

Board of the Centre

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CC 81/2

FOR DISCUSSION AND GUIDANCE

SECOND ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Independent evaluation of training and learning activities on the thematic area of “Social Dialogue and Tripartism”**I. Introduction**

1. The 2018-21 Strategic Plan of the International Training Centre of the ILO (the Centre) envisions the Centre to be a world-class provider of capacity development services for ILO constituents.¹ The Results-based Management Framework underpinning the 2018-19 Programme and Budget of the Centre identifies service quality as one of the key vectors guiding management in the pursuit of this vision, and tracks participant satisfaction, new knowledge acquisition rates and new knowledge application rates as high-level outcome indicators.² To verify new knowledge application rates after training, the Centre commissions annual independent evaluations of activity clusters linked to one its areas of expertise.³
2. In 2018, the thematic area of expertise selected for the independent evaluation was “Social Dialogue and Tripartism”. The objective of the evaluation was twofold: a) to provide the Centre with evidence of the relevance and effectiveness of its training and learning activities directly linked to the thematic area of Social Dialogue and Tripartism; and b) to provide evidence about the extent to which the promotion of rights at work is mainstreamed across other training and learning activities of the Centre. The findings and recommendations will guide the further development and evolution of the Centre’s portfolio of training and learning activities in this area in the 2018-19 biennium.⁴
3. The evaluation reviewed three clusters of training activities of the Centre. The first cluster were training activities directly linked to the thematic area on Social Dialogue and Tripartism and that were ultimately meant to give the higher-level cross-cutting policy driver on Social Dialogue in the ILO Programme and Budget for 2016-17 better effect (called in the following paragraphs Group 1 activities).⁵ The second cluster

¹ ITCILO 2018-21 Strategic Plan, p.16

² ITCILO 2018-19 Programme and Budget, p.20f

³ Refer to CC 77/4, CC 78/3, CC 79/2 and CC 80/3 for further information on the findings of the evaluations carried out since 2014.

⁴ The full text of the report of the Independent Evaluator is available at: <http://www.itcilo.org/en/the-centre/board-documents>

⁵ The cross-cutting policy driver on Social Dialogue in the ILO Programme and Budget 2016-17 (the reference document for the evaluation of ITCILO activities carried out during the 2016-17 biennium) reads as follows: “Social dialogue and the practice of tripartism between

were training activities linked to other thematic areas of the training portfolio of the Centre and delivered by either the Workers' Activities Programme or the Employers' Activities Programme (Group 2). The third cluster were training activities linked to other thematic areas of the training portfolio of the Centre and delivered by other Technical Programmes (Group 3). The distinction of these three clusters was meant to ensure that the analysis would cross-cut the entire activity spectrum of the Centre, and include - but not be limited to - Technical Programmes with a direct mandate to deliver capacity development activities aimed at the promotion of Social Dialogue and Tripartism.

4. The evaluation was carried out during May - July 2018 and covered a sample of 16 training activities carried out mainly in 2016 (but in one case in 2015 and in another case in early 2017). This allowed for *a time lapse of at least twelve months between participation in the activity and follow-up evaluation*. The sample of training activities was composed of three activities in Group 1, three activities in Group 2 and 10 activities in Group 3. Activities in the first group and second group were selected by the managers of the Social Protection, Governance and Tripartism (SPGT) Programme, the Employers' Activities Programme and the Workers' Activities Programme in consultation with the Evaluator while activities in the group were identified by way of random sampling. The purposeful selection of activities in the first and second group was meant to ensure that the flagship programmes linked to the thematic area on Social Dialogue and Tripartism would have been covered. The random sampling of activities in the third was meant to avoid bias in the selection process.

Assessment criteria

5. In line with ILO EVAL evaluation framework, the evaluation focused on the following criteria: Relevance of the selected activities to the needs of the participants and, where applicable, of the institutions supporting their participation; the validity of the activity design; efficiency; effectiveness; impact; and sustainability. The assessment criteria and the guiding questions for the evaluators are illustrated in the table overleaf.

governments and representatives of employers and workers are the ILO's governance paradigm for promoting social justice, fair workplace relations and decent work. At the heart of social dialogue lies freedom of association and collective bargaining. (...) ILO services across all outcomes will focus on: (i) building up the institutional and technical capacities of constituents, separately and jointly, to effectively fulfil their role in social dialogue; (ii) facilitating the effective participation of employers' and workers' organizations in ILO programmes; and (iii) strengthening social dialogue institutions and practices. ILO 2016-17 P&B, p.43.

