

WORLD OF Work

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ILO



asia jobs crisis worse



is workplace
safety improving?



promoting workers' rights



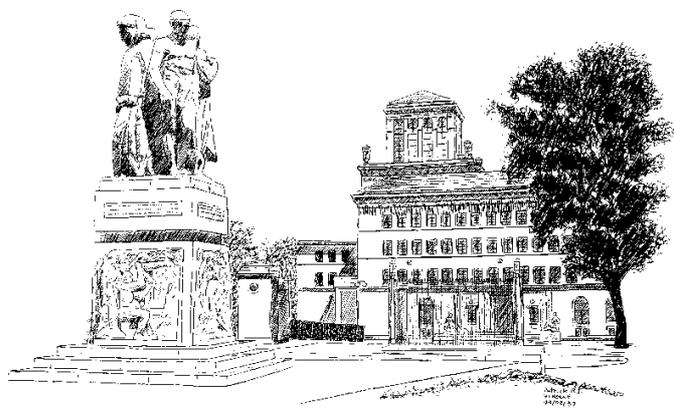
child labour
in tanzania

CRISES AND CHALLENGES

No. 28, February 1999



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE



The ILO in history

What price social justice?

Looking back on 1919: From scepticism to activism

Initially, moves in the first decade of this century towards establishing a system of international labour standards drew little support from trade unions. Unions were inclined to scepticism, doubting the effectiveness of conventions without monitoring systems or sanctions for non-compliance.

The Great War changed that. From the outset of the fighting, unions in several countries made clear that workers expected some return for the sacrifices demanded of them. Thus, from November 1914 onwards, the American Federation of Labor demanded that, once hostilities ended, a meeting of workers' representatives from various countries be held "to the end that suggestions may be made...as shall be helpful in restoring fraternal relations, protecting the interests of the toilers and thereby assisting in laying foundations for a more lasting peace".



Social unrest in the early 20th century (France).

Two years later, a Trades Union Congress held in Leeds at the initiative of French trade unionist Léon Jouhaux and W. A. Appleton of England recommended that a peace treaty "safeguard the working class of all countries from the attacks of international capitalist competition and assure it a minimum guarantee of moral and material order as regards labour legislation, trade union rights, migration, social insurance, hours of work, and industrial hygiene and safety". The meeting also proposed establishment of a monitoring commission and a permanent international labour office.

The proposals drew adherents at other international workers' conferences held in 1917 in Stockholm involving trade unions from the Scandinavian and Central European countries, and in Berne involving the neutral countries and Central Powers, and in 1918, at a London Conference gathering trade unionists from the allied nations.

With the end of hostilities in November 1918, the casualties among workers from all countries was horrifying: over 8 million dead and 20 million wounded. Revolutions and social upheavals highlighted the urgent need to make social justice a top priority of governments. Thus, the decision at the Paris Peace Conference in January 1919 to establish a Commission for International Labour Legislation was the political response to the impatience of workers and their representatives.

Source: *L'Organisation internationale du travail (OIT)*, in the series "Que sais-je?" (Presses universitaires de France)

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Created in 1919, the International Labour Organization (ILO) brings together governments, employers and workers of its 174 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.

Learning from the “Great Depression”

ILO calls on Asian countries to tackle economic crisis with new social policies

*As the social fallout from the sudden unraveling of economic fortunes in east- and south-east Asia begins to exceed initial forecasts and risks dramatically worsening, a new report¹ entitled **The Asian Financial Crisis: The challenge for social policy**, by the ILO calls for a more “socially oriented” model of development, including establishment of unemployment insurance.*

Just as the Great Depression forged a new social contract in industrialized countries in the 1930s, so must the current Asian crisis serve as an impetus to creating a more socially oriented model for development. So says ILO economist Eddy Lee in a new ILO report, which warns that the deepening economic and social troubles in the region are unlikely to be reversed in the near future. The report, issued in Hong Kong

and published late last year, urges governments and policy makers to take unprecedented emergency and long-term measures, especially establishing unemployment insurance for the mounting number of newly unemployed.

In light of the severity of the crisis, solutions will require “an unusual degree of flexibility in policy making on the part of domestic and international actors, including increased social spending, which

may prove unavoidable if countries are to undertake credible efforts to reform and alleviate the worst social aspects of the crisis”, Mr. Lee writes.

Such a social contract could be founded on increased democracy and social protection, including greater respect for the right of workers to form free trade unions, all essential ingredients to overcoming the effects of the crisis. The ILO analysis insists that “there is no basis for arguing that poor countries cannot afford to implement basic civil and political rights,” including freedom of association.

Wiping out jobs: country-by-country

One in every five formal-sector jobs in **Indonesia** was wiped out in 1998 alone, shattering decades of progress made toward modern, industrial employment in that country, along with the livelihoods of 4 to 5 million Indonesian workers and their families. An additional 20 per cent of the Indonesian population, approximately 40 million people, is expected to fall into poverty.

In the **Republic of Korea**, one in 20 workers lost their jobs in the nine months from November 1997 to July 1998 and open unemployment in the country is expected to increase threefold, from 2.3 per cent to 8.2 per cent. An estimated 12 per cent of the Korean population is expected to sink



Jacques Maillard

An estimated 12 per cent of the Korean population is expected to sink below that country’s poverty line this year.

below that country's poverty line in 1998.

In **Thailand** open unemployment levels were seen tripling, from 2 to 6 per cent in 1998, with partial information indicating a rapid acceleration in the rate of job losses in the last three months. As access to jobs and income evaporate, an estimated 12 per cent of the Thai population will become impoverished, adding significantly to the nearly 16 per cent of Thais already living in poverty.

In **Hong Kong, China**, unemployment rose from 2 per cent to over 5 per cent in the first three quarters of 1998, an estimated net loss of some 75,000 jobs. And in **Malaysia**, unemployment levels are expected to double to 5.2 per cent by end of 1998. However, both Hong Kong and Malaysia dipped into recession in 1998, indicating a relatively rapid rate of job losses in a comparatively short period of time.

But the report finds that unemployment statistics tell only part of the story, citing evidence that "the adverse impact on the labour markets of these countries has been more widespread ... apart from open unemployment, the number of discouraged workers also seems to have increased".

In the Republic of Korea, for example, the labour force participation rate fell from 63.1 per cent to 61.5 per cent between the second quarter 1997 to 1998: "This represents a decrease in labour force participation of 1.6 million workers compared to what it would have been had the pre-crisis trend in labour force growth continued."

In Thailand, the number of people of working age shown as being "not in the labour force" increased by 600,000 in the 12 months between February 1997 and 1998. In Malaysia, the presence of a very large number of illegal foreign workers in the country may well understate the true extent of job losses. In Indonesia, where estimated unemployment figures range from 7 to 14 per cent, the low estimate assumes that approximately one-half of all displaced workers will be absorbed into the country's large informal and rural sector, a contingency that is remote in light of the widespread poverty, and even hunger, afflicting both town and county in Indonesia.



Jacques Maillard

The ILO calls for a more "socially oriented" model of development, including establishment of unemployment insurance.

Near-term outlook discouraging

While the region's 1998 economic performance exceeded even the most negative forecasts, prospects for an immediate bounce-back are poor. The most optimistic forecasts see the beginnings of a moderate recovery in the second half of 1999, but few observers expect

a return to the heady growth rates of the pre-crisis era. Full employment, one of the hallmarks of the last 30 years' Asian economic miracle, is also unlikely to return any time soon.

Even in the event of an upturn in the wake of Japanese, United States and Pacific Rim-sponsored recovery initiatives, the ILO says that the Asian social model needs to adapt to the new reality. "Since high and sustained growth can clearly no longer be taken for granted, a significantly greater degree of social protection must be aimed for", Mr. Lee said.

In particular, the ILO report says unemployment insurance schemes for affected workers are feasible, affordable and increasingly necessary as the economic agenda shifts from crisis management and stabilization to embrace far-reaching financial-sector reform and industrial restructuring. The absence of unemployment benefits "has inflicted unnecessary suffering and hardship".

Among the afore mentioned countries, only the Republic of Korea provides laid-off workers with any unemployment benefits at all, and these are usually at a low level and of short duration.

While acknowledging that only success in the struggle to restore financial stability and international confidence will rekindle economic growth, "the ultimate basis for salving social wounds", the ILO insists that it would be "foolhardy" to ignore the lessons regarding social policy which have been so painfully driven home by the crisis: "A fundamental rethinking on the social dimension of economic development is as important as the purely economic and financial issues that currently occupy centre stage." Asia needs, the report says, "a new and better social contract".

Did cronies cause the crisis?

According to the ILO analysis, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Indonesia, the worst-hit country, declined by 15 per cent in 1998. Thailand will decline by 6.5 per cent and the Republic of Korea by 5 per cent. GDPs of Malaysia and Hong Kong, China are expected to de-



Jacques Maillard

“Only a small proportion of the unemployed can expect relief through public employment-creation schemes.” Unemployed in the Republic of Korea sign up for jobs in make-shift “employment offices”.

cline by 3 to 4 per cent. Japan, Singapore, the Philippines, Viet Nam and China have all slipped into recession or seen growth forecasts revised sharply downwards. The ripple effect of the crisis is felt worldwide, in Russia and Latin America, as well as on the stock exchanges of the US and Europe.

The report asks how, after decades of spectacular economic performance, so many east and south-east Asian countries fell victim to an economic shock of such unprecedented scope and severity. It examines four of the most widely-touted causes of the collapse: “crony capitalism and the failure of the Asian model; the role of international capital markets; financial liberalization and fragility; and domestic policy failures”.

While much post-crash analysis initially amounted to shifting of the onus of responsibility from domestic to international actors and back again, with blame being allocated to a diverse spectrum of agents ranging from corrupt and inept government officials to preda-

tory investors who simply panicked and fled, the ILO analysis rejects the “pat” notion that the financial collapse resulted from a “panic” on the part of international investors, and heavily discounts the impact of “crony capitalism” as a primary cause.

The crisis was caused by many factors, including volatile international financial markets, weak corporate governance and domestic policy failures, but the ILO report says that the “the financial system proved itself to be the real Achilles heel of the pre-crisis Asian economies”.

The “crony capitalism” explanation suggests that in spite of their open econ-

omic policies and sound macroeconomic management, Asian economies were fatefully undermined by widespread political interference in the market via corruption, “sweetheart” deals for relatives and cronies of the Government, or through directing finance to politically connected enterprises. “These types of interference in the operation of markets are clearly likely to have contributed to the problem of excessive and misallocated investment and a consequent lowering of the rate of return on capital.”

The report says that “there can be little doubt that elements of crony capitalism played a role in provoking the crisis, even though not the predominant one some have ascribed to it”. The ILO analysis sees crony capitalism as just one in a long list of “inadequacies” that led to a series of domestic policy lapses which eventually, and suddenly, coalesced in a catastrophic loss of market confidence following the Thai currency crisis of 1996. These policy lapses differed widely from country to country, but in general they fueled the dramatic

Increase in Unemployment Rates (%)

	Pre-crisis	Latest
Indonesia	4.9 (Aug. '97)	15.0*
Thailand	2.2 (Feb. '97)	6.0*
Korea, Rep. of	2.3 (Oct. '97)	8.4 (Sept. '98)
Malaysia	2.6 (end '97)	5.2*
Hong Kong	2.4 (end '97)	5.0 (3 rd quarter '98)
Singapore	1.8 (end '97)	4.5 (Sept. '98)

* Estimate.
Government sources.

loss of investor confidence which engulfed the entire region with surprising rapidity.

The ILO report reserves judgement on whether originality or orthodoxy should prevail in monetary and fiscal policy, arguing only that "in situations where professional opinion is seriously divided and where there is a high degree of uncertainty, a greater than usual degree of flexibility in policy implementation would be in order".

It cites the Malaysian decision at the beginning of September, to cut loose from IMF orthodoxy on high interest rates, as being "of considerable interest" in the effort to halt the economic contraction which took hold of that country's economy at the beginning of the year. But the ILO says that it is still too early to tell what effect this move will have.

What is happening in Malaysia and elsewhere is "a real-world experiment with an alternative set of policies to those, which, so far, do not seem to have succeeded in stemming the crisis". In order to avoid the possible immobility of a policy stalemate, the ILO urges pragmatism and "close monitoring of the unfolding effects of current policies and a willingness to change course when warranted".

Can prescribed remedies cure the ills?

What is certain is that while the social dimensions of the Asian crisis have been receiving increased attention, "socially provided relief still falls far short of requirements".

While the emphasis has been on stabilization, there has nonetheless been a significant loosening of fiscal policy, "accompanied by substantial increases in expenditures on mitigating the negative social effects of the crisis", large parts of which take the form of increased foreign aid which is earmarked for social relief. In particular, large social sector loans have been granted to Indonesia and Thailand.

The ILO report says that "not all of the increased expenditure made possible by the larger fiscal deficits has gone into social relief". In Thailand, "social expenditures amount to only half of the projected fiscal deficit of 3 per cent of GDP while in the Republic of Korea the corresponding proportion is 62.5 per cent. It is only in Indonesia where an amount equal to almost 90 per cent of the increased deficit spending will be devoted to social relief."

The report examines what proportion of Asia's needy will be helped by such efforts, concluding that "only a small proportion of the unemployed can expect relief through public employment-creation schemes". In Thailand "only 7 per cent and in Indonesia (at best) only 10 per cent of the unemployed can expect to obtain a job in these schemes". In contrast, "this figure is much higher in the Republic of Korea where approximately 24 per cent of the unemployed are able to count on this form of employment".

The ILO questions whether such schemes and other forms of direct relief on offer "can properly be called social safety nets". The resources deployed thus far "provide relief to only a small fraction of those in need".

The feasibility of unemployment insurance

In light of current circumstances and prospects, major policy initiatives will be needed, chief among them is the establishment of a meaningful and affordable system of unemployment insurance. According to the ILO, the potentially constructive role of unemployment insurance in the current reform process is so strong that it is a "puzzle" why no country, apart from the Republic of Korea, has introduced any form of employment insurance.

Part of the traditional, pre-crisis objections to unemployment benefits dismissed their utility because open unemployment was so low, a condition which clearly no longer pertains. A second objection, applying mainly to countries with large agricultural and informal sectors such as Indonesia and Thailand, maintained that these sectors could absorb retrenched workers. However the extent of both unemployment in cities and rural poverty as well as the need to modernize agriculture should "sweep away any notions about the adequacy of traditional safety nets".

A related series of objections held that the fiscal costs of unemployment insurance and its administration were too high for developing countries; that benefits risked eroding the work ethic and fomenting social pathologies so inimical to "Asian values"; and that unemployment benefits would distort the free market, for example by raising labour costs and reducing the incentive for employers to invest and hire, or by raising the costs of much-needed industrial restructuring.

