



International
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Organization

► Managing Conflicts and Disasters:

Exploring Collaboration between
Employers' and Workers' Organizations



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Preface

The Nobel Peace Prize for 2015 was awarded to the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet for its “decisive contribution to building democracy in Tunisia in the wake of the Jasmine Revolution of 2011.” The Quartet, comprised of ILO social partners – the Tunisian General Labour Union and Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts – along with the Tunisian Human Rights League and Tunisian Order of Lawyer was formed when the country’s efforts to introduce democracy were in danger of failing amid social unrest. Through social dialogue and cooperation, the Quartet became the driving force to advancing peaceful democratic development in Tunisia and an exemplary example of strong cooperation between social partners and civil society organizations.

Globally, employer and business membership organizations (EBMOs) and workers’ organizations contribute to achieving solutions and building social cohesion and rule of law. Partnership between social partners leads to good governance, peace and stability and can boost economic and social progress. Even when countries experience disruptive situations such as a natural disaster, conflict or social unrest, the individual and collective efforts of social partners can positively work towards improved stability and inclusive economic, social and political development.

This publication looks at the role that employers and workers, through their respective organizations, play in crisis situations arising from conflict and disaster. It explores the leadership function that EBMOs have deployed to maintain an environment for continued economic activity and the key role that workers’ organizations take to assist workers, in particular those who have been made vulnerable by a crisis. The report importantly examines how EBMOs and workers’ organizations have collaborated through social dialogue and other means of collective action to promote peace, prevent crises, enable recovery and build resilience.

While actors of the international community are effortlessly working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), violent conflict and natural disasters are on the rise and worryingly recognized as one of the biggest obstacles to achieving the SDGs. About 2 billion people currently live in fragile and conflict-affected situations and poverty is increasingly concentrated in these settings. This is contrary to the pledge contained in the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind.

It is our hope that this report inspires social partner organizations globally on the unique and complementary role they play and can play in complex situations of disaster and conflict, including emergency situations such as pandemics like COVID-19. Intensified collaboration between EBMOs and workers’ organizations before, during and after a crisis situation can critically fill a governance gap, rejuvenate employment and job creation, and improve labour market governance. The ILO will continue to harness our organization’s strength - our normative mandate and tripartism - and channel our resources to support this shared agenda.

Finally, this report reflects our organization’s journey to better document partnership between social partner organizations. Joint efforts between EBMOs and workers’ organizations are essential to addressing the challenges of our time, and the lessons of collaboration need to be shared. We will continue to pursue knowledge together and apply that knowledge in support of our constituents.

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