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## ► Managing Conflicts and Disasters:

Exploring Collaboration between  
Employers' and Workers' Organizations





# ► **Managing Conflicts and Disasters:**

Exploring Collaboration between  
Employers' and Workers' Organizations

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## Preface

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The Nobel Peace Prize for 2015 was awarded to the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet for its “decisive contribution to building democracy in Tunisia in the wake of the Jasmine Revolution of 2011.” The Quartet, comprised of ILO social partners – the Tunisian General Labour Union and Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts – along with the Tunisian Human Rights League and Tunisian Order of Lawyer was formed when the country’s efforts to introduce democracy were in danger of failing amid social unrest. Through social dialogue and cooperation, the Quartet became the driving force to advancing peaceful democratic development in Tunisia and an exemplary example of strong cooperation between social partners and civil society organizations.

Globally, employer and business membership organizations (EBMOs) and workers’ organizations contribute to achieving solutions and building social cohesion and rule of law. Partnership between social partners leads to good governance, peace and stability and can boost economic and social progress. Even when countries experience disruptive situations such as a natural disaster, conflict or social unrest, the individual and collective efforts of social partners can positively work towards improved stability and inclusive economic, social and political development.

This publication looks at the role that employers and workers, through their respective organizations, play in crisis situations arising from conflict and disaster. It explores the leadership function that EBMOs have deployed to maintain an environment for continued economic activity and the key role that workers’ organizations take to assist workers, in particular those who have been made vulnerable by a crisis. The report importantly examines how EBMOs and workers’ organizations have collaborated through social dialogue and other means of collective action to promote peace, prevent crises, enable recovery and build resilience.

While actors of the international community are effortlessly working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), violent conflict and natural disasters are on the rise and worryingly recognized as one of the biggest obstacles to achieving the SDGs. About 2 billion people currently live in fragile and conflict-affected situations and poverty is increasingly concentrated in these settings. This is contrary to the pledge contained in the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind.

It is our hope that this report inspires social partner organizations globally on the unique and complementary role they play and can play in complex situations of disaster and conflict, including emergency situations such as pandemics like COVID-19. Intensified collaboration between EBMOs and workers’ organizations before, during and after a crisis situation can critically fill a governance gap, rejuvenate employment and job creation, and improve labour market governance. The ILO will continue to harness our organization’s strength - our normative mandate and tripartism - and channel our resources to support this shared agenda.

Finally, this report reflects our organization’s journey to better document partnership between social partner organizations. Joint efforts between EBMOs and workers’ organizations are essential to addressing the challenges of our time, and the lessons of collaboration need to be shared. We will continue to pursuit knowledge together and apply that knowledge in support of our constituents.

**Deborah France-Massin**  
Director  
Bureau for Employers’ Activities (ACT/EMP)

**Maria Helena Andre**  
Director  
Bureau for Workers’ Activities (ACTRAV)



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The interviews and the drafting of the report were conducted by Oliver Jütersonke from the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding of the Graduate Institute of Geneva with input from Emilio Rodriguez and Sina Zintzmeyer. We thank the research team for their contributions, expertise and thoughtful collaboration.

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Finally, the ILO team that led and coordinated the research needs to be acknowledged. We express deep appreciation to Jae-Hee Chang, Senior Programme and Operations Officer of the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities and Claire La Hovary, Senior Specialist on International Labour Standards and Legal Issues of the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities for their fruitful partnership.



## ▶ Acronyms

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ANTUF	All Nepal Trade Union Federation
BCCEC	Bahamas Chamber of Commerce and Employers Confederation
CECC	Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce (New Zealand)
CGECI	<i>Confédération Générale des Entreprises de Côte d'Ivoire</i>
CIPC	<i>Commission Indépendante Permanente de Concertation (Côte d'Ivoire)</i>
COTU	Central Organization of Trade Unions (Kenya)
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Nepal)
EBMO	Employer and Business Member Organization
FKE	Federation of Kenya Employers
GDP	gross domestic product
GEFONT	General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions
GFJTU	General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions
JCI	Jordanian Chamber of Industry
JTUC-RENGO	Japanese Trade Union Association
JTUCC	Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (Nepal)
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (Kenya)
ILO	International Labour Organization
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency (Bahamas)
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
PWF	Pakistan Workers' Federation
SHTA	The Sint Maarten Hospitality & Trade Association
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WB	World Bank





# 01



## ▶ Introduction

This report looks at the potential for collaboration between employer and business membership organizations (EBMOs) and workers' organizations in crises arising from conflicts and disasters. By zooming in on a variety of country contexts, it explores initiatives and policies that seek to maintain an environment for continued employment, decent work, and commercial activity. It also looks at efforts to build resilience in situations of conflict and/or major destruction by natural and human-made disasters. In particular, the report examines how EBMOs and workers' organizations have taken action and cooperated in a variety of ways through social dialogue to prevent crises, promote peace, and enable recovery. In doing so, the study provides insights into the roles played by EBMOs and workers' organizations in these contexts, and how such collaboration in crisis situations could be strengthened and replicated elsewhere.

The ILO was established in 1919, by the Treaty of Versailles that put an end to World War I, with the aim of building an institution that could help prevent social tensions from breaking into open conflict. A hundred years on, the aspirations are still the same. Goal 16 of the United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development aims to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the ILO Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work was adopted with the understanding that persistent poverty, inequalities and injustices, conflict, disasters and other humanitarian emergencies constitute a threat to advances in economic and social progress and to securing shared prosperity and decent work for all. It further recognises that decent work is key to sustainable development, addressing income inequality and ending poverty,

particularly in areas affected by conflict, disaster and other humanitarian emergencies.<sup>2</sup> What is the role of EBMOs and workers' organizations in tackling these challenges?

ILO Recommendation *Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience*, 2017 (No. 205) – hereafter R205 – offers a starting point.<sup>3</sup> It provides ILO member States, EBMOs, and workers' organizations with guiding principles and strategic approaches for engagement in conflict and disaster situations.<sup>4</sup>

▶ Reference is made throughout this report to the text of R205. While R205 is addressed to member States, it was adopted by tripartite constituents and calls for action from all to be implemented.

The Recommendation's focus is broad, including the role of employment, income generation, decent work, and the creation of sustainable enterprises. Its objective is to strengthen social dialogue, international cooperation and the role of EBMOs and workers' organizations in reducing the impacts of crisis arising from conflicts and disasters. Finally, even if the ILO has the mandate and the instruments to work on peace and resilience, both in fragile and post-conflict situations, too often, full, productive and freely chosen employment and social dialogue are seen as a secondary consideration to the policy discussions on peacebuilding and recovery.

1 For a detailed commentary on each section of the Recommendation see: ILO-ACTRAV: *Workers' Guide to Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation* (No. 205) (Geneva, ILO, 2019).

2 See Preamble and Para. II A xvii. 187 ILO member States adopted the Centenary Declaration in June 2019.

3 ILO: *Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation (N°205)*, 2017.

4 See: <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-promotion/recovery-and-reconstruction/r205/lang--en/index.htm>. For a summary of R205 see: ILO-ACTRAV: *Recommendation N°205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience: What Role for Trade Unions?* ILO ACTRAV Policy Brief (Geneva, ILO, 2018). Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_dialogue/---actrav/documents/publication/wcms\\_646852.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---actrav/documents/publication/wcms_646852.pdf) [accessed 19 Nov. 2019].