General Questions	Questions for Sample Group 1	Questions for Sample Groups 2 and 3
1. Relevance		
- How did the activities contribute (or not) to the implementation of the ITCILO strategic plan, and to the achievement of the high-level indicators? - How did the activities contribute (or not) to the social dialogue and tripartism pillar of the Decent Work Agenda? - Did the training assess and responded to the need of the tripartite constituents and that of both men and women?	- How did the Centre assess the training need of tripartite constituents on the topic of social dialogue and tripartism? - Did the training meet the expectation of the participants and, if applicable, the sending organizations? - How did the training consider and address (or not) the context, in which the participants and organizations are to apply the principles of social dialogue and tripartism?	- How were the training activities, which were classified under different tripartism categories, consider and attend to the needs of the constituents, respectively?
2. Validity of the design		
- Was the design of the training activity valid and coherent for its expected contribution (e.g. in the thematic discourse, to the pre-conditions, for increased awareness, etc.) to promoting social dialogue and tripartism? - Did the activity (including its manager and resource persons) consider and integrate social dialogue and tripartism in the design, planning and implementation of the training?	- What factors did the training design seek to influence, and in which way? Are the factors valid and in coherence with the objectives that the training hopes to achieve? - How were the curriculum and learning method designed (or not) to achieve knowledge increase, skill acquisition and attitude change of the participants?	- Did the training relate its thematic area to the principles, practices and preconditions of social dialogue and tripartism? If so, how; if not, why not? - Which is the criteria used at the Centre to classify activities under different tripartism categories? Is it logical and coherent to the policy of the ILO/ITCLO? Has it been applied consistently amongst the different units?
3. Progress and effectiveness		
- To what extent has the training achieved its objectives? - To what extent and in which ways has the training contributed to the promotion of social dialogue and tripartism, including the preconditions for sound social dialogue? - How were progress and outcome of the training monitored? - What can we learn from the past experience to make better decision and improve the effectiveness of our training?	- To what extent has the training increased the knowledge of the participants on the topic? - To what extent has the training equipped the participants the skills and methods to apply their learning at work(place)? - How confident were the participants in using these skills and methods because of the training? - How did the training change (or not) the participants' attitude toward social dialogue and tripartism? Do the participants intend to apply what they have learned in the training in their work? - Upon accomplishment of the training, did the participants and/or organizations make any action plans for using their learning? Did they envisage any immediate outcome?	- How did activities under different tripartism categories perform in the outreach to tripartite constituents? - If applicable, how were the tripartite/ bipartite dynamics in the training, in terms of interaction among participants from tripartite constituents, and connections enabled? Did the participants enjoy this experience? (Please note that this question may be applicable only to activities involving bipartite/ tripartite constituents.)
4. Efficiency of resource usage		
- Have the resources invested in delivering the activity been used in the most efficient manner? How economically were resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, fellowships etc.) converted to results in outreach and		

General Questions	Questions for Sample Group 1	Questions for Sample Groups 2 and 3
performance? Did the results justify the costs? - What time and cost efficiency measures could have been introduced without impeding the achievement of results?		
5. Effectiveness of management arrangements		
- Were the roles and responsibilities of Centre officials and programmes for promoting social dialogue and tripartism clearly defined and understood? - What are the management arrangements in place to facilitate the integration and promotion of social dialogue and tripartism in the Centre's training activities? Are they effective?		
6. Impact		
- What tangible changes have been accomplished by the participants and their organizations in the area of social dialogue and tripartism, because of the activity? - To what extent and in which way has the training activity influence the factors and preconditions that lead to change in the understanding and application of the principles of social dialogue and tripartism? - What are the key contributors to and barriers from making an impact in this area, respectively?	- In which way have the participants and their organizations benefited from their learning and experience? - What have been the immediate and emerging outcome of the training? - To what extent has the training contributed to the new and/or improved application of social dialogue and tripartism by the ILO constituents? - Were there any initiatives that wouldn't have had taken place, had the participants and the organizations not participated in the training? - Do the organizations of the participants envisage any long-term impact in consensus building and democratic involvement of the main stakeholders, to which the training has contributed?	- To what extent and in which way has the training contributed to applying the principles of social dialogue and tripartism in the respective area of the training, by the participants and their organizations?
7. Sustainability		
- Have the changes and initiatives that the participants and organizations have made due to the training been – and will they be – able to sustain over time? - What are the enabling factors and obstacles for sustaining long-term impact in the area of social dialogue and tripartism?	- To what extent and in which way have the training and learning activities of the Centre made (or not) long-term impact on the topic of social dialogue and tripartism at the workplace and in policy-making? - Did the training lead to knowledge sharing and emergence of professional network, such as communities of practice (CoP), to support continuous learning and exchange of advice and experience among the participants and organizations?	

