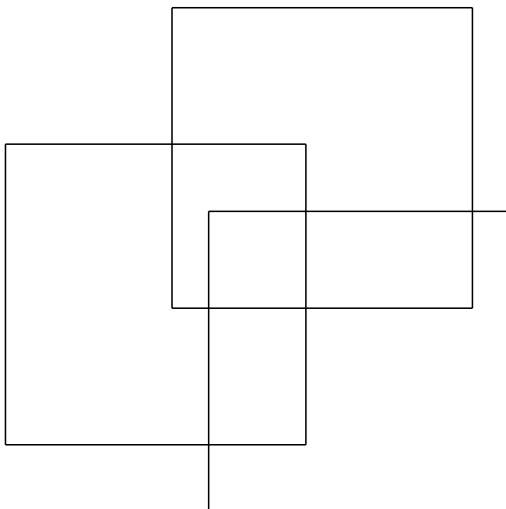




Note on the proceedings

Technical Meeting to Promote an Exchange of Views on the Further Development and Implementation of the Integrated Strategy to Address Decent Work Deficits in the Tobacco Sector
(Kampala, Uganda, 3–5 July 2019)



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1. Introduction

1. The Technical Meeting to Promote an Exchange of Views on the Further Development and Implementation of the Integrated Strategy to Address Decent Work Deficits in the Tobacco Sector was held in Kampala, Uganda, from 3 to 5 July 2019. The Governing Body of the International Labour Organization (ILO) approved the holding of the Meeting at its 335th Session (March 2019).
2. The purpose of the Meeting was to exchange views on strategies and good practices to promote decent work in the tobacco sector as well as the transition to alternative livelihoods. The International Labour Office had prepared a background report to inform discussions at the Meeting, which provided an overview of recent economic trends and development in the tobacco sector, with a specific focus on addressing decent work deficits and promoting opportunities for alternative livelihoods in tobacco-growing communities.¹
3. The Chairperson of the Meeting was Mr Martin Wandera (Uganda). The Government Vice-Chairperson of the Meeting was Mr Hlalerwayo K.K. Nyangulu (Malawi). The Employer Vice-Chairperson was Ms Jacqueline Mugo, and the Worker Vice-Chairperson was Mr Baldemar Velasquez.
4. The Secretary-General of the Meeting was Ms Alette van Leur, Director of the Sectoral Policies Department (SECTOR); the Deputy Secretary-General was Mr Wellington Chibebe, Director of the ILO Country Office for the United Republic of Tanzania, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda; the Executive Secretary was Ms Mariangels Fortuny, Head of the Forestry, Agriculture, Construction and Tourism Unit, who was assisted by Mr El'vis Beytullayev, Specialist, agriculture and rural economy; and, the Coordinator of the secretariat services was Mr Marco Minocri, assisted by Ms Jackie Banyana.
5. The Meeting was attended by 50 representatives and advisers. This included representative and advisers of the Governments of Algeria, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Italy, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, South Africa, Sweden, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States and Zimbabwe, as well as eight Employer representatives and eight advisers, and seven Worker representatives and four advisers.
6. There were 13 observers from the following intergovernmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs): the European Union; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the World Health Organization (WHO); the African Development Bank (AfDB); the Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco-Growing (ECLT) Foundation; IDH the Sustainable Trade Initiative; the International Tobacco Growers' Association (ITGA); the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF); and Business Africa. In addition, 11 members of the public were present.

¹ Background report for the Technical Meeting to Promote an Exchange of Views on the Further Development and Implementation of the Integrated Strategy to Address Decent Work Deficits in the Tobacco Sector ([MDWDTS/2019](#)).

2. Opening speeches

7. The Chairperson welcomed the participants. He explained that the purpose of the Meeting was to exchange views on the further development and implementation of the integrated strategy to address decent work deficits in the tobacco sector.² The outcome of the Meeting would be a note on the proceedings that would serve as an input to the further development and implementation of the integrated strategy. The strategy was first presented to the Governing Body of the ILO at its 332nd Session in March 2018, and an update on the costed, time-bound strategy would be presented to the Governing Body in November 2019.
8. The Chairperson stated that tobacco was an important trade commodity for many countries around the world, and a source of livelihood for millions of people engaged across its supply chain. At the same time, in many countries the sector was characterized by decent work challenges. Technological advances, changing patterns of tobacco consumption and stricter regulations on tobacco products were all having a serious impact on employment patterns in the sector, which was why a discussion on viable alternative livelihoods was called for.
9. The Secretary-General noted that the last global ILO meeting on the tobacco sector was held in February 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland (hereinafter “2003 Tripartite Meeting”).³ The conclusions and resolutions adopted at that meeting underscored the importance of continued research on employment and occupational safety and health (OSH) in the sector; the promotion of the Decent Work Agenda in the tobacco-growing and processing sectors, especially through the application of the principles and rights enshrined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up (1998); and the promotion of social dialogue.
10. The tobacco sector had been a subject of discussions by the Governing Body of the ILO for the past three years, first in relation to the ILO’s cooperation with the tobacco industry, and then with regard to the development of an integrated strategy. The integrated strategy discussed by the Governing Body at its 332nd Session had three prongs: (1) promote an enabling policy environment for decent work in tobacco-growing countries; (2) strengthen social dialogue; and (3) assist tobacco-growing communities to address decent work deficits, including child labour, and to transition to alternative livelihoods.
11. The Secretary-General reaffirmed that the outcome of the Meeting would inform and provide inputs for the further development of the integrated strategy, which had already been discussed and welcomed by the Governing Body of the ILO in March 2018. She noted that the world of work was undergoing major changes, and the tobacco sector was not an exception. Advances in technologies, rising health awareness, increasing popularity of alternative products, as well as governments’ commitment to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)⁴ had resulted in stricter regulations on tobacco products, and caused shifts in patterns of employment in the sector.

² For the text of the strategy, please refer to [GB.332/POL/5](#).

³ Tripartite Meeting on the Future of Employment in the Tobacco Sector, Geneva, 24–28 February 2003 ([TMETS/2003/15](#)).

⁴ The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) is a legally binding instrument that guides and informs the global tobacco control agenda. One hundred and seventy-five member States of the ILO are Parties to the FCTC.

3. Discussion on the adoption of the draft points for discussion and draft timetable

12. The representative of the Government of South Africa proposed to make an amendment to the draft points for discussion ⁵ to include the issue of funding for programmes and projects to advance decent work in the sector. He also proposed that the general statements should precede the adoption of the draft points for discussion and draft timetable ⁶ in order to provide participants with a sense of what to expect from the discussions.
13. The Worker Vice-Chairperson acknowledged that the issue of funding might be crucial to many tobacco-growing countries in Africa. However, the Governing Body, at its 334th Session (October–November 2018), had requested the Director-General to “organize a tripartite meeting as a matter of urgency, to promote an exchange of views on the further development and implementation of the strategy, with among others the participation of the directly affected countries and social partners in the tobacco sector”. ⁷ The clear mandate and focus of the Meeting should be respected. Furthermore, the draft points for discussion and the draft timetable had been the subject of extensive negotiations in the months preceding the Meeting, and they reflected the consensus that was reached. The Workers’ group was not prepared to reopen this discussion. Nevertheless, the group was strongly committed to constructive dialogue and an exchange of views on the issues contained in the proposed points for discussion.
14. The Employer Vice-Chairperson had no objection to amending the draft points for discussion and the timetable as proposed by the representative of the Government of South Africa.
15. The Government Vice-Chairperson could accept the proposed points for discussion and the timetable if the Office would execute the decision of the Governing Body, which directed the Director-General of the ILO to present an update on the costed and time-bound integrated strategy to the Governing Body at its 337th Session (October–November 2019), and if the Office on that occasion would specify sources of funding.
16. The Secretary-General assured the participants that a costed and time-bound strategy would be presented to the Governing Body at its 337th Session and would address the issue of funding. This would be based on the deliberations at the present Meeting and there would subsequently be extensive consultations with the tripartite constituents to finalize the strategy. Furthermore, in accordance with the decision of the Governing Body at its 334th Session, the Director-General would “continue efforts to mobilize various sustainable sources of funding from the public and private sector with appropriate safeguards”. However, the Office could not guarantee that it would be able to secure funds for the implementation of the strategy.
17. The Government Vice-Chairperson inquired about the reasons why the costed and time-bound integrated strategy was going to be presented to the Governing Body for information only and not for discussion.
18. The Secretary-General explained that, following the decision of the Governing Body at its 335th Session (March 2019), the Tripartite Screening Group had met on 16 April 2019 and

⁵ [MDWDTS/2019/4](#).

⁶ [MDWDTS/2019/3](#).

⁷ [GB.334/PV](#), para. 703.

had at that time not raised any objection to including on the agenda of the 337th Session of the Governing Body an item on tobacco for information. She further explained that any member of the Governing Body of the ILO could initiate a discussion at the Governing Body, regardless of whether an item was presented for information or for discussion. She moreover noted that, as per established practice in all ILO meetings, the draft points for discussion were established through informal consultations with the tripartite constituents, who had been able to reach consensus only after a long series of consultations in the months leading up to the Meeting. She finally stated that nothing in the Standing Orders for technical meetings prevented the adoption of the points for discussion and timetable after the general statements.

19. The representative of the Government of Brazil brought the attention of the Meeting to section 5 of the Introductory note to the Standing Orders for technical meetings adopted by the Governing Body at its 335th Session. The note stated that the Office “draws up a list of discussion points to focus attention on the major aspects of the matters covered by the agenda without, however, limiting the freedom of the meeting to carry out its work as it sees fit”.⁸ Therefore, it was within the mandate of the Meeting to amend the points for discussion, and the tripartite constituents within the boundaries set by the Standing Orders could bring up any matter relevant to the Meeting for consideration.
20. The Chairperson called on the participants to agree on a decision. He questioned if having general statements preceding the adoption of the draft points for discussion and draft timetable would have an impact on the substance of the Meeting, the objective of which was to promote the exchange of views on the further development and implementation of the integrated strategy to address decent work deficits in the tobacco sector. He referred to article 7(5) of the Standing Orders for technical meetings, which stated that it was the duty of the Officers of the meeting to approve the programme of work, and fix the date and time of the sittings of the meeting and of its subsidiary bodies and any time limits for interventions. He observed that only the Workers’ group was opposed to the proposal.
21. The representative of the Government of South Africa reiterated his proposal that general statements should precede the adoption of the draft points for discussion and draft timetable, pointing out that a majority supported the proposed amendment.
22. Guided by the rules, and in the interest of time and progress, the Chairperson intervened and ruled to proceed based on a majority consensus while acknowledging the concerns of the Workers’ group. The order of business was amended as proposed and the meeting began with general statements, followed by the adoption of the points for discussion and timetable.
23. The Worker Vice-Chairperson said his group was not prepared to engage in discussion on any item other than those that appeared on the draft timetable and that a tripartite consensus, not a majority, was needed to effect the proposed changes in the agenda.
24. The points for discussion were adopted without amendments.

4. General statements

25. The Worker Vice-Chairperson thanked the Office for the background document, which provided a good basis for the exchange of views. The Meeting was a timely opportunity to share experiences in addressing decent work deficits and discuss the way forward. The decisions and commitments made in the 2003 Tripartite Meeting were keystones in policy development and should be incorporated in the integrated strategy. Although the Meeting

⁸ ILO: *Standing orders for technical meetings*, 2019, Introductory note.

had been organized in accordance with the decision of the Governing Body in an urgent manner, the ad hoc approach had limited the possibilities for proper consultations and preparations for discussion. The Meeting did not offer a balanced composition of Worker and Employer representatives because many of the Worker representatives could not afford to travel to Kampala. He stressed that decisions to organize international meetings far from ILO headquarters should be taken in the spirit of enabling equal participation of all parties as mandated by the ILO resolutions concerning tripartism and social dialogue.

- 26.** He underscored the need to advance the interests and rights of the millions of workers in the tobacco sector, especially at a time when the industry was experiencing transformative changes, including but not limited to: restructuring in major tobacco companies; the shift from cigarette production to electronic cigarettes; “new generation” products; and the forecasted dramatic drop in demand for the tobacco leaf globally. This had resulted in factory closures in Europe, Asia and the Americas. The discussion on the just transition of the jobs in the tobacco sector should not only be about child labour but include all aspects of the fundamental principles and rights at work, in particular freedom of association and collective bargaining. Unfortunately, in the United States and around the world, agricultural workers were either excluded from national laws guaranteeing fundamental principles and rights at work or existing laws were not adequately enforced. He contended that negotiating for fair standards of pricing, wages and working conditions by both workers and employers had the potential to resolve many of the problematic issues in tobacco supply chains. For many years, the pricing and format of tobacco purchasing had pitted workers and growers against each other such that an improvement in workers’ rights was perceived as a loss for the growers, and improved financial standing of growers was seen as a loss for the workers. He urged the Meeting to reject such ideas, arguing that organized workers could be true partners in social dialogue and could collaborate with employer associations and tobacco purchasers to pursue goals of improving working conditions and crop yield and other financial goals in the supply chain.
- 27.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson welcomed the hosting of the Meeting in Kampala, which reflected the decision of the Governing Body to hear the voices on the ground and to learn from the experiences of local stakeholders. She highlighted the importance of the field trip to visit tobacco farms but regretted that the Office was not represented at the trip. Employers were keen to ensure that the costed and time-bound integrated strategy, which was going to be presented by the Office to the Governing Body in November 2019, would fully take into account the local realities and focus on tobacco-growing countries. She noted that the challenges of child labour, forced labour, poverty and OSH, as well as the need to strengthen social dialogue were not specific to tobacco but reflected the reality in the agricultural sector in general. It was therefore important for the discussion on decent work in the tobacco sector to be considered within a broader discussion on national action to promote decent work in agriculture. The industry was strongly committed to tackling decent work challenges. Through various sustainability efforts, the industry had focused on creating long-term value while continuously improving the understanding, management and performance of the social, economic and environmental impacts of operations in their wider value chain. The joint cooperation between the industry and the ILO to address decent work challenges had been successful, as had been verified by independent evaluations that concluded that the projects had either met or surpassed expected targets. The lesson learned from this cooperation was that partnerships were key to comprehensively addressing decent work deficits, and that neither companies, governments nor trade unions could afford to work in silos.
- 28.** She further added that the recognition of the role of the private sector in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 was a marked improvement over the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The UN Secretary-General and the ILO Director-General had repeatedly reaffirmed the need for scaling up partnerships with the private sector. Similarly, the ILO Governing Body had agreed that ILO engagement with governments, social partners and the

industry was essential to addressing decent work deficits in the sector. Therefore, it was important that the integrated strategy would be closely linked to ongoing industry efforts, and that the efforts of different actors complemented and did not duplicate or jeopardize each other's work. In further developing the integrated strategy, the ILO should be guided by the experiences from the public-private partnerships (PPPs) with Japan Tobacco International (JTI) and the ECLT Foundation. There was no need to reinvent the wheel as JTI's Achieving Reduction of Child Labour in Support of Education (ARISE) programme and the ECLT Foundation had taken a comprehensive approach, which focused on education, economic empowerment and alternative livelihoods as well as improving legal frameworks, and which was similar to the approach taken in the integrated strategy and its three pillars.

- 29.** She further highlighted that the 2003 Tripartite Meeting had requested the Office to carry out follow-up activities, ranging from data collection to the ratification of ILO core Conventions. It was important to know what follow-up work the Office had undertaken pursuant to the resolution of the 2003 Tripartite Meeting. The successes and challenges as well as the potential solutions to furthering the development and implementation of the integrated strategy should be shared. She cautioned that a lack of transparency and accountability could limit the impact and erode the credibility of tripartite ILO meetings, and that farmers, workers and their communities would feel the consequences. The Employers' group was, however, committed to joining the discussion constructively, aiming to provide good input based on their experiences and expertise to identify challenges as well as possible solutions in the development of the integrated strategy. As the Standing Orders required consensus for any outcome of the Meeting, it was important to concentrate on finding agreement on tangible actions, drawing inspiration from the upcoming UN High-Level Political Forum on the SDGs, which was dedicated to "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality".
- 30.** The Government Vice-Chairperson stated that there had not been sufficient time to agree on a statement during the preparatory meeting of the Government group, but that mixed views had been expressed. The visit to tobacco farms had offered an excellent chance to hear directly from tobacco farmers. The farmers had all spoken well of tobacco and revealed that although they had tried growing alternative crops they had not been able to continue because these crops were not as profitable as tobacco. He acknowledged that the subject matter was complex and had been a subject of discussion in Governing Body sessions for some time. Throughout the discussions, the issue of funding had been raised. The 337th Session of the Governing Body was expected to be presented with a costed, time-bound integrated strategy. He stressed that tobacco was a legal crop, and the ILO had a responsibility to provide technical support to its Members to address decent work deficits in the sector.
- 31.** Speaking on behalf of Malawi, The Government Vice-Chairperson recalled that the country had been a beneficiary of ILO assistance to eliminate child labour in the tobacco sector. He appreciated the support from the industry, which unfortunately had not been replaced by alternative funding from other sources. Securing sustainable funding remained an important aspect if the integrated strategy was to succeed. He recalled the decision of the 332nd Session of the Governing Body which, inter alia, had requested the Director-General to implement an integrated strategy on the promotion of decent work in the tobacco sector using short-term funding. The matter had been deferred to the 334th Session of the Governing Body, which in point (b) of its decision had requested the Director-General to present an update on the costed and time-bound integrated strategy to the Governing Body at its 337th Session. It had also in point (c) requested the Director-General to continue the ongoing project-based efforts to eliminate child labour using Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) funds and other public funds in the short term; and in point (d) requested the Director-General to continue efforts to mobilize various sustainable sources of funding from the public and private sectors with appropriate safeguards. He stated that it should be put on record that Malawi was part of the informal discussions in Geneva where, during the consultations, Malawi had indicated that the issue of financing should be discussed at the

Meeting, but the proposal had unfortunately not been successful. Malawi had also proposed that the Standing Orders should be waived to allow many participants, for example ministries responsible for agriculture, to participate in the discussions on alternative livelihoods.