Nevertheless, many of today's violent conflicts relate to group-based grievances arising from inequality, non-respect of human and labour rights, exclusion, lack of participatory mechanisms and dialogue as well as feelings of injustice.<sup>5</sup>

- ▶ **Conflict** has not been defined in Recommendation No. 205. For the purpose of the Recommendation, it includes “armed conflicts” as well as “non-armed conflicts”. It covers many diverse situations, including situations of violence that destabilise societies and economies.
- ▶ **Disaster** means a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts.
- ▶ **Resilience** means the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management.

Source: ILO: *Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation (N°205)*, 2017 and ILO: *Provisional Record No.13-2(Rev.)*, ILC 2017, paras 144-150.

The purpose of this report is to showcase specific examples where EBMOs and workers' organizations have taken proactive action to work together to respond to conflict and disaster crises. This collaboration might focus on building peace, on the prevention of conflicts and catastrophes or on being better prepared for the next crisis. It might also be about ensuring a quicker and more effective response to an event, or a more coherent recovery and reconstruction period. In all these activities, EBMOs and workers' organizations have important roles to play, as will be illustrated in the following sections using a number of country examples.

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- ▶ R205 calls on member States to ensure *consultation and encourage[s] active participation of employers' and workers' organizations in planning, implementing and monitoring measures for recovery and resilience* (para 8 (d)) and acknowledges *the vital role of employers' and workers' organizations in crisis responses* (para 25).
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<sup>5</sup> See ILO, *Handbook how to design, monitor and evaluate peacebuilding results in jobs for peace and resilience programmes* (Geneva, ILO, 2019).



*Image of soldier (armed forces) (DRC) © ILO/Crozet M.*

In terms of its approach, this report is based on extensive desk research as well as interviews. Interviews with EBMO representatives were conducted from Geneva between April and October 2019, notably with individuals from the Bahamas, Côte d'Ivoire, Jordan, Kenya and Sint Maarten. The study also draws on extensive notes and interview data drawn from the authors' participation in a series of regional workshops and training events convened by the ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) throughout 2018. This included insights from workers' organizations based in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This report also briefly looks at early responses of social partners to the crisis situation arising

from COVID-19. Overall, the aim has been to showcase innovative ways in which EBMOs and workers' organizations have contributed to the management of conflicts and disasters. The aim was not to provide a comprehensive account or attain global geographic coverage.

The report is divided into five sections, including this introduction. The second section will focus on conflict contexts and the third on disasters. The fourth section will then briefly discuss an issue that is common to both conflicts and disasters: population displacement. A fifth and final section will present a few concluding reflections from the analysis.



▶ 02



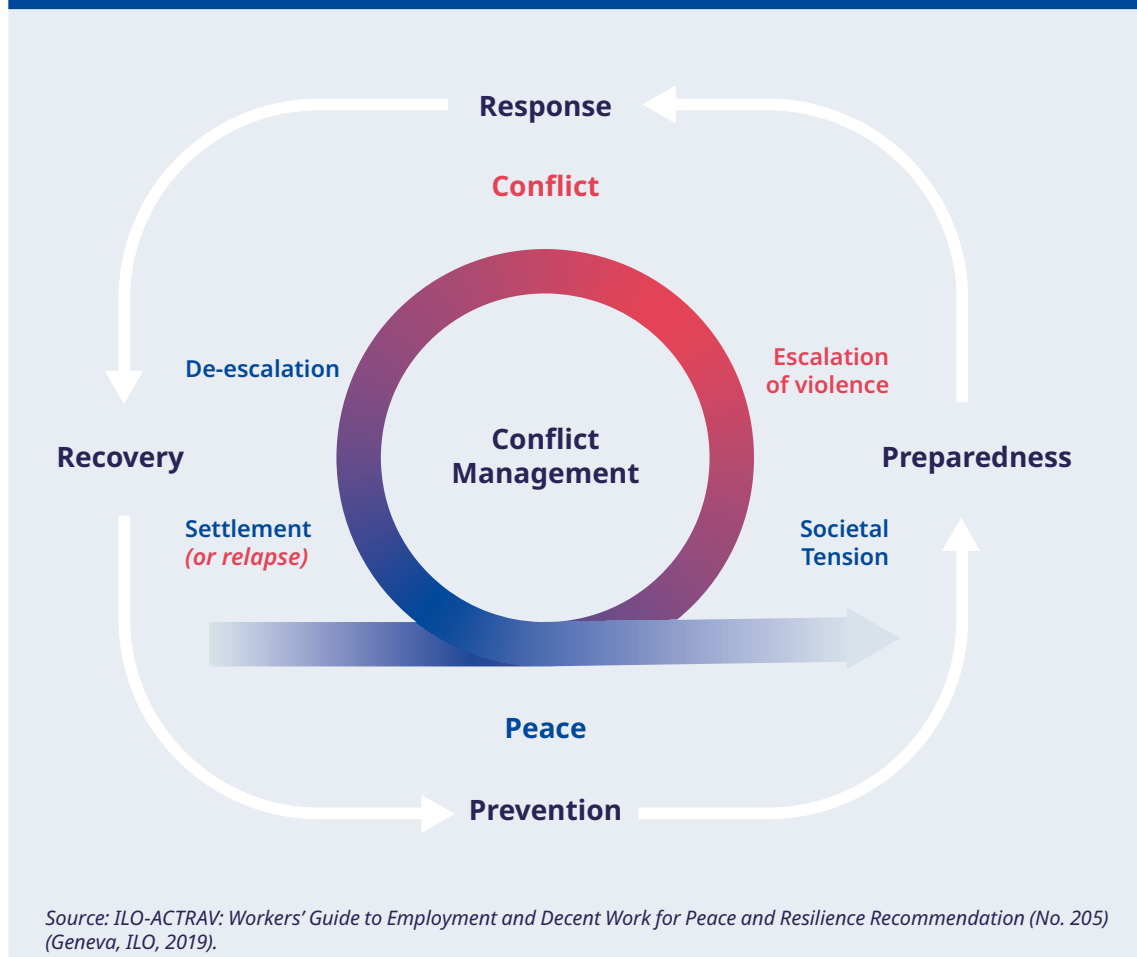
## ► Conflict, post-conflict, and fragile settings

Conflicts in various forms – from large-scale military confrontations to rebel insurgencies, election violence or popular uprisings, for instance – continue to rage in societies around the world. These conflicts have a profound impact on employment and income-generating opportunities, and on decent work. They lead to a breakdown of the rule of law, destroy livelihoods, displace populations, and disrupt education. Conflicts also tend to lead to an expansion of the informal economy, a collapse of social protection and a rise in criminal activities such as trafficking. Vulnerable populations, including vulnerable youths, persons with disabilities, and the elderly, are especially affected.

It is useful to think of peace and conflict in terms of cycles, as shown in figure 1. This figure

illustrates how a society can move from relative peace and stability to a crisis situation marked by political or communal tensions that might escalate into violence and ultimately armed conflict. If stakeholders are unable to prevent an escalation to outright conflict through diplomacy and dialogue, then efforts shift to organizing an effective response. This response includes peace talks and ceasefire agreements as well as humanitarian activities to help those caught up in the fighting. Hopefully the conflict can be resolved quickly, leading to a political settlement among the conflict parties and the start of peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts. If no lasting agreement can be found, violent conflict might once again ignite, leading to a new cycle.

Figure 1. The conflict management cycle



Source: ILO-ACTRAV: Workers' Guide to Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation (No. 205) (Geneva, ILO, 2019).



This section will discuss how EBMOs and workers' organizations can play key roles in every stage of the conflict cycle, using examples from Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Nepal and Sri Lanka – four countries that have experienced often lengthy periods of large-scale violence.