The ILO confronts these arguments, insisting that "one of the side-benefits of an unemployment benefit system is that it facilitates the process of industrial restructuring, since the added economic security it provides reduces the resistance of workers to change".

As to the prohibitive cost, the ILO argues that "an unemployment insurance scheme is, as the name implies, typically self-financing" on the basis of contributions from workers, employers or a combination of both. The question of a fiscal cost to governments need not arise "unless the government chooses to subsidize the scheme". Governments would clearly need to intervene to establish a system of benefits and that could make coverage as broad as possible and compensate for the near total absence of private insurance.

"Without state intervention, there would be inadequate provision against the contingency of unemployment; individuals do not provide enough cover on their own and, because private provision is not viable, they cannot surmount this by buying insurance." Government-sponsored schemes could be self-financing, with minimal burdens on enterprises and the market.

An imaginative response to the new social agenda need not detract attention or resources from other aspects of dealing with the Asian crisis. The ILO report insists that strengthening the financial system is of key importance and "indispensable for ensuring a return to high and stable growth in the post-crisis period".

The ILO report says that "freedom of association and the right to organize are key components of international action to promote democracy and full respect of basic human rights". It rejects the argument that there are distinct "Asian values" (which place communitarian values and social harmony above individual rights) which stand in sharp contradistinction to universally accepted civil and political rights. "There is no evidence that Asian thought and tradition have historically given less importance to civil and political freedoms." It says that the claims for the existence of distinct "Asian values" are difficult, if not impossible, to make, given the size and diversity of cultures in the region and that the case for such values has most often been "articulated by authoritarian regimes" and does not "represent an expression of popular will." □

¹ The Asian Financial Crisis: The challenge for social policy, by Eddy Lee. International Labour Office, Geneva, 1998. ISBN 92-2-110850-3. Price: 20 Swiss francs.

Asian workers: Despite progress, ILO says freedom of association remains elusive goal

Although some progress has been achieved in recent months, freedom of association – the right of workers and of employers to associate freely, without prior authorization – remains elusive in much of East and south-east Asia, according to the Geneva-based International Labour Office (ILO). In a lengthy report, published in November 1998, the ILO examined the state of workers' rights in the region. A detailed copy of the report is contained in ILO press release ILO/98/41 available from ILO offices, or on the organization's site on the Internet (www.ilo.org/public) under "press releases".

The severe economic and social crisis still unfolding in Asia has focused attention on the need for a genuine social dialogue, and led the authorities in several countries to reconsider past positions. The single most dramatic example of this trend was the ratification by Indonesia of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the instrument which formalizes the principle in international law, on 5 June 1998, following years of systematic repression.

ILO seminars have been organized in Cambodia, China and Malaysia to discuss the legal and practical implications of adherence to Conventions Nos. 87 and 98 while the Lao P.D.R. has asked for and received advice on the compatibility of its labour laws with freedom of association principles.

Of twelve countries¹ in the region, only four – Indonesia (in 1998), Japan (1965), Myanmar (1955) and the Philippines (1953) – have ratified ILO Convention No. 87. Worldwide, 122 of the ILO's 174 member States have ratified Convention No. 87². Ratification alone means little, however,



Jacques Maillard

Freedom of association in China – more to come?

where democracy and the rule of law are denied, as in Myanmar today.

"Freedom to associate with those of one's own choosing is a fundamental human right, nowhere more valued than where it is denied. It is essential to the building of more democratic, participatory and equitable patterns of development in all regions of the world. Without the right to associate, whether exercised or not, the prospects for achieving social justice are poor or non-existent".

*ILO Director-General
Michel Hansenne*

Says William Simpson, Director of the ILO's East Asia Multidisciplinary Team: "If democracy is about the participation of people in how decisions are made, then Convention No. 87 is more relevant than ever as it affects people's rights to express their views, form organizations, and be free from interference. This is especially crucial in a region filled with illustrations of what can go wrong when the right to freedom of association goes unheeded."

Adopted 50 years ago, in 1948, Con-

vention No. 87³ is backed up by a potent supervisory mechanism. A Committee composed of 20 independent experts meets once a year in Geneva to monitor and issue a public report on the application of Conventions – notably Convention No. 87 – in all countries which have ratified them. In addition, the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association – composed of workers', employers' and government delegates – meets three times a year to examine complaints submitted by workers' organizations and, more rarely, by employers' organizations and by Governments.

The distinguishing characteristic of the Committee on Freedom of Association is that, drawing its authority from the ILO Constitution itself, it is competent to examine complaints whether or not the country concerned has ratified the relevant Freedom of Association Conventions. This is a unique feature for which there exists no parallel in international law. Alleged infringements concern, among others, instances of anti-union discrimination, violations of human rights and basic civil liberties, refusal to engage in collective bargaining, denial of the right to strike, and interference by employers in trade union organizing, elections and activities.

Since it was established, in 1951, the Committee has examined nearly 2,000

complaints. It is perhaps best known for its tireless pursuit of information concerning trade unionists who have been murdered, imprisoned or who have “disappeared”. □

¹ Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao P.D.R., Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam.

² *The Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), has been ratified to date by 139 countries, including Indonesia (1957),*

Japan (1953), Malaysia (1961), Philippines (1953) and Singapore (1965).

³ *For more information on the origins, the significance and the impact of Convention No 87, see the International Labour Review, Volume 137, Number 2 – Special Issue: Labour Rights, Human Rights. International Labour Office, Geneva, 1998. ISSN 0020-7780.*

ILO Bangkok meeting calls full employment “a vital goal”

BANGKOK—*The importance of putting employment at the top of the development policy-making priority list was a central theme of the Asian Regional Consultation on follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, in Bangkok in January, and is one of the key guidelines for future ILO action to emerge from the meeting.*

Delegates representing government labour and planning ministries, and workers’ and employers’ organizations from Asia and the Pacific met to discuss the challenge of improving and increasing employment in the midst of the Asian economic crisis. Together they represented 12 countries and one region.¹

The technical report prepared for the meeting warned that the crisis had reversed decades of progress towards full employment in Indonesia, the Republic of Korea and Thailand. The crisis’ disastrous effect on employment could worsen as banks and enterprises tried to regain profitability by shedding labour. Without renewed growth, there was also a risk that more people could be driven out of wage employment in modern sectors into low-paid jobs in the informal sector.

Malaysian workers’ representative and ILO Governing Body member Mr. Zainal Rampak told the meeting’s concluding session that employment creation was the cornerstone of sustainable human development at all times, and deserved serious policy attention. He stressed that employment creation should “go hand in hand with the observance of core labour standards”.

“We are now confronted with significant increases in child labour, greater exploitation of women workers, growing gender inequalities and a vicious low wage contract labour cycle”, he said.

Australian employers’ representative and ILO Governing Body member Mr. Bryan Noakes said the meeting had been a good example of tripartism in action – participants had been able to discuss controversial issues and reach

general agreement. He called for a degree of realism on full employment and the extent of social protection that could be provided. Despite all the work done by workers’ and employers’ organizations, the primary responsibility for dealing with the social impact of the crisis rested with governments.

“Plainly, the goal of full employment is more crucial than ever before in our region”, Assistant Director-General responsible for ILO activities in Asia and the Pacific, Ms. Mitsuko Horiuchi, told the meeting, adding that countries in the Asian region were for the first time learning how to cope with the effects of financial liberalization. Ms. Horiuchi said the crisis was a human crisis, and thus called for even more emphasis on the protection and welfare of workers.

She said the results of the meeting participants’ deliberations, in the form of common understandings produced by the working groups, would provide guidelines for future ILO action.

Among the issues the working groups highlighted were:

- making sustainable employment creation a key objective of development policies;
- making employers’ and workers’ organizations stronger so that they can play a greater part in designing labour, social and economic policies;
- increasing ratification and application of core ILO Conventions and awareness of international labour standards;
- more investment in education, training and multi-skilling in line with market demands, and more involvement

in policy planning by employers and workers;

- encouraging governments, employers and workers to work together to achieve broad-based, sustainable growth, and building trust between the three groups;
- building better social safety nets to provide basic social protection;
- supporting vulnerable groups, including children, migrant workers and workers with disabilities;
- improving labour market information;
- designing policies to help small and medium-sized enterprises while safeguarding the quality of employment;
- raising awareness of their potential to create employment, and making sure they have access to credit, training, and other services they need;
- implementing self-employment programmes to help workers returning to rural areas from cities;
- making sure women have access to training, safety nets, and representation in workers’ organizations and tripartite bodies to overcome gender-based discrimination in the labour market.

Penny Ferguson, ILO/EASTMAT □

N.B. *The report of the meeting will be published and available through the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. It will also be available on the regional website, at <http://www.ilo.org/asia>*

¹ *Australia, China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Thailand.*

Finding ways to fight child labour in Tanzania

With a rapidly declining economy, Tanzania faces an escalating economic crisis. Rising poverty and health threats, most notably the AIDS epidemic, are driving more and more children into the labour market. In the urban informal sector, children below 15 constitute about half the workforce. Now, the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) is working with the government, as well as unions and employers to address this problem.

Sophia has just turned 18. She occasionally helps out at a social rehabilitation centre for young girls. "I came here three years ago. When I was 14, my mother died. They told me it was because of AIDS. My father remarried and I lived a life of misery and slavery because my stepmother ill-treated me." Sophia ran away to Dar es Salaam from her village and found a job as a domestic helper. When her employer started to abuse her sexually she quit, but found no alternative but a grinding life of prostitution on the streets. Through IPEC's outreach programmes with local rehabilitation organizations, she was able to undergo vocational training and start a new life.

"When I was on the streets, someone from the rehabilitation centre approached me and counselled me to join their programme. She told me how I was exposing myself to the scourge of AIDS and other hazards. I am ever so thankful that programmes like this exist because my life has changed completely."

Mistreatment and poverty, lack of harmonious family environment, and family

conflicts have led many children to abandon their homes in search of work, exposing them to situations which are hazardous to their mental, physical and psychological well-being.

"Child labour in this country is a fast-growing social problem", says William Mallya, ILO/IPEC National Coordinator in Tanzania. IPEC is establishing sustainable projects with all social partners and the government to help children move away from child labour into schools and rehabilitation centres.

IPEC was introduced in Tanzania following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Tanzania and the ILO in 1994. "This was a very significant breakthrough in the fight against child labour", notes Mr. Mallya. Since then, IPEC has helped to stimulate efforts to combat child labour by facilitating and supporting different action programmes. Tanzania is a good example of IPEC's success in raising awareness at all levels.

Education: Ill-affordable and of poor standard

Many parents see little value in education which does not provide their children with income-generating skills. Thirty per cent of all 10-14 year-old children are out of school. Gross primary school enrolment has declined from 90 per cent in 1980 to 77.8 per cent in 1996. School drop-out rates and truancy have increased partly due to the introduction of direct and indirect contributions by parents with children going to school, poor school infrastructure and low morale of teachers.

In the rural areas, more than 25,000 out-of-school children are estimated to



From a poster issued by the Child Labour Unit of the Tanzania Ministry of Labour and Youth Development, ATE, TFTU and the ILO.

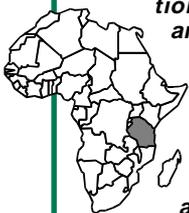
be working under hazardous conditions either in commercial agriculture or in mining and quarry sites. An increasing number of girl-children from the rural villages are being recruited for domestic servitude or prostitution in the urban centres.

Some of the worst forms of child labour appear in the mining and plantation industries, where children are exposed to chemicals, machinery, hard physical work and long working hours. The vast majority of child workers are engaged in subsistence agriculture and in private homes. Most visible are those who work on the streets of urban centres in various types of tasks and activities. Dar es Salaam alone has an estimated 4,500 street children.

Plantation agriculture

In Iringa rural district, about 600 km from Dar es Salaam, an estimated 1,200 to 1,500 boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 15 are seasonally employed in tobacco estates to work under hazardous conditions with little pay. In Mufindi district in the same region, dozens of children between the ages of 12 and 15 were carrying out activities ranging from clearing farm boundaries to picking tea

Tanzania is one of the least developed countries with an estimated population of about 30 million people in 1997. The population growth rate is 2.8% per annum while the economic rate of growth in 1996 was 4 per cent. Forty-seven per cent of the population is below 14 years of age, of which 24 per cent is female and 57 per cent is under the age of 19. Life expectancy at birth is 48.9 and 51.7 years for males and females, respectively.



leaves, but tea estates have taken positive measures towards preventing child labour.

Efforts have been directed towards the training of trade union leaders in cooperation with the Federation of Tanzania Trade Unions (TFTU). Among the issues: bargaining for better and safer working conditions for children on specific plantations, raising the awareness of plantation owners about the negative aspects of child labour, safeguarding jobs for adults, and gradually reducing the number of children working on the plantations.

The Association of Tanzania Employers (ATE), within the framework of IPEC's programme, has secured the cooperation of owners and managers of tea and sisal plantations to work towards protecting children and their gradual removal from the plantations. "Our main problem and major hurdle was to assure employers that ATE was not trying to undermine its own members but was trying to involve them in seeking practical solutions to the problem of child labour", notes Mr. Mark Mfunguo of ATE.

"This whole exercise was indeed a tripartite affair", says Mr. Mfunguo. "We have come a long way in our efforts to remove children from plantations and the trade unions have been extremely helpful by including a ban in their collective bargaining agreements on the use of child labour."

The employers themselves are assisting their adult employees in establishing small economic ventures to help reduce poverty and economic hardship which force them to depend on their children's earnings, giving them small pieces of land for growing vegetables and helping in micro-savings and credit schemes.

Many employers have also reduced the intensity of the workload which had forced workers to seek the help of children. "I could not handle a whole mountain of sisal all by myself and I would only get paid when I was through", says Mwanaidi, a plantation worker who has headed her household since her polygamous husband left her. "So I had to use my children to finish the job on time." Some employers are providing child-care services in the workplace. Others are encouraging workers to send their children to school and as an added incentive and are offering to pay up to 75% of the school expenses for children who reach secondary level. They are also, together with trade unions, community leaders, IPEC and other organizations, assisting in establishing primary schools and vocational

training centres for the local children.

But child labour still exists in small-sector plantations. Children in villages are "lured" by exploiters who promise them an income and transport them to plantations (sisal, tobacco and sugar cane). The children just run away in the hope of finding a better life. Once a crop is harvested, they move the children to other areas where labour is required. This is a form of contract child labour where the owners don't get "involved". The contractor is paid for getting the job done. After the last job, these children are left wherever they happen to be, without any means of returning to their villages. They either search for small jobs or find the nearest rail route and make their way to the cities.