- 32.** The representative of the Government of South Africa highlighted the decision of the Governing Body at its 332nd Session, which requested the Director-General to implement the strategy, taking into account the discussions of the Governing Body, and to report on progress by November 2019. This included the strategy for short-term funding and long-term partnership development. He recalled that in the Governing Body, after an intense and heated debate that had been initiated by the Africa group who questioned the very existence of the integrated strategy as proposed by the Office, no consensus was reached and the matter was deferred to the 334th Session of the Governing Body. However, after protracted discussions, again in the Governing Body, a decision was reached which, among others, directed the Office to present an update on the costed and time-bound integrated strategy at the 337th Session of the Governing Body. The decision also directed the Director-General to continue the ongoing project-based efforts to eliminate child labour using RBSA funds and other public funds in the short term, and to continue efforts to mobilize various sustainable sources of funding from the public and private sectors with appropriate safeguards. He stated that these discussions at the Governing Body uniformly responded to the one common challenge of ensuring continued funding for the elimination of child labour in the tobacco industry. A seemingly concerted effort to disregard the Africa group's proposal to focus on the main issue of funding to address decent work deficits in the tobacco sector was disappointing. Drawing on the experiences from the field visit, he stated that farmers had not called for the opportunity to grow alternative crops. Evidence from the field visit suggested that farmers were happy with tobacco, which had enabled them to send their children to school and secure sustainable livelihoods. In the context of such evidence, he wondered why the topic of alternative livelihoods should even be part of the discussion.
- 33.** The representative of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo stated that if tobacco production were to be eliminated, there would be severe consequences, including increased unemployment. The tobacco industry in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was small and on the verge of disappearing due to the lack of funding. He requested the ILO to provide technical support to develop binding legal instruments that would assist the Government in protecting the sector and addressing decent work deficits.
- 34.** The representative of the Government of Namibia expressed support for the statements made by the representatives of the Governments of South Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and asserted that the Meeting should not be discussing whether the tobacco industry should exist, because there were no alternatives to tobacco.
- 35.** The representative of the Government of the United States expressed support for the integrated strategy covering child labour and forced labour, skills development, livelihoods, OSH and social dialogue, but noted that its implementation would require strong support from all ILO constituents. He requested the Office to provide an update on the unpublished report on the rapid assessment of the tobacco sector in Malawi, referred to in the background report.
- 36.** The representative of the Government of Zimbabwe recalled her country's history with tobacco and highlighted its major interest in promoting decent work in the tobacco sector given its position as the fifth largest producer of tobacco globally and as the leading producer in Africa. Zimbabwe was one of the first countries to develop a national Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) after the ILO International Labour Conference adopted the concept in June 2005. This programme prioritized employment, social dialogue and rights at work in all sectors. Zimbabwe also had a well-functioning National Employment Council for the tobacco industry, which was a bipartite body charged with providing for and ensuring adherence to minimum conditions of work in the industry.

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- 37.** She appreciated the insights gained from the field visit and noted the similarities between tobacco growing in Uganda and in Zimbabwe. She observed that tobacco farming was a vibrant economic activity that required the support of governments to promote sound industrial relations through social dialogue, strengthen labour inspection systems and provide timely extension services. Farmers had stated that there was a lack of equally lucrative alternative livelihoods. She underscored that farmers were rational human beings who understood their craft and would shift to other crops of their own volition should there be viable alternatives. The results from a study on alternatives to tobacco conducted in 2018 with funding from the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) had also shown that there were no viable alternatives to tobacco. She therefore considered it premature for the Meeting to discuss alternative livelihoods and questioned how the topic had become part of the discussion.
- 38.** The representative of the Government of Mozambique stated that her country had ratified the eight core Conventions of the ILO as well as the ILO Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122). Tobacco growing was a labour-intensive agricultural operation. Approximately 100,000 smallholder farmers entered into contracts with tobacco companies every year in Mozambique. Tobacco was an important economic activity and a crucial source of rural employment that inadvertently helped to slow down migration from rural to urban areas. Approximately 30,000 women and men in rural areas were directly employed in the tobacco sector while 1 million people were directly benefitting from tobacco farming and processing activities. The agricultural sector, including the tobacco subsector, was the third largest employer in Mozambique, contributing significantly to the implementation of the country's employment policy. She acknowledged the existence of decent work deficits in tobacco farming but was quick to point out that these deficits were not insurmountable. Some of the deficits included child labour, rural poverty, a lack of alternative employment for youth, a lack of infrastructure, low wages for workers, a lack of occupational safety and health, and a lack of personal protective equipment in rural areas. To address these decent work deficits, especially child labour, the Government had implemented the National Action Plan to Combat Child Labour, which included reviewing the hazardous work list which determines work to be prohibited to persons under 18 years of age, including clauses to prohibit child labour in the ongoing revision of the labour law, and increasing the minimum age of employment from 15 to 18 years old.
- 39.** The representative of the Government of Nicaragua informed the Meeting that his Government's major objective was to reduce poverty among its more than 6.3 million citizens, of which 3 million were employed, 1 million of whom were in formal employment. The tobacco sector in Nicaragua had become more dynamic and industrialized with investments from Cuban tobacco companies. The country was now producing high-quality artisanal tobacco products, such as cigars, that were able to compete with larger producers in Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Honduras. With a workforce of 50,000, the industry had impacted the lives of over 150,000 people, especially in three northern regions where the tobacco industry was vibrant. Because losses in the tobacco industry would have a negative impact on the people, especially in tobacco-growing regions, the Government had created tax-free zones to help boost the industry. Compared to previous years, Nicaragua had increased exports. The largest trading partner was the United States, where nearly 330 million Nicaraguan cigars, worth US\$148 million, were consumed. He stressed the need for greater social dialogue in the sector and informed the Meeting that there was no child labour in the tobacco sector in Nicaragua. He acknowledged the challenges of eliminating child labour on smallholder family farms, but the country was committed to working towards a complete removal of children from the workforce.
- 40.** The representative of the Government of Italy stated that Italy had adopted an integrated strategy with a tripartite approach for the tobacco sector. The document, which addressed decent work deficits as well as organizational aspects in the tobacco sector, had three parts: (i) market organization; (ii) protection of workers; and (iii) a tripartite approach. For many

years, the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union (EU), the single framework of rules applicable to all 28 Member States of the EU, had focused closely on the economic organization of farmers. To concentrate production and increase the contractual power of farmers, the establishment of producer organizations and their associations was promoted. These organizations were recognized and controlled by public administration and complied with strict requirements in terms of the minimum number of members, representative product volumes and statutory regulations defined by decree. Only recognized producer organizations and their associations were qualified to participate in development programmes funded by the EU. Furthermore, inter-branch organizations set up on the initiative of the farmers, including economic representatives of processing and trade in agri-food products, constituted another organizational level. The main objective of inter-branch organizations was the regulation of agri-food product markets, in compliance with competition law. At the national level, only one inter-branch organization was recognized for each product, and if the level of representativeness exceeded two thirds of the national market, the inter-branch organization could ask the Ministry of Agriculture that the rules agreed upon within the inter-branch organization were mandatorily applied to all operators, even non-members. On the basis of the Common Agricultural Policy, Italy had mandated written and recorded cultivation contracts in the raw tobacco sector, stipulated exclusively by the approved producer organizations on behalf of the farmer members. Regarding worker protection, he highlighted as best practices the national and local collective labour agreements, the Agriculture Quality Labour Network (AQLN), the Code of Good Agricultural Labour Practices in the Tobacco Sector (ALP), the rules and restrictions for the use of pesticides in tobacco cultivation and the tripartite approach adopted by his Government. Other member States when developing the integrated strategy could consider these as a reference. He suggested that the Office circulate relevant documents supporting his intervention to the delegates as well as the Governing Body as valid examples that could be followed by governments to address decent work deficits in the tobacco sector.

41. The representative of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania thanked the Government of Uganda for the opportunity to visit tobacco farms in order to get the local perspective from farmers. The exercise was aimed at closing the missing link in previous discussions. It was hoped that the visit would greatly contribute to the discussion and the outcomes of the Meeting. The tobacco sector in the United Republic of Tanzania was a key sector that significantly contributed to employment, livelihood and income generation, and national export earnings. Unmanufactured tobacco alone accounted for 5 per cent of total export earnings. These figures were likely to grow given ongoing government initiatives to expand the sector. In terms of foreign exchange earnings, tobacco was the leading crop compared to other cash crops. The sector employed more than 2.5 million people across its value chain, including 150,000 tobacco farmers. Tobacco was processed domestically by tobacco-processing factories owned either by joint ventures with locals or by foreign tobacco buyers. The sector was traditional and historical and had deliberately been developed and nurtured by good government interventions over the years.
42. He emphasized that the issue of decent work deficits was not specific to the tobacco sector but permeated the entire agricultural sector and would require a collective effort from stakeholders to address. His Government recognized the challenges ahead, in particular child labour. Since the early 1990s, the Government had undertaken several interventions and implemented a number of programmes to fight child labour. Some of the ongoing projects included Promoting Sustainable Practices to Eradicate Child Labour in Tobacco funded by the ECLT Foundation and the ARISE programme in collaboration with the ILO and JTI. He noted that the private sector was well-organized and contributed to overcoming existing challenges through funding and tackling social infrastructure challenges. While there was agreement that efforts to address decent work in tobacco should continue, concerns were raised about the provision and availability of sustainable funding. Any promise with respect to alternative funding other than the involvement of the industry concerned would need to be tested before conclusions could be made.

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43. The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom stated that the United Kingdom was considered the best in Europe and a world leader on tobacco control policy. The country had a record low prevalence of tobacco use, just over 14 per cent in the adult population, which compared favourably with country peers. He recalled that the Government group had expressed an opinion that the integrated strategy needed to demonstrate “time-bound and costed objectives”, and emphasized that tobacco transcended the mandate and scope of labour and employment ministries. There was need for discussions to include representatives of ministries of health and finance at the national level. Tackling tobacco should be a matter of a cross-government priority, and not only for the ministry of labour. Therefore, the integrated strategy should be informed by discussions with government stakeholders, through a whole-of-government approach. The ILO was urged to consult further on the integrated strategy and apply the views from the different arms of government to inform the final document. He stated on record that, going forward, the whole-of-government approach should be reflected in the updated integrated strategy to prevent it from being implemented only by some sections of government. This could be done in two ways. First, through an evidence-based approach, where the ILO could demonstrate to member States why tobacco control should be prioritized and what benefits could be realized in terms of improvement in the livelihoods of their populations. Second, through alternative livelihoods, where the ILO could present sustainable alternative livelihoods founded on reality, taking into account various country contexts and the diverse views expressed by those attending the Meeting. The United Kingdom was committed to supporting the ILO in its work to develop and implement the integrated strategy and specifically offered to share its expertise, evidence and knowledge in the area of tobacco control.
44. The representative of the Government of Brazil observed that the main advantage of convening the Meeting in Uganda was to put the constituents in direct contact with local realities. While he could not join the field trip, he had gathered positive impressions from the Worker and Employer representatives from Brazil. The field trip reflected the importance of blending abstract concepts with on-the-ground realities for a meaningful discussion. He acknowledged the diverse views on the subject, and said that flexibility was necessary when addressing decent work deficits in light of the different country contexts. Brazil was the second largest producer and the largest exporter of tobacco, meaning the sector was significant to the country in terms of income generation and employment creation. He highlighted Brazil’s expertise in the tobacco sector and recalled that two Brazilian ambassadors had chaired the negotiations on the WHO FCTC, that the FCTC Secretariat was currently headed by a Brazilian national and that, over the years, Brazil had gained experience with PPP projects between the ILO and the industry on the elimination of child labour. Furthermore, Brazil was represented in each of the three groups in the Meeting, reflecting the importance of the sector to the tripartite constituents in the country. He observed that the fast-changing landscape required quick and effective mechanisms to adapt. He appreciated the openness and willingness of Workers and Employers, in the spirit of compromise and social dialogue, to find ways to adapt to these challenges and opportunities in the tobacco sector.
45. A representative from the WHO reiterated his Organization’s commitment to the development of the integrated strategy to address decent work deficits in the tobacco sector. Tobacco killed more than 8 million people every year and the majority of deaths occurred in low- and middle-income countries. It was also well-documented that tobacco farmers were exposed to grave chemical hazards at different stages of tobacco growing. Tobacco growers and farm workers, which often included children, were at risk of green tobacco sickness caused by respiratory and dermal absorption of nicotine from contact with tobacco leaves. Workers at tobacco manufacturing plants were also at high risk of diseases associated with exposure to and inhalation of tobacco fumes, especially where stringent workplace health and safety measures were not fully enforced. Governments had committed to reducing tobacco use through accelerated implementation of the WHO FCTC. Of particular relevance were Articles 17 and 18 on the provision of support for economically viable alternative

livelihood activities for tobacco growers and protection of the environment and health of persons. The 194 member States of the WHO had further committed themselves to reduce tobacco use by 30 per cent by 2030 and 25 per cent by 2025. The implementation of the WHO FCTC had resulted in a noticeable decline in tobacco use and the full implementation of FCTC policies would in the medium- and long-term lead to significant reduction in demand for tobacco. He also stated that except for three or four countries, all of which were in Africa, the contribution of tobacco to GDP was less than 1 per cent. Large tobacco-growing economies such as Bangladesh, Brazil and India were on track to reduce their demand for tobacco. A number of countries, including Uganda, had also shown deeper commitment to tobacco control by aligning and achieving their development objectives through greater policy coherence. This clearly required a whole-of-government approach. He further noted that in several countries the WHO, the FCTC Secretariat and UN partners had already supported governments in alternative livelihood projects and identified domestic funds through increases in tobacco taxes. These lessons were worth looking at.

46. The representative of the ECLT Foundation noted that for the past two years the Foundation had been following the ongoing debates on decent work deficits in the tobacco sector in the Governing Body of the ILO. The Foundation had the mandate to prevent and protect children from child labour in tobacco-growing areas. He emphasized the importance of collaboration with workers' organizations, companies, the ILO, as well as with communities and families. This was seen as the only viable solution to the fight against child labour. He cautioned that individual commitments and professional agendas could distract delegates from truly grasping the complexities of the issues of the Meeting. The SDGs called for greater collaboration across stakeholders. A failure to collaborate effectively would create additional barriers that would exacerbate the decent work deficits the Meeting was trying to address. He further noted that the Foundation saw securing enhanced social dialogue in tobacco-growing communities as a viable way forward.
47. The representative of the International Tobacco Growers' Association (ITGA) appreciated the invitation of tobacco growers' representatives to this Meeting since they represented the largest number of people in the sector. Despite being a majority, tobacco growers were not represented in the ILO. She noted the decrease in the number of people engaged in tobacco activities, from 100 million in 2003 to 40 million producers and workers in 2019. The tobacco industry was witnessing a fall in consumption and the emergence of new tobacco products. These transformations would inevitably lead to a fall in production, creating a challenge for the sector if viable alternatives were not found in time. The fall in production was largely affecting countries with a high dependence on the tobacco sector such as Malawi and Zimbabwe as well as other countries with socio-political and economic difficulties such as Colombia, Kyrgyzstan and parts of Europe. In all these cases, the fall or total disappearance of tobacco production had led to a significant increase in unemployment, desertification of rural areas, emigration to urban centres, and increased poverty and the inherent increase in child labour. There was an urgent need for research to identify the best transformative strategies for the tobacco market, possible consequences and potential viable diversification solutions. In order for change and sustainability in the sector to become a reality, it was necessary to ensure coordination among UN agencies, the WHO through Article 17 of the FCTC, the World Bank, civil society, producers, companies, and foundations and NGOs. The ITGA and its partners had always expressed their willingness to collaborate and hoped that the Meeting would mark a difference in this regard. She expected to see outcomes that would lead to concrete initiatives with more action in the field. She emphasized that tobacco producers operated in a legal sector with real demand and a market of more than 900 million consumers that would not just disappear overnight.
48. The representative of the IDH Sustainable Trade Initiative stated that in many developing countries wages were often below the minimum threshold to live a decent life. Workers and their families could not meet basic needs such as housing, nutritious food or education, and remained poor. In an attempt to fill the income gap, workers might work excessive overtime,

which could result in risks to their mental and physical well-being and make their families vulnerable. By receiving a living wage, workers could work their way out of poverty and provide their families with a decent standard of living. She defined a living wage and its elements and stated that IDH's role was to facilitate the implementation of a living wage in several sectors and countries by increasingly building knowledge on how each stakeholder could make informed decisions about closing the living wage gap in supply chains. Although IDH did not work directly in the tobacco sector, the lessons and knowledge gained through its extended work with plantations (tea in Malawi; bananas in Belize, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Ghana; and the flower industry in East Africa) could be used to influence and contribute to the development and implementation of the integrated strategy to promote decent work in the tobacco sector.

