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Freedom, Security and Voice at Work:

50 years of action by the
ILO Committee on Freedom of Association

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International Labour Organization

Poland 1980-1989: When numbers made a difference



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On 14 December 1981, a foreign news agency in Warsaw, Poland printed a story from Geneva. It said, "In a telegram to the Polish authorities, the Director-General of the ILO expresses his profound concern."

That concern was over the imposition of martial law on 13 December, which led to the outlawing of "Solidarity" and other trade unions, the replacement of civil law with military rule, and for the time being, an end to Poland's "odnowa", or "renewal". The correspondent in the news bureau read the dispatch, looked out the window at the tanks and troops enforcing the military edict, and muttered, "What difference will that make?"

Although it was not apparent at the time, the answer was unfolding then and there, and would continue to unfold for years to come. As Ian Graham points out in an article on the 50th anniversary of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association in this issue, those expressions of concern were part and parcel of a far deeper process which had been going on for some time, and in Poland, would continue for nearly another decade.

In fact, throughout Poland's social "revolution" of 1980/81, the ILO had been involved every step of the way. When Gdansk shipyard workers hammered out their 21 demands in August 1980, they based them on ILO Conventions, including Nos. 87 and 98 on freedom of association and the right to organize, which Poland had ratified but never properly implemented. After initial resistance, Poland finally registered Solidarity as a legal entity in November 1980 – delivering the news to the Committee on Freedom of Association – following strikes by Solidarity and a mission to Poland by the ILO's then Director-General Francis Blanchard. In June 1981, Solidarity leader Lech Walesa addressed the ILO International Labour Conference as the first "free" trade union leader from a Communist country, an event that in itself was history as it happened.

After martial law ended in July 1982, the ILO continued to meet both the Polish Government and trade union officials, including Solidarity leader Walesa, to discuss reforms in Polish labour law and an evolution of Polish reality. As Ian Graham reports, throughout the 1980s, the ILO pressed the Polish Government to adopt legislation compatible with Conventions 87 and 98. Though the Government resisted, a new wave of strikes in 1988 brought with it democratic elections which swept Solidarity-allied forces to power. The ILO helped to organize a national tripartite commission in January 1989, in part to draft new trade union law. Then the Berlin Wall fell, and the rest, as they say, is history.

History may one day note that symbolically, one of the first bricks to come out of the Berlin Wall should have the word "Solidarity" written on it. Perhaps another should include the letters "ILO". Did those letters make a difference? The answer is, and remains, decidedly yes.

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Freedom of Association Committee: 50 years of action

In the history of work, people have often demanded their rights in informal meetings like the one shown in the picture on the cover of this month's *World of Work*. A half century ago, they received a more formal platform in the ILO to express their demands.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association. Established by the ILO Governing Body in 1951, the committee has often performed a fire-fighting role since it began meeting in 1952.

The core ILO Convention, No. 87 on freedom of association and the right to organize was adopted in 1948, followed by Convention No. 98 on the right to organize and collective bargaining in 1949. Since then, thousands of trade unionists and many employers' organizations have benefitted from the



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protections provided by “87 and 98” magic numbers for defenders of labour rights.

A new *World of Work* article traces the 50-year history of the ILO freedom of association committee which provides the clout behind the numbers. It shows that there is nothing abstract about freedom of association as the quote in the article beginning on page 4 explains. **Page 4**

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

ILO's pioneering Freedom of Association Committee **4**
marks fiftieth year

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Created in 1919, the International Labour Organization (ILO) brings together governments, employers and workers of its 175 member States in common action to improve social protection and conditions of life and work throughout the world. The International Labour Office, in Geneva, is the permanent Secretariat of the Organization.

RIGHTS WATCHDOG SETS WORLD STANDARDS

ILO's pioneering Free Committee marks fif



The core ILO Convention, No. 87 on freedom of association and protection of the right to organize, was adopted in 1948, followed by Convention No. 98 on the right to organize and collective bargaining, in 1949. Since then, thousands of trade unionists and many employers' organizations have benefitted from the protections provided by "87 and 98" – magic numbers for defenders of labour rights. Ian Graham traces the 50-year history of the ILO Freedom of Association Committee, which provides the clout behind the numbers.

GENEVA – There is nothing abstract about freedom of association.

Ask Dita Sari. For daring to organize independent trade unions in Indonesia during the 1990s, she went through repeated detentions, harassment, beatings, and abuse by the military.

In 1996, her call for a general strike brought her an eight-year prison sentence. But she had some powerful advocates abroad, including a unique international committee which celebrates its fiftieth anniversary this year.

The ILO Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA) kept up the pressure for Dita Sari's release. Success came in 1999, when she was freed and was unanimously elected Chairperson of the Indonesian Labour Federation, FNPBI.

In the last decade alone, more than 2,000 trade unionists worldwide were released from prison after this ILO Committee examined their cases.

"Trade unionists still go to jail in my country," Dita Sari told a special anniversary roundtable at the ILO this March. "We need more practical and direct action, the way you gave me three years ago. That's the way we can repeat the Committee's success stories."

Basile Mahan Gahé agrees. He is General Secretary of the "Dignité" trade union confederation, and has been jailed 10 times in Côte d'Ivoire. Here too, the ILO Committee kept working away at his case.

"I really owe my life to the Committee on Freedom of Association," he insists.

"We literally work here with questions of life and death," says ILO Executive Director Kari Tapiola.

BUILDING CONSENSUS

It is not easy work. Setting standards is one thing. Achieving them is quite another. World-wide norms pose a special challenge. They have to be applied through moral suasion, backed by a consensus which gradually builds up a set of precedents.

This technique has become all the more vital today. Many aspects of life have been fully globalized in practice, but doctrines of global sovereignty and global law-giving have not kept pace.

Labour rights are a good case in point. In a one-world market, workers everywhere must have the same right to join together in defence of their interests. Otherwise, all talk of a "level playing field" becomes meaningless.

Not surprisingly, a key role in the development of consensual standard-setting has been played by the ILO, one of the world's most enduring international organizations. And nowhere have these methods been employed to better effect than in the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association.

"We have probably made more frequent use of this Committee than of any other, and we have seen results," says Guy Ryder, General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

Freedom of Association tenth year

BASIC RIGHT

Freedom of association is everybody's right. So says the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which dates from 1948. That same year saw the adoption of a core ILO Convention, No. 87 on freedom of association and protection of the right to organize. This was rapidly followed, in 1949, by Convention No. 98 on the right to organize and collective bargaining. ILO Conventions are ratifiable by States and binding upon them.

To this day, "87 and 98" are the magic numbers most quoted by defenders of international labour rights. They crop up constantly in protest letters to governments and companies over union rights violations. And they tend to produce a response. The clout behind them is due mainly to the case work built up by the Freedom of Association Committee.

Established by the ILO Governing Body in 1951, the Committee often has a fire-fighting role. When trade unionists are jailed for legitimate union activities, and particularly when they are in physical danger, the Committee can move fast.

This is due to its unique scope. Like the ILO's general structures, it is "tripartite". In other words, government, workers' and employers' representatives take part on equal terms. However, the Committee can examine a case against any ILO member country without the prior consent of the State concerned – even if that State has not formally ratified the Conventions on freedom of association. Nor do domestic remedies have to be exhausted before a case can be taken to this international Committee. And, when deciding if a complaint is receivable, the Committee does not feel bound by national definitions or recognition of workers' and employ-

ers' organizations. This means that it can hear cases brought by unofficial, clandestine, or exiled unions.

The Committee's conclusions go to the Governing Body, and governments do not relish being criticized in its reports.

"For trade unionists, the great advantage of this Committee is its universality," the ICFTU's Ryder believes. "If something happens to you, a complaint can be examined without having to wait for a long cycle of resolutions and permissions. In many ways, this Committee is a model of what international supervision should be."

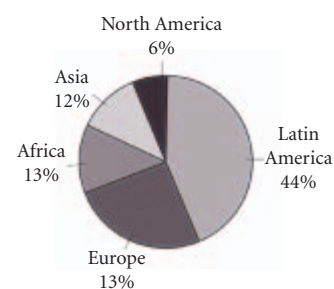
Gross violations of labour rights are all too common these days. The ICFTU reported 223 trade unionists murdered or "disappeared" during 2001. In addition, more than 4,000 people were arrested, some 1,000 injured and 10,000 sacked for legitimate trade union activities. In Colombia alone, 201 trade unionists were assassinated or "disappeared" last year.

Specific, often brutal attacks on freedom of association will therefore remain a big concern for the Committee. Recently, for instance, it has been urging the Colombian Government to punish those who murder and abduct trade unionists, the Korean Government to release those detained or on trial for their trade union activities, the Zimbabwean Government to set up an independent enquiry into attacks on trade unions, and the Yugoslav Government to lift restrictions on employers' freedom of association. Employers have the same organizing rights as workers, and the Committee is there to protect them in the same manner as workers.

WIDER ROLE

But it also looks at the bigger picture. Over the past 50 years, it has often had to delve into the

Figure 1:
Complaints examined by the Committee on Freedom of Association (1951-2001)



Continent	No. of cases
L. America	939
Europe	527
Africa	278
Asia	264
N. America	134
Total	2147



RIGHTS WATCHDOG SETS WORLD STANDARDS



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>> economic, social and political conditions which affect freedom of association. Poland is a good example of this. In August 1980, when strike leaders of the Solidarity movement drew up their 21 demands in Gdansk, they included broad social and political rights, as well as “bread and butter” bargaining claims. This raised the issue of whether Solidarity could claim a legal status – and if so, which one.

“Every association had to be registered by the authorities,” explains Janusz Onyszkiewicz. Now a member of the Polish Parliament, he used to be Solidarity’s national spokesman. At that time,

the Polish authorities could refuse to register most types of organizations.

“The only exceptions were trade unions,” Onyszkiewicz points out. “There was no legal basis [to refuse registration] because Poland had ratified the Convention that made registration of trade unions automatic.”

The strikes led to the Gdansk Agreement of August 31, 1980. This included the Polish Government’s overt acceptance of the principles set out in Conventions 87 and 98. That October, Poland brought in a new Trade Unions Act, which permitted trade union pluralism. However, Solidarity still could not get its statutes registered. So the ILO Director-General undertook a mission to Poland, and in November 1980, the Polish Labour Minister appeared before the Committee on Freedom of Association to announce Solidarity’s registration.

This victory was short-lived. The imposition of martial law in Poland on December 13, 1981 led to the dissolution of trade unions and repression against Solidarity’s leaders and members.

However, the ILO continued to meet both with the Polish Government and with trade unionists, including Solidarity leader Lech Walesa. All through the 1980s, the ILO pressed the Polish Government to adopt legislation compatible with Conventions 87 and 98. The Government rejected these calls, but the ILO Director-General returned to Poland in 1987 for further talks with the Government and with trade union leaders, including those of the still-outlawed Solidarity.

A new wave of strikes in 1988 paved the way for democratic elections and the transfer of political power to Solidarity-allied forces. On ILO advice, a national tripartite commission was set up in January 1989, in part to draft new trade

Freedom of Association is also an employers’ issue

“Freedom of Association is also a major employers’ issue. In many countries, employers’ organizations have been under harassment, discrimination and aggression from their governmental authorities and through this, have been hindered in their functioning. The Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA) has facilitated the respect of employers’ rights. Like in Poland – where the ILO, through the CFA, played a substantial role in ensuring the recognition and respect of trade union rights – in Nicaragua, during the Sandinist regime, the CFA was a determinant tool in safeguarding employers’ rights and democracy. Employers have recently presented complaints before the CFA against the Governments of Kenya and Yugoslavia.”

Antonio Peñalosa, Secretary General
of the International Organization of Employers (IOE)

union legislation. In Poland, as throughout Central and Eastern Europe during the 1990s, the ILO followed through with a wide programme of seminars, training, and study tours, which put freedom of association on a strong footing there.

Over the decades, the Committee has dealt with a number of similar cases where dictatorial or authoritarian regimes, whatever their underlying ideology, systematically attacked freedom of association. Notable examples include Franco's Spain, Pinochet's Chile, and South Africa under apartheid.

Not that trade union rights are necessarily safe in parliamentary democracies. The geographical distribution of the complaints received by the Committee is certainly not even (see Fig. 1 from CFA report), but they show that freedom of association can come under threat anywhere.

PRECEDENTS

Meanwhile, the Committee goes on building up a body of precedents which make it easier to rule on important questions of trade union rights. When, for example, is it legitimate to outlaw strikes? The Committee has recognized that the right to strike may be restricted or prohibited in two cases: in the public service, but only for the public servants exercising authority in the name of the State, and in essential services.

This raises obvious problems of definition. Governments may be tempted to label almost anything as an "essential service", simply in order to ban industrial action. So part of the Committee's work over the past half-century has been to gradually list what are and are not essential services.

Similarly, the Committee has made it quite clear that many public servants, notably teachers, must not be banned from striking.

These rulings have practical consequences. For instance, fines imposed on Brazilian oil workers for going on strike in 1995, were cancelled after the Committee asked the Brazilian Government to intervene.

GROWING SUCCESS

Over the past half-century, the Committee has dealt with nearly 2,500 complaints from all conti-

nents. So what is its success rate? It is difficult to put a precise figure on that. Governments which are swayed by the Committee's recommendations will not necessarily say so.

Nonetheless, some measurements are available, and they point to a steadily growing effectiveness over the years.

The Committee judges its own impact mainly by "cases of progress". Over a period of 25 years, more than 60 countries on five continents have acted on the Committee's recommendations, and have informed it of positive developments on freedom of association. Up to 1999, some 37 per cent of these cases of progress were in Latin America, 23 per cent in Europe, 17 per cent in Africa, 15 per cent in Asia, 5 per cent in North America and 3 per cent in Oceania. The total number of cases of progress has increased rapidly over the past three decades – see Fig. 2.

To these should be added a growing number of cases where the matters raised in the complaints are settled after satisfactory negotiations between those concerned. These show the Committee's role in promoting dialogue.

