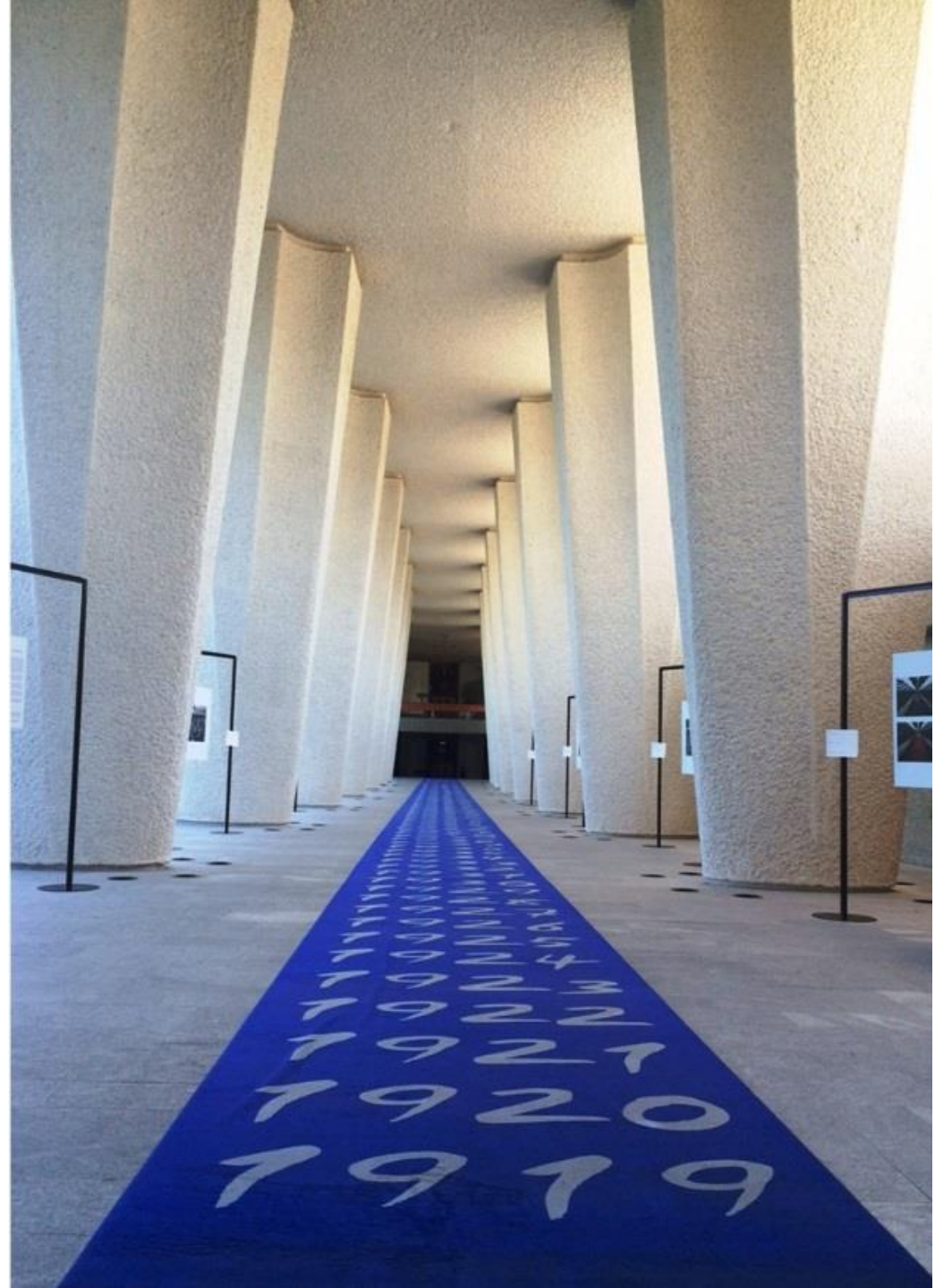


# Cooperatives at the 106th Session of the ILC



Cooperatives Unit  
June, 2017



# Main items on the agenda

- Labour migration (general discussion)
- A recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of fundamental principles and rights at work
- Employment and decent work for peace and resilience: Revision of the Employment (Transition from War to Peace) Recommendation, 1944 (No. 71) (Standard setting, second discussion)



# What is a cooperative?

“A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise”- Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation (No.193)

*Statement on the Cooperative Identity, Adopted by the General Assembly of the International Co-operative Alliance in 1995*

*Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No.193)*



# Labour migration: opportunities & challenges

- Employment is one of the main drivers for the movement;
- Many migrant workers are found in sectors such as domestic work, manufacturing, construction and agriculture;
- Labour migration brings benefits to migrant workers and their families through remittances, exposure to new education, skills & know-how;
- Migrant workers, especially the less-skilled, continue to suffer from significant decent work deficits, such as:
  - excessive recruitment service fees;
  - denial of fundamental principles and rights at work;
  - withholding of wages for travel, living expenses & other wage penalties;
  - poor conditions of work;
  - lack of social protection.



