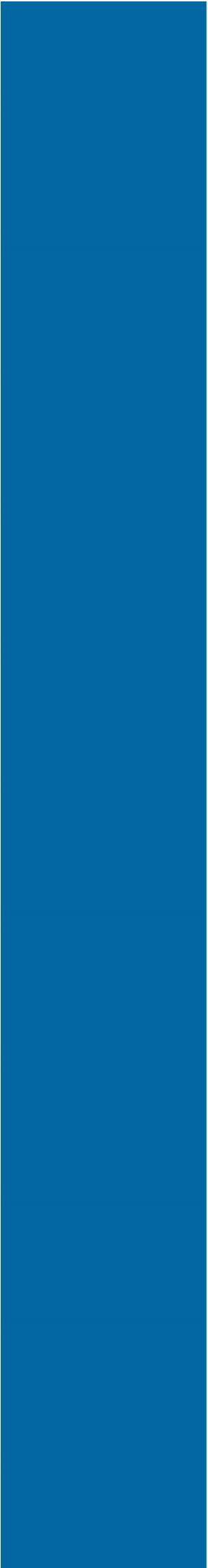




## DECP ANNUAL REPORT 2020





Front cover: East African partners and DECP staff members at De Dam square in Amsterdam

First row: Mrs. Myra Ngoma, President Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE). Dr. Aggrey Mlimuka, Executive Director, Association of Tanzanian Employers (ATE). Mr. Buxton Kayuni, President Employers Consultative Association of Malawi (ECAM). Mrs. Janye Nyimbo, President ATE. Mrs Annet Mulindwa, Vice President Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE). Mr. Arnout de Koster, countrymanager DECP  
Second row: Mr. Jannes van de Velde, countrymanager DECP. Mr. George Khaki, Executive Director ECAM. Mr. Jos van Erp, countrymanager DECP. Mr. Harrington Chibanda, Executive Director ZFE. Mr. Douglas Opio, Executive Director FUE. Mrs Christine Rehbock, Office Manager DECP, Mr. Peter Bongaerts, Director DECP.

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## **RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS**

### Preface by DECP's president

Taking responsibility for an inclusive and sustainable society. That is the new perception of the role of business in society that my organisation, the Dutch employers' organisation VNO-NCW, has recently presented. VNO-NCW believes in doing business to create broad welfare, building on the combined strengths of business, government and the public. Not only in the Netherlands: also from an international perspective we have to be aware of our role in society. For Dutch companies this means doing international business in a fair and responsible way. And for Dutch employers' organisations this means supporting employers' organisations in other parts of the world with capacity building, knowledge exchange and developing social dialogue. That is why I believe the work of DECP is so important and it is without hesitation that I took over the chairmanship of DECP from Hans de Boer last year.



Ingrid Thijssen, president of VNO-NCW

I would first of all like to commemorate the passing of Hans de Boer. We were all shocked by his sudden passing only a few months after his retirement. Hans has been active as DECP-president for six years and he has always been very involved with the work of DECP. Hans was head of the business delegation of a large economic mission in March with the King and Queen of the Netherlands to Indonesia (see page 4). In the middle of a packed programme he found time to be present at a social dialogue event of Indonesian employers and trade unions, supported by DECP and CNV Internationaal. Speaking about broad welfare, Hans was not only concerned with trade in this economic mission to Indonesia, but also with promoting sustainable development by a constructive social dialogue between employers and trade unions. We will continue the DECP work in that spirit.

2020 has been an extraordinary year for people, for companies and last but not least for employers' organisations all over the world. From the start of the pandemic, COVID-19 was obviously a radical challenge for business. From one day to the next workplaces and workers were affected by the virus. Lockdowns were announced for sectors and for complete economies. In that situation, where could you go as an individual company to find answers, support and some perspective? Right! It became very clear that employers' organisations were eminently capable of voicing the needs of business, making proposals for economic recovery and caring for jobs that were at stake.

### *'Taking responsibility for an inclusive and sustainable society'*

In that respect, the pandemic has not only been an enormous challenge for all of us. It has also provided an opportunity for employers' organisations to be visible and relevant for members and for the broader society. I am happy that DECP was able to support employers' organisations during the pandemic to enable them to provide information on business continuity to companies, to stimulate social dialogue with trade unions and to advise governments on socio-economic recovery measures. The many examples in this annual report show that with the DECP-support employers' organisations have taken their responsibility for getting through this difficult and uncertain period.

As stated at the beginning, building on the combined strengths of business, government and the public is key to tackle challenges. Now and in the future. I am convinced that employers' organisations worldwide continue picking up this responsibility. As the annual report makes clear, DECP is available to support this in the best possible way.

Ingrid Thijssen  
President DECP

## **IN MEMORIAM. HANS DE BOER**

On 18 January 2021, Hans de Boer (66) suddenly passed away. Hans was Chairman of the Board of DECP until 21 September 2020. He was a great promotor of international business and advocated the role that employers' organisations play in this. We remember Hans as an enthusiastic and knowledgeable chairman. But especially as an amiable person with a listening ear who knew how to put things into perspective at the right time. Below we share some of our memories of Hans.



**Christine Rehbock, Office Manager DECP:**

'DECP board meetings take place twice a year. For the past six years, I have been present, taking notes, during all of those meetings. What always struck me was the ease with which Hans would lead us through the agenda. There was always a time limit with so many things to discuss, but under his guidance we made it through the meeting with even time for a joke or two.'

### ***'He would know my name'***

Personally, I also admired Hans' ability to remember names and faces. He met hundreds of people a day in and outside our building but whenever we would happen to step into the same elevator, he would know my name and make some small talk'.

**Peter Boorsma, DECP Country Manager Latin America:**

'In November 2018, Hans de Boer took part in a cross-cutting workshop on working conditions and absenteeism in Bogotá, Colombia. The directors and board members of the employers' organisations from Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia came to Bogotá for this workshop, organised by DECP and ANDI, the Asociación Nacional de Empresarios de Colombia'.

### ***'He was convinced that dialogue is the way to solutions that benefit all parties'***

'People are worried about the consequences of internationalization and robotization for their work and income', said De Boer. 'Only by taking these concerns seriously will it be possible to set up a social dialogue and make agreements with trade unions'.

'His contribution was inspiring and convincing. He stated that it is important to have an eye for the concerns of your employees when it comes to absenteeism, but also for the interests of the trade union movement when it comes to negotiating the pension agreement. He was convinced that dialogue is the way to solutions that benefit all parties, even though there are times when there are many tensions, such as in that period in Colombia'.

[Peter Bongaerts, DECP director](#) notes Hans' recent accomplishments :

'Hans stimulated mutual cooperation between the international organisations in the Malietoren, the headquarters of VNO-NCW where DECP has its offices. He regularly invited DECP with PUM, NLinBusiness and the policy department for international entrepreneurship of the VNO-NCW to see if more could be achieved in synergy. In addition to a number of more coherent trade missions, this has led to the development of a joint Africa Strategy. Together with FMO<sup>1</sup> and NABC<sup>2</sup>, the mission was launched to bring Africa to the attention of the business community and policymakers and to take targeted action to better position Dutch business in Africa.'

During a trade mission with Prime Minister Rutte to Vietnam in 2019, Hans chaired a DECP round table discussion between Dutch and Vietnamese female entrepreneurs with great conviction. As a champion of 'Women to the top', Hans knew how difficult it was to get more women in CEO positions. And there in Hanoi, at a long table with female entrepreneurs from both countries, he enjoyed what it should really be about: a good discussion about how to be successful as a woman at the top.

The last time Hans took action as chairman of DECP was in Jakarta, in March 2020. During the visit of the King and Queen of the Netherlands to Indonesia, Hans led the business programme with many trade-oriented activities. The fact that he also made time for a social dialogue-oriented activity with the Indonesian employers' organisation APINDO and the trade union KSBSI speaks volumes. Hans spoke from the bottom of his heart about the importance of social dialogue, about keeping employers and employees in dialogue – in good times and bad times.

Thank you for inspiring us Hans!'

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<sup>1</sup> Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank

<sup>2</sup> Netherlands African Business Council

## BUILDING A NETWORK OF EXPERTS

Over the years, DECP has built up a network of external experts with the aim to reinforce the DECP team and to guarantee full service to partners. In 2020, various experts were asked to make efforts for DECP. Elies Lemkes-Straver and Simon Beausaert report on this.



Elies Lemkes, Vijay Padate (director Employers Federation India) and Ravi Peiris (specialist employers' activities at ILO) during skills development workshop in Kathmandu

Elies Lemkes-Straver has been Chairperson of the Board of a Dutch regional development programme and General Director of ZLTO, the Dutch farmers' association, which has 16,000 members. She has a lot of experience in competence development and cooperation in this field between companies, TVET schools and the government. In early 2020, Elies was asked by DECP to moderate a workshop of the South Asian Forum of Employers (SAFE), focussing on skills development. With this aim in mind, various meetings with DECP staff and experts were organised to start this assignment well prepared.

### *'Discussing in a very open and trusted atmosphere'*

Elies: 'It was a joy to prepare the SAFE meeting with the three of us from DECP. Jos and Andrew, very experienced and committed professionals, aimed to get the most and the best out of the meeting. They did so with great empathy and respect for and understanding of the local situation in the member countries. In preparation of the SAFE meeting, a questionnaire was sent to the members. Thanks to the high response rate and the meaningful answers, we could easily and quickly get to the point during the SAFE meeting'.

The 9th meeting of SAFE took place in Kathmandu (Nepal) on 28 and 29 February. It was attended by representatives from Nepal, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh,

the ILO and Andrew Moore from DECP. The meeting provided the opportunity for members of the employers' organisations to discuss in some detail the major issues they are dealing with in their respective countries. It also provided the opportunity for them to see how, as a regional organisation, they can work more closely together.

Skills development was the main topic of the discussion, which was led by Elies. Based on the discussion, it was agreed that employers' organisations should work closely with education institutes and work with their members to provide opportunities to upgrade the skills of their existing workforce. The recognition of prior learning and of shared knowledge and certification was of great importance.



Elies Lemkes-Straver is Deputy of the Provincial Council of Noord-Brabant and has Agriculture, Food and Nature in her portfolio. She holds a master's degree in human geography. She is an experienced researcher and advisor in the field of regional development and skills development. Elies has been lecturing on sustainable production at the University of Applied Sciences of Agriculture and Food.

Elies: 'The workshop focused on sharing analysis and good practices, as well as the challenges in availability and development of skills. Everything was discussed in a very open and trusted atmosphere. We ended up with concrete follow-up actions leading to results in the field and strengthening the cooperation and network on skills'.

The employers' organisations are looking for a modern training infrastructure, up-to-date curricula, new skills and soft skills, as well as a good use of apprenticeships and internships. It was also agreed that focus should be given to SMEs as well as entrepreneurial skills and the key issue of finance.

Although the COVID-19 outbreak interrupted all planned activities in this field, it goes without saying that the actions that have emerged from this workshop will be followed up as soon as the situation allows.



Simon Beausaert is Associate Professor of Workplace Learning in the Department of Educational Research and Development, School of Business and Economics, Maastricht University, in the Netherlands. He has conducted research and published several articles and book chapters on how to support employees' formal and informal learning and how to organise assessment for workplace learning.

Dr. Simon Beausaert is an associate professor at Maastricht University. He is a specialist in learning & development in organisations. When it became clear that COVID was changing the world, he understood that the world of L&D could not escape it either. At the same time, DECP and its partners were looking for methods to inform

and train their members online. As Maastricht University and DECP have been cooperating in the field of skills development for many years, Simon Beausaert was asked to participate in an experiment with CGECI, the employers' organisation of Ivory Coast.

Simon Beausaert: 'DECP and CGECI were preparing a series of webinars to inform the members of CGECI about measures to prevent the spread of the virus, and to advise entrepreneurs on how to continue their activities as much as possible. That is why they had to discover for themselves how to deal with digital devices, software, didactical methods and how to organise an online meeting. Moreover, CGECI is used to offer training and workshops. The objective was to gain experience with online learning, so that they could eventually transform their offline training to online courses'.

