



Governing Body

346th Session, Geneva, October–November 2022

Institutional Section

INS

Date: 14 October 2022

Original: English

Final report on the implementation of the ILO programme of action on decent work in global supply chains 2017–21

Summary: This document describes Office activities to implement the ILO programme of action on decent work in global supply chains since the midterm report submitted to the Governing Body at its 337th Session.

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Related documents: GB.328/INS/5/1(Add.); GB.337/INS/12/2; GB.337/INS/4; GB.341/INS/13/2; GB.344/INS/18(Rev.1); GB.346/INS/6; GB.346/POL/5.

▶ Background

1. The ILO programme of action on decent work in global supply chains followed on from the resolution and conclusions concerning decent work in global supply chains adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 105th Session (2016), and subsequent Governing Body discussions about appropriate follow-up to the resolution. Following guidance from the Governing Body and joint guidance points from the Employers' and Workers' groups, a proposed five-year programme of action was revised and consolidated into one final document in August 2017.
2. The ILO programme of action on decent work in global supply chains (programme of action) adapted the 2016 resolution's wide-ranging agenda to reduce decent work deficits and increase opportunities for productive and decent jobs for women and men in supply chains. It was structured around five areas of action:
 - knowledge generation and dissemination;
 - capacity-building for the tripartite constituents and enterprises;
 - effective advocacy for decent work in global supply chains;
 - policy advice and technical assistance; and
 - partnerships and policy coherence.
3. These areas of action were organized around 30 deliverables and 95 key activities.
4. In addition to the deliverables, the programme of action included three meetings requested by the Governing Body on topics mentioned in the resolution: export processing zones, cross-border social dialogue, and the question of whether existing ILO standards were fit for the purpose of achieving decent work in global supply chains. The Tripartite Meeting of Experts to Promote Decent Work and Protection of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work for Workers in Export Processing Zones (EPZs) took place in November 2017, with the aim of identifying possible actions to promote decent work and protection of fundamental principles and rights at work for workers in export processing zones. The [conclusions to promote decent work and protection of fundamental principles and rights at work for workers in EPZs](#) were endorsed by the Governing Body at its 332nd Session in March 2018, with several recommended follow-up action areas subsequently implemented and reported below.
5. A [tripartite Meeting of Experts on Cross-border Social Dialogue](#) was held in February 2019, with [conclusions](#) endorsed by the Governing Body at its 337th Session in October–November 2019. The meeting analysed contemporary experiences, challenges and trends characterizing cross-border social dialogue initiatives, as well as the role and value added of the ILO in this area. Follow-up actions are described below.
6. A Technical Meeting on Achieving Decent Work in Global Supply Chains was held in February 2020, in line with the issues raised in paragraph 25(c) of the 2016 [resolution](#). The meeting did not adopt any conclusions, as explained in the [report](#) submitted to the Governing Body's 341st Session (2021).
7. In October 2019, the Office provided a midterm report updating the Governing Body on its progress and proposing a way forward for the second half of the programme's

implementation. The Governing Body requested the Office to continue to implement the programme of action as outlined in the midterm report.

8. The rest of this document discusses relevant Office activities under each of the programme of action's five action areas, with a focus on key activities since the midterm report, and offers concluding observations.

