SECTORAL ACTIVITIES PROGRAMME

Working Paper

Labour oriented participation in municipalities: How decentralized social dialogue can benefit the urban economy and its sectors

by

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Preface

The economy of each municipality, while diverse, is often primarily driven by a few key sectors (or sometimes even one sector), which concentrate significant numbers of workers and enterprises. This paper presents the characteristics of local social dialogue, and how it can contribute to improve labour conditions and businesses in such sectors of the urban economy. It gives insights on how sectoral workers and enterprises can get together with government authorities to discuss issues of common interest and contribute to governance. Its analysis can also be used for multi-sectoral local social dialogue.

This paper is a spin-off product of the SECTOR project "Participatory approaches for construction-related technical assistance in settlement upgrading". While the project had an initial focus on low-income settlements specifically (and produced related material), its research also unveiled the need to study social dialogue at the municipal level.

While social dialogue at the national level (both sectoral or multi-sectoral) have recognized attributes, at the same time, as noted in this paper, there are local level issues related to labour which vary according to the municipality, and are difficult to capture at the national level. Both national and local social dialogues are important. The literature and concrete activities related to national social dialogue abound. Much less is available in regard to local social dialogue. This paper aims at expanding the knowledge on this topic.

It is also important to note that the bulk of the literature and practice related to participatory approaches at the municipal level concentrate on community-based participation and city-wide general processes (a notable example of the latter is the "participatory budgeting" approach, pioneered by the city of Porto Alegre in Brazil, and now spread to many municipalities in developing and also some developed countries). Both community-based and city-wide participatory approaches have brought some labour-related benefits, especially regarding employment generation in the context of small enterprises and self-employed workers. While this is commendable, there are many other issues which need to be addressed in order to achieve decent work at municipal level. For example, a large number of workers lack the many elements of social protection and/or respect to their rights. These are important issues for reducing urban poverty, yet seldom addressed in participatory processes. In sum, labour-related participation requires a different approach, which would integrate effective practice of social dialogue. This paper aims at addressing this issue and would therefore be of value to the local decision-makers who, although familiar with community-based and city-wide participatory approaches, tend to lack information about social dialogue.

The paper will also be useful for countries where social dialogue at the national level (sectoral or cross-sectoral) is still weak. The strengthening of local social dialogue can trigger a bottom-up process with possible multiplier effects in the sectors of the economy which still face constraints to implement dialogue at the national level.

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Contents

Introduction [1]

Participation is central to local/urban governance. There is already a wealthy body of knowledge about urban participatory approaches, and how they feed into governance. But in what regards urban labour specifically, there is so far scattered knowledge about participatory approaches, let alone how they link to governance processes. Throughout the present and the past decades there have been indeed many practices of promoting labour (especially employment-creation) in cities and towns. But the possible participatory practices in which they might be embedded have been seldom analysed.

However, with the continuous trend towards decentralization, a growing number of local authorities and/or other urban actors have engaged in labour-related participation. Yet, there is a need to analyse what has been done, to contrast the labour-related experiences with participatory experiences in other fields (sanitation, housing, etc.) as well as to analyse the value-added of a labour-related approach. These are issues addressed by this paper.

The paper starts by presenting background information on the importance of labour in urban areas, linking it to the concept of decent work (section 1). Next, section 2 notes that the existing community-based and city-wide approaches in urban areas are not enough to properly address the labour issues. This section also explains the importance of a specific labour-related participatory approach. Section 3 puts such an approach into a sectoral perspective. Following, section 4 shows that labour-related participation has already been widely applied at the national level, but it needs adaptations to the urban level. In section 5, the paper presents the roles and contributions of urban social dialogue; [2] followed in section 6 by its obstacles and favourable conditions; and in section 7 on how to sustain and institutionalize the process. The paper concludes, in section 8, with a set of recommendations on how to strengthen and scale-up urban social dialogue. The appendix presents a step-by-step abridged manual on the implementation of social dialogue at the municipal level, as an aid to put in practice the ideas presented in this paper.

1.   The importance of labour in urban areas and the decent work perspective

Over the next ten years, the ILO estimates that 500 million people will join the world's job markets, most of them young people in developing countries. They will join the 184 million unemployed and the 550 million working poor, all wanting to use their talents and abilities in a productive and gainful manner. Therefore, a large number of jobs have to be provided by the end of this decade simply to employ the new entrants. This would require not only improved economic growth but also policies and programmes to increase the impact of economic growth on decent and productive work opportunities. The inability of cities and towns to productively absorb the influx and generate enough quality jobs has led to rising levels of poverty and insecurity.

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[1] This paper is based on a previous collaboration between the two authors, presented at the 12th EADI (European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes) General Conference, Geneva 24–28 June 2008. For a full explanation about the sources of such previous collaboration, see
www.eadi.org/fileadmin/Documents/Events/General_Conference/2008/Paper_Werna.pdf

[2] In this paper, "social dialogue" is sometimes mentioned only as "dialogue". The paper focuses on urban settings, and the terms "municipal", "urban", and "local" social dialogue (or dialogue) are used interchangeably.

At the same time, cities and local governments have a number of areas of comparative advantage for employment creation. For instance, the concentration of supply and demand for a wide variety of services and products in urban areas, that potentially offers great employment opportunities. However, such advantages are often misunderstood or poorly exploited.

A large number of people have to resort to informal employment, and many work in precarious conditions. Many workers in the informal economy are working long hours for low pay without any form of representation or social protection – often in dangerous, and sometimes violent and illegal activities.

The concept of decent work is helpful for the understanding of the specific issue focused by this paper. Therefore, the concept will be explained here.

Decent work is an organizing concept used by the ILO to provide an overall framework for action in economic and social development. It is the converging focus of the four strategic objectives of the ILO, related to the following themes: *employment creation, social dialogue, social protection* and *rights at work*.

The first theme is probably the one that urban specialists are more familiar with. It encompasses the issues which lead to the direct creation of employment or/and which increase the possibilities and potential of workers to access jobs or self-employment (e.g. skills training, development of cooperatives and small, investor driven enterprises, self-employment, etc.).

The second theme, social dialogue, is basically the participatory approach used in the world of labour – which is not the same as community-based participation or city-wide participation. It can include various forms of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy. The main goal is to promote consensus building and democratic involvement among the main actors. Successful social dialogue structures and processes have the potential to resolve economic and social issues, encourage good governance, advance social and industrial peace and stability and boost economic progress.

Thirdly, social protection, is defined by the ILO as aiming, through government action and constant social dialogue, at ensuring that men and women enjoy working conditions which are not only not harmful, but as safe as possible, which respect human dignity, take into account family and social values, allow for adequate compensation in case of lost or reduced income, permit access to adequate social and medical services, and respect the right to free time and rest.

Finally, there is a need to protect or strengthen the implementation of principles and rights of workers. The ILO's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work focuses on four areas: freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining; elimination of forced and compulsory labour; abolition of child labour, and elimination of discrimination in the workplace. Furthermore, a number of other internationally agreed labour standards are central to promoting sustainable and good quality employment, beginning with the Employment Policy Convention.