5. Update on the ILO's work in the tobacco sector (2003–19)

- 49.** The representatives of the Office, led by the Secretary-General, presented an update on the implementation of the outcomes of the 2003 Tripartite Meeting. The presentation was structured according to the five resolutions adopted at the 2003 Tripartite Meeting. These included: (1) future activities of the ILO in the tobacco sector; (2) strengthening of institutional links and cooperation between international organizations working on issues relevant to the sector; (3) child labour in the tobacco sector; (4) fundamental principles and rights at work in the tobacco sector; and (5) the employment of women in the tobacco sector, acknowledging that more work was needed to implement this particular resolution. The Secretary-General assured the Meeting that the Office was committed, with the support of tripartite constituents, to do more going forward to dedicate efforts for the inclusion of women and to address discrimination, violence and harassment in the workplace.
- 50.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson thanked the Office for the presentation and noted that information on important dates such as the start of PPPs with the ECLT Foundation and the JTI, which were much more relevant to the work of the Office than the FCTC, as well as the sources of resources cited, were missing. She also emphasized that it appeared from the presentation that all activities to strengthen fundamental principles and rights at work and social dialogue had been conducted under the PPPs with the JTI and the ECLT Foundation, and added that the PPPs had also played an important role in the ILO's efforts to implement the resolution on the elimination of child labour. Furthermore, the focus of the second resolution on the strengthening of institutional links and cooperation between international organizations was on consultation with social partners. This was even more important in view of the UN reform and the greater importance coordination with different UN agencies would play in the work of the ILO. However, the Office presentation had not provided any information on the engagement with social partners. She also observed that the mandate to "collect data country-by-country on employment in the tobacco sector" under the fifth resolution was not sufficiently followed up, except for the work done under the PPPs. Furthermore, the presentation did not inform the Meeting about the work in the pipeline for the four former PPP project countries and its linkages with the integrated strategy to promote decent work in the tobacco sector. The background report also did not give any information on the budget for 2019 for the former project countries, linkages of the activities with the ongoing efforts of the industry and the ILO's plan of action to coordinate with the industry going forward.
- 51.** The Worker representative of the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union (Kommunal) stated that despite the noticeable strides made by the Office to address decent work deficits in the tobacco sector since 2003, much more needed to be done to improve the living conditions of tobacco farm workers. She was not impressed by the progress made thus far, as 16 years after the 2003 Tripartite Meeting the majority of farm workers continued to experience poor

working conditions. She recognized the many useful international instruments aimed at making the lives of agricultural workers bearable, including the ILO's core Conventions and the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), and urged governments to ratify them. Having noted that tobacco was a profitable crop, she asserted that there was a strong need to tackle the challenges facing the industry, eradicate child labour and promote decent work for all workers in the world, including those in the tobacco sector.

52. The Government Vice-Chairperson described the presentation as comprehensive. He was particularly pleased that the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), was nearing universal ratification and informed the Meeting that Malawi had ratified all the ILO core Conventions.
53. The representative of the Government of Australia thanked the Office for the presentation. She noted that there were gaps, especially in relation to the employment of women in the tobacco sector, and that information on the working conditions of female workers in this sector was inadequate.
54. The Secretary-General assured the Meeting that the Office was committed to strengthening its focus and efforts on the issue of women's empowerment, particularly in the tobacco sector.
55. Another representative of the Office [M] explained that with regard to the resolution concerning the strengthening of institutional links and cooperation between international organizations, the social partners had been active in the work of National Steering Committees on Child Labour in all project countries, with a strong contribution to policy work at the national level. Furthermore, the social partners also supported the Office in the implementation of action programmes to build the capacity of their own members. Their involvement was aimed at providing support to rural communities, in partnership with district authorities and municipalities through PPPs and other projects, such as projects funded by the United States Department of Labor. The Office had also worked on the promotion of the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184).

6. Consideration of the points for discussion

56. The Meeting considered the adopted three points for discussion. The first point for discussion was informed by two panel discussions.

Point for Discussion 1: What are the prevailing decent work deficits today in the tobacco sector and what are their main drivers at national and international levels? What has worked and what more needs to be done to promote decent work in the tobacco sector including in tobacco-growing countries? How can the Office support its tripartite constituents to promote decent work in the sector?

With reference to the three pillars of the integrated strategy, that is to: (1) promote an enabling policy environment for decent work in tobacco-growing countries; (2) strengthen social dialogue; and (3) assist tobacco-growing communities to address decent work deficits, including child labour, and to transition to alternative livelihoods), the Meeting may wish to discuss:

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- (a) *what interventions by tripartite constituents have worked and what more needs to be done to promote:*
- (i) *an enabling policy environment for decent work in tobacco-growing countries;*
 - (ii) *social dialogue; and*
 - (iii) *fundamental principles and rights at work, including the elimination of child labour, occupational safety and health and other international labour standards, women's empowerment, and address issues related to wages and working conditions, social protection, productivity and increased value addition, and environmental sustainability;*
- (b) *good practices and lessons learned on the promotion of decent work from past and ongoing work in the sector.*

Panel discussion 1

Moderator: Ms Rie Vejs Kjeldgaard, Director, Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV), ILO

Panellists: Ms Annette Mpundu Chipeleme, Director of Organization and Recruitment, Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, Zambia

Mr Felix Thole, Chief Executive Officer, Tobacco Association of Malawi, Malawi

Ms Rebecca Nabwire, Principle Labour Officer, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda

- 57.** Ms Chipeleme stated that the integrated strategy should be global and systemic, as it was impossible to address decent work deficits in the tobacco sector by only focusing on local-level solutions. She supported her statement with the example of Africa, where tobacco production was mostly export-oriented and prices were not locally determined. Global players, though headquartered in developed countries, were heavily involved in the sector. Collaboration among the industry, workers and governments could create an enabling environment for social dialogue to negotiate better working conditions for workers locally and globally. Guaranteeing the full exercise of freedom of association, including for workers in the informal economy, could increase the bargaining power of workers by strengthening their collective voice. Workers should be involved in consultations from the time investment was made by companies, to allow them the opportunity to negotiate decent working conditions.
- 58.** Regarding child labour, Ms Chipeleme observed that children provided additional unpaid labour to support their family's livelihoods. She acknowledged the active role played by trade unions in the elimination of child labour. As decent work deficits were not specific to the tobacco sector, but prevalent in the broader agricultural sector, simply shifting to other crops was not the solution. She underscored the need for long-term measures for promoting decent work. This included, inter alia, a living wage and fair distribution of profits, universal social protection, social dialogue, assessment of the impact of climate change, and engagement of workers in social dialogue on tobacco industry transformations and their impact at all levels of the supply chain, both in developed and developing countries. A just transition framework for the tobacco sector should be based on the promotion of freedom of association and collective bargaining, as was concluded in the 2003 Tripartite Meeting on the tobacco sector. It should also be based on universal social protection and a social

dialogue framework to discuss the transformations along the tobacco supply chain and impacts at all levels, in the North and the South. A just transition to alternative livelihoods should ensure decent work for all workers. National development frameworks on a just transition should include discussions about alternative crops as well as prevalent agriculture models, with due consideration given to the impact of climate change, food security and sovereignty, and local value addition. Proper implementation of existing labour laws and labour inspection system reform were also required to ensure compliance.

- 59.** Mr Thole stated that the Tobacco Association of Malawi was actively involved in community-awareness programmes supported by the ILO and the ECLT Foundation to promote decent work. The annual February meetings held by the Association to discuss decent work with farming communities was cited as an example. The Association had also formed integration groups to prevent child labour and ensure that children attended school, as well as to inform communities about OSH and other labour issues. He urged that the support from the ILO, the ECLT Foundation and other partners should continue because the Association did not have the financial capacity to sustain the ongoing projects.
- 60.** Ms Nabwire stated that the Government of Uganda had put in place the necessary structure to address decent work deficits in agriculture through enabling legislation and policy, as well as trained labour inspectors. District action plans to fight child labour had been developed through social dialogue and local governments had committed to financing the action plans. However, the inability to reach isolated farm workers in rural areas remained a key challenge. A targeted policy allocating sufficient resources to the labour department to extend the reach of labour inspectors and extension officers to rural areas could be instrumental in this regard. Furthermore, as tobacco prices were predetermined with no room for negotiation, it was important to develop a price monitoring mechanism to inform social partners of fluctuations. Additionally, a strategy to enable smallholders to organize and join trade unions in order to participate in social dialogue was cited as an important dimension.

Discussion and questions to panel members

- 61.** The Employer representative of Japan Tobacco International (JTI) emphasized that production, sale as well as consumption of tobacco were legal. While prices of tobacco were generally set by governments, the discussion was equally relevant for other agricultural commodities. JTI was committed to combating child labour, in line with the United Nations *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* and the *OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises*. The ARISE programme was given as an example of a development project that, with 12 years of committed financial support from the industry, had been successful in addressing child labour in the industry. That said, child labour was merely an entry point and the company was committed to taking action to address human rights issues in its supply chains, motivated by demands of investors, consumers and employees and with continued support of governments, trade unions and the ILO. For instance, it is a participant in the OECD–FAO Project on Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains, whose baseline report interestingly presented benchmarks relevant to the resolutions of the 2003 Tripartite Meeting.
- 62.** The Employer representative of the Federation of Uganda Employers observed that child labour was endemic in the entire agricultural sector, and that it was misleading to single out the tobacco subsector. In Uganda, the level of commitment from tobacco companies on action against child labour was incomparable to any other agricultural subsector. He highlighted the memorandum of understanding with tobacco companies to address child labour as evidence.
- 63.** The Employer representative of China Enterprise Confederation (CEC) underlined the importance of social dialogue. As the representative of Chinese enterprises in the Global Compact, CEC would actively cooperate with the ministries of industry, information,

education, and human resources, to advance social protection and other corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes.

64. The Worker Vice-Chairperson observed that manufacturers were not represented on the panel. It was in his view not possible to address the structural aspects of a global issue affecting all constituents without engaging tobacco companies.
65. The Worker representative of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee of the AFL–CIO stated that even in the absence of laws guaranteeing freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining many companies in the United States had developed policies on these issues but implementation of those policies was opaque.
66. The representative of the Government of South Africa described a “just transition” as a transition to workers’ rights and not to alternative livelihoods. It emerged from the discussions that child labour existed in the agricultural sector generally and was not specific to the tobacco industry. Furthermore, the industry’s efforts to support workers had been echoed in the interactions with farmers during the field visit. Even the ILO’s presentation of progress made since 2003 did not record failures. This implied that collaboration with the industry had yielded positive results.
67. The representative of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania noted that while progress had been achieved since 2003, more needed to be done to sustain positive results and apply best practices from past projects. Furthermore, the issue of pricing was important to the tobacco sector as well as other agricultural commodities.
68. The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom cited his country’s experience in introducing taxes on tobacco products such as cigarettes. He offered to share information and expertise with the ILO to help address challenges in the tobacco sector.
69. The representative of the Government of the United States appreciated the acknowledgement of the support from the United States for the ILO’s work on gender equality and the elimination of child labour in the Office’s presentation. He then sought the view of the panellists on a continuation of industry funding for ILO interventions in the tobacco sector.
70. The representative of the Government of Zimbabwe underscored the importance of policy coherence, strengthening labour inspection systems and timely social protection services. She further noted that contract farming addressed the issue of resources by providing farmers with inputs and expertise, as well as building their capacity to address decent work deficits through awareness of labour standards.
71. The Government Vice-Chairperson stated that governments had the responsibility to provide an enabling policy environment. Malawi had made significant progress in this respect, including with the ratification of the ILO’s eight core Conventions. Informality, however, remained a challenge and required dedicated efforts.
72. Responding to the question from the representative of the Government of the United States regarding industry funding, Ms Nabwire stated that given the industry’s past positive engagement in the sector, financial support from the industry could be received as long as it promoted decent work.

General discussion

73. The Employer Vice-Chairperson stated that the background report, while listing some key challenges, had not adequately covered the progress made so far or the lessons learned for the future. The report, however, had acknowledged the importance of the private sector in the promotion of decent work, with companies demonstrating their commitment through due

diligence in their supply chains and responsible business initiatives, such as the Agricultural Labor Practices Programs (ALPs). The report had also noted the positive impact of contract farming on poverty reduction, farmers' productivity and income generation including through the adoption of good agricultural, labour and environmental practices, of traceability of production, and of transparency through audits. Separately, other organizations such as the FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT), also reported that contract farming helped farmers and buyers build mutually beneficial partnerships by ensuring market access and income for farmers as well as a stable and quality supply for buyers. The private sector commitment to improving the livelihoods of people was also expressed through industry-wide initiatives that sought to align with international labour standards and the United Nations *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*. These examples should be leveraged to increase collaboration among all constituents to maximize resources, available knowledge and expertise, as well as improving the infrastructure to enable positive change.

74. The challenge of farmers heavy reliance on informal and unpaid family labour, including child labour, was not specific to the tobacco sector, but permeated the agricultural sector in general, especially among family-run farms in developing countries. The issue was complex and warranted a holistic approach to address the root causes of child labour, including access to quality education, vocational training for young people outside the formal education system and community awareness of the effects of child labour and of children's right to education. The ARISE and ECLT Foundation programmes had successfully withdrawn children from child labour by, among others: involving local community members as anti-child labour ambassadors; creating local anti-child labour clubs; and setting up capacity-building programmes to improve the legal and conceptual understanding of child labour. The programmes recognized access to quality education, affordable childcare and afterschool programmes as key to providing children a safe space while their parents worked. They also placed emphasis on labour inspection and the proper implementation and enforcement of labour regulations.
75. She also noted that child labour was closely linked to the inadequacy of household incomes. Inadequacy of incomes in tobacco growing could be the outcome of various factors. For instance, in many cases workers only worked for a few months or weeks during the entire season, which was insufficient for their subsistence. While income from tobacco was more reliable and secure than alternative crops, it was nevertheless important to develop strategies to improve household incomes. Such strategies should include: ensuring adequate wages, working hours and periodicity of payments through laws and collective bargaining; establishing a minimum wage; generating new income opportunities for women through access to training in business and start-up capital; reforming the auction system to ensure a proper calculation system for tobacco prices free from interference of intermediate buyers, auctions and opportunistic merchants; training for farmers in agribusinesses management skills to improve productivity; and increasing access to social protection with the ILO's Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), as a key frame of reference.
76. She further observed that the ratification rates of ILO Conventions relevant to OSH, as called for in the resolutions of the 2003 Tripartite Meeting, were low among major tobacco-producing countries. Awareness raising and capacity building were key to improving OSH. As mentioned in the background report, training programmes should be underpinned by sectoral health risk assessments and corrective action plans. They should also include a strong gender component because women tobacco growers had limited or no knowledge of occupational hazards such as exposure to pesticides, sun, tobacco and the dangers of tobacco exposure during pregnancy. Furthermore, training programmes and awareness raising should be done in collaboration with rural workers' and employers' organizations to improve their outreach and reception.

