

# **Institutionalizing Social Dialogue**

## ***A Presentation for Workshop of the Inter-American Network for Labour Administration (RIAL)***

*on*

*Social Dialogue and Social Cohesion*

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# **Social Partnership**

is perhaps the highest expression of social dialogue

## **Social Dialogue**

as an approach to governance should not, and cannot be conceptualized in a top-down approach

There **must** be

**dialogue at the plant, enterprise, sectoral and institutional levels.**

*In today's world social dialogue has now evolved in such a way as to transcend labour related issues. In fact contemporary national and international economic imperatives suggest that to confine social dialogue to labour market issues grossly understate the overwhelming influence of the much larger and more complex macroeconomic environment on the world of work.*

- ***Social dialogue*** is **one** element of four basic elements of the ILO **Decent Work** agenda.
- It seeks to provide an avenue through which parties can voice their concerns with each other.
- With social dialogue in practice, parties can listen to each other's points of view,
- a mechanism is created where grievances could be solved in an amicable manner, thereby diminishing the prospect of disruptive and costly industrial action that could not only harm all parties, but the wider economy in general.

- The broader conceptualization is feasible so long as:  
traditional industrial relations institutions, mechanisms and processes are seen to be part and parcel of the social dialogue process through which constructive and fruitful exchange of ideas and outcomes on substantive issues at **all** levels can be addressed.

The country has experienced vibrant collective bargaining in both the private and public sectors

Collective bargaining **is** the undisputed means of employment regulation; either **directly** for unionized workers, or **indirectly** for other wage earners

Acknowledgment by the  
partners of **the strategic  
value of dialogue** in  
resolving various issues.

**Institutional Level -**

***Social Dialogue in the  
Structure of Management  
Councils***



In establishing the **management structure** of a range of state institutions it is recognised that the promotion of **good institutional governance** starts with the **composition of the management council or *Board of Directors***.

# Social Dialogue in the Structure of Management Councils

- The Barbados Vocational Training Board (BVTB)
- The Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council
- The ***National Insurance Scheme***,

# Generic Management Council Structure:

Rep(s). of Stakeholder Organisation(s)

Rep(s). of Parent Ministry

Rep(s). of Public agencies with interest

Exec. Director of the Institution

Snr. Technical Officer of Institution

**Rep. of Trade Union(s)**

**Rep. of Employers' Confederation**

# ***Social Dialogue on National Concerns:***

- The ***National Productivity Council***
- National Initiative for Service Excellence (NISE)
- ***Barbados Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and Other Life Threatening Illnesses in the Workplace.***

# Social Dialogue in Occupational Safety and Health:

## Plant/Enterprise Level-

*Safety and Health at Work (SHaW) Act, 2005,*

*Where 25 persons are employed in a workplace **there must be a Health & Safety Committee** comprising **equal numbers** of worker & management reps.*

# Social Dialogue in Occupational Safety and Health:

National Level –

***National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NACOSH).***

This body is established under the legislation and has a tripartite-plus structure.

Formulation of the ***Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS*** and the process of consultation that led to the formulation and passage through Parliament of the ***Safety and Health at Work Act***, 2005 are two examples of ad-hoc consultation and collaboration on important areas of national concern.

# ***ILO InFocus Programme on Strengthening Social Dialogue:***

The Barbados experience is largely rooted in **historical, cultural and political relationships**.

Any idea of exporting the model may not be a very promising path to follow.

At best, the Barbadian model can serve to **inform** partners elsewhere of **the elements of a successful social dialogue**.



A model that depends on:

**maturity, trust, understanding and cooperation among the partners;**

**A:**

- **level of internal cohesion in the elements of the partnership**
- united, disciplined trade union leadership,
- well organised, all embracing private sector
- common vision shared by all stakeholders

Meaningful,  
Purposeful and  
Effective Social  
Dialogue

Institutionalizing social dialogue -

Parties Must -

view **social dialogue** as an approach to management, decision making and governance in which the participation of, and consultation with **all** stakeholders assumes a natural place.

# Labour Management:

At the plant and enterprise level –

- **bi-partite**

approaches may be appropriate

- **Tri-partite** and **tri-partite plus**

structures may be more appropriate at the  
**sectoral** and **national** levels

Thank You