The bulk of the literature on urban development which deals with labour-related issues concentrates on the first theme, i.e. employment generation. While this is indeed important, it is also essential to address the three other themes. This paper concentrates on the theme of social dialogue, which is about participation. The next section will make inferences to social dialogue within the context of urban governance.

2. Urban governance and the role of labour-related participation

In the present and past few decades, literature on governance in general and on urban governance in particular flourished. Among other authors, Werna (2001) made an attempt to summarize the definitions put together in the literature and noted that governance refers to the relationship between civil society and the state. Thus, as a concept, it is broader than government, and more inclusive. Also, governance has been defined as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development – following, urban governance refers to the exercise of power in the management of such resources in cities/towns.

In short, urban governance refers to the interplay of the social actors which actually shape the public decisions and activities in a city/town. Therefore, urban governance in different places have different degrees of participation, depending on the social actors which are involved, and on how and to what extent they are involved. Considering the importance of having a more inclusive process, it is necessary to discuss the role, scope and challenges of the existing participatory processes used in urban areas.

The bulk of the literature on participation in urban areas focuses on low-income communities. It dates back from the 1960s with the pioneering work of John Turner (e.g. Turner, 1967, 1968, 1977, Turner and Fichter, 1972), and amasses a large amount of publications up to the present (e.g. Viloria-Williams, 2006; World Bank, 2005; to mention just a few recent publications). It is a consolidated approach which has been, and continues to be, widely used by local actors and international cooperation actors alike.

Such participatory approach has brought benefits for low-income communities, leading to the physical upgrading of their settlements as well as to the improvement of social services such as educational and health facilities, among others. It also helped local authorities and other stakeholders to better understand the needs of low-income communities. However, such an approach is limited in bringing benefits related to decent work.

The present decade or so has also brought to attention the importance of a city-wide participatory approach. For example, the concept of "participatory budgeting", pioneered by the city of Porto Alegre in Brazil; and now spread to many municipalities in different (developing and also some developed) countries, and promoted by international organizations such as UN-Habitat. However, such an approach is also limited in specific relation to decent work issues.

Both community-based and city-wide participatory approaches have brought some labour-related benefits especially regarding employment generation in the context of small enterprises and self-employed producers. While this is commendable, there are many other issues which need to be addressed in order to achieve decent work in urban areas. For example, a large number of workers lack the many elements of social protection and/or respect to their rights (noted in section 3). These are important issues for reducing urban poverty and ensuring sustainable development, yet seldom addressed in participatory processes.

In addition, even the effectiveness of employment-generating activities is limited without a proper participation of organized/unionized workers and associations of formal enterprises/employers. The linkages between the formal and informal sectors of the (urban) economy are already well understood, and do not need to be repeated here. It is known that a large amount of informal sector activity is tied through a sub-contracting chain to formal sector activities. Contrary to what early theses about the informal sector argued, formal and informal workers do not operate in unconnected universes. Therefore, decisions that affect

informal workers and small enterprises are tied to larger scale businesses as well as negotiations with formal workers. Therefore, it is important to address such linkages on an integrated way, which by and large have not been addressed through community-based and city-wide participation.

In sum, labour-related participation requires a different approach. Socially viable cities cannot exist without ensuring fair representation and involving workers, enterprises and other stakeholders in the decision making process that affect them. Various aspects of work are related respectively to the role of the government, companies and the workers themselves. It is therefore important to have a forum for dialogue among these actors – a participatory process involving them all – to establish a common and mutually beneficial agenda, which seeks synergies and complementarity and avoids duplication of effort.

Section 1 outlined the basic definition of social dialogue, which is the participatory approach used in the "world of labour". It involves the principal actors in this field, employers, workers and government (also known as a tripartite process). Other actors active in labour-related initiatives, such as NGOs, sometimes participate in the process as well. The purpose of social dialogue is to jointly discuss questions related to decent work and put forward solutions leading to concrete activities for implementation.

In social dialogue at the national level, the workers are represented by the trade unions, the employers by employers' organizations and the Government by the Ministry of Labour (when the matter under discussion specifically relates to a particular sector of the economy, the ministry responsible for that sector also takes part).

In the case of urban/municipal social dialogue, the workers and employers should be represented by their respective organizations in the municipality and the government by the local authority. Federal and provincial bodies may also send their representatives. Urban/municipal social dialogue also offers an opportunity for other locally organized actors, which very often are not represented at national or even provincial level, notably the associations of informal workers and/or businesses, and cooperatives,[3] together with grassroots community associations and social movements (housing, women's movement).

Furthermore, it should be noted that the decent work questions of national relevance do not necessarily apply to all municipalities in a given country – in addition to the fact that they do not include other issues specific to each municipality. A possible integrated urban plan of action on decent work, derived from a social dialogue process in a given municipality, has the advantage of focusing specifically on local questions, which cannot be addressed in detail in the overall policies of the Ministry of Labour. Also, such an urban programme, because it is local, is more flexible and can take specific measures more quickly than national-level initiatives, depending on the extent of decentralization in the country.

There is a significant amount of efforts to strengthen the roles of local actors in labour policy-making and implementation. This reinforces the importance of social dialogue, as a platform to bring together and jointly conduct efforts which by and large have been dispersed – as well as to bring on board new issues not yet discussed.

Given the above reasoning, social dialogue can add value to a participatory process of urban governance, by bringing on board social actors not yet included or prominent in the

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[3] The case of cooperatives is specific in this regard. Depending on the context, primary (local) cooperatives do have representative bodies such as cooperative unions, federations or confederations. However, in many countries the vertical linkages of the cooperative movement are weak, impacting on the capacity of the cooperative movement to effectively participate in social dialogue at national and local level.

existing urban participatory approaches, and by holistically addressing decent work and its impact on urban poverty reduction.

Social dialogue has been widely used at the national level by the ILO and other actors. The use at the urban level is still incipient, and, as noted in the beginning of this paper, deserves more attention. But it is possible and important to make inferences about the adaptation of the existing methodology to the urban level, as well as to analyse some existing experiences. This will be presented in the following sections, beginning with a sectoral approach.

3. The perspective of the sectors of the urban economy

While the economy of cities is diverse, it is frequently driven by one or a few sectors. Such sectors not only concentrate large numbers of workers and enterprises, but often also shape the very character of a city. Many cities are known as 'touristic cities', 'manufacturing cities', 'commerce cities', 'college (education) cities', 'service cities', etc. Construction, transport and utilities are also often key sectors of the economy of cities, providing support services which are crucial for the operation of other sectors.

There are three ways through which local social dialogue can be of value for specific sectors:

(1) *Sectoral focus from the beginning:* local social dialogue involving representatives of workers and employers in a given sector and government authorities. At least the key sectors of the local economy have a critical mass of workers and enterprises to form workers' and employers' organizations at the local level - and many already exist. Box 1 presents a case of social dialogue in the construction sector in the city of Hong Kong, which led to the creation of more businesses and employment. The experience of leading sectors of the local economy in social dialogue can set an example of good practice for the remaining sectors. Sectoral social dialogue is important because of the specificity of issues related to labour and enterprises in each sector.