▶ Knowledge generation and dissemination

9. The objective of this action area was to ensure that the ILO has the necessary knowledge and research capacity to support constituents with evidence-based advice on global supply chains that will help them shape effective policies and strategies for achieving decent work. In line with the [decision](#) taken by the Governing Body at its 328th Session (2016) and as detailed in the Office's midterm report, knowledge and research were prioritized during the first two years of the programme of action, with the Office conducting a [research review](#) and an independent [synthesis review](#) of interventions in supply chains, mapping research methodologies used by the ILO in supply chains work, and forming a supply chains research working group.
10. The programme of action acknowledged the need for more and better data on supply chains, notably through supply chain mapping. Research conducted by the Vision Zero Fund has expanded ILO knowledge regarding occupational safety and health in supply chains in multiple countries, recently summarized in two synthesis reports on drivers and constraints for occupational safety and health improvements in global [garment](#) and [agricultural](#) supply chains. Work by the Vision Zero Fund includes research on the impact of [COVID-19](#) and [climate change](#) on occupational safety and health in these sectors. Country-specific research in the fishing, textile and garment, coffee and electronics industries has also been completed as part of the technical cooperation project [Sustainable supply chains to build forward better](#). An Office [research report on home working](#) discussed the particular situation of industrial homeworkers in the global supply chains of the apparel, electronics and houseware industries, who are generally in the informal economy. The report also reviewed possible approaches to address the decent work deficits these workers face. Data analysis by the [Decent work in the garment sector supply chains in Asia](#) project assessed employment, wages and productivity in the Asian garment sector to highlight trends, patterns and ways forward for a better future of work.
11. Background papers for sectoral meetings, for example on the [future of work in the automotive industry](#) or the [future of work in aquaculture in the context of the rural economy](#) have also considered supply chain issues.
12. The Office has continued to improve knowledge on [child labour](#) in supply chains, in particular at the level of production and extraction of raw materials, including in cacao, chestnut, cobalt, coffee, cotton, gold, hazelnuts, palm oil, sugar cane, tea, vanilla and wheat. Following the 2019 publication of the first [global estimates](#) on child labour, forced labour and human trafficking in global supply chains by the [Alliance 8.7 Action Group on Supply Chains](#), the Office continued to refine its methodology for statistical analysis on the prevalence of child and forced labour in supply chains in selected sectors.
13. Plans to pilot a comprehensive supply chain mapping methodology building on previous work conducted by the ILO and work done under the umbrella of Alliance 8.7 were significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as much field work had to be put on hold. However, since the fourth quarter of 2021, the Office has begun piloting its network-sampling-based

approach to supply chain mapping in Viet Nam's electronics sector. The highly technical work relies on close collaboration with relevant government agencies and the social partners and, within the ILO, coordination among several projects supporting constituents in the country's electronics sector. In 2023, the Office will roll out the full sector-wide mapping in Viet Nam and will seek to implement this methodology elsewhere, with a view to establishing a uniform supply chain mapping approach that, in surveying the range of decent work deficits and opportunities, will provide the foundation for a needs-based, holistic, and collective action approach to supply chain interventions, in line with the way forward described in the October 2019 midterm report on the implementation of the programme of action. In the meantime, most large-scale Office supply chain mapping continues to focus on specific thematic priorities, such as occupational safety and health, child labour or forced labour, rather than a holistic assessment.

14. With respect to trade, a significant contribution has been made by the Office's research programme on [Integrating trade and decent work](#), which includes a [hub](#) on labour provisions in trade agreements. Two volumes on trade and decent work are to be published in the fourth quarter of 2022, covering the labour market impacts of trade, and case studies (Volume 1) and macro policies for promoting trade and decent work (Volume 2).
15. Given that the massive health, economic and jobs crisis unleashed by the COVID-19 pandemic was frequently felt through supply chains, the Office also investigated the interactions between COVID-19 and supply chains. Throughout the pandemic and recovery phases, the ILO's COVID-19 Monitor and dedicated COVID-19 [portal](#) assembled a wealth of knowledge and guidance for constituents that frequently included a supply chain angle, particularly on [sector-specific issues](#). At the global level, in 2020 and 2021 the Office published significant research and policy briefs, including [COVID-19, vaccinations and consumer demand: How jobs are affected through global supply chains](#) and [COVID-19 and global supply chains: How the jobs crisis propagates across borders](#).
16. Regionally focused [briefs](#) looked at the effects of supply chains on economically vital sectors. Forthcoming comparative research includes findings on differences between countries in South-East Asia and other countries in the associations of various value chain activities with the employment shares of different workers, the role of backward and forward value chain participation, and shifts in labour demand between different categories of workers. Other forthcoming work will include examinations of various national and international responses and lessons learned.
17. Better Work continued to collect worker- and enterprise-level data throughout the pandemic, which have shed light on the situation of garment workers who were isolated, or who temporarily or permanently lost their jobs. This evidence on how garment-producing countries responded to the pandemic has been widely disseminated, along with other [knowledge products](#).
18. In 2021, the Office created a [supply chains topic portal](#) on the ILO web page. The topic portal acts as a central resource facility, highlighting ILO research and major publications, and providing relevant Governing Body and International Labour Conference information. It links to ILO projects and services as well as to supply chains content available via the ILO Library. Separately, in line with the conclusions on cross-border social dialogue, the Office initiated the development of a one-stop knowledge portal on cross-border social dialogue. The portal will compile information on public and private processes and initiatives that generate opportunities for governments and representatives of employers and workers to engage in

