

## INTRODUCTION

This issue of the *Review* looks at selected dimensions of social protection, gender inequality, globalization and employment. In the spirit of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, the opening article provides innovative practical illustrations of how social protection can be extended to informal-sector workers in developing countries. The second article empirically confirms the persistence and social consequences of occupational segregation by sex at the country level. The next article makes a powerful case for a new international standard on corporate social responsibility to counter the current proliferation of inconsistent codes of conduct adopted by multinationals. Drawing on the experience of Morocco, the last article provides valuable insights into possible employment policy responses to the challenge of growing graduate unemployment.

The Decent Work Agenda includes the vision of universal social security.<sup>1</sup> But the grim reality is that only one in five people in the world has adequate coverage; half the world's population is without any social security protection at all. In developing countries, the pattern of social security coverage is determined largely by the domestic political influence of trade unions in the public sector or major industries (which, at best, typically translates into social insurance for union members alone) and by each country's absolute income level which, in turn, determines the government's financial ability to spread the social safety net more widely.<sup>2</sup> In this context the article by *Wouter van Ginneken* provides a survey of policy approaches to broadening the coverage of social security, notably for the benefit of unorganized informal sector workers in poor countries. It is interesting to compare the notion of social security conveyed by this article (which includes aspects of access to health care) with the concept of income security that was recently

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<sup>1</sup> See Amartya Sen: "Work and rights", in *International Labour Review* (Geneva), Vol. 139 (2000), No. 2, pp. 119-128.

<sup>2</sup> See Ethan B. Kapstein and Branko Milanovic: *Income and influence: Social policy making in emerging market economies*, Kalamazoo, MI, W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2003.

introduced in a special issue of the Review (this included minimum wage setting, wage indexation and tax policies).<sup>3</sup>

In the next article, *Saliha Doumbia* and *Dominique Meurs* draw on a labour market survey of Mali's modern sector to investigate the causes of gender inequality at work. Their findings confirm the universal existence and persistence of occupational segregation by sex as identified in an earlier contribution to the Review based on international cross-sectional data.<sup>4</sup> While gender theories provide the principal explanations for sex segregation of occupations worldwide, the case study evidence from Mali in this article brings into sharper focus the national policy measures that would be required to tackle the demand-side and supply-side factors that exclude certain workers from certain occupations. This special survey of Mali's modern-sector enterprises and their workers was carried out within the framework of an ILO support programme concerned with the application of the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100).

Spectacular growth in international trade and foreign direct investment were two main features of globalization in the 1990s. Over 60,000 multinational enterprises, with some 500,000 subsidiaries worldwide, now account for a quarter of global output and three-quarters of international trade in commodities. Two recent articles in the *Review* found no evidence that growth in international trade has led to a deterioration of labour standards or that foreign investors favour countries with lower labour standards.<sup>5</sup> However, the article by *Olivier Boiral* in this issue of the *Review* suggests that the current plethora of corporate codes of conduct, adopted in response to national and international civil society pressures, is largely aimed at maintaining and expanding multinationals' gains from international trade and investment. But while voluntary codes of conduct may indeed be indicators of genuine corporate social responsibility, such codes seldom make reference to international conventions on labour standards (e.g. a survey of 215 corporate codes of conduct found no reference to such conventions). This article powerfully argues for a new international (ILO) standard on corporate social responsibility, incorporating existing international conventions and establishing independent international mechanisms for verification, certification and monitoring of enforcement.

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<sup>3</sup> See *International Labour Review*, Vol. 141 (2002), No. 4 (a special issue on socio-economic security).

<sup>4</sup> See Richard Anker: "Theories of occupational segregation by sex: An overview", in *International Labour Review* (Geneva), Vol. 136 (1997), No. 3, pp. 315-339.

<sup>5</sup> See Ajit Ghose: "Trade liberalization, employment and global inequality", in *International Labour Review* (Geneva), Vol. 139 (2000), No. 3, pp. 281-305; and David Kucera: "Core labour standards and foreign direct investment", in *International Labour Review* (Geneva), Vol. 141 (2002), No. 1-2, pp. 31-69.

The last article, by *Mohammed Bougroum* and *Aomar Ibourk*, addresses the challenges of job creation in a complex labour market in Morocco. The authors' evaluation of a special job-creation programme for the educated unemployed in urban areas points to the programme's success in stimulating demand for qualified workers and improving their employability in the private sector. However, the article also exposes the abusive practices of both enterprises and worker-beneficiaries with respect to various job-creation incentives provided by the State. This case study shows how employment policies might be adapted to cover the entire labour market more broadly and address structural issues (e.g. infrastructure development and educational reforms). Its findings are especially relevant to developing countries where growing privatization and market liberalization are making job creation increasingly dependent on the private sector.

The first of the three books reviewed in the *Books* section examines the combined and mutually supportive social effects of social protection and labour market reforms in OECD and transition countries of Europe during the post-Second World War period until the early 1970s. The second book dwells on the theory and concepts of labour market planning and the need to balance complementary approaches based on sophisticated modelling and the generation of high quality data. The third book on reinventing functional finance reviews the historical background of the functional finance approach, discusses the inflationary limitations of functional finance and countercyclical fiscal policies and explores the linkage between full employment theory and policy.

The eight books presented in the *Recent books* section cover a wide range of topics. These include labour market indicators in the European Union; "social fragmentation" amidst economic prosperity in Australia; labour standards in the context of increasing globalization and trade liberalization; the protection of human rights and labour rights globally, also in the context of globalization; trade union history in Canada; the challenge of reconciling labour market flexibility and employment security; and, lastly, violence as a global health problem.

The *New ILO publications* section offers a rich and varied mix of tripartite, Conference and global reports, surveys, codes of practice and scholarly studies on a large number of topics, including equality at work, the challenges and opportunities facing public utilities, the employment effects of mergers and acquisitions in commerce, ILO standards-related activities in occupational safety and health, working out of poverty, and many more.