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77. Regarding the strong focus on social dialogue in the integrated strategy, the background report suggested that workers, tenants and farmers faced challenges in exercising their rights at work, including freedom of association and collective bargaining. The 2003 Tripartite Meeting had already called for the proper implementation of the fundamental principles and rights at work in the sector, and the industry was strongly committed to it, in particular ensuring freedom of association. Legislative restrictions on trade union membership, such as requirements for minimum membership, minimum levels of education and minimum funds should be removed and protection against backlash for participating in unions should be guaranteed.
78. She also underscored the importance of labour inspection, proper compliance and enforcement of regulations in creating a conducive environment for decent work. Good governance and the rule of law was fundamental to all measures and strategies. Such measures were already a core part of the ECLT Foundation and other industry initiatives such as the ARISE and ALP programmes. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that measures undertaken by different stakeholders, that is, the ILO, governments and industry, were interlinked and scaled up. Funds from the Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) currently utilized by the ILO to support the ongoing work in the former PPP countries should be considered in the development of a long-term funding strategy. Employers' organizations should also be included in the development, planning and implementation of any strategy to eliminate child labour and promote decent work in the sector by the ILO or the governments because of their role as important multipliers and their trusted relationships with companies, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). She enquired if the ILO had an alternative to private sector engagement that would avoid disrupting the activities and avoid negatively impacting people on the ground.
79. The Employer representative of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP) stated that attaining the SDGs was a common goal for all parties. The tobacco industry had brought some US\$9 billion in investment to the Russian economy. In 2018, it had contributed approximately US\$1 billion to the national budget through taxes. Additionally, in 2018, the industry also accounted directly for 10,000 decent jobs and 500,000 jobs in the supply chain. The RSPP engaged with the tobacco industry as they would with any other legal industry, and it would continue to represent its interests as a member of the Governing Body of the ILO.
80. The Employer representative of Philip Morris International (PMI) stated that PMI had collective bargaining agreements in place, and that it was the first multinational company to receive certification on equal pay for work of equal value between women and men. Through contract farming, 350,000 farmers in PMI's supply chain participated in the ALP programme, while 2,600 company agricultural extension technicians carried out visits to over 300,000 farms. Ninety-eight per cent of these farms did not have child labour. He highlighted the importance of collaboration between the industry and other stakeholders such as governments, social partners and civil society, and communicated PMI's commitment in this respect.
81. The Worker Vice-Chairperson appreciated the recognition of the issue of inadequate wages by the Employer Vice-Chairperson. He recalled that at its 27th World Congress, the IUF issued a resolution entitled *Protecting the rights of tobacco farm workers (No. 24)*, which endorsed the *Call for Action on human rights in tobacco growing* by the Agricultural Workers Trade Group (AWTG) at its conference in January 2017. These called on tobacco manufacturers to ensure that workers could exercise their rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining throughout their supply chain. They also called for negotiation with independent trade unions recognized by contract farmers, access by workers' organizations to farms and farm workers, neutrality of farmers, no retaliation for workers' organizations, assurance of repercussions to any grower in violation of workers' rights, and transparency in tobacco supply chains. He emphasized that pricing and procurement policies

should support a system that allowed workers to engage in collective bargaining for fair conditions of employment, including job security, reasonable working hours, fair pay, decent accommodation, clean water and sanitation. Through collective bargaining, tenant and contract farmers in Ohio, United States, had achieved improvements both in productivity and working conditions. He called upon governments to ratify the relevant ILO Conventions, such as Convention No. 184, and enforce national laws and policies relevant to the tobacco sector.

- 82.** The Worker representative of the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union (Kommunal) noted that in many countries agricultural workers were not covered under labour law. A lack of schools and poverty had contributed to an increase in child labour in agriculture from 68 per cent to 71 per cent. Over 800,000 people went hungry on a daily basis and half of them were smallholder farmers and agricultural workers. Freedom of association and collective bargaining were the best ways to address these gaps. Furthermore, all the member States of the United Nations had adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Reaching agricultural workers was essential to achieving the SDGs.
- 83.** The Worker representative of the National Union of Co-operative Movement and Allied Workers' Union stated that awareness-raising programmes were needed to withdraw children from child labour and promote their participation in education. Despite Uganda's universal education policy, the high poverty levels in tobacco-growing communities limited the workers' financial capacity to support scholastic activities, even in communities where education facilities were available and accessible. She identified low wages and the absence of a statutory minimum wage as contributing factors to workers' inability to afford basic school supplies for their children. The Parliament of Uganda had recently passed a bill on the establishment of a Minimum Wage Board whose mandate was to conduct research on sectoral minimum wages and submit recommendations. However, a mechanism for its implementation had not yet been established, which affected rural workers adversely. She urged governments to enforce existing labour laws, increase the number of industrial relations officers, effectively implement the ILO fundamental principles and rights at work, ensure the full exercise of the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, and recognize that human rights were workers' rights.
- 84.** The Worker representative of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee of the AFL-CIO appreciated the emphasis on freedom of association, as it was also reflected in the resolutions of the 2003 Tripartite Meeting. He recalled that he had experienced resistance by employers and growers to allow workers to organize and instances of retaliation against workers for union activities. Social dialogue was important in addressing decent work deficits and could not be achieved without freedom of association and collective bargaining.
- 85.** The Worker representative of the Tobacco and Allied Workers Union of Malawi (TOAWUM) stated that he had been involved in the implementation of the ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), since 1992. It was difficult to access and organize workers in the tobacco supply chain to give effect to the full exercise of the right to freedom of association due to employers' resistance to the union's efforts to access their workers. He stated that a survey conducted in 2002 revealed that the tobacco sector could potentially organize 3,797,065 workers, but that currently only 3,464 workers were members of a union, and that only one collective bargaining agreement existed in the sector. With respect to the elimination of child labour, it was important to identify and address the root causes, such as the tenancy system in Malawi, which should be abolished by proper procedures.
- 86.** The Worker representative of the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (MCTU) highlighted some of the decent work challenges prevalent in the tobacco sector. Personal protective equipment was either not provided or inadequate. Sanitation in tobacco-growing areas was

poor and workers had no access to clean drinking water. Further, initiatives to promote alternative livelihoods were heavily dependent on landlords, who provided inputs, food and medical services to support farmers and their families. These provisions were often inadequate and could not help farmers effectively transition to alternative livelihoods. Child labour was also commonplace due to inadequate infrastructure, the absence of teachers and limited access to education facilities. Furthermore, these circumstances lead to the common practices of being forced to stay on the landlord's land and at the same time family members being used as source labour but without pay at the end of the season.

- 87.** The Worker representative of Sindicato de los Trabajadores Rurales (CONTAG) stated that in Brazil, tobacco production was mostly undertaken on family farms that would contract other farmers for additional help during the harvest season. Trade union organizations were important in Brazil, and farmers organized themselves by forming associations. Child labour was a reality, not only in tobacco growing but in the broader agricultural sector. Brazil's minimum age regulation was instrumental in advancing efforts to combat child labour. For the past 20 years many initiatives were undertaken to eliminate child labour, with the work of trade unions yielding especially positive results. Trade unions also actively participated in annual negotiations with companies about the pricing of tobacco leaf in order to maintain a constant dialogue on wages and worker remuneration.
- 88.** The Worker representative of the German Food Workers' Union NGG drew attention to the production of cigarettes. Since 2003, many major companies had closed their manufacturing units in Germany causing significant losses in jobs and income, and social structure change. The reduction in a major factory of British American Tobacco in 2016 had led to a loss of thousands of jobs. In 2019, PMI had announced the closure of its last factory in Berlin, affecting 950 workers. The situation was common in Western Europe and was predicted to spread to Eastern Europe as well. Manufacturing, commercial, business and sales workforces had also seen a headcount reduction and increase in their workload. The employers explained that these actions were based on the decline in demand for cigarettes. However, while the demand for cigarettes was decreasing, the profit made by multinational companies was on the rise. It was therefore important that the success of the tobacco industry be underpinned by secure jobs and workers' rights across supply chains. She also highlighted the situation of female workers and called upon the constituents to prioritize the rights of women workers. Women's daily contributions in tobacco fields were unpaid and treated as household work in a family business, significantly limiting their income and personal security. They also faced sexual and other forms of discrimination at work.
- 89.** The Government Vice-Chairperson was of the view that the presentation by the Office on work done pursuant to the resolutions of the 2003 Tripartite Meeting lacked qualitative analysis. The Office should also have analysed each project and outlined the achievements, responses and areas of future action. Noting the need for ratification and implementation of international labour standards, he stated that Malawi had committed to ratifying the ILO Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184); the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187); the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155); and the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930. He further noted that engagement with the industry had yielded positive results. Without prejudice to the decision not to discuss the issue of funding in the Meeting, the Government group was of the view that the Office should consider establishing a trust fund where donors and private companies could contribute to ensure sustainable financial support for the successful implementation of an integrated strategy. Proper and permanent mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that the industry contributed in a transparent manner with adequate safeguards as suggested by the Governing Body at its 334th Session. The Office was also urged to consider undertaking a gender-based analysis to better target women-specific issues in the sector. A lot remained to be done to achieve decent work and a holistic approach to addressing child labour in the tobacco sector and agriculture in general was needed.

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- 90.** The representative of the Government of Australia emphasized the need for a concrete exchange among the constituents to develop the evidence-based elements of the integrated strategy. She also suggested incorporating the gender dimension and good practices learned from country projects. She clarified that Australia did not endorse the idea of the establishment of a trust fund, and informed the Meeting that it was not a unanimous position of the Government group.
- 91.** The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom noted that it was clear from the Employers' statement that the tobacco industry was willing to support efforts to promote decent work through financial contributions to various interventions. These contributions should be formalized in the interest of protecting workers, growers and the population in general. This could be done through domestic and internationally recognized legal mechanisms, which could ensure continuity of financial support for farmers if the voluntary industry funding was withdrawn at any point. He suggested that the Office and its partners should register it as an identified need, and that the United Kingdom could share its experience in setting up regulations to raise revenue from the tobacco industry.
- 92.** The representative of the Government of Zimbabwe structured her views on the three pillars of the integrated strategy by highlighting what had worked and what had not worked. Regarding the promotion of an enabling policy environment, Zimbabwe had put in place national policies, including the Zimbabwe Decent Work Country Programme (ZDWCP), which had enabled the formulation of sector-specific policies, like the Tobacco Industry Marketing Board (TIMB) – an advisory and statutory body responsible for regulating the tobacco industry. The TIMB had the mandate to control and regulate the marketing of tobacco in Zimbabwe; promote, protect and maintain the sale of tobacco; collate statistics relating to the provision, marketing, manufacture and consumption of tobacco; and distribute market studies and information relating to the marketing, manufacture and consumption of tobacco. Through the TIMB, farmers paid levies, which in turn helped to promote CSR initiatives. Zimbabwe also had an afforestation programme that addressed environmental issues. The TIMB had been working on creating woodlots and, in 2018, 2,000 hectares of gum trees were planted. Additionally, employers and workers within the industry engaged in collective bargaining to set minimum wages and conditions of employment through the National Employment Council (NEC). In accordance with the provisions of the Labour Act (Chapter 28:01), the NEC sought to regulate matters of mutual interest to its members and promote harmonious industrial relations. Collective bargaining agreements also regulated the terms and conditions of employment within the tobacco industry. While Zimbabwe had not received much support from the ILO–International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), it had mobilized resources from the TIMB and ECLT Foundation. This reflected that it was possible to mobilize resources at the national level to promote decent work in the sector.
- 93.** In February 2019, the Government conducted a study on the existence of child labour in the tobacco industry. Zimbabwe was of the view that the Office should continue to seek funding from stakeholders interested in promoting the Decent Work Agenda. Given the number of workers employed in the tobacco industry, it was well within the ILO's mandate to engage the industry for continued support. The ILO also had a responsibility to ensure that workers were well protected in the exercise of their rights. In cases where donor funding was limited or non-existent, member States should consider pooling local resources from multiple stakeholders, as illustrated in the case of Zimbabwe.
- 94.** The representative of the Government of Brazil highlighted the importance of a strong evidence base for policymaking both at national and international levels. Evidence was key for governments and social partners to engage in effective and efficient dialogue to tackle decent work deficits in the tobacco sector. He also called on the Office to provide a deeper qualitative assessment of the work done since 2003. The information provided in the presentation by the Office was a list of actions and initiatives undertaken since the 2003

Tripartite Meeting, but it offered limited insight into areas where improvements could be made. The background report also acknowledged this lack of sufficient data for a thorough analysis of policies and actions to promote decent work in the tobacco sector. The Office should therefore undertake further evidence-based work to map out relevant decent work-related challenges and opportunities in agriculture in general and in the tobacco sector in particular.

- 95.** The representative of the Government of South Africa supported the positions by various Government representatives on issues related to policy coherence, social dialogue and the promotion of the fundamental principles and rights at work. He suggested that actors in the tobacco sector should consider setting up a “Tobacco Indaba”, similar to the Mining Indaba, to provide a platform for industry leaders, governments and social partners to discuss issues affecting the industry. Such a platform was especially timely as the tobacco industry was going through a transition period.
- 96.** The representative of the Government of Canada emphasized the importance of women’s empowerment and gender equality. Women faced specific issues such as gender-based violence, sexual harassment and discrimination in the context of decent working conditions. The Office should therefore adopt a gender-based approach when developing national programmes for decent work to include, for example, a gender-based analysis of the expected effects of the initiatives on women farmers. He further clarified that Canada did not support the creation of a trust fund as mentioned by the Government Vice-Chairperson.
- 97.** The Chairperson, in accordance with article 4.7 of the Standing Orders, presented his views to the Meeting. He was of the opinion that the discussion thus far had been limited to addressing decent work deficits in tobacco growing, despite the fact that decent work deficits existed across the tobacco supply chain. Furthermore, the issue of livelihoods was not limited to developing countries. The information provided by the Worker representative of European Employees Council and British American Tobacco emphasized factory closures and declining employment in the industry in western parts of Europe. He sought information on mechanisms for the creation of alternative jobs and means of household income for those laid off in that process. He also reiterated the need for evidence-based policymaking to address decent work deficits in the tobacco industry. The Meeting constituted a part of the effort to provide the evidence necessary to address decent work deficits in the tobacco industry. In his view, the Office had only presented a list of interventions undertaken without touching upon the impact of those interventions in reducing decent work deficits on the ground.
- 98.** A representative of the Office provided additional information on the ILO’s engagement with the private sector. The current ILO Development Cooperation budget of US\$600 million, which constituted nearly 45 per cent of the overall ILO budget, and which was used for technical assistance and support to member States and constituents at the country level, was financed by a multiplicity of partners, including the private sector. The ILO was also working with the private sector through various interventions. The financial contribution of the private sector accounted for roughly 5 per cent of development cooperation, of which the tobacco industry accounted for 9 per cent.
- 99.** A representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) urged governments and other intergovernmental organizations to ensure transparency when it came to contracts between the tobacco industry and growers to prevent marginalization of workers in the production cycle. That meant putting in place a fair and independent leaf quality (or grade) arbiter to ensure that contracts were enforced and quality concerns were not used to justify not purchasing tobacco produced by contracted farmers. Additionally, governments should establish and implement health-care protocols focused on threats to the health of tobacco growers. Health surveillance systems and policy-oriented research should be prioritized to study the health risks associated with tobacco growing and identify preventive and curative

measures. Existing personal protective equipment should be revisited and adequately updated. The efforts to eliminate child labour should be enhanced through legal and administrative measures, the promotion of education, social inclusion of children in tobacco-growing areas and adequate wages for farmers to discourage the use of unpaid family and child labour. State Parties to the FCTC were also reminded of their obligation to implement Article 5.3 (on protection of public health policies with respect to tobacco control from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry) and Article 13 (on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship), along with their corresponding guidelines. They should also avoid using CSR strategies and front groups funded by the tobacco industry to support interventions to address decent work deficits including child labour in tobacco-growing communities.

- 100.** The representative of the Government of South Africa sought clarity from the representative of the WHO on whether the FCTC or the Model Policy for Agencies of the United Nations System on Preventing Tobacco Industry Interference was binding on the member States.
- 101.** The representative of the WHO responded that while the FCTC was binding on member States who were Party to it, including South Africa, the Model Policy was not.
- 102.** The representative of the Government of Namibia sought clarity on whether Article 13 of the FCTC prevented tobacco companies from addressing decent work deficits through their CSR programmes and raised concerns about policy incoherence if that was the case. He inquired about limitations posed on the Office in terms of its collaboration with interested partners and accepting resources needed to pursue its mandate to address decent work deficits in the tobacco sector.
- 103.** The representative of the Government of South Africa observed that the WHO's relationship with the ILO and other UN agencies was not based on the FCTC but on the Model Policy. As such, it was the responsibility of the State Parties to the FCTC, and not the ILO, to defend their positions both in terms of obligations to their labour markets and their membership to the ILO. The WHO presentation had given the impression that the signatories to the FCTC were not allowed to engage with the tobacco industry. Statements concerning labour standards in the tobacco sector and the agricultural sector more generally were beyond the WHO's mandate of public health.
- 104.** The representative of the WHO agreed with the representative of the Government of South Africa that the obligation was not on the ILO but on member States who must ensure that public health authorities were insulated from the commercial interests of the tobacco industry.
- 105.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson raised objections to certain tweets by representatives of the WHO linking the Meeting with FCTC policy. She also emphasized that decent work deficits in tobacco-growing communities in many countries would be far worse without the work done by the tobacco industry under their CSR policies. Member States were responsible for ensuring that health policies protected citizens from the influences of tobacco and other substances, but it was also important to acknowledge the significant amount of work being done through CSR policies.
- 106.** The Chairperson reminded delegates and participants that they were free to tweet as long as it did not misrepresent the proceedings of the Meeting.
- 107.** The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom stated that, as a signatory to the FCTC, his Government was prohibited from engaging profitably with the tobacco industry. Any engagement with the industry was to be made public, with minutes of the relevant discussions provided as a matter of public record. Relevant provisions prohibited government authorities from receiving funding from the tobacco industry, and it was for this

reason that his Government would not support the proposed trust fund as such a fund would breach the FCTC. He instead proposed that systems should be put in place to collect such funds through legislation.