cross-border social dialogue, and will also feature a database on transnational company agreements. It is expected to be available in early 2023.

▶ Capacity-building

19. During the second half of the programme of action, improving the capacity of tripartite constituents remained a major focus of implementation activities. This section covers activities since the midterm report. To more clearly differentiate this action area from policy advice and technical assistance, this section primarily deals with tools, guidance and training developed for constituents and other stakeholders.
20. The Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) provided the framework for a substantial amount of training and tools relevant to supply chains. Resources for much of this work came through two projects promoting responsible business conduct in [Latin America and the Caribbean](#) and [Asia – China](#).
21. In collaboration with the International Training Centre of the ILO (Turin Centre), the Office has offered three standard annual courses: (1) a course for tripartite constituents on the MNE Declaration and its operational tools to assist them in applying the principles of the MNE Declaration in relation to trade, investment, supply chains and responsible business conduct; (2) a course on the labour dimension of human rights due diligence to assist primarily companies in conducting due diligence in accordance with the MNE Declaration, but also to assist governments and social partners in their supporting role to companies conducting due diligence; (3) a course for investment promotion agencies on attracting foreign direct investment that contributes to decent work and is aligned with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) priorities. (See also the discussion of export processing zones below.)
22. The annual Turin Centre [e-Academy on Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations](#) includes modules aimed at training ILO constituents and other stakeholders in national and cross-border social dialogue to promote fundamental principles and rights at work, human rights due diligence and sound industrial relations in supply chains.
23. In 2019, the Office introduced a [training module](#) aimed at small and medium-sized enterprises designed to increase their understanding of the international frameworks at the origin of key concepts in responsible business conduct, the content of private codes of conduct and the different areas covered by social compliance audits, and to provide guidance on what steps enterprises can take to improve their respect for international principles and compliance with national law and corporate codes. Demonstrating that respecting workers' rights and improving working conditions can be part of competitive business strategy is a key aspect of the training.
24. Also in collaboration with the Turin Centre and in partnership with the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and a number of other organizations, the ILO developed a massive online open course (MOOC) on [How enterprises contribute to achieve decent work for all \(SDG 8\)](#). More than 1,200 participants from 114 countries registered for the MOOC for the inaugural course in autumn 2021. The course provided participants with a clear understanding of how enterprises can contribute to the Decent Work Agenda and to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, introduced the MNE Declaration as a framework for dialogue and action, raised awareness of the importance of policy coherence for the realization of decent work for all, and promoted

understanding of the “smart mix” of measures and initiatives that can stimulate business contribution to decent work for all.