Another important but unquantifiable benefit is the Committee's preventive role. The body of principles which it has established is taken into account by well-intentioned governments when they are drafting new labour legislation. In this way, breaches of basic rights are avoided at the outset.

As it moves into its second half-century, the Committee on Freedom of Association will continue to develop new techniques. One possibility introduced in the mid-1970s is the use of on-the-spot missions, both to gather information and to urge compliance with freedom of association. This has been put to good effect recently in union rights cases concerning Guatemala, Côte d'Ivoire and Korea. A further innovation in the Korean case was that the mission included employers', workers' and government representatives. This facilitates dialogue with "opposite numbers" in the country concerned.

But whatever its methods, the Committee's basic aim will remain the same – to defend freedom of association and collective bargaining worldwide.

Figure 2:





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Persistent back pain, sore necks, insults, stress, management practices contributing to ill health... Contrary to all clichés about glamour jobs in the airlines, the profession of airport check-in agent can be difficult, even dangerous. A recent study by Ellen Roskam, Senior Work Security Specialist in the ILO Socio-Economic Security Programme, brings to light for the first time the difficulties of this line of work – which is

Airport che When che

mostly performed by women – and looks at ways to make things better

GENEVA – Only slightly less than one-quarter (23 per cent) of all the airport check-in agents surveyed say they suffer no pain at all. All the others complain of persistent aches and pains; more than half suffer from neck problems, 49 per cent have shoulder pains, and one out of every two has lower back pain. These are not little sores or cuts, but rather significant suffering, bad enough to seriously disturb their sleep.

The pains come from musculo-skeletal disorders (MSD); that is, inflammatory problems of the joints, muscles, tendons and nerves. These are primarily caused by carrying heavy loads, repetitive activities, and confining positions. If, in addition, their work is characterized by stress and tight deadlines, an explosion of MSD can be expected.

This is the work of airport check-in workers, as shown by a new study* carried out by Ellen Roskam in three international airports (two in Canada, one in Switzerland).

The check-in agents handle more than one hundred pieces of baggage a day having an average weight of 33 kg. each. Where the baggage handling systems are not mechanized, the check-in agents lift and carry each bag to the conveyor belt. (At non-mechanized baggage check-in systems, workers can lift and carry up to 600 bags a day, weighing on average 33 kg. each. This means that workers may lift and carry up to 19,800 kg. a day, with no training on safe lifting techniques, and no assistance.) Even at fully mechanized baggage check-in systems, workers often push and pull bags, often in painful postures. Not surprisingly, the cumulative effects often lead to severe pain which interferes with sleep and job performance, and in some cases causes workers to stop activities outside of work. (Some workers reported giving up non-work-related activities for a year or more.)

ck-in workers: cking in becomes a pain

“The profession of check-in agent requires strength and diplomacy, since workers are confronted increasingly with aggressive, even violent, passengers,” Rosskam notes.

More in an interview below:

What are the key results of your study?

Rosskam: “We were surprised at the high number of workers suffering from severe MSD. Unfortunately, these health problems, whose professional origin is obvious, are rarely recognized as work-related illnesses in Switzerland or Canada. The difference in the prevalence of MSD between workers equipped with a mechanized baggage handling system and those at a manual baggage check-in system is not immense. In other words, even with entirely mechanized equipment, check-in workers must often grasp, push, pull, lift and carry heavy loads. But they are not trained to do so safely. And they are often constrained to manipulate loads of several dozens of kilos in difficult postures; for example, when suitcases become blocked on the conveyor belt and check-in workers must break up the jam. In any case, it is better to have a mechanized system, which reduces the risk of back and neck injury and other MSDs.”

“Check-in workers are also subjected to immense stress. Present management practices applying ‘just in time’ policies mean that workers should check in passengers (including check-in and baggage handling) in around three minutes. But if for any reason the agent spends more time – such as with a passenger who doesn’t understand the instructions, or with an elderly passenger who may move more slowly with their baggage, etc. – they must try hard to make up the time later, because at the end of the line is an airplane waiting to take off. A missed schedule is costly. At the check-in counter, the agent knows this very well. So you can

imagine the pressure. At the same time, workers are not consulted about the organization of their work, they do not have a voice in workplace decision-making, nor are they consulted about problems they may be experiencing. Communication is top-down only, whereas it could easily be top-down and bottom-up. This environment, full of repetitive physical effort and stress due to existing management practices, favours the occurrence of MSD.“

Violence is another disturbing finding. What is the situation?

“The incidence of violence against check-in workers should ring alarm bells for management. One in every five check-in agents has suffered physical aggression at the hands of a passenger, 17 per cent have received threats, and 80 per cent have been subjected to verbal violence, including insults. Nearly half of all agents estimate that violence is a significant risk in their job. And the situation is getting worse. Airport and union officials and the staff all say that the level of aggressiveness and violence of passengers has increased dramatically. There are no substantial differences according to country or airport size.”

“Thus far, there has been concern about violence against cabin crews. However, violence against ground personnel must be equally taken into account, particularly since check-in workers are the first line of defense to protect passengers and crews inside aircrafts.”

Does work organization also play a role?

“Yes. The industry-wide use of ‘just in time’ policies in airports has caused an increase in pressure which is exerted directly on the check-in workers, pushing them to work faster. The objective is to avoid as much as possible delays in takeoffs, which are very costly to the airlines. There are more people travelling today through

** This study was conducted with Andrew Drewczynski and Renzo Bertolini, researchers at the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, with the participation of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), the Canadian Auto Workers' Union, the Canadian Labor Congress, the PUSH and SSP unions in Switzerland, and management at the airports studied. The research serves as the basis for a doctoral thesis presented by Ellen Rosskam at the University of Lausanne, School of Management.*



Participatory management practices are critical as a means of increasing worker voice and improving worker health, in all jobs. Occupations performed predominantly by women, such as check-in work, are no exception. In fact, women's work is often characterized as low-skill, low-wage work, and as such the participation of workers is critical in workplace decisions affecting their job and their well-being. Check-in work is a de-professionalized job, with no skills training, no career possibilities, no worker protection measures, with workers facing increasing violence from aggressive passengers."

"This research includes findings that are relevant for other jobs typical of women's service sector work, including computer clerical work and supermarket check-out work, where insecurities are similar. Such

jobs are characterized by low skill levels, low wages, low or no training, high level of demand with little or no control by workers over the organization of their work or on the design of their workplaces, exposure to the public with associated threats, repetitive movements, static postures, and resulting high rates of stress and musculoskeletal injuries. The study is also unique in that it examines management practices that are shown to have negative effects on workers' health. The lack of voice, lack of worker participation in workplace decision-making, and the complete lack of worker autonomy, seem to be associated with low-wage work, women's work in particular, and associated with high rates of negative health outcomes in workers."

Guy Standing, Director, ILO Programme on Socio-Economic Security

>> airports than ever before. 'Just in time' policies impose a speed-up in the work process. To characterize the situation, one might say that the agents have more work to complete in less time, while remaining smiling and polite with passengers who are more and more aggressive, and working under conditions often physically demanding, with no training to protect them against any of these risks. That this has repercussions on their health is not surprising."

To what extent is airport management aware of these problems?

"It appears that awareness is lacking. This is demonstrated by the significant difference between the official employer work-related accident/injury reports, and levels of injury reported by the workers in our study. The fact that it is difficult to obtain a diagnosis of a work-induced MSD for sick leave or compensation contributes to this. Therefore, a major health problem experienced by check-in workers is barely recorded in employer injury reports. As a result of this gap in reporting, employers have little 'official' reason to question the causes and even less so to take preventive measures."

"For their part, the check-in workers continue to go to work as though nothing were wrong, in spite of their often severe pains. There is a kind of 'culture of pain' at work; if the majority of people in your professional environment suffer from the same kind of pain as you, you may end up by considering that this is the normal state of things. You may tell yourself it's up to you to put up with the pain and suffering without complaining,

and to get on with your work. What I call an occupational culture of pain, combined with the difficulty to obtain diagnosis and compensation, and the fact that workers may be somehow encouraged to use their sick leave rather than activate workers' compensation when needed, may work in consort to cause low or no injury reporting and a low level of lost work time, despite widespread suffering. The workers are motivated to do their job because they strongly identify with their profession and are proud of it."

Are there simple preventive measures which can be applied?

"The first step in prevention is to recognize that these problems exist. Once there is awareness and recognition of the problems, one can begin to discuss workplace improvements with involvement of the workers directly concerned."

"There are some very simple preventive measures which can be adopted. Eliminate those workstation arrangements that oblige workers to either remain standing during their entire service, or to remain seated. It is important for workers to be able to alternate positions. The baggage tag dispenser should be placed so that workers are not forced to adopt awkward postures, such as bending over to attach the tags to the baggage and then twisting around to push the bags. Moreover, perhaps there should be a universal baggage weight limit of 20 kg. The check-in counters are often poorly designed; often there is not enough space underneath the counter for the legs when the agents are

seated, or even leg room when standing. Workers often end up adopting impossible positions to adapt to what may be a complete lack of leg room under the counter. As well, the work surface of the counter is often too narrow to accommodate all of the documents the agent must deal with. These need to be adapted to the needs of the worker so they may perform their job efficiently and comfortably. Fully mechanized check-in systems are far more desirable than manual systems, but even where costs prohibit the introduction of a fully mechanized system, at least a roller bar could be installed, to obviate lifting and carrying every bag.”

“It would also be useful to use a high check-in counter everywhere, such as those at Geneva’s Cointrin Airport. The higher counter seems to have a dissuasive effect on violent passengers, functioning as a sort of barrier against eventual physical aggression. The workstation designers may not necessarily have thought about that, but the high counter seems to have this added value. Also, management practices are needed to help workers deal with aggressive passengers. These should include training for both workers and managers for dealing with unruly passengers, and empower workers to protect themselves with the support of management structures. Workers should be provided training on safe lifting techniques, and basic principles of ergonomics. These measures can be applied easily. Of course, such measures will not eliminate the problems entirely, but they can help significantly to reduce the impact on workers. Present management policies, such as ‘just in time’ policies, and the non-involvement of workers in workplace decision-making and workstation design need to be addressed, as these are impor-

tant factors contributing to negative worker health outcomes.”

There are few studies which examine the working conditions of service sector jobs, which are typically performed by women. Does this mean that there is a general underestimation of the occupational health problems related to women’s work, and particularly service sector work?

“Definitely. It is a misconception that women’s jobs are clean and safe, or even glamorous. Workers’ compensation and sickness insurance systems are devised in many industrialized countries to give priority coverage to sectors which have obvious dangers, such as construction, heavy industry, or mining, for example. These are essentially jobs performed by men. Since these occupations are very costly to insurance companies, research on occupational health and prevention focuses on these high-risk areas. The lack of research in most other sectors of work therefore reinforces the idea that other jobs are less hazardous, especially in service sector work, where women make up the majority of workers. But in reality, little is known about health effects related to women’s jobs because so few women’s jobs have been studied.”

“It is important to begin examining jobs heretofore unstudied, such as most women’s occupations. This study demonstrates that ‘all that glitters is not gold’. The fact that musculoskeletal disorders are not recognized as occupational illnesses does not help in increasing awareness.”

Pietro Boschetti.

(This article is adapted from an original interview which appeared in Le Courrier newspaper, Geneva.)

EXTERNALIZING THE COSTS OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Managers of enterprises have a responsibility, too often underestimated, concerning the physical and mental well-being of their collaborators. Some consider employees as instruments, quickly forgetting that they are men and women who can be deeply affected by what they experience at work.” This is the conviction of Alexander Bergmann, Professor of Management of Human Resources in the Graduate School of Business, at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland.

Can one reconcile working conditions which respect the health of employees, with the demand

for profit? Certainly, but not in every case. For Professor Bergmann, however, even if the enterprise retains no material benefit whatsoever, it owes it to itself to create workplaces which do not negatively affect the health of workers. “If not, that amounts to externalizing the costs of occupational health, in the same way that twenty years ago certain enterprises externalized the costs of pollution. They produced in a way that was harmful to the environment and it was then up to the State to assume the costs. This is an unacceptable way to do business.”

In Cambodia, business people with disabilities



© ILO / Nick Rain

Having mobile telephone troubles in Cambodia? Call Ms. Sotheary Nay. Though she contracted polio as a child, physical disability has never prevented her from doing her job at the customer call centre of Mobitel, Cambodia's largest mobile telephone company. That's the message of the Business Advisory Council (BAC) – a group of business leaders in Cambodia – who are challenging discrimination by building workplace opportunities for people like Sotheary

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia – Business councils which partner employers and persons with disabilities were launched in the United States in the early 1970s, as a means to involve private companies in training people with disabilities and matching them with jobs. Their success in the US led to their replication in Africa by the ILO in the early 1990s, and inspired the ILO and the World Rehabilitation Fund (WRF) to launch a similar exercise in Cambodia, where some 200,000 people have disabilities resulting from anti-personnel land mines and diseases such as polio.

Since being formed in January 2001, the 13-member BAC – which includes companies such as British American Tobacco, Caltex Cambodia, Nestlé (Cambodia) and Siemens – meet each month to devise strategies to improve workplace opportunities for persons with disabilities.

More than 140 Cambodians with disabilities have found work through the BAC. The Council has also advised vocational training centres on curricula which teach skills sought by employers, provided valuable work experience through on-the-job training, and commissioned key research to ascertain employer attitudes toward persons with disabilities in Cambodia.

“Linkage between training, employment services, and the workplace is critical,” said Ms. Debra Perry, ILO Senior Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation, and the person whose technical assistance helped bring the BAC to fruition in Cambodia.

“Employers know where the jobs are and how to best prepare people for them,” Ms. Perry said.

“Until the BAC was formed, employers in Cambodia had not been asked for advice regarding vocational training for persons with disabilities, nor assistance in helping them find work,” said Ms. Padma Shastry, WRF country representative.

Business councils match graduates to jobs

“A key BAC aim is focusing skills training on company needs, and matching graduates from training programs with employers. It’s a partnership between persons with disabilities, training providers, and ultimately Cambodia’s employers,” Ms. Shastry said.

