

Shaping the social dialogue - a prerequisite for social justice

Contribution by Kolping international to the 111th session of the International Labor Conference on June 12th, 2023, prepared by Dr. Hildegard Hagemann, Kolping International, Check against delivery

Dear President, dear delegates,

It's great to be back in front of the plenary after four years. Thank you for reopening the ILC to INGOs. It is refreshing to present face to face the statement on the Director General's report of the Catholic social organization KOLPING INTERNATIONAL, with around 400,000 members in over 60 countries. Of course we hope that there will be no restrictions on the participation of INGOs in the next few years, despite the forthcoming renovation work.

As an international non-governmental organization that has been registered with the ILO for 30 years this year, we, together with other INGOs, made good use of the period of physical abstinence to discuss the opportunities and challenges of social dialogue for the future of work.

We all agree that without social dialogue, the economic, social and environmental impacts of recessions, pandemics, financial crises are far more dramatic for the majority of workers, formal or informal, than having well-functioning forms of negotiation for the social partners. We must ensure that in the future those who primarily need the protection of the world community from disasters, displacement and exploitation are not excluded from dialogue.

In this context, we recall the statement by the Global Commission on the Future of Work, which in 2019 to mark the 100th anniversary of the ILO defined social dialogue as a public good in its final report.

Today the motto '*Nothing about us without us*' is more relevant than ever. The fight against terrorism, against financial, climate and health crises is an excuse for many authoritarian states to close the space for civil society. However, let us not forget that workers, as producers and consumers, are not only part of the economy, but also part of civil society.

Therefore, this is the right place, in the ILO's tripartism, to further develop social dialogue as a public good and at the same time to act in solidarity with all those who are not organized and therefore cannot be here, against the restriction of civil society's opportunities for participation.

For 3 decades now, Kolping International has been involved with the International Labor Organization for the interests of all people who often have to earn their living under precarious and informal conditions and who do not sit at the negotiating tables. How important international conventions, such as those that have been adopted here at the ILO for more than 100 years, are in particular for these workers is shown by the great support given by civil society organisations in ratification processes and the provision of evidence for reporting on implementation and compliance of labor rights.

Kolping International expressly welcomes the ILO's focus on the labor law deficits for informal workers. Kolping International has worked with other INGOs in this area to develop proposals for improving social dialogue, e.g.

- **the establishment of regular dialogue platforms at national level on ILC topics**
- **the establishment of contact points for NGOs at national level**
- **Ensuring the presence and effective participation of INGOs at the ILO, specifically in the Global Coalition for Social Justice**

Kolping International supports everyone who not only protects the public good of social dialogue from restrictions, softening and neglect, but also strengthens it to protect social peace as an essential part of social justice.

At this point, we would like to expressly thank the Director General Gilbert Houngbo for his recognition of our work and await with interest the start of his initiative - the Global Coalition for Social Justice, with the perspective of being able to actively shape the social dialogue.