108. The Workers' group Secretary pointed out that the issue under discussion was not on the Meeting's agenda. He suggested that note was taken of the WHO's position, and that the Meeting return to the items on the agenda.
109. The Chairperson clarified that anything related to tobacco could be discussed even if it was not specifically on the agenda. It was clear that the FCTC had an impact on the nature of the interventions that could be made by governments and the ILO. The contribution made by the WHO was therefore relevant for the exchange of views. The Meeting was not going to take any decisions. It was meant to be an exchange of views on the further implementation and development of the integrated strategy.
110. The representative of the Government of Namibia asked if WHO Conventions were to be ratified in their entirety as was the case with ILO Conventions, or if member States had the liberty to be signatories to particular Articles in WHO Conventions.
111. The representative of the Government of South Africa noted the views of the representative of the Government of the United Kingdom as an example of balancing the State's obligations under the FCTC with its engagement with the tobacco industry. Setting up a voluntary and transparent trust fund as proposed could also address the issue of safeguards.
112. The representative of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania found the WHO statements on the ILO's engagement with the industry unacceptable in light of the distinct mandates, limitations and boundaries of the two organizations. Citing the example of the discussion on safeguards to industry funding, he was of the view that the Governing Body of the ILO, and not the Meeting, was the right forum to discuss the issues the WHO had raised.
113. The Worker Vice-Chairperson referenced the Workers' group's proposal made in their opening statement to ensure the participation of tobacco workers and trade unions in relevant meetings of the WHO FCTC. He stated that the Workers' voice was missing in that dialogue and it was important that worker issues were addressed in negotiations on tobacco control and crop diversification.

Panel discussion 2

Moderator: Mr Wellington Chibebe, Deputy Secretary-General

Panellists: Ms Juliet Kutwabwana, Organizing and Education Secretary/Youth Representative, National Union of Co-operative Movement and Allied Workers' Union, Uganda

Ms Siyama Kemidisha, former child labourer, Uganda

Mr Eddie Wambewo, Programme Coordinator, Uganda Women's Effort to save Orphans (UWESO)

) Mr Edward Tome, Director, Zimbabwe National Farmers' Union, Zimbabwe

Mr Jose Enrique Espinoza Peña, Viceministro del Trabajo para Asuntos de Zona Franca Ministerio del Trabajo, Nicaragua

Ms Jane Bimungi, tobacco farmer, Uganda

Ms Margret Ogowa, tobacco farmer, Uganda

Mr Sabbiri Akibar, former child labourer, Uganda

- 114.** Ms Kutwabwana observed that one of the reasons for the persistent decent work deficits in the tobacco sector was the suppression of freedom of association. Child labour and low wages were compounded by the absence of the right to collective bargaining and the challenges faced by trade unions to organize workers. There was stark disparity in prevalent wages of farmers compared to workers in the tobacco sector. Farmers earned in excess of 53 million Ugandan shillings (UGX) and workers a meagre UGX600,000 per farming season. Workers were not able to send their children to school so, instead, children worked on farms to supplement the family income. Trade union activities and collective bargaining should therefore be encouraged to bring about fundamental change in the sector. She called for a comprehensive action-oriented strategy to achieve this.
- 115.** Mr Wambewo stated that 69 per cent of the population of Uganda was mainly engaged in subsistence agriculture. The workforce was characterized by informality, limited access to labour rights and extension services, and inadequate occupational safety and health services. There were no land rights in agriculture and child labour was almost 99 per cent compared to other sectors. High levels of illiteracy, long working hours for both children and adults, and the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS on the farms were some of the issues that needed urgent attention.
- 116.** Ms Kemidisha, a former child labourer, described her transition from child labour to tailoring, a skill she had learnt through vocational training with the help of the social partners. Through her tailoring skills, she was now earning UGX10,000 per day, which was enough to take care of herself and her family. She appealed to the social partners to help other children escape the scourge of child labour.
- 117.** Mr Tome stated that in Zimbabwe, tobacco farmers had provided accommodation, education, health services, water and food to their workers. They had also built schools and clinics and provided scholarships for workers' children. Through their CSR policies, the tobacco industry had been complementing governmental efforts by financing free technical extension services in tobacco as well as other crops. Industry support for a robust education policy had also helped reduce child labour. The country also had labour laws to ensure minimum wages for workers, full exercise of the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, and a zero tolerance policy regarding child labour.
- 118.** Mr Espinoza Peña stated that in Nicaragua, child labour was prevalent in many sectors, including the tobacco sector. The Government had aggressively been fighting child labour through educational programmes and community engagement with families. It had also put in place a strong legal framework and ratified most of the ILO Conventions. He called for permanent technical assistance to the social partners on OSH and other labour-related issues as well as to build the capacity of labour inspectors.
- 119.** Ms Bimungi observed that women were being empowered through various interventions, including technical and vocational training at the grass roots level. Village Saving Associations, with 90 per cent female membership, enabled women to borrow money from the Government for investment and improvement in their standard of living, at 0 per cent interest. She also acknowledged the progress made in terms of women's representation in government structures.

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- 120.** Ms Ogowa stated that while she grew crops for consumption, such as cassava and rice, tobacco was more viable commercially, generating much higher income than other crops. Income from tobacco farming had enabled her to afford higher education for her children.
- 121.** Mr Akibar, a former child labourer now training to become a teacher, stressed the need to strengthen agricultural research, access to critical farm inputs, and access to low interest agricultural loans to increase agricultural productivity. Strategies to fight child labour and youth unemployment should also build the capacity of young people through financial literacy and project management as well as provide them with start-up capital.

Follow-up discussion

- 122.** The Worker representative of the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union (Kommunal), having mentioned a recent report on the tobacco sector in Zimbabwe, requested more information from Mr Tome about child labour in this sector in his country. She also mentioned that the High Commissioner for Human Rights had requested the Government and tobacco companies to respond to reports of massive exposure of workers and children to pesticides and hazardous substances in tobacco-growing communities.
- 123.** The representative of the Government of Uganda stated that Uganda had a specialized department that handled OSH matters. The question was how to reach workers at the community and workplace levels and help them organize.
- 124.** The representative of the Government of the United States sought qualitative and quantitative information on measures undertaken to address the decent work issues that had been highlighted. He sought an explanation of the means and methods being used to withdraw children from child labour. He also asked for information about the specific areas in the integrated strategy that could promote the empowerment of women in the tobacco and agricultural sectors.
- 125.** The Employer representative of the Association of Tanzania Employers stated that they had put in place best management standards at the workplace, which included the elimination of child labour. The Government had developed a code of agricultural labour practices, with measurable standards on forced labour, child labour and safe working conditions, among others, which had been adopted unanimously and disseminated by the private sector. Furthermore, the Association rewarded companies that excelled in responsible business conduct, quality productivity and innovation, employee engagement, reducing non-communicable diseases and HIV/AIDS, and OSH. It also promoted the payment of social security contributions by all companies, including those in the agricultural sector. However, the sector still experienced decent work deficits. She stressed that the industry was keen to work with the social partners to promote decent work.
- 126.** The Employer representative of the Zambia Federation of Employers stated that Zambia was a signatory to the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and had set up a national steering committee to fight child labour in the country. The national steering committee had since expanded its responsibilities to cover all aspects of decent work in the country in line with the Decent Work Agenda. He acknowledged the presence of decent work deficits, especially in rural agricultural communities. The Federation was involved in awareness-raising campaigns on child labour through workshops and community engagement encouraging workers to send their children to school. Where government schools were far from the farming blocks, commercial farmers had been encouraged to build schools within the farming communities, and the Government, through the Ministry of Education, had been engaged to provide teachers. He stated that the policy environment in Zambia was well-developed and promoted freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining while guaranteeing social protection for workers and the observation of minimum

OSH standards by employers. The Federation was also reaching out to small-scale farmers to sensitize them about social protection and OSH.

- 127.** The Worker representative of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) observed that the field trip did not provide a balanced perspective on the situation in the sector because it did not involve workers. While much had been said about the profitability of tobacco, the field trip did not provide any insights into the lack of respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, low wages and benefits, price negotiation challenges and limited access to social protection from the perspective of workers.
- 128.** The Worker representative of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee of the AFL–CIO observed that child labour was closely linked to the issue of wages. Unless there was a replacement of the income that led to child labour use in the first place, the problem would continue. He asked the panellists whether they were aware of the minimum wage in their countries.
- 129.** The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom inquired about the duration of the tobacco farming season in Uganda and sought suggestions from the panellists for improving future field trip planning.
- 130.** Responding to the interventions, Mr Tome addressed the question from the Worker representative of the IUF by stating that the report she referred to lacked credibility, because it was conducted without the participation of the Government, farmers and key stakeholders in Zimbabwe. He noted that pesticide control was well regulated by the TIMB, a regulatory body for the tobacco sector, which held quarterly meetings to review pesticides, fertilizers and chemical use. There had been a deliberate shift from using purple-level chemicals to green-level chemicals. Good agricultural practices and clinics in tobacco farming areas, built by tobacco companies and the Government, and employing well-trained agronomists, also contributed to the mitigation of chemical poisoning, including by providing training on the safe use of chemicals and fertilizers. Additionally, the Minimum Wage Act ensured that all workers were adequately compensated, irrespective of the sector. He reiterated that Zimbabwe had addressed 90 per cent of its child labour problem and had not recorded any child labour-related cases in the recent past. Successful efforts in eliminating child labour were facilitated by a robust education policy, which was complemented by industry support of children’s education. The Government had also established a women’s empowerment policy to build women’s capacity to lead agricultural production businesses.
- 131.** Mr Wambewo, in response to the representative of the Government of the United States, noted that between 2013 and 2019, the Uganda Women’s Effort to save Orphans (UWESO), with support from the ECLT Foundation, had managed to withdraw 5,997 children from child labour and integrate them into schools. Another 26,000 children had been identified for withdrawal from child labour between 2019 and 2021. Through school hygiene and sanitation programmes, the UWESO had also managed to build toilets and provide sanitary pads to 3,200 girls.
- 132.** Ms Kutwabwana observed that one way to address decent work deficits was to promote freedom of association and strengthen trade unions and their activities. She noted that tobacco workers had no trade union representation in labour disputes. The practice of direct dealing was also unfair to the workers because it allowed the employer to set prices and wages without trade union involvement. There was a need for trade unions to be engaged at all levels, as provided for in Article 34 of the Plantations Convention, 1958 (No. 110). Furthermore, in the absence of minimum wage legislation and tripartism in wage determinations in Uganda, workers were at a disadvantage in wage negotiations. Trade unions should therefore be recognized and represented at the negotiating table. She stated that the tobacco farming season in Uganda lasted eight months, and suggested that future field trips should consider a random selection of farms to be visited.

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- 133.** Ms Kemidisha acknowledged the various groups engaged in savings and loans initiatives and stated that one of them had recruited her, trained her in tailoring and provided her with a sewing machine. She expressed gratitude to the UWESO for providing her with the toolkits she used.
- 134.** Ms Bimungi requested more support for skills training for women and market access for the goods they produce. She stated that training programmes should cover different aspects, including primary health care, which was critical to ensure household hygiene.

Closing statements on Point for Discussion 1

- 135.** The Workers' group Secretary stated that they were a small but representative group, with delegates from four different continents who had brought their knowledge and expertise from all parts of the tobacco supply chain. He emphasized that this knowledge was neither theoretical nor academic. A majority of the members of the Workers' group were former child labourers who had been subjected to violations of their rights and discrimination when they entered the job market. They were the voice of millions of workers, brothers and sisters and their children, who worked long, hard hours, lived in poverty, continued to be victimized, abused, discriminated against and even sexually harassed at work.
- 136.** When the ILO Governing Body discussed the outcomes of the 2003 Tripartite Meeting, its members referred to this meeting as one of the most successful and productive in the history of ILO sectoral meetings. The conclusions and five resolutions jointly represented a real framework for the integrated strategy to eliminate decent work deficits in tobacco. The Governing Body authorized the Director-General to communicate the decisions: (a) to governments, requesting them to communicate these texts to the employers' and workers' organizations; (b) to the international employers' and workers' organizations and the other international organizations concerned. The industry had demonstrated a commitment to be the best in the field and become an example to others. The success of the meeting was celebrated in the hope that it would open a new page in the history of industrial relations. It was hoped that the decisions would guide the industry towards a fundamental change in its approach to social dialogue, worker's rights recognition, and the removal of obstacles for workers to exercise those rights.
- 137.** Nevertheless, these hopes had not been realized. The industry had focused on developing a long list of projects instead of serious engagement in the development of a socially responsible industrial relations system. The projects could produce positive effects, albeit short term, but they could also have the negative impact of creating long-term dependency on external funding. In essence, the project-based approach to addressing decent work deficits could not guarantee long-term benefits. That was why, after 16 years, the Meeting could still not find common ground beyond the failing of the tobacco sector to create decent working and living conditions for its workers.
- 138.** The 2003 Tripartite Meeting called for the development of social dialogue at all levels, but the tobacco industry failed to promote it. The IUF had managed to establish systems of relations with a number of global companies in food, drinks and tourism, but there was not a single example from the tobacco sector. The Meeting of Experts to Adopt Policy Guidelines for the Promotion of Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Targeting the Agro-food Sectors in September 2016 had not achieved a result, which was another failure in the implementation of the 2003 recommendations. He thanked the Office for providing statistics on the global pace of ratification of the Conventions referred to in 2003 as relevant to the tobacco sector, including Convention No. 184. Taking into account the extremely low rate of ratification of these Conventions by tobacco-growing African countries, he requested an overview on how Conventions were being promoted in East Africa so that, in the absence of

ratification, a clarification could be sought from the ILO on whether governments had requested support in preparation for ratification and whether such support was provided.

- 139.** He recalled the stories told in the Meeting that had illustrated the miserable circumstances of workers. He drew attention to how workers tried to claim their fundamental human rights, and how the whole system worked to deny them access to these fundamental human rights. He also recalled the positive stories about how genuine social dialogue and workers' empowerment changed the realities on the ground. The change that took place in Europe was not attained through CSR policies, projects and certifications, but rather as a result of workers' unionization, collective action and genuine social dialogue. This was what was needed for the tobacco sector, which, through collective bargaining with independent and democratic workers' organizations, had all the required financial tools to establish decent income levels for workers. He expressed the wish that in 16 years' time another meeting discussing decent work deficits in this sector would not be necessary.
- 140.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson responded to the Workers' group Secretary by stating that there was a need to distinguish between different actors in the tobacco sector when talking about social dialogue and the right to collective bargaining. It was true that decent work deficits were prevalent among smallholder farmers, but that was not necessarily the case at the factory level and in large farms where significant improvements had been achieved with regard to union representation and OSH. She refuted the narrative that there was no freedom of association in the sector by giving the example of Philip Morris International, where up to 70 per cent of workers had been unionized. She argued that the tobacco industry was far ahead of other sectors in terms of OSH standards, standards of pay and working conditions.
- 141.** The Employer representative of the Organizzazione Interprofessionale Tabacco Italia shared Italy's experience in addressing decent work deficits in tobacco. Their three-pronged approach included first, market organization, and second, the protection of workers through national and local collective labour agreements. These included the Agriculture Quality Labour Network (AQLN); the 2016 law on illegal recruitment (*caporalato* law); the Code of Good Agricultural Labour Practices in the Tobacco Sector (ALP); and the Rules and restrictions for the use of pesticides in tobacco cultivation. Third, Italy's tripartite approach ensured that farmers' associations, leaf buyers' associations, workers' unions and the Italian Government were continuously aligned on good agricultural labour practices and on protecting the health of farmers and workers. He added that the Code of Good Agricultural Labour Practices in the Tobacco Sector included seven pillars, including child labour, remuneration and working hours, fair treatment of workers, no forced labour, safe work environment, freedom of association and compliance with the law.
- 142.** The Employer representative of Japan Tobacco International (JTI) informed the Meeting that trade unions had accused the JTI of cherry-picking labour standards by focusing only on child labour. She challenged this by saying that after directly contracting 4,314,000 tobacco growers, the company had realized that child labour was endemic in agriculture, and had therefore taken actions to address it urgently and as an entry point for advancing labour rights more broadly. She stated that the JTI had since been able to include all aspects of the fundamental principles and rights at work in their contracts with growers, and that the company collaborated with the social partners to respond to violations in a meaningful way. She indicated that more than 350,000 community members were able to tell the difference between child work and child labour which had not been the case when they started intervening in the fight against child labour. Even though more than 55,000 children had successfully been withdrawn from child labour, more could be done. She reiterated JTI's willingness to engage with the social partners to find solutions to decent work deficits in tobacco.
- 143.** The Government Vice-Chairperson acknowledged that employment, and in particular rural employment, was critical for inclusive growth, sustainable development and decent jobs. He

noted that decent work challenges were multifaceted, and included limited access to services, infrastructure, social protection, lack of economies of scale, technology, markets and inputs, high production costs, poor agri-management skills, and environmental factors. The agricultural sector was the largest employer in most countries and was characterized by informality and long working hours. Addressing decent work deficits required concerted efforts by the Office and the social partners.