The graphic features a blue background with white text. At the top left is the DECP logo (Dutch Employers Cooperation Programme). The main title is 'Développement de mes compétences à distance' followed by 'Formation continue pendant la pandémie'. A yellow box contains the text '« Webinar organisé par la CGECI en collaboration avec DECP et l'Université de Maastricht de Pays Bas ». Below this are logos for CGECI ('Le Patronat Ivoirien') and Maastricht University. To the right, a grey box provides details: 'Mercredi le 10 Juin 2020 14h00-14h45' and 'Par Simon Beausaert, Professeur en Formation et Jos van Erp, Conseiller Spécial'.

The project manager of CGECI, Mr. Zana Kone, prepared a webinar on the topic 'How to guarantee continuous learning during the pandemic'. Simon Beausaert and Jos van Erp (special advisor DECP) prepared a structured interview to be held during the webinar. Jos asked informed questions and Simon answered them. The content was about issues like competencies, setting goals, the learning coach, learning opportunities and a learning culture. The webinar took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June. Forty people participated, and they were invited to ask questions after the interview. A few days later, the participants all received a summary.

***'No matter where the company is located similar issues are at play'***

Simon: 'I really enjoyed the webinar. The participants were very interested in the newest scientific insights on how to foster the learning and development of employees, even in times of COVID-19. The webinar showed me that no matter where the company is located and no matter how different the context is, similar issues are at play: How to motivate and coach employees, how can competences best be developed, how to become a learning organisation, ...?'

CGECL benefited from this experience by organising three webinars on COVID-related issues like ‘how to keep employees involved?’ and ‘how to communicate with members?’. Training courses that used to take place in conference rooms have now been transformed into digital learning trajectories.



Elies and Simon were not the only external experts to cooperate with DECP and its partners. DECP also called on Joris van den Aker and Alex Danissen, among others. And that will certainly not be the last time.



‘DECP advises employers’ organisations in developing online courses. Organising online and blended training courses is what TNO-ESI has done for more than 10 years. I was asked to share my experiences with the DECP country managers. We learned a lot from each other’.

Joris van den Aker, Competence Development Manager at TNO-ESI



‘The focus of Agriterra is on business development in the agricultural sector worldwide. Therefore, we are complementary to the activities of DECP. DECP asked Agriterra to carry out a mission to Togo. There I brought the organised agricultural sector into contact with the employers’ organisation CNP-Togo. The decision-makers got to know each other in a constructive joint workshop. The next step may involve practical punctual collaborations, paving the way towards an intensive collaboration. In any case, they now know where to find each other and which actions could be undertaken together for mutual benefit’.

Alex Danissen, Business Advisor Team Africa, Agriterra

## FEMKE DEN HARTOG: BUILDING SECTORAL DUE DILIGENCE

DECP is building a network of experts and focussing on social dialogue increasingly at a sectorial level. Mrs Femke den Hartog is an expert, and she knows a lot about sectorial social dialogue. That is why DECP asked her to contribute to the development of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and social dialogue in Colombia. She met with the DECP partner ANDI (Asociación Nacional de Empresarios de Colombia) and shared experiences.



Femke den Hartog is senior policy advisor INretail, Dutch trade association for non-food retail

CSR is nowadays on the top of everyone's mind. Companies have to fulfil their CSR towards their value chain. According to the OECD guidelines and the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) guidelines, companies worldwide should fulfil their obligation to carry out due diligence to map their social and environmental risk and determine how they can minimise it.

Femke den Hartog: 'I have a lot of experience in this because of my work for INretail, the Dutch business organisation for non-food retail. I was one of the

founders of the Dutch responsible business conduct agreement of textiles. I was asked by DECP to share some experiences with the Colombian employers. In a presentation in Bogota, I explained what a social business conduct agreement is and how you can implement this. We shared some thoughts about the Colombian context. I gave a presentation in the CSR high level group of ANDI.

### *'CSR is on the top of everyone's mind'*

Further, I organised some very concrete workshops for the Colombian business organisation ANDI, with the aim being to train Colombian business about the basics of CSR. I was happy to do this because it has shown that there is a tremendous need for further capacity building. I was glad to see that businesses were enthusiastic. From an economic point of view, they realised that it is becoming more important in the value chain to be transparent regarding the social and environmental side effects of doing business. Colombian businesses are experiencing more pressure from their European buyers because of the upcoming EU due diligence legislation. We see that the companies are more conscious now and have identified a strong need to further develop skills to further build on a sectoral social dialogue, like in Colombian mining. Social dialogue is at the heart of due diligence. "Workers and employers must talk with each other to identify the most important issues to work on".'

## EAST AFRICAN PARTNERS VISIT THE NETHERLANDS

In January, a group of representatives of East African employers' organisations visited the Netherlands. They were invited by DECP, not only to visit the DECP country managers in The Hague, but also to follow a study programme. This week turned out to be educational and enjoyable at the same time – both for the guests and for the DECP staff.

The DECP management attaches great importance to maintaining a good relationship with its partners. DECP country managers visit their partners on a regular basis in their home countries. Usually, experiences and ideas are exchanged. Quite often the experiences include working with the trade unions and the government in the Netherlands using the polder model, a concept of social dialogue that DECP is very proud of. Thus, why not invite partners to visit the Netherlands to meet social partners who are intensively involved in the social dialogue? The DECP staff set up an extensive study programme to which various Dutch employers' organisations, trade unions and government institutions contributed.



Visit East African employers' organisations to SER (Social Economic Council) with the participation of DECP board member Fried Kaanen

Representatives from Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi and Zambia were the first to benefit from this opportunity. The visit took place from 8-10 January. The guests agreed that it is of added value to become acquainted with the Dutch approach to cooperation between important players on site, and that they have certainly seen a number of cases that they can apply in their countries. Partly on the basis of this successful meeting, DECP has decided to repeat the program and invite partners from other regions, as soon as it is possible to travel safely.

An extensive report on this visit can be found on the DECP website under the stories section. <https://www.decp.nl/stories/working-visit-of-east-african-employers-organisations-to-the-netherlands-22587>

## FIVE QUESTIONS TO INEKE DEZENTJÉ HAMMING

Ineke Dezentjé Hamming is president of FME, the business association for the technology industry, and board member of DECP. In the Netherlands she stands up for the interest of entrepreneurs in the technology industry. She strives for a good business climate.



Ineke Dezentjé Hamming, president of FME

**Why, according to you, do employers' organisations matter? What is your vision on their role in today's economy and society?**

'I strongly believe in the mobilising and connecting role of employers' organisations. The mission of FME is to mobilise and connect the technological industry and society for every issue or challenge to which technology is the answer. That is put into practice every day. Member companies are connected to FME's powerful network to build partnerships that, in the end, make the world a better place. By doing so we are aiming for a future-proof world, with wellbeing and prosperity, in which everyone participates'.

**During your FME presidency, you have seen many foreign employers' organisations, inside and outside Europe. What do you think foreign employers' organisations can learn from Dutch employers' organisations and vice versa?**

'I have been president of the European association for tech & industry employers CEEMET and I was leader of the business delegation on various international trade missions. In that capacity, I have seen that the Dutch straightforwardness and directness more and more fit today's need for transparency and action orientation. Dutch employers' organisations are vocal, results-driven and innovative. That is what foreign employers' organisations can learn from us. The other way around, we are constantly reminded by foreign employers' organisations of the international interdependence and the importance of global partnerships. It is always good to learn from each other as employers' organisations, with DECP as the linking pin of course!'

**For almost 15 years, the DECP work has focused on "umbrella" employers' organisations – like the VNO-NCW in the Netherlands. In its updated strategy, DECP announced pilots to support sector organisations as well. As president of the largest sector organisation (for the technological industry) in the Netherlands, what do you believe is most important for a powerful and influential sector organisation?**

'The big difference between umbrella organisations and sector organisations is that sector organisations have a direct membership, meaning that the word "member" is

the basis of all actions. In my sector, the technology industry, it is more important than ever as a company to be part of a powerful network. “By members, for members” is therefore a key principle for strong sector organisations. In addition, offering members new insights with the help of data and uniting interests in new forms of partnerships are contributing to the uniqueness and added value of sector organisations’.

**DECP, together with the international programmes of FNV and CNV, is a promotor of harmonious industrial relations in developing countries through social dialogue. You have had some challenging collective bargaining processes in the technological industry in the Netherlands at times. Do you believe social dialogue has a future?**

‘Yes. Full stop. Important labour market transitions are taking place all over the world, such as demographic developments, digitalisation and the mismatch between skills supply and the needs of companies. These ‘future of work’ challenges are not something that employers can unilaterally address. Listening to employees, knowing their concerns and needs and defining common solutions is the only way forward. That is why I believe employers’ organisations should keep investing in good relationships and collaboration with trade unions, in collective bargaining and beyond’.

**After being a DECP board member for nine years, what do you see as the most important achievement of DECP? And what message do you want to give for the future of DECP?**

‘I have always supported the work of DECP because I believe every country is better off with a powerful employers’ organisation. In terms of achievements, promoting social dialogue together with FNV and CNV in joint trainings with employers’ organisations and trade unions in developing countries is a unique capability that DECP can be proud of.

***‘It is more important than ever as a company to be part of a powerful network’***

Entrepreneurs represent such an important part of society and are worth being represented. As VNO-NCW puts it: entrepreneurs operate at the heart of society, are an integral part of society and feel a shared sense of responsibility for it.

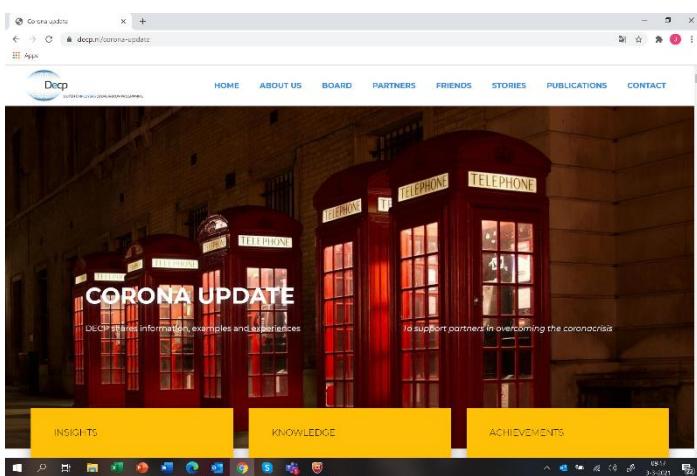
Uniting companies will reinforce their influence and impact. Sharing the best practices and making tailor-made solutions in specific regions is important. By doing so, DECP is helping to bring more prosperity’.

## **QUICK RESPONSE CORONA UPDATE ADDED TO DECP WEBSITE**

At the beginning of 2020, it still seemed like a regional epidemic in China. But it soon became apparent that no country could escape it. The coronavirus has hit the whole world. A lockdown was introduced in many places. Companies came to a standstill. It goes without saying that employers' organisations let go of their long-term strategies and concentrated on the new situation. The same goes for worldwide operating institutes like the ILO, the IOE and the World Economic Forum.

### *'If there is one common enemy, you must join forces'*

It was amazing to see how flexible and creative employers' organisations are. Their main goals were to prevent the spread of the virus as much as possible and to enable companies to continue their activities. DECP collected a series of best practices and designed a website called 'Corona update' which is directly linked to the homepage of the DECP website. On this website, DECP presented creative ideas, examples of concrete actions, references to relevant studies and reports from which employers' organisations could benefit – either by just getting inspired or by copying them, more or less, to improve their unique situation.



Although the corona crisis has taken a terrible toll and significantly slowed down the global economy, we could also observe a number of positive consequences and developments. For example, many employers' organisations and trade unions have managed to work together to jointly make

proposals to the national government. After all, if there is one common enemy, you must join forces. Hopefully, this element of social dialogue can be continued after the impact of the coronavirus has decreased. A lot of employers' organisations, with amazing speed, translated their offer of workshops and training courses into online training. This allowed them to reach out to members and potential members, even in the outskirts of the country. By focussing on lobbying and advocacy, employers' organisations increased their visibility, as they were asked to share their ideas and opinions on national television, in newspapers and on websites.