"We have a policy of no child labour", says Rick Ghau, Manager of the Mufindi Tea Plantation. "Tanzania has a surplus of able-bodied unemployed adults so there is no sense in our employing children to do the job." Mr. Ghau stressed that they would work closely with ATE and IPEC to abolish child labour completely.

"We have a school here on the plantations and a day-care centre. We cannot force our workers to send their children to school, but we do encourage it", adds Mr. Ghau.

The story is similar at the Brooke Bond tea plantation which employs about 4,000 people. "We have made a deliberate policy not to employ children, but also not to employ juveniles up to the age of 18...", says the General Manager Norman Kelly, "because it is not always easy to determine the child's age and we do not want to fall into any grey areas." The plantation provides schools for children, medical facilities and day-care centres.

"The call of the mines"

In the small-scale mining camps, children are exposed to environmental hazards and subjected to sexual abuse, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. The primary school drop-out rate is between 30 per cent and 40 per cent in villages surrounding mining sites because children run away to the mines.

Working in the mines is especially hazardous for children. "Because of their small size, it is easier for them to double up and move around the treacherous mine shafts, in particular to place dynamite for blasting", notes Birgite Poulsen of ILO/IPEC, Tanzania. Most of the time they have no protective clothing or equipment. They hide in the shafts during the blasting so that they can be the first to find

FIGHTING CHILD LABOUR IN TANZANIA

In March 1994, the Government and the ILO signed a Memorandum of Understanding to implement child labour programme activities in the country, under IPEC.

IPEC is cooperating with the Government to prohibit, restrict and regulate child labour progressively, with a view to its ultimate elimination. Among the main actors are the Ministry of Labour and Youth Development which is working closely with IPEC and has established a Child Labour Unit. IPEC is also working together with the Ministry of Community Development, Women's Affairs and Children, the Tanzania Information Services Department, the Ministry of Education and Culture and other social partners such as the Association of Tanzania Employers, Tanzania Free Trade Unions, NGOs such as the Tanzania Media Women Association, Tanzania Women Lawyers Association, the African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect, and UNICEF. Local town and village committees/task forces have been set up to deal with resource mobilization and use in child labour issues.

the "big one", the gem that gets blown out. "They live with the vibrations, heat and dust, together with the constant danger of explosions," she adds.

In the large-scale mining sector, very little child labour now exists. Children have been withdrawn from certain mines but many remain in the surrounding areas and move into petty jobs such as cattle herding, farm and domestic jobs. They find themselves far away from their families because they ran away "in search of fortune". Others are orphans. Like the plantation workers, many go to the cities where they join the ranks of street children, domestic servants or get involved in some form of child prostitution.

Poverty and poor health conditions "produce" child workers

Tanangozi village is situated in a "catchment area" which provides future

child domestic workers and prostitutes. A committee comprising educators, counsellors, teachers, village elders and government representatives, who work in close cooperation with the social partners and international aid agencies, was set up after IPEC-coordinated projects had compiled statistics on the number of children out of school. Many are victims of violence or have been orphaned by AIDS.

AIDS is a major threat here and elsewhere. The nearby village of Kiponcero reports that up to 40 per cent of the adults are suffering from AIDS-related diseases. If the current trend is not reversed, it is projected that by the year 2010 there will be four million orphaned children in the country, adding to the rural exodus.

"The adult workforce is fast diminishing because of the high incidence of HIV/AIDS among many workers", notes Norman Kelly, General Manager of the Brooke Bond tea plantation. He points out that of those people referred to the plantation hospital, about 30 per cent of the cases were AIDS-related. Poor health and deaths in the adult population could lead to an increase in children searching for work and in people employing children.

Bringing and keeping the children home

Some children are attracted to towns by peer pressure. "We are trying to sensitize the parents, school teachers and the community to help us in the strategies to bring back those children who have run away and reintegrate them", says Mr. Muzee, Head of the Child Labour Unit of the Ministry of Labour and Youth Development.

Village committees are looking into alternate sources of income for parents which can help alleviate their extreme poverty. They are trying to get children to attend primary schools and older ones are being channelled into vocational training and trades.

Young persons who have finished basic schooling and want to become self-employed do not have the necessary tools and as a result are left with no option but to continue with cattle herding and such activities. With appropriate support they could become self-reliant. IPEC is working closely with the village committees to help provide sustainable solutions through a series of mini action programmes.

Around the bus stand in the town of Dodoma (pop. over 150,000), small mud



Very young boys do domestic work, ranging from fetching heavy loads of water, groceries and firewood, to chopping meat, cooking on open fires and heaving heavy pots of boiling water.



huts with corrugated iron sheets for roofing, broil in the hot sun. Here, many young women run kitchens to feed travellers in transit. Very young boys do domestic work, ranging from fetching heavy loads of water, groceries and firewood, to chopping meat, cooking on open fires and heaving heavy pots of boiling water.

Young girl workers help around or practice prostitution as required because they need the added income to survive.

These and other children selling peanuts, eggs, candy and other items, are generally those who have run away from their homes in villages. This has become a way of life for them.

Special problems of girl-children

IPEC cooperates with TAMWA (The Tanzania Media Women's Association) who is pulling these children, especially girls, out of this pattern and putting them in rehabilitation centres.

"The girl child is disadvantaged from the very beginning. As a future mother, she has to begin working and doing chores at a very early age, frequently at the expense of her education. She doesn't stand a chance unless we change conditions in the villages," says Rose Haji, a journalist from TAMWA. Many girls

who are of marriageable age are put into "confinement", awaiting a match. When marriage does not happen and they have lost a few years, it is too late for them to go back to school and they become a burden on the family. Frequently, they become pregnant, and the social stigma leads families to encourage them to leave home, so they drift into domestic work or prostitution. "The problem is very complex", adds Ms. Haji "but it is also compounded by tribal practices and cultural values such as female genital mutilation, sexual abuse, and child marriages from which the girls are running away."

"Poverty is the major problem", says Leila Sheikh, Director of TAMWA. TAMWA is fighting for a gender-oriented budget, legal literacy, economic literacy, health literacy, family planning issues, education, loans and promotions for women and upward mobility. "Economic growth in our country is too small. The economy is in the transitional stage...The current budget does not hold much hope for workers and vulnerable groups like children, women, the disabled and the aged."

Rehabilitation

A small local rehabilitation centre has been successful in reintegrating young girls from work into schools. Some of them are orphans and others are victims of difficult home circumstances, sometimes living with relatives who ill-treat them.

"I had a very difficult childhood. My parents are dead. I lived with some relatives. There was no money to go to school so I had to drop out and work for a living," says 14-year old Mariamsum,



"Since 1994, we have already had several hundred girls go through our [Kwetu] Centre".

who is now able to attend the Dodoma school.

The *Tumaini* Centre is an education and rehabilitation centre for street children with which IPEC is networking. Here, former street children, domestic workers and prostitutes are given schooling or various types of vocational training such as tailoring, cooking, arts and crafts.

The Social Welfare Centre in the city of Morogoro, a three-hour drive from Dar es Salaam, takes care of reintegrating children who have been "withdrawn" from street situations and domestic labour. "They are now going to start school because of this project that your organization [IPEC] has set up. We hope that we will be able to find local help to sustain this effort in the future", says the chief medical social worker who is part of the child labour task force. "We are also trying to channel the older children into vocational training but we lack the implements such as sewing machines for tailoring, tools for mechanics, etc." They have been able to identify some local businesses which are ready to accept them as apprentices for training.

The Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA) networks with IPEC and provides free legal aid to domestic servants and prostitutes. TAWLA works on safeguarding their rights and awareness-raising. "Recently, we were able to get compensation for a young girl who gave birth to her employer's child and he abandoned her", says Janet Chambo, a lawyer working with girl domestic servants and prostitutes. "These are hidden, invisible workers. In order to protect them, one needs a whole chain of authority – a law, the police, lawyers, magistrates, etc. The system has many loopholes and we have to work in coalition with other organizations. That, and commitment is the only way out."

Kwetu Centre collaborates with IPEC for the rehabilitation of girl prostitutes. Feddy Tesha has been the coordinator since 1994. "When [the girls] come to us, we forge a relationship through different activities and then we guide them to make correct choices", she says. "We have outreach programmes in brothels and ghettos and we use some of our girls to lead us to these places. We make night visits to the streets, meet 'our clients' on-the-spot. We meet them at city entry points where agents 'swoop down' to take them away for prostitution and related work. We make visits to prisons



The Dogodogo Centre even has its own musical band of rehabilitated street children.

where many of them end up, put away for vagabonding. We lobby for their rights. When they are released, they come to us." Some of the girls, between 10 and 15 years old, are addicted to cannabis, glue, etc. Many of them come to the Centre when they are already very sick, frequently with HIV/AIDS.

"Since 1994, we have already had several hundred girls go through our Centre." Some have been channelled to income-generating activities through training, others have been reunified with their families. "We have also 'lost' some girls, mostly to AIDS, and some of the babies as well", states Mrs. Tesha, pointing to a Memorial Board on the wall. "The government is providing help through its social welfare department and provides us with some education and health materials also."

Many girl-child workers are brought from villages for domestic service. They work long hours with very little or no pay. Housework includes taking care of children, cooking, fetching heavy loads of water from the well, cleaning and related tasks. They do not get a chance to attend school and some of them work under very difficult circumstances, sometimes abused physically and sexually.

The Dogodogo Centre

IPEC works closely with the Dogodogo Centre where street boys aged 6 to 17 years are provided with different services. "There is no stability in the family any more, especially in the villages, and children are finding their own ways of

surviving", says Nicholaus Shemsanga, the Centre Coordinator. "We get them off the streets and provide them with food, clothing, recreational activities and health services, education, informal training, family reunification, and shelter to those who we can accommodate", he adds.

Most of these children work in the informal sector on the streets, in quarries breaking stones, scavenging in the garbage dump sites, collecting scrap metal for recycling, digging for sand in the river beds for construction, working in the fish market, washing and guarding cars or begging. "It is not safe on the streets for them", continues Mr. Shemsanga. "They are sexually abused, they face

the risk of AIDS, they are regarded by society as thieves, difficult children, black-listed and spurned, which sometimes leads them to find solace in drugs and opium. They are often harassed by the police. The Dogodogo Centre has sensitized the police and in many cases Centre staff intervene to have the children released.

"To enable more kids to benefit from the activities and food, we have a drop-in centre where we encourage children to join in the recreation and learning", he says. "This soon becomes a habit and they change their ways." He adds that the children often stop petty thieving and criminal activity for survival when they know they can get food at the Centre.

At night on the streets of Dar es Salaam street children and prostitutes fight for survival. Child labour has become a part of life in Tanzania. However, the level of awareness through IPEC's sensitization programmes has increased among all social partners, the Government, NGOs and aid workers. The ILO's new proposed standards on abolishing the most extreme forms of child labour have now led IPEC to reinforce its action in such areas which expose children to hazardous forms of work.

It is the aim of IPEC/Tanzania to focus on strategic measures to integrate child labour concerns into the policies and programmes of the government institutions and of the social partners, to help them intervene against child labour routinely over the long term. □

*Text and photos:
Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman*



Herald INTERNATIONAL Tribune SPORTS

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Zidane's Debt to a Child Worker

International Herald Tribune

LONDON — This is a letter to Tahira Bibi, a child who stitches soccer balls in the Punjab:

Dear Tahira,

You may not remember my visit just before the soccer World Cup of last summer, but I do.

It's an old cliché, but I doubt I can ever forget you. Your solemn face, your swollen stitching fingers, your apparent serenity as hour by relentless hour you worked to make soccer balls that, in another place, another world, help make millionaires.

When we spoke, or rather when your mother, Haleema, spoke because you didn't want to drop a stitch, you had no notion of who Ronaldo, Zinedine Zidane, or Michael Owen might be. They are men of a different world — it might seem a different planet — to you.

Though it is my job, my luck, to travel the continents, I approach Christmas still disturbed, still trying to understand how something that starts from nothing at your small hands can give you barely enough to subsist upon, while propelling others far above all of us.

In your composure as you labored beneath the shade of your front door, in your timeless working rhythm, I saw you — an 11-year-old — as the appallingly underpaid creator of the tool of, say, Zidane's finest achievement.

Since you don't read or write, and you have neither time nor access to television, let me draw a picture of who and what Zidane is. He is a Frenchman, though having been born the son of an Algerian janitor and raised in a tough Marseille district he spent his youth not entirely accepted as true blue.

He had little in childhood, but he was granted something denied you — the precious gift of time and space to play. His playground was the street, his liberator from boredom as a child and possibly drudgery as an adult was the fact that he could make a ball — your ball perhaps, or one made by somebody like you — dance.

And you know what? This play, bordering on genius, has made Zidane everyone's player of 1998.

There is not a price France can put on the two goals he scored with his head to win the final against Brazil at Stade de

World Soccer/ **ROB HUGHES**

France. There is no way of over-dramatizing the scenes along the Champs Elysees and up and down the length and breadth of France that this slight and slightly balding man caused among the people who were now all his admirers.

As harsh as your existence is, you might never have come across a racist. Well, a man called Jean-Marie Le Pen who leads the National Front in France is one. Two years ago, he lamented the "coloreds" on the French national team. He dismissed them as immigrants, as mercenaries, and, I'm sad to say, he arouses a considerable following.

Anyway, Zidane did so well in the summer that everyone who runs a poll of the outstanding player of the year put him top. So its not clever of me to tell you about him, except that Zinedine Zidane and Tahira Bibi have something in common.

YOU BOTH started life at the bottom of the pile. He rose because of his talent, and first Cannes, then Bordeaux, then Juventus and then Aime Jacquet, the much-criticized French trainer, built their teams around him. All his coaches did the sensible thing: they did not try to change his natural style, they did not try to work him so hard that he became bored with the effort.

As you do, perhaps, as the sun goes down and the pesky flies start to leave and your fingers ache with the effort of sewing your third 32-panel ball of the day. For each ball, you get 30 cents, which of course means that somebody is profiting greatly from your labor, while Zidane, for his efforts, is a multi-millionaire.

The International Labor Office in Geneva cares about you and 7,000 other under-age workers around Sialkot in the Punjab. They organize — as you know because your two younger sisters benefit — two hours' school a day. They arrange day care to try to help mothers work and ease the necessity for kids to do so.

All the big manufacturers, including Adidas, which markets the official World Cup balls, tell us about their philanthropic deeds, their social conscience, their attempts to produce their expensive

equipment more humanely. They were not there, unlike the flies, around you and your mother when I called.

In truth, I'm lost for words on what, if anything, such groups as the ILO, the United Nations, or writers like myself can really do to help you. It is social engineering on Western lines to suppose that policing children out of work can spare their families' needs when, in your case, you who have no father and every cent you reap puts bread into the mouths of your sisters and two infant brothers.