25. The [ILO Helpdesk for Business on International Labour Standards](#) (ILO Helpdesk) is the one-stop shop for enterprises and workers on how to better align business operations with international labour standards and build good industrial relations. It provides links to relevant tools and resources, training opportunities and ILO business networks, and responds to questions related to respect by business of principles of international labour standards. The ILO Helpdesk provides information on the relationship between international labour standards and national labour laws and country ratification information. Helpdesk experience is incorporated into other ILO training materials.
26. In Asia, the ILO has: hosted seminars on responsible business conduct and decent work in global supply chains for [university students](#) and [future business leaders](#); helped coordinate tripartite dialogue on decent work in the Philippine [coconut, pineapple and banana industries](#); co-organized workshops on advancing international labour standards and socially responsible labour practices in the “[belt and road initiative](#)”; and held seminars on wages and working time for Viet Nam’s [electronics industry](#). Building capacity for government constituents included guidance on [strategic labour inspection](#) in supply chains, with specific activities earmarked for inspection in export processing zones, for example in the Philippines.
27. In Latin America, efforts featured: [virtual training](#) for Chilean labour inspectors, with a focus on the fundamental principles and rights at work in supply chains, particularly child labour and forced labour; a pilot training programme for Chile’s [winemaking industry](#) (in Spanish); and guidance for public prosecutors in Costa Rica.
28. For the Africa region, in 2021 the Office hosted a three-week virtual training course on “Multinational enterprises, development and decent work: The approach of the MNE Declaration” for 40 participants (government, national employers’ and workers’ organizations and social dialogue institutions) from the Member States of the West African Economic and Monetary Union. A follow-up webinar in 2022 aimed to help participants take the next steps on national-level activities.
29. In February 2022, the ILO and the IOE published a jointly developed [self-assessment tool](#) for enterprises based on the provisions of the MNE Declaration in three languages. The tool helps companies assess how their current policies and practices align with the principles of the MNE Declaration and encourages management to have meaningful consultations with workers or their organizations in this process of assessing and identifying areas for improvement. The self-assessment tool covers all areas of the MNE Declaration and guides the user to the ILO Helpdesk for additional resources on specific topics.
30. The Office’s work on wages and working conditions also contributed to supply chains as an entry point for decent work. As part of a project to strengthen the capacity of governments and social partners to negotiate and set [adequate wage levels](#), the ILO developed indicators and methodologies to estimate the needs of workers and their families, along with other economic factors. The project produced studies and provided capacity-building for setting adequate wages in Costa Rica, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia and Viet Nam, including in supply chains, focusing in particular on the banana, coffee and tea sectors.
31. Thematic information aimed at enterprises included topical briefings, such as [Nine Business Practices for Improving Safety and Health Through Supply Chains and Building a Culture of Prevention and Protection](#), developed in partnership with the United Nations (UN) Global Compact. Other supply chain resources for enterprises included [Supplier guidance on](#)

preventing, identifying and addressing child labour by the ILO Child Labour Platform. A brief on the [guidance of the MNE Declaration](#) to address the root causes of child labour was timed for a dedicated supply chains session at the 2022 Durban 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour.

► Effective advocacy for decent work in global supply chains

32. Under the programme of action, effective advocacy for decent work in global supply chains was defined in terms of effective dialogue and action by the ILO and its constituents to advance decent work in supply chains, concentrating on countries and sectors with significant decent work deficits. Outputs were focused on advocacy and communications around key policy messages, notably on the fundamental principles and rights at work, fair recruitment, occupational safety and health, and working conditions issues, including to promote ratification and effective implementation of specific Conventions. The action area also includes support for effective national and cross-border social dialogue when requested.
33. As was noted in the [Gap analysis of ILO normative and non-normative measures to ensure decent work in supply chains](#), ratified Conventions, Protocols and Recommendations apply to workers regardless of supply chain relationship. Generally speaking, the Office's work to promote ratification and effective implementation did not depend specifically on the programme of action. In many cases, the strongest links between ILO standards and supply chain work fell under trade-related policy advice and technical assistance.
34. A significant share of programme of action work under this action area aligned with the Office's regular work to promote international labour standards or intersected with other campaigns. For example, the Office began preparing a major ratification drive for the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), in advance of and following the adoption of the [resolution on the inclusion of a safe and healthy working environment in the ILO's framework of fundamental principles and rights at work](#) at the 110th Session (2022) of the International Labour Conference.
35. The programme of action included a specific deliverable on promoting the ratification and implementation of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), the Consultation (Industrial and National Levels) Recommendation, 1960 (No. 113), and the Tripartite Consultation (Activities of the International Labour Organisation) Recommendation, 1976 (No. 152). The primary avenue for this has been Office promotion of the MNE Declaration and technical support to Member States in the establishment of national focal points or similar processes following tripartite social dialogue, taking guidance from Convention No. 144.
36. The programme of action foresaw the promotion of the ILO *General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment* in ILO development cooperation programmes such as the [Fair Recruitment Initiative](#). This was done in countries such as Guatemala, Jordan, Mexico, Nepal, Tunisia, the Philippines and Uzbekistan, benefiting constituents and migrants working in different tiers of supply chains. In this programme, the ILO has focused on different sectors and supply chains, for example agriculture in Guatemala and Mexico, and garments in Jordan and Nepal. Part of the project has focused on expanding knowledge and advocacy on the role of the [labour inspectorate](#) in ensuring fair recruitment, including peer-to-peer knowledge-