The first example is **Côte d'Ivoire**, a West African country that was long regarded as a model of economic development and political stability. In 2002, Côte d'Ivoire was effectively split into two, with the south remaining under the control of the incumbent president and the north run by armed-rebel groups linked to the political opposition. Increasing levels of violence, insecurity and business uncertainty took a heavy toll on the economy. In 2003, the country witnessed its lowest GDP per capita in the period between 1972 and 2005.<sup>6</sup>

As a consequence of the violence, workers were temporarily laid off with the hope they would be re-employed once the crisis had passed. This temporary lay-off, called *chômage technique* or technical unemployment, was limited by Ivorian labour law to a maximum period of two months. After that, workers had to be either fully brought back to work or definitively laid off. When it became clear that the 2002 crisis was not going to end any time soon, Ivorian workers' organizations and the *Confédération Générale des Entreprises de Côte d'Ivoire* (CGECI) began collaborating through the *Commission Indépendante Permanente de Concertation* (CIPC).

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► One of the strategic approaches noted by R205 is to *promote social dialogue and collective bargaining* (para 8 (i)).

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The CIPC is a bipartite forum consisting of representatives of the workers' and employers' organizations created in 1995. Its first objective was to draft proposals and solutions regarding labour-related issues between employees and employers, to be submitted for government approval. When the *chômage technique* problem was brought before the CIPC during the 2002 crisis, employees and employers jointly came up with a mechanism

enabling a four-month extension of the *chômage technique*, with the obligation for the employer having to pay at least one-third of the salary during that period. Moreover, employers and employees worked together to find rotation systems between *chômage technique* and full employment to ensure that the smallest possible number of workers had to be laid off, while maintaining the working capacity needed by the employers at all times.

The constructive collaboration between employers and workers via the CIPC is an example of how solutions can be found in times of violent political turmoil. The CIPC allowed employers and workers to effectively lobby the government based on solid and jointly developed solutions– and not just representatives of the Ministry of Labour but the political executive as a whole. During repeated episodes of political violence between 2006 and 2011, the CIPC also led discussions to increase the minimum wage, which was seen as an important gesture towards citizens. When the Ivorian labour law was eventually revised in 2015, the more flexible legislation of the *chômage technique* with two months of no pay followed by a possible four-month renewal with partial pay, was anchored into the law.

In sum, the case of Côte d'Ivoire shows how the existence of an effective communication channel between EBMOs and workers' organizations – in this case the CIPC – can be a key vehicle in certain conflict situations. It is here that the harmful consequences of violent conflict for businesses and workers can either be prevented or at least mitigated in duration and intensity through constructive dialogue between both social partners.

A second example is **Kenya**, another economic engine on the African continent that has experienced significant political violence in recent years, particularly during election periods. The most serious episode was in 2007, when supporters of the two main political candidates, the incumbent President, Mwai Kibaki (Party of National Unity-PNU) and the leader of the opposition, Raila Odinga (Orange Democratic Movement-ODM), violently clashed as a result of alleged voting manipulation. The demonstrations and manifestations soon evolved into widespread violence in a climate of ethnic tensions, human

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<sup>6</sup> N'Zue, Felix (2006). 'State – Business Relations and Economic Growth: Empirical Evidence from Côte d'Ivoire', *Revue Ivoirienne des Sciences Économiques et de Gestion*. 10, pp.72-90.

rights violations, socio-economic inequalities and political grievances.<sup>7</sup>

In the weeks following the disputed presidential election of 2007, members of the Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU) travelled continuously throughout the country, alleviating tensions wherever possible and preventing a further escalation of violence.

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► In responding to crisis situations, R205 insists on the creation of an *enabling environment for the establishment, restoration or strengthening of employers' and workers' organizations* (para 24 (b)).

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According to interviews conducted, COTU's positive standing in society gave it significant political authority with the new coalition government of Kibaki and Odinga that was formed on the basis of a power-sharing agreement signed in February 2008. The organization was subsequently able to influence the formulation of the new Constitution of Kenya 2010, in which are enshrined the right to freedom of association for all and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike. This was the result of effective social dialogue.

In parallel, the business community was actively involved in helping to respond to the crisis. In the face of a sudden economic slowdown, the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) developed various projects to prevent hostilities and to address grievances among different ethnic groups in companies and factories. FKE's members also communicated messages on violence prevention to their employees. These emphasized the fact that by conducting acts of violence within the workplace, workers were jeopardizing their livelihoods. Since group identity and ethnicity were used for electoral politics, the goal has been to work with labour unions in order to turn the workplace into a place of common ground.

According to FKE officials interviewed, the positive history of social dialogue with the unions has

contributed to a reduction of conflicts in the workplace and to the prevention of comparable outbreaks of violence in subsequent election periods – although more empirical research would need to be conducted to corroborate these claims.

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► R205 recalls the *importance of good governance and combatting corruption and clientelism* (para 7(c)).

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In preparation for the 2013 presidential election, the FKE supported public debates among the candidates in the media ahead of the vote. It also conducted backchannel conversations with politicians, prestigious leaders and the media to moderate their discourse during their campaigns. Beyond that, FKE leaders met with representatives of the security sector, including private security companies, to have them commit to non-violence. It also coordinated activities with the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) in order to assess voting preparations. The initiative went as far as publicly supporting the judiciary during the election to guarantee the transparency and neutrality of the institution in periods of electoral dispute. These initiatives and programmes, although often not institutionalized, produced important lessons that were considered in subsequent election periods. During the 2017 presidential elections, the violence was minimal in comparison to the 2007/2008 elections, and when disputes between the two political contenders threatened to trigger violence, the FKE raised its voice to encourage political leaders to tone down their discourses.

Taken together, the initiatives and programmes initiated in Kenya over the past decade once more highlight the important role that EBMOs and workers' organizations can play in preventing violence and responding to crises when they occur. Just as in Côte d'Ivoire, and despite on-going differences among unions and tensions within the tripartite set-up, such collaboration has the potential to bring about long-lasting legislative and constitutional change to the overall benefit of Kenyan society. In 2012, the FKE produced an Employer's Manifesto to provide a framework

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7 J. Austin and A. Wennmann: "Business engagement in violence prevention and peacebuilding: The case of Kenya", in *Conflict, Security and Development*, 2017, Vol. 17, No. 6, pp. 451–472; Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence: *Kenya: Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Post Election Violence (CIPEV)*, (Government Printers, Nairobi, 2008).

for discussion about the country's future. The Manifesto stresses that the role of employers is not only to search for economic and profit-making aspects of doing business but also to "uphold the constitution, remain apolitical and non-partisan, and use the workplace as a platform for peacebuilding".<sup>8</sup> These concepts within the Manifesto illustrate the scope of the organization's goals and the lasting impact the electoral violence of 2007-2008 has had on the business community as a whole.

The cases of Nepal and Sri Lanka, two countries that have experienced long civil wars, are examples of EBMOs and workers' organizations seeking to resolve differences and disputes within their organisations and across conflict lines. In **Nepal**, a major breakthrough was achieved when the All Nepal Trade Union Federation (ANTUF) decided in 2019 to merge with the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT). The ANTUF was aligned with the Maoists who had waged decades of armed conflict against the Government. Despite an agreement among the four major workers' organizations in 2006 on the back of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed between the Government and the Maoist insurgents in 2005, the post-insurgency period was marked by violent rivalry among the unions. To some, including at the ILO, "it appeared that the conflict was moving from the political sphere to the workplace".<sup>9</sup> Employers commonly had to deal with multiple unions simultaneously and with disputes and strikes that were driven by inter-union rivalry. Poor industrial relations thus made for a very difficult business environment in which investment dried up. It was only with the establishment of the Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC) in 2007 and the attendance of ANTUF at the 2007 International Labour Conference, that a path towards greater unity among Nepal's major workers' organizations eventually emerged. It nonetheless took a further ten years until the Labour Act of 2017 was finally signed, not least

because some unions sided with EBMOs and against ANTUF during the negotiations. This new labour legislation is generally regarded as a "win-win result" for both workers and employers.