Methodology

6. The evaluation relied on several data collection techniques. This “mixed methods” approach combined both hard and soft evidence and involved multiple means of analysis:
 - Desk review: analysis of the documentation related to the training activities under evaluation: flyers, training needs analysis, former evaluations reports, end-of-activity questionnaires, follow-up surveys and other documents reporting evidence on the training covered by the evaluation.
 - An online survey, to ask participants about the impact and results of the training activities. A total of 422 participants were surveyed, with a response rate of 34 per cent (Group 1), 57 per cent (group 2) and 26 per cent (Group 3).
 - Face-to-face interviews with staff of the Centre, including selected Programme Managers, Activity Managers and Programme Assistants as well as Management.
 - Interviews via skype or telephone with former participants and with organizations who had sponsored these former participants in training activities of the Centre, to explore tangible and non-tangible changes resulting from the activities.
 - Case studies of former participants, and organizations employing these former participants, applying the knowledge acquired during training.

II. Conclusions and recommendations made by the Evaluator⁶

Conclusions

7. Irrespective of the titles or schedules of the training activities, social dialogue and tripartism were seen by the participants to be highly relevant, and the training experiences had led to an increased understanding and application of this principle.
8. The **relevance and outreach** of the programmes is closely linked to the composition, often bipartite or tripartite, of the participants in the training activities. Social dialogue and tripartism are fundamental for a very wide range of labour market activities as well as to the management of the training process itself. This starts with the selection of the participants and continues to the delivery of the training programmes. In many cases, the participation was enabled by the ILO's field offices. The training experience was generally considered objective and positive, and many examples show that it has been made use of in practice. The activities have clearly contributed to the ITCILO Strategic Plan.
9. The **validity of the design of the activity** is assisted by a general understanding of what the cross-cutting nature of the topic means. There is a degree of vagueness as to the description of promotional measures, let alone any prescription of any of them. Yet the training has clearly contributed to the understanding of social dialogue and capacity to make use of it. There was an overwhelming request to have more

⁶ The conclusions and recommendation are quoted from the evaluation report, paragraphs 6-47.

exchanges and concrete examples of the kind that had taken place during the training.

10. The **effectiveness** of the training is assured by being able to bring in, as participants or resource persons, the social partners who, in turn, can apply or spread further the knowledge and competencies received. Judging by the views of the participants, the training has been targeted at an appropriate level of senior experience and competence. The training objectives have thus been met.
11. Efficiency of the use of resources appears to have been assured, as the time available had as a rule been used thoroughly. There was no questioning of the number or quality of resource persons for the courses. In many cases the training relied on the experiences of the participants themselves.
12. Efficiency of management arrangements is found to be high for individual courses, but it seems to be affected by the lack of one specific “home base” in the International Labour Office for this strategic objective. Activities labelled as social dialogue cover institutional questions, collective bargaining and industrial relations, which are dealt with by different headquarters departments.
13. As to impact orientation, the concrete examples of how new knowledge had been used by the participants of the training courses in their work demonstrate that the learning experience has been seen as pertinent and satisfying. Without any specific labelling, ITCILO courses increase the understanding of social dialogue and tripartism. This is validated by the examples of achievement given by the participants.
14. The high recognition level of social dialogue and tripartism as a principle goes a long way to guarantee the sustainability of the training activities. As to institutional social dialogue, its sustainability still is dependent on resources available; training should continue to be a key recipient of such resources.
15. The main thrust of the recommendations is that cohesion and operative clarity should be increased so that social dialogue and tripartism can effectively be presented as a strategic objective. Currently it is treated as a cross-cutting theme without one entity being responsible for it.