It is futile to demand that Nike and Adidas and Umbro and Reebok give you a fair wage, or give your mother enough for what she sews so that you could be allowed a balanced upbringing of work and play. Futile, because the Chinese are waiting to set prisoners to stitching at even cheaper rates.

It is a haunting Christmas tale to tell, to keep telling. Ronaldo and Zidane and Owen are not bad guys, but something is wrong with a world that showers more millions at their feet than they could spend, and starves a child in the Punjab if she falls too ill to sew.

God bless you, Tahira, and send someone your way who is less inadequate than I feel after my visit.

Rob Hughes is the chief sports correspondent of The Times of London

Rob Hughes is the Chief Sports Writer for the Times of London, and has contributed a column on sports to the International Herald Tribune since 1977. He has received many awards for his work. In a citation accompanying the Order of the Southern Cross from Brazil, Mr. Hughes was described as belonging to those few sports writers "who seem to reach beyond the mere descriptive to find in sports a deeper expression of individual and national aspirations". The above article was based on a visit to the Sialkot region of Pakistan in 1998.

New Encyclopaedia published

From radiation leaks to “jet lag”: Work-related health threats are growing

Despite advances in knowledge and workplace protection of the 20th century, tens of millions of workers around the world are still continually exposed to chemical, physical and social hazards which drain their health and their spirits. The ILO and other organizations must still combat many other forms of occupational safety and health, with their inevitable hazards.

In Egypt, workers are found to be suffering from a major cause of sickness and death caused by inhaling silicon dioxide, commonly known as silica, in crystalline form. In London, child workers come down with a rare form of cancer, linked to their jobs.

Today's news? Not in the least.

Silicosis is believed to have afflicted workers constructing the great Pyramids in Ancient Egypt over 2,000 years ago. And in London, child chimney sweeps were found in 1775 to be suffering from scrotal cancer caused by soot encountered on the job, in the first documented case of job-related cancers.

Occupational health and safety is as old as work, but in the latest edition of its *Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety*¹ just published by the ILO, studies show that workers today face many of the same dangers which existed even before the the First Edition was published in 1930.

What's more, to old threats like fac-

tory fires or tuberculosis, the encyclopedia adds new workplace concerns like eye and hand strain, jet lag in business travel, and radiation leaks at nuclear power plants – all work sites or work-related situations which didn't even exist before.

Expert text

The Fourth Edition of the encyclopedia was developed through a process of consultation with leading experts and health and safety institutions throughout the world. Experts from 60 countries – more than 1,000 collaborators in all – have contributed to the conceptualization, writing, editing and peer review of the Encyclopedia. Each article has also been peer-reviewed to ensure accuracy and relevance, and is intended for the specialist and non-specialist alike.

“The Encyclopaedia has been designed to provide the general user with background information on the major disci-

plines of occupational health and safety in an understandable manner that will, at the same time, be considered rigorous by professionals in their fields,” says Jeanne Mager Stellman, Ph.D., editor-in-chief of the Fourth Edition. “We have attempted to provide sufficient depth and breadth of coverage to permit workers in one area to appreciate and be stimulated by the ideas and approaches of other disciplines in occupational health and safety.”

The audience for the Encyclopaedia includes trade union leaders, company managers, lawyers, doctors, nurses, engineers, hygienists, toxicologists and regulators, each of whom will find comprehensive and accurate coverage of their fields and the information they could require in other disciplines. The aim is to provide practical, jargon-free answers to their questions about safety and health in one easy-to-use reference.

The 1998 Fourth Edition of the Encyclopaedia is the world's most authoritative compilation of the thousands of threats to health and safety in the workplace. The Encyclopaedia also describes the range of actions which unions, companies and governments can take to protect people on the job. It comes in four hard-bound volumes numbering 4,231 pages, and is also available on CD-ROM. It is a greatly expanded, completely revised work from the Third Edition of 1983, reflecting the multidisciplinary and rapidly changing world of health and safety in the workplace.



Jacques Maillard

Major risks

Some of the major risks to workers which appeared in the 1930 First Edition and also, greatly expanded, in the new edition include:

- **Factory fires** – Workers, especially in the developing world, still face one of the grimmest threats, becoming entrapped in a factory which catches fire. Two deadly fires illustrate how the threat continues. The previous record for factory fire deaths was held by the Triangle Shirtwaist factory in New York City in 1911, which killed 146 workers. That record fell in May 1993, when the Kader Toy factory in Thailand, burst into flames, killing 188 workers, becoming the world's worst accidental loss-of-life in an industrial building in this century.

- **Occupational lung diseases** – Respiratory diseases have been placed at the top of the ten leading work-related diseases and injuries. Their importance has been confirmed by several key chapters of the Encyclopedia. Global efforts have taken place against respiratory cancer, asbestos and tobacco smoke. Occupational asthma has become the most prevalent occupational lung disease in developed countries, says the Encyclopedia, and respiratory diseases caused



M. Trajtenberg

by organic dusts among farmers are highlighted.

- **Tuberculosis** – This ancient and highly contagious scourge, once believed conquered in developed countries, has returned in a new antibiotic-resistant form during the 1990s, the Encyclopedia says. The transmission of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* has become a recognized risk in health-care facilities, including several recent TB outbreaks among people in US health-care facilities. Many of these outbreaks involved transmission of multi-drug-resistant strains of *M. tuberculosis*

to both patients and health-care workers. Most of the patients and some of the health-care workers were HIV-infected persons in whom the new infection progressed rapidly to active disease.

- **Agricultural work** – Agricultural laborers face both old and new risks. The older risks include poor housing and low sanitary standards, injuries from farm machinery, and diseases, especially skin diseases. Newer threats come from exposure to herbicides, including one still legal in rice fields in the United States, known as 2,4,5-T.

- **Industrial wastewater** – This is particularly a problem in the paper and pulp industries and in sugar refining plants. Pulp and paper mills consume vast amounts of fresh water. Exposure to these potential hazards is likely to depend on the extent of automation of the plant – more automated and enclosed plants expose maintenance, cleaning and quality assurance operations to greater threats.

- **Silicosis** – This ancient lung disease was a major cause of sickness and death among workers worldwide earlier in this century. Silicosis derives from inhalation of silicon dioxide, commonly known as silica, in crystalline forms. Despite the knowledge of the cause of this disorder, workers worldwide still face

ENVIRONMENTAL CANCER

As an example of how the Encyclopedia covers occupational threats in detail, excerpts from the chapter on Occupational Carcinogens are given below:

Since the first documented cases linking carcinogens to the workplace in 1775, a number of other occupational causes of cancer have been demonstrated through epidemiological studies, including arsenic, asbestos, benzene, cadmium, chromium, nickel and vinyl chloride. Such occupational carcinogens are very important in public health terms because of the potential for prevention through regulation and improvements in industrial hygiene practices. Key facts include:

- Some 20 agents and mixtures are established occupational carcinogens; a similar number of chemicals are highly suspected occupational carcinogens;

- In industrialized countries, occupation has been causally linked to 2 to

8 per cent of all cancers among exposed workers. In some occupations however, the proportion is much higher.

- No reliable estimates are available on either the burden of occupational cancer or the extent of workplace exposure to carcinogens in developing countries.

- Although several occupational cancers are listed as occupational diseases in many countries, a very small fraction of cases is actually recognized and compensated.

Prevention: The most successful form of prevention – avoiding the use of recognized human carcinogens in the workplace – has been learned too late for the present populations of industrialized countries, since most occupational carcinogens have been identified by epidemiological studies of populations that were already occupationally exposed. In theory, the Encyclopedia says, developing countries can prevent the introduction of chemicals and production processes which have been found to be hazardous.

The next best option is the removal of established carcinogens once their carcinogenicity has been established or suspected. Examples include the closure of plants making the bladder carcinogens 2-naphthylamine and benzidine in the United Kingdom, the closure of Japanese and British mustard gas factories after World War II, and the gradual elimination of the use of benzidine in the shoe industry in Istanbul, Turkey.

In many instances, complete removal of a carcinogen (without closing down the industry) is either not possible, because alternative agents are not available, or is judged politically or economically unacceptable. Exposure levels must therefore be reduced by changing production processes or through industrial hygiene practices. A related approach is to reduce or eliminate activities which involve the heaviest exposure. Exposure can also be minimized through the use of protective equipment such as masks and special clothing, or by imposing more stringent industrial hygiene measures.

exposure in mining, quarrying, tunneling, abrasive blasting and foundry work. Epidemics of silicosis continue to occur, even in developed nations.

New threats

Some of the new threats for workers which are analysed in the Fourth Edition include:

● **Nuclear plant accidents and disasters** – With the advent of nuclear power, came new problems for workers. Sites include power-generating stations, experimental reactors, facilities for the production and processing or reprocessing of nuclear fuel, and research laboratories. Military sites are among the most dangerous for workers, because they include plutonium breeder reactors and reactors located aboard ships and submarines.

● **The microelectronics industry** – An industry which did not even exist in 1930 has emerged in the latter half of the century to make a profound impact on the evolution and structure of the world's economy. Six major fabrication processing steps are universal to all silicon semiconductor devices: oxydation, lithography, etching, doping, chemical vapour deposition and metallization, which are followed by assembly, testing, marking, packing and shipping. Each step presents separate risks for workers, which are detailed in the Encyclopaedia.

● **Visual Display Units/repetitive strain** – Although computers have improved the work environment and reduced work loads, computerization has also increased the repetitive nature and intensity of tasks, and has led to a reduction in the margin for individual initiative, and the isolation of the worker. The Encyclopaedia lists the various infirmities which repetitive strain can induce, such as epicondylitis, a painful condition which occurs at the elbow, where muscles that permit the wrist and fingers to move, meet the bone, or carpal tunnel syndrome, a similar condition in the wrist. Data entry tasks have become a leading cause of such conditions in women.

● **Reproductive hazards** – The relationship between male and female reproductive toxicity and occupational health hazards is a vastly expanded topic in the Fourth Edition. The dangers include, environmental tobacco smoke, solvents – volatile or semi-volatile liquids, pesticides and related chemicals, endocrine disruptors, lead and other heavy metals. Discussion of the problem ap-

pears in dozens of sections of the four volumes.

● **Genetic hazards** – Biological monitoring helps to detect possible harmful genetic agents in the workplace environment which enter the body through respiration, skin absorption, and ingestion. First defined in 1980, biological monitoring is one of three important tools in the prevention of diseases due to toxic agents in the general or occupational environment, along with environmental monitoring and health surveillance, the Encyclopaedia says.

● **Hazards of travel** – Descriptions of the problems and how to cope with them are given for problems which particularly affect people who travel for their jobs, including jet lag, mosquitoes and other biting pests, malaria, contaminated water, contaminated food, traveller's diarrhoea, altitude sickness, crime and civil unrest, and fatigue.

Providing an overall strategy

The Encyclopaedia concludes that an effective overall strategy generally involves a combination of approaches. One example is a Finnish government registry which seeks to increase awareness about carcinogens, to evaluate exposure at workplaces and to stimulate preventive measures. The registry contains information on both workplaces and exposed workers, and all employers are required to maintain and update their files and to supply information to the registry. The system appears to have been partially successful in decreasing carcinogenic exposures in the workplace.

The Fourth Edition also provides a centralized location in which all of the new threats facing workers are catalogued – with both descriptions and treatments offered in detail.

Much progress has been made since the publication of the first edition of this work, says Professor Stellman. The world has completely eradicated the use of some extremely dangerous poisons, such as the deadly radium once routinely painted on watch faces to make them glow, and the crippling and disfiguring phosphorous which had been used as the combustible material for matches.

Most governments have also established regulations and have undertaken many noteworthy actions to guard against the entirely preventable tragedies of occupational death, disease and disability. The ILO itself has contributed to this

progress with Conventions, Recommendations and Codes of Practice governing many workplace conditions, as well as with its many technical cooperation programmes and specialized publications. □

¹ILO Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety. *Fourth Edition*.

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International Labour Office, Geneva, 1998.

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“Get me there, fast!”

Benin’s “Zémidjan”: Informal sector solves transport blues

Getting around town for work, school or leisure activities is an essential need public authorities are finding increasingly difficult to satisfy in numerous West African cities. Faced with the chronic inability of the formal sector to meet constantly growing demand, informal transport services have sprung up to offer users flexibility and accessibility – making travel times shorter. Bernard Gbezo explains how the taxi-bike urban transport initiative in Benin appears to be solving people’s mobility problems.

COTONU, Benin – Produce to sell at the Dantokpa market? A quick errand to run as night falls? Or simply need to get to work or school in a hurry? “Zémidjans”, or motorcycles offer a practical solution. For 100 francs CFA or thereabouts (about 15 U.S. cents), depending on the length of the trip, the state of the roads and the time of day, the “zémidjanmen” will take you all over town from six in the morning until late at night.

The “zémidjans” (literally “get me there fast” in the Fon language) have conquered the roads of Porto-Novo and Cotonou. The riders’ yellow jackets and black motorbikes make them easy to spot.

Caught in the maelstrom of unemployment or idleness, poorly qualified young people, unemployed graduates, and workers made redundant from public and private enterprises are taking up a number of micro-activities in order to survive. This has led to the development in Benin, following the example of many other informal sector activities, of taxi-bike transport, commonly known as *zémidjan*.

The practice emerged here in the 1980s and gradually made a name for itself as a low cost, highly efficient form of transport. Now, no one can claim to be unaware of the existence and activities of these taxi-bikes, which have taken the place of conventional taxis for suburban trips and to outlying areas where access is difficult.

Nicaise: From printer to driver

Nicaise took up driving three years ago. Says the qualified printer who was unable to find work when he finished training, “I manage to survive thanks to the zémidjan. It was not easy to start with ... each day I paid the owner of the motorcycle 2,000 CFA francs ... six months ago the motorcycle was mine and I began to work on my own account ... I am now earning much more than I would in a printing works.”

He is far from alone in this situation. While this activity traditionally attracts unqualified young people and migrants, it is not unusual to discover graduates with higher education, who are looking for a way to integrate themselves into working life, or else private sector officials and workers trying to supplement their incomes.

There’s no need for a driving licence or any specific training. All that is required is the appropriate equipment – a Japa-

nese moped – to take up this activity which is flourishing in the crisis. Networks are being organized around the market for second-hand motorcycles and fuel at a price defying all competition (more often than not coming in fraudulently from neighbouring Nigeria). Certain wealthy individuals and some tradesmen have rushed to buy these vehicles that criss-cross the roads of the capital day and night.

In the majority of cases, the rider hires a motorcycle, paying a daily charge established by common accord with the owner (between 1,500 and 2,000 CFA francs). He receives no fixed wage. The rider renting the motorcycle is responsible for its maintenance, and therefore has free use of it.