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► R205 states that Members should, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, review, establish, re-establish or reinforce labour legislation (para 23 a).

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Nepalese EBMOs, in turn, were also keen to avert socio-economic stagnation at both the regional and national levels. The fragility of state institutions impedes business opportunities, and, hence, the creation of decent jobs that are key drivers for peacebuilding and development.<sup>10</sup> During the conflict, EBMOs tried to intervene and promote initiatives to lessen the effects of the protracted crisis between the Nepalese Government and the Maoist insurgents. For example, they held discreet negotiations with unions on key issues, including agreement on a higher minimum wage in 2003. In 2005, a number of EBMOs, including the Nepal Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Hotel Association of Nepal, created the National Business Initiative for Peace with the aim of supporting and encouraging peace and dialogue among the warring parties.

In order to thrive in any setting, businesses require a stable environment and public institutions that can deliver consistent policy and rules in order to maintain investors' interest, clients' approval and workers' confidence. In **Sri Lanka**, where the Government had been fighting Tamil rebels in the northern and eastern regions of the country since 1983, the business sector faced similar challenges to those experienced in Nepal due to the escalation of the conflict at the end of the 1990s and in the early 2000s.<sup>11</sup> After the bombing of Colombo's

8 Federation of Kenya Employers: *The Employer's Manifesto: Employers call for an improved business climate for growth and job creation from the next Government* (Nairobi, FKE, 2012).

9 For a detailed analysis of the Nepalese case see: ILO-ACT/EMP: *The role of the social partners in the Nepal peace process* (Geneva, Bureau for Employers' Activities-International Labour Office, 2019). Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_dialogue/---act\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_711811.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---act_emp/documents/publication/wcms_711811.pdf) [accessed 19 Nov. 2019].

10 For a detailed guide on the role EBMOs can play in fragile settings in Asia see: ILO-ACT/EMP, *Enterprise creation, employment and decent work for peace and resilience: The role of employer and business membership organizations in conflict zones in Asia*, Bureau for Employers' Activities, Working Paper No. 15, International Labour Office, 2016. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_dialogue/---act\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_581077.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---act_emp/documents/publication/wcms_581077.pdf) [accessed 19 Nov. 2019].

11 D. Miriyagalla: *Case Study, Business and peace in Sri Lanka: The roles of employer and business member organizations* (Geneva, Bureau for Employers' Activities-International Labour Office, 2016).

airport and the ensuing economic standstill in 2001, EBMOs stepped up the pressure on the Government to achieve an end to the conflict through peace negotiations.

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- ▶ R205 calls on member States, in consultation with the most representative employers' and workers' organizations, to support *sustainable enterprises to ensure business continuity in order to maintain and expand the level of employment and enable the creation of new jobs and income-generation opportunities* (para 11 (d)).
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Nella Fernández talks to the miners at East Kalimantan, Indonesia © ILO/Cassidy K.

As part of a bipartisan initiative, EBMOs drafted a ten-point document signed by all chambers of commerce and employers' organizations to lobby the president and the opposition leader to end the war.<sup>12</sup> EBMOs also created the J-Biz initiative with the aim of leveraging collective advocacy efforts to reach a negotiated resolution to the conflict. A key component of the private sector's strategy was the Sri Lanka First Initiative,<sup>13</sup> which led to a ceasefire agreement in 2002. As a result, the trade embargo on goods in the North was lifted and the island's main highway was reopened. The ceasefire failed to hold, however, and the conflict resumed until 2009, when the Sri Lankan Government defeated the Tamil rebels militarily.

The influence of Sri Lanka's unions, by contrast, has been fading according to many analysts – not least because of difficult relations with the post-conflict government. At the same time workers' organizations, notably the Sri Lanka Nidahas Sewaka Sangamaya, have been trying to rebuild ties with unionists in the North. Union membership numbers are gradually rising in former Tamil-held areas, although much effort in trust-building and reconciliation is still required in order to convince workers to rejoin organizations based in Colombo.

The cases of Nepal and Sri Lanka illustrate the potential of workers' and employers' organizations to work collaboratively across conflict lines and initiate peace dynamics from a perspective that is different to the traditional political negotiation approach. In so doing they also have the potential, despite the many challenges involved in seeking to rebuild social dialogue in post-conflict settings, to make a concrete contribution to reconciliation following the end of armed violence.

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12 Ibid., p.18.

13 Ibid., p.19.





▶ 03

## ▶ Disaster settings

- ▶ **Mitigation** refers to the lessening or minimizing of the adverse impacts of a hazardous event. The adverse impacts of hazards, in particular natural hazards, often cannot be prevented fully, but their scale or severity can be substantially lessened by various strategies and actions. Mitigation measures include engineering techniques and hazard-resistant construction as well as improved environmental and social policies and public awareness.
- ▶ **Preparedness** is the knowledge and capacities developed by governments, response and recovery organizations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current disasters. Preparedness is based on a sound analysis of disaster risks and good linkages with early warning systems, and includes such activities as contingency planning, the stockpiling of equipment and supplies, the development of arrangements for coordination, evacuation and public information, and associated training and field exercises. These must be supported by formal institutional, legal and budgetary capacities. The related term “readiness” describes the ability to quickly and appropriately respond when required.

Source : United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, <https://www.undrr.org/terminology/> [accessed 10 Feb. 2020].