### *'Employers' organisations are flexible and creative'*

The DECP Corona update website has been consulted often. One of the main functions of DECP – to share experiences – has found a new platform. If there is reason to do so, DECP will develop a (temporary) website again with the aim of exchanging experiences.

## SOUTH BOLIVIA DETERMINED TO EMERGE STRONGER FROM THE CRISIS

In 2020 the three employers' federations in the south of Bolivia jointly developed a plan to restart and further develop the economy, with the support of DECP. The plan and the active lobbying have already led to a lot of dynamism at the national level, but also in the south of Bolivia itself, says Patricia Vargas of the FEPT.

'In Bolivia, the focus has traditionally been on the central axis of La Paz-Cochabamba-Santa Cruz, where the major companies are located. The south of the country, with many SMEs and mini-companies, is often forgotten', says Patricia Vargas Cazón, general manager of the Federación de Empresarios Privados de Tarija (FEPT).



Patricia Vargas, director of the employers' organisation in Tarija, Bolivia

This prompted the federations of entrepreneurs from the departments of Chuquisaca, Potosí and Tarija - FEPCh, FEPP and FEPT - to jointly request financial support from DECP to develop a vision for the future economy of the south of Bolivia. It had to become a vision not only of the reactivation of business after the corona crisis, but also of the longer-term development of the economy.

DECP provided financial support for hiring an external facilitator and travel and agency expenses. In September, the three federations - now renamed 'Bloque Sur' - presented their "Plan de reactivación y fortalecimiento de las economías del sur de Bolivia: Chuquisaca – Potosí- Tarija." In this plan, the federations have drawn up proposals for, for example, the mining

of lithium, the cultivation of superfood, a joint proposition for tourism offering and a plan to attract investments.

'The central idea of the plan is that the economies of the three departments must be more diverse, in order to grow GDP after years of contraction', says Vargas. This requires an investment fund with \$ 2 billion government money and \$ 3 billion from the private sector to implement the proposals. 'If you implement the proposals properly and the economy is in line, I am sure that this will lead to significant growth in employment'.

*'The caterpillar is there, but it still has to become a butterfly'*

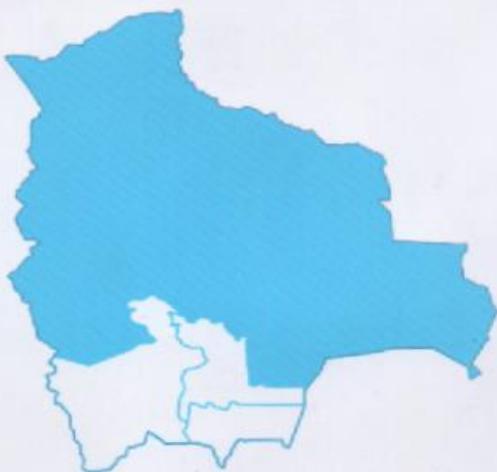
'The plan has led to a special dynamic in which politicians themselves are now also talking about synergy and joint action', Vargas emphasizes. "It is interesting that the private sector has brought this about. But we are still in the first phase. The caterpillar is there, but it still has to become a butterfly'.

Vargas has been able to present the plan to the presidential candidate and now President Luis Arce. 'He called the plan 'spectacular' and promised to get back to it. According to Arce, it fits well with his plans to better connect the south of Bolivia with the Chilean and Argentine regions on the other side of the border'.

Normally, the federations each held an annual fair with which they earned quite a bit of income. Due to corona, the fair could not continue. But the collaboration has also led the three federations of entrepreneurs to organize a digital fair together, the Fevisur. This has attracted 20,000 unique visitors from home and abroad.

Vargas: 'We see that as Bloque Sur we can do many more things together, such as developing entrepreneurship. We see that the positive approach of the proposals is especially important. The plan is a vision of the economic development of the southern part of Bolivia. This not only helps the national government, but also the departmental authorities. They too must know the needs and wishes of the entrepreneurs'.

**PLAN DE REACTIVACIÓN Y FORTALECIMIENTO  
DE LAS ECONOMÍAS DEL SUR DE BOLIVIA:  
CHUQUISACA - POTOSÍ - TARIJA**



The map shows the outline of Bolivia with the southern region (Chuquisaca, Potosí, Tarija) shaded in blue. The northern and central parts of the country are shown in white.

**FEPT**  
FEDERACIÓN DE EMPRESARIOS PRIVADOS DE TARIJA

**FEPCH**  
FEDERACIÓN DE EMPRESARIOS PRIVADOS DE CHUQUISACA

**EPP** | FEDERACIÓN DE EMPRESARIOS PRIVADOS DE POTOSÍ

Realizado con el Apoyo de:



The logo for Decp features a globe graphic with the letters 'Decp' overlaid in a stylized font.

## **ECOP PHILIPPINES INFORMS ON THE DECP COVID SUPPORT**

The COVID-19 pandemic caught everyone by surprise. Its impact on business is particularly devastating and far-reaching. This was and is expected considering that governments had to close borders, shut down the economy, and restrict movement of people to avert the further spread of the virus.

When the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) in the main parts of the country was implemented, ECOP was forced to put the whole Secretariat in telework without the benefit of gradual transition and proper preparation. Due to travel restrictions, quarantine protocols, and physical distancing, all face-to-face programs of ECOP have been cancelled indefinitely.



Sergio Ortiz-Luis, Jr. President of  
ECOP

In the new normal, online applications which support interactions virtually have become the primary means of ECOP's communication with its partners. Initially, ECOP used Facebook and Facebook Messenger as the means of communication both internally and externally. Subsequently, the Secretariat explored and used other communication tools to keep the network updated and engaged not only within, but also outside the country through various videoconferencing applications such as Zoom Meetings, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet, among others. All these communication tools and videoconferencing applications became immensely handy and useful as we continued to perform our functions.

Amidst the pandemic, ECOP not only had to fast track its digital shift, it also pivoted its reach to struggling businesses during the pandemic to help encourage companies to rise up against the challenges brought by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

ECOP called on its members to submit their COVID-19 workplace response and re-entry plans. These submissions were then converted into a compilation of good business practices which proved to be helpful to many members. Some members needed good practices to benchmark on and emulate in order to continue operating, while others wanted to showcase how they conduct their business responsibly and conscientiously despite limitations brought about by the pandemic.

ECOP also provided its members with resources, reports, tools, and other guidance and informational material that may help business and employers survive and be resilient amidst the pandemic via a special section on "*Prescriptions on Business Survival and Resilience*". In addition, ECOP began to organise and conduct free web-based seminars or what is popularly known as "webinars" focused on COVID-19 related government issuances and were clustered under the series entitled "*Employers and Workers in the Time of COVID-19*".

All these efforts were put together in the campaign called "*ECOP Special Coverage on COVID-19: Looking after Business and Employment*" which caught the attention of

media, the International Labor Organization, and the Philippine government, notably the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

As evidenced by the activities and interventions mentioned above, no pandemic has and will ever stop ECOP in providing services to its general membership and maintaining its relevance. ECOP continued to engage its members by communicating all activities and updates through the many virtual platforms of ECOP – website, social media, email, CRM, providing them with exclusive access to information and selected services, offering feedback mechanisms, and addressing concerns through the helpdesk.

Ultimately, all of ECOP's advocacy support activities and direct services were geared towards helping employers cope with the changes brought about by COVID-19, preparing them for the next normal, and capacitating them to become what ECOP calls the “*21st century employer*”. With the pandemic at hand, it became even more relevant as the country faced the impact of COVID-19 crisis: the digital shift was accelerated at a pace no one ever imagined; the capabilities and limitations of enterprises were put to the test; and the labor market pushed companies to build on its agility and resilience.

### *‘Digital, agile and resilient’*

Side-by-side the 41<sup>st</sup> National Conference of Employers (NCE), ECOP partnered with the Dutch Employers Cooperation Programme (DECP) and introduced an online certificate course on topics related to social media and how MSMEs could benefit from it especially in crisis situations. Evidently, “*digitization and digitalization*” are just what MSMEs need in order to survive and thrive.

Following the conclusion of the ECOP-DECP webinar series and the 41<sup>st</sup> NCE, ECOP realised that there is more to be done and that there are more opportunities to seize in the “digital” component. To ensure sustainability, ECOP again collaborated with DECP through the project “*Digital Optimization and Website Enhancement*.” Through

The screenshot shows a webinar interface. At the top, it says "EMBRACING THE NEW NORMAL: How to Survive the Pandemic and Thrive Through Digital Transformation". Below that, it says "Episode 3 Selling and Marketing in Times of Crisis and Post-Crisis". It lists the dates: "DAY 1 - 14 JULY 2020 (Tuesday) | 2:30pm - 4:30pm" and "DAY 2 - 15 JULY 2020 (Wednesday) | 3:00pm - 5:00pm", both via ZOOM app. A small video thumbnail shows three people. Below the dates, it says "This episode will look into new ways of how to sell and market during and after COVID-19." Under "Topic:", there is a bulleted list: "How to sell and market during and after COVID-19", "Should you stop selling and marketing? Why or why not?", "How do you market and sell during COVID-19? How about after?", and "What are the most effective but cheap (even free) marketing options for businesses?". At the bottom, it says "To register, please contact: Ms. Zeni Bengrancy - registration@ecop.org.ph | 09772020969 Ms. Mina Capite - m.minacapite.ecop@gmail.com | 09277911671". It also shows logos for ECOP, DECP, and other partners.

information, and other materials and resources that ECOP provides to members.

The enrichment of ECOP's communication channels is a direct service in itself, a tool to advance and promote the employer agenda, and a platform to connect and engage with members and other constituents in the most direct and immediate manner possible.

through this collaboration, ECOP was able to maintain its communication channels which enabled the organization to provide access to information despite the threats posed by the pandemic through the website which housed COVID-related responses,

## **HOW THE NATIONAL EMPLOYERS COUNCIL OF BENIN HAS DEALT WITH COVID-19**

Benin is one of the countries in West Africa that the DECP cooperates with. Like everywhere in the world, Benin was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. The DECP management met with Mr. Bernard Kossi Hounnouvi, executive director of the CNP-Benin, the National Employers Council of Benin, to ask some questions about his experiences.

Mr. Bernard Kossi Hounnouvi: 'Before answering your questions, allow us to reiterate the thanks of the CNP-Benin to DECP for all the technical and financial support it has received throughout 2020 to support its partners in dealing with COVID-19. This support is additional and helps our organisation improve its response to the continuity of economic activities'.



Bernard Hounnouvi, director of the National Employers Council of Benin (CNP-Benin)

### **What has been the impact of COVID-19 in Benin in general?**

'Our country was taken aback by the COVID-19 crisis that appeared at the end of 2019, a crisis which surprised the whole world. The pandemic, which was initially perceived as a health crisis, has turned out to also be a crisis that has damaged the world economy. Benin recorded its first positive case on 16 March 2020, joining the affected countries. It faced major obstacles like other countries. The general impact can be summed up in three main categories: health impact, socio-economic impact and cultural impact.'

### **What has been the impact of COVID-19 on private businesses?**

'COVID-19 has not only affected private companies, public companies or private or public administration. The suddenness of the pandemic shocked all economic players in all sectors. Private companies have had their share of negative impacts. Entire sectors have seen their activities plummet due to COVID. The economic effects of the pandemic are real and have been severely felt by private companies in Benin, which are mostly MSMEs and SMEs. All this led to layoffs and, of course, the termination of employment'.

### **What was the CNP-Benin's response to entrepreneurs and the government?**

'The CNP-Benin very early on began measuring the effects of the health crisis which extended its impact to economic activities. It advised, guided, and informed people on

the various aspects of the crisis. It undertook advocacy against government authorities for the survival and revival of the economy. It instructed companies to observe the rules imposed by health authorities to counter the spread. It contacted its partners to support it in this unforeseen disaster. It has regularly published useful information for member and non-member companies. It encouraged those who have the skills to opt for telework. It served as a bridge between the Business continuity plan issued by the IOE/ACTEMP and the Directives for employers and workers in the face of COVID-19 initiated by the Ministry of Labor and Public Service. It initiated with the support of the DECP, a study on the psychological vulnerability of company personnel to COVID-19, which was highly appreciated by stakeholders in the business world.