Many of those working in this sphere endeavour to earn the daily amount due to the owner first thing in the morning, working on their own account the remainder of the time, including public holidays.

In this way, irrespective of the type of contract concluded (for hire-purchase or simply for hire), the “zémidjanmen” manage to make ends meet. Some can hope to own their motorcycles after a few months, others can expect to make a daily net profit in the region of 4,000 CFA francs (US\$1 = approximately 600 CFA francs).

The activity also gives rise to some subsidiary employment, such as motorcycle repairmen, travelling spare parts dealers and casual fuel salesmen.

Risks: Pollution, accidents, inexperience

Despite the general enthusiasm for the “zémidjan”, its detractors complain in particular that it causes atmospheric pollution. It seems that some riders are willing to use adulterated fuel and oil to maintain their vehicles. During peak hours the thick exhaust fumes reduce visibility to a radius of 100 metres.

Moreover, according to officials from the National Road Safety Centre (CNCR), “zémidjan” riders are often involved in serious road accidents, most frequently owing to the motorcycle being overloaded or to a lack of respect for road safety. According to an UCOTAC official (Union of Cotonou taxi-bike riders) – the first union, established in 1993 – many of these accidents are caused by occasional inexperienced riders.

The authorities initially tried to prohibit this form of passenger transport,

but soon realized this activity corresponded to a real demand by the population (taxi-bikes charge less than half as much as their four-wheeled competitors) and constituted a source of employment in a context of ongoing economic crisis.

Aware of the negative image which some of the population as well as the public authorities have of it, the profession is striving to organize itself, calling for greater professionalism among its members. With three taxi-bike riders' unions, the "zémidjanmen" of Cotonou are seeking full recognition for their contribution to urban transport.

In future, riders will be required to register with the urban district authorities, pay a fixed tax of 600 CFA francs per month and have their vehicles regularly tested for roadworthiness.

While it appears necessary to regulate, or at least to put some order into this activity, it will take time to persuade all drivers to submit to the prevailing regulations. The public authorities are undertaking awareness campaigns targeting the principal trade unions which remain suspicious, fearing that the sector will end up being formalized, as has recently occurred in Togo.

In the meantime, a local enterprise had the idea – in agreement with the public authorities – of distributing a yellow jacket and cap displaying its logo free of charge to Cotonou's 40,000 "zémidjan" riders, for advertising purposes. Not everyone has welcomed this practice; some are already denouncing the cumbersome red tape involved. One rider who prefers to remain anonymous points out: "It's another form of exploitation and a trap ... you can easily lose a day's work before you get the clothing ... and on top of that we're asked for endless papers ..."

Be that as it may, according to most of the riders, the current practice of urban taxi-bike transport is an informal sector activity, which is what constitutes its *raison d'être* and makes it so appealing. It generates thousands of jobs and ensures the survival of numerous house-



While this activity traditionally attracts unqualified young people and migrants, it is not unusual to discover graduates with higher education, who are looking for a way to integrate themselves into working life, or else private sector officials and workers trying to supplement their income.

Bernard E. Gbezo

holds. The concept has even been exported to neighbouring countries.

“No threat for formal sector”: ILO

According to an ILO report, in spite of the limitations found in informal transport services (lack of security, risks for users, difficult working conditions for drivers), in developing countries demand is so high that the presence of informal sector providers does not undermine formal sector income. On the contrary, it takes the pressure off governments to make additional resources available for the development of public transport capacity.

According to a number of informal sector observers, the activity can only be organized from within; too much

constraint could suffocate it. Both productive and redistributive, this informal activity plays a considerable role of integration and social regulation, areas in which the State has shown itself to be weak and even powerless.

Given these circumstances, the providers' associations must help to improve working conditions in this area and to maximize the contribution of these workers to local development. The fact is, informal sector activities play a dynamic role in African economies. The ILO is of this opinion and on many occasions has emphasized the positive aspects of this sector which has shown itself to be profitable, productive and creative.

ILO action to promote the informal sector aims at improving the performance of micro-enterprises and introducing changes within the institutional, administrative and legal framework in which they operate in order to encourage their transition to the formal economy. The ILO has helped a number of African countries, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Senegal, to facilitate their development by establishing a more favourable framework.

A study of the informal sector in each of these countries, as well as of the policies applied by their public authorities, showed that a number of the obstacles facing this sector could be removed by adopting simplified administrative procedures, reduced labour costs and more tax incentives.

The development of urban transport services is one of the main objectives of the United Nations Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (UNACDA II). In many African towns informal transport services predominate and successfully compete with more centralized formal services. They have become indispensable for the mobility of the urban population and are in the process of being recognized as part of the local economy.

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Historical profile: Nurses mark formation of labour organization

*Celebrating nursing's past, claiming the future:
The International Council of Nurses (ICN) predates the ILO*

The nurse has been the world's most recognizable symbol of caring, compassion and health expertise. In homes, schools, hospitals, villages, refugee camps and many other settings, nurses promote the health and well-being of their communities, educate, tend to people in need and search for new ways to improve the health of humanity. Linda Carrier-Walker explains how the International Council of Nurses (ICN) has been representing nurses and nursing worldwide over the past century, advancing the profession and shaping health policy.

Very few women in the world had any legally recognized rights, not even the right to vote, when a group of bold, forward-looking women decided in 1899 that the work of nursing was too important for society to remain subject to arbitrary rules and standards.

The spirit that moved the founders of the International Council of Nurses was central to a social movement that would eventually lead to the creation of a number of key international organizations, including the International Labour Office (ILO), all dedicated to the emergence of a better society. The need for change was evident all around them. The height of social progress at the time was the enactment in France of an 11-hour working day, considered a great step forward for working people.

In the field of health care nurses had to confront daily problems arising from lack of resources, unskilled hospital administrators, uneven standards of practice and the unavailability of health care in poor tenements. The low status and poor working conditions of nurses was a clear detriment to progress in developing health care which could provide relief and recovery for patients while also becoming available to everyone in need of care.

It was with these issues in mind that several hundred nurses from Europe and North America gathered in 1901 in Buffalo, N.Y., for a Congress to endorse a role and mission for this new organization, which had been formally established as the International Council of Nurses, in London in July 1899.

Ethel Gordon Fenwick, the founding President of the organization, set out a vision for the ICN when she described it as "a confederation of workers to further the efficient care of the sick, and to secure the honour and interests of the Nursing Profession". That capsule description captured the consensus among the early members of the ICN that its central mission was to improve conditions for both nurses and patients, through a programme of action that would improve professional standards for nursing practice while also championing the development of quality health care services accessible to all.

The women attending that Congress of 1901 knew they had become part of an important movement for social change. It was a movement with an agenda which would see nurses assuming a key role in health care as well as in the devel-

opment of professional working standards and conditions over the next 100 years.

Forging ties with the ILO and WHO

The activism of the ICN's early years included forging relationships with an emerging group of international organizations, among them the ILO which recognized the profound link between health policy, human health and economics, and that a sound health-care system required a particular attention to the role, the expertise and the treatment of nurses.

Working with the ILO, the World Health Organization (WHO) and other organizations over the past decades, the ICN has contributed to the development of standards which have significantly improved health care in countries around the world.

This work of shaping international standards both for health care and for the working conditions of health-care workers, has included the development of a number of related ILO Conventions. This international work has gone hand-in-hand with the efforts by the membership of the ICN, currently 118 national nursing associations, to lobby and pressure for the respect of these Conventions at the national level.

The result of that patient but persistent effort, guided constantly by the founding vision of the ICN, has been a steady and clear contribution to improving the working conditions of health-care workers and to

When we consider the whole movement of social progress – the breaking down of the spirit of hatred and prejudice, the promotion of kindlier and more humane relations between human beings, the organization of practical and effective measures for reducing human suffering and distress – it would be hard to find any group of workers who have contributed more to the sum total of social effort than nurses.

Dock, L.L.; Stewart I.M.: *A Short History of Nursing, 1925*



Canadian International Development Agency

nursing care and for the training of professional nurses, including those in specialized fields.

- Implementation of an International Code of Ethics for Nurses, adopted in 1953, and which states “the need for nursing is universal. Inherent in nursing is the respect of life, dignity and rights of man. It is unrestricted by considerations of nationality, race, colour, creed, age, sex, politics or social change.”

- Moving forward in the 1960s to a formal relationship with the ILO, based upon the previous decades of fruitful collaboration.

- International extension through the 1970s of ICN’s public and professional information activities, including its extensive publishing programme aimed at professional nurses and other health-care workers.

- ICN leadership in the early 1980s on prevention and care for HIV/AIDS, including programmes to train nurses on providing care for victims of this new disease while also developing methods to protect nurses exposed to the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) which causes AIDS.

- Active role in defining and protecting the role of nurses through the 1990s in the context of national programmes to reform the delivery of health-care services. The work in this area has included promotion of criteria for health care reform that respect basic human rights, including the right of every person to have access to quality health care independently of social condition or gender.

The impetus for the creation of the ICN at the turn of this century was poverty, discrimination, poor working conditions and human suffering from disease. Though there has been significant progress in reducing the extent and impact of these social conditions they nonetheless remain part of the human condition for most of the world’s population. The nature of the problem has changed in some cases. The impetus to reform a tenuous, unprofessional and inequitable health care sector that mobilized the ICN in the 1890s

ICN AT A GLANCE

- *Founded in 1899 – the world’s first international organization for health professionals*

- *Representing millions of nurses in 118 countries*

- *Mission: To represent nursing worldwide, advancing the profession and shaping health policy*

- *15-member Board of Directors, coming from all regions of the globe*

- *Run by nurses for nurses, with a corporate office staff of 20 in Geneva, Switzerland*

- *Annual operating budget of US\$4 million*

the development of health-care services which are increasingly available to people around the world.

There have been numerous advances registered in that record of social progress, including:

- The establishment of minimum criteria for the “trained nurse” in the period from 1900 to 1910.

- Developing approaches to advocacy and lobbying by nurses for better health care,

- Progress in the reform of nursing education and improvements in community health-care services,

- Improvements in social and working conditions of nurses and extension of these improvements to all nurses,

- Development of professional curricula for schools of nursing.

- Pressing for extension of health care services to the poor in urban and rural communities through the development of community health care.

- Affirmation through the 1950s of the ICN’s world leadership in nursing education and in the development of standards for health care, as expressed through the theme “world health and world solidarity”,

- Development of a process for defining and promoting basic principles for

has shifted to ensuring that the modern wave of health care reform is carried out in ways that protect the gains of past decades while initiating further improvements to individual health care and to professional standards for health care delivery.

The ICN continues to inveigh against threats to human life and health which have always been the bane of humankind, and which have motivated its actions from its creation in 1899 to the present day. At the same time, the organization is having to grapple with a range of new issues and human calamities which are shaping its agenda for the new millennium. The emergence of new diseases such as HIV/AIDS and the emergence of new strains of tuberculosis call for new approaches to prevention and treatment. The negative impacts of budget cuts in health care evoke the need for renewed advocacy on behalf of the rights of patients and of providers of health care services. Widespread substance abuse and the development of biological weapons are among new threats which cannot be ignored by an organization dedicated to human well-being.

All of these present and future dangers require the intervention of organized efforts by people around the world. Among those committed to addressing these traditional and emerging problems is the International Council of Nurses and the thousands of nurses worldwide whose skills and determination can be mobilized to contribute as much to the future of humankind as they have to its development over the past 100 years. □

*Linda Carrier-Walker,
Director of Communications, ICN*



News Section

Governing Body

Follow-up to ILO Declaration on Human Rights

First Reports to Appear in 1999

In a move designed to strengthen the oversight of fundamental labour standards in the ILO's 174 member States, the ILO Governing Body adopted a programme of action at its 273rd session in November 1998 to establish the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work adopted by the International Labour Conference in June of last year.

The Governing Body (GB) paid particular homage to Mr. Michel Hansenne who was attending his last session following a 10-year tenure as Director-General of the ILO. Speakers from the workers', employers' and government groups praised Mr. Hansenne's stewardship of the Organization during the tumultuous decade which followed the collapse of communism in 1989. Mr. Hansenne's term of office ends in March 1999.

ILO Director-General Michel Hansenne praised the rapidity with which the GB members moved to implement the follow-up, which, along with the Declaration he characterized as "vital to the future work of the ILO and the values of social justice it seeks to defend".

Two-part follow-up

The follow-up has two parts. The first is an annual review of countries which have not ratified one or more of the Conventions relating to the four categories of fundamental rights, to be carried out once a year in the GB. At its present session, the GB decided to embark upon the annual reviews from 1999 onwards (which means that the procedure will effectively start already in April 1999 with the sending of requests for information on these rights).

The second part establishes a global review to be carried out annually of one of four categories of fundamental human rights¹ to be examined in turn, irrespective of whether or not countries have ratified the Conventions relating to these rights. The GB approved a proposal to produce the first global report for the year 2000 on freedom of association.

The GB requested the International Labour Office to submit specific proposals at its next session in March 1999 to settle a number of outstanding technical and practical questions related to the follow-up. These include the sequence of the global reports which should be in the order provided for in the Declaration (forced labour, elimination of discrimination in employment and of child labour), the composition and number of experts charged with presenting the conclusions of the annual reports to the GB, and the form that requests for information on non-ratified Conventions should take. The GB asked that these and any other questions be resolved taking account of the observations made and ideas put forward by the delegates.

Private sector social initiatives

The GB's Working Party on the Social Dimensions of the Liberalization of International Trade had an initial exchange of views on private sector social initiatives. Increasing calls on businesses to be accountable for the social and environmental impact of their operations and the need for enterprises to protect their image have, in recent years, led to numerous private sector initiatives designed to display commitments to good labour practices and to influence the behaviour of consumers and business partners. Such voluntary methods include codes of

conduct, labelling programmes and various investor initiatives which together "constitute an important element in the international debate on the social dimensions of economic development", according to a background document submitted to the GB². The Working Party on the Social Dimensions of the Liberalization of International Trade invited the Director-General to make more specific proposals to the GB at its next session in March 1999.

Myanmar considered

The GB also considered the results of a special Commission of Inquiry on Forced Labour in Myanmar which details widespread and systematic use of forced labour in that country and a broad pattern of violation of fundamental human rights by the military government. In a debate on the report, the labour and human rights policies of the Government of Myanmar came in for withering criticism on the basis of that country's widespread use of forced labour and other grave human rights violations, with some delegates calling into question the ability of the GB to continue dealing with Myanmar in light of its practices and continued neglect of ILO findings.

The report had been undertaken under article 26 of the Constitution of the ILO, a procedure that is only used in the event of grave and persistent violations of ILO standards and repeated non-observance of ILO findings.

