

Decent Work Partnerships for Decent Work



International
Labour
Organisation



Partnerships and Development Cooperation

*“The primary goal of the ILO today is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of **freedom, equity, security and human dignity.**”*

Juan Somavia, ILO Director-General



Partnerships for Decent Work

In a globalized world, partnerships are essential to make change happen, to make policies work. Partnerships increase outreach and influence, foster synergies and leverage available assets, including financial resources, technical capacity and expertise.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is one of the most universal organizations, made especially so by its unique tripartite structure of governments, employers and workers. The ILO is also part of a wide network of actors. It is committed to the promotion of decent work at the global, national and local levels.

Standards and technical cooperation are the cornerstones of the ILO's work. To achieve effective and long-lasting results, the ILO joins with the donor community and a wide range of development actors including numerous financial institutions; with parliamentarians and regional and local governments; with civil society organizations, academia, NGOs, and faith-based organizations; and with agencies and funds in the UN system.

By working together with those who share its historical aspirations for **human dignity** and global prosperity, the ILO can forge an effective convergence of national and international policies that lead to fair globalization and fulfil the needs and aspirations of peoples, families, and communities worldwide.



From past...

The International Labour Organization (ILO) was created in 1919 as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to reflect the belief that universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice. The ILO's founders were committed to spreading humane working conditions and **combating injustice**, hardship and poverty in respect of **human dignity**. In 1946 the ILO became the first specialized agency associated with the newly formed United Nations.

The ILO's unique tripartite governance structure brings together representatives of **governments, employers and workers** to jointly shape international labour standards, policies and programmes. Its normative instruments cover conditions of work, occupational safety and health, social security, employment promotion, human resource development and the fundamental goals of freedom of association and collective bargaining, the abolition of forced and child labour, and non-discrimination. These normative instruments also focus on specific groups of workers, including indigenous peoples, migrant workers, disabled workers and economic sectors, such as the maritime sector.



In partnership with its constituents, with non-state and economic actors and with other international and UN entities, the ILO engages in research, cooperation and capacity building programmes that illustrate the practical application of its values and mandate. Its expertise and assistance help bring social dialogue to the core of economic development. In countries such as Poland, Chile and South Africa, the ILO's strong support for trade union rights helped **the fight for democracy and freedom**.

At strategic moments the Organization has adopted major Declarations that have restated and refined its mandate in crucial historical contexts. As the world emerged from World War II, the Declaration of Philadelphia in 1944 reaffirmed the fundamental values of the ILO, stating that **“labour is not a commodity”**, and that **“poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere”**. In the decade following the end of the War, the ILO turned its attention to key human rights issues in the labour field and its procedures became a model for other international organizations.



...to present

In 1998, the ILO again redefined its role in a changing world. **The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work** established the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining, and freedom from forced labour, discrimination at work and child labour as core labour standards.

In 2008, on the eve of the financial and economic crisis, the ILO's **Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization** reflected a broad international consensus on the need for a strong social dimension to globalization in achieving improved and fair outcomes for all.

One year later, at the 2009 International Labour Conference, ILO constituents responded to the crisis when they unanimously approved the **Global Jobs Pact** – the first global and strategic response to the financial and economic crisis by the actors of the real economy.

In July 2009, the Director-General presented the Global Jobs Pact to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) following a request from the United Nations General Assembly Conference on the Crisis. A resolution on the Global Jobs Pact was adopted by ECOSOC with over 170 co-sponsors, thus bringing the Pact into **a wider multilateral arena**.

Decent work is today the essential expression of the ILO's mission, mandate and responsibility.

For its constituents and its partners,
a better world starts here.



Decent work – A better world starts here

In a better world, in developed and developing economies, in the North and the South, there would be no forced labour, no child labour, no discrimination, and no danger at work. In adopting the 1998 Declaration, governments and worker and employers organizations recognized these fundamental rights.

From birth to retirement, decent work is central to everyone's well-being. For the poor, decent work is the best route out of poverty. Through education, skills and training, it is the way to a better life for all. Through investment and support for entrepreneurship and local development, decent work opens new opportunities for all and contributes to global prosperity. In each country, each community, each family, decent work places human dignity at the centre of people's work.

Labour is not a commodity – decent work means safe working conditions, adequate free time and rest, compensation in the event of lost or reduced income, and support for those with disabilities, and ensures access to adequate health care. Decent work makes our world a safer place.

Poverty anywhere is a danger to prosperity everywhere – in the workplace and in society at large, decent work brings peace. **Social dialogue**, involving strong and independent workers' and employers' organizations, is fundamental to peacebuilding, conflict resolution, avoiding disputes at work and building cohesive societies.



A long way to go

Decent work deficits are still numerous: many women and men are still unemployed or underemployed. For most people, their work is not safe, their income is not secure, their fundamental rights are denied.

- Half of the world's workers are unable to lift themselves and their families above the US\$2 per day per person poverty line.
- Women are more likely than men to work in the informal economy, with weak social protection and high insecurity.
- Over 85 million young people are unemployed worldwide.
- More than 86 million workers worldwide are migrants, 34 million of them in developing regions. Many are vulnerable to exploitation and lack representation.
- Global economic growth is increasingly failing to translate into the new and better jobs that would lead to poverty reduction.





A global consensus

In the face of these gaps, commitments to decent work are now strong. Decent work is endorsed through [international consensus](#), bringing together governments, employers, unions and civil society.

At the UN World Summit in 2005, some 150 global leaders resolved to make full and productive employment and decent work a central objective of their national and international policies and strategies, including poverty reduction strategies.