Recommendations

16. Recommendation 1: If you want to teach tripartism, practice tripartism.

The composition of participants in as many training activities as possible should be tripartite. Depending on the programme design, either the composition of the course should be tripartite, or there should be tripartite inputs in the training exercise. Demonstrating how tripartism works is the best way to convey the message of the principle. This does not mean that all training should be tripartite – on the contrary, there is a strong case for separate employers' and workers' training activities. The purpose of the training determines the composition, but it is reasonable to expect that tripartite participation is considered when each activity is planned. Also, when for instance strengthening negotiating skills is one of the objectives of the training, a sufficient number of the participants should have bargaining experience. It may be difficult to compress social dialogue and tripartism into any one activity with all the diverse aspects that they entail, but the relevance of the principle for each training activity should be explained. **Tripartism should be the primary concern when the design of a training activity is being considered, including the composition of the resource persons to be used.**

17. Recommendation 2: Government functions which are relevant to tripartism need more attention.

Programmes carried out by ACT/EMP and ACTRAV are generally seen to express the tripartite character of the ILO. The linkage of various government or other public functions to the strategic objective of social dialogue and tripartism needs to be further clarified and promoted. Different approaches to social dialogue may not be sufficiently known by national or local authorities, especially in countries where social dialogue is not institutionalized. Social dialogue involves in one way or another a whole number of government or quasi-government institutions which deal with labour and social protection. It also involves activities which need a high degree of independence, such as labour inspection and mediation mechanisms. It often also relies on networks of labour lawyers from academic institutions. All these actors are candidates for obtaining further technical capacities and knowledge through ITCILO training courses. While continuous training is important, the ITCILO courses should avoid catering too much to "usual suspects". They should reach out to audiences especially in the government and public sphere. This does not weaken tripartism; it contributes to improving its understanding and use among relevant partners. **There should be continuous review of the extent to which governmental and other public actors in the labour sphere are aware, and make use, of social dialogue and tripartism with the help of participation in ITCILO training activities.**

18. Recommendation 3: Review the responsibilities for the strategic objective.

Carrying out educational activity is complicated when a strategic objective of Decent Work has no one "home base" at the ILO headquarters in Geneva. Recognizing it as a strategic objective does not match up with organizational arrangements. When the Office was restructured in 1999 in line with the four strategic Decent Work objectives, a sector on social dialogue was established. However, the present structure allocates responsibilities differently, and the argument is being made that up to 9 – 11 headquarters units deal with social dialogue and tripartism in one way or another. The consequence is that training activities can be left without an identifiable headquarters partner or then a headquarters programme may not have a readily available counterpart in the ITCILO. In addition, especially employers, do not want to see their capacity-building activities automatically classified as social dialogue. Managing a cross-cutting issue entails well-known problems. When something is done by everyone, more often than not no-one is responsible for it. In practice, objectives with targets and outcomes get priority over cross-cutting issues. This is also reflected in difficulties to establish and maintain the necessary contacts between headquarters

and ITCILO programme managers. **The questions of cohesion and resources cannot be efficiently addressed if the strategic objective is not expressed in terms of recognized and measurable outcomes which can effectively inform the purposes of training activities.**

19. Recommendation 4: The scope of social dialogue should be used with consideration.

The value-added of tripartism for national law and practice has been recognized throughout the history of the ILO, but the exact meaning of social dialogue has not been settled. Both within and outside the ILO, the concept of social dialogue is currently attached to national as well as cross-border activities. Their common denominator is that they contain elements which are proposed to be dealt with by tripartite consultation, cooperation and collective bargaining. Different issues linked to globalization (such as MNEs, EPZs, supply chains, and IFIs), which do not have established procedures, increasingly refer to social dialogue. Some of these issues – in particular the question of supply chains – have emerged through the ILC debates on social dialogue. They have gained new operative potential due to the flexibility which the principle of social dialogue accords. They involve interaction between private entities, businesses, trade unions and different public authorities as well as non-governmental actors. This is liable to be a growing area. A number of training activities are carried out today for constituents to devise and apply ways of dealing with them. This provides further opportunities for the ITCILO to offer both open and tailor-made training. **Categorizing an issue as one of social dialogue should be accompanied by an operative understanding on how it should be dealt with beyond the implied search for dialogue, consultation and negotiated settlement. New opportunities for training activities should be made use of by ITCILO.**