In its report to the GB, the ILO Commission of Inquiry set up in March 1997 to examine the observance by Myanmar of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), drew attention to widespread and systematic recourse to

forced labour in Myanmar as part of a disturbing pattern of human rights abuses throughout the country. It noted the impunity with which Government officials, in particular the military, treat the civilian population of the country as an unlimited pool of labourers and servants to build and maintain a whole variety of projects, ranging from roads and railways to construction of military camps, logging camps, hotels and other infrastructure.

The GB noted the Commission's report and the reply by the Government of Myanmar. The GB requested that the Director-General submit to its next session (March 1999) a report on the measures taken by the Government of Myanmar to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Commission of Inquiry.

Contacts mission to Nigeria

The GB also took note of the results of a direct contacts mission to Nigeria, which, among other observations, noted "a strong consensus among workers' and employers' representatives in favour of trade union independence and that the Government has expressed willingness to contemplate a re-examination of the whole trade union question in the light of the ILO's freedom of association principles and standards".

The report also made clear that measures need to be taken in Nigeria with respect to aspects of Nigerian labour law (specifically Decrees Nos. 4, 26 and 29) in the light of comments made by the ILO supervisory bodies, in order to bring Nigeria's legislation into greater conformity with ILO standards. The GB requested the Government of Nigeria to take appropriate action on outstanding freedom of association issues, and decided it will again take up this matter at its March 1999 session.

Social crisis in Asia

Turning to ILO activities in response to the financial crisis in east and south-east Asia, including the provision of advisory services, research, operational activities and the effective deployment of the ILO's own funding and human resources, the GB heard a discussion paper noting the "serious inadequacy of the social protection systems in most of the countries affected" covering only, as most of them do, "a minority of the labour

force ... for a limited range of contingencies."

The ILO seeks to develop employment promotion policies, including emergency employment creation, strengthening of labour market and human resource development, enterprise promotion, particularly for the job-creating small enterprise sector, and increased social protection. Targeted measures offer support for vulnerable groups, including women workers, migrant workers and children.

In addition, the ILO has developed close coordination with international and regional financial institutions, including the Asia Development Bank, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund

and donor countries with the goal of promoting improved labour relations, employment and vocational training programmes and workers' rights.

Source, ILO press release ILO/98/40

¹ Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; effective abolition of child labour; and elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

² Overview of global developments and Office activities concerning codes of conduct, social labelling and other private sector initiatives addressing labour issues. Working Party on the Social Dimensions of the Liberalization of International Trade. International Labour Office, Geneva, November 1998. GB.273/WP/SDL/1.

Clinton pledges US to work with ILO



Keystone

WASHINGTON – In his State of the Union Address on 20 January, US President Bill Clinton pledged that the United States would work with the International Labour Organization "to raise labour standards around the world". In addition, the US President also signalled renewed US support for a new draft Convention on the worst forms of child labour, to be dis-

cussed for a second time at the International Labour Conference in June, saying, "we will lead the international community to conclude a treaty to ban abusive child labour everywhere in the world". The specific references in the annual address, to US support for ILO work, was the second by Mr. Clinton in as many years.

New report

Labour market flexibility in machinery/electronics sector

GENEVA – A new ILO report* says flexible labour practices can boost the competitiveness and employment prospects of firms in the mechanical and electrical machinery industries. However the process of engineering change often proves wrenching for the workforce, coming as it does, at the expense of long-established workplace practices, with unwelcome consequences

for the personal lives of many employees.

Among the benefits due to flexible labour market arrangements, the ILO report cites “companies doing better, productivity rising and wage costs falling,” as well as a trend to shorter working hours. Among the labour market negatives, the report highlights increased part-

time work, reduced overtime pay, higher job instability and “unsocial hours” (i.e. night work, weekend work and long shifts during peak periods).

Another critical issue is linked to *how* changes in work methods are implemented. The report highlights the value of negotiating with the workforce in light of existing collective bargaining agreements in order to smooth the way and to accommodate the needs of workers.

Workers in Germany, Japan and the United States are among the most affected by the re-engineering of production, with those countries’ industries accounting for, respectively, 15, 25 and 27 per cent of world output in machinery industries. But increasing numbers of workers in developing countries are feeling the effects as well.

The ILO report indicates that total world employment in the sector increased since 1980 by 12 per cent, adding some 4.5 million jobs worldwide as production grew by 113 per cent. Most of the employment increase came as a result of a shift in production to low-income countries, which now account for 32 per cent of the workforce, versus only 22 per cent in 1980. So great has the shift been, that by 1992, China alone accounted for nearly 30 per cent of world employment in the sector as opposed to the United States which accounts for only 8 per cent of the total workforce.

During the period 1980-92, nearly a million jobs in the machinery industry were lost in high income OECD countries, but the combination of industrial restructuring and the strong economy since then has contributed to stabilizing and in some cases even reversing the pattern of job losses. Between 1992 and 1997, the United States added 411,000 jobs, bringing the total of workers employed in the sector to nearly 4 million. The Republic of Korea added 117,000 jobs, the UK 85,000 jobs and Canada 14,600 jobs during the same period.

Though the employment numbers may be smaller in OECD countries, they nonetheless account for the overwhelming volume of production at the high-value-added end of the engineering spectrum. In 1997, seven of the ten leading machinery and electrical manufacturers in the world were US companies (General Electric, Intel, IBM, Hewlett Packard, Compaq, Cisco and Motorola). Sweden’s Ericsson, Japan’s Matsushita, and Germany’s Siemens also ranked among the top ten. In the global marketplace, these and other industrial giants are all engaged in relentless efforts to increase



Jacques Maillard

profitability and productivity in what are among the most capital-intensive, hi-tech manufacturing activities in the world, notably via re-engineering their own workplace operations.

The report says that in the global market the driving force in the industry is to stay competitive, which means searching for greater flexibility and lower labour costs. The workers' concerns focus on

preserving jobs, dealing with problems of coordinating flexible production systems and coming to terms with the long-term social implications of flexibility. "Employment preservation and creation is a main objective of unions in demanding reductions in working hours in exchange for more flexible arrangements," the report says.

Flexibility is not just about how work

is organized, the report notes, but about how it is scheduled and remunerated.

Source: ILO Press release, ILO/98/37

*Impact of Flexible Labour Market Arrangements in the Machinery, Electrical and Electronic Industries. Report for discussion at the Tripartite Meeting on the Impact of Flexible Labour Market Arrangements in the Machinery, Electrical and Electronic Industries. International Labour Office, Geneva, 1998. ISBN 92-2-111108-3. Price: 25 Swiss francs.

Attacking child labour in cyberspace

New ILO convention could boost fight against child porn on Internet

PARIS – ILO Director General Michel Hansenne said in Paris recently that a new draft Convention against the worst forms of child labour, under consideration by the International Labour Organization (ILO), could boost international efforts to halt child pornography and other forms of child labour on the Internet.

Speaking to a meeting of experts entitled "Sexual Abuse of children, Child Pornography and Paedophilia on the Internet: An international challenge," held at the offices of the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Mr. Hansenne said: "Countries which ratify this new Convention will have the obligation to ban such practices, and punish the perpetrators and eliminate, in practice, such activities."

The new ILO Convention is up for adoption at the ILO's annual meeting, the International Labour Conference, to be held in June. Among its proposed elements are measures that would ban the worst forms of child labour including bonded labour, the sale and trafficking of children as well as the use of children for prostitution and the production of pornographic



ILO/Nick Rain

materials. If adopted this year, the new Convention would enable States to establish priorities in the fight against child exploitation.

The ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) has organized some 1,200 actions and mini-programmes worldwide designed to eliminate child labour, or improve the working conditions of children who must work.

"In this context, the use of the Internet could be a major aid in diffusing information for the protection of children to the largest number of people, and in real time, and improving the efficiency of these measures," Mr. Hansenne said. "Experience has shown that it is fundamental for the success of IPEC's activities to promote preventive activities, sensitize communities concerned and aid children who are risk. In this regard, resolute action using the Internet against such abuses could not but benefit our activities."

Source, IPEC, ILO press release ILO/99/1

News (continued on p. 30)



Working World

SOCIAL PARTNERS

● The number of unionized workers in the **United States** increased in 1998 for the first time in five years, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the US Department of Labor. In one year the number of union members increased by 101,000 for a total of 16.2 million. However, the rate of unionization continued to decline, falling from 14.1 per cent of the salaried workforce to 13.9 per cent between 1997

A regular review of trends and developments in the world of work

tations with workers' representatives. (*EIRR*, October 1998)

● The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) has denounced child labour, practices approaching slavery, and sexual discrimination, in **Burkina Faso, Guinea and Togo**. In its regularly published reports on the respect of basic workers' rights in countries whose trade policy is currently being reviewed by the World Trade Organization (WTO), the ICFTU also pointed out obstacles to the exercise of trade union rights and salary discrimination against women in **Canada**. Its latest report was devoted to **Argentina**, denouncing the repression of union activities, obstacles to collective bargaining, child labour and sexual discrimination. (*ICFTU ONLINE*, 1998)



Jacques Maillard

The number of unionized workers in the United States increased in 1998 for the first time in five years,

and 1998. The union membership rate is higher among men (16.2 per cent) than among women (11.4 per cent), and higher among blacks (17.7 per cent) than among whites (13.5 per cent) or Hispanics (11.9 per cent). (*Daily Labor Report*, 25 January 1999)

● In a first for unionism in Europe, the metallurgical union in **Germany**, I.G. Metall, invited trade union officials

from the **Netherlands and Belgium** to participate in its negotiations with management. Although the Belgian unionists could not respond to the invitation due to their involvement in their own talks at the time, a representative of the Dutch union FNV-Metalectro was present at the negotiating table. (*Libération*, 24 January 1999)

● The principal employers' organization of **France**, NCFE

(National Council of French Employers) has recently changed its name in the hope of modernizing its image. From now on it will be called MFE, the Movement of French Enterprises. This decision was accompanied by a restructuring of the organization with the idea of better representing small and medium-sized enterprises.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

● **Norway's** oil giant Statoil has signed a ground-breaking agreement with the Norwegian oil and petrochemical workers' union (NOPEF), and the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM) regarding compliance with ILO labour standards. The agreement commits its signatories to respect, worldwide, standards contained in Conventions Nos. 87 and 98 of the ILO on freedom of association and collective bargaining, Nos. 29 and 105 prohibiting forced labour, and No. 138 on minimum age. The agreement also contains clauses regarding safe working environment, fair pay and consul-

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

● In mid-October 1998, 14 unions called 30,000 workers out on strike in several enterprises in **Algeria**, to protest against privatization, massive layoffs and decreases in production. Their movement did not elicit any response. (*Libération*, 24 November 1998)

● After the strike of truckers (see *World of Work*, No. 27), it was once again the rail workers who launched a "Euro strike" in November 1998, which affected six countries: **Belgium, Spain, France, Greece, Luxembourg and Portugal**. The rail workers were protesting against European Union proposals regarding liberalization and deregulation of railway transport. (*Le Monde*, 25 November 1998,

International Herald Tribune,
24 November 1998)

● In **Zimbabwe**, two days of a general strike organized by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) were widely followed, paralyzing activity in major towns. The purpose of the strike was to protest the rising cost of living and the Government's economic management. The national trade union center also denounced its persecution by the Government, and in particular the attack on its Deputy Secretary-General on January 20, in which he was beaten unconscious. (*ICFTU ONLINE*, 1998, 1999)

● In **Poland**, a memorial service for the workers killed during the strikes and dem-



Jacques Maillard

onstrations in the Baltic port shipyard in Gdansk of 1970 and 1981 turned into an indictment of the national leaders who are members of the Solidarity trade union. The shipyard workers – whose numbers have decreased from

20,000 to 2,800 since the days when the former Communist bloc's first independent trade union was formed in 1980 – feel betrayed by the leaders of a movement born of their social struggle. (*Financial Times*, 17 December 1998)

with a union delegate rather than be criticized in Cyberspace for all to see. (*Libération*, 16 December 1998)

**Gdansk
shipyard
workers
lament:
Less
solidarity
these days.**

PART-TIME WORK: UK, FRANCE, SPAIN SEE CHANGING TRENDS

● In the United Kingdom, one-third of all jobs should be part-time by the year 2010, according to a new study by the consulting firm Cambridge Econometrics, a dramatic increase since 1980, for example, when the proportion was less than one-fifth. Part-time jobs are expected to represent the majority of new employment in the decades to come because of flexible working patterns, especially in the service sector – expected to be the largest provider of employment in the future. (*Financial Times*, 12 January 1999)

In France, the proportion of part-time work (less than 32 hours per week) reached 18.1 per cent of salaried employment in 1998, more than doubling in the past 15 years. However, its growth seems to be slow-

ing down: in one-year, the proportion of people working part-time among those who would prefer to work full-time has diminished slightly, going from 43 per cent to 42 per cent. (*Argus*, January 1999)

An agreement regulating part-time work was reached in Spain between the unions and the Government. Part-time work is permitted as long as the working hours are less than 77 per cent of normal working hours. Recourse to overtime work is limited, and social coverage of part-time workers is improved regarding retirement, vacations and sick leave. Part-time work represents 8 per cent of employment in the country. Management has refused to sign this agreement. (*Argus*, January 1999)

TRIPARTISM

● On 22 December 1998, the Government of **Italy** and the social partners signed a four-year social pact to revive the economy and fight unemployment, which at the time of the signing was 12.6 per cent. Management's contributions toward employee benefits will be lowered by 3 per cent, which would lead to a reduction of 1.2 per cent in labour costs. Reinvested profits will be exempt from tax, and income tax will be reduced by 1 per cent. (*Le Monde*, 24 December 1998)

NEW TECHNOLOGY

● A growing number of salaried workers in **France** are expressing their dissatisfaction via the Internet, especially those who have no union representation or the right to organize. This method has come to be seen as so harmful to the image of the enterprises in question that, according to a French union official, employers concerned could eventually come to prefer meeting

INFORMAL SECTOR

● According to a study published in Antananarivo, the informal sector produced 77 per cent of all consumer goods in **Madagascar**, and 95 per cent in the food industry. According to this study, the evolution of this sector, along with economic reforms, has led to the slowdown in underemployment, and the unprecedented rise in income, accompanied by an increase in purchasing power of 34 per cent of average income and 48 per cent of median income. (*Marchés tropicaux*, 15 January 1999)

ASIAN CRISIS

● Unemployment in **Hong Kong** rose to a record level of 5.5 per cent last autumn. Even though very low in comparison with levels reached in other countries, this unemployment rate represents a shock for an economy whose annual growth rate has been approximately five per cent since 1991, and where there was not only full employment but even a labour shortage. (*International Herald Tribune*, 18 December 1998)



AROUND THE CONTINENTS

ILO-WORLD BANK COOPERATION

▲ Top ILO and World Bank officials met October 28 in Washington to explore closer cooperation on labour and social issues. Topics included ways to help the millions of people thrown out of jobs due to the global financial crisis. Agreement was reached on issues including studying how both institutions could cooperate at the country level on practical ways of promoting core labour standards and the principles enshrined in the ILO Declaration. At a public event the same day, ILO Deputy Director-General Kari Tapiola urged the Bretton Woods institutions and the UN system as a whole to speak “with a single voice” on global minimum labor standards, and integrate these into their policies and programs. “They are relevant, Tapiola said, “not only in the workplace, but more generally for sustainable development.”

