

ILO statement for the Grand Bargain annual meeting 2019

The ILO expresses its appreciation to the outgoing Eminent Person Ms Kristalina Georgieva and wishes success to the incoming Eminent Person Minister Sigrid Kaag.

The ILO remains committed to the principles and spirit of the Grand Bargain, i.e. to ensure that resources entrusted to aid organizations yield the maximum benefit possible for populations affected by crises, disasters, conflicts or fragility. To this end, the ILO believes that the focus should remain on reducing needs and aid dependency by increasing local capacities and resilience. This can only be achieved through better-integrated and more comprehensive response models involving both humanitarian and development actors.

Currently, approximately two billion people live in fragile and conflict-affected situations, many of which are poor. The share of global poor living in fragile environments is projected to rise to almost 50 per cent by 2030. Crisis and disaster response interventions cannot therefore be limited to stabilizing or restoring a pre-existing situation of low human development. Virtually every crisis – besides endangering lives – also jeopardizes development prospects by destroying productive assets, undercutting livelihood opportunities and undermining the capacity of institutions to deliver basic services. Without an early-on strategy to provide decent livelihood opportunities and access to social protection services, long-term prospects for resilience remain scant and aid-dependency high, with constant risk of relapse into crisis or poverty.

While recognizing that steps forward have been made in implementing the humanitarian-development (-peace) nexus, the ILO believes that more needs to be done, and that the spirit of mutual trust, cooperation and transparency needs to be reinforced. While excellent examples of inter-agency collaboration exist and have even increased, efforts should continue in order to bridge the humanitarian-development divide and achieve a clear sense of complementarity based on respective competitive advantages. At the same time, the ILO believes that the nexus has not yet been sufficiently mainstreamed across the remaining work-streams, including among those that have registered more progress.

This year the ILO celebrates the 100th anniversary of its foundation, as part of the Treaty of Versailles which ended World War I. Its constitutional principle, according to which peace can be accomplished only if it is based upon social justice, remains just as relevant today. In 2017, one year after joining the Grand Bargain, the ILO adopted the [Recommendation on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience \(N. 205\)](#), a global normative reference for the world of work's contribution to peace and stability. The recommendation explicitly stresses the importance of enhancing the capacities of national and local social partners to respond to crises and fragility, in line with the localization work stream.

The ILO's mission has been from the start at the core of what is today the "triple nexus", working to provide women and men with decent work opportunities that allow them to live in dignity, to fulfil their aspirations and enjoy fundamental labour rights. Because it is only when these conditions are met that work can become a catalyst for peace and resilience. It is in that spirit that the ILO sees its contribution to deliver on the Grand Bargain's commitments.

The operational contribution comes through the ILO's flagship programme [Jobs for Peace and Resilience \(JPR\)](#), a modular, local resource-based and people-centre programme, which combines in a coherent and context-specific manner employment-intensive investments, technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills training, employment services and the collaboration with the private sector. At the same time, the ILO and UNHCR have been working together since the beginning of the Grand Bargain to promote sound market-based solutions to provide livelihood opportunities to displaced population and their host communities.

In order to ensure sustainability of cash-based programming, the ILO reiterates the necessity for cash transfers to be combined with the (re)establishment of efficient national social security institutions, in

order to facilitate transition to sustainable and locally-owned social protection programmes. The ILO has been cooperating with WFP in this regard, and in 2018 it has developed a specific approach towards [ensuring social protection coverage to people affected by natural disasters and climate change](#). The ILO further underlines the specific added value of labour-based infrastructure programmes, such as those currently implemented by the ILO around Syria, in the Sahel and elsewhere, as they combine the provision of monetary income with concrete reconstruction and social integration opportunities that cash alone cannot achieve.

On joint needs assessment, the ILO has been stepping up its involvement in multi-stakeholder post-disaster assessment, such as the post-cyclone Idai one in Mozambique in 2019. On transparency, a comprehensive 3-steps plan to achieve full transparency was adopted, gradually improving the quality and comprehensiveness of data published in IATI format. The ILO has also participated in the pilot on simplified reporting, providing feedback to the co-convenors on how to improve its relevance for nexus activities. Furthermore, a new coordination mechanism to ensure the mainstreaming of crisis and conflict-sensitive approaches across all ILO actions has been set up and operationalized.

The ILO welcomes the latest annual report and has taken good note of the findings, as well as of the recommendations, which it largely agrees with. The Grand Bargain has created a momentum to rethink the way we work internally and with one another. Furthermore, it has created a platform to facilitate dialogue and exchange of information, bringing together for the first time donors and a multiplicity of aid recipients across the humanitarian-development spectrum around a number of shared commitments.

In the two years to come, the ILO stresses the need to further focus on actionable and realistic goals. In order to avoid widening the gap between large frontrunners and smaller players – stronger inclusiveness should be ensured for signatories without co-convenors' role. Similarly it would be desirable to ensure political support also from non-OECD donors and from recipient countries.

The ILO believes that the political, financial and institutional investments made thus far should be capitalized on and lessons should be learned for a possible “future for the Grand Bargain” beyond the 2021. In fact its initial aims remain relevant and the fulfilment of its commitments still require considerable work by all sides.

Going forward, the ILO believes that the new eminent person, together with the Facilitation Group and the co-convenors, should adopt a critical view on how change can be gradually and realistically achieved through a stronger incentive structure (including the reinforcement of the *quid pro quo* element), as well as a renewed commitment at the political level.