

ILO Statement, ECOSOC Special Session on El Niño, New York, 6 May 2016

Honorable Ms. Chairperson,

Thank you for allowing the ILO to offer a contribution to the interesting discussion this morning.

Our concern is how people's productive capacity is affected. My question is inspired by the very informative and relevant intervention by the Government representative of Indonesia.

So I would like to ask the panellists to share with us how they take into account the working situation and that of enterprises in their responses and, especially, in strategies for preparedness.

Because if the productivity capacity falls, the phenomenon like El Nino and related, climate-change induced changes in weather patterns, has a much longer negative impact on people's livelihoods.

Maldives, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Somalia, Vietnam and the other Small Island States already referred to economic and social impacts of El Nino such as reduction in fish stock and crop production were mentioned, in particular the cases of the threatened rice basket in the Mekong Delta and the 20 million people that depend on the proceeds of sales.

From the ILO's perspective we think it is essential to recognize:

- the need to promote the resilience of work places through structural and more specific measures
- the importance of increasing business resilience, protection of livelihoods and productive assets throughout the supply chains by integrating disaster risk management into business models and practices
- the role of businesses and professional associations incl. cooperatives to ensure business continuity, especially in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises,
- and also the need to ensure resilience to shocks at the household and community levels through strengthening the design and implementation of social safety-net mechanisms, including those related to employment programmes to rebuild damaged physical infrastructure.

One concrete example of preventive/preparedness work is the initiative undergoing in Pakistan to mitigate the effects of alternate droughts and floods on rural populations in the Sindh province. This is a joint initiative implemented by the ILO, FAO and UN-WOMEN with the aim to build the resilience to future shocks of the most vulnerable villages. The ILO's component focuses on enhancing the

technical and entrepreneurship skills and knowledge base of men and women farmers, landless people and unemployed youth by providing skills and vocational training to create alternative livelihoods for rural populations (while FAO's component focuses on technical support in good agriculture practices (GAPs) and post-harvest management).

The ILO's work is intended to contribute to the application and effective use of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

Towards COP21 and in support of climate action the ILO brought together evidence and expertise how best to address the challenges and seize the opportunities in the move towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies.

The ILO convened a tripartite expert meeting in October 2015 to consider and review guidelines for a Just Transition, containing a menu of policy options how to ensure that the process and the outcomes are fair, inclusive and provide decent work opportunities for all. Now we invite countries to adapt and use the most relevant policy options in their own responses.

To do that, it is very important to engage in social dialogue, bringing together stakeholders from the world of work to analyse and prioritize the challenges they agree to address.

So given these concerns, we would be interested to hear the panellists' view about their efforts to anchor the safeguarding of the productive capacity of people and business in affected areas, and their suggestions for concrete action in this respect.

Thank you Ms. Chairperson.