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Mr Sergio Mujica (Secretary-General)
International Organization for Standardization (ISO)
ISO Central Secretariat
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22 February 2018

New activities by the International Standard Organisation in labour fields

Dear Dr Zhang and Mr Mujica,

Following our [previous letter](#) communicated to you on further ISO work relating to social responsibility, the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) are deeply concerned to learn of several additional recent activities by the International Standard Organisation (ISO) in labour-related fields. As global representatives of workers and of employers, we would like to express our opposition to these new areas of activity, given the lack of alignment between ISO standards with agreed international labour standards, as well as the lack of balanced involvement of social partners within ISO activities within fields that directly concern them.

We are particularly concerned by the below activities:

- The ongoing ballot for the creation of a technical committee and development of further follow-up work by the ISO in the occupational health and safety field. We would not support further work in this area, given the shortcomings with the recently-adopted standard on OSH management systems (45001): namely that it was not developed in a balanced, tripartite manner, and is not in the spirit of the main ILO instruments in the area of occupational health and safety. In our view, the creation of such a committee could risk reopening many of the provisions within this standard. Moreover, we are not in favour of developing guidance for managing psychosocial risks at the workplace, as this is a very complex and sensitive issue that should be left to the remit of social partners. The deadline to vote on this proposal is 28 February 2018, and we have strongly encouraged our affiliates to influence their national standardisation bodies to vote no.
- The development of nine standards in the area of human resource management (TC/260). We have noted that several of these areas touch upon labour issues within the remit of social partners, including:
 - Guidelines on human capital reporting
 - Procedures and methods to assess people in work and organizational settings;
 - Diversity and inclusion; and
 - Workforce planning.

We have also noted a draft set of metrics for human capital reporting contains several labour-policy metrics, including in the areas of occupational health and safety, workplace diversity, gender pay gaps, and workforce availability. It is however unclear to what degree such activities will take into account existing international labour standards and involve social partners.

- The establishment of a [technical committee on Ageing Societies](#) (TC/314) to develop standards and other ISO materials related to an ageing workforce. The exact content and scope of the work being developed in this area is however not clear to us, as we have not been invited to take part. It is also uncertain whether social partners are represented at all in these discussions, despite the fact that they have a critical role in the negotiation, design and implementation of active ageing measures.

While we appreciate that the ISO has an interest in all of the above issues in the labour fields, in our view the ISO and its standardization bodies do not have the mandate, the representation, the necessary expertise, nor the capacity to interpret and create such standards – especially in view of the recent decision by the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation to terminate its Memorandum of Understanding with the International Standard Organisation.

We moreover perceive a serious risk that these standards undermine and create divergence of universally-accepted and carefully-negotiated international labour standards and instruments, including from the ILO, that have been painstakingly developed by Governments and social partners over a number of years.

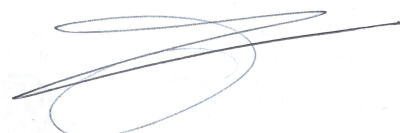
We therefore ask that you reconsider the development of these standards/activities in the labour fields. We also ask that you kindly keep us informed on any developments regarding ISO's work in areas of interest to social partners.

Finally, we would ask that you inform national standardisation bodies and ISO members around the world about our position.

Yours sincerely,



Sharan Burrow
General Secretary
International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)



Linda Kromjong
Secretary General
International Organisation of Employers (IOE)