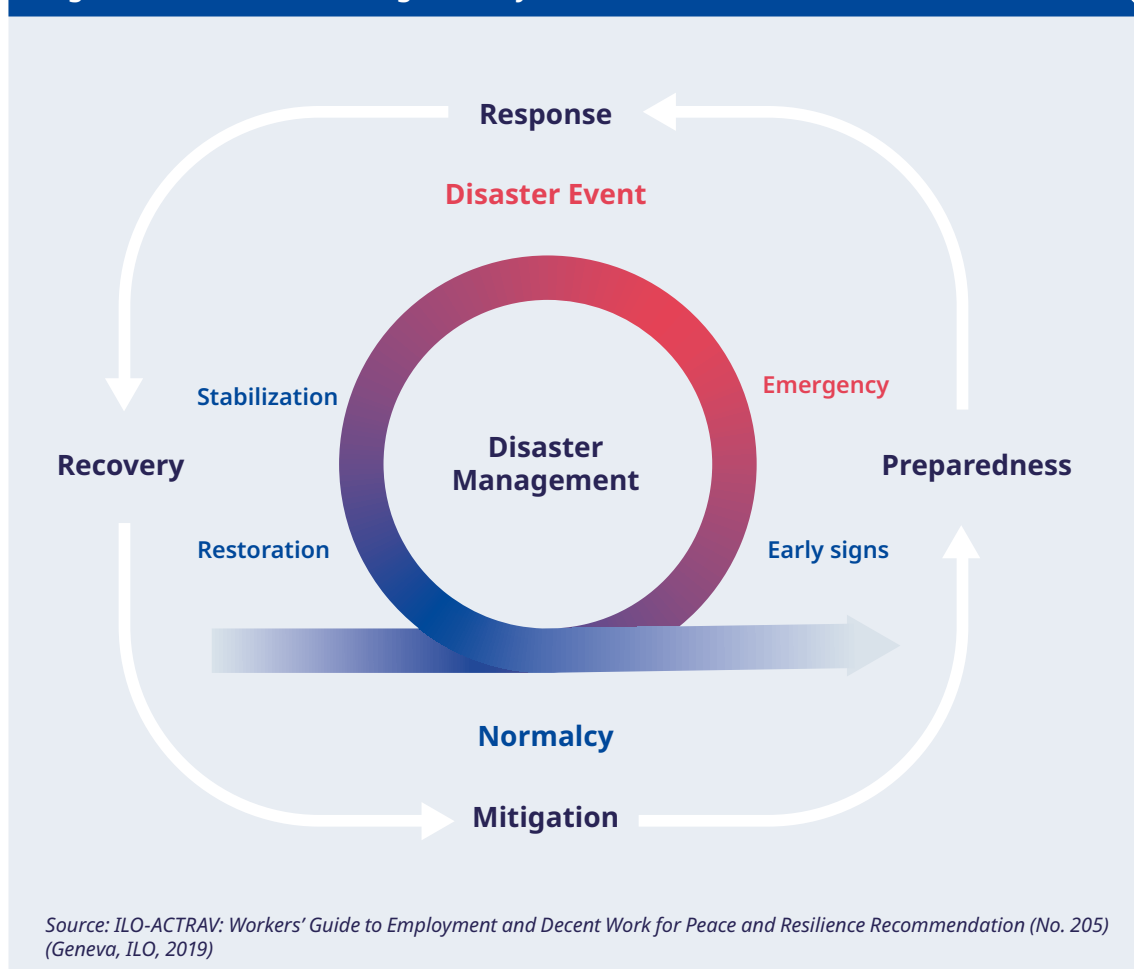
As with “conflict”, the term “disaster” covers a wide range of events ranging from natural hazards (storms, earthquakes or floods), environmental hazards (climate change), biological hazards (epidemics), to anthropogenic hazards (industrial accidents). All of these and many more disrupt the day-to-day activities and routines of societies and cause massive human and economic costs.<sup>14</sup> While developed countries possess more resources and have greater reconstruction capacities, disaster events can harm less developed countries much more, delaying reconstruction efforts and potentially further weakening state and societal institutions. Some of these incidents are preventable, while for others, preparation is the key to mitigating their effects. This is why we talk of disaster “management”: since we cannot guarantee that disasters will not occur, how can we use our available resources to make us more resilient when they do?

Figure 2 shows the cyclical nature of many disasters. It is similar to the cycle we used for conflicts in the previous section: we continuously monitor the weather, geological activity, environmental degradation and so on, in the hope that we can detect the signs of a disaster as early as possible. The better prepared we are, the more likely it is that we can quickly respond to any emergency that arises and thus possibly mitigate its effects.<sup>15</sup> The next steps are to stabilize the situation by focusing on damaged infrastructure and affected populations, before moving on to long-term reconstruction and increased resilience.

14 United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR): *The 2019 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction* (Geneva, UNDRR, 2019). Available at: <https://gar.unisdr.org/report-2019> [accessed 19 Nov. 2019].

15 See also Section XII of ILO Recommendation No. 205.

Figure 2. The disaster management cycle



In theory, EBMOs and workers' organizations have an enormous role to play in disaster management. If EBMOs can collaborate with business leaders, including small and medium-sized enterprises, about being better prepared for storms, earthquakes or flooding, for instance, the damage caused can be minimized. Moreover, given the large numbers of union members, the potential for mobilizing workers to provide an immediate response is equally as big. Two examples from New Zealand and Japan illustrate this.

In the aftermath of the two major earthquakes that struck **New Zealand** in September 2010

and January 2011, the Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce (CECC) played a key role in recovery operations in the badly affected city of Christchurch.

- ▶ R205 suggests, as one of the strategic approaches to enable recovery and build resilience, *developing the capacity of governments, including regional and local authorities, and of employers' and workers' organizations* (para 8 (k)).



The CECC became a founding member of “Recover Canterbury”, a multiagency public-private initiative that sought to help businesses in the region to survive and recover, liaise with government agencies and companies and keep the economy of the region running in the post-disaster period. Participation in this initiative permitted the CECC to develop lessons learned and best practices for facing future challenges, such as training in risk management, collaboration with state and private agencies, constant communication with members to facilitate policies and claims, and support to companies in developing crisis management plans. By 2013, when the initiative ended, “Recover Canterbury” had assisted 7,000 businesses, disbursed US\$5 billion in grants and helped to save more than 600 jobs.<sup>16</sup>

Equally impressive, but from the perspective of workers' organizations, is the Japanese Trade Union Association (JTUC-RENGO) and its effective role in preparing for and responding to disaster events. **Japan** frequently suffers from heavy storms and typhoons, and in 2011 had to deal with the very serious industrial accident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant that was caused by a massive earthquake measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale.

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► R205 states that Members should, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, build resilience through actions such as *risk management, including contingency planning, early warning, risk reduction and emergency response preparedness (para 41 (b))*.

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Union workers volunteering in the immediate aftermath of such terrible events have been an important part of the overall response. RENGO's decentralized presence at the level of Japan's 47 prefectures ensures a very rapid mobilization of workers to help with flood control, debris removal and organization of shelters. The association's sophisticated disaster information sharing and emergency information conveyance systems are key logistical supports. The subsequent recovery period involves both short-term job creation

and the swift (re)integration of populations into the labour market, as well as more long-term reconstruction projects around social infrastructures and sustainable livelihoods.

While the above examples testify to the positive role of both EBMOs and workers' organizations, there are few illustrations of significant collaboration between these two groups in disaster settings. And yet, social dialogue in the workplace is an essential tool, and there are obvious merits to their combined involvement in being better prepared for disasters and contributing to a timely response.

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► R205 insists that *Members should strengthen international cooperation, including through the voluntary and systematic exchange of information, knowledge, good practices and technology for promoting peace, preventing and mitigating crises, enabling recovery and building resilience (para 47)*.

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Joint fact-finding missions could be an important activity in this regard: One hundred days after Typhoon Haiyan struck the **Philippines** in 2013, representatives of employers' and workers' organizations joined a high-level government delegation, convened by the ILO, to visit Japan's Iwate Prefecture, one of three prefectures severely hit by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. The aim of this mission was to learn from the Japanese recovery experience.

Despite such promising examples, building trust relationships between EBMOs and unions remains a major challenge in many places: interviews with representatives from workers' organizations in some countries have shown how the absence of workers who were mobilized for emergency disaster relief was at times taken by employers as a reason for laying them off afterwards. Government relations – which in crisis situations go well beyond the Ministry of Labour – are an additional challenge noted by many. But there are valuable contributions and constructive stories to be told: two of them come from the Bahamas and

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16 For a detailed account of the initiative see: Recover Canterbury Management Team: *A city rebuilds: The Recover Canterbury story* (Christchurch, Recover Canterbury, 2013).

Sint Maarten in the Caribbean and another from Pakistan.

Located at the confluence of the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean, the Bahamas and Sint Maarten are part of a chain of scenic islands that are popular tourist destinations. The islands are also situated along strategic shipping lines: freighters, oil tankers and cruise liners navigate past sunny beaches and luxury resorts. Yet each year the region is beset by natural disasters such as hurricanes, violent storms, flooding and landslides. In 2016-2017 alone, hurricane Matthew swept through the Bahamas while hurricanes Maria and Irma (a Category V storm) hit the region, including Sint Maarten, in quick succession, causing very severe damage: reconstruction was still on-going when the next hurricane struck. In 2019, the Bahamas witnessed the most powerful storm in history with hurricane Dorian leaving catastrophic damages. According to interviews conducted for this study, climate change is, moreover, leading to rising sea levels, with devastating consequences for coastal communities and the livelihoods of local residents.

