

Rationale:

Topics to be discussed at this expert meeting will follow closely the sub-headings of Article 7(ICESCR), which, in addition to the labour standards guaranteed in the Conventions and Recommendations of the International Labour Organization, recognizes this right as a human right.

Input by the experts would be expected to build on relevant cases to deduct important aspects for the development of legal interpretation.

Article 7, ICESCR

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work which ensure, in particular:

(a) Remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with:

(i) Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work;

(ii) A decent living for themselves and their families in accordance with the provisions of the present Covenant;

(b) Safe and healthy working conditions;

(c) Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence;

(d) Rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, as well as remuneration for public holidays

To date, the ICESCR has been ratified by 160 States and the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) has been monitoring the developments concerning this right in numerous countries over the last 3 decades.

Despite these international guarantees, violations of this right continue on a daily basis. With the current economic and financial crises, the context in which workers have to struggle for and claim their rights has not become more conducive. The situation of workers tends to become more and more precarious in particular in terms of remuneration and working conditions including working time.

More generally, the labour market has fundamentally changed since the adoption of the ICESCR, and the reading of its article 7 has to be done in the light of both old and new challenges to the right to decent work. To this end, the CESCR has announced its will to work on a General Comment on article 7, which will constitute the authoritative interpretation of the right to just and favourable conditions of work, its normative content and related State obligations.

Against this background, we would like to invite you to a discussion on concrete issues arising from practice of both Committees that could inform the elaboration of this forthcoming General Comment.