

▶ South-South Cooperation in ILO's Regular Budget (RBTC): the 2024 year in Review

▶ Overview

For the biennium 2024-2025, the ILO, in collaboration with its PARTNERSHIP department, is intensifying its South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) efforts through 14 dynamic projects spanning five regions, alongside global initiatives supporting action programmes and ITC-Turin office activities on South-South Cooperation. These initiatives engage over 80 countries, leveraging adaptable, sustainable, and results-oriented approaches. Primarily financed through the Regular Budget's development cooperation support, these projects aim to enhance the capacity of ILO constituents through peer-learning activities, needs-matching, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) development, and country-to-country and region-to-region cooperation.

Central to these initiatives are gender equality, diversity, and inclusion, which remain pivotal in promoting professional exchanges across countries and fostering valuable networks. Building on the documented good practices of previous years, these efforts highlight the achievements and lessons learned in SSTC among ILO constituents and practitioners, further solidifying their impact and replicability.

For 2024-2025, the ILO's key activities include peer-learning initiatives, virtual exchanges, joint research, and targeted support for Southern countries. These activities address critical themes such as employment services, women's empowerment, the Green Economy, and more, fully aligned with the ILO's strategic framework for the biennium. By working closely with influential groups like BRICS, IBSA, G20, G77, and the G7+ (group of fragile countries), the ILO continues to strengthen interrelationships, leveraging these alliances to advance its mission of promoting social justice and decent work globally.

The successes of 2024 stand as a testament to the impact of SSTC in driving meaningful change across the Global South. These achievements, underpinned by innovative collaboration and constituent-driven initiatives, demonstrate the ILO's commitment to fostering inclusive, sustainable development. A snapshot of 2024 will soon be shared, providing insights into the milestones reached, lessons learned, and the transformative power of SSTC in achieving shared goals for social justice and decent work worldwide.

▶ Global Activities



Photo Credit : Brazilian Presidency of G20, Rio, November 2024

The ILO's Emerging and Special Partnerships Unit is dedicated to advancing the promotion of decent work and gender equality, with a strong focus on the Global South. This is achieved through deepened collaboration in major international policy forums such as the BRICS, G20, and the United Nations, in addition to regional initiatives like the Global South-South Development Expo (GSSD). Two central pillars of the Unit's work are advancing Just Transitions and strengthening Social Protection through South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC), with an emphasis on fostering youth empowerment and promoting gender

equality. By supporting these efforts, the ILO is working to ensure that the future of work is fair, inclusive, and equitable, with a specific focus on the challenges faced by developing economies.

Furthermore, the ILO is playing a key role in supporting BRICS countries' collaborative efforts to improve productivity and working conditions across their economies. PARTNERSHIPS has provided technical inputs to the This is exemplified by the creation of the "Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work" platform, which is designed to facilitate knowledge-sharing, research, and the development of policies that promote inclusive, sustainable economic growth within the BRICS nations. This platform serves as a critical space for exchanging best practices and lessons learned, fostering synergies among the member countries to drive growth that benefits all segments of society.

In the context of global results, the ILO has been proactive in engaging with various working groups within the G20, including the Labour and Employment Working Group (DWG) and the trilateral cooperation programme. The ILO has also built important relationships with other government entities, such as ASEAN, BRICS, and IBSA, to ensure that issues related to decent work and social protection are integrated into the broader economic and policy agendas. The ILO's work on SSTC and emerging partnerships is further reinforced through engagements at the regional level, such as the Regional Initiative for the Americas on Combatting Child Labour and Forced Labour, which was highlighted during the X Anniversary of the initiative held in Brasilia in October 2024. This anniversary celebration underscored the significance of the ILO's continued commitment to regional and global collaboration in advancing decent work and social justice while supporting the rights of the child, making a tangible difference in the lives of vulnerable populations across the Global South, while combatting child labour and forced labour of girls and boys. This meeting was held back to back with the XI Annual Review ILO- Brazil SSTC, which celebrated the 13th year of the deepening of Brazilian South-South Cooperation with the ILO, and marked the event with the signature of a new project on "Social Justice for the Global South", where the Brazilian government is providing 5 million \$ to the ILO. The ILO, through PARTNERSHIPS also engaged in the Global Partnerships Initiative of OECD (the GPI) on triangular cooperation, providing our contribution to the forum in Lisbon in the past years. In 2024 our contribution targeted the support to the Brazilian-led initiative on integrating a permanent mechanism in the development working group of the G20 on triangular cooperation: this was shared with OECD and non-OECD countries in Lisbon, as well as emerging partners for development cooperation.

The "Future Leaders in the World Of Work, South-South University" course kicked off in July 2024 in the ITCILO Headquarters in Turin, with the participants of more than 100 attendees. The Summer University was a training program for university students and young professionals from the Global South in the territory of SSTC initiatives for human-centered development. It combined high-level plenary sessions, elective courses, a study visit to Geneva, and envisioning sessions. The course covered topics such as leveraging SSTC, emerging technologies, climate change, data analytics, and promoting equal access to decent work opportunities. Participants produced outcome documents for the UN Summit of the Future 2024.



