



International
Labour
Organization

World of Work Summit: Social Justice for All

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

► Concept note

Background

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

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

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

World of Work Summit: Social Justice for All

Purpose and outcomes

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

The Summit will act as a platform for:

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

The Summit is expected to produce the following outcomes:

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

Format and content

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

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

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

Tentative agenda – Subject to changes

► Wednesday, 14 June 2023

Time	Session	Location
9.45–10.15 a.m.	Official opening: Addresses by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the ILO Director-General	
10.15–11.35 a.m.	Addresses by Heads of State/Government, Employers' representative and Workers' representative (names to be confirmed)	Palais, Room XX
11.35–11.45 a.m.	Interlude	
11.45 a.m.–1.15 p.m.	Panel: Addressing inequalities, informality and facilitating inclusion , moderated by Ms Nozipho Tshabalala	
1.15–2.30 p.m.	Lunch break	
2.30–3.30 p.m.	Addresses of Heads of States/Governments (names to be confirmed)	
3.30–3.40 p.m.	Interlude	
3.40–5 p.m.	Panel: Fostering equal opportunities and full, freely chosen and productive employment for all through education, lifelong learning and skills development , moderated by Ms Nozipho Tshabalala	Palais, Room XX
5–5.10 p.m.	Interlude	
5.10–6.10 p.m.	Addresses of Heads of State/Government (names to be confirmed)	
6.10–6.20 p.m.	Interlude	
6.20–7 p.m.	Addresses of Heads of State/Government (names to be confirmed)	

► Thursday, 15 June 2023

Time	Session	Location
9.45–10.45 a.m.	Addresses by Heads of State/Government (names to be confirmed)	
10.45–10.55 a.m.	Interlude	
10.55 a.m.–12.15 p.m.	Panel: Jobs and social protection for just transitions , moderated by Ms Sharanjit Leyl	Palais, Room XX
12.15 p.m.–12.20 p.m.	Interlude	
12.20 p.m.–1 p.m.	Addresses by Heads of State/Government (names to be confirmed)	
1.30 p.m.–2.45 p.m.	Lunch break	
3 p.m.–4.30 p.m.	Panel: Trade, employment and sustainable development: Advancing human and labour rights , moderated by Ms Sharanjit Leyl	
4.30 p.m.–4.40 p.m.	Interlude	Palais, Room XX
4.40 p.m.–5.20 p.m.	Addresses by Heads of State/Government (names to be confirmed)	
5.20 p.m.–5.30 p.m.	Official closure by the ILO Director-General	

Panel: Addressing inequalities, informality and facilitating inclusion

Wednesday, 14 June 2023, 11.45 a.m.-1.15 p.m.

Background

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

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

Expected outcomes

The panel discussion is expected to:

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

Panel: Fostering equal opportunities and full, freely chosen and productive employment for all through education, lifelong learning and skills development

Wednesday, 14 June 2023, 3.40–5 p.m.

Background

The Transforming Education Summit, held at the headquarters of the United Nations in September 2022, noted a triple crisis in education: a crisis of equity and inclusion, a crisis of quality, and a crisis of relevance. Over 244 million children and young people are still out of school, including one third of children in child labour and an estimated seven out of ten children in low- and middle-income countries who cannot read and understand a simple text at age ten. In developed countries, significant education disparities remain, which are often based on income, race and gender, and they are particularly acute in crisis contexts. ¹ All regions of the world need more teachers, especially those countries that have rapidly growing school-aged populations. ² Even where access to education and training can be provided, many educational and training systems are not equipping new generations with the values, knowledge and skills they need to face challenges throughout their lives such as just transitions (climate, digital, energy and demographic transitions). Lifelong learning provides equal access to training and skills development and promotes decent work, secure livelihoods and career prospects for millions of people. If implemented through social dialogue, it can act as a powerful social equalizer, preparing societies for change and unforeseen crises and empowering people and enterprises to address new challenges such as the digital and green transition as well as known challenges such as the informal economy. The development of core and future-oriented skills allows workers to adapt and to explore career pathways that would otherwise be closed to them. It enables the public sector and private enterprises, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, to be more sustainable, develop resilience and adaptability, enhance productivity and generate decent work opportunities. It enables successful job transitions, intra-enterprise mobility and transitions into formality, and promotes access to social protection, with positive impacts on the incomes of vulnerable groups. To this end, countries must develop well-coordinated systems and policies, supported by a whole-of-government approach, and engage in social dialogue with the social partners. They need skills intelligence, a flexible and inclusive training offer, strong and effective institutions, sustainable financing and quality assurance alongside robust skills validation and career guidance. This requires curricula, pedagogy and teaching and training staff that are relevant for diverse communities. Skills recognition is also important. Last but not least, having qualified, motivated and well-supported education personnel, working in a conducive teaching and learning environment, is essential to delivering quality education. ³

Expected outcomes

The panel discussion is expected to:

- raise awareness of the need to ensure (i) equitable access to quality education, skills development and lifelong learning; (ii) strengthened capacities of all people to benefit from the opportunities of a changing world of work; and (iii) social dialogue to advance social justice;
- identify practical solutions, potential innovative approaches and best practices to promote social justice;
- foster collaboration among policymakers, representatives of workers and employers and international organizations to address these issues effectively.