sharing. A technical brief on [Labour inspection and monitoring of recruitment of migrant workers](#) is currently feeding into the development of training materials with the Turin Centre.

37. Likewise, the programme of action outlined specific attention to fair recruitment issues in activities addressing business. To that end, the ILO's [REFRAME](#) and [FAIR](#) projects collaborated with the [Global Business Network on Forced Labour](#) to produce a [guide for business](#) on due diligence in fair recruitment; other projects also developed country-specific [tools](#) (in Spanish) on the same subject. The Office has published [training material](#) to promote and guide business and private sector stakeholders in understanding and applying fair recruitment principles in their business processes and operations.
38. Initiatives and platforms such as the [Child Labour Platform](#), the Global Business Network on Forced Labour and [Alliance 8.7](#) have been important venues through which to advocate and raise awareness of the importance of the ratification and effective implementation of international labour standards, and to help elucidate the relationship of standards implementation with decent work in supply chains. These efforts have also helped increase interaction between ILO constituents and other stakeholders, and helped shape the agenda of and raise the profile of events such as the [5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour](#), which had several sessions devoted to supply chains. For the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, employers' organizations and enterprises submitted over 100 [pledges](#) to tackle child labour in a wide range of supply chains, a third of all pledges submitted. The [Durban Call to Action](#) adopted during the Conference called for a series of measures to combat child labour and forced labour in supply chains.
39. The MNE Declaration has been a valuable advocacy and communications tool to promote social dialogue. In addition to promoting national tripartite social dialogue, it has the capacity to foster cross-border social dialogue in the form of dialogue between home and host governments of multinational enterprises, as well as between multinational enterprises and workers' organizations. It has also proved relevant in light of the responsibility of enterprises to conduct due diligence, which is stipulated in the MNE Declaration and the UN *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*.

► Policy advice and technical assistance

40. This section describes policy advice and technical assistance delivered to specific constituents, countries or stakeholders, often through supply chain development cooperation programmes.
41. As requested in the programme of action, the ILO organizes an annual course on the MNE Declaration and its operational tools for Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) national contact points for responsible business conduct. The course assists national contact points dealing with labour-related specific instances in company operations, including with respect to supply chains and due diligence requirements. The training also enables home-host country dialogues, by facilitating exchanges between national contact points and national focal points for the promotion of the MNE Declaration. As noted in the document "Taking stock five years after the adoption of the revised Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy" ([GB.346/POL/5](#)), the ILO has also facilitated six company-union dialogue procedures.
42. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Ethiopia and Tunisia, SCORE Training is being incorporated into supplier development programmes of public and private small and medium-sized enterprise service providers to improve productivity, working conditions and linkages to

international supply chains. In Ethiopia, this is done as part of [SIRAYE: A programme on Advancing Decent Work and inclusive industrialization in Ethiopia](#), the “One ILO” programme initially supporting the garment and textiles sector.