“Cambodia could be a model for partnerships like this throughout the region,” Ms. Perry said.

In June 2002, the ILO co-funded a business seminar organized by the BAC to promote awareness among employers in Cambodia of the capabilities of persons with disabilities.

Delivering the seminar’s keynote address, Cambodian Prime Minister, Mr. Hun Sen, told participants how his own disability, the loss of an eye, had not kept him from fulfilling his potential. “Disability,” Hun Sen said, “can be overcome with proper training and opportunity.”

Beliefs that people with disabilities are not capable of work or bring bad luck, is a major barrier to them in finding jobs, said Mr. Long Ly, of the National Centre of Disabled Persons (NCDP), a BAC partner which maintains a database of almost 2,000 persons with disabilities who are seeking work. The BAC is promoting persons with disabilities and the “opportunity-not-charity” message carries weight when spread by business leaders, Mr. Long said.

Welding torch in hand, Mr. Chhay Mao, 34, inspects a new de-mining vehicle which the company he works for – the Development Technology Workshop (DTW) – produces on the outskirts of Phnom Penh.

When a land mine blew off Chhay’s left leg in 1989, he spent years trying to find his place in society and earn a living for his young family. After receiving vocational training through the NCDP, he secured a job with DTW and now builds equip-

ment which removes land mines from Cambodia.

“Having a skill is the most important thing, not your disability. Training makes us all equal,” said Chhay.

“Being a person with disability does not stop them,” said Mr. Peng Seong, General Manager of Caltex Cambodia.

Caltex is a BAC member and employer of 19 persons with disabilities, who in the course of their work have developed a reputation as diligent workers, said Peng Seong.

“The whole idea is being able to contribute back to society. That’s what drives our involvement,” Mr. Seong said.

The BAC is working on several new initiatives to promote employment opportunities, including a request to the Government for better tax breaks for companies which hire persons with disabilities, said BAC Chairman, Mr. Wolfgang Kitz, managing director of Siemens AG Representation Cambodia.

“In the age of corporate responsibility, BAC makes good business sense,” said Ms. Kim Mom, director of the Maryknoll-Wat Than Skill Training Center for Persons with Disabilities and Polio.

“[BAC members] show themselves as socially responsible businesses. They will get more credibility and publicity,” said Ms. Mom. “There is give and take,” she said.

Kevin Doyle, Phnom Penh

Business Advisory Council members: British American Tobacco; Business Intelligence Consulting Group; Caltex Cambodia; Cam GSM Mobitel; China, Hong Kong & Macao Business Association; Digital Divide Data; Envotek Company Limited; Hotel Inter-Continental; Nestlé Dairy (Cambodia) Limited; Phnom Penh Chamber of Commerce; Rattana and Associate Companies; Siemens AG Representation; Wearwel Cambodia.

Post and telecoms face but for better or worse?

As the old saying goes, “Neither rain, nor sleet nor snow ...” can stop the post. But how about globalization, privatization and technological development? Transformations in the post and telecoms sector over the past decade have significantly affected overall employment levels, working conditions, and labour relations. Have the changes been for the better or for the worse?

GENEVA – Delegates from governments, and employers’ and workers’ organizations from about 40 countries gathered at the ILO in May to consider the implications for employment, employability and equal opportunities, of changes taking place in the post and telecoms sectors.

The picture painted by the tripartite participants was complex; profound negative and positive effects on employment, with job creation in some areas and job losses in others.

Indeed, in the four years since their last meeting, telecoms had gone from boom to bust, as enthusiasm for third-generation mobile telephony and e-commerce waned, creating a challenging climate for creating quality new jobs.

The delegates, however, agreed that the best way of managing the process of change is likely to be through appropriate strategic planning and effective social dialogue.

The background paper to the meeting, prepared by the ILO Sectoral Activities Programme, offers detailed research evidence to reinforce the view that, in terms of employment opportunities, the current situation is a mixed one. In the telecoms sector, privatization and liberalization have generally resulted in job losses for the previously public telecoms giants, but recent years have seen new jobs created elsewhere.

The end result is confused; countries such as Austria, Finland, the United Kingdom, China, Malawi, and the United Arab Emirates are all reported as having seen significant increases in full-time telecoms services staff in the five years from 1995 to 99. By contrast, the net balance is firmly negative elsewhere in such countries as Italy, Spain, the Philippines, South Africa, and Tanzania. Jobs particularly at risk are those in areas such as construction, installation, repair, and maintenance of switching equipment.

It is a similar picture for the postal sector. Some countries have reported considerable net job losses in recent years; this has been the story, for example, in Kenya, Argentina, Uruguay, Cambodia, and the Russian Federation. Conversely, other countries, such as Switzerland, Egypt, Cameroon and Chile, have seen net job growth.

However, the very rapid pace of development makes it difficult to find very accurate employment statistics. Frustratingly, as the delegates put it in their conclusions, “it is difficult to assess whether the creation of employment opportunities in new postal and telecommunications services has compensated for job losses”.

Easy generalizations, therefore, should be avoided. Nevertheless, as the delegates also pointed out, employment statistics hide the experiences of real people and their families. The loss of a job can be devastating for the individuals concerned, particularly if they find that their existing skills are rapidly becoming obsolete. There was agreement, therefore, that governments, employers, and workers share a responsibility in ensuring that the workforce is equipped with significant future-oriented skills.

Lifelong learning, it was argued, offers benefits for all. Not only is it the key to improving job opportunities and job satisfaction, it also can help avoid skills shortages and improve the qual-

massive changes...

ity of service which companies are able to offer their customers. Governments and employers should commit themselves to ensuring adequate funding, but workers also need to take responsibility for their own skills development, the delegates resolved.

In this respect, the ILO background report to the meeting identified several examples of good practice from around the world. The Swedish postal operator, Posten AB, for example, has developed a programme called Futurum, offering job search advice and assistance to staff whose jobs are being phased out, Germany's Deutsche Post has developed a computer-assisted training programme, while Spain's Correos y Telégrafos has launched a programme on quality awareness, specifically tailored to temporary staff.

In the telecoms sector, fifteen major European telecoms companies have collaborated with trade union representatives from Union Network International, in the joint Lisbon Statement, which identifies, among other priorities, the need for information and communication technology (ITC) training for all employees, for proper certification of ICT training, and for the use of the Internet for training purposes.

The ILO report also highlights innovative social partnerships between telecoms companies and trade unions in the United States, to develop employability initiatives. One of the most influential has been the Alliance for Employee Growth and Development, a partnership between AT&T, Lucent Technologies, and the Communications Workers of America. Also in the US, the National Coalition for Telecommunications Education and Learning (on which several companies and two unions are represented) has developed an innovative degree programme, taught primarily over the Internet.



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Other examples of good practice identified by the ILO report include the sectoral education and training authorities (SETAs), established by the South African government, with the support of the social partners.

Education and training; in particular “second-chance” education, can also be of special importance in terms of working for equal opportunities in the post and telecoms sectors.



Many examples of best practice in the field of equal opportunities were given in the ILO report, as well as a statistical analysis of data on equal opportunities in employment with regard to gender (and, in some cases, ethnic origin) in selected countries and enterprises. In terms of enhancing equal opportunities in the post and telecoms sectors, the report identified education and training; in particular, “second-chance” education, as being of special importance.

Participants at the meeting observed that the achievement of equal opportunity objectives in post and telecoms enterprises represented a tremen-

dous and lengthy cultural and attitudinal change on the part of everyone from senior management to the lower levels of the workforce. They noted that part-time and casual employment in this sector had opened some opportunities to achieve greater diversity in terms of gender, race and attitudes in the workplace, and improved access to full-time and more permanent jobs in the longer term. Collective agreements incorporating provisions for balancing work and family responsibilities, and promoting diversity in the workplace in postal services, were discussed.



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The meeting called for new steps to be taken to open up career development opportunities for women and disadvantaged groups, arguing that flexible working arrangements may help provide access for people trying to enter or re-enter the workforce. As the meeting's conclusions put it, “The achievement of equal opportunities is a goal for which we should strive constantly. Progress has been made on equal opportunities in the postal and telecommunications sectors, but there is still a need for greater equality of opportunity in career advancement, and equality of treatment in pay and benefit structures.”

The ability of government, employers' and workers' representative groups to agree to a common statement of conclusions at the end of the sectoral meeting offers the hope for healthy

social dialogue in these two sectors, despite the sometimes rapid pace of change. Delegates drew attention to the global framework agreements already signed by Telefónica (Spain) and OTE (Greece) with trade union representatives, as examples of arrangements which can facilitate social partnership. But they also called on the ILO to study developments in the sectors further, and to promote the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, and the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its follow-up. More specifically, the ILO was asked to work with the Universal Postal Union, the International Telecommunication Union, and the World Bank, to arrange regional tripartite seminars for the post and telecoms sectors for Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

The report accompanying the sectoral meeting, “Employment, employability and equal opportunities in the postal and telecommunications services”, is available on the ILO Web site, at www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/techmeet/tmpts02/tmpts-r.pdf (English version). French and Spanish versions are also available. The conclusions of the meeting have not been examined by the ILO Governing Body and are therefore not yet definitive.

Fighting forced labour: ILO launches new programme

Roger Plant, who heads the ILO Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour (SAP-FL), has worked in the human rights area for many years and has served as an advisor on human rights to UN, government and non-governmental organizations, as well as the private sector. He is the author of “Sugar and Modern Slavery”, a study on the plight of Haitian migrant workers in the Dominican sugar industry. He spoke to the *World of Work* about the new ILO programme

What exactly is forced labour?

The most widely used definition is, in essence, labour which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily. Traditionally, people have thought about this with the penalty being physical harm or constraint – which it often is – but in recent decades there’s also been a much better appreciation of some of the other types of penalties that can coerce people; for example, being in debt with your employer, confiscating identity documents, or threatening various reprisals if you don’t work for him.

Are things getting better or worse?

There is a wide range of practices, some of which are getting worse. The trafficking of women and children – mainly for prostitution and domestic service, but also sweatshop work – has increased dramatically throughout the world in the last ten years. Millions of people live and work in conditions of debt bondage in many countries throughout south Asia and Central and South America. Forced labour in the form of coercive recruitment is present in many countries of

Latin America and in parts of the Caribbean, as well as elsewhere.

So is this purely linked to poverty?

No. For a start, forced labour is a truly global phenomenon; very few states are fully exempt. It’s certainly not just a problem involving developing countries as people often assume. In the wealthier countries you find vulnerable migrant workers, often women and even children, who are subject to coercive treatment at the hands of intermediaries or employment agents in the shadow economy. In Europe, for example, there has been an explosion of trafficking since the breakup of the former Soviet Union. And the problem of trafficking links networks of countries – most countries in the world are sending, transit or receiving countries, or a combination of all these.

And who’s to blame – governments?

Sometimes, but not usually. Unlike the mass forced labour of the past century, exacted first for economic purposes by colonial powers, then for political purposes by totalitarian regimes, most modern forced labour is not exactly directed by states. There are some exceptions to this. But most modern forced labour is exacted largely by individuals and enterprises acting outside national law – by feudal landlords or criminal elements who trap people in coercive labour conditions. However, governments do have a clear responsibility to stamp out forced labour and punish those responsible.

Is there enough public awareness of this problem?

No, not nearly enough. Neither the general public, nor most specialists in human rights and



>> development organizations, have a real grasp of the dimensions and gravity of forced labour in the modern world. That is why in its first year our new programme is giving high priority to awareness raising, to sensitize public opinion as to the reality of modern forced labour and trafficking for labour exploitation, and how to combat them.

How has the ILO previously dealt with forced labour?

For a long time the ILO has addressed problems of forced labour through its regular supervisory machinery; the two forced labour Conventions after all are among the most ratified Conventions. It's also undertaken major Commissions of Enquiry, the most prominent example being Myanmar. Yet, in June of last year, we issued the first global report on forced labour, a report which had some key but disturbing messages, and which highlights the need for a special programme. A wide range of activities are now taking place: to identify the problem, develop the national consensus to tackle it, and develop the specific programmes to eliminate it.

Can you give some specific examples?

In Nepal and Pakistan, for example, with ILO support, sample studies and surveys are underway to identify the true extent of the problem and the most effective strategies to tackle it. In West Africa, several member States have agreed to a comprehensive research programme, focusing in particular on the forced labour practices associated with traditional and chiefly systems. We've also got a project in Brazil assisting the Government's Mobile Inspection Units to secure the release of workers trapped in

forced labour situations, and generally to improve law enforcement.

What about in some of the destination areas, such as Europe?

There's a lot to do. We have to alert public opinion to the very real danger of a rising incidence of forced labour affecting both irregular migrant workers in the shadow economy, and young women and children in the sex sector. We also need to have appropriate sanctions imposed on labour traffickers and smugglers, and to provide alternative forms of livelihood.

There is potential to get things moving at the moment; both irregular migration and trafficking are currently high on the European political agenda, and while the main focus has been on trafficking for sexual exploitation, there is a growing realization that trafficking for labour exploitation can be a serious problem.

Why have a special programme to tackle forced labour?

The experience of the ILO and UNICEF with child labour over the past decade has already demonstrated the effectiveness of strategies which combine data gathering and analysis with practical assistance to the governments ready to address the problems. I believe that the world is now ready for a similar approach on forced labour.

For further information, please contact the ILO Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour,

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Social reinsurance: An **innovative** way to sustain community health insurance schemes



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The International Labour Office (ILO) and the World Bank have joined forces to devise a new way of helping small health insurers overcome financial crises caused by the unpredictable cost of severe or chronic illness. This innovative approach specifically addresses

the “micro” health insurers’ precarious financial situation, which is rooted in the small size of their groups, underfunding, low technical and managerial skills and their lack of access to reinsurance which is normally available to all large insurers worldwide. The approach is called “social reinsurance” (or “social re”).



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>> WHY IS A NEW APPROACH NECESSARY?