For further information please contact the Office of the Deputy Director-General (DGA/REL), phone: +4122/799.6320; fax: +4122/799.7289; e-mail: dgarel@ilo.org

INCREASED FUNDING FOR IPEC

▲ The US Congress has increased funding to the ILO’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) by ten times to \$30 million in 1999, compared with \$3 million in 1998. This is by far the largest US voluntary contribution ever to an ILO field programme. In a message last May to the Global March Against Child Labour, President Clinton said he was asking Congress to make the United States a leader in funding IPEC.

For further information please contact the ILO’s International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC), phone: +41-22-799.6486; fax: +4122/799.8771; e-mail: ipec@ilo.org

FIGHTING CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA

▲ As part of an ongoing effort to increase coordination in the United Nations

A regular review of the International Labour Organization and ILO-related activities and events taking place around the world.

efforts to eliminate child labour in India, major UN agencies (UNDP, World Bank, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNIFEM, WHO, UNAIDS, UNESCO and UNDCP) – under the leadership of the ILO – agreed to “pool their resources and work on common child labour projects with non-governmental organizations and the Government”. According to 1991 Government figures, in India, about 200 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 do not go to school. Participants agreed to start by focusing on “exploitative and intolerable” forms of child labour such as bonded and forced labour, prostitution and hazardous jobs.

For further information please contact the ILO’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), phone: +4122/799.6486; fax: +4122/799.8771; e-mail: ipec@ilo.org

250,000 NEW JOBS

▲ Over the past five years, the ILO technical cooperation programme for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and cooperatives has generated some 250,000 jobs. The total budget for this programme amounts to around 25 million US dollars per year. Another important milestone in the ILO’s work in this area was the recent adoption of the Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Recommendation (No.189) in 1998, the main vehicle for assisting member States in this domain. Small and medium-sized enterprises currently create 80 per cent of all new jobs.

For further information please contact Mr. Henriques, Chief of the Entrepreneurship and Management Development Branch (ENT/MAN), phone: +4122/

799.6857; fax: +4122/799.7978; email: entreprise@ilo.org

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN ASIA

▲ The financial crisis in Asia has shown that strong and representative workers’ and employers’ institutions providing a forum for social dialogue can be instrumental in finding alternatives to job losses, in an equitable sharing of the costs of the crisis, and in building consensus for needed reforms. With support from Japan, the ILO’s multidisciplinary advisory teams in the Asian region have tailored a programme to meet constituents’ needs in adapting their industrial relations systems to the challenges posed by globalization, the financial crisis and its aftermath. National tripartite seminars have offered analysis and have stimulated the political debate in India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam in recent months.

For further information please contact the ILO’s Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, phone: +662/288.1234; fax: +66-2-280.1735; e-mail: bangkok@ilo.org

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

▲ Profound reforms and transformations are taking place in industrial relations in the countries of southern Africa. A recent publication of the ILO Southern African Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (SAMAT), entitled *Industrial relations in Southern Africa: The challenge of change*, shows that the Republic of South Africa will continue to set the pace in influencing industrial relations institutions and processes to achieve the level of a democratic workplace in the region. The study also shows how southern Africa follows a worldwide trend for governments to reduce their involvement in labour issues and to allow unions and employers to participate more or to resolve issues themselves. The ILO has an important technical advisory role in this process.

For further information please contact Mr. Tayo Fashoyin, SAMAT, phone: +263-4-781760; fax: +263-4/759372; e-mail: harare@ilo.org

SOCIAL SECURITY FOR THE INFORMAL SECTOR

▲ More than half of the world's population is excluded from any type of formal social security protection. Informal-sector workers are often unable or unwilling to contribute a significant percentage of their incomes to finance formal sector social insurance benefits which do not meet their priority needs. Therefore, informal-sector workers themselves have to set up health and other social insurance schemes which better serve their needs and financial possibilities. Moreover, governments and the social security partners need to formulate comprehensive policies to ensure coverage for the whole population, argues Wouter van Ginneken, an ILO social security expert in a forthcoming article for the *International Social Security Review*.*

In sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia, formal social security coverage is estimated at 5 to 10 per cent of the working population, and decreasing. In India, for example, in the mid-1990s not more than 10 per cent of workers were in the organized sector compared to more than 13 per cent in the mid-1980s (*see box*). In Latin America, coverage is roughly between 10 and 80 per cent – it is generally high in the “Cone countries” (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay) and low in Central America.

In most transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe coverage varies between 50 and 80 per cent, while most developed countries have reached a coverage of practically 100 per cent. In south-east and east Asia, coverage can vary between 10 and 100 per cent, and was increasing until recently.

The main reason for low social security coverage in developing countries is that many workers outside the formal sector are not able or willing to contribute a relatively high part of their incomes to finance social security benefits which do not meet their priority needs. In general, informal sector workers give priority to more immediate needs, such as health and education – particularly in the context of structural adjustment measures which have reduced or eliminated access to free health care and primary education. Within the range of pension benefits, they seek protection in case of death and disability rather than for old-age. Legal restrictions and administrative bottlenecks further restrict access to the formal social security schemes.

As a result, various groups of workers outside the formal sector have set up



ILO

SOCIAL SECURITY FOR ALL INDIANS

▲ Social security for all Indians was a basic commitment by the Indian state to its people on the eve of Independence. Social security in India, however, remains heavily weighted in favour of public employees and the decreasing number of workers in the organized sector. It is estimated that out of a labour force of about 375 million workers in the early 1990s, about 10 per cent were covered by social security schemes in the organized sector. Wouter van Ginneken, Senior Economist in the ILO's Social Security Department, discusses in his new book “Social Security for All Indians”** how social security can be extended to all citizens, especially marginalized groups like women and workers in the informal sector.

The first part of the book shows that vigorous action by various labour groups and NGOs operating in the informal sector can make an important contribution to the extension of social security coverage. The second part of the book outlines some characteristics of an integrated approach towards social security for all Indians. The author suggests that the development of area-based social security schemes is a promising novelty in this respect. Structural reforms would include, inter alia, the creation of a National Health Insurance Agency, greater administrative coherence, and the involvement of local authorities, employers, trade unions and NGOs in the social security partnership.

** *Social Security for All Indians*, edited by Wouter van Ginneken, Oxford University Press, Delhi, Calcutta, Chennai, Mumbai, 1998, ISBN 0-19-564569-3, price: Rs. 425.

schemes that better meet their priority needs and financial capacity. Over the past decade, many self-financed, and often self-managed, comprehensive schemes for informal sector workers have emerged. Organizations such as NGOs and cooperatives have a good understanding of the particular needs and priorities of informal sector workers and have developed institutions and policies which are quite different from what governments did and still do.

Health insurance

Health insurance is the most urgent social security priority for informal sector workers. Some of the self-financed health insurance schemes in various developing countries reflect the variety of priorities. The SEWA health insurance scheme in India concentrates on hospital cost insurance and is part of a comprehensive social security scheme which also covers the contingencies of death, disablement, maternity, as well as loss of house and property. Rural health insurance in China combines elements of hospital and primary health care insurance, financed by a combination of private and public contributions. In Dar es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania, the UMASIDA scheme covers about 1,500 informal sector workers and 4,500 family members, while it has reached the capacity to grow into a professional organization providing access to primary, some secondary (medical examinations) and some tertiary health care (hospitals).

Over the past 50 years, the bulk of technical cooperation has concentrated on extending social security coverage to formal sector workers. Now the time has come to extend the social security concept to the informal sector with pilot projects setting up special social insurance schemes for informal sector workers and other hitherto uncovered groups. On the basis of experience gained with these activities, governments and the social security partners can then be trained to formulate their own policies with regard to the informal sector. A promising avenue is area-based social insurance schemes which aim at full coverage within an area and which are mainly run by the local government in collaboration with other partners (such as cooperatives, village communities, workers' and employers' organizations). □

* Wouter van Ginneken, Social security for the informal sector: A new challenge for the developing countries, *International Social Security Review*, 1/99.

News

(continued from p. 25)

Taking a new approach

ILO-INDISCO project aids indigenous peoples in the Philippines

Last November saw a large international gathering of indigenous peoples, donors, government, NGOs and representatives from academe, organized by ILO-INDISCO* in the southern Philippines. The indigenous participants came from INDISCO projects in India, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. The focus was on incorporating indigenous knowledge into the development process, thus trying to enhance local ownership, and make technical cooperation more culturally appropriate.

The consultation offered a unique opportunity for all the stakeholders to meet and share their views and experiences. One important output was an agreement to set up community-based indigenous knowledge resource centers, not only as a depository of knowledge, but also to serve training needs and function as a database.

INDISCO was established in 1993 as an inter-regional programme of the ILO to support the self-reliance of indigenous and tribal communities through cooperatives and other self-help organizations. INDISCO tries to demonstrate this through effective and replicable methodologies in the delivery of support services.

In the Philippines, INDISCO is pioneering a new approach, with all ten project sites managed by communities themselves through their People's Organizations (POs). This means that the POs are key in determining the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their projects. INDISCO just provides oversight services, administrative and financial backstopping and – on a need basis – technical assistance.

For example, the fishing community assisted by INDISCO in the remote island



INDISCO project site in Bukidnon Province, Mindanao Island, Philippines. INDISCO Viet Nam meets tribal leaders of the Matigsalog.

of Tawi-Tawi, noted an alarming decrease in the number of sea abalone in their area. They responded by launching a training programme on the culture and propagation of this crucial resource. The PO is tapping local marine scientists and concerned government agencies to act as resource persons during the training.

This particular example touches on two of the six INDISCO components, namely "Sustainable Environment and Natural Resources Management", as well as the "Income and Employment Generation" component. Depending on the needs of a particular community, the project may emphasize one component over another, although all components are present in each site. The other components focus on Capability Building, Institution Building, Preservation and Promotion of Indigenous Culture, and Advancement of the Status of Indigenous Women. Tripartite evaluations have indicated the appropriateness of this approach.

The ILO has been working with indigenous peoples since the early 1920s and adopted a Convention on the rights of indigenous peoples in 1957, which was replaced by the more appropriate Convention 169 in 1989. Convention 169 is now up for ratification by the Philippines.

Arend van der Goes, ILO-Manila

* INDISCO is an acronym for "Inter-regional Programme to Support the Self-Reliance of Indigenous and Tribal Communities through Cooperatives and Other Self-Help Organizations"

YVON CHOTARD (1921-1998)

Yvon Chotard, the representative of the Government of France on the ILO Governing Body (GB) died on 12 November 1998 at the age of 77. Born in 1921 in La Madeleine, France, he held a number of senior positions including that of Chairperson of the GB in 1991-92 and 1995-96, as well as President of the *Centre Chrétien des Patrons et Dirigeants d'Entreprise Française* (CFPC) from 1965 to 1970, and President of the *Commission Sociale* and Vice-Chairman of the *Conseil National du Patronat Français* from 1972 to 1986. An ILO obituary honoured Mr. Chotard as "a man of outstanding ability, who lent great dignity to



Jacques Maillard

the work of serving humanity, development and social progress, a charismatic and wise leader, sincere, open, warm and human". (Source, ILO document GB.273/14/6, 16/11/98)

Labour market flexibility, new encyclopaedia on occupational safety and health, and Asia crisis draw media coverage

✓ **Labour market flexibility boosts productivity in machinery/electronics sector, says ILO, but poses challenges for the workforce**
(ILO Press Release No. 98/37)

JOURNAL OF COMMERCE

(28 October 1998, USA)

United States leads way in adding technical jobs

GENEVA – Communications and information technology has spurred the machinery, electrical and electronic industries and added more than 4.5 million jobs worldwide since 1980, an industry study said.

(...) The study by the Geneva based International Labour Organization points out that factors have helped in the revitalization of the U.S. electronics industry.

FINANCIAL TIMES

(28 October 1998, UK)

Flexible practices boosting machine jobs

Flexible labour practices have helped machinery manufacturers in rich nations to boost competitiveness and increase employment, according to a study by the International Labour Organization (ILO). But workers have paid a price in higher job instability and more inconvenient working hours, including night work, weekend work and long shifts, "with unwelcome consequences for the personal lives of many employees". (...)

Het Financieele Dagblad

(31 October-2 November 1998, Netherlands)

Rapport Internationale Arbeidsorganisatie

'Flexibiliteit zet werknemers onder druk'

GENEVE (ips) – Flexibiliteit heeft zware gevolgen voor de werknemers van bedrijven actief in de productie van machines, elektrische toestellen en elektronica. De werknemers vrezen voor het behoud van hun job en krijgen af te rekenen met sociale implicaties. Dat stelt de Internationale Arbeidsorganisatie (ILO) in een nieuw rapport. De ILO onderzocht de gevolgen van de flexibelere arbeidspraktijken op de productieprocessen. (...)

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

(1 December 1998, USA)

Work Week

A Special News Report About Life On the Job – and Trends Taking Shape There

THE CHECKOFF: The International Labour Organization, a United Nations affiliate, lists jet lag as an occupational hazard for business travellers...



(2 November 1998, Kuwait)

ILO: Labour Market Flexibility Boosts Productivity in Machinery/Electronics Sector but Poses Challenges for the Work Force

الابقاء على المنافسة من طريق المرونة الأكبر وكلفة أقل القوة الدافعة لسوق الصناعة

منظمة العمل: مرونة سوق العمل تعزز قوة الإنتاج في قطاع صناعة الآلات والأجهزة الكهربائية والإلكترونية ولكنها تعرقل القوة العاملة

✓ **New encyclopaedia lists main threats to worker health worldwide**
(ILO Press Release No. 98/39)



(15 November 1998, Spain)

El progreso no consigue evitar los riesgos laborales

GINEBRA – Los trabajadores siguen expuestos a importantes riesgos profesionales en todo el mundo. Ésta es una de las conclusiones que se recoge en la nueva edición de la Enciclopedia sobre seguridad y salud en el trabajo, editada por la Organización Internacional del Trabajo. (...)



LA NACIÓN

(6 December 1998, Uruguay)

Las amenazas a la salud de los trabajadores

Según la OIT, las quemaduras, las enfermedades respiratorias y la desacomodación horaria por viajes son trastornos frecuentes.