43. The ILO has provided significant assistance to constituents to strengthen their capacity to eliminate child and forced labour, using supply chains as an entry point to advance decent work, in more than 15 countries, including in projects such as [ACCEL Africa](#), [Entr’Alliance](#), [CLEAR Cotton](#) and [COTECCO](#). ACCEL Africa, for example, has worked to organize workers in the lower tiers of tea and coffee supply chains as a means of reducing child labour, expanded financial inclusion to upstream workers in the cotton and gold supply chains, and developed strategies to raise awareness among Dutch coffee retailers. In Uzbekistan, ILO [third-party monitoring](#) contributed to the elimination of systemic child labour and forced labour during the 2021 cotton harvest. In Malaysia, the ILO and the Malaysian Rubber Council published [A practical guide for Malaysian employers](#) on addressing, preventing and eliminating forced labour in the rubber industry as part of the [Sustainable Supply Chains to Build Forward Better](#) project.
44. Under a project to promote a sustainable and resilient [natural stone industry in Rajasthan](#), a state-wide strategy was developed to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the sector. In the coffee supply chain in Honduras, a project worked with constituents to design a national strategy to eliminate child labour and forced labour, while the Vision Zero Fund worked with constituents to [improve occupational safety and health](#) in the coffee supply chain in Honduras and elsewhere in Latin America. In Colombia, the ILO supported the creation of a space for dialogue specific to the coffee supply chain to promote decent work and productivity in the sector. The Vision Zero Fund is also implementing a project to improve occupational safety and health in the tomato and chili pepper supply chains in Mexico. This project also addresses the impact on workers’ safety and health of heat stress induced by climate change.
45. In Namibia, the Office helped the Namibian Maritime and Fisheries Institute organize training for [labour inspectors](#) on basic safety and other issues to help prepare inspectors to inspect occupational safety and health and labour conditions on board fishing vessels, held workshops to sensitize constituents to the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), and helped establish a strategic compliance task team.
46. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a greater recognition of the key role played by transport workers in the operation of supply chains. Measures by public health and border control authorities and others to prevent the spread of the virus led to serious and long-lasting challenges to decent work for transport workers. Restrictions on travel, access to medical care ashore in foreign ports, and other actions were in violation of the obligations of States which had ratified the ILO’s Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006). The Office engaged extensively with constituents, as well as other UN specialized agencies, to draw global attention to these violations and ensure full compliance with the Convention. The Office continues to carry on the work of protecting transport workers in supply chains through a [Joint Action Group](#).
47. The pandemic helped drive new assistance efforts as well as changes to existing signature programmes in supply chains. For example, during the pandemic Better Work adapted its enterprise-level services to address constituents’ changing needs, including a greater focus on occupational safety and health. Several ILO programmes adapted delivery mechanisms using new technology, including using virtual technologies to train thousands of enterprises virtually and to train constituents to scale coverage of enterprises.
48. The pandemic raised awareness of the weakness of many social protection systems. In close collaboration with business and workers’ associations, and following tripartite consultations

on the design and implementation modalities, the Office has begun implementation of income security schemes in response to COVID-19 for workers and factories in the garment sector in Bangladesh and Cambodia.

