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► Recommendations


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INSTITUTIONAL

RECOMMENDATION 1

Continue to strengthen the capacity of the tripartite constituents to enhance and adapt their services to contribute to the development of effective global, regional and national post-pandemic recovery policies and actions.


Adjust the ILO Institutional Capacity Development Strategy to meet the needs of the constituents in a post-pandemic world, ensuring that the constituents are as well equipped as possible to develop policy responses and to offer innovative services related to the trends accelerated by COVID-19. Emphasis could be placed, for example on: formalizing the use of digital tools; developing teleworking policies and guides (including to build capacity to influence legislation and to engage in collective bargaining on this subject); developing crisis and risk management systems; protecting and enhancing employment opportunities for vulnerable groups; strengthening the economic case for employment-rich investments, particularly in the care, digital and green economies; sectoral recovery actions; improving productivity and promoting innovation in enterprises; and curbing the spread of informality. The Office should seek the right balance between online and face-to-face approaches to capacity-building by assessing their comparative impacts and barriers to digital training.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Deputy Director-General for Field Operations (DDG/FOP), Bureau for Workers' Activities, Bureau for Employers' Activities, DDG/P, Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV), Turin Centre		Short-term	Medium

RECOMMENDATION 2

Develop an Organization-wide crisis response strategy encompassing both headquarters and the field.


In addition to the ILO's current risk management and business continuity plans, use the experience accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic to develop an Organization-wide crisis response strategy to deal with any future global calamity that might have far-reaching and sustained impacts on service delivery. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of adaptive management principles and the possible need to temporarily step away from established procedures (and associated risks) and devise a resource mobilization plan (including human resources) or strategy for crisis situations to facilitate a rapid response to country offices and national constituents in crises. The ILO should also urge regional and country offices to review and adjust their existing business continuity and contingency plans in the light of the lessons drawn at the local level regarding responsiveness to the COVID-19 crisis, which was uneven.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Senior Management Team, DDG/MR, Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM), DDG/P, DDG/FOP, Treasurer and Financial Comptroller		Short-term	High

RECOMMENDATION 3

Expand and mainstream more broadly the approach to cross-departmental teamwork demonstrated in the pandemic and continue the efficient and effective management and governance practices that were introduced.


Building on the successful collaboration models introduced during the pandemic, establish more structured mechanisms, driven by the Director-General and senior management, to drive policy coherence and organizational synergy (such as cross-departmental work teams and more frequent and structured interactions between policy portfolio directors and regional directors). The ILO should also nurture Global Technical Teams as communities of practice and mutual support. This focus on policy coherence would align with the institutional guidelines on the next programme and budget. More broadly, the ILO should review any improvements in efficiency and effectiveness that flowed from management and governance arrangements introduced during the pandemic, with a view to formalizing their ongoing application post-pandemic.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Senior Management Team, PROGRAM		Short-term	Medium

RECOMMENDATION 4

Enhance the ILO's capacity to monitor, report and evaluate crisis response actions that are developed and implemented outside the normal programming cycle.

In the context of tracking the progress of human-centred recovery, the Governing Body has stressed the need for "evidence-based assessments of the quantity, quality and social inclusivity of the recovery at the country level and to examine how the recovery strategies can be improved". However, this high-level evaluation found the ILO's tracking of its own COVID 19 response actions to be lacking. The ILO needs to develop a process to adequately adjust plans when operational circumstances have been severely disrupted (for example, by revising the theory of change, taking major disruptive risks into consideration). Reporting needs to clearly describe actions and their effects to respond immediately and to envision recovery or structural change. Evaluation processes and their funding also need to better capture the impact of crisis recovery actions by adopting a longer-term approach that allows assessments to be made two or three years down the road, not just at the conclusion of projects.


Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/MR, DDG/FOP, PROGRAM, PARDEV, Research Department, EVAL		Medium-term	Medium

RECOMMENDATION 5

Strengthen the institutional capacity of governments to respond to systemic crises through universal social protection.

The Governing Body should re-emphasize the leadership role of the ILO in ensuring universal social protection in the light of current and future crises, and support Member States in implementing the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), and the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205). This can be done, among other things, by building capacities to prepare and respond to systemic crises and shocks through social protection measures that target, inter alia, vulnerable groups and the informal sector. The Office should clarify how the Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All will contribute to adapting social protection systems to new and emerging challenges. It should also provide details of the strategic position and modalities under which it should offer at least the basic guarantees of income and health protection to all, including women and vulnerable groups.

