

## GB.340/POL/5

### Enhancement programme of development cooperation for the occupied Arab Territories

On behalf of the Employers' Group, I would like to thank the Office for preparing a well-written report. The GB paper as well as the DG report to the ILC on the occupied Arab Territories are in many ways rather similar. They depict a dramatic situation in a hugely complex part of the world, politically and in the labour market.

I have four points to make with regards to the paper:

- Points 8 and 9 refer to the challenges smaller enterprises face. The report recognises their struggle to meet their obligations and are at high risk of suspending wages and terminating employment. **How can the ILO help to ensure business continuity**, beyond the fund for income support? We would be grateful if **more information can be provided at the next report on how the ILO can provide some guidance to develop an enabling environment for business to grow**. Can the ILO's *Jobs for Peace and Resilience* flagship programme (JPR) help give some guidance on a strategic approach for more peaceful and resilient societies through employment, decent *work* and social dialogue?
- The various ILO interventions has provided very substantial support to consultative processes, review processes, undertaking of studies and similar. Uptake at decision making/political level seem to be limited (also indicated in some paras). **We encourage more ILO interventions to focus more on employment, and less on consultative, debate oriented interventions**.
- We are pleased to see more serious coordination efforts being undertaken with other international agencies. We stated our encouragement on this front, at the last GB meeting on the occupied Arab territories. We welcome the work currently being done with WFP, UNICEF, UNDP and UNIDO. The **project proposal to support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in addressing and recovering from COVID-19 through the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund is good news** to us. The Employers' Group, through the Secretariat and Bureau can provide technical support on this, if needed. Please keep us regularly apprised on the status of the project. There is also added value in sharing information with UN Resident Coordinators, to strengthen the ILO's role as lead agency of labour and social issues.
- We also call on the ILO to provide more capacity building of social partners. For employers, we would like to see **more training, perhaps through the ITCILO, on upskilling, digitisation to help tap into international markets, and harnessing entrepreneurial and core/soft skills**.

We support the point for decision.

**340<sup>e</sup> session, Genève, octobre-novembre 2020  
Section de l'élaboration des politiques**

**Commentaires du Groupe des Travailleurs**

**CONSULTATION PAR CORRESPONDANCE**

**GB.340/POL/5**

**Programme renforcé de coopération pour le développement en faveur des  
territoires arabes occupés**

Le groupe de travailleurs prend note des progrès réalisés et des activités que le BIT prévoit d'entreprendre dans le cadre de son programme de coopération pour le développement en faveur des territoires arabes occupés, qui englobe les travaux menés par le Bureau au titre du deuxième programme palestinien de promotion du travail décent (2018-2022), signé en avril 2018, et mis en œuvre en partenariat avec les institutions publiques et les partenaires sociaux. Il met en évidence les activités du BIT destinées à améliorer la situation des travailleurs et à remédier aux principaux problèmes qui se sont posés depuis la publication du dernier rapport.

Le groupe de travailleurs exprime sa profonde inquiétude quant au fait que l'économie palestinienne, déjà paralysée par l'occupation et un marché du travail caractérisé par un faible taux d'activité, un chômage élevé et une sous-utilisation généralisée de la main-d'œuvre, en Cisjordanie comme à Gaza, est particulièrement démunie face à la crise du COVID 19 et à ses conséquences. Le bien-être de la population, l'emploi et les moyens de subsistance sont menacés et les inégalités déjà existantes risquent de se creuser davantage. La jeunesse est particulièrement touchée, comme en témoigne le nombre élevé de jeunes Palestiniens et Palestiniennes qui sont sans emploi et ne suivent ni études ni formation.

Le groupe de travailleurs se félicite du processus de dialogue social, qui a joué un rôle essentiel dans la recherche de solutions permettant de protéger les travailleurs et de fournir une bouée de sauvetage aux entreprises, dans un contexte économique grevé depuis longtemps par le chômage et une croissance au point mort. Un accord tripartite adopté en mars 2020 par le ministère du Travail et les partenaires sociaux a autorisé les employeurs à ne verser aux travailleurs que la moitié des salaires qui leur étaient dus aux mois de mars et d'avril, l'autre moitié devant être versée à la fin de la crise. La Fédération générale des syndicats de Palestine a joué un rôle crucial dans la conclusion de cet accord.

