

“Peak-level” social dialogue in the first months of the Covid-19 pandemic

Key trends & lessons

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▶ ILO study on “peak-level” social dialogue

- ▶ The use of “peak-level” social dialogue during first months of the COVID-19 pandemic -15 March to 10 June 2020- was intensive
- ▶ Peak-level Social Dialogue: Negotiations, consultations or exchange of information between Governments and national organizations of Employers and Workers (cross-sectoral or sector level)
- ▶ Main “process outcomes” (in the form of guidelines, agreements, code of conduct etc.) aimed at shaping the emergency measures for mitigating the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic.

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- I. Key social dialogue trends during the emergency
- II. Main take away points

▶ I. Key findings

Finding 1

From 15 March to 10 June 2020, **134 countries and territories** (out of 188) used peak-level social dialogue to address the pandemic and its impacts.

Urgent responses to the pandemic: a unifying theme for a majority of countries and social partners across all regions.

COVID-19 treated as a “common enemy”

Forms of social dialogue

▶ **45%** (61)

Only national **tripartite** social dialogue

▶ **13%** (17)

Only **bipartite** social dialogue

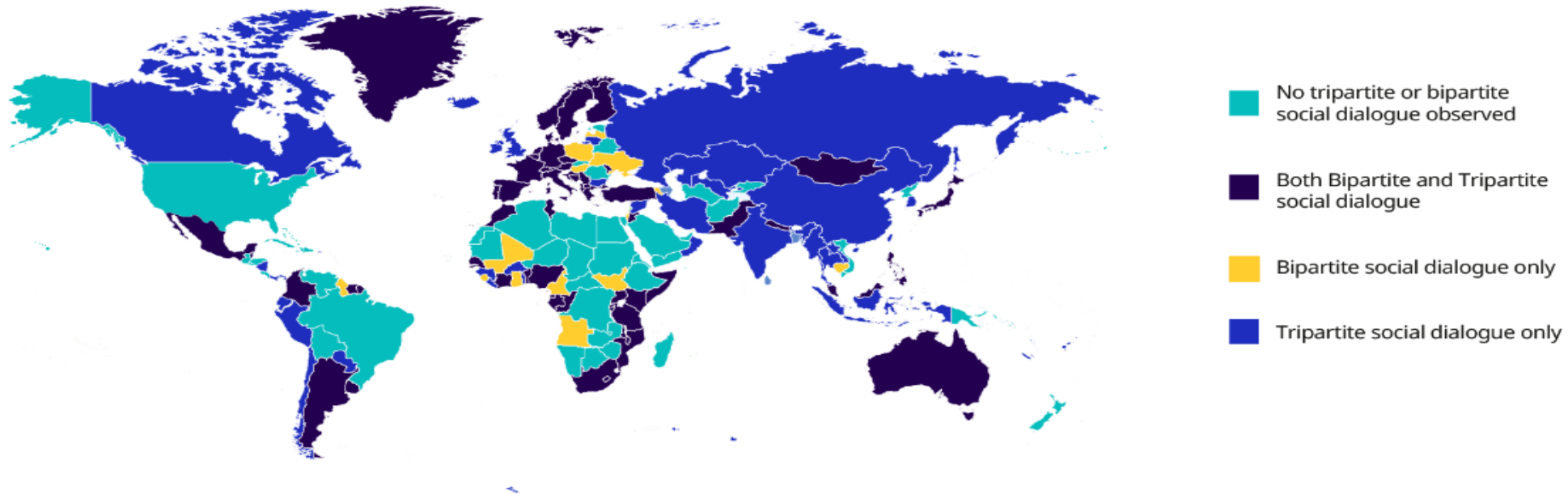
▶ **42 %** (51)

Both **tripartite & bipartite** social dialogue

- ▶ **Tripartism** used to consult and agree on measures for stimulating the economy and employment
 - ❖Example: fiscal and monetary policies for saving jobs & businesses
 - ❖An effort by governments to achieve the broadest possible societal consensus
- ▶ **Bipartite** social dialogue for shaping measures, in two ways:
 - ❖support business continuity, jobs and incomes (such as short-time work); or
 - ❖protect workers in the workplace (such as health & safety protocols).

▶ Bipartite & tripartite “peak-level” social dialogue (15 March -10 June 2020)

Form(s) of social dialogue used



▶ **Note: Bilateral interaction between governments & workers or governments & employers**

In 23 of the 188 countries and territories examined, only bilateral interactions were held, either between Government and employers, or between Government and workers (within the period under consideration).