The CNP-Bénin encouraged companies to set up hand-washing systems. It shared with members the IOE business continuity plan, adapting it to its realities. It continued to liaise with the government and partner institutions for the establishment of credit lines to support businesses. CNP-Bénin has opened a COVID-19 section in its magazine. It handed the microphone to members to share good practices'.

#### **What role did the unions and the National Council for Social Dialogue (CNDS) play?**

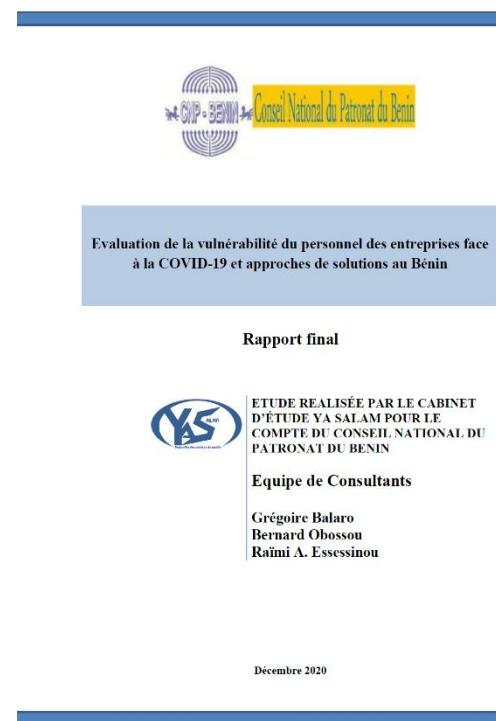
'The context created by the pandemic requires that we give priority to social dialogue. We have a common enemy to destroy. The CNP-Bénin and other actors in the private sector, in agreement with the central and workers' confederations, signed a Memorandum relating to the joint proposals of employers' organisations and workers' organisations in Benin for measures to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 and economic stimulus addressed to the government. The workers' unions have also played their part. They have shown themselves to be open to dialogue. They took an active part in the creation of the psychological vulnerability study. The CNDS did not sit back, it also helped to hold the sessions online. Social dialogue has been strengthened in the COVID context.

The unions distributed hand washing mechanisms, gels and masks with their logos.

#### **You have started two actions with DECP support: (1) increased visibility through regular updates with the help of HAVAS, and (2) the study of the psychological impact on employees and productivity. Could you describe the process and the outcome of these two activities?**

'Regarding the project carried out with the help of HAVAS, – a worldwide player in communication – it relates to the regular publication of COVID-19 bulletins and targeted useful information. It consisted in designing the ten guidelines to be implemented; COVID awareness capsules and bulletins; creation of WhatsApp broadcast messages, creation of a newsletter every fortnight and a range of videos containing informercials and interviews.

The performance report of said activity sent by our partner HAVAS clearly shows the scope of publications by audience. This action had a great impact and made the CNP-Benin visible through its COVID-19 actions.



The second flagship activity is the study to assess the vulnerability of business personnel to COVID-19 and its impact on business productivity. CNP-Benin wanted to invest in research to better target its support in this exceptionally trying time for businesses. This project has generated a lot of interest from both workers and employers. Its validation brought together senior executives of the Beninese public administration, workers and, of course, employers. Social dialogue was active through this situational analysis tool. This study made it possible to measure the psychological, anthropological and social impact that the COVID-19 pandemic crisis can have on workers in Beninese companies. It made it

possible to identify the significant economic vulnerability of Beninese companies to multiple shocks. Economic vulnerability which, added to the barrier measures, has resulted in a psychological vulnerability of workers in companies. This study offered CNP-Benin the opportunity to properly anticipate crisis prevention and management signals at the company level and at the same time include response measures in sustainability. The report was sent to the Beninese authorities and to certain institutions including BOAD (West African Development Bank), during a meeting initiated by CNP-Benin and held with the President of BOAD and his Cabinet, on Thursday, 28 January 2021'.

**The Corona crisis is affecting us enormously around the world. Still, we can say that there are good things that remain. What can you say about the sustainability of your actions and social dialogue?**

'As we underlined above, the tools developed are part of the sustainability of our actions in the face of COVID-19. The reactivity of the CNP-Benin has reinforced its legitimacy and improved its visibility.

CNP-Benin extended the microphone to members, non-members and traditional partners (workers) to nourish reflection and work together. It got involved in forward thinking for the survival and revival of the economy. It was able to provide rapid responses to business concerns. It was part of an anticipatory and participatory

approach that helped it meet the challenges. It was the much-advocated social dialogue that made things easier. Together we are stronger. The world of work has won. The employers of Benin continue their actions in spite of and beyond the pandemic. It continues to write new innovative notes in the continuity so that the post COVID-19 period is the bearer of a prosperous economy for the wellbeing of companies in all sectors.



The CNP-Benin now sees COVID as an opportunity. In this sense, it presented a public communication entitled: "What is the model of development for the Beninese private sector after the COVID-19 crisis?"

**All this could open the door to cooperation with DECP in 2021-2022. The focus will be on membership and social dialogue. How will the CNP-Benin move forward?**

'From this crisis we retain the fragility of all human work. We also remember the need to unite forces around the ideals common to companies. Active cooperation has made it possible on both sides to

pool skills and move forward. The retention of members, the recruitment of members to unite the voice of the private sector is essential for any action. Social dialogue is a valuable tool which helps to negotiate, to reconcile positions and to be more audible vis-à-vis administrative authorities and workers. Employers have a long history, but should use it more often. The CNP-Benin, after analysis and based on the lessons learned in 2020, marked its full support for the focus retained during the DECP flash summit of 6 January 2021. It intends to continue an offensive of communication for more visibility in order to facilitate new memberships/professionally manage the directory of members and potential members.

To conclude, allow us to express our satisfaction with the quality of our cooperation with DECP. CNP-Benin is committed to continuing this cooperation with DECP for the 2021-2022 biennium.

Thank you'.

## **THE ITCILO COMPLETELY CHANGED ITS WAY OF WORKING BUT DID NOT SACRIFICE QUALITY**

The ITCILO, the International Training Centre of the ILO based in Turin, Italy, is a United Nations learning hub for executives from government, employers' organisations and trade unions on all subjects linked with the world of work and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 8: "Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all." (source [www.itcilo.org](http://www.itcilo.org))

### ***'Learning has never stopped!'***

The DECP management met with Jeanne Schmitt who is Senior Programme Officer in the Employers' Activities team of the ITCILO. She has co-operated with DECP for a long time and is a very experienced trainer and project manager. How did she experience the unexpected developments due to the pandemic? How did the ITCILO adapt its activities to the new situation? What went smoothly? What were/are the main challenges?



Jeanne Schmitt, Senior Programme Officer at the ITCILO

### **The lockdown in Italy, March 2020. What did that look like for the ITCILO?**

'Until March 2020, life at the Training Centre had been business as usual: participants, collaborators and staff were busy delivering training activities on our Campus, or getting ready for missions abroad. Then, the pandemic hit and our Campus became quiet – populated mostly by squirrels and rabbits. Like in many other places, COVID-19 reshaped our world into home offices, webinar conversations, and stories of resilience. But learning has never stopped. On the contrary! Because we cater to a worldwide and diversified audience, distance learning has

been part of our learning mix since the 1980s. However, the amplitude of the pandemic caught the centre off guard and called for a quick and massive reaction'.

### **How did the ITCILO and your team respond?**

'2020 caused us to refocus on two things: innovation and distance learning. Neither were new but they became essential, both to serve our participants – for our team these are EBMOs' (Employers and Business Member Organizations) staff and members worldwide – and for our own sustainability.'

Looking back, we can identify a few ingredients that were especially important to our "recipe".

First, we immediately moved to online learning. Before 2020, most ITCILO courses were delivered in blended modalities (one part online and one part face-to-face). In a couple of months, all courses were transformed, adapted and offered fully online. This is not just a matter of technology. Indeed, to go online while maintaining the level of participation and quality, you need to perform important design and methodological

work. With the DECP, we published a Guide “just in time” on adult learning methodologies to support EBMOs having training services – we used it extensively as well!

Second, we learned a lot from our peers. Faced with similar challenges, staff within and between teams came together to share experience, tips, ideas of tools to transfer knowledge and keep active engagement of learners. This is no small feat when most of our participants had no or very little experience with online learning. Moreover, all were battling with the impact of the pandemic in their own countries. This is where discussions with colleagues outside the ITCILO, such as ILO colleagues working in the field and like-minded organizations like DECP, became so relevant. We could keep each other abreast of developments, share intelligence and disseminate relevant research and tools.

Third, we could count on state-of-the-art infrastructure. The ITCILO had already planned a massive upgrade of our learning platform, the eCampus. This came in very handy as it helped us expand capacity and add new features to make the learning experience more user-friendly. For example, not only all our courses are online, but they are also mobile compatible. I believe this gives us an edge for 2021 and beyond.

Of course, all that would not have been possible without the expertise and dedication of the team. Especially important was the willingness of colleagues to rethink, readjust and embark on new projects all at the same time. From the original list of joint activities with the DECP, only a few pre-crisis and training material development activities could be carried out in their original form. Others were transformed online, including new content on the current context and priorities, for example on productivity or membership strategies. We were also able to launch brand-new learning products, for example on digitalizing training services or crisis and reputation management. This enabled us to respond to emerging needs of EBMOs. Moreover, this work gives us a solid base on which we can expand in 2021’.

**So, all in all, 2020 worked out to be a positive year for your team?**

‘2020 has been an extremely difficult year for the Centre. When the crisis hit, deficit projections were staggering. However, it seems that the management crisis response implemented both in terms of training delivery transformation and cost-cutting measures produced the desired effect. We could close the year without deficit. We also proved – to ourselves and to our partners – that we are a flexible and resilient organisation.

***‘Refocussing on innovation and distance learning’***

For our team, we come out of 2020 a bit exhausted (!) but with a more diversified portfolio of activities going from advisory activities to specific EBMOs, research and development, dissemination of turn-key professional support tools (CRM databases, eLearning platforms etc.) and, of course, training activities. There again, we expanded our training portfolio in terms of delivery modality but also in terms of tailoring to the skills and support needed by our participants. We learned a lot about how to ensure

our courses are participatory, interactive and directly relevant to participants' jobs in EBMOs.

Through the 44 activities we implemented this year, we reached a total of 1020 participants (963 fully at distance) incl. 52.5% women and 47.5% men. We also reached participants in parts of the world where we had very little footprint before. This is encouraging for the future'.

#### **Speaking of the future, what do you expect from 2021 and beyond?**

'Even without a crystal ball, it is safe to say that economic, ecological and health concerns will push even more people to opt for digital learning and collaboration in the future. As people get used to online delivery of consultancy and training, they will value their efficiency (tailored advice and personalized support, accommodates busy schedules, no travel, lower cost, etc.). I see us being able to build on our 2020 experience and consolidate our training activities portfolio in the next years. I also see us venturing more into advisory and consultancy service – this could be an area for further cooperation with DECP. But I also believe that delivering our mandate takes close contact with EBMOs – and this is about knowledge, trust and "human" interactions. We'll have to get smarter and learn when and how to make the most of technology and innovation to perform efficiently – it's a challenging agenda for 2021!'



## **QUESTIONS TO JOB RUNHAAR, DDE-PORTFOLIOMANAGER FOR DECP**

Job Runhaar has been DECP's contact person at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for several years now. In his role, he advised the management of DECP and was very much involved in developments in many fields, especially with regards to social dialogue. In mid-2021 he will change jobs and move to Tanzania to reinforce the Dutch Embassy. This is the moment to look back on working together with DECP.