In low-income countries, low GDP, minimal tax collection, and regressive tax structures restrict government revenues. For instance, in India, only about 5 per cent of GDP is collected as Government income. With insufficient revenues, governments cannot finance universal health insurance coverage.

Moreover, most people are not only unable to pay for high and unexpected health costs, but they are also unable to access health insurance. A large share of the poor population eke out a living in the informal economy. The irregular income typical of this sector means people cannot pay health insurance contributions regularly. Also, paying for insurance only makes sense if it can be relied upon to provide services when necessary. But many stories circulate of schemes, including public ones, defaulting on their obligations, or absent altogether from rural or slum areas, which erode people's trust in insurance and their willingness to adhere to an insurance scheme. The resulting low affiliation levels make insurance unprofitable and

inefficient. A vicious cycle ensues where people have to finance the crippling costs of their own health care and risk falling into the so-called "health-poverty trap", where treatment depends on having a job, but getting or holding a job depends on being treated.

HOW DO THE POOR COPE WITH HEALTH RISK?

The most common alternative is to pay for health services on the spot. However, cash payments require liquidity, something that the poor do not have. In cases where treatment is vital, a family may be obliged to sell its assets (crops, livestock, house, etc.) to raise cash. Insurance is the best way out of this illness-poverty trap, except that those who need insurance most are not only least likely to buy insurance, but also least likely to get a fair deal out of it. Instead, poor households rely on social relationships and seek help from the extended family, the community, and those in similar situations. Community self-help and mutual help are based on the notion of balanced reciprocity – in other words, that today's giver might be tomorrow's receiver. Given this reality, micro health-insurance units (MIUs) have emerged and bear witness to the fact that unity and a large network strengthens everyone. MIUs are often the only locally accessible safety nets with little red tape and an immediate response time.

MIUs are themselves exposed to various risks, the most serious of which are insolvency and the danger that they might default on their commitments. Given the difficulties, help for the poor can best be provided by ensuring that existing community health schemes provide solvent and efficient insurance for informal economy workers, with special protection against unpredictable and large claims. In an ideal world, this would mean transferring the risks to reinsurers. However, in the private sector they have so far refrained from doing business with MIUs because of the relatively small profit margin they can expect to achieve compared to that obtainable in rich countries, and the lack of reliable information to quantify the expected financial risks and opportunities. Unfortunately, governments have also not been very supportive of MIUs. Enter social re.

WHAT DOES SOCIAL RE DO?

Social re opens the way to transfer risk from MIUs to a reinsurer. The reinsurer agrees to cover medical expenses above an agreed threshold in return for a small contribution from MIUs – initial calculations suggest that the premium would be US\$0.075 per family per month to cover risks up to US\$1,000. – a small price to pay to prevent insolvency.

In order to succeed, social re needs to access information on risk profiles and the costs of health benefits in rural and informal settings where MIUs operate. Until recently, MIUs lacked the technology and skills necessary to supply such data. However, higher levels of education, computer literacy, the availability of electricity both in urban and rural areas, decreases in the cost of computers, and widespread access to the Internet and telephones, have provided them with the means to transform the way they function. It is now feasible to introduce an efficient framework for the collection, analysis, and transfer of data, thus creating the essential link between MIUs and reinsurance operations. Thus, social re can now start working in support of MIUs.

Designed to operate modern risk management techniques for the informal economy, social re is breaking new ground. It is not competing with other reinsurers; its activities are socially oriented. It will provide technical support for IT systems and claims settlement at no cost to the affiliated microinsurers, thus reducing the insurers' administrative overheads. Moreover, the premiums for this non-profit, pro-poor concept are calculated as low as possible. Social re also gives back to MIUs an exceptionally high share of the premiums (both through reinsurance benefits and through discretionary budgets in years with few claims). Social re's social emphasis is also seen in the design of different financing channels for insurable and uninsurable benefits. Pure public health interventions should be financed through subsidies and donor support, which can best be channelled through MIUs, whereas random and future risks can be managed at affordable costs.

The result of this work is the Social Reinsurance Model. The book* which describes this new approach and provides a gold mine of new analytical information is just out. The concept still has to be tried and tested on the ground, and a pilot pro-

ject is planned once the necessary start-up capital has been raised. Several countries have been considered for the pilot. The Philippine Government has expressed interest in including social re in the ILO Decent Work Country Initiative, because the approach fits well with its overall anti-poverty policy and its plan to extend health insurance coverage to rural and informal workers.

Social re cannot replace the role of governments in low-income countries in striving for universal health insurance. But it seeks to improve the solvency of micro health insurers in the informal economy, thus converting informal mutual assistance into an adequately capitalized, more equitable, better run, sustainable risk management system. If local insurance schemes are able to provide health services and drugs much more reliably than in the past, without running out of money when the number of expensive cases exceeds the norm, then the programme will be a success. Successful and affordable MIUs are bound to attract more people.

Ultimately, social re should shorten the time when a case of severe or even chronic illness in the informal sector of a poor country will be similar to that in a wealthy one – unfortunate for the individual involved, but it will neither mean bankruptcy for his family nor a disaster for his community health insurance scheme.

For more information on social re, please see the Web site: www.ilo.org/socialre, or send an e-mail to: socialre@ilo.org.

The book on social reinsurance (see footnote) can be bought from ILO publications at: pubvente@ilo.org, or www.ilo.org/publns, or from World Bank publications at: books@worldbank.org or www.worldbank.org/publications.

* Dror, D.M., Preker, A.S. (Editors): *Social Reinsurance: A New Approach to Sustainable Community Health Financing*, (Washington, World Bank and ILO), September 2002.

Conference tackles global security, poverty, and



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The 90th International Labour Conference adopted a series of measures designed to promote a more rigorous approach to tackling the challenges of globalization, create an “anchor” for personal security through poverty reduction, job creation, and improved workplace health and safety, and reinforce the Organization’s tripartite structure

GENEVA – “Until we see a globalization that prioritizes the creation of employment and the reduction of poverty, the whole concept is going to remain dogged by controversy.”

With those words, ILO Director-General Juan

Somavia summed up the “exceptionally rich” discussion at the 90th International Labour Conference surrounding globalization, child labour and other issues, and saw a “broad and steadily deepening consensus over the goal of decent work for all”.

Two distinguished guests of honour, the Rt. Hon. Dato’ Sei Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, and the Rt. Hon. Owen Arthur, Prime Minister of Barbados, addressed the issue of globalization during the Conference. Prime Minister Mahathir said that globalization in its actual form cannot be “the remedy for the social ills of the world” and called for “globalization with a social dimension”.

Globalization, personal job creation



THE INFORMAL ECONOMY: FROM SURVIVAL TO PROTECTION

The Committee on the Informal Economy held a general discussion on a report entitled “Decent Work and the Informal Economy”. According to the report, excluding agriculture, informal work is the lot of half to three-quarters of workers in developing countries.

The proportion is particularly striking in countries such as India, where informal workers – including in agriculture – account for 93 per cent of the entire economically active population, and Mexico (62 per cent). The industrialized world is not immune either, the report says. In the 15 countries of the European Union, 30 per cent of workers work outside the standard framework. In the United States, one out of four workers are in this situation, with less than 20 per cent of part-time

workers covered by health insurance or an employer-financed pension plan.

In principle, the term “informal economy” refers to all activities of workers and economic units which are – in law or in practice – not covered by formal arrangements. In both cases they are outside the scope of the law. In some countries the term refers to the private sector, while in others it is synonymous with the “underground” or “shadow” economy, even if the workers in the informal economy produce legal goods and services.

At the ILO Committee discussing this issue, representatives of governments, employers and workers noted that most people enter the informal economy “not by choice but out of a need to survive”.

According to the experts on the Committee, the growth of the informal economy is more a result



SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND TRIPARTISM: “ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO OUR IDENTITY”

As well as emphasizing some of the principles underpinning the tripartite approach, the Resolution calls for the involvement of the social partners in “a meaningful consultative process in labour reforms”. It instructs the Office to carry out in-depth studies of social dialogue in collaboration with the Organizations’s constituents, in order to enhance the capacity of labour administrations and workers’ and employers’ organizations to participate in social dialogue.

The Resolution also aims to improve the way the Office operates. It calls for a strengthening of the Office’s tripartite structures and for appropriate tripartite consultation when selecting civil society organizations with which to work.

Commenting in the debate, Mr. Botha, the

Employer Vice-Chair of the Resolutions Committee, spoke of the need to support “the unique functions of the ILO Bureaus for Employers’ and Workers’ Activities”, a theme taken up in the Resolution. Mr. Miranda De Oliveira, the Worker spokesman for the Committee, also emphasized that dialogue must be meaningful, saying that “we do not want a form of tripartism that merely acquiesces, rubber stamps, previously taken decisions”.

In his closing remarks, the Director-General spoke of the broader context within which the Recommendation sat, of a “cohesive tripartism: the notion that we have not come here to be divided, or to confront one another, but in difficult and complex issues, to achieve cohesion, to find the solutions we need”.

>> of poor governance than of globalization. They attribute it firstly to “inappropriate, ineffective, misguided or badly implemented macroeconomic and social policies”.

To reduce the size of the informal economy, it is essential that structural adjustment, restructuring and privatization policies take account of the need to promote employment creation. The first step, where the ILO is concerned, is to ensure that the fundamental labour standards in force in the formal economy are applied to informal work, the delegates concluded.

The Conference adopted a call for a new ILO programme of work which would focus on the issues of employment generation, social protection, and poverty reduction, for those in the informal economy. The new programme should provide a road map for future ILO activities aimed at extending rights to those who don't have them and access to the benefits of labour standards and the global economy.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Conference unanimously adopted a **Resolution concerning Social Dialogue and Tripartism**, giving the Organization new direction in an area the Director-General described as “absolutely essential to our identity”. The Resolution reaffirms the importance of the tripartite nature of the ILO as the only international organization where governments, and workers' and employers' represen-

tatives can freely and openly exchange their ideas and build a consensus. (See box p.23)

The Conference also adopted a **Recommendation on the Promotion of Cooperatives**, which replaces ILO Recommendation 127, adopted in 1966, and limited to developing countries. The new instrument asks Members to adopt measures to promote cooperatives in all countries to create employment, develop their business potential, increase savings and investment, and improve social well-being. Members are asked to consider the promotion of cooperatives as one of the objectives of national and social development, and to reflect on measures to create an enabling environment to promote the growth of economically viable and democratically managed cooperatives.

Ranging from small-scale to multimillion dollar businesses across the globe, cooperatives are estimated to employ more than 100 million women and men, and have more than 800 million individual members. They are also an important means of integrating unprotected informal economy workers into mainstream economic life.

In the area of health and safety at work, the Conference adopted a new **Protocol to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention**, 1981 (No.155), and a Recommendation updating a 22 year-old list of occupational diseases. The Protocol asks ratifying member States to establish and review requirements and procedures for the recording and the notification of occupational



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accidents and diseases, dangerous occurrences, and commuting accidents. The Protocol also asks member States to publish annual statistics following classification schemes that are compatible with the latest international schemes of the ILO or other relevant international organizations.

The Recommendation asks member States to establish a national list of occupational diseases for the purpose of prevention, recording, notification, and compensation. This new list supplements Schedule 1 of the ILO Employment Injury Benefits Convention, 1964 (No. 121), which has not been revised since its last amendment in 1980. The list in the annex of the Recommendation will be regularly updated through tripartite meetings of experts convened by the Governing Body of the ILO.

The Conference examined the implementation report of activities 2000-2001, the first years under a "strategic budgeting" mechanism. In his wrap-up, the Director-General noted that delegates had

urged the ILO to "set increasingly rigorous performance indicators that relate to the needs of constituents, and be more aggressive in evaluating how our intervention can best help to redress decent work deficits in a globalizing world".

The Conference also debated the situation in the occupied Arab territories, and heard pledges in support of enhancing ILO efforts to create jobs in the area and promote dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis. Mr. Somavia said the ILO would allocate resources immediately with a view to establishing a Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection. (See article *Building for Peace* p. 26)

The Conference President was Mr. Jean-Jacques Elmiger, Secretary of State of the Federal Department of the Economy of Switzerland, which earlier this year decided to join the United Nations, after having already been a long-standing member of the ILO.



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Governing Body: Lord Brett elected chairman



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The Governing Body of the International Labour Office (ILO) elected Lord Brett, United Kingdom, as Chairman for its 2002-2003 Session.

Lord Brett replaces Mr. Alain Ludovic Tou, Minister of Employment, Labour and Social Security, Burkina Faso, who served as Chairman during the 2001-2002 Session. Lord Brett was the former Workers' Vice-Chairman of the Governing

Body and has been a member of the General Council of the Trade Union Congress (TUC). He also sat on its Executive Committee until 1999. He was appointed a member of the House of Lords in the United Kingdom in June 1999.

H.E. Eui-Yong Chung, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, was elected Government Vice-Chairman. Daniel Funes de Rioja, President of the Social Policy Department of the Argentinian Industrial Union, and Chairman of the Employers' Group of the Organization of American States from 1995 to 1998, was reelected as Employer Vice-Chairperson.

The three will serve as Officers of the Governing Body during its 2002-2003 Session. The Governing Body is the executive council of the ILO and meets three times annually in Geneva. It takes decisions on policy and establishes the programme and budget of the 175 member-State Organization.

The Conference elected the new members of the Governing Body on 10 June. The period of office of the Governing Body is three years. Elections were held to select the 18 governments which have elective seats¹ and the 14 Employer and 14 Worker members of the Governing Body. Ten out of the total of 56 members of the Governing Body are appointed by member States of chief industrial importance holding permanent seats².

¹ Bahamas, Bulgaria, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Gabon, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Mali, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan, and Uruguay.

² Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and the United States.