- 144.** Key learning points had emerged from the panel discussions and the plenary sessions. These spoke of the need for a greater focus on the promotion of workers' rights, including freedom of association and collective bargaining, safe work environments, improved occupational safety and health, and a living wage. A sectoral minimum wage was part of the solution, but it was not without its own challenges, which required honest engagement in effective social dialogue and collective bargaining mechanisms to resolve. The examples and insights of former child labourers highlighted the need to pursue vocational training to bridge the gap between child labour and decent work. Infrastructure and community development, and in particular school infrastructure, health-care systems and personnel, and the provision of extension services to tobacco-growing communities, had a lasting impact on the lives of workers and their families.
- 145.** He further called on governments to focus on providing enforceable legal frameworks that protect workers' right to collective bargaining and guarantee freedom of association and social dialogue in the workplace. He recognized the genuine concerns raised about inadequate labour inspection services and the enforcement of existing laws, and called on social partners to work with government to develop sufficient human resources. It was clear from the discussions thus far that child labour was an ongoing issue, and that it should be pursued actively to meet the 2025 target for the elimination of child labour and the 2030 target for the elimination of forced labour. He informed that Malawi had taken significant steps to eliminate child labour with a launch of the Decent Work Country Programme, the National Action Plan, the draft policy on child labour and the recent steps towards abolishing tenancy labour.
- 146.** The representative of the Government of Namibia observed that everyone agreed on the importance of the tobacco sector to the economy and that decent work deficits were still a challenge. With a common purpose of enforcing labour standards, almost all States in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) had ratified the ILO core Conventions, including the fundamental principles and rights at work. He stressed that international labour standards assisted governments, employers and workers in the tobacco value chain to address decent work deficits. It would be unfair to the millions of people employed in the tobacco industry to think that the sector would disappear in the next 50 to 100 years.
- 147.** The representative of the Government of South Africa stated that despite the existence of decent work deficits, the reality was that millions of workers were employed across the tobacco supply chain, and that it remained an important commodity for many countries. As was the case in any other sector, it was true that challenges existed. He noted that the funding issue was a central theme in all the discussions thus far and was key to any conclusive integrated strategy. It was also clear that child labour was not specific to tobacco, but that it was an agriculture-wide problem. He reiterated that a just transition was not a transition to alternative livelihoods, but a transition to respecting the rights of workers in the tobacco sector. There was a need for the integrated strategy to place emphasis on the gender dimension and to highlight the plight of women in the agricultural sector. He stated that the ILO should defend and protect its mandate of social justice and decent work within the multilateral system. He urged the Office to lead the way in implementing a human-centred approach grounded in the actual needs of its constituents.
- 148.** The representative of the Government of Zimbabwe stated that in direct response to the Human Rights Watch (HRW) report on child labour in Zimbabwe, in February 2019, her

Government conducted a child labour survey and committed to share the results with the Office for a good understanding of the realities in Zimbabwe. It was worrying to her that an organization such as HRW conducted a survey using unorthodox means, without due regard to proper research methods and data collection. The report lacked validity and reliability and was statistically not representative of the population. The Government had already communicated their concerns to HRW. She added that Zimbabwe, through an Act of Parliament, had established the National Social Security Authority (NSSA), which was run by a tripartite body to raise awareness on the use and application of pesticides in agriculture. In addition, the Zimbabwe Health and Safety Council was responsible for OSH-related issues in the agricultural sector.

Point for Discussion 2: What strategies have worked to support tobacco-growing communities to transition to viable alternative livelihoods? How can the ILO, other UN agencies and development partners support tripartite constituents in this respect?

The Meeting may wish to discuss:

- (i) case studies on promoting economic diversification, finding alternative markets for non-traditional agricultural exports and triggering productive transformation for rural development;*
- (ii) rapid assessment interventions for crop diversification and viable alternative livelihoods; and*
- (iii) the role of the ILO, other UN agencies and development partners as well as other key stakeholders representing smallholder farmers to promote transition to viable alternative livelihoods.*

General discussion

- 149.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson, having noted that the issue of alternative livelihoods was not a new topic, stated that it might be the most challenging part of the integrated strategy, whose aim was to make households more resilient and economically empowered and reduce their economic reliance on tobacco. In view of the fact that in most places tobacco was the most profitable crop for farmers, diversification strategies should consider market dynamics in order to protect farmers and workers from unintended consequences. She observed that transitioning to alternative livelihoods required skills and technologies necessary to switch to other crops; access to financial services to enable investment in other activities such as livestock keeping; access to markets for new products; off-farm job-creating opportunities; entrepreneurship training; and physical and virtual access to nearby economic centres. Approaches to alternative livelihoods should provide tobacco farmers with a complete range of support and services - from training and market education to market access. However, experience had shown that there was no “one-size-fits-all” approach. Each approach should be adapted to the local context, taking into account political, economic and environmental factors.
- 150.** She stressed that some tobacco farmers had highly diversified farms, growing other crops alongside or in rotation with tobacco. Crop diversification was important for food security, preservation of soil health and farmers’ economic resilience. Through contract farming, the industry managed to facilitate greater transparency regarding labour conditions on farms, helped farmers improve their businesses and promoted crop diversification. To ensure the efficient use of resources and avoid duplication it was important to acknowledge initiatives already under way with financial support from the industry and other actors. A more detailed

mapping of these initiatives would be an important input for the integrated strategy. Cooperation with the industry remained key to ensuring the complementarity of the approach. Efforts of the integrated strategy should not restrict the industry's existing support to farming communities because doing so could exacerbate poverty. There was evidence that crop diversification efforts were more successful when all relevant actors - government and farmers' organizations, international organizations, local and international development partners, and the private sector - were involved.

- 151.** Governments, international organizations and the private sector should provide support to tobacco farmers to help them maximize their production and use less land for tobacco so more could be used for alternative crops that ensure food security and generate additional sources of income. There was a need to develop an enabling environment for doing business in line with labour market needs. This included dynamic and flexible labour markets, access to finance, easy and non-bureaucratic ways of setting up a business, modern infrastructure, and education and training systems. This was even more urgent in view of the many tobacco-growing countries who were experiencing rapid population growth and high numbers of young women and men entering the labour market. Without determined efforts to improve the business environment, the chances of creating decent job opportunities inside and outside agriculture would be slim. Many UN organizations had a role to play to support growth, development and employment creation. Besides the ILO, the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, the FAO, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and other multilateral organizations should coordinate their efforts. The UN reform process was a good platform to improve coordination at the national level.
- 152.** An Employer representative from Philip Morris International (PMI) observed that tobacco was the crop of choice for farmers, and that crop diversification should not simply mean crop replacement. Crop diversification should be about food security and a means for a just transition to alternative livelihoods. For this to be possible, support and services such as technical assistance, supply of quality inputs, in-country infrastructure and access to new markets should be made available to farmers. He explained that for several years his company had been supporting smallholder farmers in growing food crops alongside tobacco. The overwhelming majority of them were doing it for their own consumption, but for some it was an additional source of income. The company was exploring possibilities to facilitate market access for surplus food crops produced by tobacco growers by leveraging the infrastructure and logistics already in place. This was even more important in the context of the reduction of global demand for tobacco and the transformation of the industry, which would bring new challenges for farmers in certain areas. He recalled that the Decent Work Agenda and the SDGs should be plans of action for people that leave no one behind. Success was only possible through transparent and accountable cooperation involving governments, workers, employers, international organizations and development partners.
- 153.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson disagreed with the Employer Vice-Chairperson's earlier assertions that major strides had been made since 2003 in addressing decent work deficits in the tobacco sector. He also noted that most farmers were already highly diversified. For example, farmers in North Carolina, United States, grew 30 different crops on the same farm, but tobacco generated the highest revenue, especially for independent family farms. In suggesting the way forward for tobacco, he referred to the negotiations of the 1980s, where the wages of workers were directly linked to the profitability of the family farms on which they were employed. He suggested that such a model could help workers earn decent wages through social dialogue, freedom of association and collective bargaining across the tobacco supply chain. The approach would allow for a fair distribution of gains across the supply chain and could assist in addressing some of the more elusive social problems beyond wages. In the United States, for instance, this was used to address decent work issues such as child labour and housing for workers.

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- 154.** A Worker representative from Malawi stated that he had observed improvements in his country with regard to social dialogue and decent work conditions in areas where the ECLT Foundation and the ILO had interventions. These interventions included access to savings and loans, non-farm income-generating activities and the construction of schools. He urged social partners to scale up the projects to the rest of the 18 districts in the country.
- 155.** The Government Vice-Chairperson observed that the issue of alternative livelihoods was very complex and that members of the Government group had diverse views. Some thought this was not the right time to discuss alternative livelihoods. Others believed that in view of the possibility of a sharp decline in tobacco demand the discussion was timely. Another group was of the view that farmers were seeking to maximize their production and incomes, and that they would switch automatically to another crop when they found a more profitable alternative.
- 156.** The Government Vice-Chairperson, speaking in his national capacity, said that in the case of Malawi, there were no strategies that had successfully supported tobacco-growing communities to transition to viable alternatives. The Government was aware that tobacco was a vulnerable crop, especially following the adoption of the FCTC. A number of alternative crops had been tried. However, in the absence of market access and competitive prices, promoting alternative crops was not a viable strategy. He argued that the promotion of alternative livelihoods was beyond the ILO's mandate, which was to promote social justice. He therefore suggested that the focus of the Meeting should be on the exchange of views towards enriching the strategy for addressing decent work deficits in tobacco growing.
- 157.** The representative of the Government of South Africa referred to the issue of alternative livelihoods as an issue to be considered in the near future, especially for developing countries, because most of the successful case studies originated from high-income countries. The subject required more information and research. Crop diversification was not crop replacement and efforts aimed at diversifying economic activities should take into account market dynamics.
- 158.** The representative of the Government of Italy shared examples of good practices in the tobacco industry in Italy and Europe, which included adherence to global goals and labour standards. Tobacco farmers were entrepreneurs who grew tobacco as a business. The industry was highly organized and capable of resolving labour issues through tripartite mechanisms. He requested the Office to circulate the documents that formed the basis of his intervention to the Meeting delegates as well as to the Governing Body.
- 159.** The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom urged the ILO, the WHO and other UN agencies to raise awareness about the importance of crop diversification and its benefits to farmers. There was a need to invest in research on viable alternative livelihoods, but governments struggled to do this by themselves. He called for in-depth studies aimed at assessing the impact of interventions that combined experts from academia, civil society and farming communities, as opposed to the current rapid assessment interventions whose outcomes had limited impact on families and the wider community. The ILO and other UN agencies should work in their multilateral capacities, as a whole, contributing their expertise, resources and mandates, for a coherent mechanism to deliver functional standards, models and interventions for viable alternative livelihoods in tobacco-growing communities.
- 160.** The representative of the Government of Uganda noted that tobacco farmers were already growing different crops, and that her Government had put in place programmes to assist them with some of the inputs. However, there were no pricing and marketing mechanisms in place to enable farmers to sell their produce at competitive prices. She highlighted the role of governments in facilitating market access for alternative crops and regulating their pricing to compete with tobacco. In that way, farmers would be incentivized to transition from tobacco to alternative crops knowing that they would earn just as much.

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- 161.** The representative of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania stated that there were no alternative crops to tobacco and none of the social partners had evidence to suggest that it was possible to transition to alternative crops, except for isolated cases of farmers practicing mixed farming. Tobacco was cheap to grow with a good return compared to alternative crops.
 - 162.** The representative of the Government of Brazil acknowledged that the issue of alternative livelihoods was a complex one, which was why Article 17 of the FCTC, covering the subject of alternative livelihoods, was the least implemented Article of the FCTC. He called for more research on viable strategies to alternative livelihoods and highlighted the trade barriers in high-income countries as part of the problem.
 - 163.** The representative of the Government of Zimbabwe asserted that the ILO should not be an advocate of alternative livelihoods but a champion of social justice and decent work through the provision of guidelines and standards. Farming was a business and farmers always chose crops that would give them the highest return. They would naturally shift to alternative crops if it made business sense. She urged the ILO to focus on its standard-setting mandate.
 - 164.** The representative of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo stated that tobacco was an important source of livelihood to most people in his country, especially in rural areas. There were no crops in tobacco-growing communities which could compete with tobacco in terms of income generation. He called for more funding to address existing decent work deficits.

Follow-up discussion

- 165.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson sought clarity from the Employers' group on their earlier assertion that the Workers' group was painting an inaccurate picture of the prevailing conditions in the industry.
- 166.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson stated that their statement was a reaction to the Workers' group's claim that there was no freedom of association in the sector and that no progress had been made towards decent work conditions since 2003. The allegations stood rejected as per the previous responses.
- 167.** The Workers' group Secretary clarified that their earlier statement neither said nor implied that there was a complete absence of progress in addressing decent work challenges in the sector. It did, however, point out that there were shortcomings in the implementation of the conclusions and resolutions of the 2003 Tripartite Meeting, such as the application of international labour standards in the tobacco industry. As an example, he noted that none of the governments attending the Meeting had ratified Convention No. 184. He expressed the hope that the Employers' group would respect the views of the Workers' group, which reflected the organizations it represented.
- 168.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson stated that social dialogue was based on mutual respect of each other's views and positions. The absence of an international framework agreement in the tobacco sector could not be equated to the absence of freedom of association. The Workers' views were respected. However, if there were issues that needed to be clarified, the Employers' group had the right to respond. It was important that the Meeting did not leave an impression in people's minds that there was no freedom of association in the tobacco sector and that the efforts being made by employers were not making any difference on the ground.
- 169.** The Chairperson noted that all representatives had the right to express their views. It was ultimately a matter of perspective, and each party assessed the state of decent work from their position. It was important that the constituents fearlessly expressed their views.

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- 170.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson emphasized the importance of removing barriers faced by workers in their quest to access sustainable livelihoods and transcending old preconceived notions about workers. The tripartite process was crucial to identifying country-specific barriers to the promotion of sustainable alternative livelihoods and appropriate solutions. While it might not be possible to solve all problems at once, incremental progress was important. The procurement structures in global supply chains were entrenched in systemic inequalities, which marginalized workers at the bottom of the supply chain. It was important that the social partners took a closer look at the nature and the design of the supply chains with a view to addressing the structural inefficiencies that caused poverty and misery among workers. Employers and workers needed to work together to advance fundamental principles and rights at work.
- 171.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson stated that the issue of alternative livelihoods was complex and should not be restricted to tobacco alone, particularly since the decent work challenges present in tobacco growing were attributable to the wider agricultural sector. Tobacco continued to play a central role in the livelihoods of many people, further compounding the challenge of transition. She emphasized that the goal should not be crop replacement, but rather crop diversification to the extent possible, in order to improve livelihoods and food security of tobacco-growing communities. She highlighted the need for more research and stronger collaborative partnerships between the ILO and other agencies on the subject. She underscored the important contribution in terms of input and experience that social partners could bring to this debate.
- 172.** The Government Vice-Chairperson, speaking on behalf of Malawi, emphasized that tobacco was a legal crop, which sustained livelihoods of many people in his country. He noted that farmers were entrepreneurs who grew tobacco for profit, and that they should be allowed to make the decision to transition to alternative crops of their own accord. The field trip was insightful in demonstrating that farmers were already diversifying to crops such as maize and bananas. Nevertheless, tobacco was the most profitable with ready markets. He once again suggested shelving the issue of alternative livelihoods for future discussions, and urged the Office to concentrate on its primary mandate of addressing decent work deficits in the labour market.
- 173.** The representative of the Government of Namibia echoed the statement made by the representative of the Government of Zimbabwe that there was no available evidence to suggest that alternative crops generated higher income for farmers than tobacco. Tobacco was a legal business, and the focus should be on ensuring that it was conducted ethically and with due respect to international labour standards.
- 174.** A representative of the WHO stated that the WHO FCTC was among the most widely adopted treaties under the United Nations system with a total of 181 Parties. He also noted that Article 17 of the FCTC recognized the need to promote economically viable alternatives to tobacco production as a way to prevent adverse social and economic impacts on tobacco-dependent populations. The health, social, economic and environmental impacts of tobacco growing were well known. Close proximity to nicotine and other chemicals due to long working hours had resulted in hazardous diseases such as green tobacco sickness. Children, including those between 5 and 11 years of age, and women, especially pregnant women, involved in growing tobacco were most vulnerable and exposed to lifelong risks. It was important to protect farmers from the harmful effects of tobacco growing and provide them with viable alternatives for a sustainable future.
- 175.** In 2008, the Third Conference of the Parties (COP3) of the FCTC established a working group on economically sustainable alternatives to tobacco growing. It was tasked with developing policy options and recommendations for the implementation of Articles 17 and 18 of the FCTC. This working group had generated an informative report on economically sustainable alternatives to tobacco growing, which was adopted by the Sixth Conference of

the Parties (COP6). The document was publicly available and could be used as the basis for any global agenda on alternative livelihoods to tobacco growing.