### **Can you briefly introduce yourself?**

I was born in the East, raised in the South and studied in the West of the Netherlands (MSc Human Geography, Amsterdam). I worked for NGOs and the United Nations, mainly in (post-) conflict settings. I joined the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs diplomatic class in 1997, and had several functions at the Ministry in The Hague, as well as postings at our embassies in Mozambique, Ecuador and Vietnam. Since 2014, I have been policy coordinator at the Department for Sustainable Economic Development (DDE). Running keeps me going.



Job Runhaar, policy coordinator sustainable economic development

### **What exactly is DDE?**

The Department for Sustainable Economic Development (DDE) of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs promotes inclusive economic growth in developing countries. We focus on a good business climate, stimulate decent employment and entrepreneurship, and encourage local and Dutch companies to come up with innovative solutions to challenges in developing countries.

### **When did you get involved with DECP?**

I started as portfolio manager with DECP in 2015. Throughout the years, I have had the pleasure to witness the development and strengthening of the organisation and its strategy.

### **What do you like most about the DECP programme?**

DECP has a very professional team, consisting of knowledgeable and dedicated staff, management, and country & thematic managers. The approach of listening carefully to the needs and requirements of partner organisations, as well as clearly taking into account the – sometimes shifting geographic and thematic – priorities of the Netherlands' government, is much appreciated.

### **What developments have you observed over the years?**

In the past years, the collaboration and strategic cooperation with the trade union programme – implemented by Mondiaal FNV and CNV Internationaal – has been intensified with very positive results. The respective organisations clearly have their own mandate and objectives, but particularly in relation to social dialogue, teaming up efforts has proven to be very effective. Frequent exchanges of information, joint meetings, and joint programmes for incoming missions have clearly contributed to more mutual understanding and better results. In addition, collaboration with other international partners, e.g., Nordic employers' organisations and the ILO, has been strengthened. DECP's regional approach has helped to strengthen networks and exchanges between employers' organisations.

### **What have been challenging aspects for you?**

Managing a programme from headquarters and relying on written reports to monitor progress is too limited. It was always very enriching and stimulating to meet and discuss activities, opportunities, and MFA policy-related issues with DECP staff. Fortunately, I have also had the opportunity to participate in several DECP events and to meet with partner organizations, both in the Netherlands and abroad.

Another challenge has been, and still is, matching the longer-term strategy and investments, which are clearly important in DECP's work, with shorter-term changes dictated by changes in government policies. The search for meaningful progress indicators and information at programme level – in line with overall efforts of the Ministry to quantify results of development cooperation efforts – has also proven to be challenging.

### **What have been good experiences in your relationship with DECP?**

As said, I very much appreciated the open and transparent communication and exchange of vision and ideas with – previous director – Paul (Witte), Peter (Bongaerts) and Jos (van Erp). The collaborative spirit and attitude, motivation and dedication, looking for strategic partners, and including colleagues of the trade union programme are great.

In addition, the pro-active approach and proposal to adapt the focus of the DECP interventions in response to the COVID19 pandemic was very welcome. Moreover, in follow up to earlier exchanges on responsible business practices – promoting international corporate social responsibility is a Dutch policy priority – DECP has started to explore how it can play a more active role.

### **What developments should DECP focus on in the coming years?**

Building on the good relations that DECP has developed with different partners in many countries, DECP can further strengthen its impact by teaming up with strategic partners and actively linking the employers' organisations to other relevant stakeholders. Social dialogue will remain a key priority. However, another key challenge in many countries to which DECP can continue to make a contribution is to better link the private sector to educational institutes and contribute to better preparation of youth to enter the labour market and meet the requirements of the

private sector. Moreover, I very much welcome DECP's increased efforts to invest in responsible business practices.

**Your next step will be to join the Kingdom of the Netherlands embassy in Tanzania. This must be exciting. What will be your tasks over there? Do you think you will meet DECP there as well?**

As deputy head of mission in the embassy, I will deal with many different aspects of the relations between Tanzania – as well as Zanzibar, Mauritius and Madagascar – and the Netherlands. Further strengthening the economic relations is one of the areas of interest. DECP has been a longstanding supporter and partner of ATE Tanzania. I definitely hope to benefit from these good relations and the networks that DECP has helped to build.

**We wish you all the best Job. And ..... we'll meet again!**



## DECP PUBLICATIONS

The core business of DECP is to advise partner organisations. DECP experts have knowledge and expertise, external experts bring in knowledge, and experience is built up over time by working together with employers' organisations in the Netherlands and far beyond. DECP experts have published several articles, reports and books in 2020. They are all open source and employers' organisations can benefit from that. Below is an overview of these publications.

### 8 lessons learned from the pandemic

Since the start of the worldwide Covid-19 crisis, DECP has closely followed the proceedings in the 22 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America where it operates,



focussing on the involvement of business member organisations in those countries in tackling the crisis. What can business member organisations learn from what happened and which actions should they undertake now and in the foreseeable future? That is the key question following the pandemic and therefore the key question in the brief report DECP published. Analysing the events has led to an overview of the role business member organisations (BMOs, also known as employers' or entrepreneurial organisations) played and play, resulting in eight lessons for those organisations to emerge stronger from this crisis and be better prepared for future crises.

<https://www.decp.nl/publications/eight-lessons-from-the-pandemic-38788>

### E-learning with impact

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown companies, organisations, governments and individuals possibilities hitherto unimagined. You can 'meet' people on the other side of the globe and actually see them. You can have group discussions with people who are in 15 different places, or even 30. You can address a crowd from your desk with



the help of a camera, a microphone and the world wide web. Within a few months, the world of meeting, discussing, exchanging ideas, teaching and learning has undergone a digital revolution. Avoiding travel costs and saving the precious time spent travelling promises huge gains in productivity, efficiency and sustainability. In order to use digital means of communications and replace physical learning, DECP defined some basic questions to get started. What are the main challenges to deal with? How do you reach the individual learner without being in the same classroom? How can you get the most out of it?

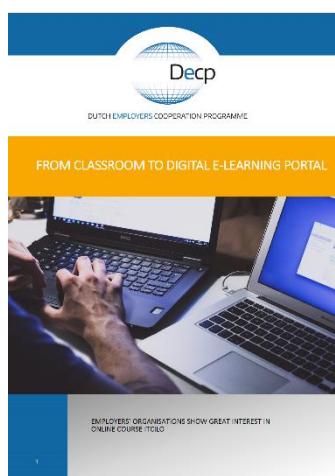
Based on these questions, some research and our own expertise, DECP then defined 10 golden rules. This serves as a guideline for those

moderators who want to start conducting training courses for their members as soon as possible.

<https://www.decp.nl/publications/e-learning-with-impact-38852>

### From classroom to digital e-learning portal

Switching from meeting in a classroom to online training is not easy. That is why DECP has offered its partners the opportunity to participate in an intensive online course developed by the ITCILO. The aim of the "Digitalizing Training Services" course was to help trainers facilitate the transition to online training. This course, which was held from 12 to 30 October, consisted of a variety of didactic methods. It included short



instructional videos, cases and exercises, all of which were elaborated in an inviting digital environment, which could be followed by the participants regardless of time and place. About 70 participants have successfully completed the entire course. This is a very high number for an online course. This result was partly due to intensive individual coaching of the participants by the trainers. According to Jeanne Schmitt, Senior Programme Officer at International Training at the ITCILO: 'The 3-week course was very intensive – we looked at how organisations can digitalise their training services offer, at how to adapt the training design for blended or online courses and finally we explored a

wide variety of methodologies and tools to deliver digital training. We received a lot of positive feedback from the participants about the quality of the content and the added value of the coaching process'.

Ten participants were asked to give feedback on their experiences. DECP published an extended article on this course and its relevance. In 2021, DECP will provide fellowships to participate in this training course.

<https://www.decp.nl/publications/from-classroom-to-digital-e-learning-portal-38871>

### Guide on training methodology for EBMOs

The intensive relationship with the ITCILO is not only reflected in the registration of students. DECP also likes to use its knowledge and experience to develop products and innovate together with the ITCILO. A lot of work has been done to produce a manual that aims to guide in a very practical way EBMOs which are planning to set up or which are running a training service. This 'guide on training methodology for EBMOs' focusses on the fundamental concepts of adult learning and the role of the trainer, proposes a step-by-step methodology on how to design a training and finally presents practical tools and tips to use innovative and engaging adult learning methodologies in training activities. It covers all three types of training: face-to-face workshops, blended learning and eLearning. While most EBMOs organize principally face-to-face training workshops, there is a growing trend towards digitalizing training

services and using blended approaches. The guide suggests how to best design and deliver training courses based on practical examples of training activities delivered by selected EBMOs. The examples of training curricula and material were shared by EBMO training experts during a workshop held in 2018 in Turin.

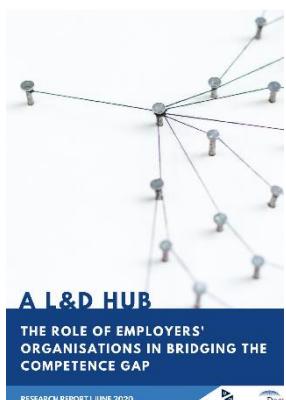
It is already clear that this comprehensive and valuable handbook meets a distinct need of employers' organisations. Gathering and transferring knowledge are core tasks of every EBMO.

[https://www.itcilo.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/EBMOS%20Guide\\_web.pdf](https://www.itcilo.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/EBMOS%20Guide_web.pdf)



### The employers' organisation as Learning & Development hub

From April to June, DECP has been working together with a team of six students from the master programme 'Learning & Development in Organisations' of Maastricht University. As part of their study, the students had to do research and deliver conclusions, recommendations, practical models and tools. DECP has cooperated for several years with professors and students from this master programme with regard to learning & development in organisations. The main question of the assignment was: 'What can employers' organisations do to bridge the skills gap?' It goes without saying that this should be seen in the context of DECP's fields of activity. In addition to a literature study, the students have conducted extensive field work, including conducting almost 30 interviews with partners and stakeholders of DECP.



The findings were presented to staff members of DECP and academics on Friday 5 June. The main added value for DECP is the concept and expert-role of the employers' organisation as L&D hub. The characteristics of the L&D hub have been described and a set of practical tools is part of the report.

The students have written an article to present a summary of the research and outcomes. The article is available in English and French. The full report can be requested from DECP.

<https://www.decp.nl/stories/cooperation-with-maastricht-university-again-fruitful-38741>

## An interesting internship

Skills development is one of the issues employers' organisations are dealing with. Although it is an ocean of challenges, institutions and people involved, skills development needs a lot of attention. After all, a country that teaches its children well creates a strong basis to build the future upon. DECP published the adventures of Christophe, a student who interns at an employers' organisation analysing all aspects of this interesting issue. Step by step, he discovers the challenges of bridging the gap between the competence needs of companies and the educational systems. In this story, he organises workshops and finds out that being successful is the work of people who trust each other. Finally, he manages to advise the employers' organisation on how to take the lead.

This booklet is endorsed by several organisations that are specialised in skills development and located in Europe, Africa and Asia.

'An interesting internship' is available as a PDF in English (African and Asian version) and in French.

<https://www.decp.nl/publications/an-interesting-internship-38881>



## SOCIAL DIALOGUE AS A LIFELINE FOR NEGOTIATION AND STABILITY

Social dialogue is a broad concept. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), it encompasses "all forms of negotiations, consultation or exchange of information between representatives from government, employers and employees about economic and social policy issues with a common interest". This includes both bipartite forms of social dialogue (employers and employees) and tripartite forms (employers, employees and government).

Over the years, DECP experts have published articles, manuals and books on social dialogue, including practical training for negotiation skills. In 2020 as well, social dialogue development has been an important issue in several countries and regions. An overview is provided below.

### Training negotiation skills for employers and employees in West Africa

From 25 to 28 February, a cross-cutting training on negotiation skills was conducted in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. This cross-cutting activity was unusual in more than one aspect. In the first place, it was part of a series of trainings in the framework of developing social dialogue in the West African French-speaking countries. In 2019, training was conducted on the general aspects of social dialogue, lobbying and advocacy. In the second place, this particular training was organized by DECP and CNV Internationaal, the Dutch Christian trade union. Mr. Sylvain Baffi was the ITCILO trainer involved by DECP. Mr. Uzziel Twagilimana was the CNV trainer. Eleven attendees from employers' organisations and 8 unionists from Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, Togo, Niger, Senegal and Ivory Coast participated.