20. Recommendation 5: More comprehensive training in the regions.

Regional differences are important for how social dialogue and tripartism are understood and promoted. In addition to the European Union, institutional solutions have been developed in Francophone Africa. In other regions, the concept is less systematically used, accepted and practised. The national situations of participants in a global training activity are very varied, and the participants themselves have different ways of understanding of the issue. Collective bargaining processes or workplace consultation and cooperation are based on universal principles. Yet, the way they are implemented in different countries, regions and private or public entities are far from uniform. Training activities need to focus on the ways in which this application takes place so that different economic, social, cultural and industrial relations traditions can be recognized. When the aim is improving the capacity of key actors to use different aspects of social dialogue, and assessing how it should be reflected in Decent Work Country Programmes, more activities with a regional scope would be advisable. Such training should be tailored to the concerns and realities of each region or country. This should specifically be able to counter fears of a “one-size-fits-all” model. **Regional and sub-regional Academies should be organized both where integration policies favour social dialogue and tripartism or, conversely, where different concerns regarding them need to be addressed.**

21. Recommendation 6: Success stories can demonstrate the business case for social dialogue.

While there will continue to be calls for making the business case for social dialogue and tripartism, this is not liable to be convincingly satisfied by macro-economic arguments and calculations. A business-case module applicable to all ITCILO courses is unlikely to be developed soon. Given the consistent demand for more concrete examples during training sessions, a reasonable response is to make use of a number of success stories which illustrate achievements that have been possible,

focusing on how they have been realized. A business case can be made by demonstrating what works (and what does not work) and how agreements can be reached. Such cases are usually well presented by resource persons who represent both employers and trade unions as well as institutions involved. Examples of what has not worked out should also be used in the training context. The overwhelming request for more practical information, case studies and role-play signifies that the training is expected to transmit new and useable knowledge, techniques and methods of consultation and negotiation. In this area the ITCILO can tap into a wealth of knowledge and experience, which gives a distinct advantage in terms of its training offer. **The widespread request to “show how it is done” should be met by examples of how processes and techniques of social dialogue have improved concrete situations in a way which has been fair for all partners.**

22. Recommendation 7: Use resource persons familiar with cultural differences.

Social dialogue is different from economic or employment policies. It is a combination of efforts by all three sides to maximize the returns, with a special focus on bilateral negotiations between employers and trade unions and the bargaining cultures this has created. The aim is to achieve both acceptable and beneficial compromises between different aspirations. Labour law has an intimate connection with economic, corporate and trade law. All of them aim at providing predictability for trade and investment decisions, which have immediate employment consequences. It is crucial that the ILO – as the benchmark setter on labour rights and practices – can make full use of dedicated persons and professional networks of industrial relations specialists all around the world. One could for instance envisage master classes delivered by recognized experts who have insight of how social dialogue and tripartite negotiations work. Such training might be particularly useful in different regions or countries, with the involvement of tripartite resource persons. **Although a course might be an open one, it should be as much as possible tailored to the expectations and needs of its target group. The selection of resource persons should aim at acquiring expertise for not only the specific topic but also the context in which it is liable to be used.**

23. Recommendation 8: Recognize the different stages of the freedom of association continuum.

The concern has increasingly been expressed that the collective bargaining systems, and through that the functioning of social dialogue and tripartism, are changing in a way which may affect and even change the balance of power between the employer and the workers. It is important to see the full scale of what freedom of association implies. There is a continuum of freedom of association rights which ranges from the right to organize and express joint views to representation at workplaces and in collective bargaining processes at different levels. It would seem opportune to revisit all the Conventions relevant to freedom of association, collective bargaining, tripartite consultation and workplace cooperation in order to have better understanding on the rules of the game at different stages of industrial relations. If the motivation for stressing the role of workplace cooperation arises from a desire to focus more on decentralized negotiation and bargaining, ultimately to reduce the collective power of the trade unions, then more attention should be given to such existing instruments as the Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971 (No. 135). This Convention is not mentioned in the listing of relevant instruments during the recurrent item discussions at the ILC in 2013 or 2018. **Constructive discussion on promoting social dialogue calls for an assessment of the standards that apply to the way in which bipartite and tripartite processes should be carried out at various stages and levels of labour-management relations.**