Le groupe de travailleurs prend bonne note du projet du BIT de lancer des consultations tripartites aux fins de la révision du programme de promotion du travail décent, le but étant de l'aligner encore davantage sur les stratégies nationales révisées et d'y intégrer les nouveaux besoins du marché du travail tels qu'énoncés dans le plan d'intervention du Ministère du Travail et dans le plan de l'équipe de pays des Nations Unies pour une réponse du système de développement au COVID-19.

Le groupe de travailleurs soutient le travail du BIT, qui a organisé à l'intention des travailleurs et des employeurs une série d'ateliers de renforcement des compétences en matière de négociation, notamment collective. À cette occasion, les participants ont reçu des orientations sur les outils et les concepts liés à la négociation collective, et le dialogue bipartite a été promu en tant qu'outil efficace, garant de solides relations professionnelles. À l'avenir, le BIT compte organiser des séances de formation à l'activité syndicale sur un large éventail de sujets, l'accent étant mis sur la négociation sectorielle dans les secteurs économiques où les travailleurs, et surtout les travailleuses, souffrent de mauvaises conditions de travail.

Pour conclure, le groupe de travailleurs demande au Conseil d'administration de prendre note de la nécessité urgente d'élargir et de diversifier l'aide au développement en faveur des travailleurs palestiniens et, de façon plus générale, du marché du travail palestinien. Pour résoudre les problèmes qui se posent sur ce marché en constante évolution, en particulier ceux liés au COVID-19, il est primordial d'élargir l'appui aux programmes de perfectionnement des compétences et d'employabilité ainsi qu'aux programmes actifs du marché du travail, et de continuer à soutenir les initiatives de protection sociale.

Avec ces commentaires, nous pouvons adopter le point de décision.

## **Statement of Bahrein on behalf of the Arab Group to the 340th Session of the Governing Body of the ILO (29 October-12 November 2020)**

On behalf of the Arab Group, we extend our appreciation to the Director General, Mr. Guy Ryder, and to the regional office in Beirut and the Office of the International Labor Organization in Jerusalem for their efforts in reducing the suffering of the workers and the people in the occupied Palestinian territories, hoping that these efforts would continue in favor of the labor sector and workers in Palestine.

Chair,

On behalf of the Arab Group, we present this statement regarding the contents of the document GB.340/POL/5 Under item (5) on the agenda of the Governing Body titled “Enhanced Programme of Development Cooperation for the Occupied Arab Territories”.

The document presented before us sheds light on the progress made and the operations of ILO's planned intervention in the context of the development cooperation program in the occupied Arab territories and the activities and programs covered by organization in the Palestinian territories within the second Palestinian decent work program for the period 2018-2022, implemented in partnership with governmental institutions and social partners.

In his annual report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories, the Director General emphasized that the Palestinian labor market presents a bleak picture due to the spread of unemployment, the decline in protection, and the increasing marginalization of youth. With the absence of appropriate solutions to the challenges facing the Palestinian labor market, the unemployment rate will continue to rise affecting disproportionately women and youth.

The document presented before us and the concerns it contains about the collapse of the Palestinian labor market, and to what was stated in the appendix, is caused because the Israeli occupation authorities continue their policies of imposing restrictions on people and goods, which constitutes an obstacle to growth, sustainable development and reducing unemployment rates, causing an obstacle to Palestinian workers' access decent work.

Chair,

Based on the above:

1. The Arab group holds the occupation authorities responsible for the lives of Palestinian workers and their human and economic rights, and calls for ILO and other concerned international organizations for the protection of these rights and for raising their injustice.
2. The Arab Group calls for the discussion of the appendix of the Director General's report submitted to the International Labor Conference on the conditions of Arab workers in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories before the conference in the plenary session or in one of the sessions as an item, and for the report to be translated

into executive steps and programs adopted by the organization for the aim of correcting Conditions of workers in the occupied Palestinian territories.