- 176.** Furthermore, many initiatives had been undertaken by governments with the support of the WHO and the FCTC Secretariat, including the 2017 Global Meeting on the Implementation of Articles 17 and 18 held in the United Republic of Tanzania in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and the FAO. Four pilot projects had recently been supported in Brazil, Philippines, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Study visits to Brazil were undertaken by three countries in 2016 to understand the actions of the Brazil National Diversification Programme for the implementation of Article 17. There were also examples from countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines, which had earmarked domestic resources, in particular tobacco taxes, to help tobacco growers transition to other crops. The WHO, the FCTC Secretariat and many other UN agencies, including the ILO, were part of the UN InterAgency Task Force on Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (UNIATF), of which the main cause was tobacco use. The Task Force had been working closely on this issue, including by compiling available research and evidence. Furthermore, there was additional research and evidence from developing countries to show that farmers who switched from tobacco typically saw marked improvements in their economic livelihoods. The members of UNIATF were currently working together on developing innovative financing solutions related to alternative livelihoods.
- 177.** The Chairperson inquired whether there was a timeline for the FCTC Parties engaged in tobacco growing to switch to alternative livelihoods.
- 178.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson sought more information from the WHO on whether they had undertaken any work to address the current health challenges of tobacco workers, in particular related to children working in the field, green tobacco sickness and exhaustion from extreme heat due to climate change.
- 179.** A representative of the WHO clarified that there was no timeline for tobacco farmers to shift to other crops under the FCTC. However, during the FCTC negotiations, it was envisaged that the demand for tobacco would decline by at least 30 per cent by 2030 as per the commitment made by FCTC Parties. It was inevitable that farmers would eventually have to shift from tobacco farming. He therefore urged countries to commence efforts aimed at assisting farmers to transition out of tobacco. He also acknowledged that the FCTC had to be in harmony with other international Conventions and treaties, with national laws prioritizing Party obligations.
- 180.** The representative of the Government of Namibia highlighted that the WHO should take into account the views of workers and employers, in particular with respect to business models, business profitability and employment creation.

Point for Discussion 3: What should tripartite constituents do to ensure policy and programme coherence and convergence at the country level in order to effectively realize national development priorities and to promote decent work in the tobacco sector? What has worked and what more needs to be done?

The Meeting may wish to discuss, inter alia:

- (i) *ways to ensuring effective policy and programme coherence at the national level and the role of the ILO and the DWCPs in this regard; and*

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- (ii) *national rural/agriculture development plans and strategies as they may relate to the tobacco sector, employment policies and UN Cooperation Frameworks with a view to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.*

General discussion

- 181.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson noted that the Meeting showcased the need for stronger policy coherence on decent work and resilient livelihoods. In many ways, the tobacco sector faced the same opportunities and challenges as the broader agricultural sector so it would be misleading to look at the tobacco sector in isolation. The Meeting had identified possible areas of action such as the improvement of education systems, strengthening of labour inspection systems, improving opportunities in the labour market and promoting crop diversification. It was also clear from the discussions that efforts to address decent work deficits in the tobacco sector should not be restricted to the ministries of labour, but rather all related ministries such as agriculture, education, trade; economic development agencies; and regional administrations, should be involved. There was a need to break down the silos that existed and comprehensively target decent work deficits. United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and DWCPs provided opportunities for strengthening collaboration between different ministries and agencies in order to identify joint strategies and targets. The ILO and its constituents were advised to make full use of the possibilities of the UN reform to make the UNDAF an inclusive instrument. ILO representatives in the field should show leadership in guiding the work of the integrated strategy in collaboration with other UN agencies.
- 182.** Coherence was also necessary with regard to the engagement with social partners and industry. Social partners had a key role to play, not only in the development of DWCPs, but also of UNDAFs and national strategies for the agricultural sector. At the international level, the issues affecting the social partners were equally important. The 2003 Tripartite Meeting requested that the Director-General of the ILO ensure that social partners are duly consulted and involved in the cooperative actions between the ILO and other UN organizations, the Bretton Woods Institutions and other multilateral institutions. This involvement should ensure that the employment and social impacts are adequately addressed and recognized when adopting policies regarding the sector. The 2003 Tripartite Meeting called for engagement with the private sector, but unfortunately there had not been any meaningful consultations with the private sector. The 2003 Tripartite Meeting had further asked the Director-General to ensure consultation with and involvement of social partners in the cooperation of the ILO with UN agencies and the WHO. Recognizing that multi-stakeholder engagement was necessary for knowledge sharing, expertise, technology transfer and financial resources, the SDGs and the indicators under SDG 17 called for strengthened partnerships that would bring together governments, civil society, the international community, the private sector and other actors. Policy coherence for sustainable development should reconcile sustainable development policies in general rather than adopting a narrow definition of mechanisms supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Coherent implementation of the SDGs required mechanisms for dialogue and engagement whereby governments and key stakeholders could come together to identify common challenges, set priorities, contribute to the development of laws and regulations, align policies and actions, and mobilize resources for sustainable development. A key question was how different institutional mechanisms worked together and contributed to policy coherence. The industry was willing to engage with the social partners to find solutions.
- 183.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson was glad to note that the Employers were reaffirming the importance of the 2003 Tripartite Meeting outcome document and the five resolutions. The ILO should foster tripartite discussions focused on specific labour issues prevailing in global supply chains. Platforms for engagement created by the ILO were important to share the lived realities of workers, discuss challenges and ultimately find pathways to addressing

them. In the United States, labour laws were not extended to farm workers. Instead, workers relied on platforms such as this Meeting to discuss labour violations occurring on the ground.

- 184.** A Worker representative observed that further efforts were needed to promote decent work in the tobacco sector. She urged tripartite constituents to consider updating the existing intervention strategies in their countries and tailoring them to local realities. She called for stronger and constructive dialogue among the social partners.
- 185.** A Worker representative from Malawi observed that the project-based interventions at national level were limited to a few tobacco-growing communities. In Malawi, out of the 18 tobacco-growing districts, only three were covered by such project activities.
- 186.** Another Worker representative from Malawi stated that workers should be treated as partners who were equally interested in the success of their companies and not as enemies. They should be consulted as equals about policies that affected them. This unfortunately was not the case in Malawi. He reiterated that child labour could not be fought in silos, and appealed for the full participation of all social partners.
- 187.** The Government Vice-Chairperson observed that tripartite constituents had a responsibility to ensure policy and programme coherence and convergence at the national level in order to achieve national priorities, including decent work in the tobacco sector. He noted that most member countries had developed DWCPs as the main vehicle to address decent work deficits in the labour market, including in agriculture as well as the tobacco sector. He appreciated the role of Resident Coordinators but urged the ILO to work directly with the tripartite constituents to deliver the outcomes of the DWCPs. He stressed the need for the ILO to listen to the views of member States. Speaking on behalf of Malawi, he stated that his Government had ratified the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), and put in place social dialogue structures such as the Tripartite Labour Advisory Council, the Social Dialogue Forum, the Wage Committee and other sector-specific forums to facilitate Government engagement with the social partners on all matters affecting employers and workers. Malawi had a fixed national minimum wage, which was established through a tripartite consultative process. He appreciated the technical and financial support rendered to his Government by the ILO, and reaffirmed the important role social partners played in making progress in DWCP priority areas.
- 188.** Sustainable development policies should also include social dialogue and cross-cutting issues such as gender, disabilities and HIV/AIDS. Malawi had developed robust gender policies, industrialization policies, national export strategies, and strategies focused on micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. He called on the ILO to assist countries with further strengthening their social dialogue structures. He refuted the assertion that workers in Malawi were treated as enemies, and argued that all of the country's labour-related bills had been passed with the full involvement of workers. The Government of Malawi worked closely with social partners in all sectors, including tobacco.
- 189.** It was clear that the industry was interested in addressing decent work deficits. It should not be isolated but rather included and made part of the solution. Evidence suggested that some of the best practices recorded in the reduction of child labour were a result of industry interventions. Having welcomed the participation of the FCTC Secretariat and other stakeholders, he noted that there was a concern about the ability of participants to freely express their views at the Meeting. He explained that some Government group delegates had received messages and phone calls from their respective missions in Geneva regarding their contributions at this Meeting. He underscored the importance of ensuring freedom of expression at this forum. He stated that the behaviour of issuing threats by the FCTC Secretariat should be condemned and discouraged. There was a need to maintain decorum and respect among UN organizations and their respective mandates.

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- 190.** The representative of the Government of South Africa endorsed the statement made by the representative of the Government of Malawi, stating that such situations were unacceptable and that in the ILO, members and representatives of constituencies should be free to speak without fear. He underscored the importance of ILO programmes being constituency driven, responsive to country priorities and informed by a wide range of partners, while promoting social justice and living up to the pledge of leaving no one behind. He reminded the Meeting about the guiding principles for future ILO development cooperation, which were agreed at the 107th Session of the International Labour Conference (2018), and which included, among others, a call to enhance country ownership, increase the role of the private sector in sustainable development, strengthen the focus on capacity development, promote innovative and inclusive forms of partnerships in financing, and enhance transparency through social dialogue.
- 191.** The representative of the Government of Brazil referred to his country's experience in South-South and triangular cooperation. International cooperation was most effective when it was based on true dialogue and not the result of the external imposition of preconceived models and ideas. The effectiveness of international cooperation was enhanced if it was aligned with national development priorities. This was equally applicable to technical assistance provided by the ILO and other international agencies. He enquired if the Office was having any conversations or consultations with other international organizations on policy coherence in the preparation of the revised integrated strategy.
- 192.** The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom urged the tripartite constituency of the ILO to work jointly towards the SDGs. Employers should work within accepted frameworks, respect domestic and international legislation and ethical frameworks, and innovate towards a tobacco-free society. Workers should innovate and prepare themselves for these changes, while addressing the health, social and environmental concerns identified in tobacco farming. Governments, for their part, should continue to pursue a whole-of-government approach to tackle decent work issues, specifically involving ministries of health, finance and development. He stated that the ILO had a long and respected pedigree of fostering partnerships and should work within the One-UN system framework to support the tripartite constituents as they tackled these issues. He urged the tripartite constituents to utilize the expertise of the WHO and the FCTC, the FAO, and other UN agencies to address decent work deficits in the tobacco sector. He called on the specialized UN agencies to make the policies and frameworks they provide more user-friendly and their work more accessible to the most marginalized. Specifically, he called on the FCTC Secretariat to translate Articles 17 and 18 of the FCTC so both farmers and workers could understand what these Articles really meant. The WHO should make available, in simplified language, successful examples and models for crop diversification and alternative livelihoods as well as formats and tools for the workers to access and understand.
- 193.** The representative of the Government of Zimbabwe emphasized the importance of policy coherence and stated that, in Zimbabwe, labour administration policy formulation, the promulgation of acts as well as the ratification of Conventions were guided by tripartite consultations. The recently passed Tripartite Negotiating Forum (TNF) Act provided a legislative framework for engagement with all parties and enhanced accountability to ensure that there was no policy mismatch. Against that background, the Zimbabwe Decent Work Country Programme (ZDWCP) was the benchmark in labour administration and had consistently been guiding and influencing national development programmes. Tripartite constituents were therefore urged to create such legislated and accountable institutions for engagement. The TNF Act was founded on the principles enshrined in Convention No. 144. Having noted that Zimbabwe was also a signatory to the FCTC, she stressed that no one Convention was more important than any other. Commenting on earlier submissions by the WHO, she stated that it was possible for member States to meet their obligations to both the ILO and the WHO through social dialogue. She further noted that in order to implement

national programmes in instances where donor funding was limited, local resource mobilization strategies should be considered. The multi-stakeholder approach had worked well in Zimbabwe, tying well with the objective of the SDGs to leave no one behind. Reflecting the views of South Africa, she emphasized that the Office should be responsive to the needs of constituents and support what worked in different contexts. The ILO should support national development priorities and actively participate in DWCPs that reflect these priorities. She further said that coordination of SDGs had been delegated to the Ministry of Labour, which had contributed to promoting SDG 8 on decent work and ensuring that government policies were coherent.

- 194.** The representative of the Government of Uganda stressed that the ILO had a responsibility to raise issues on multilateral platforms but was sometimes marginalized, even within the UN system. When the ILO became part of the UN system, it brought in its constituents. The ILO should therefore seek to be heard in multi-stakeholder forums and ensure that its unique tripartite structure and way of work were understood and respected by other international organizations within the UN system. Constituents were reminded that it was their responsibility to improve the livelihoods of people.

Follow-up discussion

- 195.** Responding to the questions raised, a representative of the ILO Secretariat stated that the work to revise the integrated strategy based on the discussions of this Meeting was within the ILO's mandate of addressing employment and labour-related challenges, and in particular strengthening social dialogue, in the tobacco sector. He underscored the important role that partnerships with other UN agencies, in particular the FAO and the IFAD, played in the promotion of diversification and alternative livelihoods. The Office had already been engaging with these agencies and would continue this collaboration. In addition, partnerships among countries were important and, as the representative of the Government of Brazil highlighted, South-South and triangular cooperation played a central role in this regard.
- 196.** The representative of the Government of South Africa sought clarity on what the Office meant when it said it engaged in partnerships with other UN agencies in relation to alternative livelihoods and in the context of the outcome of the Meeting.
- 197.** The representative of the ILO Secretariat clarified that the Office was working closely with various UN organizations within the context of the ILO's work on the promotion of decent work in the rural economy. In order to effectively support countries in their diversification efforts, strong partnerships and collaboration between different UN agencies would be crucial.
- 198.** Following up on the issues raised by the representative of the Government of South Africa, the representative of the Government of Zimbabwe observed that the background report only discussed the issue of alternative livelihoods, and that the terms of reference received from the Governing Body to convene this Meeting did not highlight that issue. Referring to the Office's statement about collaboration with other agencies on alternative livelihoods, she asked whether this was driven by the constituents, as was expected by the Office.
- 199.** A representative of the Office clarified that the promotion of alternative livelihoods was part of the third pillar of the integrated strategy that had been discussed and welcomed by the Governing Body at its 334th Session. The strategy had three prongs: (1) promote an enabling policy environment for decent work in tobacco-growing countries; (2) strengthen social dialogue; and (3) assist tobacco-growing communities to address decent work deficits, including child labour, and to transition to alternative livelihoods. The points for discussion for this Meeting were organized in line with the strategy.

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- 200.** The representative of the Government of Nicaragua stated that tripartite dialogue, and not unilateral decisions, were crucial when addressing the issue of alternative livelihoods. In Nicaragua, it was difficult to transition from tobacco to corn because the cost of growing corn per hectare was higher. Additionally, young people preferred working in cities rather than on rural farms. He informed the Meeting that his country had a national minimum wage to support people. Underscoring the importance of freedom of association, he noted that it would be difficult to strike a balance between employers and workers in the absence of this right. He was of the view that not much progress had been achieved since the 2003 Tripartite Meeting and that much remained to be done, especially with the WHO in regard to addressing OSH challenges in the sector. After listening to Government representatives of African countries, it was clear that long-term solutions tailored to the socio-political and economic contexts of the respective countries were needed to address the issue of alternative livelihoods.
- 201.** The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom requested information on the steps taken by the ILO to promote a whole-of-government approach and the involvement of other relevant ministries in the development and implementation of the integrated strategy to address decent work deficits in the tobacco sector.
- 202.** A representative of the WHO emphasized the need for policy coherence and stated that the UN Interagency Task Force on Non-communicable Diseases (UNIATF) had a mandate to advance the FCTC and its Article 17. The ILO was part of the UNIATF, and the negative health effects of tobacco farming were part of the discussion. He stressed that the UNIATF took a coherent UN-wide approach and was a repository for relevant research.
- 203.** The representative of the Government of the United States reiterated the support of his Government for ILO efforts to promote decent work, eliminate child labour and improve gender equality, wages, OSH, education infrastructure and social dialogue. He recalled that the Model Policy was non-binding, and that the work of each UN agency should focus on its core mandate.
- 204.** The representative of the Government of Uganda asserted that the ILO should proactively express its perspective on the challenges facing the tobacco sector, particularly at the UNIATF.
- 205.** The representative of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania stated that the issue of funding was a cross-cutting issue which could not be left to governments alone. It required the involvement of all stakeholders, including the private sector. More work was needed to explore the economic importance of alternative crops to tobacco.
- 206.** The Deputy Secretary-General, in responding to the questions, referred once again to the three prongs of the integrated strategy: (1) promote an enabling policy environment for decent work in tobacco-growing countries; (2) strengthen social dialogue; and (3) assist tobacco-growing communities to address decent work deficits, including child labour, and to transition to alternative livelihoods. Therefore, the integrated strategy covered decent work broadly and was not limited to child labour. Furthermore, he referred to paragraphs 54 and 60 of the background report, which acknowledged that a whole-of-government response would be required, including close inter-ministerial coordination.
- 207.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson stated that the key to the discussion was addressing decent work deficits. Governments had confirmed the central roles of social partners in this endeavour. She expressed appreciation for the recognition of the key role the industry had played in addressing decent work deficits. She agreed with the representative of the Government of South Africa that governments and social partners should have the freedom to express their views regarding the tobacco sector as they deemed appropriate. She stated

that the Employers' group would be raising this point in the forthcoming 337th Session of the Governing Body.