# Cooperatives and labour migration 1



- “Migrant workers and members of their families (...) should enjoy effective equality of opportunity and treatment with nationals of the Member concerned in respect of rights of full membership in any form of co-operative”: Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975 (No. 151)
- Migrant workers can benefit from a wide range of services from cooperatives e.g. financial services, education, housing, trade, social services, job placement
- Financial cooperatives can help leverage the role of remittances in Africa:  
when remittances are made through credit cooperatives or community-based microfinance institutions they provide a valuable capital for small-scale business and could be an engine for growth

(Sources: AfDB, IOM, World Bank, IMF)

# Cooperatives and labour migration 2



- Migrants benefit from coop services in host countries

E.g.: Social coops in Italy provide immigrants job placement, language and other orientation services, in Germany housing cooperatives provide housing allocations

- Migrants can create their own coops in the host countries

E.g.: The case of “Subiendo al Sur” in Spain composed mostly of immigrants from Peru (restaurant, a store and a catering service in Madrid)

- They can join existing coops in the host country

E.g.: Domestic workers (including migrants) in South Africa setting up a cooperative with support from a union

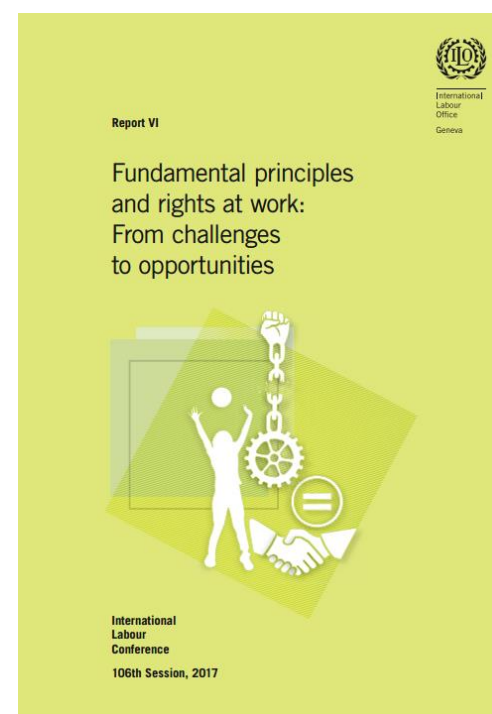
- They can join coops back home while still in the host country

E.g.: Housing cooperatives in Turkey joined by migrant workers in Europe

# Fundamental principles and rights at work: From challenges to opportunities 1

Adopted in 1998, the Declaration commits Member States to respect and promote principles and rights in four categories, whether or not they have ratified the relevant Conventions:

- freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- the elimination of forced or compulsory labour;
- the abolition of child labour; and
- the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation



# Fundamental principles and rights at work: From challenges to opportunities 2

In many African countries, the economic and social context that provides the background to trends in FPRW has been challenging:

- In Sub-Saharan Africa, over 70 per cent of workers are in vulnerable employment (higher risk for women). In 2017, the number of unemployed is expected to reach 30.4 millions in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- With 18 per cent (3.7 million) the continent accounts for the second largest share of forced labour (including human trafficking);
- Northern Africa has the highest regional youth unemployment rate in the world (close to 30 per cent in 2015);
- The informal economy in the region contributes 60–80 per cent of employment and 90 per cent of new jobs;
- Sub-Saharan Africa has the second highest income inequality in the world.