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WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR LAUNCHED

The first World Day Against Child Labour was observed worldwide on 12 June, and will be held annually to intensify support for the global campaign against child labour. It will also serve as a catalyst for enhancing the growing worldwide movement against child labour, as reflected in the steadily mounting ratifications of the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), as well as the work of the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

On 12 June, events held around the world included volunteers in Thailand painting a mural about child workers, while former child workers in Egypt played a match with a national football star. Three thousand Bangladeshi child labourers gathered on the streets of their capital to tell their stories through music and drama. In Nicaragua, teenagers who work in the coffee industry met to discuss their future. In Chile and in Pakistan, schoolchildren took part in art competitions on the subject of child labour. Street children in Albania held their own art exhibition.

Building for peace: An ILO programme of assistance in the occupied Palestinian territories

Following lengthy discussion at the Conference and a report by the Director-General, the ILO is undertaking a series of urgent measures to alleviate the dire conditions of workers in the occupied Arab territories, including a Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection, and support for social dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian constituents.

The moves take place amid a deteriorating situation for many in the occupied territories, with the latest estimates of unemployment suggesting nearly two-thirds of the potential labour force (65 per cent) are without work, and nearly 70 per cent of the Gaza Strip population are living at or below the poverty level.

The ILO's proposed programme of technical assistance aims to re-examine current projects in the area and establish a Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection, with an overall goal of stimulating employment. Particular emphasis will

be given to targeting the young through a youth training and employment programme, which will provide vocational training as well as subsidized apprenticeships in enterprises.

In addition, the fund will provide a subsidy plan to help small enterprises, and create a public works programme to rebuild the infrastructure and services damaged during the conflict. Subsidies will be offered to families so that they can rehabilitate their plots or farms and produce food.

The programme also aims to build the capacity of the social partners, and to improve social dialogue between Palestinian and Israeli constituents. The Director-General has appealed to Palestinians and Israelis to "take the risk of embarking on social dialogue" to achieve peace.

The emergency measures follow the publication of the Director-General's special report on the occupied territories which was debated by workers', employers' and government delegates at the 90th Interna-

tional Labour Conference in June. The report warned of the "socioeconomic meltdown in the occupied territories resulting from the present stage of the conflict and the deep humanitarian crisis which Palestinian families are living through", as well as "the sense of insecurity in Israel due to suicide bombings and the economic crisis".

Yasser Arafat, the President of the Palestinian National Authority, has outlined his strong support for the technical cooperation programme in a recent letter to the ILO Director-General. The proposed measures were also discussed with Dr. El-Khatteeb, the Palestinian Minister of Labour, when a high-ranking delegation from the occupied territories met the Director-General in July.

The ILO has allocated US\$300,000 of its emergency activities resources for immediate implementation of this programme, and is requesting donor support.



PLANET WORK

A REVIEW OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN LABOUR ISSUES

HEALTH AND SAFETY

■ Tobacco consumption falls by nearly one-third in workplaces which introduce a smoking ban, a study has found. Such a ban usually encourages about 4 per cent of workers to quit smoking, and 29 per cent less cigarettes to be consumed overall. According to Simon Chapman, Professor of Public Health at the University of Sydney, such bans could potentially have a bigger impact than more traditional tactics, such as health education campaigns, pack warnings and taxes. The VicHealth Centre for Tobacco Control estimates that about a quarter of workers in **Australia** are exposed to cigarette smoke at work, despite many large companies and small businesses introducing bans over the past fifteen years.

– Source, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 July 2002

■ “Office rage” is widespread, according to a new survey of workers in **Scotland**. Almost 50 per cent of those interviewed treated their colleagues to angry outbursts at least once a week, with 70 per cent admitting to throwing tantrums at work from time-to-time. Common causes of these outbursts were workmates who talk too much, mobile phone tunes and technical breakdowns. Also high up on the “annoying list” were untidy co-workers and lazy colleagues. According to Averil Leimon, a psychologist consulted for the survey, one solution is to take time out for a glass of chilled water.

– Source, *The Scotsman*, 29 July 2002

WORKPLACE ISSUES

■ Lunch breaks are going the way of fast food, shrinking by nine minutes over the last two years. A survey in the

United Kingdom by workplace caterers Eurest showed workers aren't taking the time off that they are contractually owed, with job insecurity being cited as the major cause. In addition, the study said, only 1 per cent of the workers surveyed had wine or beer with lunch – a big change from 1990, when nearly a third of all survey respondents had an alcoholic drink with lunch. This may not be part of a massive general health movement though – 13 per cent of workers now use their lunch break to escape their smoke-free environment and have a cigarette.

– Source, *The Guardian*, 5 August 2002

■ Is divorce contagious? Possibly, according to a study by a sociologist at Stockholm University in **Sweden**. The study found that the more single or divorced people working in an office, the more prone their co-workers were to divorce. Working in an office mainly populated by people of the same age and the opposite sex increases the chances of divorce by 75 per cent. There is an antidote though; working with a spouse halves the likelihood of splitting up.

– Source, *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 August 2002

■ One in five workers in the **United States** say they know of co-workers who have lied on expense reports, lifted items from the supply cabinet, pocketed money from cash sales or accepted personal gifts from clients, according to a survey by Ernst & Young. In addition, eight in every ten workers said they would turn in cheating colleagues, although they would do it anonymously. Women and older workers were the most likely to report fraud.

– Source, *The Atlantic Journal-Constitution*, 8 June 2002

GENDER

■ **Norway** is about to become the first country in the world to insist on female quotas for company boardrooms. State-owned firms have 12 months to comply with the order that at least 40 per cent of board members be women; public companies have an extra two years to ensure the change. At the moment women make up only 7 per cent of the boardroom elite (compared to a European average of just 2 per cent), and this despite women accounting for 60 per cent of university places. “Men recruit men”, argues Mie Opdordsmoen of LO, Norway's biggest union. “We all recruit people who are like ourselves, and men are in power.”

– Source, *The Guardian*, 1 August 2002

UNIONS

■ A union in the **United States** is using spoofs of the popular movies “Scream” and “The Matrix” to recruit workers. The 30-second adverts, showing in 400 cinemas in Florida, are aimed at recruiting men and women between 18 and 25 to the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT). IUPAT is looking to sign up 4,000 new young members by 2004 to replace those who are retiring.

– Source, *The Washington Times*, 8 June 2002

■ Up to half a million **Brazilian** frozen turkeys lost a buyer due to intervention by a union in the **United Kingdom**. The turkeys – frozen, plucked, dressed and “as hard as cannon balls” – were due to appear on British shelves this Christmas, having been spotted on the Internet and bought by a buyer for

the supermarket group Wal-Mart Asda. However, following a protest from the National Farmers' Union, pointing out that the supermarket made much of supporting British farmers, the turkeys were put back on the market and were subsequently gobbled up by rival stores Safeway and Iceland.

— Source, *The Western Daily Press*, 4 August 2002

CALL IT SLEEP WORKING...

Having trouble concentrating on work? Finding the daily grind wears down your ability to focus? A new study by Harvard University and the US National Institute of Mental Health shows that a 30-minute nap during working hours significantly enhances performance. Called "power napping", it supposedly boosts the ability to absorb and process information, thereby feeding the bottom line. And the bottom line is that "we should stop feeling guilty about taking that 'power nap' at work," the researchers said. As a result, some companies are encouraging workers to sleep on the job – around noon each day – which the study said was the best time for a nap.

— Source, *The Straits Times Interactive*, 14 August 2002

EXECUTIVE OPTIONS, MANAGEMENT BUBBLES, ETC.

Will the "senior management bubble" go the way of telecoms?

The Enron and WorldCom scandals will cost the **United States** Gross Domestic Product an estimated US\$37 billion to US\$42 billion in its first year, according to a new Brookings Institute Study reported by United Press International. Given the (heavily disputed) scale of such losses, what should countries be doing to ensure their top executives' behaviour doesn't seriously damage their growth?

The most common answers from around the world seem split between those who think the market will correct things in the long term and those who advocate stricter punishments for errant executives. The US publication *Business Week* articulates a common stance: "longer jail sentences for corporate fraud". Accounting improvements also seem popular. One example is making stock options an expense and including it in the calculation of earnings. *Business Week* reports on a recent Merrill Lynch study of the 500 largest US companies. It found that reported profits would have

been 21 per cent lower overall in 2001 if options had been considered expenses, and 39 per cent lower in the high tech sector.

Yet, it's not only shareholders and the public who seem to be raising questions about what qualities top executives should possess. A recent Demos study conducted in **Britain** and reported in the *Observer* newspaper, asked middle managers what they thought. The good news: almost two-thirds identified a single criterion – inspiration – as essential to good leadership in the workplace. The bad news: nine out of ten of them said they never experience it from their bosses.

One of the most unconventional suggestions to "better" the executive class is to improve their politeness and manners. According to Paul Simao, writing for *Forbes*, good etiquette is making a spirited comeback in the corporate world, with consultants reporting increased interest in good decorum following the recent accounting scandals. The price for group training in this area? At least \$1,000 per person.

S U R F B U T D O N ' T C Y B E R S L A C K

Office workers spend 21 hours in an average week on the Internet according to a new research paper from York University, with the average user in the survey logging on 41 times a day.

More and more of this time is supposedly spent "cyberslacking" – using the net for non work-related activities. According to the technology research house, International Data Corp., 30 to 40 per cent of employee Internet activity is not business-related, and represents a serious financial drain on companies due to lost productivity.

Businesses are reacting differently to the problem, with some deciding warnings are most effective. SK Telecom, for example,

the top mobile carrier in Korea, has posted an online notice on its internal bulletin board announcing that accessing non business-related Web sites during working hours is banned, and that employees found to be sending or receiving pornography via the Internet will be severely punished.

Punishment has already been meted out by global computer manufacturer Hewlett-Packard. Two employees were fired and a further 150 reprimanded for downloading pornographic files via the company's Internet network.

French cosmetics giant L'Oréal has decided to deal with the problem by setting up its corporate computer network to allow

for e-mail transmission only, blocking its employees from accessing other Web sites.

Yet it's not just Web sites which can get employees into trouble. Some ten employees of Computer Associates, a leading US software company, were sacked for violating the company's e-mail policy. According to local reports they had been sending sexually explicit joke e-mails.

New technology may make a difference too, with several companies developing Web-filtering software. Installed on the company's server, it could allow access to useful Web sites while still barring those considered by managers to be inappropriate.

— Source, *The Korea Times*, 31 July 2002

More children, less teachers: Classrooms get increasingly swamped

A new study says a looming shortage of teachers worldwide puts educational quality at risk. Despite moves in many developing countries to increase the number of teachers, population growth means teacher-pupil ratios often remain stubbornly high

GENEVA – The study* released by the International Labour Office and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris, found that relentless population growth is overcrowding the world's classrooms at an alarming rate. Growth in the number of school-age children outpaced growth in the number of teachers worldwide in the 1990s, packing classrooms with as many as 100 students per teacher in some countries.

The data show that a concerted effort has been made in many developing regions, where demand for more teachers is highest, and where two-thirds of the world's 59 million teachers live and work. The number of primary teachers in these countries increased on average by almost 9 per cent between 1990 and 1995. But, the report finds, the population of primary-school age children there rose by the same amount.

In industrialized countries, an aging teaching force and a dearth of new recruits discouraged by declining status and low pay, threatens to diminish the quality of education, just at a time when the need for new knowledge and skills is growing dramatically.

The report also examines who is entering the profession. While the number of women teachers increased unabated throughout the 1990s, they still remain well under 50 per cent of the total in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia, places where the presence of more women teachers could help increase the access of girls to schooling.

In addition, despite the growing number of women teachers worldwide, women remain under-represented – often severely – in management positions, providing further evidence that the “glass ceiling” remains a reality in education.

* “*Statistical Profile of the Teaching Profession*”, by Maria Teresa Siniscalco. The report draws on information from various sources, including the European Network for Information in Education (Eurydice), UNESCO and its International Bureau of Education (IBE), the International Labour Office (ILO), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The report is also available in French.

Cambodian clothes plants: Working conditions improve

GENEVA – A new ILO report* has found “encouraging signs of improvement” in working conditions in some 30 garment factories in Cambodia. The factories produce apparel for sale in North America, Europe, and other developed

countries, and are being monitored as part of a technical cooperation project established following an agreement between the Governments of Cambodia and the United States.

The latest report said recent monitoring >>



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>> found no evidence of child labour or sexual harassment. While some problems remain, freedom of association and the right to organize, payment of wages, and overtime rules are improving. Said the report, “there is room for optimism that the working conditions in those factories will further improve”.

A three-year trade agreement between the US and Cambodia offers a possible 18 per cent annual increase in Cambodia's textile export entitlements, provided the Government of Cambodia supports the implementation of a programme to improve working conditions in the textile and apparel sector, including internationally recognized core labour standards, through the application of Cambodian labour law.

The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) – comprising representatives from the Cambodian Government, the Garment Manufacturers' Association, and trade unions – endorsed the third report, and said it was pleased that it confirmed that there is no evidence of child labour, forced labour, and discrimination, including sexual harassment, in the 30 factories covered by the report.

* Copies of the “Third Synthesis Report”, and the PAC statement, as well as previous reports are posted on the ILO Web site, www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/index.htm, under “Featured Sites”.

EARTH SUMMIT II

ILO to summit: Sustainable development begins in the workplace

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa – If sustainable development strategies for lifting people out of poverty and reversing environmental degradation are to succeed, look to the workplace. This was a key message from the ILO Governing Body tripartite delegation to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg from 26 August through 4 September.

In his address to the Summit, ILO Director-General Juan Somavia noted that adopting environmentally friendly technologies and practices will require a revolution in the way people work and in the things which they make. The challenge of achieving sustainable development, he said, is a massive opportunity for technological breakthroughs, investment, skills development, gender equality, and decent work.

“Managing change by close cooperation between governments and the real actors of the economy is vital,” Mr. Somavia said. “It is organized workers and employers, women and men, who will play the primary role in making the technological transition to sustainability.”

“Let’s remember that it is through work – and work that is accomplished in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity – that people can rise out of poverty, earn a decent living, and relate to society and the environment in a truly sustainable way,” he added.