7. Closing statements

- 208.** A representative of the ECLT Foundation stated that the Foundation had been following debates in the Governing Body of the ILO on the issue of collaboration with the tobacco industry with great interest. This was because, to a large extent, it was the Foundation's funding agreement with the ILO that essentially sparked the global debate around whether the ILO should be receiving funds from the industry to fulfil its legal mandate to address decent work deficits in the tobacco industry. In his view, one element that had been lost in the debate was the fact that the Foundation's PPP with the ILO had always been about protecting children. In 2015, the ECLT Foundation entered into a three-year contract with the ILO to fill a knowledge gap on specific OSH issues, such as green tobacco sickness, unique to tobacco growing. As the WHO had pointed out, there were health risks unique to the tobacco leaf. The goal was to develop evidence-based global guidance on hazardous child labour in tobacco-growing countries. In addition, the PPP singled out the need to enhance social dialogue in Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda, and it provided for a tripartite mechanism to review, deliberate and independently validate the outcomes of research on these hazards, as well as to use the mechanism of social dialogue to address and overcome other decent work deficits. The same month as the ILO was about to undertake contracted research in Malawi, the Model Policy was rolled out, and this had stalled the research. It was unfortunate that the safety and protection of one group of stakeholders reflected under the Model Policy came at the cost of the safety, health and protection of another group of stakeholders, primarily representing the Global South.
- 209.** The representative of the ECLT Foundation further stated that instead of focusing the discussion on deficits, it was critical for the social partners to look towards solutions. There was still a great need to complete evidence-based global guidance to protect children from all forms of child labour. Social dialogue was more important than ever, and ensuring that the integrated strategy thrived and did not become an unfunded mandate going forward was crucial. Looking at the outcomes of the 2003 Tripartite Meeting, it could be said that progress had been made at least on the child labour front because trade unions, governments and employers, many who were in this room, had been collaborating with the support of the ILO to make this a priority. However, much work remained to be done. The Foundation supported enhanced social dialogue as well as many other key strategies laid out in the outcome document of the 2003 Tripartite Meeting. The Foundation would continue to support the strategies agreed to in 2003 as a viable way forward towards greater solutions in better protecting children in tobacco-growing communities across the world.
- 210.** A representative of the International Tobacco Growers' Association (ITGA) expressed the hope that this Meeting would initiate a new phase for discussions about growers and workers through their associations at national and global levels. This approach had been missing and, up to now, tobacco farmers felt unrepresented. While admitting that the ILO may not be the best or most appropriate UN agency to deal with the subject of crop diversification, it could provide a platform where all key players could come together to deliberate on the issue. When Article 17 of the FCTC was brought up under this Convention's mandate, farmers around the world waited for the officials tasked to work on Article 17 to consult with them on the matters directly related to their livelihoods and allow them to share their expertise and experiences. This, however, did not happen, and, as a result, Article 17 remained the least implemented Article of the FCTC. The market had changed quickly and there was a need to take the discussions to a different level – a level of action – particularly in the field. The ITGA commended the ILO to be the driving force of this initiative for farmers, workers, their families and their communities.

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- 211.** A representative of the WHO stated that the FCTC Secretariat had 194 member States, including the 181 countries that were Parties to the FCTC. Support to countries was therefore provided to both Parties and non-Parties to the FCTC. All decisions made at the WHO and the FCTC Secretariat were made by governments and not the Secretariat. All member States were committed to tobacco control and to achieving a 30 per cent relative reduction in tobacco use by 2030. Parties to the FCTC were also committed to accelerating the implementation of the FCTC as part of their SDG commitments. More than 25 countries were already on their way to achieving the targets, and another 50 were very close. It was inevitable that the demand for tobacco would decrease, and the supply-side sectors should recognize it. Article 17 of the FCTC committed Parties to supporting the process of looking for alternative livelihoods only for that reason. Having thanked the ILO for inviting the WHO to share their views on the health and safety concerns from tobacco growing and use, he said the WHO was happy to contribute, as appropriate, to achieving decent work conditions in the tobacco sector, and would follow-up with the ILO for any support needed.
- 212.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson reiterated the importance of social dialogue. He noted that there were challenges within the Workers' group to reconcile the meaning of some of the terms used to describe common challenges such as child labour. This could even be more complicated in gatherings such as this one, where governments and employers might understand the same concepts differently. It was important to find a common understanding on these concepts. It was impossible to attain a collective voice among different players without engaging in honest social dialogue. He reaffirmed the resolutions of the 2003 Tripartite Meeting because they emphasized the importance of social dialogue.
- 213.** The Workers' group Secretary stated that while the situation in agriculture was not on the agenda of the Meeting, tobacco growing could not be considered separately from agriculture, especially when alternative crops to tobacco farming were under consideration. A common problem in agricultural communities was the lack of sustainable resources for development. Global supply chains had placed growers at the very start of the production chain while profits were being accumulated and taxed downstream at company headquarters in urban areas, creating significant imbalances in the distribution of profits and taxes. Rural economies, especially agricultural communities, could not be developed without a just and fair redistribution of taxes and profits. Effective measures to ensure transparency in the distribution of public funds would help achieve equal opportunities for the rural population. Agricultural workers should be encouraged to form unions in order to be represented in national and international discussions on rural livelihoods and in national rural/agricultural development plans and strategies.
- 214.** The ILO and DWCPs should keep a specific focus on the needs of rural workers and should help to promote and implement the recommendations of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (September 2018). This Declaration covered, among other issues, the right to work (Article 13); the right to form and join organizations of their choosing (Article 9); the right to work in safe and healthy working conditions (Article 14); and the right to information (Article 11). The ILO should continue to work with the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture, created in 2008 by the FAO, the IUF and the IFAD, and continue to provide technical expertise in support of the efforts of the countries of the EU and other member States to assist governments of African countries to implement child labour eradication programmes in agriculture. Child labour was decreasing in some parts of the world but increasing in others. As recognized at the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour in Buenos Aires, Argentina (2017), there was a clear need to strengthen the implementation of cooperation through strengthened international development assistance, including North-South and South-South and triangular cooperation to assist Africa governments in their efforts to address child labour in agriculture. He also underscored the importance of strengthening the coordination of work on the tobacco sector within the ILO

through its Sectoral Policies Department. He concluded by reading out the four points of a bipartite consensus between the Workers' and Employers' groups. These included:

1. The decisions of the 2003 ILO Tripartite Meeting on the future of employment in the tobacco sector should be taken into consideration for the integrated strategy to address decent work deficits in the tobacco sector. Although there was progress, a lot remained to be done by the ILO and the social partners to implement the 2003 resolutions.
2. Since tobacco growing was part of the agricultural sector and the existing decent work deficits were common to other agricultural commodities, the ILO should take specific issues related to tobacco workers in the sectoral plans of work on agriculture and continue the efforts to address decent work deficits in agriculture, by organizing a meeting of experts to discuss and adopt Guidelines on the promotion of sustainable rural livelihoods targeting agro-food sectors. In view of the discussions on crop diversification, extended cooperation with the FAO was needed for ensuring adequate research and tripartite consultations in the development and implementation of national action plans for agricultural development, as well as on the elimination of child labour and other decent work deficits in agriculture.
3. The ILO should continue working within the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture, and should ensure the participation of all social partners, for the development of child labour eradication programmes in agriculture.
4. The ILO should closely be engaged with and cooperate with the social partners in the design and implementation of programmes to promote decent work and social dialogue in the tobacco sector at international and national levels.

215. The Employer Vice-Chairperson stated that the Meeting had been very successful. There were clear outcomes, which should guide the Office and form the basis for the further development and implementation of the integrated strategy. The past two days had displayed the need for proper policy coherence and decent work in the tobacco sector. The industry was highly committed to addressing decent work deficits. It was clear that the industry was far ahead of other actors in promoting decent work and labour rights and that the impact of the different programmes was significant. However, much more needed to be done. In order to properly and sustainably change the realities on the ground, all stakeholders should work together. Cooperation with the industry was key, and the ILO should engage with the industry as well as social partners in the design and implementation of the integrated strategy and targeted programmes. Tobacco was an important crop for farmers, and it could not be replaced by other crops easily. It was central to governments and their economies, and to workers and their communities, giving opportunities to the children of workers to pursue their dreams through education. The contributions made by women tobacco farmers were very impressive and provided clarity in many respects. At the same time, the acknowledgement of the need to work together for the continued support to farmers who were diversifying their crops for both food security and income generation was lauded. The ILO should focus on the labour impact of crop diversification and work with other relevant multilateral agencies, such as the FAO, to develop research and close the existing knowledge gaps.

216. Contrary to what was announced by the Office at the 334th Session of the Governing Body, it was clear that the ILO had not properly replaced the funding it used to receive from the industry. The issue of private sector funding remained high on the agenda and had to be properly addressed by the Office at the forthcoming 337th Session of the Governing Body.

217. The Employer Vice-Chairperson agreed that not all problems had been solved since 2003, but addressing decent work deficits was a process and not a one-off event. Great progress had been made in the last 16 years, as acknowledged through several concrete examples in

the background report. What had been achieved so far gave an impetus to the industry to continue with its agenda and programmes to promote decent work and social dialogue in the tobacco sector. The fact remained that tobacco was a legal product, and the ILO could not ignore the millions of farmers or the people working in indirect and direct jobs in the sector. A clear, well-articulated approach to policy coherence for sustainable development was essential to better inform inclusive and successful policies in line with the formal consultative tripartite processes and the mandate of the ILO. The Employers' group was committed to working with the industry, the ILO, governments, trade unions and all other stakeholders for the continued promotion of decent work and social dialogue in the sector. She concluded by restating the four points of a bipartite consensus that had been reached by the Workers' and the Employers' groups. However, with regard to the second point concerning the promotion of sustainable rural livelihoods targeting agro-food sectors, a reference was made to the organization of a technical meeting to discuss the subject. She further enquired if the Workers' group had any reservations to including a reference to the industry in the fourth point, which would say "The ILO should closely engage and cooperate with the social partners and the industry in the design and implementation of programmes to promote decent work and social dialogue in the tobacco sector at the international and national levels."

- 218.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson stated that it was not necessary to refer explicitly to the industry in the fourth point as his group considered the industry to be part of the social partners.
- 219.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson regretted the response of the Workers' group and decided to withdraw all four points of consensus in their entirety.
- 220.** The Government Vice-Chairperson quoting the ILO Director-General stated that: "Decent work is key to achieving sustainable development and social justice, itself a foundation of lasting peace." Since the Meeting was discussing decent work deficits in the tobacco sector with the aim of further developing the integrated strategy, the discussion essentially was on lasting peace and cultivating justice in the tobacco sector in line with the UN message: "if you want peace and development, work for social justice; if you desire peace, cultivate justice". Tobacco was a legal crop and the Meeting was creating justice for the sector. He was confident that the Office had understood all the views exchanged in the Meeting and hoped that the Note on the proceedings would cover them all faithfully. He looked forward to a costed and time-bound integrated strategy to be presented to the Governing Body at its 337th Session. He expressed the hope that the issue of funding for the integrated strategy would be considered in Geneva, because having a strategy without funding would not be sufficient. The ILO should follow up on the resolutions of the 2003 Tripartite Meeting, and these should form part of the integrated strategy.
- 221.** The Government Vice-Chairperson was also of the view that the integrated strategy should be presented to the Governing Body for discussion and not for information only, as the Governing Body could not adopt the strategy without discussing it first. He also regretted that the Workers' and Employers' group had withdrawn the suggested bipartite points of consensus. He reiterated that social partners were key to shaping DWCPs, and the ILO's support to the implementation of DWCPs was crucial. Governments had both international and national obligations, they had ratified international Conventions and propagated laws, but they counted on the social partners to deliver on these mandates. He called on the social partners to be active participants at the national level on matters that affected society in general, and workers and employers in particular. If their rights had been stifled, they should fight for them, because they had the responsibility to shape national and international policies. Workers and employers were part of the solution, and no worker or employer should suggest that the government was the enemy. The strength of the ILO was tripartism and through it the social partners enjoyed the space to carry out their mandate of social justice and decent work. He thanked the Meeting for the confidence and election of Malawi to speak on behalf

of the Government group and the Government of Zimbabwe for providing the necessary support and advice to the Vice-Chairperson throughout the Meeting.

- 222.** The representative of the Government of South Africa expected to see clear and specific proposals for funding from the ILO's RBSA, as well as recommendations for continued efforts to mobilize various sustainable sources of funding from the public and private sector, keeping in mind the appropriate safeguards. He hoped that the strategy to be drafted would be inclusive, enhance coherent policy approaches and indeed leave no one behind. The challenges of promoting policy coherence, strengthening social dialogue and addressing decent work deficits, including child labour, were not a tobacco-sector problem but a labour market problem. He expressed support for the efforts of the social partners to reach consensus on various points, but highlighted the importance of explicitly referring to the industry, which was at the centre of the discussion.
- 223.** The representative of the Government of Zimbabwe thanked the Office for the opportunity to discuss the ways and means of collectively addressing decent work deficits in the tobacco sector. The Meeting was enlightening, and the information gathered from the field visit contributed immensely to the sound discussions. The Meeting also provided a good platform to share and demonstrate the legislative and administrative measures that Zimbabwe had put in place to address decent work deficits. Lessons had been learned, especially on the need to consolidate what had worked well, and her Government would continue to seek viable ways of addressing what still needed to be done. She noted that social dialogue should always be given prominence when finding lasting solutions, and despite the differences of opinions and positions, tripartite constituents should continue to be guided by it. The ILO should continue to promote ways of addressing decent work deficits in the agricultural sector as a whole and engage relevant stakeholders in pursuing its mandate. Zimbabwe was committed to promoting ways of addressing decent work deficits in the tobacco sector and looked forward to further discussions.
- 224.** The Deputy Secretary-General thanked the tripartite constituents and other participants. The Meeting was convened to exchange views on decent work challenges in the tobacco sector and discuss ways of addressing them. The Office had heard different perspectives and experiences which no doubt would make an invaluable contribution to the further development and implementation of the integrated strategy. From this point, the Office would embark on the process of developing an updated strategy, which would be done in close consultation with the tripartite constituents. The Office was expected to – and would present – an update on the costed, time-bound strategy to the Governing Body at its 337th Session. The Office would also prepare a Note on the proceedings that would capture the views expressed at the Meeting. The Note on the proceedings would be sent to participants for review before its finalization.
- 225.** The Chairperson stated that the Meeting was convened to provide a platform for constructive discussion, the results of which would provide an important contribution to the further development and implementation of the ILO integrated strategy to address decent work deficits in the tobacco sector. As decided by the Governing Body at its 334th Session, an update on the costed and time-bound strategy would be presented by the Office to the Governing Body at its 337th Session. The Meeting had facilitated a rich exchange about the prevailing employment and labour-related realities of the tobacco sector in different countries and contexts, as well as the challenges and opportunities for advancing decent work in this sector. It had also provided an opportunity to share experiences and exchange ideas on alternative livelihoods for tobacco-growing communities and to discuss the importance of policy and programme coherence at the country level.
- 226.** Without exception, all interventions had been thoughtful and extremely interesting, and they had stimulated a lively and rich debate. The background report and the discussion confirmed that tobacco was still an important export commodity for many countries around the world.

The sector was also a source of livelihood for millions of people engaged in tobacco growing and other downstream parts of the supply chain. However, as was the case in rural economies, especially in many developing countries, the sector continued to be characterized by decent work challenges, despite the progress that had been made over the past years. At the same time, technological advances, changing patterns of tobacco consumption and other developments in the world of work all had profound impact on the sector. In light of the projected decrease in the demand for tobacco as well as the need to ensure food security, it was important to initiate research into viable crop diversification strategies. The strategy would then serve as the basis for the development and implementation of collaborative and sustainable interventions to address decent work challenges across the tobacco supply chain and promote decent work for all workers in the rural economy and beyond.