3. The Arab Group reiterates its call to the Director General of the International Labor Organization and the Governing Body of the International Labor Office and donor States to fulfill their obligations in financial support to revive and activate the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection , and continue to make efforts coordinating with international agencies and donor countries to pull the financial support necessary to support the demands and development needs, In light of Covid-19 , in coordination with the Arab Labor Organization and the International Labor Organization offices in Beirut and Jerusalem.
4. The Arab Group calls the Governing Body of the International Labor Office to make efforts providing financial resources to support the Palestinian Compensation Fund to help Palestinian workers overcome the Covid-19 pandemic and alleviate their suffering.
5. The Arab Group calls ILO to intervene effectively to restore Palestinian workers ' rights from the occupation authorities since 1970 to date, and to take the necessary procedures to pay wages and entitlements of Palestinian workers in accordance with international labor standards and the Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Right to Work , in light of the difficult financial circumstances faced by the Palestinian National Authority.
6. The Arab Group requests the Director General to include in his periodic report submitted to the Governing Body in March 2021 on the organization's activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, a briefing of the efforts made in this regard in particular, in order for the Governing Body members to be informed by them.

I thank you.

**Written Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Indonesia  
on Agenda Item POL 5. Enhanced programme of development cooperation for the  
occupied Arab territories (GB.340/POL/5)  
at the 340<sup>th</sup> Session ILO Governing Body  
November, 2020**

***Honorable Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,***

1. At the outset, we would like to express our appreciation to the Office for the comprehensive report on "Enhanced programme of development cooperation for the occupied Arab territories". We would also like to register our appreciation for the ILO's work in regard to mobilize resources and leverage new partnerships for the development cooperation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
2. The Palestinian socio-economic condition has been in stake due to the decades of occupation, which has resulted in the low participation in the labour market, as well as the threats for public welfare and livelihoods. We are deeply concerned that the COVID-19 pandemic, due to its severe disruptions to the societies and economies is having a devastating impact on the increased unemployment rate and decline in wage, in which economically active women and youth as the most disadvantaged.
3. On that note, we would like to express our support in the strongest possible terms to the continuation of ILO's extensive efforts to implement the second Palestinian Decent Work Programme 2018-2022 and its alignment with broader frameworks of the UN system and the United Nations country team (UNCT).
4. We endorse strategic priorities in the second Palestinian Decent Work Programme, which focuses not only to enhance employment and livelihood opportunities, but also to strengthen labour governance and support the Palestinian social security system.
5. Indonesia would support the ILO's work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by emphasizing these three key points:
  - First, we support the efforts to overcome the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to the world of work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as the ILO's commitment to Palestine for the attainment of the Palestine's National Policy Agenda (NPA) 2017-2022 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Target 8.5 to realize decent work for all.
  - Second, we encourage the ILO to focus on the efforts to counter possible exploitation and to increase protection of the rights of Palestinian workers in Israel and the occupied territory, as well as to ensure decent work conditions for them.
  - Third, we support the efforts to expand and diversify development assistance to Palestinian workers, including to extend support to include skills development, employability and active labour market programmes, as well as continued assistance to social protection initiatives. To quote the Director General, decent jobs, universal social protection, and Agenda 2030 in general should be at the center to build back better.

6. We note with particular concerns that the hardship faced by Palestinian people are becoming more alarming due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this matter, Indonesia always stands ready to give support needed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Both the Government and people of Indonesia have been contributing in providing assistance for Palestinian people. This year, the Government of Indonesia has announced Indonesia's increased contribution to Palestine as well as to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) during the Extraordinary Ministerial Pledging Conference for UNRWA.
7. We are of the view that the enhancement of the Decent Work Agenda and the realization of social justice for Palestinian people would be less meaningful as long as the instability in the territory remains. Therefore, we would also like to underline, that we need a comprehensive solution that is just and sustainable. We need to start a credible multilateral peace process based on internationally agreed parameters.
8. To conclude, Chair, Indonesia wishes, that ILO with the support of its Member States to continue its contributions to strengthen labour governance in the Occupied Palestinian Territory so that Palestinian people will recuperate from the adverse impacts of COVID-19 on jobs and livelihoods.

