

Summit for Democracy Year of Action

Workers' Rights Consultation Session

Friday, April 1, 2022

Thank you to those who joined the April 1 civil society consultation on workers' rights to discuss opportunities for civil society to participate in thematic Summit for Democracy (S4D) Year of Action (YoA) lines of effort.

Representatives from the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Labor previewed the United States goals for a labor-focused Democracy Cohort and solicited feedback from attendees. We intend to convene a group of governments and non-governmental experts focused on workers' rights. Although the specifics are being finalized, the expectation is for the cohort to bring together stakeholders to advance workplace democracy, labor union rights, workers' voice, and freedom of association by creating opportunities to hear from workers themselves. A goal of the labor cohort is to integrate workers' voice into other Summit dialogues to expand conversations on workers' rights. The cohort is intended to be complementary, rather than duplicative of existing global labor initiatives.

Democracy Cohorts are multi-stakeholder platforms that bring together civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders to: (1) share experiences/best practices/lessons learned across Summit themes; (2) leverage the work of other stakeholders to fulfill government commitments; and (3) produce a product (ex. guiding principles, a call to action, etc.) that can be included in the next Summit. Cohorts are meant to be action oriented.

The United States anticipates the cohort will focus on advancing workplace democracy, labor union rights, workers' voice, and freedom of association by creating opportunities to hear from workers themselves. The goals of the labor cohort are to integrate workers' voice into other Summit dialogues to expand conversations on workers' rights.

The United States will continue to hold informal, recurring consultations with a broad swath of civil society, private sector, other experts to discuss fulfillment of our own Summit One commitments, as well as YoA and planning for Summit Two.

Participants asked for clarity on terms such as "workplace democracy" and "workers' voice," and encouraged the United States to focus on "remedy" in the areas of workplace democracy in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. They urged the United States to link this cohort's line of effort with other U.S. efforts to prevent the trade and procurement of goods made with forced labor. Others highlighted the importance of promoting democratic, worker-driven, co-operative workplaces, and the importance of considering and strengthening the connections between labor rights, political rights, human rights (defenders), women's rights, and disability rights. This cohort could also consider how to protect workers in non-traditional workplaces, such as domestic workers, migrant workers, and those in the informal labor economy.