Photo Credit : ILO

► Africa

The ILO's SSTC project focuses on assisting Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Rwanda, and Cabo Verde in extending social protection to workers in the informal economy. This involves addressing the challenges of formalizing informal sectors through peer

learning, capacity-building, and knowledge-sharing. The initiative emphasizes leveraging good practices such as Cabo Verde's REMPE program, which simplifies legal and tax procedures for micro and



small enterprises, and Rwanda's innovative mechanisms, including its universal health coverage and long-term savings scheme (Ejo Heza). In Côte d'Ivoire, support extends to cocoa sector workers, linking social protection to child labour prevention and sustainable agricultural practices. In Guinea Bissau, efforts focus on establishing mechanisms to extend social protection and facilitate formalization, building on national consultations and the social protection framework. These activities aim to align with ILO standards, including Recommendation 202 on social protection floors and Convention 102 on minimum social security standards.

The second project supports agricultural sectors in Madagascar and Kenya, promoting responsible business practices, sustainable agribusiness, and compliance with international labour standards. It leverages triangular cooperation with France to enhance the capacity of SMEs and cooperatives in the horticulture value chain to access export markets, including the Rungis Market in France. Through peer exchanges, such as the Kenyan model for meeting ESG requirements, Malagasy companies will gain skills to navigate regulatory barriers like EU pesticide limits while promoting job-rich and export-oriented economies. The initiative integrates lessons from previous ILO-Brazil and ProAgro Youth projects, emphasizing sustainable supply chains and lifting rural farmers out of poverty. These interconnected efforts aim to enhance trade, create decent work opportunities, and strengthen social protection systems, contributing to the achievement of SDGs and fostering inclusive growth.



Photo Credit : ILO

In 2024 two study tours of tripartite constituents were held in [Madagascar](#) and [Kenya](#) with over 100 participants from ILO partners, social partners and Multi-Stakeholder Partners. As part of the project to strengthen Madagascar horticulture value chains, the Emerging and Special Partnerships team, in support of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) national office for Antananarivo, has been exploring ways of stimulating decent work, increasing export potential and meeting the challenges through South-South and triangular cooperation in the sector.

▶ Arab States

This SSTC initiative is engaging countries in the Arab States region, including Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, to address key climate and just transition challenges. With a focus on adaptation, green job creation, and climate resilience, the project will facilitate peer learning and policy exchanges, linking countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to job creation and just transition priorities. This includes capacity-building initiatives to integrate social dimensions into climate policies, ensuring that transitions to low-carbon economies are inclusive, equitable, and foster social cohesion. Through workshops and training programs, stakeholders will enhance their engagement in NDC development, prioritize green job creation, and mitigate negative impacts on vulnerable workers and communities.

The second initiative will expand the ILO's Regional Care Initiative by improving care policies and addressing decent work deficits in the care sector, particularly for migrant workers. Building on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) frameworks, the project will foster peer learning and collaboration to address systemic care challenges in the region. It aims to strengthen the capacity of Arab States to design and implement effective care policies that align with decent work standards, thereby promoting gender equality and supporting sustainable development. Additionally, the initiative will explore innovative partnerships and funding strategies to bridge gaps in the care economy, ensuring that solutions are inclusive and address the needs of all workers involved in care services.

Launching [a blended learning program](#) with online sessions and an in-person masterclass. This will integrate just transition principles into climate policies and enhance regional collaboration on NDC priorities, employment, and social dialogue. Finalizing contracts with consultants on long-term care, early childhood care, and domestic work. A regional

knowledge-sharing workshop is being prepared to promote innovative care policies, decent work standards, and investment in care infrastructure, while fostering cooperation between Arab States and the Global South and North. The workshop will focus on advancing gender equality and sustainable development.

Finally, the ILO also published this biennia, the results of the past biennia-s work on possible Areas for Cooperation between [Lebanon and Brazil SSTC](#).



Photo Credit : ILO

▶ Asia and the Pacific

The two proposed initiatives focus on fostering SSTC to address the complex challenges faced by the Global South, particularly in relation to climate change, conflict, and economic downturns. The first initiative will convene an inter-regional forum in India, bringing together institutions and research think tanks from Asia and the Arab States [to share knowledge on employment-intensive approaches](#) for climate change adaptation and mitigation. By focusing on inclusive green jobs, sustainable development, and just transition policies, the forum will promote peer learning and the creation of partnerships that foster resilience in the face of overlapping crises like climate disasters, conflict, and displacement.