(2) *Common points for specific sectors:* when an issue is common to a number of sectors, the representatives of their workers and employers may find it useful to join forces to discuss it. An example can be public private partnerships, , in which companies from multiple sectors can be involved in contracts with local governments to supply goods and services – e.g. infrastructure, water, electricity, waste management, catering for public schools and hospitals. During periods of local government planning, the representatives of such sectors could get together with local authorities to discuss possible improvements in the procurement process, etc. Another example relates to the specific sectors where there is a large magnitude of local informal workers and enterprises. Workers' and employers' organizations of such sectors may find it helpful to engage in dialogue with local authorities about policies to help the informal workers and enterprises to join the mainstream of the local economy.

(3) *General start-up to trickle-down to sectors:* in municipalities where sectoral workers and employers are not organized, one alternative would be a general process of local social dialogue. Such form of local social dialogue can pave the ground for future sectoral dialogue (in addition to giving a boost to the local economy in general). A number of subsequent boxes in this paper (referred to in the specific sections where they appear) provide examples of how such type of dialogue can get started – such as the experience of the city of Marikina or the LEDAs (local economic development agencies).

The specificities of local social dialogue will be examined next.

Box 1
Social dialogue for job creation and improvement of working conditions
in the construction sector in Hong Kong

The construction industry was severely hit by the financial crisis throughout the world, and Hong Kong was no exception. Unemployment rose, forcing many construction workers who have worked in the industry for more than 20 years to look for employment in other sectors. Throughout the world, it was estimated that at least 5 million construction workers were laid-off during 2008, with a similar estimation for 2009. BWI (Building and Wood Workers International) reported that, in August 2009, while the official unemployment rate in Hong Kong was at 5%, the rate for construction workers was much higher, at 12.7%. In addition, in a trade union survey, 50% of those interviewed stated that they were underemployed and at least 20% stated that they have been out of job for a month or longer.

In an effort to address the crisis, CITU (Concrete Industry Trade Union) held dialogues with the MTRC (The MTR (Mass Transit Railway Corporation) was established in 1975. The sole shareholder was the Hong Kong Government. The Company was re-established in June 2000 after the Government sold 23% of its issued share capital to private investors in an Initial Public Offering. MTRC shares were listed in the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong on 5 October 2000. The operations of the other Government-owned rail operator, the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation, were merged into the MTR in 2 December 2007).

Afterwards, workers (CITU) and employers (MRTC) together approached the Hong Kong government to begin construction of infrastructure projects that it had proposed earlier. According to BWI, CITU and MRTC successfully dialogued with the Hong Kong government to approve 12 billion Hong Kong dollars for the construction of the West Island Line project. This new project, which began in August 2009, plans to create 5,000 new jobs for the construction industry. There are currently 10 project sites under construction with 2,000 workers already employed by sub-contractors of MTRC. According to the MTRC, the breakdown of the overall 5,000 jobs is the following:

- Bar Benders: 7 per cent

- Carpenters: 8 per cent

- Concrete workers: 7 per cent

- Plant operators: 11 per cent

- Skilled workers (building facilities and electrical devices): 21 per cent

- Skilled workers (civil) and general workers: 46 per cent

  The project will also provide further 1,600 jobs for more supervisory and technical positions such as:

- Director / project manager: (3%)

- Assistant project manager / Senior engineer: (15%)

- Engineer / Assistant engineer: (39%)

- Site supervisor (technical): (43%)

Furthermore, in early November 2009, the MTRC invited the Hong Kong unions to conduct occupational health and safety trainings on the sites. The unions were scheduled to conduct other rounds in 2010, when the MTRC employs more workers in the project sites. In a recent meeting between the MTRC and the unions, others issues such as back wages and the sub-contract system were also discussed.

Source: data for this box was provided in November 2009 by the Asia and Pacific Office of BWI (Building and Wood Workers International). The Asia and Pacific Office of BWI confirmed and updated information for two articles posted in BWI´s website: www.bwint.org/default.asp?index=2383&Language=EN and www.bwint.org/default.asp?index=2360&Language=EN.

4. Distinctive features of urban social dialogue

The urban reality calls for a social dialogue form that differs from the national or enterprise level, bi-partite and tri-partite social dialogue structures. In general, one can distinguish four elements that differentiate urban social dialogue from the more regular forms of social dialogue. At first, the broad-based involvement is typical for urban social dialogue. Depending on the specific context, dialogue partners can include municipal authorities, decentralized line ministries, local branches of trade unions, chambers of commerce, small business associations, cooperatives, business service providers, micro-finance organizations, vocational training institutions, community and religious leaders, NGOs, universities/research centres, etc. In this respect, special attention should be paid to groups that risk to be excluded from consultation processes because they are not well organized or because of other socio-cultural reasons. Besides the aforementioned informal economy workers, one should think more specifically about women, youth, disabled persons, migrants, ethnic or religious groups and home workers. One should avoid that the dialogue shall institutionalize or sustain unequal power relations. Actually, inclusive dialogue is a way to address such inequalities. Therefore, dialogue facilitators should grasp the opportunity to foster the participation of less common or visible groups.

Secondly, there is the urban level at which dialogue takes place. The urban level can refer to a city or a human settlement and sometimes to a broader, surrounding geographical space where one finds a critical mass of inhabitants, resources and organizations representing public and private sectors as well as civil society.

At the third place, the dialogue topics are of a distinctive nature. They concern urban development issues that impact decent work. For example, the lack of productive and economic infrastructure and services (e.g. a market, a business incubator, ICT, financial services, etc.) can be a source for dialogue.

The fourth and final distinctive feature of urban social dialogue concerns its pragmatic orientation whereas social dialogue at the national level is mainly policy oriented. In some cases, it is the practical nature that facilitates public-private partnerships among the dialogue partners for the actual implementation of the outcomes.

This is not to say that current practices of urban social dialogue correspond exactly to all four features. Across the world, there is a wide variety of urban dialogue forms that encompass in varying degrees the above described characteristics. They are known under various terms including "multi-stakeholder dialogue" or "multi-partite social partnerships", "territorial pacts", etc. In this paper we refer to these practices as "urban social dialogue". The social dialogue tradition in Marikina in the Philippines is an example of tripartite dialogue that has become a pillar of growth for the city (see box 2).

In the l960s, Marikina was the envy of the emerging metropolitan Manila because it was host to big industries availing of incentives Marikina enjoyed as a special industrial zone. Moreover Marikina was home to a flourishing footwear cluster. However, in the l970s, it lost its special status due to changes in national policy. In the l980s, Marikina's national status deteriorated further, as it suffered from the harsh competition of the Chinese footwear industry. In addition, the City was plagued by floods and nasty stories on crimes and grime. The negative image was compounded by the chaotic system of industrial relations, when Marikina became a center for militant unionism in the country, with the 'class war' even becoming 'physical' for some management and union officials. As a result, a large number of business and industrial establishments either closed down or relocated elsewhere. Thus, by the early l990s, nobody wanted to invest in Marikina.