The Government of the **Bahamas** through the Advisory Council of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) works to meet these challenges.

As more than 80 per cent of the country's GDP currently depends on weather conditions (60 per cent of GDP comes from the tourist industry, 10 per cent from agriculture and 10 per cent from fishery),<sup>17</sup> the Bahamas Chamber of Commerce and Employers Confederation (BCCEC) is an active member of NEMA. In terms of prevention, the BCCEC's initiatives have focused on early warning and readiness. For example, the BCCEC conducted a training workshop in 2017 to enable its members to develop business continuity plans, and conduct risks and business impact assessments of natural disasters. Additionally, employers, workers, and NEMA have organized and participated in workshops and conferences to facilitate cooperation and provide expertise in the case of grave contingencies. Together with the coordination and collaboration of NEMA and workers' organizations, this has allowed employers and firms to generate the conditions for an adequate response to forthcoming disasters. In particular, the various parties have sought to implement "Business Continuity Plans", specifically in the shipping industry due to its importance for the country's economy.<sup>18</sup>

In **Sint Maarten**, recovery and reconstruction efforts following Hurricane Irma in 2017 have involved various stakeholders, both national and international.

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► R205 underlines the importance to take into account *the promotion of full, productive, freely chosen employment and decent work which are vital to promoting peace, preventing crises, enabling recovery and building resilience* (para 7 (a)).

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► *In preparing for and responding to crisis situations, Members should strengthen cooperation and take appropriate steps through bilateral or multilateral arrangements, including through the United Nations system, international financial institutions and other regional or international mechanisms of coordinated response. Members should make full use of existing arrangements and established institutions and mechanisms and strengthen them, as appropriate* (R205, para 42).

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17 World Bank, "World Economic Indicators", <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators> [Accessed 20 June 2020].

18 In early September 2019 Hurricane Dorian hit The Bahamas generating widespread damages in the economy of the country. See Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Assessment of the Effects and Impacts of Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas. <http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=EZSHARE-1256154360-486> [Accessed 30 Jan. 2020]. Due to the timeframe of this research, it has not been possible to follow up and assess the developments on the ground, especially the role of workers' and employers' in disaster management and recovery.

The storm destroyed around 36 per cent of the Sint Maarten's infrastructure, residential and non-residential buildings, and equipment infrastructure and caused US\$2.5 billion in economic losses, particularly in the tourism industry.<sup>19</sup> In 2017, Sint Maarten's GDP shrunk by 8.4 per cent.<sup>20</sup> The Sint Maarten Hospitality & Trade Association (SHTA), which became an employers' organization in 2010, has been collaborating with national and international authorities as well as workers' organizations in efforts to reconstruct the infrastructure of Sint Maarten and to build resilience. For example, in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, SHTA's general managers discussed the impact of the storm and proposed strategies to re-open business and reconstruct the economy with the support of the ILO. SHTA members further addressed the legislative requirements to assist employers understand their rights and obligations during and after a natural disaster. The SHTA has produced a manual on disaster management with the participation of 55 hotels, and has provided feedback in the design of the Sint Maarten National Recovery and Resilience Plan, which was established with the financial and political support of the Netherlands and the technical expertise of the World Bank.<sup>21</sup> In this context, the SHTA also launched the Sint Maarten Innovation, Initiatives and Industries Linkup Event (SMILE) in November 2018, aimed at reducing the impact of hurricanes on companies and their employees. With the participation of the Windward Islands Federation of Labour (WIFOL) and a particular focus on small and medium-sized enterprises, the annual event centres around workshops, training activities and networking to increase the involvement of companies in reconstruction efforts funded through World Bank tenders.

Besides affecting jobs and incomes, disasters often cause existing social protection systems to break down. Specific response mechanisms need to be put in place in advance to alleviate the disproportionate impact on the poor and most vulnerable. In Pakistan, cash-based transactions using ATM cards were first tested following the 2005 earthquake in the country.

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► In responding to crisis situations, Members should as quickly as possible seek to ensure income security,... develop, restore and enhance comprehensive social security schemes and other social protection mechanisms,... and seek to ensure effective access to essential health care and other basic services... (R205, para 21).

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Such rapid response mechanisms can provide a crucial safety net for households and affected communities when income flows have broken down in the wake of a disaster. What is needed for such a response to be effective, however, is a comprehensive database of affected workers and their households – and it is here that workers' organizations and EBMOs have much to offer. Given the frequency of natural disasters in Pakistan, members of the Pakistan Workers' Federation (PWF) have been very active in this sector, being involved in damage assessments, survey work to identify those most in need of immediate assistance and the provision of basic food, water and shelter. According to PWF representatives, the scope of what unions have managed to achieve in this field is due in large part to their good relations with the Employers' Federation of Pakistan and in particular the Workers Employers Bilateral Council of Pakistan, which has provided an essential dialogue platform.

19 CEDIM Forensic Disaster Analysis Group (FDA): *Hurricane Irma – Report No. 1, Focus on Caribbean up until 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017*; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)-Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee-CDCC (2018). 'Irma and Maria by Numbers' FOCUS, March 2018, pp.1-16. See also: *Sint Maarten National Recovery and Resilience Plan: A Road Map to Building Back Better* (World Bank, 2018).

20 Government of Sint Maarten, Department of Statistics, Press Release, 15 October 2018. Available at [http://www.stat.gov.sx/press\\_release/National\\_Accounts/GDP\\_2017\\_Estimate.pdf](http://www.stat.gov.sx/press_release/National_Accounts/GDP_2017_Estimate.pdf) [Accessed 30 June 2019]

21 Other stakeholders include the Central Bank of Curacao and Sint Maarten, KPMG, the Netherlands and Sint Maarten Red Cross, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Children's fund (UNICEF).



Image of TU meeting Pakistan – close to “dialogue” © ILO/Crozet M.

It is worth mentioning the importance of fostering collaboration with international stakeholders in order to strengthen disaster management. In **Côte d’Ivoire**, the CGECI launched a Humanitarian Platform in 2017 in response to an increasing number of disasters, including floods and drought periods that were adding to the political challenges discussed above.

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- ▶ R205 calls on Members to *cooperate to promote development assistance and public and private sector investment in crisis response for the creation of decent and productive jobs, business development and self-employment* (para 44).
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The goal has been to bring the private sector and humanitarian actors together to improve crisis preparedness. This approach is based on the insight that companies are in most cases the first actors to be present in a crisis region and they provide humanitarian aid by supplying food, drinking water and electricity to their employees. The Humanitarian Platform has been created with the support of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Ivorian Red Cross to involve the private sector more purposefully in humanitarian responses. One of the objectives of the platform has been to develop a common workplan with the aim of integrating crisis prevention, management and reconstruction into the way companies work (production cycles, business policies and strategies, and so on). In this regard, the private sector was involved in preparedness activities for the Ebola virus outbreak that was raging in neighbouring countries. Companies mobilized



resources for prevention and were ready to take action in the event that Ebola hit Côte d'Ivoire. The CGECI is also looking beyond its borders by using the network of employers' organizations convened – together with workers' organizations – through the Conseil du Travail et du Dialogue Social (CTDS) of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) to share their experience of the Humanitarian Platform with other member countries.