The ILO should clarify its role in emergency situations in this area and consider the importance of having a seat at the table when a crisis strikes. The ILO's unique comparative advantages should be promoted by UN resident coordinators and the ILO should collaborate with UN partners and international financial institutions to shape a common understanding and vision of shock-responsive social protection systems in interventions that are systemic and catalytic. The ILO should continue to ensure strong leadership in the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, including by: contributing to the mobilization of target resources; leveraging its networks of constituents, the UN system and partners through international social protection platforms such as the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board; and strengthening partnerships with international financial institutions and ministries of finance.


Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Social Protection Department (SOCPRO), DDG/P, DWTs and country offices (COs), DDG/FOP		Long-term	Medium

RECOMMENDATION 6

Continue to strengthen the constituents’ capacities to sustain international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work for workers, even during a crisis, and develop inclusive, gender-responsive policies for the protection of workers in insecure forms of work.

The impact of the crisis on health and care workers, and transnational workers in the transport and maritime industries, exposed a lack of understanding of applicable international labour standards in these highly exposed sectors. Together with its social partners, the ILO should work with Member States to implement a whole-of-government understanding of the obligations under the applicable Conventions and support policies that are applicable at all times, especially during crises, that are rights-based and intersectional to protect key workers.


Responding to the urgent need to provide protection for emerging diverse forms of work, the ILO needs to accelerate support for gender-responsive national legislation and labour administration systems in respect of the protection of wages, working time, care responsibilities, safety and health, the elimination of violence and harassment, and inclusive access to social protection. The ILO should work with other development partners at the global and national levels to address decent work deficits, paying special attention to those made particularly vulnerable by the crisis.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
International Labour Standards Department (NORMES), Sectoral Policies Department, Governance and Tripartism Department (GOVERNANCE), SOCPRO, COs, Conditions of Work and Equality Department, DDG/P		Medium-to-long-term	Medium

RECOMMENDATION 7

The ILO should more clearly integrate a just transition into its post-pandemic employment and skills development strategies and actions, and use its experience and expertise to implement approaches with maximum potential for impact. It should pursue financing and delivery partnerships with organizations with resources to help bring a just transition to scale.

A just transition needs to be incorporated into a broader range of the ILO’s employment and skills development strategies and actions in the post-pandemic recovery (including for young people, women and vulnerable groups). While the high-level agreements, transition guidelines, manuals and training courses already devised are all necessary, they are far from sufficient. Countries considering just transition processes have found that the ILO has committed very few resources in this area, and that available staff would be insufficient to support the complex social dialogue necessary to generate support for radical change. The surveys conducted as part of the high-level evaluation found that there was a strong perception that the ILO was underperforming in this important area. In the absence of sufficient ILO presence in-country, it is considered likely that other agencies will enter the process, but with limited perspective, no tripartite mandate and inadequate experience.


Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/P, ENTERPRISES, Employment Policy Department, GOVERNANCE, Multilateral Cooperation Department (MULTILATERALS), SOCPRO		Long-term	High

RECOMMENDATION 8

The ILO should review its current capacity to deliver on the whole-of-government approach and new models of development financing, focusing on the scale and distribution of workload implied by its agreements as part of the UN COVID-19 response (including with both UN and other multilateral organizations), and devise a prioritized and specific plan to meet the resource requirements, including at the country level.

Calls for new models and higher levels of development financing have highlighted the ILO's relatively limited capacity in this field, particularly with international development banks and funds. The UN Secretary-General has emphasized the need to move forward with whole-of-government approaches, not just engaging ministries covering social, labour and environmental areas but ensuring that ministries of finance are fully engaged in the recovery process as well. To achieve these ambitious goals, the ILO will need greater financing expertise.

Furthermore, the ILO currently lacks the human resources to manage the workload associated with its many new cooperation agreements and partnerships, especially at the country level. If these agreements are to deliver on the bold development results projected, the ILO will need to scale up its operations and presence, particularly at the country level. It appears unlikely that this can be achieved efficiently through the widespread use of short-term contract staff or consultancies.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MULTILATERALS, PARDEV, PROGRAM, DDG/P, DDG/FOP, Human Resources Development Department (HRD)		Medium-to-long-term	High