The realistic case studies and role plays were very much appreciated by the attendees. During the evaluation, one of the employers' representatives said: 'This is the first time I am in a training with unionists. And, believe me, I have learned a lot and I have enjoyed it very much. We can apply this next week already!'

The training was professionally hosted by CGECI, the employers' organisation of Ivory Coast, also called 'the House of entrepreneurs'. This training experience might be a milestone in developing social dialogue in the sub-Saharan region. Let's talk about 'the House of the future'.

### Seminars on social dialogue development in Indonesia

Both the Covid-19 pandemic and the introduction of The Omnibus Law (Job Creation Law) make a successful social dialogue more than necessary. Applying a high-quality

social dialogue will help parties to preserve harmonious relations and prevent conflict. Employers' organisation APINDO and trade union KSBSI asked their team of certified trainers to organize their first online seminar in August 2020. In this seminar, the trainers shared the principles for a successful social dialogue. And they facilitated role plays to familiarize the participants with good practices in SD on issues directly related to their day-to-day work regarding the pandemic as well as the Omnibus Law. Four regions (Jakarta, Medan, Bandung and Makassar) were involved with 20 bipartite participants each. At the end of the day the certified Indonesian trainers discussed their experiences online with DECP expert Dirk Joosse and CNV Internationaal expert Henk van Beers.

After this first online seminar, a follow-up was arranged in December. Parties decided to make plans for the future in order to achieve a prolongation of what was started. Participants for this second seminar were the certified Indonesian trainers and representatives from the garment and palm oil sectors. With the experiences and knowledge gathered in the first seminar, the question arose as to how the further development of social dialogue could be stimulated even better in the very near future.

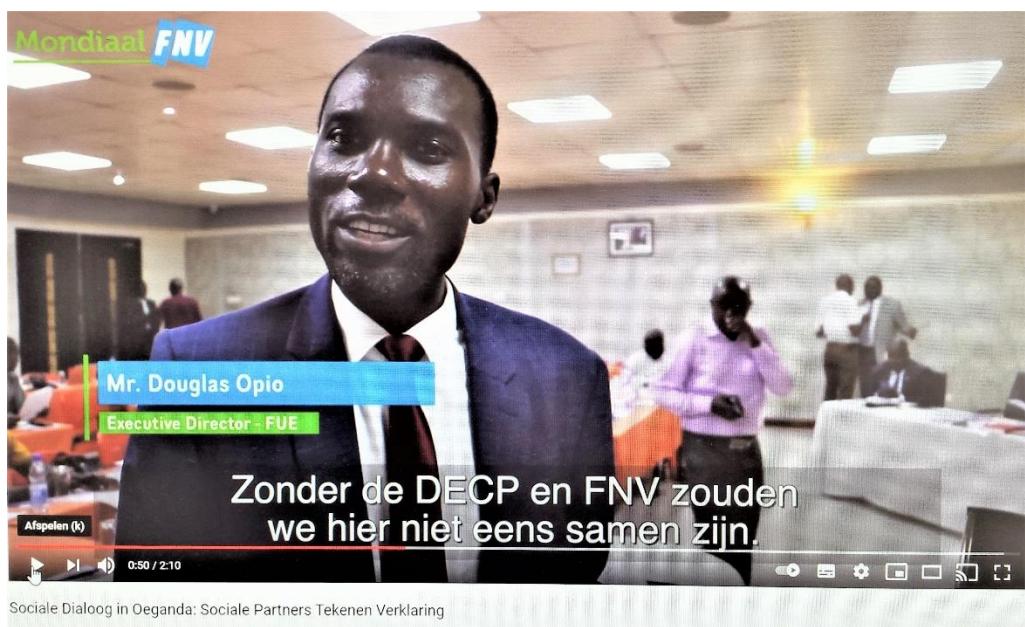


During this second seminar “Communication Structure in Negotiation Strategy as a solid base for social dialogue”, the participants discussed how to improve communication and not only the communication structures but also the communication skills and the basic attitude that is needed to achieve a successful social dialogue. The bottom line was: high-quality social dialogue is needed to clarify the issues among partners in industrial relations.

The participants concluded that these two seminars were a very important step in the process in which the final goal ‘Dissemination of social dialogue to achieve harmonious labour relations’ got an extra boost, despite the restrictions in this period. An extensive plan of activities for 2021/ 2022 will be developed, containing an overview how the final goal can be reached.

## Memorandum of understanding for more bipartite social dialogue in Uganda

For a few years already, DECP and Mondiaal FNV, which are both active in Uganda with their counterparts, have been focussing part of their agenda on promoting social dialogue directly between the trade unions and the employers. Why? Because social dialogue on a bipartite basis has been very successful in other countries to bring a joint message to governments and/or to try to autonomously solve a number of issues between the social partners. In the Netherlands, they would call it a move toward a more intense polder model. This notion, which interestingly enough has also gained wide acceptance in the English language, comes from the Dutch verb “*polderen*”, which literally means to work together to keep low grounds – threatened by flooding – dry. Cooperation for a common good is, in a nutshell, what social dialogue is all about.



Sociale Dialoog in Oeganda: Sociale Partners Tekenen Verklaring

44 WEERDAGEN • 08 JULI 2019

Back to Uganda. In 2019 a formal meeting already attempted to conclude a general Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between both parties to formalise their relations and the agenda for the coming years. Just before the outbreak of the Corona crisis in Uganda, a new attempt was successful and led to the conclusion of a formal MOU. Both meetings were sponsored by the Dutch social partners DECP and Mondiaal FNV.

In Uganda, the MOU can be a source of reference and a symbol to accentuate and aim for a common approach when issues get difficult and require cooperation. It also should be hoped that the government will enthusiastically accept the input and the support of the social partners. Many countries show how much the real economic and social actors can add value to the design, implementation and legitimacy of social and economic policies to be established to deal with crises, such as the impact of COVID. There is no reason why Uganda would be a different case.

DECP and Mondiaal FNV intend to follow up closely and to support the actions which the Uganda partners will undertake to give real life to the MOU.

## How the Peruvians got the grips with the collective labour agreements

In November 2020, twenty young Peruvians became certified “trainers in negotiation skills according to the AWVN/Harvard method”. These young people will train delegations of companies and trade unions in negotiating the collective labour agreement with a focus on win-win situations – *ganar-ganar* in Spanish. In doing so, they give substance to the social dialogue that the Peruvian employers and workers have set up with the help of Mondiaal FNV and DECP.

In January 2020, Covid-19 seemed to be one of those viral diseases in distant China that would never gain a foothold in the West. But the virus did arrive and in mid-March government after government came up with measures to prevent the spread of the virus as much as possible. We had to wash our hands, keep our distance and traveling was no longer possible – certainly not to Peru, as the South American countries closed their borders.

### Twenty young Peruvian trainers

DECP consultants Dirk Joosse and Martien Robertz had recently been in Lima (Peru) to train a group of twenty young Peruvians from the CGTP trade union or the SNI entrepreneurial organisation to become negotiation trainers. It was the second training in a series of three organised by DECP and Mondiaal FNV. In between visits from the Netherlands, Samuel Machacuay and Carla Gómez would keep the mutual contacts warm and organize an activity here and there to ensure that the group would stay together.

The whole programme was called “Ganar-ganar”, which is Spanish for win-win. Dirk had taken care of the first training in August 2019, so for Martien it was the first time that he met the group. And he was impressed: “Such a high level! And so much interest in the matter, I've never seen that before.”



### Many years of experience

DECP has been providing negotiation skills trainings for years, based on the AWVN/Harvard method. The core of the method is that both parties start by looking for a win-win situation. To achieve this, the negotiators must apply a number of principles. For example, they must have a good eye for the interests of their

opponent. They must differentiate between conflict about content and the personal relationship. And they should try to make the negotiated package – the pie – as big as possible so that package deals are possible. In addition, a party gives away something at one point to bring in something extra at another.

The *ganar-ganar* approach works very well in the negotiations within the Asociación para el Trabajo (Labour Foundation), which was set up by Peruvian employers and workers to promote social dialogue. But *ganar-ganar* also works very well in collective bargaining within sectors and companies, according to the experiences of DECP in Vietnam, Indonesia and Malawi. This makes the programme an essential part of the broader effort to promote bipartite social dialogue in Peru.

#### **Planned third trip to Peru**

In May, Dirk and Martien would travel to Peru for a third time for the last training, which was mainly focused on the attitude of the trainers. After that, the group of Peruvian trainers could start offering its services to negotiating delegations from companies and trade unions.

#### **Travel restrictions**

But here too, the coronavirus got in the way. Travel restrictions made it impossible to travel to Peru. In the meantime, everyone was considering the new situation. What is going on? What else can we do? The contact between DECP and Mondiaal FNV and the group of trainers in distant Peru watered down somewhat. It was not until June that the restrictive measures were relaxed and everyone was now used to meeting via Zoom and Teams. Via Zoom, the Netherlands contacted the trainers' group in Peru, and spoke with Samuel Machacuay. Is there still something to be saved?

Samuel spoke before the question could be asked. The group had not only stayed together but had adapted to the new situation at a rapid pace and had taken every opportunity to further educate and professionalise itself.

#### **New digital possibilities**

A physical meeting was no longer possible due to the strict lockdown, but in no time a virtual classroom was set up to maintain mutual contact. "Digital" also appeared to offer new possibilities. Because the collective labour agreement negotiations in Peru also took place via Zoom, the trainers-to-be could easily join in and experience a live collective agreement negotiation.

It became clear that digital collective bargaining is a challenge, even for experienced negotiators. This is because you miss a lot, such as facial expressions, bilateral informal contacts, etc. The trainer group decided to add a module of six sessions to the programme about digital communication. This concerns, for example, recognizing facial expressions and emotions in the voice.

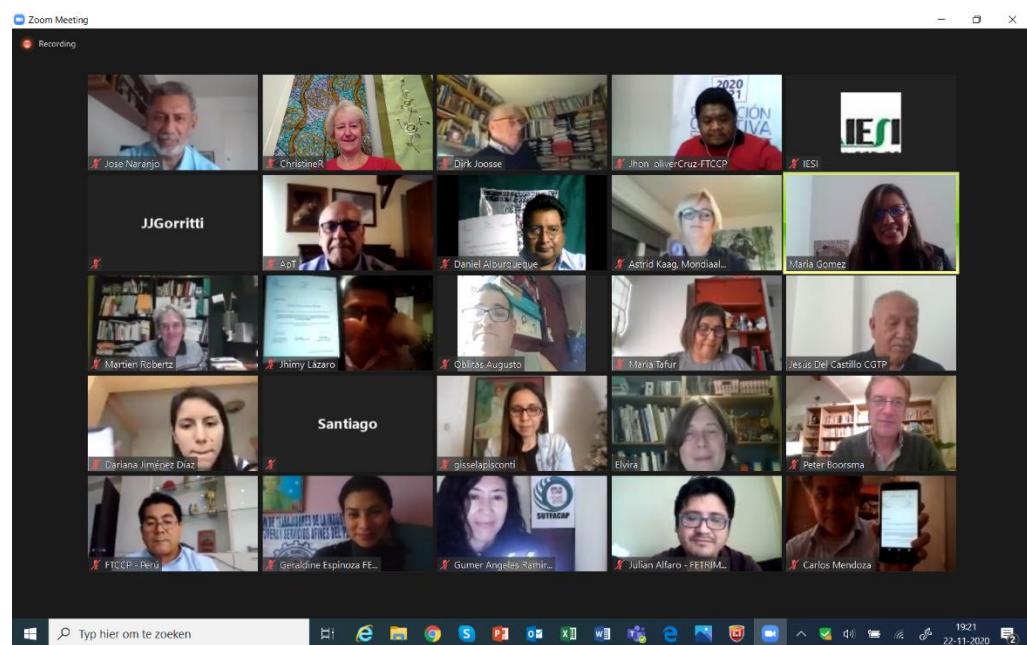
#### **Marketing the services**

In the meantime, five companies had registered for a trial run, so that the candidate trainers could practice in real life. A marketing company has been asked to put the service on the market in 2021 and consideration has been given to which services can be offered.

