

**Openingswoord Mariëtte Hamer tijdens
The International Conference on
Promoting Workplace Compliance
including in Global Supply Chains**

Good morning,

Let me start by welcoming everyone to our building. It is wonderful to welcome such an international and broad audience to our Social and Economic Council (SER) of the Netherlands.

This event has brought together representatives of Economic and Social Councils from all over the world and numerous experts from organizations such as the United Nations Global Compact, the World Bank, the International Labour organization (ILO), the organizations for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and international organizations of workers and employers.

We hope that our council and this building offers a good place to stimulate dialogue between the social dialogue institutions; that is in itself the tradition in this building: it is THE house in the Netherlands for dialogue on labour related issues .

I would like to thank the ILO and the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (AICESIS) for organizing this event together with my council, the SER, and for choosing our beautiful country as venue.

As social dialogue institutions from all over the world, we all aim to help create social consensus on national and international socio-economic issues. It is our goal to find the common ground between employers' representatives, union representatives and independent experts. As you all know is not always easy, but very important work to try to find solutions together for problems that we face.

Because of the similarities between our councils and social dialogue institutes, it is at the one hand easy to compare our work and at the same time learn from our differences. And that is exactly why we are here. What can we learn from each other, in a time of changing societies? A time of globalization and fading borders, where more and more people get a chance to work and live elsewhere.

What are the roles, challenges and opportunities of social dialogue institutions at the national level in ensuring and promoting workplace compliance, including in the global supply chains? This is the main theme for this conference. We will hear many interesting examples and practices of how this can be enhanced.

As social dialogue institutions we cannot ignore the changes in our societies and labour markets due to globalisation, ICT developments and increased flexibility. As such, here in the Netherlands we are working on projects looking at skills and learning for the future, new types of jobs and labour relations, such as self-employment and combining multiple jobs. The changing labour market does not only apply to a growing foreign workforce and domestic workforce, but it also applies to the global supply chain.

This brings us to another subject my council, the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands is working on: international Corporate Social Responsibility. Due to globalization, the production of the jeans we wear and the cell phones we use no longer takes place in the Netherlands, but in locations where comparative advantage allows for lower production cost. This presents opportunities for producing companies and consumers, as well as risks to local societies and environments.

To avoid those risks, the Dutch government, employer and employee associations, consumers, and civil society organisations (CSOs) expect companies to do business with respect for human rights and the environment. Internationally, these responsibilities are enshrined in the OECD-Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Human Rights and Business (UNGPs), and the ILO fundamental labour standards.

The past years the SER has worked intensively to provide in-depth information and practical guidance to companies on the further implementation of these guidelines. We have done so in close cooperation with employers, unions and also CSOs. You will hear more about the concrete work of my council on these issues later on in this conference.

All in all the changing societies and labour markets bring a great amount of challenges.

Challenges where we can benefit from the knowledge and experience from social dialogue institutions, and with this knowledge can create common ground and work on practical solutions and steps forward.

At the end of the Conference, we hope to adopt a set of concrete recommendations that will inform future discussions including the International Labour Conference in 2016 on global supply chains. May this conference inspire you and prove to be fruitful!

I wish you all a very good stay and interesting times in our country and at our council. Let me finish by thanking you all for joining this conference. We are very honoured to have so many distinguished delegates from so many countries and organizations in our building. Thank you!