



International  
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► **The Director-General**

H.E. Mr Morten Jespersen  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of  
Denmark to the UN in Geneva

H.E. Ms Anna Jardfelt  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of  
Sweden to the UN in Geneva

16 November 2021

Excellencies,

On behalf of the International Labour Organization (ILO), I welcome the 2020-21 MOPAN Assessment Report. We are grateful to the Governments of Denmark and Sweden for their leadership and support in steering the 2020-21 MOPAN assessment of the ILO. Our appreciation also goes to INOMER and the MOPAN Secretariat for the constructive discussions throughout this 18 month-long process.

We note with satisfaction the positive assessment of the ILO in most dimensions of the MOPAN framework, reflecting steady progress made since the last MOPAN assessment in 2015-16. The report also points to several areas for improvement, which the ILO embraces and is committed to acting upon. The attached management response provides the details of the ILO's intended follow up.

The report constitutes a solid basis to strengthen and deepen our engagement with MOPAN Members. This is critical as the ILO strives to support its Constituents' efforts for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, as called for by the Global Call to Action adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2021.

We look forward to engaging with MOPAN Members in the coming months to build on the assessment and pursue our common goals centred on realizing decent work and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Guy Ryder'.

Guy Ryder

Copy : MOPAN Secretariat



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Guy Ryder

Copy : MOPAN Secretariat

# 2020-21 Institutional Assessment of the ILO by MOPAN

## ▶ Introduction

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The ILO's management welcomes the 2020-21 Institutional Assessment and finds that the report provides a high quality, insightful and comprehensive picture of the ILO to date, showing significant progress in several key dimensions compared to the earlier 2015-16 MOPAN assessment of the ILO as well as identifying areas for improvement. More broadly, ILO management appreciates MOPAN Members' interest in the relevance of the Organization and the performance of the Office.

This third MOPAN assessment of the ILO was conducted at a timely moment, allowing for an external review of the changes that the ILO has undergone since launching its comprehensive institutional reform programme in 2012. With the bulk of the assessment conducted throughout 2020, the process also covered the rapid response by the ILO in the face of the unprecedented global challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ILO appreciates the engagement of the MOPAN Secretariat and INOMER teams and their willingness to take on board the specific features of the ILO, particularly its normative function and its unique tripartite structure.

The following sections focus on key findings of the MOPAN assessment.

## ▶ Positive Findings

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ILO management notes with satisfaction the introductory observation that *"the ILO's performance trajectory shows improvement since 2017 in all performance areas of the MOPAN framework"* and that the *"organisation celebrated its centenary, consolidating its relevance and strategic position as it entered its second century"*.

MOPAN's observations about our commitment to and progress in results-based management and transparency, increased collaboration across the UN system, expanded and diversified partnerships, and a robust and quality-focused evaluation function are a testimony to the trajectory of continuous improvements pursued by the ILO in recent years. Such improvements have contributed to strengthening the ability of the Office to develop evidence-based integrated policy advice and interventions.

The report acknowledges the challenges arising from the significant increase in the demand for ILO services and its engagement in new policy areas in the context of a zero real growth budget persisting for almost two decades. The ILO appreciates MOPAN's recognition of the Office's ability to re-focus interventions and repurpose available resources with flexibility and agility in relation to constituents' responses to the COVID-19 crisis, the consistent search for efficiency gains and the pursuit of innovative approaches to support its services. The voluntary contributions provided by the MOPAN members and other funding partners have greatly contributed to strengthening and sustaining the ILO's capacity to deliver its mandate in pursuit of social justice and decent work.

## ▶ Areas for improvement

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The report provides important insights into areas for future improvement, building on valuable feedback provided by ILO constituents and partners through interviews and country-level surveys conducted in the framework of the 2020-21 assessment.

ILO management takes note of MOPAN's observations in relation to the ***ILO's field capacity***. This is and has been a challenge. Within the limits of available resources, efficiency gains have permitted a certain degree of reallocation of resources to the field. Efforts will continue in this regard yet there will be limits as to how far that process can be taken. Other options such as out posting of technical specialists have been pursued, as noted in the report. In view of the demand for services, along with the growing country-level collaboration with members

of the UN Country Teams and other partners, a key priority for the ILO remains to strengthen its ability to bring together a critical mass of technical expertise at the right time and in the right places. This would also include leveraging resources in headquarters, to support Member States' efforts to advance a human-centred recovery with Decent Work. The Office will continue to look for innovative solutions and lessons learned from the experience of working under the conditions of COVID 19 will be useful in this regard. MOPAN's observations will help give impetus to these efforts.

Regarding prevention of and response to **sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH)**, the ILO has zero tolerance for acts of SEA and SH and is firmly committed to preventing and addressing them in all its programmes and operations. The ILO does recognise there is a need for continued efforts towards better, comprehensive systems, as part of its approach to enhancing transparency and accountability.