Two subsequent mayors did a lot in transforming the City's image, by initiating reforms in the social and physical infrastructures of the city such as the rehabilitation of the Marikina River, instilling civic discipline among the residents, cleaning up the city and improving the overall system of local governance. These City Executives also succeeded in establishing industrial peace and a favorable labour and business climate through social dialogue. To this end, the Mayor undertook the following steps:

■ Making personal contacts with a wide range of workers' and employers' representatives. This resulted amongst others in the forging an alliance among the City's fractious unions, i.e. the Alliance of Trade Unions in Marikina (ATUM). The Marikina Valley Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MVCCI) was acknowledged as the main voice of business as other employers' organizations are represented in its board. This regrouping of workers and employers eventually facilitated the Mayor in convening tripartite consultations in the City based on balanced representation among the parties;

■ Arranging a series of formal and informal dialogues, initially facilitated by the Mayor himself;

■ Creating an official tripartite body capping the ongoing dialogues and followed by several tripartite agreements;

■ Institutionalizing the dialogue system backed up by a Workers Assistance Office financed by the City;

■ Formulating City policies in line with the tripartite agreements.

Through dialogue the City of Marikina was able to settle labour disputes at the tripartite or company level. Dialogue has been a major factor in the enactment of labour- and business-friendly ordinances such as the creation of a one-stop-shop business registration. Above all, dialogue has been crucial in inculcating respect and trust between and among the tripartite social partners.

The decentralized tripartite system that has developed in Marikina is characterized by continuity and a clear development focus. Furthermore, its institutionalization through a regular secretariat and mechanisms for dispute settlement is typical for the success of this experience as it avoids ad-hocism and crisis-focused management. Thanks to the support and participation of the workers' and employers' organizations, the mayors could play a key role in making this happen. (Rene E. Ofreneo, ILO, 2005.)

5. Participating in urban social dialogue: Roles and contributions

The roles and contributions of the most common categories of urban dialogue participants (local government, private sector organizations, civil society organizations) can be summarized as follows.

Local government is key in initiating and facilitating urban social dialogue. The role and success of local government depends to a great extent on the enabling dialogue environment provided by national and/or regional government. Local government can organize the practical and logistical aspects of dialogue (e.g. invitations, agenda, accommodation) and ensure the implementation of dialogue outcomes such as adjusting regulations, allocating resources according to concerns raised and linking up with national policy makers. However, involving private sector and civil society organizations in decision-making processes is not yet common practice everywhere. In such cases, the know-how and means of local government to structuralize urban social dialogue can be reinforced.

Private sector organizations (employers and workers) are important urban dialogue partners. Private sector representatives can provide information on labour demand, obstacles in the business environment, and in the end become implementing partners of the dialogue outcomes. For example, in Sri Lanka, Micro and Small Enterprise (MSE) Forums have been created as public-private dialogue bodies that address in particular constraints in the business policy and regulatory framework. See box 3. But in most urban economies, organizations regrouping micro and small businesses are normally characterized by fragility, structural constraints and limited effectiveness. They are rarely officially registered or recognized and therefore have limited access to and influence over relationships with the institutions and enterprises of the formal economy or with the public authorities. Only in a small (albeit growing) number of cases are they affiliated to formally structured national or international organizations of employers, chambers of commerce, trade unions or cooperatives (ILO/ILC, 2002). However, in many developing countries, national level federations also have a limited operational capacity at the urban level, an issue which needs to be addressed.

Box 3
Micro and Small Enterprise (MSE) Forums in Sri Lanka

The ILO Enterprise for Pro-Poor Growth project has facilitated the establishment of MSE forums in the districts of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Puttalam and Kurunegala. They bring together representatives of the District Secretariat and Provincial Government, the private sector, and NGO and Government service providers. They were established following a number of half-day workshops with each of the three sectors separately, which addressed issues of collaboration and cooperation, to generate support for dialogue. Representatives for the Forums were elected at the end of the workshops. Their mandate, broadly, is to facilitate "local economic development through MSE development" in their Districts, and function as a forum for dialogue.

The MSE forums discuss topics in relation to policies and regulations that are brought up through participatory exercises to assess local competitive advantages in each district. If the issues cannot be solved by those represented in the forums, they are passed on and discussed with relevant District or Provincial authorities, or raised at the national level Enterprise and Export Development Forum. This strategy has proven effective, as improvements have been realized. The following are some concrete examples:

■ In Puttalam District, there is a regulation against mining clay, aimed at avoiding environmental problems due to large-scale mining for bricks and tiles production. When the District Secretary was made aware of the regulation's negative impact on small-scale pottery producers, he has made an exception for them so they can continue their craft. They are allowed to mine two cubic meters a month, which has little impact on the environment.

■ The validity of tickets for archaeological sites in Sri Lanka's "Cultural Triangle" is just one day, discouraging tourists from staying longer. The MSE forum brought this issue to the national Enterprise and Export Development Forum. As a result, the Cultural Triangle Authority has now extended validity to three days.

So far, all stakeholders appreciate the way the Forums have been functioning and contribute to the development of public-private dialogue and collaboration among agencies. However, of course there is variation in the way the Forums are developing. One of the Forums is expanding its membership and considering options to formalize its status. Others have not yet reached this stage, although all are increasing their scope and moving towards the inclusion of broader and more contentious dialogue issues, such as, for instance, land ownership. (Roel Hakemulder/ILO, 2006)

Civil society organizations bring a variety of information and interests to the dialogue table that otherwise may be overlooked. Examples include: gender equity, environmental protection, health issues and other community matters. Also, they can become key implementing partners. It should be taken into account that NGOs may lack representation, as they are not member-based. In addition, democratic control is not systematically ensured.

In some countries, there is also a need to involve traditional authorities (e.g. religious or ethnic leaders), as they remain very important in organizing the life of people at the urban level. For example, traditional authorities regulate social life, control access to land

and settle disputes, among others. Therefore, traditional structures may be key in conflict management. However, this is location specific. In some localities for example, the multiplicity of traditional authorities and chieftaincy disputes make it difficult to have coherent legal/socio-cultural norms or can be a source of conflict.

The complementary roles and contributions of the various public and private partners to the dialogue process are also illustrated in box 4 that presents the Ghanaian experience with District Committees on Productive and Gainful Employment.

Box 4
District Committees on Productive and Gainful Employment in Ghana

The ILO assists the Ghanaian government and social partners in mainstreaming decent work and informal economy concerns into national policies and the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy. The decentralized planning framework provides that district and regional development plans contribute to policy formulation and budgeting at the national level. However, district assemblies and regional government encounter difficulties in providing those inputs because of –among others- a lack of know-how on employment issues and the absence of a forum bringing together the main local stakeholders in the district. For this reason, the ILO supported the establishment and functioning of a District Assembly Sub-Committee on Productive and Gainful Employment (SPGE) in two pilot districts in the Central Region.