The Peruvians also further developed the method. There are roughly four styles of negotiation, depending mainly on the personality of the negotiator. Through a test it is easy to find out which style is dominant in someone. But isn't it also useful to ensure that different styles are always represented in a negotiating team?

### Certificates for the participants in November

Dirk and Martien were deeply impressed by all the activities the group has developed. On 22 November there was one more webinar where the candidate trainers could ask questions and discuss the desired attitude in particular. Afterwards, the young people received a digital certificate from country managers Astrid Kaag of Mondiaal FNV and Peter Boorsma of DECP. Luis Villamil, the president and treasurer of the Asociación para el Trabajo, and José Naranjo of employers' organisation SNI closed the webinar. Both underlined the importance of this development project at a time when social dialogue in Peru is more needed than ever.



After the webinar ended, the Dutch participants discussed the event and the tremendous commitment and ambition of the Peruvians. The conclusion was unanimous: they are doing very very well.

## SOCIAL DIALOGUE. WHY? WHO IS BENEFITTING?

### Benefits for employers

Employers benefit from social dialogue because countries with a good social dialogue generally have fewer strikes. The business and investment climate is also better than elsewhere. Another benefit for employers is that industrial peace improves their competitive position and productivity. Working together with the unions also results in employers' organizations having more influence in government policy and in politics. If employers and unions agree on a socio-economic topic, then it is hard for politicians to take a very different stance.

### Benefits for employees

Similarly, unions are also able to exercise greater influence on government and parliament thanks to social dialogue. Structural consultations with employers generally result in lower unemployment figures and a smaller income disparity in society. For individual employees, social dialogue often results in a broader range in the employment package and improved employment conditions.

### Benefits for the government

In fully-fledged democracies, the government together with parliament has the final say. Nevertheless, the government leaves certain aspects of employment relationships and employment conditions to the employers and the unions. The benefit for the government is that this results in greater acceptance of the solution that is eventually proposed. This in turn increases the likelihood of the envisaged results actually being achieved.



## SOCIAL DIALOGUE. HOW? SEVEN GOLDEN RULES FOR A SUCCESSFUL DIALOGUE

- The same principles as always are needed more than ever: trust between parties, dialogue about all interests at stake, creativity in finding solutions and reasonability in deciding.
- Build trust between employers' organisations and trade unions by transparency and formulating the common goals in this situation. A suitable attitude is to look for what binds the parties first and use these common grounds to solve the issues that divides them in the end.
- Use social dialogue to monitor the situation. The views of the other parties might be different from yours sometimes and that can add value to your views.
- Don't come up with 'sudden surprises' for your parties in social dialogue. Take them along in your thinking process by using your social dialogue. Of course, they won't always agree with your way of thinking, but at least they are informed. If sudden surprises occur, this will cause mistrust.
- Build a dedicated agenda for social dialogue, especially in this situation of COVID-19 with trade unions. The influence of common and shared solutions of employers' organisations and trade unions together are more difficult to neglect for the third party (government).
- A strong position for employers' organisations in social dialogue will be a great advantage for members in their playing field.
- For the social dialogue process, the main characteristics about knowledge and skills are the same as for lobbying mentioned above.



## NABC: FRANCOPHONE WEST-AFRICAN EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS PARTICIPATE IN THE DIGITAL AFRICA BUSINESS DAYS

Africa in 2020 is not the same as Africa 20 years ago. The continent's private sector is more innovative and dynamic than ever before. Its youth is better educated and highly ambitious to become part of the globalized world. However, to reach Africa's potential, there is a need for Africa to become more resilient in food systems, healthcare, and value chains. Intensifying cooperation between European and African companies and knowledge institutes might contribute to significant improvements. NABC organised a digital conference to discuss a high variety of opportunities, such as investments in the region. The executive directors of the employers' organisations of Ivory Coast and Benin participated in an interesting panel discussion.

The screenshot shows the website interface for the Digital Africa Business Days. The left sidebar lists navigation options: Home, Page d'accueil, Live Talk Show, Sessions, Round Tables, Speakers, Attendees, Embassies, Exhibition, Country Pavilions, and DBA Award. The main content area displays a video feed titled "STREAMING IN FRENCH: West-Africa: Business Perspectives in a Challenging Region" from December 15, 2020, at 09:00 - 11:00. The video shows three men in professional attire: one in a blue suit and tie, and two others partially visible. The background of the video frame includes the DECP logo and text: "DUTCH EMPLOYERS COOPERATION PROGRAMME".

The Digital Africa Business Days were co-organised by the NABC and the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), together with the members of the 'Africa Coalition': VNO-NCW/MKB Nederland, FMO, NLINBusiness, DECP and PUM. This activity falls under the overarching Dutch campaign 'Moving Forwards Together', aimed at countering the effects the COVID-19 crisis has had on international enterprises. Moving

Forwards Together connects to the vision of co-creating innovative solutions to African challenges. The conference took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of December, 2020.

The executive directors of the aforementioned organisations emphasized that West Africa has a lot to offer to European investors. Existing trade relations can be

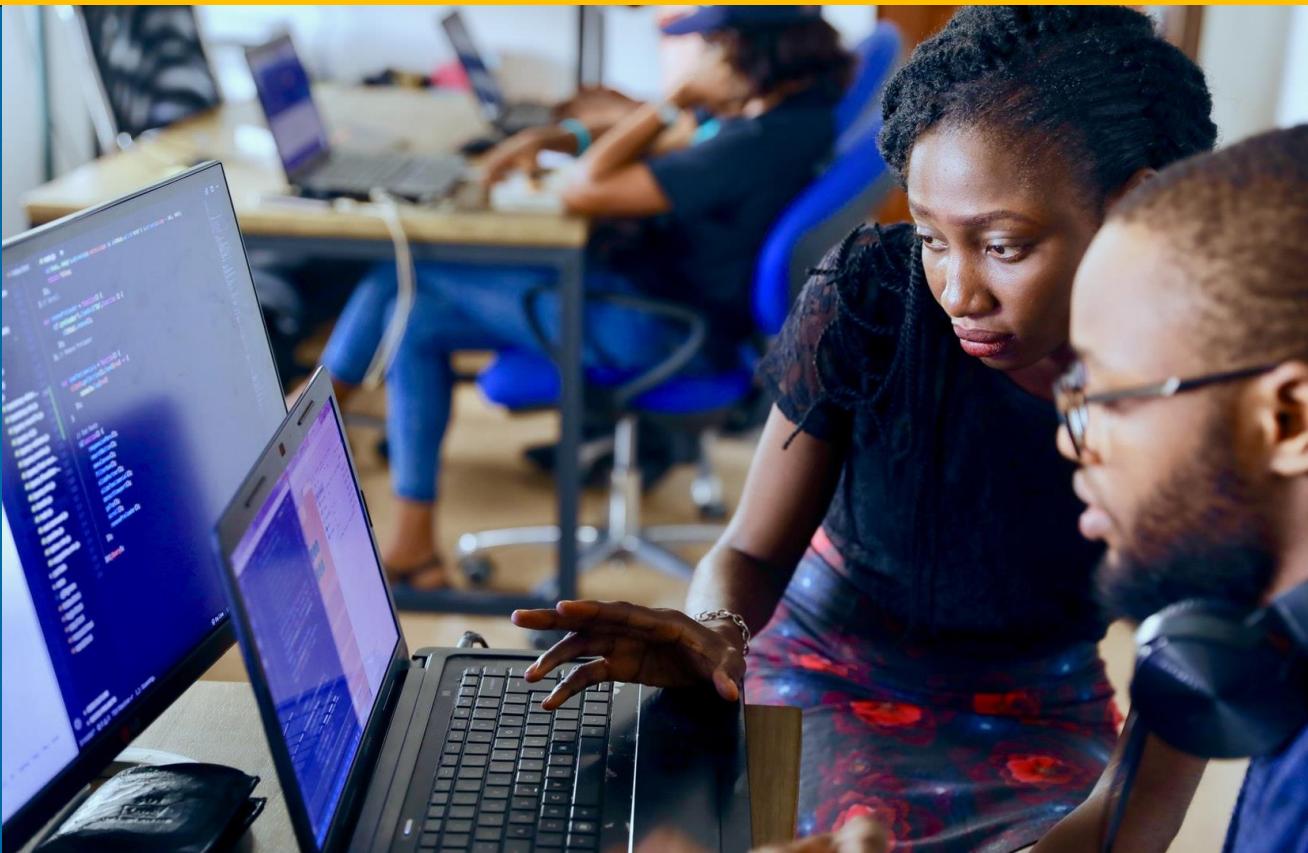
improved and expanded. New ones can be developed. Especially in food-production chains value can be added locally. After all, the West African countries have a promising workforce and the national governments offer attractive business conditions. With a regional consumer market of over 400 million people regional markets are just as challenging as exporting to other continents. It is obvious that, once the impact of the COVID pandemic has decreased, the tourism sector will rebound strongly. You must have guts to do business, which goes for West Africa as well. One thing is for sure; the employers business member organisations (EBMOs) are there to guide you and help you with your first steps in a new business adventure.

## ABOUT NABC

The Netherlands-African Business Council (NABC) is the leading organisation for trade and investment facilitation for Africa in the Netherlands. The NABC today leads a network of nearly 250 engaged and diverse members and has access to a community of over 10,000 African and European businesses, institutes, government entities and others interested in doing business in Africa.

In order to achieve lasting business relations between the Netherlands and Africa, NABC organises trade missions and events, and coordinates long term sector development programmes with the involvement of Dutch and local companies. Setting up consortia of companies around a certain sector in a specific country has proven a successful method in which Dutch companies can jointly enter a market in Africa. NABC has also been instrumental in developing the first 'Africa Strategy' of the Dutch private sector in 2019.

[www.nabc.nl](http://www.nabc.nl)



### **HE DROPPED BY TO SEE SOME FRIENDS – AND STAYED FOUR MONTHS**

The mission started out like any other mission. It had been planned that, as the DECP country manager for a number of Asian countries, Andrew Moore would travel to the Philippines in late February in order to discuss plans for 2020. He would then travel to a meeting of the South Asian Forum of Employers (SAFE) which was being held in Kathmandu and attended by representatives from across South Asia. Although COVID-19 was under discussion, nobody had foreseen the terrible impact that it was going to have across the world. It was agreed at the meeting in Kathmandu that the members would keep in close contact regarding how they would deal with this virus and how their governments would react.



Andrew Moore, DECP Country Manager

The completion of the meeting meant that members returned to their respective countries and for Andrew this was the starting point of his private vacation and he flew to Australia to stay with friends and relatives. It was at this stage that it became clear that the virus was far more serious than had first been thought. Australia was quick to react and put the country into lockdown. Suddenly, it was not only impossible to travel to and from the country, but restrictions within the country meant that people could not travel from one state to another. Andrew was staying with friends in Canberra and was in a part of Australia that had very few cases, and they wanted to keep it that way. One of the main reasons for travelling to Australia was to visit an elderly relative on the island of Tasmania. It was clear, however, that this was not going to happen, as Tasmania went into complete lockdown.

The question was then what to do next, as travel was not going to be possible. It was still hoped that within weeks these restrictions would be lifted. However, as time went on, it became clear that this was not going to happen. Andrew's friends kindly allowed him to stay in Canberra, and the limited restrictions there meant that life was as normal as possible. However, when you come to stay for three weeks, it can be stressful when this stretches from weeks into months. Plans for flights back to the UK, where Andrew lives, started to appear and travel agents took bookings only to cancel them a few days later.

As time went on, Andrew tried to make sure that he was not being too much of an inconvenience, as the guest who came and was not able to leave.

It was not until June that a booking was made with a regular flight and Andrew returned to the UK. There he faced two weeks of self-isolation before being able to go out of his apartment to the local shops. While Andrew had been away, the UK had been in total lockdown. Over the coming months, things started to improve only to get worse again towards the end of 2020.