Other members of the ILO delegation included the Chairperson and Workers’ Representative of the ILO Governing Body, Lord Brett, the Vice-Chairperson representing Governments, Ambassador E-Y. Chung of Republic of Korea,

and the Vice-Chairperson representing Employers, Mr. D. Funes de Rioja. All three Governing Body members joined Somavia for an ILO-sponsored Round Table on Employment, Social Dialogue and Social Protection, which was attended by more than 150 Summit participants.

After months of negotiations and preparatory meetings, the final political document of the Summit included an agreement to “provide assistance to increase income-generating employment opportunities, taking into account the International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work”.

Somavia, in his speech to the Summit, also linked the failure to achieve sustainability to the present form of globalization, which he described as “exacerbating rather than bridging social divisions within and between countries”. To further

explore this issue, the ILO World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization convened at the Summit in a consultation meeting with representatives of civil society. The two co-chairs, President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania and President Tarja Halonen of Finland, joined five other Commission members at the event.

The Summit’s overriding theme was to promote action on the most pressing concerns of poverty and the environment, with a particular focus on four priority areas set forth by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan: To increase access to clean water and proper sanitation, to increase access to energy services, to improve health conditions and agriculture, and to better protect the world’s biodiversity and ecosystems.



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Tripartite conference in Tallinn

The implications of information and communication technology (ICT) for work and employment were under discussion in April, when government, employers' and workers' representatives from Central and Eastern European countries met in Tallinn, Estonia, for a two-day conference organized by the ILO and the Estonian Government

TALLINN, Estonia – The conference, which was supported by the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs and the Finnish Ministry of Labour, provided an opportunity to assess issues raised in the ILO World Employment Report 2001, "Life at Work in the Information Economy" – particularly in the context of European Union expansion.

While delegates concluded that Central and Eastern European countries are generally well-equipped for the information society, some warned that securing the benefits depends on ensuring an appropriate policy environment and efficient social dialogue.

Amid fears that the expansion of the European Union could potentially see a "brain drain" to Western Europe, the conference urged governments and social partners to combine incentives for qualified professionals to remain in their home countries, with similar incentives to woo

back those who had already left. Also highlighted was the need for the continuous training of young people – and indeed older workers.

According to some at the conference, new forms of work organization – which are emerging through the use of ICT – could potentially lead to more job satisfaction and a more balanced work and family life. However, both employers' and workers' organizations were told that such new types of work could require them to find innovative ways to organize their members and would-be members, and to deliver services to them.

The conference agreed that collective bargaining and national, sectoral, and local-level agreements were a useful tool when new work practices are being implemented. Specifically on telework, the conference drew up a good-practice list, which included a recommendation that telework should be voluntary, with the right for individuals to return to company offices. The need to protect teleworkers' employment and representational rights was stressed.

Also explored were the occupational safety and health implications of new technology at work, with delegates calling for better professional advice on acceptable working environments and conditions of work.

With all the European Union candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe represented, the ILO conference provided an opportunity for delegates to take stock of the potential which ICT offers for employment creation and decent work.

Telework agreement

European employers' representatives and trade unions have negotiated a new European Union-wide framework agreement on teleworking. The agreement, signed at a ceremony in Brussels in July, marks the culmination of almost a decade of debate at the European level, about how to regularize conditions for those working in new

ways with information and communication technologies (ICTs).

BRUSSELS, Belgium – Telework, which historically has proved a difficult term to define, is used in the agreement to mean work which makes use of ICT and is carried out away from the employers' premises on a regular basis. Potentially, therefore, the new framework covers many mobile workers as well as those who are home-based.

The agreement was negotiated between three European employers' bodies and the European Trade Union Confederation, and is the first time that employers' and workers' representatives in Europe have established an agreement which they themselves undertake to implement, without recourse to European legislation.

The agreement covers a number of points. The first establishes that telework should be voluntary with an explicit "right to return" to conventional working at a worker's or employer's request (except in cases where the initial job description specifies that the post is a teleworking one). Teleworkers are to benefit from the same employment rights and conditions as their colleagues who are working conventionally, and employers are generally expected to provide the equipment used by teleworkers and to take responsibility for data protection safeguards.

Employers remain responsible for the health and safety of teleworking employees, in line with standard legislation. Among other things, the agreement also covers privacy rights and issues.

The agreement builds on numerous collective

telework agreements within individual companies (particularly those in the information technology and telecom sectors), and on national and sectoral telework agreements and codes of practice established in several EU member states. More recent antecedents are the two EU-wide sectoral agreements on telework, negotiated for the telecom and commerce sectors between employers and UNI-Europa.

In the context of European social partnership, it is the voluntary nature of the framework agreement which has received particular attention. It makes use for the first time of the "voluntary route" established in Article 139 of the EU Treaty, and is seen as a model for future social partnership agreements.

European Commissioner Anna Diamantopoulou, in welcoming the agreement as a landmark deal, called it a sign of the "coming of age" of European social dialogue. Monitoring of the agreement is to be undertaken by an ad hoc group made up of the signatory parties, with a joint report on the process of implementation required within four years.

Tripartite labour agenda adopted in Santo Domingo

SANTO DOMINGO, Costa Rica – Tripartite delegations from Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and the Dominican Republic, have adopted a new labour agenda for the subregion following a meeting in Santo Domingo in May 2002. The discussions were organized by the ILO Office in San José, with support from two technical cooperation projects promoting social dialogue in the subregion (PRODIAC, funded by the Government of Norway, and RELACENTRO, funded by the US Department of Labor).

The underlying theme of the meeting was the link between labour relations, social dialogue, and democratic governance. The agenda which was adopted identifies 11 priority areas for action and follow-up, including: compliance with the ILO fundamental Conventions, policies and strategies to address the informal economy;

strengthening the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations; promoting productivity and competitiveness, particularly in micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises; promoting gender equality; modernizing social security systems; and developing programmes on migration of labour in the subregion.

In spite of the extremely difficult economic and social environment in most of the countries, participants expressed real interest in adopting a new approach to industrial relations in the subregion, one based on respect for the principle of freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively, and building a consensus on economic and social development.

The follow-up and implementation of this agenda will be supported by the ILO working with the relevant national and subregional bodies, such as the Council of Ministers of Labour,



>> the Subregional Employers' Forum, and the Workers' Forum. A follow-up subregional meeting will be held to evaluate the results of this agenda and to establish future activities. (For further information, contact the ILO InFocus Programme on Social Dialogue, Labour Law and Labour Administration, by e-mail at: ifpdialogue@ilo.org)

Arab Region: From significant historical innovations to modest diffusion of new technologies



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Will information technology widen the gap between the rich and the poor? Or will it be a significant instrument in promoting decent work for all men and women in the Arab Region? These were two of the major questions raised during a regional Forum on Technology, Employment and Poverty Alleviation in the Arab Countries, jointly held by the ILO and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in Beirut on 16 to 18 July 2002.

BEIRUT – In his opening speech, Mr. Juan Somavia, the ILO Director-General, said that, “we are in a region whose cultures were once technology leaders, who were great innovators, and whose ideas and inventions spread across civilization”.

The Lebanese Prime Minister, Mr. Rafiq Hariri, stressed the importance of this Forum and the need to couple it with practical mechanisms for technological advancement in the Arab Region. According to Mr. Hariri, technological development can't be achieved through government initiatives alone, but rather jointly with the private sector and in partnership with European countries.

Mr. Hariri has agreed to sponsor a regional meeting of the Global Commission for the Social Dimension of Globalization, in response to an invitation by the ILO Director-General, made through his Adviser on Development Policies and Counselor on Arab Countries, Mr. Samir Radwan.

According to papers presented during the Forum, new technologies could provide opportunities for sustainable development, job creation, and poverty alleviation, if they can bridge the income divide between the haves and the have-nots, both between countries and within them.

“Information and communication technologies in their hands can inspire innovation, can create decent work, work with higher productivity and incomes, and with a higher level of participation and equity,” Mr. Somavia said. He stressed that “the poor, after all, are also information poor...when technology gives them a voice, they are empowered, and thus better able to attain the security, decency, and respect to which all people aspire”.

“Globalization has been an instrument for progress, for enterprise, for jobs, for wealth. For others, however, including many in this region, it has been a source of rising inequality and insecurity,” he added.

The Forum focused on reviewing and generating debate on policies, strategies and initiatives aimed at employment creation, decent work, and poverty alleviation, through new technology inputs in the Arab Region and other experiences worldwide.

“The aim of the Forum is to study ways and means of making modern technology the focus of thought, planning, and implementation in Arab societies, with a view to improving the relative position of the Arab States,” Ms. Mervat Tallawy, Under Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCWA said.

While referring to the low level of GDP per capita in most Arab countries – a mere US\$2,800 – Ms. Tallawy stressed the importance of human endeavours over raw materials, implying that the region could rely on its human and social capital if technology is utilized. She cited different examples where modern technology was able to overcome development-related problems, including poverty, unemployment, and low levels of education.

“However, the problem is how to raise awareness of the potential of these new sciences, how to find the people who are determined to make change and exploit technology, and how to change traditional ways of thinking in respect to this knowledge,” Ms. Tallawy added.

Throughout the three-day Forum, speakers and specialists indicated that market forces may be powerful motors of technological progress, if combined with the right policies and approaches, not only by governments but also by the private sector, whose commitment is essential.

Policies aimed at introducing new technologies should concentrate simultaneously on the integration of the Arab economies into the knowledge-based global economy.

The Forum was also attended by a number of well-known Arab scientists, including Professor Ahmed Zewail of Egypt, the 1999 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry.

One of the major achievements of the Forum was the establishment of a task force on information technology, employment, and poverty. The last day of the Forum was also dedicated to the inaugural meeting of the ESCWA Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development, and Technological Innovation (ESTIC). ESTIC came up with recommendations on science and technology strategies for employment creation and poverty alleviation which will be presented to member countries for implementation.

ILO Director-General in Moscow



ILO DIRECTOR-GENERAL
boots up Russian ILO
Web site in Moscow.

MOSCOW – The ILO Director-General met with senior officials of the Russian Federation as well as employers' and workers' representatives during a recent five-day visit here, during which he discussed the Russian Federation's accession to the World Trade Organization and other issues, such as child labour.

Included in the meeting were Alexander Pochinok, Minister of Labour and Social Development; Mikhail Shmakov, Chairman, Federation of Independent Trade Unions of the Russian Federation, leaders of affiliated trade unions, and

Oleg Eremëev, Director-General, Coordinating Council of Entrepreneurs' Unions of the Russian Federation. Meetings were also held with Prime Minister Mikhail Kasianov, Vice-Premier Valentina Matvienko, the State Duma Chairman, Gennady Seleznev, and the Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov.

At the meeting with Prime Minister Kasianov, the ILO Director-General gave top priority to the discussion of issues related to the forthcoming accession of the Russian Federation to the World Trade Organization. The Government has requested the ILO to assist in assessing the social consequences of its accession. Juan Somavia noted that everything possible needs to be done to maximize the benefits and minimize the negative impact on the population of the Russian Federation of joining the WTO.

The child labour problem was also discussed at the ILO delegation's meeting with leaders of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia. Following a meeting with the Mayor of Moscow, Mr. Somavia also visited a shelter for street children – one of many which have been opened in recent years in the city.

Director-General visits France



During an official visit to France on 19 and 20 September 2002, ILO Director-General, Juan Somavia met with President Jacques Chirac. They agreed that in order to tackle the globalizing economy, States will need to look at promoting globalization with a human face because there can be no sustainable economic development without social progress for the people. Mr. Somavia emphasized the significance of this meeting and the importance of dialogue to make progress in the new direction of globalization.

He also met with the Minister of Labour, François Fillon, Denis Gautier Sauvagnac, Vice-president of MEDEF (a French Employers' and Association) and Marc Blondel, Secretary-General of the trade union "Force ouvrière" and a worker delegate to the ILO Governing Body.



AROUND THE CONTINENTS

A REGULAR REVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION AND ILO-RELATED ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS TAKING PLACE AROUND THE WORLD.

ILO gender audit

■ Findings of the first participatory gender audit in the ILO were presented at a panel discussion on 17 June, in Geneva. Four panelists talked about their experiences in the ILO gender audit, which took place in 15 work units at headquarters and in the Organization's field offices, from October 2001 to April 2002. The panel, hosted by the ILO Bureau for Gender Equality, was attended by around 75 delegates to the International Labour Conference, and representatives of the United Nations, the ILO, and NGOs. Panelists who had been part of audit teams said the participatory, self-assessment approach of the audit facilitated their role in helping work units identify their own good practices and gaps in gender mainstreaming. Workshops with both professional and general service staff during the audits also contributed to discussions about organizational and methodological challenges to promoting gender equality in ILO programmes and initiatives.

For further information, please contact the ILO Bureau for Gender Equality,
phone: +4122/799-6730,
fax: +4122/799-6388,
email: gender@ilo.org

New foundation aims to end abusive child labour in cocoa industry

■ On 1 July, the international cocoa industry, the International Union of Food and Allied Workers (IUF) and three NGOs established a foundation to end abusive child and forced labour in the growing and processing of cocoa beans. The Geneva-based International Cocoa Initiative – Working Towards Responsible Labour Standards for Cocoa Growing, will provide financial and operational support to field projects, and act as a clearinghouse for best practices in ending child and forced labour. The Foundation will also help determine the most appropriate, practical means of monitoring and public reporting, in compliance with internationally recognized abusive child and forced

labour standards. ILO Director-General Juan Somavia welcomed the initiative, saying that “in collaboration with this Foundation, the ILO will play an important role in identifying strategies to remove children from the worst forms of child labour and adults engaged in forced labour, in the growing and processing of cocoa beans and their derivative products”. The ILO will also serve as an advisor to the Foundation's Board of Directors.

For further information, please contact the ILO InFocus Programme on Child Labour,
phone: +4122/799-8181,
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email: ipecc@ilo.org

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Company labour pact cites ILO standards

■ A multinational paper company has signed an agreement with a labour group which incorporates respect for core ILO labour standards into its global operations. The 24 June agreement between the Norwegian firm Norske Skog and the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers Union (ICEM) covers 11,000 employees worldwide. ICEM General Secretary Fred Higgs said that “global agreements give substance and credibility to corporate ethics”.

