)

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*The sitting closed at 7.15 p.m.*  
*La séance est levée à 19 h 15.*  
*Se levantó la sesión a las 19.15 horas.*