► Partnerships and policy coherence

49. The Office has for some time prioritized policy coherence in the multilateral system, but national-level coherence is no less important. Though the ILO's lack of a comprehensive strategy on supply chains has sometimes hindered its ability to take a leading role, the Office continued to engage actively when appropriate opportunities arose, and recent regulatory trends on mandatory human rights due diligence have provided the Office with some opportunities to promote policy coherence. Meanwhile, collaborations with the private sector through public-private partnerships (PPPs) have helped to expand the ILO's reach in supply chains.
50. Several multilateral forums – though sometimes modified or postponed due to the pandemic – offered opportunities for the Office to build partnerships and promote policy coherence. These include the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) annual UN Forum on Business and Human Rights, along with regional business and human rights forums. These forums, in which the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights take centre stage, are important venues to highlight the alignment between the Guiding Principles, international labour standards, and the MNE Declaration as a framework for ILO interventions in supply chains.
51. Likewise, the Office regularly participates in and contributes to OECD forums promoting due diligence and responsible business conduct. While there were fewer opportunities to participate in public events in 2020 and 2021, the Office has continued to participate in annual global forums hosted by the OECD on responsible business conduct and [due diligence](#) in specific sectors. The Office will also support OECD colleagues with its expertise as they undertake an update of the [OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises](#).
52. In addition to the brochure produced jointly with the OHCHR, European Union and the OECD explaining the leading international frameworks associated with supply chains, [Responsible Business: Key Messages from International Instruments](#), the shared interest in policy coherence led to the development, with the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, of an additional guidance document for constituents, [The linkages between international labour standards, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights](#). Other aspects of the ILO's partnership with the OECD include a chapter on informality and global value chains in a report entitled "Informality: In Search of a New Social Contract" to be published at the end of 2022. At country level, these partnerships with the OHCHR and the OECD are further reinforced by development cooperation programmes on responsible business conduct, such as those mentioned above.
53. The conclusions of the Tripartite Meeting of Experts to Promote Decent Work and Protection of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work for Workers in Export Processing Zones included an emphasis on collaboration and coordination with international organizations. Collaboration with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) has been particularly productive. The ILO and UNCTAD undertook a review of the labour policies of government-managed zones, [Enhancing the Contribution of Export Processing Zones to SDG 8 on Decent Work and Inclusive Economic](#)

Growth: A review of 100 zones, which was launched at the World Trade Organization's 2019 Public Forum. Since then, the ILO and UNCTAD have expanded their partnership to support "sustainable zones", with the MNE Declaration deployed as the central instrument for involving ILO constituents in export processing zone policy discussions.

54. Similarly, since signing a memorandum of understanding with WAIPA in 2016, the ILO has built on and broadened this relationship with respect to export processing zones. The MNE Declaration has been the foundation for a course on investment promotion, with similar agencies collaborating with UNCTAD, WAIPA and others to develop guidance on how to enhance the development impacts of foreign direct investment, including in export processing zones.
55. As noted above, the increased attention paid to due diligence has created opportunities to advance programme of action goals to develop constituent capacity, and also to engage with the private sector, including multinational enterprises; the Office has also collaborated with academia to this end. For instance, with ILO support, the Paris Institute of Political Studies has hosted two [international social dialogue meetings](#) (in French), with the 2021 edition examining the role of cross-border social dialogue in due diligence and just transitions. Other collaborations with academia included a [conference and report](#) on the implementation of France's 2017 mandatory due diligence (*devoir de vigilance*) law.
56. The Office is developing sector-specific due diligence training for supply chain actors in certain sectors, for example gold. The Office has also entered into new PPPs that address working conditions in domestic and global supply chains at national level. PPPs with [Ferrero](#) and [CAOBISCO](#) have helped catalyse cooperative approaches to addressing child labour by linking efforts undertaken by the private sector to existing and future national programmes to combat child labour in Turkey. Likewise, the ACCEL Africa project is collaborating with national health insurance funds, cooperatives and the private sector to expand universal health coverage for cacao farmers and will evaluate the impact on child labour.
57. The Office continues to deepen its engagement with the private sector – including small and medium-sized enterprises – and other agencies through the Child Labour Platform, the ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour, Alliance 8.7, and the [Equal Pay International Coalition](#).