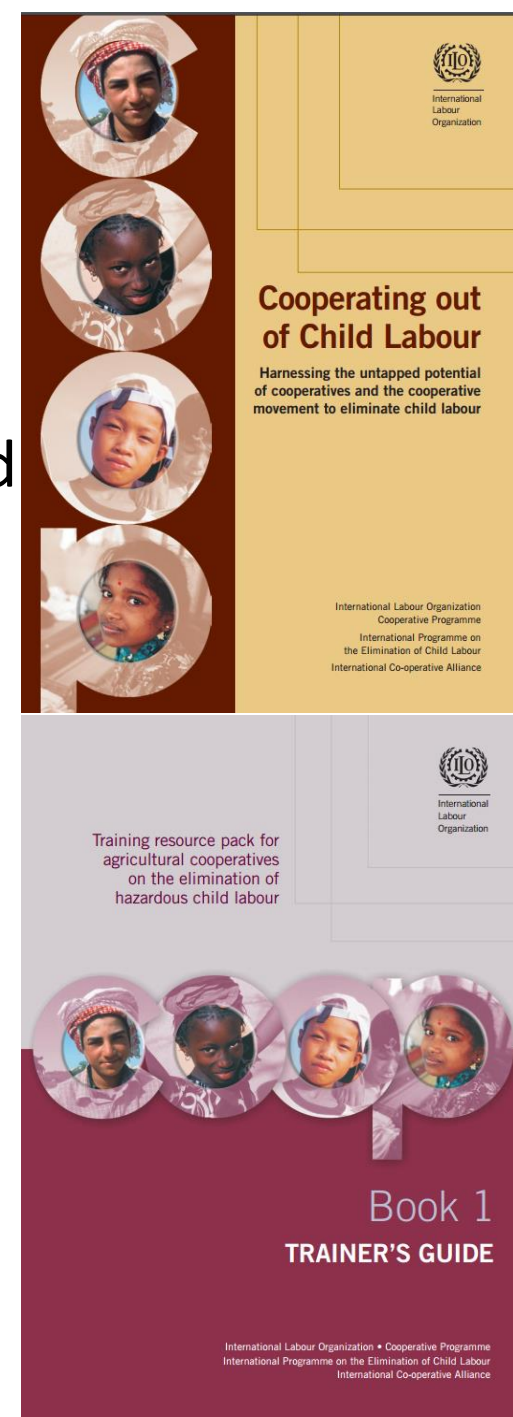
# Cooperatives and FPRW

- In Africa cooperatives provide over 7 million jobs
- Like any other businesses, coops have an obligation to comply with responsible labour practices
- Business practices that do not comply with FPRW are not aligned with coop values of equality, solidarity, social responsibility or caring for others
- Ways cooperatives engage in advancing FPRW include:
  - engaging in community mobilization and awareness-raising campaigns among their members and within their communities on FPRW,
  - ensuring that their own business operations are free of labour rights abuses,
  - promoting livelihoods opportunities within the guidelines of FPRW



# Cooperativeness & FPRW: Case of child labour

- Agriculture remains the sector where most child labour is found:  
**98 million (59 per cent) of all working children are in agriculture**
- In Africa, coops are mostly in agriculture, improving the livelihoods and wellbeing of people in rural areas
- Coupled with their commitment to social responsibility this allows them to play a potentially important role in eliminating worst forms of child labour
- In Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania & Zambia, greater awareness within coop members and support structures about child labour was raised through:
  - Information campaigns
  - Action plans for joint implementation,
  - Integrating child labour in cooperative colleges' curricula
  - Training guide and report on "Cooperating out of Child Labour"
- Ongoing work in Malawi



# Employment and decent work for peace & resilience – the cooperative advantage 1



- Self-help and mutual aid approaches are among the most sustainable solutions in post-crisis and post-disaster situations.
- In these circumstances self-help organizations such as cooperatives have a valuable role to play in terms of pooling know-how and resources, sharing risks and responsibilities and ensuring collective voice among those most likely to be severely affected by a crisis.
- The role of cooperatives can range from developing supply, credit and marketing systems through agricultural cooperatives, to creating employment to refugees in camps and resettling ex-combatants through artisanal, industrial and workers' cooperatives.

# Employment and decent work for peace & resilience – the cooperative advantage 2



Example of ILO project with ex-combatants in DRC (2009-2012):

- 10,000 ex-combatants and their families integrated into communities in five provinces through promoting self-employment and the promotion of micro-enterprises, including through cooperatives
- Project beneficiaries received vocational training and installation assistance (e.g. bicycles & professional kits)
- Focus on strengthening cooperatives of ex-combatants, former child soldiers and members of the host communities (2,877 ex-combatants in 217 cooperatives)
- Cooperatives were seen as an important vehicle not only for improving employment and livelihoods opportunities, but also for rebuilding social cohesion and improving community collaboration (integrating host community members into cooperatives with ex-combatants)

# Thank you!



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