For further information on this and similar agreements, please contact the ILO Multinational Enterprises Programme,

phone: +4122/799-6481,

fax: +4122/799-6354,

email: multi@ilo.org

Trade bills call for promoting ILO standards

■ The Senate trade bill passed on 23 May calls on US trade negotiators to promote respect for ILO core labour standards. It also calls on them to promote universal ratification and full compliance by all nations with ILO Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour. The House of Representatives earlier passed its own trade bill instructing negotiators “to promote respect for worker rights and the rights of children consistent with core labour standards of the ILO”. Both bills also call for greater cooperation between the ILO and the World Trade Organization.

For further information, please contact the ILO Washington Branch Office,

phone: +1202/653-7652,

fax: +1202/653-7687,

email: washington@ilo.org

Research methodologies for decent work

■ The ILO International Institute for Labour Studies, and its Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, organized a national workshop on research methodologies for decent work, in Shanghai, China, from 15 to 17 May. The purpose of the workshop was to start a comprehensive discussion of the concept, indicators and measures of decent work. Senior officials and social partners in China who attended the workshop evaluated the policies and programmes being adopted in China to realize the goal of decent work. The workshop was organized as a follow-up of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the ILO Director-General, and the Chinese Ministry of Labour and Social Security in May 2001.

For further information, please contact the International Institute for Labour Studies,

phone: +4122/799-6128,

fax: +4122/799-8542,

email: inst@ilo.org

ILO launches “S.O.S. Computers” for Afghanistan

■ Women are back to work in Afghanistan. The Afghan Interim Authority (AIA) has recently issued an official decree to affirm women’s right to work. Both the Afghan Ministry of Women’s Affairs and the Ministry of Labour have requested the



ILO to help recreate an environment where women can work while feeling secure and safe. A pilot project started in early June, and computer applications and management training centres have already opened in the Afghan capital, Kabul. The project will initially target 500 women recently hired by the Ministries. The ILO Crisis Response Programme made an initial allocation of US\$150,000 to provide for office space, equipment, and training. Other agencies (IAEA, the UN Vienna office, and ICTY) have already joined the ILO in this effort, or are expected to contribute to the programme. Computer equipment will be donated by an international private company.

For further information, please contact the ILO Crisis Response Programme, phone: +4122/799-6834, fax: +4122/799-6189, email: crisis@ilo.org

ILO Forum on Equality at Work

Equality at work is an essential component in the effort of achieving decent work for all. Recently, Japan has introduced related legislation, including the Basic Law on Joint Participation of Men and Women in Society. The law prohibits unfair and discriminatory treatment with respect to recruitment and working conditions of women and men. To raise awareness on the principle of equality at work and ILO Convention No. 111 on discrimination (employment and occupation), the ILO Tokyo Branch Office organized the Forum on Equality at Work, on 2 July at the United Nations University, in Tokyo.

For further information, please contact the ILO Tokyo Branch Office, phone: +03/5467-2701, fax: +03/5467-2700, email: tokyo@ilo.org

ILO-Japan forums on company HIV/AIDS policies

■ The AIDS epidemic is spreading steadily in Japan and has almost reached a critical level. On the occasion of the publication of the ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work in Japanese, the ILO and Sankei Shimbun, the Japanese employers' federation, have decided to hold a forum on company HIV/AIDS policies in Tokyo (23 July) and another in Kobe (25 July). The forums will examine such issues as the necessity to support HIV-infected people, how to prevent the spreading of HIV/AIDS, and the benefits to the company of investing in employees' health.

For further information, please contact the ILO Tokyo Branch Office, phone: +03/5467-2701, fax: +03/5467-2700, email: tokyo@ilo.org

Tighter maritime security

■ On 27 June, leaders of the G-8 industrialized nations agreed on several steps to improve maritime security, including new ILO standards for seafarers' identity documents. The statement gives a boost to the ILO plan to develop a new protocol,



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slated for discussion and adoption at next year's International Labour Conference. Last September's terrorist attacks created new urgency for standardized documents to check the identity of seafarers entering US and foreign ports.

For further information, please contact the ILO Maritime Activities Team, phone: +4122/799-7501, fax: +4122/799-7050, email: marit@ilo.org



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Friday, 12 July, 2002, 16:05 GMT 17:05 UK

Africa feels hidden cost of Aids



UNAIDS estimates 28 million Africans have HIV

Illnesses caused by the spread of Aids, and the virus that triggers it, are hitting the economies of sub-Saharan Africa harder than expected, a report by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has said.

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WEDNESDAY JUNE 12, 2002

Report 15.08

World Day against Child Labour

According to the recently released report "A Future Without Child Labour", 246 million children - not in every six children aged 5 to 17 - are involved in child labour. Among its startling findings, the report also revealed for the first time that some 179 million children aged 5-17 are in every eight children in the world - it will respond to the worst forms of

child labour which endanger the child's physical, mental or moral well-being. The first World Day Against Child Labour will be observed worldwide today (12 June). The International Labour Organization (ILO) formally launched this global day with an event at its Headquarters in Geneva on June 11 the eve of the first World Day.

Labour is intended to help spread the message that child labour remains a serious problem and that we must do more to combat it," said International Labour Organization (ILO) Director-General Juan Somavia in a statement. "We are asking everyone to join together in working towards a world where no children will be deprived of a normal, healthy childhood, where par-

ents can find decent jobs and children can go to school. Our goal is a world free from child labour."

In Sri Lanka, while the problem does not have the same proportions as it does in other South Asian countries, pockets of children are trapped in child labour. It is imperative that they are immediately being given better alternatives.

The Island

Wednesday 12th June 2002, Registered as a Newspaper Vol. 22 No 138 PRICE Rs.15.00

ILO launches first "World Day Against Child Labour"

The first World Day Against Child Labour will be observed worldwide today. The International Labour Organization (ILO) formally launched this global day with an event at its Headquarters in Geneva on 11 June, the eve of the first World Day.

"This first World Day Against Child Labour is intended to help spread the message that child labour remains a serious problem and that we must do more to combat it," said International Labour Organisation (ILO) Director-General Juan Somavia in a statement for the day. "We are asking everyone to join

together in working towards a world where no children will be deprived of a normal, healthy childhood, where parents can find decent jobs and children can go to school. Our goal is a world free from child labour."

In Sri Lanka, while the problem does not have the same proportions as it does in other South Asian countries, pockets of children are trapped in the worst forms of child labour. It is imperative that they are immediately being given better alternatives. While it is difficult to point at accurate numbers, there is clear evidence that there are Sri Lankan

TradeWinds

ILO Hopes Measures will not Compromise Crew Dignity

September 13th, 2002 - The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is hoping the new crew identity card it is developing as part of enhanced security measures will still manage to "maintain the dignity of seafarers".

The controversial new measure to introduce identity cards is being developed at a time when seafarers with legitimate visas are being denied access to some US terminals because of heightened security. Some US seafarers have even been denied access to US ports.

Norwegian Maritime Directorate assistant director Georg Smeffjell, who is working on the new identity card, says the recent developments in the US could mean conventional shipping practices will "grind to a halt". Speaking at the International Shipping Federation's manning and training conference, he called for a new understanding on port access along with the identity card.

He said: "There is a need to provide international agreements to allow access to ports and a need to protect the dignity of seafarers." The new identity card will contain so-called biometric details that register individual characteristics such as fingerprints or facial features. They could also employ "smart-card" electronic technology to further enhance security.

The US is independently proposing that identity cards also carry background information on individual seafarers but the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has voted against the move partly to protect human rights. The US is also trying to persuade the IMO to allow it to inspect vessels it believes to be a security threat outside its waters, although the IMO security working group meeting this week has not welcomed the idea.

TRIBUNE DE GENÈVE

«La mondialisation a échoué pour un milliard de sans-emploi»

Le directeur général du BIT tire la sonnette d'alarme.

Le plus grand échec de la mondialisation est de ne pas avoir créé suffisamment d'emplois, a affirmé hier à Genève le directeur général du BIT, Juan Somavia. Devant les 3000 délégués de la 96^e Conférence internationale du travail tenue jusqu'au 20 juin. Plus d'un milliard de personnes et de femmes sont sans emploi, se-

condemner direct, plus de 128 millions de travailleurs migrants et leur famille quittent leur pays pour rechercher un travail ailleurs, a-t-il déclaré.

"Nous avons besoin de créer 300 millions d'emplois nouveaux au cours des dix prochaines années, presque exclusivement dans les zones en développement, pour

répondre de la demande de travail. Mais personne ne prévoit de scénario pour cette prochaine décennie afin de combler ce déficit béant d'emploi décent", a répliqué Juan Somavia. Il a appelé à une action conjointe entre secteur public et secteur privé. Il a notamment souligné que la croissance internationale et les investissements étrangers profitent seulement à quinze pays en développement. Pour le reste, les résultats sont très mitigés.

Par ailleurs, M. Somavia a dit s'efforcer de l'organisation. Il a rappelé notamment la création de la commission mondiale sur la mondialisation, dont le rapport est attendu d'ici à la fin de l'année prochaine. L'action contre le travail des enfants et l'exploitation d'un bureau de Genève du BIT et le Bureau (Myanmar).

Quatre Palestiniens sur dix au chômage
 Le directeur général du BIT a lancé également un appel au dialogue. Il s'est engagé à créer un important programme de coopération pour les travailleurs palestiniens. «Le BIT ne peut pas se dérober à ses responsabilités», a déclaré Juan Somavia. «Une pause durable pour soulager les tensions lorsqu'on se fonde sur la justice sociale, n'est pas possible», a-t-il ajouté.

Une réunion d'urgence du BIT a consisté sur place l'effacement socio-économique des territoires palestiniens, avec un taux de chômage de l'ordre de 43% et

sans se dévoter du seul succès. Simplement, il faut continuer à combattre ces situations et leur

Business News Americas

Rio Tinto to Adopt ILO Labor Norms

September 16 - Union representatives and Rio Tinto Brasil are to sign an agreement Friday (Sept.20) to implement International Labor Organization (ILO) standards, union leader Claudio Scliar told BNAmericas.

"Rio Tinto is the first Brazilian mining company to implement the standard," Scliar said at the II Brazilian Congress of Open Pit and Underground Mines in Belo Horizonte.

Although the Brazilian government has not ratified ILO norm No. 176, the company, a subsidiary of London-based mining giant Rio Tinto (LSE: RIO), and unions have reached an accord to implement a local version of the regulation known as NR-22. Negotiations are advancing to establish other cross-border...

The Guardian

Long march to save the world's children

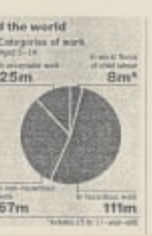
Analysis
 Felicity Lawrence

disease (especially HIV/AIDS), and that they need to be addressed. A declaration adopted by the ILO in 1998 committed its 175 member states to abolish child labour, but given the severity of the problem and its causes, can the rhetoric achieve anything? Scliar's gathering, however, marks progress, with the emergence of a more sophisticated view which moves the issue on from how just only the benefits of all child labour in poor countries. The report, A Future Without Child Labour, is significant

economic activity which is acceptable for those who have reached the minimum age - a few hours a week in the family business, for example. A shocking number of children - about 170 million - are engaged in hazardous work: in construction, quarrying, mining, in jobs exposing them to chemicals, or other conditions likely to harm them because of the hours of their age. Of these, 11 million are children under 15 whose the ILO says need to be taken out of such work immediately. A further 20 million are middle aged

and other forms of forced labour: forced recruitment for armed conflict, prostitution, pornography, and other ILO activities. By definition, these forms of child labour are hidden and hard to quantify, so the figures are likely to be underestimates. Recognition of these different categories has been crucial in getting action on the most harmful kinds. The 1999 ILO convention on the worst forms of child labour has been rapidly ratified by many governments which might previously have been too worried about trade sanc-

Working children around the world
 Economically active children Age 5-14 million
 Developed/Developing countries
 2.5
 2.4
 127.3
 17.4
 48.0
 13.4
 67m
 111m



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Experts meet to discuss providing basic payments to everyone

By NAOMI KOPPEL, Associated Press Writer

GENEVA - Governments should scrap existing welfare programs and provide every person in the world with a meet fundamental human needs, according to experts meeting under U.N. sponsorship here Thursday.

Under this system, everyone would receive such basic income — not just those with a demonstrated need, as programs. People with higher income would simply pay more income tax.

Such a system would be far simpler than existing welfare programs and would pay for itself because it would in bureaucracy, argued Guy Standing, chairman of the Basic Income European Network, or BIEN, which organize conference in Geneva.

Around 200 government advisers, academics and other experts from 28 countries are discussing the idea, which would improve economic security.

They say that everyone is entitled to enough income to cover minimum needs — food, housing, clothing, education, care, regardless of race, gender or age. The exact level of the payment would vary from country to country.

"When we first introduced this, we were regarded as mad, bad and dangerous to know. But we are now welcome policy-makers," Standing told reporters.

Programs in the United States and elsewhere have shown that such payments can work, Standing said.

These include the Alaska Permanent Fund, introduced in 1978, that provides income to every resident of the state and programs to provide money to women in Brazil and elsewhere provided their children go to school.

He also welcomed the introduction of a "baby bond" by the British government that puts money into trust when provide it with income in adulthood.

The conference is being hosted by the International Labor Organization although the ILO — the U.N. labor agency official position on the issue.