III. Management response

24. The Centre welcomes the findings of the independent evaluation. It notes in particular that the evaluation found that the overall results of the training activities directly linked to the thematic area on Social Dialogue and Tripartism or implemented by the Workers' and Employers' Activities Programmes and the Social Protection, Governance and Tripartism Programme in support of ILO constituents were very positive, and that it was possible to document that the vast majority of all participants reported increased knowledge after training and went on to implement this knowledge to the benefit of their organization. The Centre acknowledges that additional efforts can be undertaken to further mainstream the promotion of Social Dialogue and Tripartism throughout its training activities, and to increase the outreach of these activities among participants with a mandate to facilitate or practice tripartite social dialogue. The following paragraphs set down the management response to the issues raised and the recommendations made by the Independent Evaluator.
25. Before end 2018, the Centre will release a 2018-21 Centre-wide Action Plan to give the promotion of Social Dialogue and Tripartism through its training activities better effect. Modelled on the example of the Centre-wide Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality and Diversity released earlier in 2018, the Plan will have its own results-based management framework and a dedicated budget to facilitate the implementation of the activities. Implementation progress of the plan will be monitored by an in-house Advisory Council chaired by the Director of the Centre.
26. As part of the Centre-wide Action Plan, the Centre will introduce a self-assessment tool to monitor the extent to which the promotion of Social Dialogue and Tripartism is mainstreamed throughout its training portfolio. Every training activity will be classified with the help of a marker, modelled on the marker system for the promotion of Gender Equality and the promotion of International Labour Standards already in use by ILO and the Centre. The Centre will monitor performance through its results-based management framework and report to the Board the share of activities explicitly referencing or directly linked to the area of expertise of the promotion of Social Dialogue and Tripartism.
27. As part of the Centre-wide Action Plan, the Centre will furthermore establish an in-house peer review mechanism for the training materials used in its standard courses. The purpose of the review mechanism is to assess to what extent core messages of the ILO linked to the promotion of Social Dialogue and Tripartism, but also the promotion of International Labour Standards and Gender Equality and Diversity, are mainstreamed in the learning materials of the Centre. Pending the outcome of the review mechanism, these training materials will then be refined by the concerned Technical Programme.
28. As part of the Centre-wide Action Plan, the Centre will commission through the Workers' and Employers' Activities Programmes and the Social Protection, Governance and Tripartism Programme case studies of good local practice in social dialogue and tripartism. These case studies will be made available as a compendium for wider use as learning objects in the training activities of the Centre.
29. The Centre will promote the uptake of training linked to the area of expertise of promoting social dialogue and tripartism through the mobilization of extra-regular budget for technical cooperation linked to ILO facilitated development cooperation projects (like the Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations project in Bangladesh and the Industrial Relations project in Myanmar). The Centre will furthermore step up its institutional capacity development advisory services rendered to national and regional training institutes with a mandate to promote social dialogue and tripartism particularly among Government institutions, including the African Regional Labour Administration

Centre (ARLAC) and the *Centre Régional Africain d'Administration du Travail* (CRADAT). Pending availability of financial resources and demand from local constituents, this institutional capacity development support will include the joint design and delivery of face-to-face training and distance learning activities in the regions. Special emphasis will be laid on the involvement of local resource persons with context-specific expertise in social dialogue.

- 30.** In close consultation with the Social Dialogue and Tripartism Unit in the Governance Department of the ILO, the Centre will explore the potential for developing a new training course on cross-border social dialogue in global supply chains. The new training course will be informed by the recommendations of the forthcoming High-Level Tripartite Experts meeting on cross-border social dialogue to be organized by the ILO and scheduled to take place in February 2019.

The Board is invited to provide guidance on the findings and recommendations of the independent evaluation and on the management response.

Turin, August 2018