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**STRATEGIES TO END VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORLD OF WORK -  
PROMOTING RATIFICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR  
ORGANIZATION'S CONVENTION 190**

**A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE AND  
STRATEGY SESSION**

**Date: 8 September 2021**

**Time: 8 am - 10:30 am**

**Strategy Document**



## **PROMOTING RATIFICATION OF International Labour Organisation CONVENTION 190 CONCERNING VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORLD OF WORK - STRATEGIES FOR MOVING FORWARD**

### **The NGO Coalition on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work calls for action**

On 8 September 2021, the NGO Coalition to End Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, with the co-sponsorship of the Permanent Mission of Fiji to the UN, convened a virtual interactive dialogue and strategy session to take stock of the current opportunities and challenges on the road to ratification of International Labour Organisation Convention 190 (ILO C 190). The meeting brought together more than a hundred participants from the UN Member States, the ILO, and UN Women as well as civil society. The NGO Coalition made a concerted call for all concerned actors to work together to develop strategies for action plans to intensify the Campaign for Universal ratification of the Convention.

**NOTE:** The report of the session, the recording of the session and the latest list of countries in the process of ratification can be accessed [here](#)

### **Overview of the Convention**

ILO C 190 is a first on many levels:

- It is the first universal binding text on violence and harassment in the world of work.
- It provides the first clear definition of "violence and harassment in the world of work", including gender-based violence.
- It is unique in its scope and covers all types of workers and workplaces, including informal and home-based work.
- It makes clear that the "world of work" goes beyond the physical workplace and includes a variety of work-related actions, such as commuting, working from home, communications (bullying, for example), internships, and a variety of work-related situations specifically identified in the Convention.
- It is also the first international instrument that addresses the nexus between domestic violence and the world of work and requires action to address this dimension of violence.

### **Why is ratification and implementation of ILO C 190 important?**

- It is urgent to ratify the Convention, given the deterioration in conditions of work, and the labour market disruptions due to COVID-19, with disproportionate impacts on women.
- There is added urgency to realize the objectives of universal ratification and effective implementation of ILO C 190, given that violence and harassment are very prevalent in the world of work, affecting all persons.
- As a universal standard, ILO C 190 will fill in the gaps in existing laws and provide a comprehensive set of guidelines for prevention, redress, protection of victims and whistleblowers, and judicial pursuit of perpetrators.
- The Convention requires accountability as the Governments must report periodically to the ILO on their progress in implementing the provisions of the Convention.

### **Challenges on the road to ratification**

It is instructive to review how governments and civil society are engaging in actions to promote the ratification of the Convention, and the challenges faced in the process. This can provide valuable lessons when developing strategies and action plans. A review of the dialogue of 8 September reveals a number of challenges:

- countering cultural norms, practices, and beliefs that support, condone, or ignore the incidence of violence and harassment in the world of work;
- changing the mindset that normalizes violence;
- addressing particular challenges related to domestication - bringing national laws and policies into compliance with the provisions of the Convention;
- addressing issues related to lack of knowledge or understanding of the Convention and its potential for addressing violence and harassment in the world of work;
- developing mechanisms for coordination at the governmental level, as competencies related to violence and harassment in the world of work are spread across various ministries and entities which must assess issues of national compliance, each from its own institutional perspective and mandate;
- ensuring that it is understood that the Convention applies to all persons in the world of work and therefore coverage must be inclusive and not solely addressed to women;
- adapting the provisions of the Convention to cover special workplaces such as the informal sector, home-based work, domestic work;
- developing a truly inclusive, multi-stakeholder approach, ensuring that all relevant ministries and social sectors, civil society, trade unions, employers and the private sector engage in the process of devising, amending, and implementing workplace laws, policies, measures to address violence and harassment.

### **Recommendations for strategies going forward**

#### **The role of governments**

- Governments must show political will, exercise leadership, and make a strong commitment to engage in the process, doing all it takes to get ILO C 190 ratified in record time.
- They should adopt a multi-stakeholder approach, engaging in dialogue with all relevant non-state actors: civil society (NGOs, trade unions, and CSOs) as well as the private sector, and making use of their expertise to advance the process of ratification.
- Engagement with civil society is particularly important in this regard because they represent the voices of those impacted by violence and harassment in the world of work and can lend their experience and expertise to enhance the process.
- Relevant government entities and parliamentarians have a key role to play in the process of domestication of the convention, starting with a thorough review of all national legislation, with a view to making legislative changes and amendments, strengthening them, and bringing them into compliance with the provisions of the Convention.

#### **The role of employers**

Employers have a critical role to play in preventing workplace violence and harassment. They have an opportunity to establish policies that would eliminate violence and harassment, for example within their

occupational safety and health policies and procedures. Employers have a key role to play in addressing the organizational culture in order to maintain a congenial workplace culture that supports rather than demeans workers and ensures respect for all.

### **The role of NGOs**

- Coalition-building is important, and broad mobilization on key topics, with a view to raising awareness about the Convention. Education and capacity-building programs are therefore important.
- NGOs should lobby relevant ministries as well as parliamentarians to ensure adequate laws, policies, and workplace measures are put in place to implement the provisions of the Convention.
- NGOs may wish to approach the ILO at the country level:
  - for support with capacity-building on ILO C 190, and in relation to relevant advocacy points to raise with their governments in efforts to promote the ratification of the Convention.
  - to gain an understanding of the process of domestication of the Convention, with a view to advocating for bringing local legislation into compliance with the Convention.

### **All actors can take the following measures to advance ratification:**

- Develop effective communication strategies, including the use of social media such as by making their voices heard offline and online, and also by using the hashtag #RatifyC190.
- Develop education programs designed to raise awareness about the Convention and what it guarantees.
- Help to keep institutions accountable for delivering on their national and international commitments as well as to monitor and remind concerned entities of their obligations.
- Advocate for measures to develop a strong evidence base to underpin policies, using disaggregated data, research, and anecdotal evidence from stories and real experiences of violence and harassment; and with emphasis on sectors that are disproportionately impacted: women, racialized, indigenous, migrant, domestic and workers with disabilities and, LGBT+.
- Pay special attention to raising the visibility of and ensuring protections within the provisions of the Convention to less visible groups such as the informal sector, domestic, migrant, and home-based workers.
- Create/establish multi-stakeholder dialogue involving government representatives, employers, and trade union representatives, and civil society, as part of a comprehensive approach to implementing the Convention. There is a vital need for such dialogue, which helps to generate positive pressure on relevant government entities and on employers and to share expertise and experience.
- Identify a champion or champions who are effective at shepherding the process of ratification by the government

### **Conclusions**

We need broad strategies founded on the principles of social justice and human rights, in order to enable a culture of respect, non-discrimination, equal treatment, and non-violence in the world of work. Civil society must call for a results-oriented approach and concerted action by all concerned, to promote the ratification of ILO C 190.