District Assembly Sub-Committees are statutory bodies under the Local Government Act. They assist the Executive Committee of the District Assembly in exercising its executive and coordinating functions. Each District Assembly shall have the following sub-committees: development planning, social services, agriculture, works, justice and security, finance and administration. In addition, the District Assembly may decide to set up other sub-committees. The sub-committee can co-opt representatives from civil society. The costs of the sub-committee's functioning are covered from District Assembly resources.

The SPGE consists of 15 members. Six are private enterprise representatives, 4 are district assembly members and 5 are technical staff of the District Assembly. The latter represent other district assembly sub-committees such as the ones on agriculture, social services, and works. This ensures that economic growth and employment can be treated in a transversal way. The roles of the members differ from and complement each other. The elected assembly members make information on the activities of the SPGE available to all other assembly members. They play an advocacy role for the SPGEs by explaining issues to and sensitizing other assembly members as well as by lobbying for support. The District Assembly staff on the SPGE provide technical support. They give relevant socio-economic information to members for effective decision-making. Because they control the resources of the Assembly, they are able to facilitate the work of the SPGE. Representatives of Small Business Associations (SBAs) pursue the interest of their business associations. They carry the information on economic opportunities and binding constraints on growth from the SBAs to the Assembly through the SPGE and vice-versa. They have received training in areas like good business practices and service provision through association as part of the capacity building of the SPGE and act as resource persons for their SBAs. The SBAs have for example plaid a vital role in mobilizing their members to join the public health insurance and in some cases even the pension system.

Given the specific nature of the SPGE's, there was a need to add on the existing Standing Orders for "regular" Sub-Committees of the District Assembly. Consequently, a local governance expert developed a specific handbook on SPGE rules and regulations. The concerns for transparency, continuity and sustainability of the SPGE are central in this handbook. It covers issues, such as:

■ membership rules (qualification, representation, selection on merit, term of office, transition management);

■ roles and responsibilities inside the SPGE;

■ roles and responsibilities in relation to outside bodies;

■ sustainability of the SPGES;

■ use of the District Development Fund (a co-financing initiative of the ILO programme and the District Assembly).

For more information see: http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/dwpp/countries/ghana/index.htm.

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6.   Obstacles and favourable conditions for urban social dialogue

Literature on regular social dialogue practices and country experiences on urban dialogue indicate a range of favourable conditions. First of all, there needs to be political will and commitment to engage in dialogue and participatory decision-making by all actors. Moreover, existing dialogue committees and decision-making bodies should accept to open and enlarge themselves to "new" partners, who for social, cultural or political reasons were not included before. Additionally, dialogue partners need to have technical competence to engage in debates on wider issues beyond parties' immediate interests (Ishikawa, 2003). The existence of representative, transparent, accountable organizations increases the legitimacy of the dialogue process and its outcomes.

In situations where there is a lack of economic support agencies and business service providers that can support the implementation of social dialogue outcomes, it is important to consider the effectiveness of the current structures and arrangements to see if there is a need to modify existing institutions, or create new ones. A guiding question in this respect is: what kind of structure could effectively promote economic development through social dialogue while being socially, institutionally and financially sustainable? In countries in Central and South America as well as in, amongst others, Albania, Croatia, South Africa and Mozambique the answer to this question was to create Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs). They link a dialogue-based economic and employment development strategy with support services to entrepreneurs and local government. In Mozambique the successful experience of the LEDAs resulted in incorporating them into a broader institutional set-up at the national level, recognizing LEDAs as essential instruments in implementing the national poverty reduction strategy. This is described in box 5.

Box 5
LEDAs in Mozambique

In Mozambique, the first LEDAs were created in 2000 and 2001 in the Provinces of Maputo, Sofala and Manica within the framework of the UN Interagency Programme "Human Development at the Local Level" financed by the Italian government (1997-2003) The LEDA is an association at provincial level with 15 members from local government, civil society and the private sector. LEDA's main activities are focused on promoting the Provincial growth potential by attracting economic and development partners whilst improving the living and working conditions of the population and of disadvantaged groups in particular.

An extensive dialogue process preceded the constitution of the LEDAs in each Province. But also after the creation of the LEDA, the dialogue process continued. In fact, the LEDAs function as provincial network institutions, involving its members and other stakeholders in the design and implementation of a wide range of employment creation and development initiatives. For instance, LEDA Sofala recently undertook a participatory risk analysis in order to identify social protection needs and opportunities for informal economy workers in three districts. On the basis of the risk analysis, a social protection strategy was formulated in consultation with the LEDA members and other relevant stakeholders.

The successful LEDA experiences have triggered national government to formulate a multisectoral LED policy. An institutional framework has been set up to support the replication of the LED approach to the other seven provinces of the country. It exists of a national network of LEDAs, an inter-ministerial Commission for LED and a LED support unit based in the Ministry of State Administration. (Carlien van Empel, Walter Urbina, Eloisa de Villalobos / ILO, 2006)

The success of social dialogue at the urban level also depends on the national policy environment. In this respect, the adherence to democratic principles such as the respect for and the implementation of freedom of association to unions and other workers organizations is vital – especially when this is combined with a certain degree of decentralization and the existence of legal provisions for public-private consultation and partnerships. Another favourable factor is the receptiveness of national actors towards urban dialogue outcomes. However, in some situations these conditions may be hard to achieve and should be considered as long term objectives.

Hurdles that may need to be overcome in the dialogue process include for example the lack of population's confidence in the dialogue partners. In particular in times of political transformation, insecurity or (labour) conflict, the urban political configuration can make certain groups not easily trust them. In this respect, it is important to be aware of existing power relations (based on gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, etc.) within the urban setting in order to avoid reproducing existing, unequal patterns of influence through social dialogue and decision-making. Related to the lack of confidence are possible deficiencies in democratic accountability and legitimacy.

Finally, when the dialogue process is highly dependent on one driving force, such as for example a local leader or an international donor, the process risks to get biased or even politicized (Junko Ishikawa, 2003).

7. Sustaining and institutionalizing dialogue forums

The institutionalization of urban dialogue mechanisms in the policy environment contributes to its impact and sustainability. There are multiple ways of organizing and rooting dialogue in the local setting. In this section, concrete examples of sustaining cross-sectoral dialogue are presented. They include informal dialogue forums that are driven by a dynamic, dialogue culture and formal dialogue forums that are attached to urban governance structures or formalized through agreements and institutional back up, like in the before-mentioned case of Marikina City. Besides, dialogue bodies can transform into implementing structures. This is the situation, for instance, of Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs), which are constituted by a broad-based public-private assembly. Also, some types of public–private partnerships are an example of an implementing arrangement of dialogue outcomes. These varying forms of sustained dialogue mechanisms have two aspects in common. First, they are all the result of a lengthy process of confidence building among the dialogue partners. Secondly, they have gained recognition of related decision-making structures such as Municipal Assemblies, Ministries at the central level or national tripartite social dialogue bodies. The external recognition of the dialogue forum is influenced by, amongst others, the representation, legitimacy and technical capacities of the dialogue partners.