- ▶ *This practice per se, does not amount to social dialogue*
- ▶ *Yet, it may have paved the way to social dialogue at a later stage*
- ▶ **Examples: Costa Rica, Vietnam**

Finding 2

75 of the 134 countries and territories which used peak-level social dialogue [or 40 %], reached 177 “process outcomes” (without counting enterprise-level agreements).

➤ **Outcomes in the form of:**

- ✓ “guidelines”
- ✓ “joint declarations”
- ✓ “codes of conduct”
- ✓ “agreements” [...].

▶ 58% (102 outcomes)

▶ Europe & Central Asia

▶ 15% (27 outcomes)

▶ Africa

▶ 14 % (25 outcomes)

▶ Asia and the Pacific

▶ 12 % (21 outcomes)

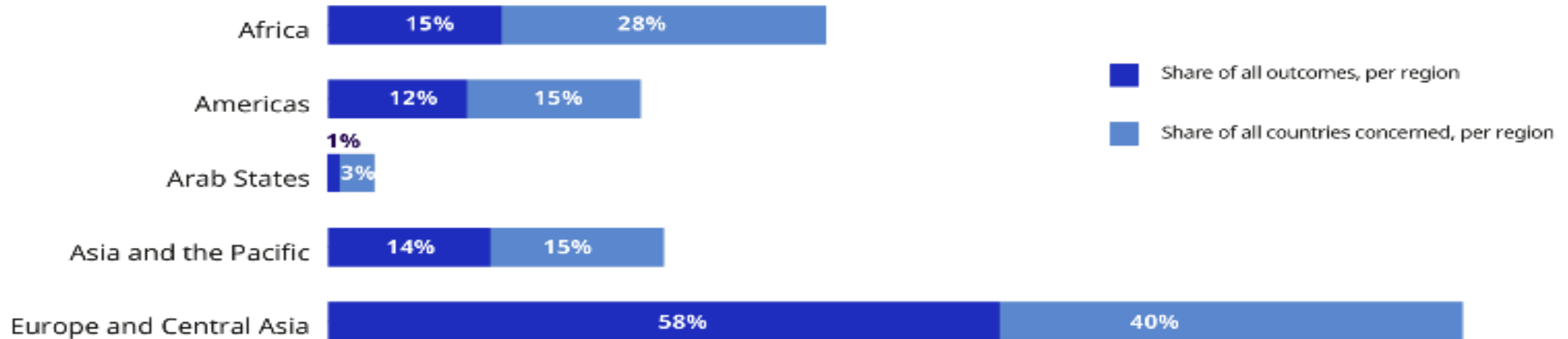
▶ Americas

▶ 1 % (2 outcomes)

▶ Arab States

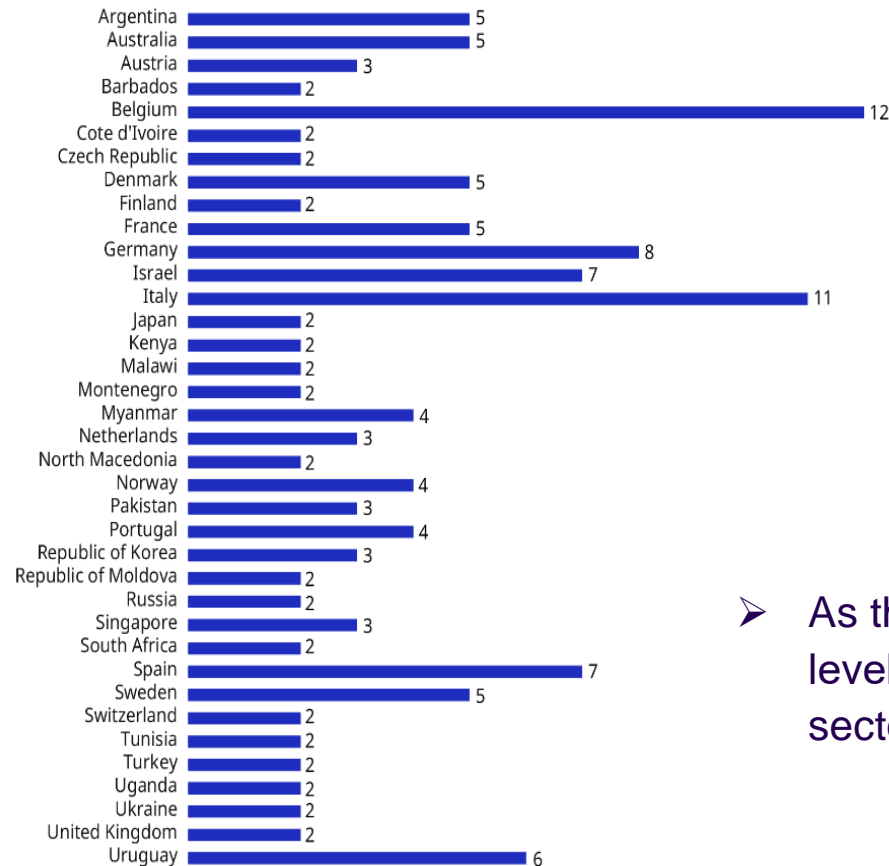
Social dialogue outcomes: regional perspectives