Thank you.

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## **Comments by Minister of Labour of Palestine to the ILO Governing Body document regarding the Enhanced Programme of Development Cooperation in the occupied Arab territories**

**Chair of the Governing Body,**

**Director General of ILO,**

I write to submit Palestine's comment to the Governing Body document GB.340/POL/5 titled the Enhanced Programme of development Cooperation for the occupied Arab territories.

The world is confronted with huge challenges caused by the serious health threat facing the humankind through COVID-19, which directly impacts the future of work everywhere. In Palestine, we were not isolated from such a challenge, which we have been addressing in addition to the Israeli occupation, the expansion of settlements, economic and financial blockade on Palestinian people, all result in deepening the impact of the pandemic on the most vulnerable and in more poverty. This comes at a time where Palestinian Authority's capacity to support its social partners is diminishing, which would eventually jeopardize the outcomes already achieved the Decent Work Programme signed with the ILO.

More than 100,000 Palestinian workers inside Israel have lost their jobs and incomes, as Israel does not allow them to their workplaces. Humiliation and discrimination continues against them at the cross borders, preventing their wages and not providing them with adequate occupation safety and health at the workplace. As of first half of 2020, occupational accidents increased among Palestinian working in Israel to more than 300 including 30 death cases.

In addition, the Israeli authorities continue to impose blockade on Gaza in order preventing thousands of workers from accessing their workplaces in occupied West Bank and Jerusalem, and inside Israel. According to international reports, including the annual Report of the ILO Director General submitted to the International Labour Conference, Gaza has turned into a large prison for more than 2 million Palestinians. We consider this Report an important international one that documents the Israeli violations to international labour standards while accurately notes down the challenges facing the world of work in Palestine and the necessary technical and financial assistance needed to address them.

We at the Palestinian Authority have been easing the impact of the pandemic, in collaboration with our social partners as well as through ILO's technical support, through a contingency plan, which included among other things the following:

- The signature of a tripartite Agreement for wage protection, at the early months of the crisis, and the establishment of unemployment support fund.
- Provision, by the Palestinian Employment Fund, low interest finance to SMEs.
- Continue with the implementation of the Decent Work Programme in Palestine 2018-2022, signed with ILO, which is risking delays and obstacles as long as COVID-19 pandemic remains. In this respect, let me refer the conclusion of the first ever National Employment Policy in Palestine as one of the most important achievements of the ILO technical cooperation provided to us. As we envisage soon its launch, we hope it will strengthen the Palestinian labour market by enhancing its capacity to create decent jobs.



Similarly, it is important to refer to the fact that the momentum behind the social security coverage has been restored at the national level, which we consider as one of the priorities ahead with the support of ILO.

**Chair of the Governing Body,**

**Director General of ILO,**

Any progress we have been able to achieve is attributed to the partnership with our social partners, our resilience in facing the Israeli occupation and its discriminatory practices, holding of our responsibilities in protecting Palestinian workers, and our commitment to social dialogue as a means of addressing crises.

In conclusion, I thank the International Labour Office as well as the countries and partners for their technical and financial support for the implementation of the Decent Work Programme, and I look forward to the consideration and support of the Governing Body to the following:

- Maintaining and enhancing the technical and financial resources for ILO's programmes and activities in Palestine, for the remaining two years of the DW Programme.
- Prepare a resource mobilization strategy linked to the National Employment Policy with a view to enhance the capacity of Palestinian Economy to create decent jobs.
- Support the ILO Director General for assuming a mediating role with Israeli side for regaining the Palestinian social security dues held by Israel since 1970.
- Place an agenda item on your next Governing Body session for the consideration of the conclusions, which appear in the Director General annual Report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories.
- Provide an urgent support to the Palestinian Fund in support of wages.

I thank you.

Nasri Abou Jaish

Minister of Labour