When a social dialogue process has taken off and the issue of institutionalizing gets on the agenda, many aspects need to be considered. The first question to be asked is whether formalizing dialogue and/or creating an organization is appropriate in the given local setting. In some situations formalizing the dialogue mechanism may not be necessary because a range of bodies and organizations already exist, especially in localities where a culture of cooperation and participation of informal way of operating can be envisaged.

In Ghana, the local dialogue body has been institutionalized through the Local Governance Act, which has tremendously increased the perspective on sustainability in political, financial and technical terms. This is described further in box 4.

In situations where there is a lack of economic support agencies and business service providers that can support the implementation of social dialogue outcomes, it is important to consider the effectiveness of the current structures and arrangements to see if there is a need to modify existing, or create new institutions. A guiding question in this respect is: what kind of structure could effectively promote economic development through social dialogue while being socially, institutionally and financially sustainable? In countries in Central and South America as well as in, amongst others, Albania, Croatia, South Africa and Mozambique the answer to this question was to create Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs). They link a dialogue-based economic and employment development strategy with support services to entrepreneurs and local government. In Mozambique the

successful experience of the LEDAs resulted in incorporating them into a broader institutional set-up at the national level, recognizing LEDAs as essential instruments in implementing the national poverty reduction strategy. This is described in box 5.

Finally, agreements or contracts are a way of formalizing social dialogue outcomes. In some cases, the implementation takes the form of public-private partnerships (PPP). It can be argued that social dialogue in public-private partnerships is key in enhancing trust, promoting informed decision-making, finding appropriate responses to urban needs and, last but not least, increasing local ownership and transparency. In their turn, PPPs consolidate urban social dialogue processes as they link dialogue with visible action. In fact, PPP and urban dialogue can be considered mutually reinforcing processes. (Carlien van Empel/ILO–ITC DELNET 2005.)

8.   Conclusion

The outcomes of social dialogue at the urban level vary from locality to locality. They depend for example on the entry point (what triggered social dialogue), the objectives, the participants, whether or not dialogue is institutionalized and the linkages that exist between the local and national level. On the basis of the case studies that were presented in this article, the following preliminary lessons can be drawn:

Institutionalizing urban social dialogue within the national legal framework increases ownership and sustainability. It makes represented and related decision-making structures more committed to the outcomes of dialogue. The complementarity of skills and resources also makes it easier to implement dialogue outcomes. Furthermore, institutionalizing dialogue is a way to ensure that the basic costs of the functioning of the body are covered, which requires significant investment in the capacity building of urban social dialogue partners.

Legitimacy. Institutionalizing dialogue does not per se guarantee its legitimacy. One should be aware of not reproducing existing, unequal power relations. The composition and representation forms of the dialogue forum should be dealt with carefully. It is therefore important to agree upon membership rules before the creation of the forum. Such rules and procedures also contribute to the forum's continuity. Besides, transparency and a constant flow of information among forum members and other stakeholders, it increases the legitimacy of the forum.

Need for tangible results. The involvement of groups that have previously been excluded from decision-making processes can be considered an achievement in itself. But urban social dialogue is not only an objective; it is also a means to achieve a higher end. Without tangible results, dialogue partners will soon lose interest and are likely to become less committed to the dialogue process. This is especially true for private sector representatives who have a business to run and expect some return on time invested.

As has been stated at the beginning of the paper, urban social dialogue is a relatively recent phenomenon and in-depth research and literature on it is scant. Many aspects deserve further attention in order to find better-informed solutions for remaining weaknesses. For instance, the effective participation of informal economy operators and workers in the dialogue process remains a challenge. How can workers' and employers' organizations best reach out to unorganized workers and operators? And, how can one ensure the continued partaking of informal economy operators and workers, given the fact that their participation often implies a loss of income? Related to these questions is the risk that only the voices of the wealthier MSEs are heard. This is important because the scope for conflicts of interest in improving the business environment is strong, notwithstanding the "win-win" mythology of market economics. The Sri Lankan MSE forums experience

that the involvement of Government agencies and NGOs, however ineffective they may seem at times, does give some level of guarantee the interests of MSEs and the poor are prioritized (Roel Hakemulder/ILO, 2006).

Another issue that deserves further reflection is the legal status of forums. Although in some cases like for instance in the state of Ceará (Brazil), the informal nature of dialogue works out rather well, in other countries the lack of legal status might negative impact on the sustainability and effectiveness of dialogue forums. In Sri Lanka this means that the decisions of the MSE Forums have no legal status and are not binding. Whether they are implemented depends on the authority of the District Secretary or Provincial authorities, and the goodwill of the NGOs and private sector organizations involved (Roel Hakemulder/ILO, 2006).

An additional challenge relates to the financial sustainability of the dialogue mechanisms that are put in place. Although their costs are relatively low, they do need to be financed. Even in the case of Ghana, where legal provisions ensure the allocation of district funds to the functioning of the Committee, the SPGEs require more resources to cover its running costs because of their exceptional composition and nature of their activities (e.g. field visits, computerized databases, etc.) compared to regular District Committees.

One can conclude that today's urban economy requires new forms of social dialogue. This dialogue should involve a broad range of actors including informal economy workers and operators. It should be organized at the urban level to tap into local knowledge, networks and partnerships. In addition, such new forms of dialogue should not only cover labour rights and norms but also take into account broader urban development issues that impact decent work in general. This implies a pragmatic approach that goes beyond the regular policy making function of social dialogue. One can state that urban social dialogue is an indispensable mechanism when one wants to tackle the intrinsic decent work dimension of urban development.

The arguments and evidence presented throughout this paper show that a labour-related participatory approach to social dialogue adds value to an inclusive process of urban governance, and therefore should be supported. The paper has also noted that urban social dialogue is still incipient and needs more research. At the same time, there is already a wealth of experience and knowledge on the community-based participatory approach – and to a lesser extent also on a city-wide approach. Therefore, further research should analyze the lessons from community-based and city-wide approaches which can be applied to social dialogue, e.g how to conduct the decision-making process, the practical steps in organizing and conducting a participatory process, among others. A number of publications, such as Imparato and Ruster (2003), bring together practical and detailed recommendations on community-based participation, which need to be taken into account.

A final word should be made about the challenge for local authorities to implement social dialogue, in parallel to everything else that they have to do. Since the early 1990s, WHO (World Health Organization) has promoted a health-related participatory approach through an initiative known as "Healthy Cities". WHO's argument for health (that cities and towns need a specific participatory approach – focused on health) is somewhat similar to what is noted in this paper for labour. Other organizations may come up with similar arguments to other themes of urban development. Therefore, the question is, how can local authorities organize a number of parallel participatory platforms – in addition to established platforms of community-based and city-wide participation. The possible answer is that social dialogue and other possible thematic platforms should not bring a burden to local authorities. There are other actors involved, as should be in processes of urban governance. In the case of social dialogue, workers and employers need to be preponderantly involved, as noted throughout this paper. Local authorities may need to

promote and organize the process at the early stage. But for continuation and sustainability, workers and employers need to come up to the forefront. Local authorities would need to continue to be involved throughout the process, but with a much lesser burden.