Repartition of outcomes and concerned countries: regional perspectives

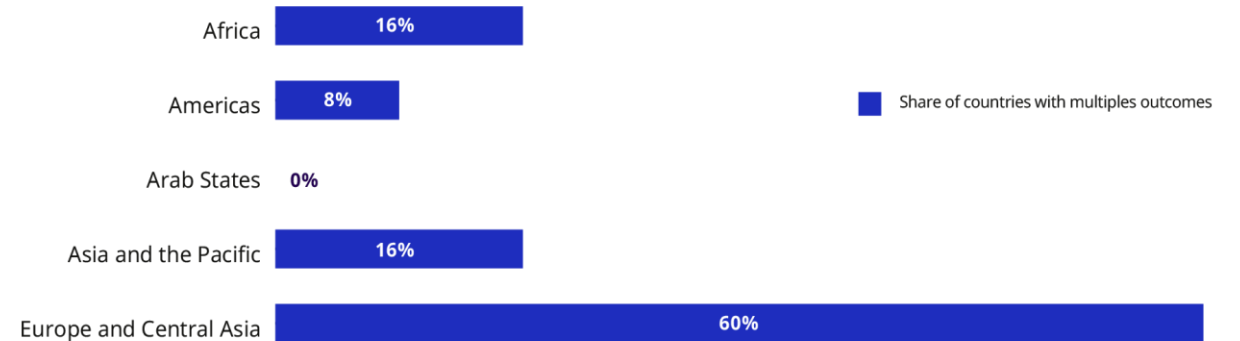


FINDING 3: Multiple outcomes (from 2 to 12) were reached in 37 countries.

Countries reaching multiple outcomes



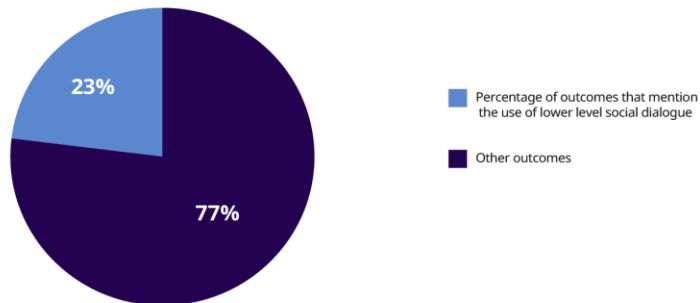
Share of countries with multiples outcomes, by region



- As the virus was spreading and its impacts unfolding, social dialogue at “peak-level” served to seek tailor-made solutions also at lower levels (specific sectors, professions, groups of workers and businesses).

Finding 4: *Of the 177 outcomes, 20 per cent (14), recommended additional social dialogue at the territorial, sector and enterprise levels.*

Outcomes that recommended or required lower level social dialogue



Example: In **Italy**, tripartite social dialogue

...with the participation of the Minister of Labour and Prime Minister.

A **bipartite protocol** on preventing the Covid-19 transmission and health & safety at work (OSH)

...**shaped** the **labour legislation** & other policy measures (the signed protocol was included as an Annex to the relevant Government decree – 26 March and 22 April)

...**triggered** tailor-made sectoral **collective agreements** (e.g., banking, transport, construction, and logistics sectors)

An updated protocol called for

...the establishment of **enterprise committees** of workers' representatives and employers in all enterprises, to ensure its implementation and monitoring of measures.

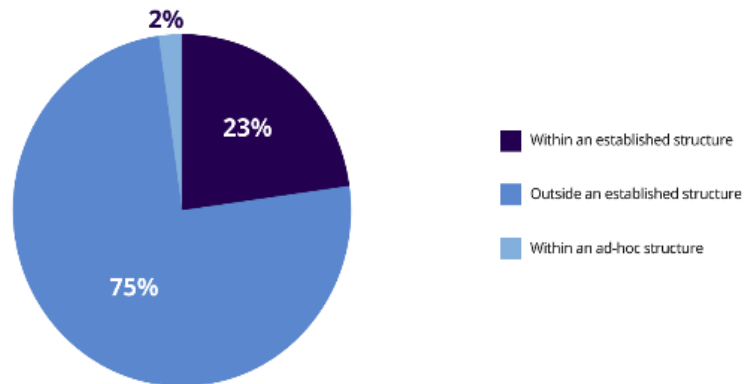
...and for the establishment of **district/territorial level** committees.