Andrew is still in close contact with his friends and relative in Australia, and he is planning to hopefully return in 2022, but this time only for a few weeks!!



## BUSINESS AS UNUSUAL

An unusual year. That is how 2020 can be described in all respects. For DECP, it started off well with the East African partner organisations' visit to the Netherlands. Our country managers Arnout de Koster and Jannes van der Velde have been in Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Malawi many times to assist the employers' organisations with advice, training and support. But they were also eager to show how things are going in practice here in the Netherlands. In a packed multi-day programme, visits were paid to the Social and Economic Council (SER) and the Labour Foundation, trade unions, VNO-NCW, AWVN, LTO and Bouwende Nederland, among others. In other words, they saw the polder model in all its facets.

That same Dutch consultation model was also central to a subsequent negotiation skills training for West African employers' organisations and trade unions in February in Abidjan and during a social dialogue training in Indonesia in March. Both trainings were conducted jointly with CNV-International. Cooperation with trade union programmes is and remains a distinctive and important element in the DECP programme.

### *'35 activities were supported'*

Beyond that, however, the year was not allowed to get off the ground. COVID-19 spread quickly and on Wednesday, 11 March, the WHO classified the outbreak as a pandemic. Our first concern was for colleagues who were still abroad. Country manager Jannes van der Velde barely managed to reach the Netherlands from Zambia. But for Andrew Moore, who had travelled on to Australia after a mission to the Philippines and a SAFE meeting in Nepal, it was too late. His story about having a forced long holiday in Australia is also included in this annual report.

After that, attention quickly turned to the partner organisations. What did they need in this unprecedented situation for which there are no blueprints available? DECP started by primarily sharing information. Through a special website, we provided guidance to partner organisations on possible actions that could be taken towards member companies, trade unions and governments. The website included a number of good practices from employers' organisations that had already come into action at the beginning of the outbreak of COVID-19.

In discussions with our partner organisations, we quickly realised that there was a particular need at employers' organisations for financial resources to provide information on COVID-19 to the business community. And they needed resources to promote adequate crisis measures through social dialogue and by advising the government. We are very grateful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and VNO-NCW for making half of the annual budget for 2020 available for this purpose. DECP thus temporarily transformed into a project organisation that guided, evaluated and monitored applications for financial support from partner organisations. In the end, especially in the third and fourth quarter of 2020, about 35 activities in the field of information, lobbying and social dialogue were supported. These activities have ensured that the economic and labour market effects of COVID-19 could be somewhat mitigated by an adequate information provision and advisory role of

employers' organisations. The impact of the temporary support is, however, not limited to the COVID-19 year. Through the activities, several partner organisations have laid new or renewed foundations for social dialogue. And partner organisations' proposals for socio-economic reactivation plans will continue to play an important role in several countries in 2021 and 2022.

In addition to the financial support for activities, the country managers remained in close contact with the partner organisations and, where possible, advice and training



were provided – online, of course. In fact, that was the biggest change for the internal DECP organisation last year: from almost exclusively face-to-face contact in previous years, suddenly everything had to be organised digitally. This was not always easy in the beginning, but a good and healthy sign is that we were able to quickly build digitally on the contacts with partner organisations that we have invested in over the past years. We have also learned a lot from others, such as the ILO's training centre (ITCILO), which made a radical and successful switch to online training early in the COVID crisis. DECP is now preparing for a future in which blended working – a mix of online and face-to-face cooperation with partner organisations – is the new way of working.

When it became clear that COVID-19 will have a long-term impact on socio-economic conditions and thus on the functioning of employers' organisations, DECP took a critical look at the overall five-year strategy 2018-2022. This has led to a Strategy Update, in which we will, within the objectives of the DECP programme, focus in the next two years on the greatest threat (loss of members) for employers' organisations and the greatest opportunity (social dialogue). In five "Flash Summits" with all partner organisations at the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021, it became clear that these themes – membership and social dialogue – touch upon the desire of employers' organisations to emerge from the crisis even stronger.

This is how a year that started successfully and then transitioned into an intensive period of doing what is necessary during the COVID-19 crisis, ended in an updated strategy with focus and new perspective. As our president Ingrid Thijssen has written in her preface, we have ended the year with the realisation that employers' organisations matter more than ever, not only to get out of the crisis, but also to tackle the challenges of the future in a responsible way that benefits the broader welfare. A year with business as unusual has ended, but it will be much talked about in the future. This annual report shows that more has happened in the world of employers' organisations than before, to which DECP has made a valuable contribution.

Peter Bongaerts

Director

## ABOUT FACTS AND FIGURES

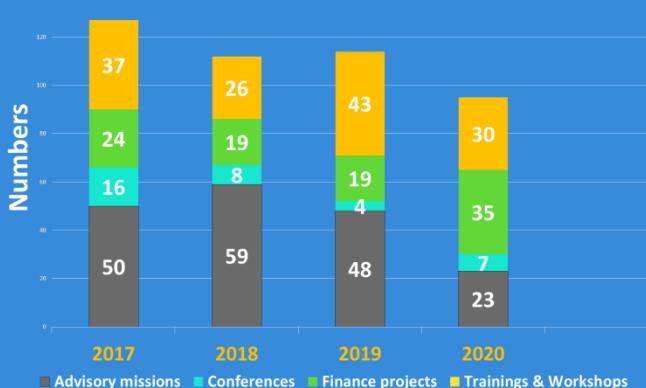
It hardly needs to be mentioned that 2020 was highly affected by the outbreak of the Corona virus. When it became clear that the virus would not simply fade away after a month or two, the DECP management decided to radically change the concept of its activities. A COVID support programme was started. It consisted of financial support for actions taken by employers' organisations aimed at combating the spread of the virus and allowing business to continue or resume as much as possible. It is therefore not surprising that the number of workshops and advisory missions was lower than it was in previous years.

Nevertheless, 26 workshops were still held, partly because DECP and ITCILO were able to quickly switch to online methodologies. In February, a two-day SAFE meeting was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, for the SAFE members. In that same month, DECP, ITCILO and the Dutch trade union CNV Internationaal organised an extensive cross-cutting training on negotiation skills as part of social dialogue development in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. An EBMO Masters training could take place at the campus of ITCILO in Turin. All other trainings and workshops were conducted online, including membership management trainings for SAFE and ACE, 'Why productivity Matters' and 'SDGs for East African EMBOs'.



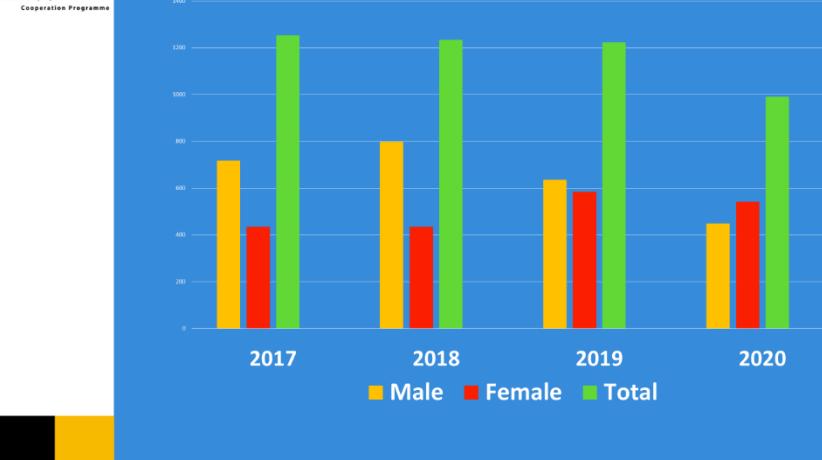
Most financial support was given to actions which are directly related to mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on health and business. Managers of employers' organisations in Bolivia, the Philippines and Benin report on them in this annual report. Fellowships were awarded for ITCILO trainings related to this, such as 'Reputation and Crisis Management' for ACE and SAFE organisations, 'Digitization Training Services' for East African employers' organisations and the same training in French for West African employers' organisations. Some regular financial support activities are related to hiring interns, developing websites and magazines and conducting a workshop on corporate social responsibility.

### DECP Activities 2017-2020



The section ‘Conferences’ refers to an interesting variety of activities where experts meet experts. These include the study visit of the East African DECP partners to the Netherlands and the contribution of DECP to the NABC conference, as reported elsewhere in this annual report. Another conference is the DECP management’s annual visit to the ITCILO in Turin with the objective being to agree on mutual activities to organise for the DECP partners. Joint coordination is also done twice a year with likeminded organisations such as DI (Denmark), NHO (Norway) and NIR (Sweden). Two ‘FLASH SUMMITS’ were held in December in preparation of the workplan 2021-2022. SAFE partners and partners from Latin America participated.

### Participants in trainings & workshops 2017-2020



The total number of participants was close to 1,000. But what is more, 2020 has been the first year that more women than men participated, largely thanks to the many trainings on Negotiation and Lobby skills held by the Vietnam Women Entrepreneurs Council VWEC for their regional Business Associations. This can be considered as a milestone in itself!

## LIST OF COUNTRIES AND PARTNERS IN 2020

Country	Partner(s)
Bangladesh	Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF)
Benin	Conseil National du Patronat du Bénin (CNPB), CNP-Benin
Bolivia	Federación de Entidades Empresariales Privadas de Cochabamba (FEPC)
	Federación de Empresarios Privados de Chuquisaca (FEPCCh)
	Federación de Empresarios Privados de Santa Cruz (FEPSC)
	Federación de Empresarios Privados de Tarija (FEPT)
	Federación de Empresarios Privados de La Paz (FEPLP)
	Federación de Empresarios Privados de Potosí (FEPP)
Burkina Faso	Conseil National du Patronat Burkinabè (CNPB)
Burundi	Association des Employeurs du Burundi (AEB)
Cambodia	Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA)
Ghana	Ghana Employers' Association (GEA)
Colombia	Asociación Nacional de Empresarios de Colombia (ANDI)
Indonesia	Indonesian Employers' Association (APINDO)
Ivory Coast	Confédération Générale des Entreprises de Côte d'Ivoire (CGECI)
Kenya	Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE)
Malawi	Employers' Consultative Association of Malawi (ECAM)
Mongolia	Mongolian Employers' Federation (MONEF)
Pakistan	Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP)
Nepal	Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI)
Philippines	Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP)
Peru	Sociedad Nacional de Industrias (SNI)
Tanzania	Association of Tanzania Employers (ATE)
Togo	Conseil National du Patronat du Togo (CNPT)
Uganda	Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE)
Vietnam	Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) and Vietnam Women Entrepreneurs Council (VWEC)
Zambia	Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE)

## **ABOUT DECP**

The Dutch Employers' Cooperation Programme (DECP) is an initiative of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and employers' organisation VNO-NCW. DECP strengthens employers' organisations in emerging countries so that they can improve the local business climate, by offering advice, workshops and networks and – since the COVID-19 pandemic – small-scale financial support for projects. A team of (Dutch) experts works together with employers' and entrepreneurial organisations in 22 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Join us at [www.DECP.nl](http://www.DECP.nl).



The DECP team

## THE DECP ORGANISATION

In December 2020 the DECP board consisted of:



**INGRID THIJSSEN**  
President of VNO-NCW  
(Chairperson)



**FRIED KAANEN**  
Vice-Chairman of Royal MKB Nederland  
(Vice-Chairman and treasurer)



**RAYMOND PUTS**  
Director General AWVN  
(Member)



INEKE DEZENTJE HAMMING-BLUEMINK  
Chairperson of FME  
(Member)



MAXIME VERHAGEN  
Chairperson of Bouwend Nederland  
(Member)



CEES OUDSHOORN  
Director General of VNO-NCW  
(Member)

(Vacancy)

## **THANK YOU**

The DECP team thanks all the people and organisations who have contributed to the preparation of this report.

L'équipe DECP remercie toutes les personnes et organisations qui ont contribué à la préparation de ce rapport.

El equipo DECP agradece a las personas y organizaciones que han contribuido a la preparación de este informe.

Back cover: Presentation of COVID-19 measures. Employers' Organisation CNP-Togo

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