A recently-constructed method to conducting urban social dialogue – based on the analysis presented in this paper – has been used by the ILO in a number of municipalities in Brazil, notably Santo Andre, Belo Horizonte, Diadema, Guarulhos and Osasco. In some cases, such process started with a focus on the construction sector. In others, it also encompassed other sectors of the urban economy. While such activities are still incipient, it will be useful to conduct future research to learn from them. This would be of value to replicate the process. As a practical guide to kick-start the process, an abridged manual for local authorities and other local actors on organizing and implementing social dialogue at the municipal level is presented in the appendix.

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Appendix

Manual for social dialogue in municipalities:
A basis for a municipal decent work programme

Contents

Introduction

Purpose of the manual

The purpose of this manual is to provide condensed information and assist municipal actors to engage in a process of participation (social dialogue) leading to the formulation and implementation of a programme aimed at improvements both for workers and companies in the municipality within a framework of decent work.

Importance

There is now ample evidence that the better the conditions of work the better worker's performance, thus benefiting both the workers themselves and their companies. The subject addressed by this manual is important firstly because a great many companies encounter difficulties in growing while a large number of workers are faced with work-related problems, for example, social security, equality of gender and racial rights, health and safety, etc. Various aspects of work are improved thorough the actions of the government, companies and the workers themselves, sometimes with additional support from other actors such as NGOs and foundations. It is therefore important to create dialogue between these various actors to establish a common and mutually beneficial agenda, which seeks synergies and complementarity and avoids duplication of effort.

The manual is also important with regard to the establishment of a municipal decent work programme. As will be explained later, there are now Decent Work Country Programmes, which are clearly vital. At the same time, questions of national relevance do not necessarily apply in all municipalities – apart from the fact that they do not include other issues specific to each municipality. The same can be said about state/province-level decent work programmes, apart from the fact that only two states in Brazil currently have a programme of this kind. A municipal decent work programme focuses specifically on local questions, which cannot be included in a country or state programme but are priorities for the municipality. Furthermore, the Municipal Programme, because it is local, is more flexible and can take specific measures more quickly, even where activities contained in the country or state programme are also relevant to a given municipality.

In addition to this, a line of action at the municipal level also has specific benefits, taking advantage of the existing potential, such as economies of scale, and tackling more dynamically the many challenges facing local managers such as socio-geographical exclusion. Lastly, a municipal agenda makes it possible to take the lead in the process of decentralization of intermediation of labour (by establishing local public centres for employment and labour issues).

Contents of the manual

This manual has four sections. Section 1 describes the key concepts necessary to the process. Section 2 describes the process of municipal social dialogue, which forms the platform for the formulation and implementation of a municipal decent work programme. Section 3 deals with the programme specifically. Finally, section 4 presents suggestions for the evaluation of the municipal social dialogue process and the municipal decent work programme.

1.   Main concepts

Social dialogue

Social dialogue is a participatory process focusing on labour issues. it involves the principal actors in this field (employers, workers and government, also known as a tripartite process). Other actors operating in the world of work also sometimes also participate, for example, NGOs.

A purpose of social dialogue is to discuss questions related to the world of labour and put forward solutions leading to concrete activities for future implementation.

In social dialogue at national level, the workers are represented by the trade unions, the employers by employers' organizations, and the government by the Ministry of Labour and Employment (when the matter under discussion specifically relates to a particular sector of the economy, the ministry responsible for that sector also takes part).

In the case of municipal social dialogue, the workers and employers should be represented by their respective organizations in the area and the government by the local authority. Federal and state actors may also send their representatives. Municipal social dialogue also offers an opportunity for other locally organized actors, which often are not represented at national or even state level, such as informal workers' associations and enterprises, associations of micro-enterprises, local community associations and social movements (housing, women's movement). Also universities and research centres, depending on the importance of recording and documenting the process as well as unleashing a continuing and participatory course of learning and evaluation. The process of municipal social dialogue should also discuss which sectors of the economy are more strategic for the city, and, consider ways to include a sectoral approach in the process.

Decent work

According to the ILO definition, decent work is work generating adequate income, exercised in conditions of freedom, equity and security, allowing a life of dignity.

The promotion of decent work must not only seek to identify means of generating employment and income, but also incentives to ensure that work is performed in a way conducive to achieving decent living conditions.

Consequently, it involves actions in areas such as occupational safety and health, prevention of discrimination and seeking fairer job opportunities, with freedom of association and access to participation in social dialogue. Also noteworthy is the goal of eliminating the worst forms of labour, such as child labour and forced labour.

The promotion of decent work must address a set of strategic and cross-cutting objectives. The first consists of the four objectives defined as strategic by the ILO directly related to the factors which constitute decent work. They are: (1) effective application of the fundamental principles and rights; (2) generation of greater job opportunities for men and women; (3) extension and strengthening of social security systems for workers; and (4) promotion of social dialogue and institutional strengthening of the social partners. Cross-cutting objectives are considered to be: (a) fair globalization; (b) poverty reduction; (c) promotion of gender equality; (d) greater influence of International Labour Standards; and (e) greater influence of the social partners, social dialogue and tripartism.

Decent Work Country Programmes

In the light of the above, the ILO and its constituents decided to promote the idea that each country should develop, on a tripartite basis, a national decent work programme. This programme provides an integrated framework for the labour-related activities.

Municipal decent work programmes

As mentioned above, the Decent Work Country Programme can be detailed or complemented by sub-national programmes, and municipal programmes have a strategic importance, for the reasons given in the section "Importance" in the Introduction to this manual.

2. Municipal social dialogue

As explained in the previous section, Social Dialogue is a participatory process focusing on labour issues.

The purpose of municipal social dialogue

The purpose is joint discussion of questions relevant to the world of labour in the municipality and to propose solutions leading to specific activities. The process should result in the formulation and implementation of a municipal decent work programme, mentioned in the previous section and described in detail in the last section of this manual.

The municipal actors, Steering Committee and Coordination

The process is owned by the municipal actors. These actors take decisions and manage the process. The government is represented by the local authority. The workers and employers are represented by their respective trade unions and associations. If there are associations of informal workers and enterprises, these should also participate, and should ideally be municipal level organizations, not only representing a given geographical area within the municipality. If there are other actors with activities in the world of labour, such as NGOs or community associations (ideally also at municipal level), they can also be invited to participate.

The process should have a Steering Committee, comprised of the appointed representatives of the participating entities.

Coordination is the responsibility of the local authority. But an alternative arrangement may be discussed and decided by the participants, for example, rotating coordination.

Other actors

In principle, national and state actors may also participate. For example, representatives of the Ministry of Labour, State Secretariat of Labour, national and state trade unions and employers' organizations. But it should be made clear that it is the municipal actors who manage the process and the questions discussed have a municipal focus.

