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Transforming institutions and governance to build forward better towards 2030

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Written statement by Public Services International (PSI)

Agenda item 8: Public sector workforce matters

With this contribution we would like to draw the Committee's attention to the instruments adopted within the International Labour Organization (ILO), which are relevant in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and other measures for emergency preparedness and disaster prevention.

In particular, we would like to emphasize the importance of the *Guidelines on Decent Work in Public Emergency Services*, adopted in April 2018. These guidelines reflect changes since 2003, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (Sendai Framework), and the Recommendation No. 205 on *Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience*, adopted in 2017.

The Guidelines – adopted by the tripartite constituents of the ILO – sets out principles that can be reflected in the design and implementation of policies, strategies, programmes, legislation, administrative measures, and social dialogue mechanisms. They draw their principles from the ILO's international labour standards and other sources, including Declarations, codes of practice, codes of conduct, as well as relevant trends and developments in regional and national law and practice.

They also seek to promote coherent measures for emergency preparedness and disaster prevention, and among their key provisions the Guidelines underline that “[e]ffective social dialogue mechanisms, including tripartite or bipartite consultative institutions and collective bargaining between [public emergency services] employers and workers, should be established where they do not exist. Where they do exist, should address the specific demands placed on workers by [public emergency services]. Such mechanisms are key to providing social partners with an effective voice in determining the conditions that make for effective services” (paragraph 22).

In this respect, collective bargaining or its functional equivalent is a key element of sound labour relations and vital to authoritative and effective outcomes resulting of decision-making processes. Consultation with public sector workers and their elected representatives is therefore a decisive factor to achieve the strengthening of public sector capacities and legitimacy for crisis management.