The second initiative targets Small Island Developing States (SIDS),

which face unique vulnerabilities such as exposure to climate change, fragile ecosystems, and high transportation costs. Building on successful SIDS-SIDS cooperation, this initiative will develop tailored solutions to strengthen resilience in these regions, particularly through capacity-building in climate resilience, labor mobility, and green economy transitions. Both initiatives aim to enhance regional cooperation and knowledge-sharing, supporting the global agenda for sustainable development, decent work, and climate resilience.

For the EIIP SSTC Forum was suggested to hold the Forum 8-10 April 2025, the draft agenda was shared with LGED and will be firmed up in discussion with them. In the technical sessions, countries will be sharing their experiences, and the ambition is to arrive at specific key recommendations and identify opportunities for partnership and potential ILO support around these themes. For the SIDS-SIDS initiative an initial draft was already submitted by the consultants; further key interviews are being conducted this week and a revised draft will be submitted before Christmas; after internally review in early January and to be shared with the SSTC team for further feedback and the course has recently concluded with a cohort of participants coming from both the Caribbean and the Pacific regions, regarding to the coordination work carried out by regional specialists and technical specialists in the relevant field offices.

▶ Americas

The two initiatives focus on addressing key challenges in the Latin American and Caribbean region. The first aims to strengthen the capacities of 17 vocational training institutions to meet the growing demand for skills in the care economy, aligning training and certification with national policies, and fostering social dialogue. This initiative promotes professionalization, better recognition, and decent work in the care sector. The second initiative targets the eradication of child labour in supply chains, leveraging SSTC to share knowledge and track progress across 31 countries. It emphasizes expanding efforts beyond immediate suppliers to include upstream sectors like agriculture and raw material extraction, using tools like MIRTI to identify high-risk areas and improve the effectiveness of policies aimed at eliminating child labour in the region. [The XI Annual Review of the Brazil-ILO South-South \(14 October\)](#),



Photo Credit : Anita Amorim, ILO

gathered key figures from the Brazilian government, the ILO, and other international organizations and social partners. A central highlight of the XI Annual SSTC Review ILO-Brazil was the signing of a new cooperation project titled "Social Justice and Decent Work", part of the larger programme "Social Justice for the Global South", which was launched in 2023. This initiative, supported by a \$5 million fund from Brazil, marks the first time that the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MTE) has directly contributed to a South-South cooperation project. The RI countries have cross-sectoral strategies and/or interventions focused on the promotion of decent work, quality education, vocational training, CL-free supply chains and the protection of the rights of migrant children and adolescents. Establishing the Governance Working Group for the establishing solid partnerships for the economic sustainability of the implementation of actions aimed at the eradication of child labour. The Regional Initiative has made significant progress in its activities and is currently immersed in a process of updating its governance and sustainability. In order to keep member countries informed, jointly explore ways to strengthen these areas and strengthen collaboration, was held the Annual meeting.

► Europe and CIS



Photo Credit, ILO

The two initiatives aim to strengthen SSTC to support just transition and green economy efforts in the Europe and Central Asia region. The first initiative utilizes the ILO's Europe & Central Asia Enterprise Development & Just Transition Network to foster regional cooperation, addressing challenges such as climate change, energy inefficiency, and the need for market transitions. It focuses on enhancing inter-regional partnerships, sharing knowledge on gender-responsive climate actions, and promoting sustainable enterprise development, with international partners like China, the UK, Brazil, and the Santiago Network. The second initiative, in response to the joint ITUC-IOE statement, aims to address the challenges of the just transition debate in EU accession countries, particularly the lack of focus on social issues like employment, social protection, and labor market policy. It will support peer-learning and triangular

cooperation to better integrate the perspectives of social partners, especially in sectors heavily linked to the EU, and strengthen the capacity of ILO constituents in the region to effectively engage in the transition process. Both initiatives contribute to the ILO's global mandate for just transitions, ensuring decent work and social justice in climate action. 24-25 July 2024, Baku, Azerbaijan: Over 50 Government, employers' and workers' organizations participated in "[Promoting a gender responsive just transition towards environmental sustainability in the Republic of Azerbaijan: a knowledge sharing and peer learning workshop](#)". The workshop was organized under the United Nations 29 Climate Conversations: The Road to the COP29 and the ILO EUROPE and Central Asia Regional Network on Enterprise Development and Just Transition. "Peer-to-peer mechanisms to elevate the employment dimensions of Just Transition discussions in CEE through triangular cooperation" workshop was held in Belgrade, Serbia 10-12 September 2024 aimed at the strengthen the understanding of key processes on climate change at national level, focusing on NDCs.

The year 2024 marked significant achievements for the ILO's South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) efforts, with 14 projects engaging over 80 countries. Key milestones included a \$5 million cooperation agreement with Brazil, impactful study tours in Madagascar and Kenya, and the "Future Leaders in the World of Work" program at ITCILO in Turin. These initiatives advanced themes like decent work, gender equality, and green economy transitions, showcasing the ILO's commitment to social justice. A forthcoming snapshot will highlight these successes and their transformative impact on the Global South.

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