Financial resources

The execution of the programme to be discussed through the municipal social dialogue process should prioritize resources available in the municipality itself (to be discussed and defined during the process). It is also important to bear in mind that social dialogue may result in synergies and complementarity of existing resources and avoid duplication.

If necessary, state and federal resources can be mobilized, but through negotiations initiated and conducted by the municipal actors involved in the process. Equally, if the municipality needs international resources, the initiative and conduct of negotiations should come from the municipal actors.

The stages in the process

Each step in the process should have the number of meetings necessary to implement it, which varies from case to case. The time necessary to implement each stage should be discussed and agreed during the process in each specific municipality.

The main points in each stage are outlined below.

Stage 1: Preparation and launch

Includes the following:

1(a) Identification of the principal actors. Preliminary contacts with the actors, information and preliminary agreement to participate.

1(b) Starting-up Office.

1(c) Analysis of the existing participatory processes in the municipality. Identification of opportunities for synergies with existing processes, to avoid duplication of effort. For example, the relationship between the various existing municipal councils, such as the economic development council, and other programmes and projects based on a participatory method (in Santo André (Brazil), for example: Town of the Future and the Millennium Goals, the Participatory Budget, the More Equality Programme, etc.)

Stage 2: Formulation

2(a) Official constitution of a Municipal Platform for Social Dialogue and appointment of the Steering Committee and the Coordinator.

2(b) Formulation of the municipal decent work programme, including objectives, linked activities, potential and priority sectors, the role of each actor, resources and time frame.

2(c) Discussion of a mechanism for monitoring the municipal decent work programme.

Stage 3: Implementation and monitoring

This stage includes the concrete implementation of the Programme activities, each under the responsibility of the actor or actors defined above.

This stage must also include a meeting or meetings to present the results of the activities and monitoring. While section 4 of this manual focuses on evaluation, its suggestions can also be useful for monitoring.

Stage 4: Evaluation and discussion of follow-up

During this stage, the municipal social dialogue process and the municipal decent work programme will be evaluated.

The evaluation should also result in discussion of the continuity of the programme, even if all the activities previously proposed have been implemented with 100 per cent success. This is because an evaluation generally results in discussion of new questions, and/or expanding previously envisaged questions. See also the item on evaluation and continuity in section 3.

This stage also includes possible contacts and synergies with other municipalities which have advanced in questions of urban labour, ideally under a municipal decent work programme. See further details in the item on Formation of the Municipalities Networks in section 3.

3.   Municipal decent work programme

The phases of the municipal decent work programme are mentioned in the municipal social dialogue process seen in the previous section. Nevertheless, these phases will be explained in this section for greater clarity.

Formulation

The first phase concerns the formulation of the programme, included in stage 2 of the social dialogue process. It results in the production of a document containing the characteristics of the programme, including its objectives and related activities, time frame, role of specific actor(s) in each activity, resources, etc.

Implementation and monitoring

With regard to the execution of the programme, this is included in stage 3 of the Social Dialogue process. The execution must be accompanied by monitoring by the Steering Committee of the social dialogue process. Monitoring is important to correct possible problems that may arise during the execution itself.

Evaluation and follow-up

This relates to stage 4 of the social dialogue process. Evaluation takes place when the implementation period comes to an end. The importance and details of evaluation are included in Part 4.

However, the Programme must not end with evaluation. Decent work does not have a fixed or determined ceiling. It is a process of constant improvement. Evaluation of a given programme normally results in discussion of new questions and/or expansion of previously envisaged questions. This must happen with the municipal decent work programme. Thus, the evaluation should be followed by a new stage of formulation, and continuation, follow-up to the programme.

Formation of a municipalities network

Also included in stage 4 of the social dialogue process. Such network follows the example of existing networks of municipalities with a focus on other subjects (such as urban health, housing, safety, etc.).

Municipalities with decent work programmes would benefit from networking. This would facilitate exchange of information and mutual support.

This stage should also take advantage of the trend to decentralized cooperation between municipalities, which is shown by initiatives such as Mercociudades (in South America) and other city networks. Belo Horizonte in Brazil has accumulated some experience of this network approach. Concerning the replicability of a decent work programme at municipal level, it is worth highlighting the potential of the forum of municipal labour secretaries, in which the town of Santo André played a prominent role.

4. Suggestions for the evaluation of the municipal social dialogue process and the municipal decent work programme [1]

Why evaluate?

Evaluation is very important for several reasons, notably:

■ allowing the actors involved the opportunity to reflect on the process of implementing the decent work programme;

■ designing a better initiative in the context of the needs and resources of the municipality;

■ creating accountability or determining/estimating if the initiative is implementing what was proposed and redirecting actions when necessary;

■ contributing to generating knowledge, sharing valid experiences not possessed by other municipalities;

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[1] This section is based on the proposed evaluation of healthy city projects of the World Health Organization, included in the document "Guide to Municipalities to Promote Quality of Life", and produced by the Pan-American Health Organization. The text has been revised to assure its relevance to the context of municipal decent work programmes.

- sustaining the process and the programme in the long term;

- creating opportunities and strengthening participation in the municipality;

- developing networks, exchanges and contacts between the various processes;

- persuading decision makers and policy-makers that the strategy is beneficial.

Evaluation must be a continuous cycle of review and feedback, unlike a linear process carried out only at the middle or end of an initiative. In this regard, monitoring is part of the developing evaluation process, and in the following text, the term "evaluation" also includes monitoring actions. Evaluation involves a process of reflecting on what has been attained or achieved in order to guide and change future action.

There are different evaluation methods and it is important for a group to supervise the evaluation and choose the most appropriate method based on practical questions, such as time, cost, the need for experienced researchers, evaluation questions and the role of the evaluator, among others. Due to the participatory nature of decent work initiatives, it is suggested that all involved parties participate in the evaluation. This type of evaluation is recommended because it is a collaborative effort, which reinforces the values and highlights the contribution of the group. Participatory evaluation requires effective participation, leadership and self-determination on part of the representatives of the entities involved throughout the whole process.

Considerations for the evaluation of the planning and implementation process

- The design and development of the evaluation as a training process for municipalities and its key actors. This means accepting the demands and complexity of the participatory work on joint construction and definition of variables and indicators that will be used.

- It is necessary to define working methods which ensure: (a) ample and diverse involvement needed to achieve the objectives described in the evaluation; (b) dissemination of this work among other groups.

Evaluation methodology

- Develop an evaluation methodology which combines both a qualitative and quantitative approach.

- Develop quantitative indicators constructed with the actors in the process themselves, for which inter-sectoral and participatory work is necessary.

- Seek an evaluation which contemplates the structure, process and results.

- Make use of information existing in each municipality, strengthening the databases used, with indicators of a qualitative type (where databases do not exist, develop them).

- Conduct the evaluation taking into account various levels (international, national and local, and within the local level, institutional/governmental and community: social forces or groups) and the context (geographical, demographic, political/administrative, economic/environmental, social and cultural).