

Committee: International Labour Organization (ILO)

Issue: Does technology help or hinder the work conditions

Author: Madagascar

Across the globe, technology has changed the way humans live their life, the way societies work and communicate between each other and in general it has increased human life expectancy enormously, with the implementation of technology in the production of food, in hygiene, and at work, as well as many other sectors. Today, technology is often associated with development and wellbeing. However, key issues such as poverty and climate change should make us develop the ways in which we use technology, in order for it to benefit as many people as possible without damaging our planet.

Unfortunately, Madagascar is currently one of the countries worst struck by poverty, with an estimated poverty rate of 75% in 2019. Even though the country is experiencing a transition from farm to off-farm businesses, due to a decline in profitability of farm work, 64.22% percent of the employed work in the agricultural sector. As Madagascar strives to gain total food independence, technology has enormously improved its efficiency in agriculture in the past ten years. This was thanks to the implementation of a new hybrid type of rice, brought by China, which was better suited to the climatic conditions of the country. In fact, from the average of 2.8 tonnes of yields per hectare of the local rice, the hybrid type almost triplicates that value, with an average above 7 tonnes per hectare of rice. Not only were the farmers planting this new crop better nourished, but also benefited economically, allowing them to elevate their living standards.

Madagascar is conscious that the implementation of new technologies, such as the one described, is able to alleviate the crushing poverty and malnourishment which affects our country. Technology can also be utilised in other industries, such as in the clothing industry which is massively important to Madagascar's economy. However, there are several issues that are to be considered in order for new technologies to have a positive impact on the whole of Madagascar's population.

Firstly, we acknowledge that technologies of any kind require money to develop and produce. We also recognise the strong investment developed countries and international organisations have given to Madagascar, and we are grateful for it. Therefore today, more than ever, it is essential that the investment in new technology remains sustained, and goes to the right place. It is crucial that such transactions remain transparent and monitored by the UN to avoid corruption.

Secondly, it is of capital importance that investment in technology is managed efficiently across the country. Presently, the majority of Madagascar's businesses are very small, and often single or family operated, both in agriculture and off-farm productions. The distribution of new technologies to such businesses would prove costly and inefficient. However, if there were a

state-managed co-operative system which merged and co-ordinated them, the provision of technology would be more beneficial.

Thirdly, Madagascar has been heavily impacted by climate change, because of a constant rise in sea levels and extreme weather conditions. Thus, Madagascar retains it important to look far into the future when utilising new technologies. While it is important to reduce poverty and famine, it is also key to preserve the planet and Madagascar's fertile lands. Worsening climatic conditions severely endanger our community. Therefore when choosing which new technologies we will be employing, we must be attentive to their effect on the environment. Technology can also help combat and reduce climate change and its effects, and our country wishes to participate with heart in new developments.

Finally, our party recognises that foreign investment in technology would be massively beneficial to Madagascar and its people. On the other hand, it is equally important to consider the risks of becoming dependent on and vulnerable to foreign countries as has happened in the past. For example, back in 2008 before the 2009 Malagasy political crisis, President Marc Ravalomanana signed a contract with South Korean private business Daewoo. This contract would have compromised 50% of Madagascar's agricultural land, putting Madagascar's local farmers, economy and political independence at enormous risk. Madagascar would like to emphasise the importance of maintaining independence from foreign contributing companies in order to truly thrive and develop into a self-sufficient nation.

Relating to this point, we would like to portray Madagascar's current dependency on foreign nations, many of which have themselves given our country monetary aid. Today, Madagascar's main trading partners list France, the United States, Germany, China and the Netherlands, all of which are either emerging or developed countries, with high GDPs and powerful economies. In fact, it is the very low labour and production costs in Madagascar which make it such a good trade partner for business from these countries. Unfortunately, this is also one of the reasons for poverty in Madagascar. Therefore we would ask that the topic of foreign exploitation of Madagascar would be discussed in this assembly. A solution to this could be the establishment of a minimum cap on the price of certain goods, across several developing countries of eastern Africa. As a consequence, our economy would be boosted, while there would be less competition and more cooperation between developing countries which are striving for a more prosperous future.

In conclusion, Madagascar is favourable to the use of technology to improve work conditions and productivity in all sectors. We would undertake these developments with caution, and will protect our country's political independence, reduce our impact on nature and on the climate, and ensure that their benefits reach the whole population. As a country, we are striving to develop socially, economically, and environmentally, to culminate in a sustainable nation. We are ready to collaborate for a better future, and we hope that other countries will join us and support us in the action.

