

## **ILO recommendations on the Dialogue themes**

### **2026 United Nations Water Conference**

The ILO is an active member of UN-Water and welcomes the organization of the 2026 Water Conference. The ILO has partnered with other UN agencies and UN-Water partners to address challenges to meet SDG 6 and 8 simultaneously, publishing tools and developing projects on the ground. This has been a testimony to the interlinkages between the SDGs, which the 2026 Conference thematic session themes should underscore. As a result, the 352<sup>nd</sup> session of the ILO's Governing Body requested the Director-General to ensure appropriate action to follow up on the recommendations contained in the UN system-wide strategy on water and sanitation. As a result, the ILO will host a global technical meeting in 2027 on advancing decent work and sustainable development in the water and sanitation sector, with representation from governments and workers' and employers' organizations from around the world.

As the Chair of UN-Water stated on occasion of the World Water Day campaign on "Water and Jobs" in 2016, "water is work". Whether it is in the formal employment in water supply and infrastructure; the informal work cleaning sewers and latrines; the unpaid work of women and girls in water fetching; or the international labour standards mandating access to water and sanitation in workplaces, the links between water and the world of work are undeniable. For this reason, the active contribution by workers' and employers' representatives, both inside and outside the water sector, are essential to formulating feasible actions to deliver the SDG 6 agenda, both in policy and practice. Since SDG 6 prioritises and targets those left behind in access to WASH services, we must harness their opinions, ideas, and resources.

Regarding the process leading up to the Conference, we propose that the organizers and member states provide reasonable space for social partner representation consultations at every level. We also suggest that the Conference facilitation process involves and communicates with representative organizations of workers and employers (social partners) through a functional communication platform. We also recommend that social partners be invited to participate in the organization of the Interactive Dialogues process, including through preparatory meetings to identify priorities for the dialogues.

In addition, dialogue speakers should address issues of governance and linkages to the other SDG targets in their respective theme. We also support previous calls that:

- All dialogues should have interpretation in at least the official UN languages and possibly more
- All dialogues should be widely broadcasted via the UN Web TV and accessible to Observers

- The appointed Co-Chairs should convene preparatory meetings for the Interactive Dialogues during the PrepCom in Dakar in December 2025
- A moderator's summary with a few tangible outcomes be produced for each dialogue, which will feed into the Chairs' report and possibly containing a follow-up draft resolution to be submitted to the UNGA and/ or Third Committee.

The ILO makes the following content proposals on the thematic dialogues:

- We suggest that access to WASH in workplaces, health facilities and schools be part and parcel of Theme 1 (Water & Health)
- We suggest that the Theme 4 emphasizes the interlinkages with other SDGs and cross-sectoral collaboration at the ministerial level, including the Ministries of Labour.
- We also suggest including a Theme 6 covering governance, which should include social dialogue on social and employment policies and conflict resolution on their implementation.

We look forward to reviewing the proposed roadmap.

Thank you.

New York, 4 April 2025