28 March 2018

**With deep concern, the ILO approves by consensus a commission of inquiry for Venezuela**

In its 332nd meeting, held in Geneva on 21 March 2018, the Governing Body agreed, by consensus and by recommendation of the Office, to approve the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry for Venezuela to examine the allegations related to the Government’s violation of Convention No. 26 concerning the Creation of Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery, 1928; Convention No. 87 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948; and Convention 144 concerning Tripartite Consultations to Promote the Implementation of International Labour Standards, 1976 in which allegations were made of attacks, harassment, aggression and a campaign to discredit the employers’ organization – FEDECAMARAS – its leaders and affiliates.

It further alleges lack of consultation with FEDECAMARAS on laws that affect the labour and economic interests of the employers, and the adoption of numerous increases to the minimum wage without consultation with employer and worker representatives. The Governing Body has discussed this complaint six times since it was presented by 33 employer delegates at the International Labour Conference in June 2015.

In taking the decision to set up the Commission of Inquiry, the Governing Body expressed deep concern about the lack of any progress with respect to its previous decisions and recommendations regarding the complaint. In particular, it referred to the failure to establish a tripartite roundtable, bringing together government, employer, worker as well as ILO representatives to resolve all pending issues. The Governing Body also expressed its regret that it had not been able to carry out the high-level mission it had recommended at its November 2017 Session, due to objections raised by the Government about the agenda of the mission.

Mthunzi Mdwaba, IOE Vice-President to the ILO, highlighted the following in his speech in the plenary session of the Governing Body:

>"We in November gave the Government of Venezuela a LAST CHANCE to redress the violations. A last chance to give us a clear sign that it wants to change and cooperate. The responses translated into false promises and manipulation of this GB......"
Given the grotesque deterioration of the situation in Venezuela, the time has come to establish the Commission of Inquiry...."

To access Mthunzi Mdwaba’s full speech and the decision please see the links in the side panel.

**About the Commission of Inquiry**

The Commission of Inquiry is made up of three independent members, is tasked with carrying out a full investigation of the complaint, ascertaining all the facts of the case, and making recommendations to address the problems raised in the complaint.

A Commission of Inquiry is the ILO's highest-level investigative procedure. It is generally set up when a member State is alleged to have committed persistent and serious violations of ratified International Labour Conventions, which are binding international treaties, and has repeatedly refused to address them. To date, 12 Commissions of Inquiry have been established by the ILO since its foundation in 1919. The last was set up in November 2008 following a complaint against the Government of Zimbabwe.

Yours sincerely,

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Acting Secretary-General

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