Situations of crises extend to pandemics like COVID-19, which is a new infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus in Wuhan, China in December 2019. COVID-19 has, in many parts of the world jeopardized the health and safety of people, and put immense pressure on businesses, jobs, and livelihoods. It has created considerable uncertainties as countries go into lockdown, close their borders, and take decisions to only allow essential business to operate. Businesses in certain sectors remain in full operation with workers at the frontline while others are closed down temporarily and are, with their workers, in financial difficulties. Urgent action and policy coherence are needed to ensure business continuity, and to tackle the health and working conditions of workers and the difficult reality they find themselves in. Attention is needed for (1) workers that are at the frontline (such as health workers, cleaners, delivery personnel); (2) workers that are in businesses that are offering essential services (such as grocery shops and pharmacies); (3) workers that have no or little protection in terms of labour rights and social protection; (4) workers who lose their job more generally.

Social partners globally, regionally and nationally are coming together with joint responses with a view to safeguarding sustainable enterprises, employment and livelihoods based on strong social dialogue. The International Organisation of Employers and the International Trade Union Confederation issued a joint statement on 23 March 2020 stressing in particular “in the strongest terms the important role that social dialogue and social partners play in the control of the virus at the workplace and beyond, but also to avoid

massive job losses in the short and medium term. Joint responsibility is needed for dialogue to foster stability”.<sup>22</sup>

At the regional level, the European social partners – Business Europe, European Trade Union Confederation, European Centre of Enterprises with Public Participation and SMEUnited – for example issued a joint statement in response to COVID-19 on 16 March 2020. Amongst other areas, social partners encouraged “Member States' spending and investment particularly to reinforce staff, equipment and means for national health services, social protection systems and other services of general interest”, called for the mobilization of “unused structural funds and other EU funds to support Member States in ensuring financial and income support for workers affected by unemployment or suspension from work, including non-standard workers and self-employed”, and underlined the need to ensure “credit access and financial support for enterprises, especially all types of SMEs, affected by lockdown and emergency measures, with a coordinated intervention from the EU budget, the European Central Bank, the European Investment Bank, and national promotional banks”.<sup>23</sup>

Many other efforts of bipartite social dialogue and joint social partner responses in response to COVID-19 have been documented across the world including in Belgium, Latvia, Morocco, Pakistan, Spain, Sweden and Uganda re-confirming that social partners have a key role to play in mitigating risks and responding to situations of crises.

22 See, Joint Statement on COVID-19 by International Organisation of Employers and International Trade Union Confederation, available at [https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/20200323\\_joint\\_ioe-ituc\\_statement\\_on\\_covid-19.pdf](https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/20200323_joint_ioe-ituc_statement_on_covid-19.pdf) [accessed on 23 March 2020].

23 See, Joint Statement on COVID-19 emergency by European social partners, available at <https://www.etuc.org/en/document/european-social-partners-joint-statement-covid-19> [accessed on 23 March 2020].





# 04

Clerk stocking shelves at a Hero supermarket in Jakarta, Indonesia © ILO/Cassidy K.



## ► Population displacement

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A common feature of conflicts and disasters is the displacement of people who flee their homes and communities. Some are displaced within their country's territory – so-called internally displaced persons (IDPs) – while others cross international borders. According to the International Organization for Migration's World Migration Report 2020, there are currently almost 272 million international migrants globally (around 3.5 per cent of the world's population). The term "migration" encompasses a broader category of people that goes beyond those considered refugees or otherwise forcibly displaced. Many people choose to move across international borders voluntarily. But beyond the prospects of higher wages and a better life, a major factor driving these movements is undoubtedly the threat or onset of conflicts and disasters.

Initiatives to deal with incoming populations, whatever their status, have been spearheaded by unions in some cases, and by EBMOs in others.

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► R205 emphasises *the need to ensure respect for all human rights and the rule of law, including respect for fundamental principles and rights at work and for international labour standards, in particular those rights and principles relevant to employment and decent work* (R205, preamble).

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In **Chile**, for example, it was the *Multigremial de la Salud* (the association that gathers the various unions in the health sector) that, together with the Chilean Government, launched an initiative to teach creole to medical practitioners and related staff following the death of a Haitian man in the emergency room due to his inability to communicate with the hospital personnel. Haiti continues to suffer from political instability, high levels of violence and serious natural disasters such as the 2010 earthquake. As a result, millions of Haitians have sought to leave their home country over the past decade, with the growing Haitian community in Chile numbering more than 105,000 people.<sup>24</sup> Unions have been active in seeking to integrate them into the job market, while also helping to ensure that they are provided with basic public services.

In **Kenya**, it has been notably the FKE that has embarked on efforts to integrate incoming populations into the job market. Beyond the political violence discussed above, the country has also been dealing with climate-related challenges that have given rise to droughts and floods, food shortages, cattle raiding and growing regional disparities.<sup>25</sup> Droughts and floods have a drastic impact on employers and workers due to increases in the costs of living and production, the disruption to work and the ensuing tensions between workers and employers with the potential to trigger ethnic disputes for scarce natural resources. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre estimated the number of IDPs in Kenya in 2018 at around 160,000 people, particularly due to these climate-related phenomena and low-intensity but continuous ethnic violence.<sup>26</sup>

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24 J. Charles, "How Chile is coping with an influx of Haitian migrants", in Miami Herald, 30 March 2018. Available at: <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article201431154.html> [accessed 10 Aug. 2019].

25 A. Linke et al.: "The consequences of relocating in response to drought: Human mobility and conflict in contemporary Kenya", in *Environmental Research Letters*, 2018, Vol. 13, No. 9, pp. 1-9; M. Kilavi et al.: "Extreme rainfall and flooding over Central Kenya including Nairobi City during the long-rains season 2018: Causes, predictability, and potential for early warning and actions", in *Atmosphere*, 2018, Vol. 9, No. 12, pp. 1-30.

26 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, "Country Information", 2019. Available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/kenya> [accessed 2 July 2019].



Beyond IDPs, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that more than 450,000 refugees and asylum-seekers currently live in Kenya, most of them coming from Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>27</sup> Again, the FKE has been active on this front, with its initiatives focusing primarily on providing training and skills, not only to find employment for refugees in Kenya but also to prepare them for their reintegration into their countries of origin one day. As a member of Business Africa, the FKE has identified migration as one of the key components of its agenda for the years ahead.<sup>28</sup>

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► R205 calls on member States to support the livelihoods, training and employment of internally displaced persons, with a view to promoting their socio-economic and labour market integration (para 14 (a)).

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Even when a country is not suffering from conflicts and disasters on its own territory, EBMOs and workers' organizations are often at the forefront of efforts to deal with the inflow of people trying to flee neighbouring states where such events are occurring. **Jordan** is a case in point, with conflicts raging along its borders with Iraq, Syria and the Occupied Palestinian Territory as well as regionally in Lebanon and Yemen. The Jordanian Chamber of Industry (JCI) has been participating in various projects to tackle the massive movements of people, including IDPs, migrants and refugees seeking to flee the dramatic consequences of turbulence and find new opportunities abroad. According to the UNHCR, an estimated 680,000

refugees currently live in Jordan, most of them from Syria but also from Iraq and Yemen.<sup>29</sup>

One challenge facing the JCI has been the design and implementation of measures to incorporate refugees into the Jordanian job market without limiting opportunities for its own labour force in the process.

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► R205 highlights that *Members should consult and engage employers' and workers' organizations and other relevant stakeholders with respect to the access of refugees to labour markets* (para 35).