- Better “articulation” (links) among different levels was key for effective implementation and monitoring.

FINDING 5:

only 23 per cent of the reviewed outcomes were reached within a previously existing formal structure (tripartite labour council or Economic & Social Council)

Social dialogue outcomes reached within or outside formally established structure(s)



- **A certain unpreparedness of these bodies to address such wide-scale emergency**
- **Adaptability of social dialogue**

► Social dialogue adapting to the emergency: Côte d'Ivoire

- The *Conseil National du Dialogue Social* (CNDS) seemed unprepared for dealing with a crisis of such magnitude.
- Role of the social partners was minimal during the first stages of the pandemic (some discovered the government measures through the media).
- Progressively, informal bipartite or tripartite meetings took place
- An *ad hoc* tripartite COVID-19 structure acted as a consultation platform on labour-related matters under the auspices of the Labour Ministry (with the leadership of the social partners and of the CNDS).
- A bipartite agreement was signed (20 March amended 29 March) addressed recommendations to the Government and the *ad hoc* COVID-19 tripartite body (measures on protecting business and workers, including the creation of a tripartite COVID-19 special fund).

FINDING 6

Only a small minority of social dialogue outcomes (8 per cent or 14 outcomes) concerned measures specifically targeting workers and business units in the informal or undeclared economy, migrant workers, and freelancers and self-employed.

- Informal workers: e.g., Côte d'Ivoire, North Macedonia
- Migrant workers: e.g., Kenya
- Freelancers and self-employed: e.g., Israel.

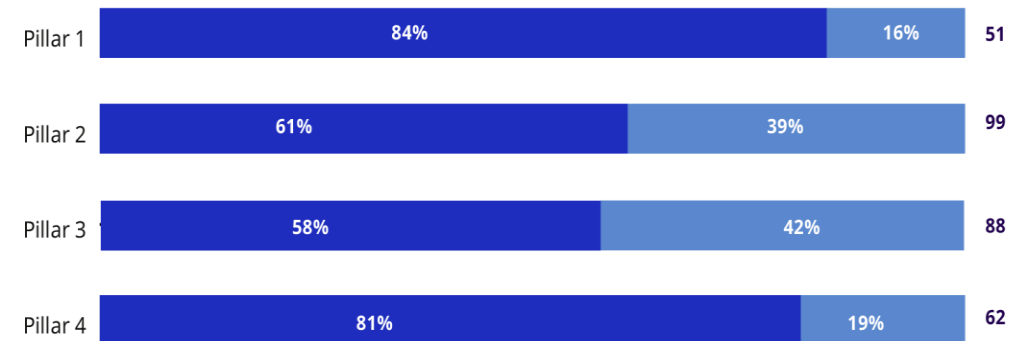
In **Israel**, Histadrut and the Israel's Chamber of Independent Organizations and Businesses sent a joint statement to the Government, requesting the payment of unemployment benefits to self-employed workers and freelancers, using the same rules and rights applied to waged employees. (Histadrut also announced its intention to establish a union for the self-employed and placed its legal services at the disposal of the self-employed during the crisis.)

Finding 7:

Content of outcomes classified by the four Pillars of the ILO policy framework to fight the COVID-19 crisis

Pillar 1	Pillar 2	Pillar 3	Pillar 4
Stimulating the economy and employment	Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes	Protecting workers in the workplace	Relying on social dialogue for solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active fiscal policy Accommodative monetary policy Lending and financial support to specific sectors, including the health sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide various types of relief, including financial and tax relief, for enterprises Implement employment retention measures Extend social protection to everyone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen occupational safety and health measures Adapt work arrangements (e.g. teleworking) Prevent discrimination and exclusion Provide access to health for all Expand access to paid leave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the capacity and resilience of employers' and workers' organizations Strengthen the capacity of governments Strengthen social dialogue, collective bargaining and labour relations institutions and processes