► Concluding observations

58. The programme of action was intended as a coordinating framework for the ILO's work on decent work in global supply chains, with the aim of providing a focused and targeted "One ILO" approach. As previously observed, the deliverables contained in the programme of action encompassed most of the ILO's regular work in support of constituents. While some work, for example the promotion of certain international labour standards, would have happened independently of the programme of action, it provided additional momentum. Further, the cross-cutting nature of issues associated with decent work in supply chains meant that many, if not all, of the ILO policy departments either explicitly engaged on supply chains or did work that complemented programme of action goals.
59. The coordination efforts, including the formation of working groups, supported by the Office of the Deputy Director-General for Policy bore fruit in increased cross-departmental coordination, with several efforts to develop coordinated project proposals modelled on the One ILO–SIRAYE integrated approach and more communication among different policy

departments and flagship programmes. For example, projects in the electronics sector of Viet Nam have collaborated with Better Work Viet Nam to adapt its [advisory approach](#) and selected tools from the garment sector to the electronics industry. Elsewhere, momentum was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as the Office shifted its focus to supporting constituents in COVID-19 response and, later, recovery.

60. The timing of the Technical Meeting on Achieving Decent Work in Global Supply Chains, which failed to reach conclusions shortly before much of the world went into lockdown, and the delay in the Governing Body taking up the issue until March 2021, was not conducive to advancing and further institutionalizing a “One ILO” approach to promote decent work in supply chains. That said, an independent midterm evaluation (2022) of the One ILO–SIRAYE programme confirmed that its approach had allowed the programme to respond to many challenges simultaneously and utilize synergies between components to good effect, noting that stakeholders appreciated the holistic approach of what would normally be multiple interventions. One gap identified was the lack of a formal global structure for coordination, including all departments at headquarters level and the country team, so that lessons learned and best practices could be transferred to future “One ILO” programmes. Ultimately, the evaluation recommended that the organizational learning from the “One ILO” approach should be capitalized and shared widely throughout the ILO.
61. Drawing on the One ILO–SIRAYE programme and the approach of the Vision Zero Fund, the design of the Sustainable supply chains to build forward better project launched in five countries and sectors in 2021 most closely embodies the research and collective action approach proposed in the midterm report, in that it considers the range of decent work deficits and opportunities in a particular sector, gathers stakeholders for social dialogue at all levels, and assists them in developing shared strategies for advancing decent work. For occupational safety and health in global supply chains, the Vision Zero Fund has continued to produce solid arguments for the critical need for data as a basis for collective action – which could begin to be generated should the ILO supply chain mapping methodology be deployed as a standard tool.
62. The adoption of the right to a safe and healthy working environment as a fifth fundamental principle and right at work has the potential to refocus the policy and programmatic environment for ILO work on supply chains. While existing supply chain partnership initiatives and platforms emphasize the interrelated nature of the fundamental principles and rights at work, with few exceptions child labour and forced labour remain the priority for donors. Significantly less attention has been paid to the enabling rights of freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. On the other hand, partly as a result of the pandemic’s exposure of weak social protection systems as a major risk factor to economies and societies, the Office has had more space to promote universal social protection as a core objective.
63. Though the ILO does not yet take a consistent approach to its supply chain work, the meeting and report of the tripartite working group on options for ensuring decent work in supply chains ([GB.346/INS/6](#)) holds promise, especially if endorsed at the present session of the Governing Body. Particularly with respect to the non-normative elements, the building blocks of the tripartite working group on supply chains echo the logic of the “way forward” proposed by the Office in 2019 in their emphasis on a coordinated research agenda and data generation, concern for all tiers of a supply chain, recognition of the promise of collective action, and support for coherent resource mobilization. Reflecting broader shifts in the multilateral system and the world of work since 2016, the building blocks go further than the programme of action regarding trade policy as a tool to advance decent work in supply chains. In practical terms,

the Office's supply chain work had already evolved in this direction, with its trade and decent work research agenda and more programmes focusing on structural transformation, trade and sectoral strategies. Importantly, the building blocks are also more explicit about the need for a strong link between the supervisory system, and development cooperation and research.

64. As the ILO considers the next steps for its work to advance decent work in supply chains, the Office welcomes guidance from the Governing Body to ensure that operational resources and strategy are appropriate to the Organization's ambitions, and that the various supply chain activities of the ILO add up to something greater than the sum of their parts.