As noted in MOPAN's report, the Office put in place new SEA policies towards the end of this assessment's timeline.

The conversion of the ethics officer's function to a full-time position from 2022, will also be important in driving initiatives that foster a strong culture of integrity and high ethical standards and strengthen compliance with relevant rules and regulations by all staff as well as external stakeholders. There will be an enhanced focus on staff training, awareness raising and advocacy including to establish a clear understanding of concepts, of responsibilities and of actions to be taken. The need for a victim/survivor centred approach is noted and will be followed up.

The ILO has been actively engaged in the wider UN SEA working group, it has developed its own SEA action plan and is currently internalizing the guidelines adopted in 2021 by Chief Executives Board (CEB) Task Force on Addressing SH within the UN system. The ILO has further endorsed the harmonized SEA and SH language as agreed recently between the UN Secretariat, certain Funds and Programmes and 15 Governments, and has committed to integrating it systematically in future funding agreements with the concerned donors. It is actively working towards full and timely compliance. This involves: (i) a review and alignment of the ILO's approach to its assessment of implementing partners against the UN implementing partner PSEA capacity assessment and its accompanying protocol, and ii) integration of the Minimum Operating Standards as applied to personnel. MOPAN's observations will be duly considered in shaping further measures to reinforce ILO action in this area along with the MOPAN note for practitioners on preventing and responding to SEA and SH that has been referenced by the ILO in its SEA action plan for 2021-2022.

The ILO also acknowledges the need for further improvements in **accountability to end beneficiaries** and intends to take follow-up action through a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, this matter will be addressed through the development and implementation of an Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework, foreseen in the Programme and Budget for 2022-23. The results framework incorporates a specific indicator to measure the percentage of ILO business processes and technical areas that have developed tools to apply this framework. In addition, the Office will assess, replicate, and mainstream the existing good practices regarding accountability to beneficiaries from several of the ILO's Flagship programmes. The ILO will also draw on examples from across the UN, such as FAO's Guide to Accountability to Beneficiaries. Based on this, ILO-specific materials will be developed and rolled-out across the organization including through staff development and training.

The ILO acknowledges that further improvements are required with respect to the mainstreaming of the provisions of **frameworks for environmental sustainability and climate change into ILO's strategies, programmes, and operations**. Climate change is the defining global challenge of our time and the ILO will focus on this across its programming framework. Through Output 3.3 of the Programme and Budget, *'Increased capacity of Member States to formulate and implement policies for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies'* the ILO will work to mainstream environmental sustainability and climate change across its work worldwide. Beyond that, environmental sustainability is embedded in several other Programmed and Budget outcomes, relating to enterprise development, business practices, lifelong learning,

equal opportunities and treatment, and social protection. The Office is attentive to the need for coherent approaches so that the various streams of work, taken together deliver clear and significant results.

Internally, the ILO is currently developing its Environmental and Social Standards framework. The Programme & Budget for 2022-23 has environmental indicators that relate to greening ILO operations and programmes, such as a reduction in carbon footprint and water consumption and guided by a Sustainability Action Plan. In addition, The Green Jobs Programme together with the Human Resources and Development Department and the International Training Centre of the ILO will continue building internal staff capacity for more effective mainstreaming environmental sustainability and climate change in different areas of work of the ILO.

Finally, the ILO takes good note of the findings on its ***intervention design and monitoring practices***. It has been seeking to address these issues, inter alia, through strengthened staff development efforts including as part of the Development Cooperation Learning Journeys on project design and project implementation, responding also to needs identified by MOPAN assessment and evaluations. In addition, the helpdesk for the design of development cooperation proposals has extended its offer of expertise on RBM, and now covers, for example, logical frameworks, theory of change and risk analysis as elements of the foundation for sound design. These efforts will be stepped up and pursued more systematically. The ILO is aware that the monitoring of interventions and tracking of performance needs to be strengthened. This will be steadily pursued at all levels. Dedicated senior management discussions will focus on specific measures required to achieve the desired performance in this area, including the definition and clarification of associated responsibilities and accountability.

## Conclusions

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ILO management agrees with the broad findings of the assessment and notes with particular satisfaction MOPAN's recognition of the ILO's unique structure and mandate, its performance in achieving its normative goals and its contribution to the promotion of human rights.

Going forward, the ILO will focus on the areas where scope for improvement has been identified in MOPAN's report. To that effect, the findings of the assessment will be widely circulated amongst managers and staff across the Office with a view to establishing a shared understanding of the issues at stake and what needs to be done in the areas covered by the report. ILO management remains available for further exchanges with MOPAN Secretariat and MOPAN Members.