In 2006, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) reaffirmed that commitment and asked UN bodies and international financial institutions to mainstream full and productive employment and decent work into their policies, programmes and activities.

In 2008, decent work was enshrined in the ILO Declaration on Social Justice, which was later endorsed by the [UN General Assembly](#).

Decent work is the highest priority in the social and economic agendas of countries and the international community.



Social justice for a fair globalization: new partnerships for a renewed commitment

The new ILO Declaration adopted by consensus in 2008 by its Member States offers a guide for the promotion of a **fair globalization** based on decent work. Its implementation is based on the four strategic objectives, which are inseparable, interrelated and mutually supportive.

These objectives can be summarized as follows:

- **Employment:** Promoting employment by creating a sustainable institutional and economic environment.
- **Social protection:** Developing and enhancing measures of social protection – social security and labour protection – that are sustainable and adapted to national circumstances.
- **Social dialogue:** Promoting social dialogue and tripartism as the most appropriate methods to achieve social progress and adapt objectives to relevant national and international contexts.
- **Rights at work:** Respecting, promoting and realizing fundamental principles and rights at work. Freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining are particularly important to enable the attainment of the strategic objectives.





The violation of any fundamental principles and rights at work cannot be invoked or otherwise used as a basis for securing a comparative advantage in trade or other fields, and labour standards should not be used for protectionist trade purposes.

How the objectives are pursued is a question to be determined by the Members themselves according to their national circumstances and priorities. **Solidarity and cooperation** between all Members of the ILO are more relevant than ever to the achievement of the objectives.

In a globalized economy, the Declaration calls for the development of new partnerships with non-state entities and economic actors such as multinational enterprises and trade unions operating at the global sectoral level.





Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work

– A global partnership

As a result of the global consensus on decent work, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and international financial institutions have been requested to support the goal of full and productive employment and decent work for all.

In order to assist the entire multilateral system, the United Nations System **Chief Executives Board** for Coordination (CEB) and its High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) called on the ILO to develop a Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work. The Toolkit is a process that permits all agencies and their constituents to assess how their policies, strategies and activities take account of employment and decent work outcomes and to evaluate how to improve those outcomes.





It has four components:

- 1.** A diagnostic and awareness-raising **checklist** of questions for self-assessment that organizations are asked to complete.
- 2.** A **knowledge-sharing platform**: In order to maximize the potential of the Toolkit to inform policies and practices, a knowledge sharing platform has been developed to enable the CEB member organizations and others to exchange their knowledge, tools and experience.
- 3.** **Training**: In order to improve general understanding of the basic concepts of decent work, a training programme is being developed in conjunction with the International Training Centre of the ILO.
- 4.** **Country-level implementation**: A separate version of the Tool kit has also been developed, tailored to country-level needs, such as the harmonization of policies and the incorporation of Decent Work Country Programmes in the One UN country programmes and UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). The self-assessment checklist may be used by all development actors.



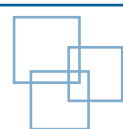
Partnerships and Development Cooperation

Effective partnerships are more important than ever for advancing internationally agreed development goals. For this reason the ILO actively seeks to establish and maintain partnerships with a wide range of development actors, including the donor community, parliamentarians, local government, civil society and faith-based organizations, and the multilateral system, including UN agencies and international financial institutions.

The ILO supports and actively participates in the current **United Nations reform** processes, including the eight “One UN” pilot countries. Decent work is a global goal and its achievement depends on a reformed and better performing United Nations, and on a stronger, more coherent multilateral system. The ILO supports its constituents and staff in their effort to actively engage with the United Nations reform process.

The ILO has developed agreements and exchanges with **parliamentarians** and local government, and it enjoys a special relationship with the Inter-Parliamentary Union. It facilitates exchanges that are vital for greater ownership of the Decent Work Agenda.

The ILO has also established long lasting relationships with a wide range of **civil society organizations** concerned with advocacy, development, expertise, and human rights. It facilitates the participation of recognized international non-governmental organizations in the International Labour Conference each year.



Technical cooperation is a major instrument and a principle means of action for the ILO to promote fundamental labour rights and employment, increase social protection and further social dialogue.

The ILO establishes and maintains sustainable partnerships with donors and other agencies in the multilateral system so as to enhance its capacity to respond to requests for technical assistance. Through these partnerships, extra-budgetary resources are also mobilized to complement the regular budget and pursue technical cooperation and decent work outcomes. In addition, the ILO introduced the Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) which enables donors to contribute un-earmarked resources thereby allowing the ILO to fund priority programmes and areas of work that are facing funding gaps. Finally, the ILO has launched a special effort to involve businesses, foundations and other private partners in the Decent Work Agenda and has fostered important South-South cooperation initiatives among its constituents.

The ILO ensures that development aid is delivered according to internationally accepted development cooperation principles which include: aligning the technical cooperation portfolio with clear development goals defined by the ILO's constituents at the country level; coordinating efforts and activities with other national development frameworks, including those of the multilateral system and especially in relation to the UN reform process; focusing on training and empowering its constituents; applying results-based management throughout its planning and operations. Support and oversight structures are in place to ensure that ILO technical cooperation is subject to rigorous quality controls, implementation monitoring, and evaluation so as to maximize the impact of donor-supported development assistance.



The ILO's Partnerships and Development Cooperation Department (PARDEV) is responsible for initiating and strengthening partnerships with a wide range of actors at international, regional and national levels: UN funds, programmes and agencies, international financial institutions, donor agencies, regional organizations, the private sector, NGOs and faith-based organizations, parliamentarians and others.

The Department coordinates ILO involvement in United Nations reform processes and is responsible for overall management and oversight of the ILO's Development Cooperation Programme, including resource mobilization.

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