¹ United Nations, *Report on the 2022 Transforming Education Summit*, January 2023.

² UNESCO, *Transforming education from within: Current trends in the status and development of teachers*, World Teachers' Day, 5 October 2022.

³ ILO, *Conclusions of the Technical meeting on the future of work in the education sector in the context of lifelong learning for all, skills and the Decent Work Agenda*, Geneva, 17–21 May 2021.

Panel: Jobs and social protection for just transitions

Thursday, 15 June 2023, 10.55 a.m.-12.15 p.m.

Background

There is broad agreement that the world must do more to address the crises facing all countries, particularly developing countries that have more limited fiscal capacity to cope with the challenges. The devastating impacts of climate change together with rising levels of debt and the risk of fiscal austerity require a significant shift in the global response, with a greater focus on creating decent jobs and extending social protection to facilitate inclusive transitions and structural transformations. Against this backdrop, the UN Secretary-General launched the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions in September 2021, which aims to increase the level and coordination of the multilateral system's efforts to support countries in creating 400 million decent jobs, including in the green, digital and care economies, and to extend social protection coverage to the 4 billion people currently excluded. If designed and implemented in an integrated manner, investment in skills and pro-employment macroeconomic policies that aim to increase employment opportunities and social protection coverage contribute to inclusive structural transformations. They are essential to support formalization and the creation of decent employment in key sectors of the economy that are marked by decent work deficits (such as digital, green, care, tourism and agriculture) and the active participation of women and disadvantaged groups in decent employment and their effective access to adequate social protection, while facilitating a job-rich recovery and a just transition to the green, care and digital economy. This virtuous circle also contributes to the expansion of fiscal space through an increase in social contributions and tax revenues for social investments, which is critical for developing countries. Coordinated and scaled-up investments in decent jobs and social protection are needed for a human-centred recovery and sustainable development. However, many countries are currently facing a difficult trade-off between containing their debt vulnerabilities or increasing much-needed public investments to shape and guide the transformations to create decent work and promote social justice.

Expected outcomes

The panel discussion is expected to:

- raise awareness of the importance of achieving decent employment and universal social protection for just transitions, and of the benefits of integrated employment and social protection policies;
- identify practical solutions, potential innovative approaches and best practices to promote social justice in this context (such as integrated policy approaches, concrete ways to increase fiscal space, and enhanced multilateral cooperation);
- foster collaboration among policymakers, representatives of workers and employers, and international organizations to address these issues effectively.

Panel: Trade, employment and sustainable development: Advancing human and labour rights

Thursday, 15 June 2023, 3-4.30 p.m.

Background

International trade can be an engine of inclusive growth, poverty eradication and economic development, and can contribute to the promotion of inclusive and sustainable development, structural transformation and industrialization, particularly in developing countries. Universal, rules-based, open, transparent, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading systems, in which all countries respect, promote and realize the ILO's fundamental principles and rights at work, will be a catalyst for increased incomes, the creation of employment and improved working conditions, the promotion of sustainable enterprises and increasing the fair distribution of value-added along supply chains.

Current dynamics in global trade, including those related to multiple crises, present new challenges for the effective implementation of policies to advance shared prosperity from trade and investment. There are also concerns about countries with limited capacity to implement and enforce national laws, especially on how this affects micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and individuals belonging to disadvantaged groups, such as low-skilled workers, women and workers operating in the informal economy. Such concerns have led to initiatives across regions and within countries to strengthen the linkages between trade and broader socio-economic objectives. These initiatives, at both the micro and the macro levels, include the promotion of and respect for human and labour rights through trade and investment policies, due diligence legislation and responsible business practices.

This panel will explore policy solutions and partnerships to enhance the social dimensions of trade, in particular trade, industrial and sectoral policies that promote decent work, enhance productivity and contribute to the transition from the informal to the formal economy. It will examine the potential of new initiatives – including through social dialogue and ILO collaboration with multilateral development banks and other international organizations – to advance socially fair trade, for example through provisions based on international labour standards in trade and investment arrangements, responsible business conduct, investment frameworks and development cooperation.

Expected outcomes

The panel discussion is expected to:

- raise awareness of opportunities to advance decent work in the context of international trade and investment, including in domestic and global supply chains, through the increased cooperation of governments, the social partners and international organizations;
- identify practical solutions, potential innovative approaches and best practices to promote social justice in this context;
- foster collaboration among policymakers, representatives of workers and employers, and international organizations to address these issues effectively.