Share of outcomes, by Pillar *



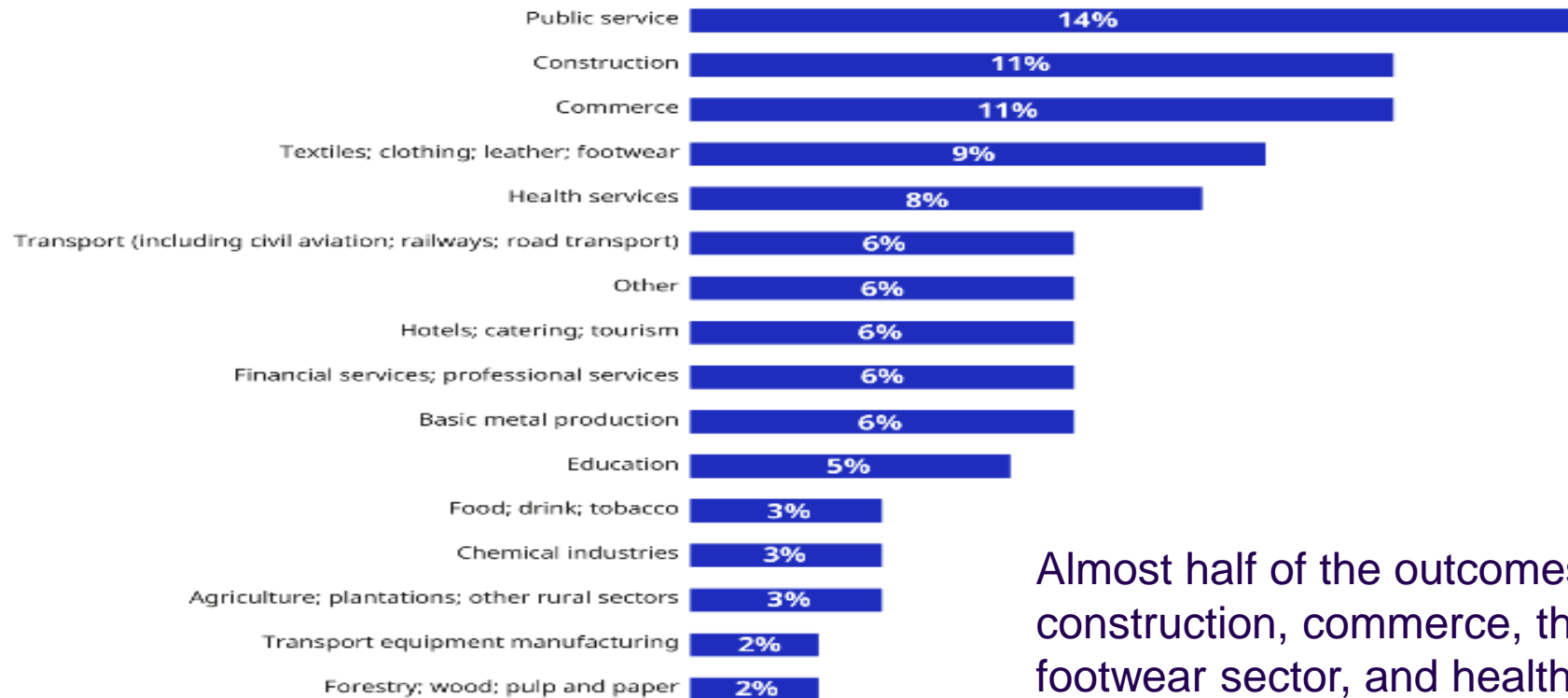
■ Share of cross-sectoral outcomes

■ Share of sectoral outcomes

▶ * Several outcomes featured proposals and measures relating to more than one Pillar.

Social dialogue outcomes: sectoral perspectives

Share of outcomes, by sector



Almost half of the outcomes concerned public services, construction, commerce, the textile, clothing, leather and footwear sector, and health sector

▶ **II. Key “take away” points**

Take away points

Take away 1: An extensive use of peak-level social dialogue leads to more **effective policy making**

- Better informed policies
- Improved ownership & trust in institutions and regulation

Take away 2: Investing in peak level tripartism stimulates **autonomous bipartite dialogue** between workers and employers **at lower levels** (territorial, sectoral, enterprise)

- The “trickle down” effect is key for tailored-made solutions
- “Synergies” between different levels of regulation and measures will be crucial in the post-Covid-19 **recovery phase**

Take away 3: The need for addressing long-standing **capacity and institutional gaps**

- **Eliminate legal and practical obstacles** faced by social dialogue actors & institutions to participate in policy-making & represent their constituents (including in the informal sector) remains pressing
- Removing obstacles and **using social dialogue also during the recovery phase**, will constitute important **safeguards against eroding labour rights and working conditions**, and against further undermining what is now a **fragile social context** in many countries.

▶ **Thank you!**

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