Among those speaking are the prime minister of Mozambique, Pascoal Mocumbi, and ILO Director-

CORRIERE DELLA SERA

Somavia, direttore dell'Agenzia delle Nazioni Unite: «Il nemico è la mancanza di strutture scolastiche»

Minori, otto milioni di schiavi

Denuncia dell'Onu: nel mondo un bimbo su sei costretto a lavorare tra i 5 e i 17 anni

ROMA — Nel mondo sono oltre otto milioni i bambini ridotti in schiavitù. E quelli costretti a lavorare, tra i cinque e i 17 anni, raggiungono la stragrande cifra di 246 milioni. Uno su sei. Per la gran parte (69%) nell'area Asia-Pacifico, di cui 178 esposti alle forme peggiori di sfruttamento e 70 milioni con mansioni pericolose. Cifre aggiornate e contenute nell'ultimo rapporto elaborato dall'Ufficio internazionale del lavoro (Oit, agenzia delle Nazioni unite). Il cui direttore generale Juan Somavia dominicano a Ginevra ricorderà per lanciare la proposta di celebrare, il 12 giugno di ogni anno, la prima giornata mondiale contro il lavoro minorile.

«Tutti insieme dobbiamo impegnarci per un mondo migliore dove ogni bambino può avere una infanzia normale», Somavia, 60



AL LAVORO Giovani impegnati in una officina pachistana

Servono veramente questi soldi o non vi è il rischio che vadano a rafforzare le dittature?

«Negli anni Sessanta le Nazioni unite fissarono il livello di aiuti allo 0,7% del Pil. Ora vedo che molti paesi ricchi, tra cui l'Italia, stanno proponendo di portarlo all'1%. Questo può cambiare in meglio le cose. Da parte nostra vi è il massimo impegno affinché questi fondi abbiano l'impatto migliore. Sono migliaia i casi di ragazzini che venivano sfruttati lavorando la terra e che noi siamo riusciti a rimandare a scuola, convincendo gli adulti a sostituirli in quelle mansioni».

Non sarebbe meglio introdurre pesanti sanzioni all'interno degli accordi del Wto?

«Credo che il dialogo alla fine sia più efficace della messa all'indice dei Paesi

Frankfurter Allgemeine
ZEITUNG FÜR DEUTSCHLAND

Erster Welt-Tag gegen Kinderarbeit

Genève, 11. Juni. Erstmals wird an diesem Mittwoch ein „Welt-Tag gegen Kinderarbeit“ begangen. Er wurde von der Internationalen Arbeitsorganisation (ILO) proklamiert. Sie will mit verschiedenen Aktionen und auch mit einer Sonderdebatte auf der 90. Arbeitskonferenz in Genf auf das Schicksal der 246 Millionen Kinder aufmerksam machen, die nicht zur Schule gehen können, weil sie arbeiten müssen – in einigen asiatischen und afrikanischen Staaten gar als „Schuldknechte“, die familiäre



Director general OIT critica inacción frente a pobreza

Ginebra, 13 sep (EFE). - El director general de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT), Juan Somavia, se quejó hoy de que se habla mucho, pero se hace muy poco, lo mismo en Latinoamérica que en otras partes, para reducir la desigualdad y la pobreza.

En un discurso a los participantes en una reunión de expertos de diversos continentes que abogan por una renta básica para todas las personas como medio de reducir las desigualdades, el chileno Somavia denunció la inseguridad social y económica que afectan a millones de personas.

El director general de la OIT afirmó que muchos gobiernos se encuentran atados de manos "por condicionantes externos" mientras que otros no quieren poner remedio a la desigual distribución de la riqueza y hay un tercer grupo de países que creen a ciegas en el "fundamentalismo del mercado".

Somavia, que participó en la reciente cumbre mundial sobre el desarrollo sostenible en Johannesburgo (Sudáfrica), dijo haberse traído de allí el mensaje de que la ausencia de seguridad socioeconómica lleva "a la desesperación y a la tentación de actuar destructivamente".

El director general de la OIT encomió los esfuerzos de la Red Europea para una Renta Básica, que ha organizado la reunión ginebrina de hoy y mañana, por promover "una nueva visión de universalidad y solidaridad social" mediante un enfoque centrado en garantizar unos ingresos básicos para todo el mundo.

The Daily Star

People's Right to Know
www.dailystar.com

ILO chief blasts globalisation inability to create jobs

Globalisation has failed to create jobs, effectively fuelling mass economic migration worldwide, the director-general of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Juan Somavia, said on Monday.

Speaking to the ILO's annual assembly, Somavia said more than one billion people were unemployed, prompting 120 million migrant workers to leave their families and home countries in the hope of finding a job elsewhere.

"The present form of globalisation has not produced enough jobs for all those who seek them or in the places where they are most needed," Somavia told government, workers' and employers' representatives from 175 member countries.

Herald Tribune
INTERNATIONAL
1911 New York Times Building, 410 Washington Post Bldg
Clothes for the emperor • By Juan Somavia

The world's people need decent jobs

JOHANNESBURG

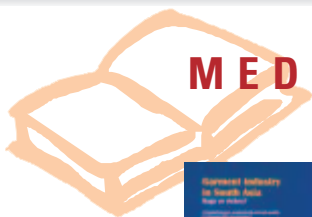
The International Labor Organization estimates that more than a billion women and men are unemployed, underemployed or working poor. A direct result of this is that some 120 million migrant workers and their families have left their home countries in the hope of finding a job somewhere else.

What can the Johannesburg summit do about this? The answer is, plenty. The summiters can begin by affirming that today's globalization, like the emperor in the fable, has no clothes.

Twenty years after the groundbreaking Brundtland report and 10 years after the Earth Summit in Rio, it is obvious that reaching sustainable development objectives that can help relieve this deficit of decent work will be impossible using the present model of un-

Articles have been excerpted and are not always in the exact format in which they appear originally. They are trimmed and rearranged sometimes, for space reasons.

MEDIA SHELF



■ **Garment industry in South Asia: Rags or riches?** Gopal Joshi, ILO, New Delhi, 2002. ISBN 92-2-111910-6.

South Asia has witnessed a rapid expansion of employment opportunities in the garment industry in the past two decades, largely due to quota arrangements under the Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA). Unprecedented numbers of women workers have joined the ranks of almost seven million garment workers.

However, as the competitive pressures from low-cost, high-productivity countries increase, not only employment but job quality may become adversely affected, and the burden of such adverse consequences may fall disproportionately on female workers.

This publication, a compendium of the country papers presented during a sub-regional workshop and meeting, surveys the state and possible future prospects of the garment industry in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and South Asia as a whole. It maps out some of the likely challenges for when the MFA quota system is abolished, and offers governments, employers, and workers potential solutions.



■ **Supporting workplace learning for high-performance working.** David N. Ashton and Johnny Sung, ILO, Geneva, 2002. ISBN 92-2-112801-6.

Across the globe there has been an increase in the proportion of professional, scientific, managerial, and technical workers in the workplace. While these groups have grown most rapidly in the more advanced industrial economies, they are also growing as a proportion of the labour force in many of the developing societies. In addition, the growth of the new high performance work organizations (HPWOs) has meant that where these organizations have been fully established, all employees have become involved in workplace learning. There, the use of modern management techniques is making continual learning a reality.

This book sets out to document and discuss learning and training in HPWOs, considering the phenomena from the perspective of workers as well as employers. It also focuses on the role governments can play in fostering high performance work practices; in particular, encouraging enterprises to make better use of their employees.



■ **Lifelong learning in the mechanical and electrical engineering industries.** ILO, Geneva, 2002. ISBN 92-2-113211-0. Price: 20 Swiss francs.

The mechanical and electrical engineering industries cover a wide spectrum of activities ranging from the manufacturing of heavy special and general purpose machinery and domestic appliances to lighter, but highly sophisticated, electronic equipment such as office machines and computers, electrical machinery, radio, TV and communications equipment, medical, precision and optical instruments, and watches. The processes for manufacturing all these things requires a wide variety of skills at varying levels. This publication sets out to examine the role played by lifelong learning, and some of the diversity of approaches adopted.

In addition to analysing the current overall situation, it examines several case studies and discusses whether examples of best practice of wide relevance can be identified. It also contains a large statistical summary of much of the available data from around the world, and is likely to be of use to policymakers, academics and the tripartite partners working in the area.



■ **Towards decent work: Social protection in health for all workers and their families.** ILO, Geneva, 2002. ISBN 92-2-312491-3.

This document introduces the conceptual framework of the Strategies and Tools against Social Exclusion and Poverty (STEP) programme, for the extension of social protection in health to those currently excluded. It aims to contribute to the development of an operational defini-

tion of social protection in health within the context of the promotion of decent work.

Chapter I presents the goals of social protection in health and the need for a socially guaranteed health services plan as a key element in combatting exclusion.

Chapter II examines the potential causes of exclusion from social protection in health. This includes problems in the demand and supply of health services, determinants of inclusion in health financing, and the organization and institutional contexts which enable well-designed systems to succeed in providing social protection in health.

Finally, Chapter III reviews the implications of the proposed framework for combatting exclusion from social protection in health.



■ **Human capital and the HIV epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa** Desmond Cohen, ILO, Geneva, 2002. ISBN-92-2-113238-2.

This working paper provides insights into the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on sustainable development in the region which is hardest hit by AIDS and already seriously affected by poverty.

The paper focuses on the loss of human capital in two important social sectors – health and education – as well as looking at the likely impact on the public and private sectors in general. It considers how the demographic shifts and loss of skilled, professional and semi-skilled labour will affect the economies of those countries most severely affected, and what the consequences will be for key public services.

The paper concludes with a proposal for the maintenance of human capital in the form of a multisectoral programme of action.



■ **Child labour in the Russian Federation** ISvetlana Stephenson, ILO, Geneva, June 2002. ISBN 92-2-113191-2.

The transition to a market economy follow-

ing the breakup of the USSR, affected the lives of children in the Russian Federation in many different ways. One of the most profound consequences has been the increased involvement of children in economic activity.

Based on the author's own research, as well as secondary information sources, this paper reviews emerging trends and issues in child labour in the Russian Federation over the transition period. It highlights some of the key challenges to be faced if vulnerable groups of children are to be protected from child labour, and particularly its worst forms, in a period of rapid and profound change in economic and social structures.



■ **Intersecting risks: HIV/AIDS and child labour** Bill Rau, ILO, Geneva, June 2002. ISBN 92-2-113192-0

The prevalence of child labour and the risk of children becoming infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) are both influenced by the socioeconomic factors which shape children's lives. This paper analyses the mutually reinforcing factors which, as a result of HIV infection among adults, contribute to child labour and may place child workers at risk of HIV infection themselves. In some instances these contextual factors run parallel; in others they intersect, thereby putting working children at greater risk of HIV infection or of suffering the consequences of infection.

Based on a review of the secondary information currently available, this publication sheds new light on the direct links between HIV/AIDS and child labour, as well as on the common factors, driven largely by deep inequalities between social groups, which increase children's vulnerability both to HIV infection and to being drawn into child labour, especially in its worst forms.



■ **International Labour Review, Vol. 141, No. 1-2.** ILO, Geneva, 2002. ISBN 30 Swiss Francs.

The articles in this double issue of the International Labour Review make an important contribution to major current concerns.

First, Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Laureate economist, writing on "Employment, social justice, and societal well-being", asks why, if the purpose of economic activity is to increase the well-being of individuals, and employment is central to that well-being, economic policies nevertheless often go against workers' interests. The explanation, he argues, lies in the commodification of labour in neoclassical economics, compounded by pervasive market failures, the political underrepresentation of labour, and widespread advocacy of "market-friendly" policies which assume efficiency issues can be addressed in isolation from equity and distributional issues.

To address the highly topical question of core labour standards and foreign direct investment, David Kucera applies new country-level measures of labour standards (freedom of association and collective bargaining, child labour, and gender discrimination and inequality in the workplace) in a cross-country econometric analysis of foreign direct investment inflows in the 1990s. No solid evidence is found in support of the conventional wisdom that foreign investors favour countries with lower labour standards – indeed all evidence of statistical significance points in the opposite direction.

Predicting the labour market effects of population aging is a complex exercise. An older population immediately suggests a contraction of labour supply. But, argues Vincenzo Spiezia in a study of the measures taken by OECD countries to cope with aging, the implications for employment are not obvious. Labour supply also

depends on labour force participation rates, and demand for labour is influenced by the wage effects of supply-side shifts, attendant changes in productivity and capital accumulation, and the increased pension and health-care costs entailed by a higher dependency ratio.

The advent of the informational society in the 1990s marked a turning point in the evolution of employment and occupational structures in the G-7 economies. In their article "An empirical assessment of the informational society: Employment and occupational structures of G-7 countries, 1920-2000", Yuko Aoyama and Manuel Castells elaborate further their theory that informationalism offers a better explanation for the pattern of structural change observed in G7 countries than does the theory of post-industrialism, with its focus on service-sector employment. The analytical focus should now be on information processing as the dominant activity in advanced economies.

Finally, two articles focus on the concept of decent work. Robert Reich develops his views on what constitutes "The challenge of decent work". He stresses the importance of expansionary fiscal and monetary policies in minimizing job loss during an economic downturn. But in the long term, he argues, promoting decent work means focusing on education and training (to enhance competitiveness and to promote flexibility), continuing efforts to integrate the global economy and, for the sake of global social justice, opening industrialized countries' markets to exports from the developing countries, alleviating the latter's debt burden and upholding the ILO core labour standards. And in a "perspective" entitled "Towards a policy framework for decent work", Philippe Egger explains how decent work promotes rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue, and how these contribute to sustainable development, macroeconomic security and a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth.

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“A Future without Child Labour”

In a cramped workshop in Pakistan, 12-year-old Amir hammers and shapes delicate surgical instruments to help his father pay off a debt. A continent away, young Lucy, orphaned by HIV/AIDS, worries that when her scholarship ends, she will be compelled to leave school and resume work as an agricultural labourer.

“A Future without Child Labour”, a new film by the International Labour Organization, looks at the faces behind the figures. Although they are just two of the world’s 246 million child labourers, Amir and Lucy can now be heard. Listen as they work today, wondering how their world will look tomorrow. Hear them explain why they are where they are and where they’d like to be. And hear them tell, in their own words, why ending child labour is so important to us as well as to them.



Duration: 26'

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A video produced by the Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, International Labour Organization

For further information: www.ilo.org/declaration