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Refugees have been working in Jordan in both the formal and informal labour markets.<sup>30</sup> With the support of the ILO, collaborative projects involving the JCI, the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU), the Ministry of Labour and other state agencies, international donors and NGOs have been implemented in the country to regularize migrant workers and refugees while promoting economic growth. In particular, the JCI and the GFJTU have collaborated in the design and roll-out of programmes to manage the Syrian refugee crisis. In 2016, the Jordanian Government committed to issue 200,000 work permits to Syrian refugees by 2021 through the *Jordan Compact*, a multi-party international initiative.<sup>31</sup> Joint JCI-GFJTU projects have included coaching, training and vocational courses in different sectors and the issuing of work permits with the aim of finding suitable and decent jobs for both Syrians and Jordanians.

27 UNHCR, "Kenya Fact Sheet", 2019. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/ke/kenya-operation-monthly-factsheets> [accessed 10/06/2019].

28 Business Africa, *Business Africa Employers Confederation Annual Report 2018*. Available at: <https://www.businessafrica-emp.org/annual-reports/> [accessed 10 July 2019].

29 UNHCR, "Jordan Fact Sheet", May 2019. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/69826.pdf> [accessed 19 Nov. 2019].

30 UNHCR, "Jordan Fact Sheet". The UNHCR keeps up-to-date information about the situation of Syrians refugees in Jordan at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36>. See also: V. Barbelet, J. Hagen-Zanker and D. Mansour-Ille: *The Jordan Compact: Lessons learnt and implications for future refugee compacts*, Briefing Papers – February 2018 (London, ODI, 2018); Norwegian Refugee Council, Jordan Fact Sheet, September 2019. [https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/fact-sheets/2019/q3/factsheet\\_jordan\\_sep2019.pdf](https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/fact-sheets/2019/q3/factsheet_jordan_sep2019.pdf) [accessed 20 October 2019]. For detailed information about the ILO programmes in Jordan see: <https://www.ilo.org/beirut/countries/jordan/lang--en/index.htm> [accessed 20 June 2019].

31 Government of Jordan: *The Jordan Compact: A New Holistic Approach between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the International Community to deal with the Syrian Refugee Crisis*, 2016. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/jordan-compact-new-holistic-approach-between-hashemite-kingdom-jordan-and> [accessed 10 May 2019]. For an analysis and review of the evolution of the Jordan Compact see also: V. Barbelet, J. Hagen-Zanker and D. Mansour-Ille: *The Jordan Compact: Lessons learnt and implications for future refugee compacts*, Briefing Papers – February 2018 (London, ODI, 2018); International Rescue Committee, *The Jordan Compact: Evidence Based Policy Review – April 2017*. Available at: <https://www.rescue.org/report/jordan-compact-evidence-based-policy-review-april-2017> [accessed 10 May 2019].



Nepal © ILO/Crozet M.

Vocational training (for instance, in the carpentry business) and subsequent support to find jobs have been at the core of the initiatives. These programmes, which seek to promote social cohesion and peaceful co-existence, have so far created more than 130,000 jobs in the agricultural, manufacturing and infrastructure sectors.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, the ILO has been fostering more concrete collaboration between employers and workers' organizations through

its *Partnership for improving prospects for host communities and forcibly displaced persons (PROSPECT)* programme that deals with forced displacement in eight countries in the MENA region and the East/Horn of Africa. Commitment and cooperation of social partners have been secured from the onset of the programme and they have been consulted in the preliminary missions and involved in joint visits to camps, for example.

32 ILO: *ILO Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Jordan: Programme of Support to the Jordan Compact. Progress Report 2018* (Geneva, ILO, 2019). See also: ILO programmes in Jordan at: <https://www.ilo.org/beirut/countries/jordan/lang--en/index.htm> [accessed 20 June 2019].





▶ 05

Islamabad: Over 200 victims in the collapse of the Margalla Towers building during the earthquake of 8<sup>th</sup> October 2005, Pakistan © ILO/Crozet, M.



## ▶ Concluding reflections

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If effective bipartite action across EBMOs and workers' organizations is already a challenge in the best of times, one might argue, conflicts and disasters make that challenge greater. Being equipped with strong institutional capacities and an enabling legal framework based on the principles of freedom of association in such settings is thus a key tenet for using constructive social dialogue and contributing to social cohesion. Yet one could also argue that it is in such crisis settings that the potential for actors in the world of work to make a significant contribution is at its highest. All have a vested interest in peace and stability. What is more, EBMOs and workers' organizations have a huge mobilization potential through their members: either to lobby for legislative and constitutional changes in favour of business continuity and the workforce, or to act swiftly and effectively when humanitarian assistance and reconstruction efforts are required.

One theme that stands out in the preceding analysis is that workers' organizations tend to be far more fragmented than EBMOs, and in times of war are often split along conflict lines. Promoting cooperation within workers' organizations would therefore appear to be a vital precondition for sustaining peace. In disaster settings, a lack of coordination also stands in the way of a swift and effective response.

A further theme related to the potential for workers' organizations to mobilize is the fact that, in many conflict-affected "fragile" countries, unions are limited to only a few sectors such as the civil service and are absent in the sectors where most of the peacebuilding is needed to dispel tensions and promote inclusivity. If workers employed by foreign-owned companies, for example, or those in the small and medium-sized sector or informal economy are not represented, large parts of the population cannot be targeted for effective lobbying or mobilization.

Similarly, the capacity of EBMOs vary widely. Some have experience and existing functions or mandates to provide valued services needed by enterprises in disaster or conflict zones and partner with workers' organizations as mediators in the peace process while others have limited capacity to undertake even basic services.

Additionally, EBMOs may face difficulties with retaining membership and representing business interest as the economic structure and the formal economy may be damaged. Enterprise activities may also focus on quick gains rather than longer-term investment leading to the erosion or downscaling of the private sector and high levels of informal employment.

For both EBMOs and workers' organizations, transnational cooperation is key, either through learning from experiences in comparable settings or by collaboration through regional forums. For workers' organizations, long-term collaborations include the well-established Baltic Sea Trade Union Network involving 22 organizations with over 20 million members, and the Organization of African Trade Union Unity, 73 affiliates in 53 countries with a combined membership of over 25 million workers. For EBMOs, comparable forums include the network of employer organizations of UEMOA.

Another commonality of the cases discussed above is the spontaneous action taken by EBMOs and workers' organizations and – the fact that they mobilized without waiting to be given a formal mandate. This proactive way of intervening may serve as an inspiration for organizations around the world to think about the risk profile of their country context and their potential role in preventing, responding to or contributing to recovery in the event of conflict or disaster. If such reflections involve bipartite collaboration, the results may be even stronger.

There are many opportunities for the world of work to feature in efforts to act in the face of crises. Some of these, including the establishment of dialogue platforms, strengthening economic relations and promoting joint ventures have been touched upon by this report. But most importantly, perhaps, is the continuity of the bipartite exchanges beyond periods of crisis. Given the cyclical nature of many conflicts and disasters, it is important to establish and foster trust relationships in times of peace and stability. Only then can mechanisms be put in place that can prevent or at least weaken the effects of crises when they do occur, and make sure that social dialogue is at the heart of common efforts to build peaceful and inclusive societies for current and future generations.

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▶ **Contact:**

**Bureau for Workers' Activities  
(ACTRAV)**

International Labour Office  
Route des Morillons 4  
CH-1211 Geneva 22  
Switzerland

Tel. +41 22 799 70 21  
e-mail: [actrav@ilo.org](mailto:actrav@ilo.org)

**Bureau for Employers' Activities  
(ACT/EMP)**

International Labour Office  
Route des Morillons 4  
CH-1211 Geneva 22  
Switzerland

Tel. +41 22 799 77 48  
e-mail: [actemp@ilo.org](mailto:actemp@ilo.org)