Governing Body establishes follow-up to ILO Declaration on Fundamental Human Rights (ILO Press Release No. 98/40)

LE FIGARO

premier quotidien national français

(20 novembre 1998, France)

Droits sociaux: le calendrier du BIT

Le conseil d'administration a adopté la procédure qui permettra, dès 1999, de donner un suivi pratique à la Déclaration de principes et de droits fondamentaux

GENÈVE – «*Sous peine de perdre toute crédibilité, il faut mettre en place le plus vite possible les moyens de donner une suite à un texte aussi important pour l'Organisation et les valeurs qu'elle défend.*»

Devant le dernier Conseil d'administration de l'Organisation internationale du Travail qu'il présidait, Michel Hansenne, qui laissera sa place de Directeur général en mars 1999 au chilien Juan Somavía, a obtenu gain de cause. La Déclaration de principes et de droits fondamentaux adoptée en juin dernier pourra ainsi rapidement trouver des moyens d'application. (...)

DAILY LABOR REPORT

(20 November 1998, USA)

ILO adopts action program on Declaration follow-up

GENEVA – The International Labour Organization has approved steps to implement its recently adopted *Declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work* at the meeting of its governing board, which is scheduled to wrap up Nov. 20.

The Governing Body agreed to publish annual reviews of countries which have not yet ratified relevant ILO core principle conventions. The reviews of these countries' efforts to adhere to the principles will be drawn up starting in 1999, with the first global report – covering the freedom of association – to be published in the year 2000. The reviews will be used to pressure governments into adhering to the four core labour rights set out under the Declaration. Subsequent global reports covering forced labour, equality of treatment for all workers, and child labour will be drawn up in 2001, 2002 and 2003, respectively. (...)



Freedom of association remains elusive in much of east and south-east Asia (ILO Press Release No. 98/41)

FINANCIAL TIMES

(25 November 1998, UK)

Union rights "elusive" in much of Asia, says ILO

The right of workers to form trade unions without the prior permission of the state remains "elusive" in much of East and South-East Asia,

according to the International Labour Office in a report from its committee on freedom of association. (...)

BUSINESS DAY

(25 November 1998, Thailand)

Industrial relations improving

The International Labour Office (ILO) yesterday said Asia was at a critical juncture in protecting workers rights, with Indonesia making significant gains but Myanmar remaining a "basket case". (...)

THE NATION

THAILAND'S INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

(25 November 1998, Thailand)

ILO stresses labour rights amid crisis

The ongoing economic crisis in the region has highlighted the need for countries to have freedom of association and for workers to have the right to join labour organizations, a senior International Labour Organization official said yesterday.

William Simpson, Director of technical cooperation for the ILO secretariat in East Asia, said that presence of better social and labour institutions would have lessened the impact of the crushing recession in many countries. (...)

Nikkeiren Times

(3 December 1998, Japan)

Freedom of association remains elusive in east and south-east Asia, says the ILO

結社の自由に消極的
東・東南アジア ILOが指摘



Asian labour market woes deepening. (ILO Press Release No. 98/42)



(2 December 1998, Hong Kong, China)

ILO urges insurance safety net

The International Labour Organization has urged Hong Kong to introduce an insurance scheme as it predicts higher unemployment whole of next year.

Visiting ILO chief economist Eddie Lee warned that deepening economic and social troubles in the region were unlikely to be reversed in the near future and urged governments and policy makers to take unprecedented and long-term measures.

He said millions of workers in Southeast and East Asia, about 75,000 in Hong Kong, have lost their jobs as a result of the financial turmoil.

Bangkok Post

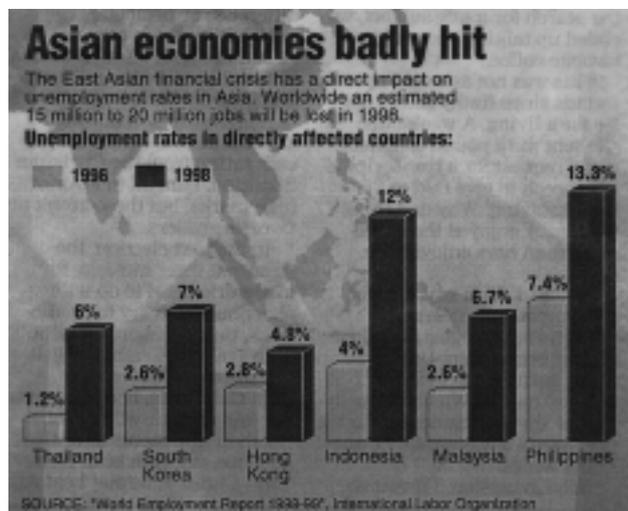
(13 December 1998, Thailand)

Asia in need of a new social contract

Eddy Lee, director of studies at the International Labour Organization, is author of the just released book, "The Asian Financial Crisis: The Challenge for Social Policy" (December 1998). The financial crisis in Asia has had devastating social consequences. Massive job losses have occurred, resulting in at least a three-fold increase in unemployment in Indonesia, South Korea and Thailand since last year. More recently, unemployment has also begun to increase sharply in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore.

HOUR

(17 November 1998, USA)



The New York Times

(3 December 1998, USA)

Grim assessment by U.N. of economic slide in Asia

HONG KONG, Dec. 2 – The social costs of the Asian economic crisis are far higher than initial estimates and are “dramatically worsening”, according to a report here on Tuesday by the International Labour

Organization, a United Nations agency.

The ILO said the economic collapse had resulted in a combustible mixture of soaring unemployment, spreading poverty and dashed expectations. The lack of social welfare programmes made the hardest-hit countries, like Indonesia, “fertile ground for breeding social unrest”. (...)

Herald INTERNATIONAL Tribune

(2 December 1998, USA)

Risk of social crisis rising in Asia, UN agency finds

HONG KONG – While some upbeat forecasters are saying the Asian economic crisis has bottomed out, an agency of the United Nations said Tuesday that the region’s social crisis was far from over and was likely to get worse.

The International Labour Office, the secretariat of the International Labour Organization, said in a report released here that the lack of unemployment benefits in the region had inflicted unnecessary suffering and hardship and called for fundamental changes to provide a social safety net. (...)

THE ASIAN WALL STREET JOURNAL.

(2 December 1998, Hong Kong, China)

Weaving Asia’s Social Safety Net The Asian Wall Street Journal, New York, by Eddy Lee

Asia needs a strategy for social stabilization as much as financial stabilization. And among the range of options, the emergency provision of unemployment insurance is probably the single most affordable, relevant and appropriate measure to help Asians come to terms with the crisis. (...)

Le Monde

(3 December 1998, France)

Le Bureau international du Travail propose à l’Asie «un nouveau contrat social» Les conséquences de la crise s’alourdissent

BANGKOK – «Les retombées sociales» de la crise en Asie de l’Est «sont beaucoup plus graves que prévu et pourraient empirer», estime, dans une étude publiée mercredi 2 décembre, le Bureau international du Travail (BIT), qui propose notamment «la création d’une assurance-chômage en faveur des nouveaux chômeurs dont les effectifs ne cessent d’augmenter». Constatant que «l’aggravation des problèmes économiques et sociaux de la région n’est pas près de s’inverser, le BIT enjoint aux gouvernements et aux décideurs de prendre des mesures sans précédents». (...)



Media shelf

In print

■ **The Asian financial crisis: The challenge for social policy**, by Eddy Lee. ILO, Geneva. ISBN 92-2-110850-3. Price: 20 Swiss francs.



This book analyses the social impact of the Asian financial crisis and its policy implications. It documents the severe rise in unemployment and its repercussions in the worst-affected countries (the Republic of Korea, Thailand and Indonesia) and how this has, to a varying extent, overwhelmed the underdeveloped systems of social protection. A new social contract, based on full respect for basic labour rights, democracy, and greater social protection needs to be forged.

The policy issues raised are of relevance to other emerging economies which are facing similar challenges in an era of rapid economic and financial globalization.

■ **Social exclusion: An ILO perspective**, edited by José B. Figueiredo and Arjan de Haan. International Institute for Labour Studies, Research Series 111, ILO Geneva. ISBN 92-9014-577-3, Price: 20 Swiss francs.

Globalization of economic relations is posing new challenges to national and international policy-makers. There is a need for new approaches to social issues which take account of globalization and which integrate economic and social aspects.

The book touches upon the central issues of the debate on social exclusion and contains papers by academics and presentations by ILO professionals, as well as practitioners from other international or regional bodies.

■ **Improving working conditions and productivity in the garment industry**. An action manual, edited by Juan

Carlos Hib. ILO Geneva. ISBN 92-2-110849-X. Price: 30 Swiss francs.

Many small or medium-sized clothing firms fail to grow or even to survive, even though the bulk of social and economic growth in most countries is expected to come from small or medium-sized enterprises. It is not easy to succeed in the garment industry. Problems of finance, production and marketing lead many to bankruptcy every year.

This book is about survival and growth through building a more effective enterprise. It is full of practical and low cost ideas, some of which may already be in use in your own enterprise or nearby. These practical ideas are the result



of several years of ILO action, in cooperation with owners and managers just like you. In each case, the starting point was a concern for the enterprise's survival and growth. It may be used by entrepreneurs participating in courses organized by employers' organizations, productivity centres, training institutions, labour ministries or other agencies, as well as by individual readers.

■ **Voluntary initiatives affecting training and education on safety, health and environment in the chemical industries**. Report for discussion at the Tripartite Meeting on Voluntary Initiatives Affecting Training and Education on Safety, Health and Environment in the Chemical Industries. Sectoral activities Programme, ILO Geneva. ISBN 92-2-111352-3. Price: 17.50 Swiss francs.



The report provides the basis to exchange views towards adopting conclusions which include guidance and proposals for further action; and to adopt a report on the discussion.

On screen

“Work with information – the ILO way”

A videocassette produced for the ILO Library

21 minutes – PAL and NTSC versions

The ILO houses the world's most important resources for information on workplace concerns. But many people are not aware that ILO information products and services are available to users around the world. This 21-minute videocassette gives an overview of a wide range of services, including the ILO's Web site offerings, the ILO Library and the ILO's network of documentation centres around the world, ILO publications, ILO statistical, legislative and bibliographic databases, and many more. The film goes on to show a wide range of users of ILO information in workplaces, in labour ministries, in multinational corporations, in trade unions, in universities, and illustrates how the ILO has helped each of them to get the information they need.... Each of these users found that sometimes, the information you need may be as close as a phone call or an e-mail.

The film is available free of charge to users in libraries, research centres, governments, and labour-related institutions. Please contact the ILO Library, International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22 (Switzerland) (Fax: +4122/799.65.16 ; E-mail: bibl@ilo.org) and include the your organization's full name and address, and the type of institution (government, trade union, etc.)

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■ **International Labour Review – the last two issues of Volume 137 (1998)**

Issue No. 3:

First there is a pair of short articles which reflect an indirect debate between the lawyer and the economist on the economic arguments for “interference” in labour markets by trade unions and regulation. The distinct interests of insiders and outsiders lead the lawyer to examine the economic arguments more closely, looking for ways of increasing solidarity. The economist shows that trade unions cannot logically be held responsible for worse employment outcomes or for increasing inequality. In this dialogue at least, there is a significant degree of convergence – and a reaffirmation of the critical role of trade unions in furthering social goals.

Next we have the benefit of an evaluation of the impact of retraining, public works, wage subsidies and self-employment assistance in reducing unemployment in Poland and Hungary. While the findings have already been applied to the benefit of programmes in those two countries, they have broader lessons – both direct and in terms of methodology – for judging and improving similar programmes elsewhere.

A subject rarely examined is the role of sheltered workshops in providing gainful work for persons with disabilities. Here we benefit from the results of a survey undertaken for the ILO on the variety of forms in a number of countries, in all regions. Whether little more than therapeutic in purpose or closer to “normal” employment, they do tend to provide an important social “good” – a chance for those otherwise excluded to participate in production, earn income, and improve their social status.

An oft-cited obstacle to improving working conditions in small enterprises is the difficulty in monitoring conditions in small enterprises. Thus, it is noteworthy when innovative means are found for overcoming this obstacle. Here, we present a report on the practice of worker representation in monitoring occupational health and safety in small enterprises in Sweden, and its recent evaluation. Perhaps most important for other countries is the idea that trade unions could, by taking the initiative to provide such a service in improving health and safety in very small enterprises, contribute to their own regeneration and regain some lost ground.

The first of the two *perspectives* in this issue explains the operation of the ILO’s supervisory machinery in the particular case forced labour in Myanmar (formerly Burma). It describes the nature of the instruments and of the escalating procedures available to the ILO in such a case of continuing non-compliance, and then summarizes the principal charges, the recommendations of the Commission, and the Government’s reply. The second *perspective* sets out the history, purpose and contents of the ILO’s most substantial publication – the massive, 4-volume (or CD-rom) Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety (4th edition). This multidisciplinary tome contains an enormous range of information of relevance to most anyone. Hazardous chemicals, most diseases and possible injuries, ethical issues, social problems, management – it is difficult to imagine any relevant question that is not dealt with by the more than 1,000 contributors, leading experts in their fields.

Finally, this issue concludes with book reviews and notes on subjects as diverse as education and training, corporate restructuring, migration, new forms of work organization, violations of trade union rights, welfare reform, health and safety, radical unionism and racism as well as new ILO publications on HIV/AIDS, child labour, workers’ education on international labour standards, maritime labour Conventions, safety and health in forestry, the sex sector, violence at work, work organization and ergonomics, and employment.

Issue No. 4:

While the right to strike is not set out explicitly in ILO Conventions or Recommendations, that does not mean it has been neglected by the ILO. Quite the contrary. A substantial number of the cases which the ILO has taken up in the course of its supervision of standards over the years have concerned restrictions on the right to strike. The result has been to interpret – quite narrowly – where it may be legitimate to constrain the right to strike. By implication, it is everywhere else permitted. That, in practice, is a powerful result. But it is not as well known and understood as it deserves to be. This issue of the *International Labour Review* is largely devoted to a response to that lacuna.

The summation of ILO principles on the right to strike presented here is the result of a thorough review by ILO officials in the International Labour Standards De-

partment of the substantial case law which has emerged from the decisions of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations and by the Committee on Freedom of Association. This is an important reference text.

Trade adjustment assistance has been provided since 1962 for US workers displaced as a result of government decisions to reduce barriers to international trade. In terms of welfare economics, it is compensation for those made worse off by such a policy shift in the trade regime, just as society as a whole gains. The widespread difficulties of many governments in funding existing broad-based social assistance may lead them to contemplate the adoption of more targeted trade adjustment assistance. For that reason it is sensible to try to understand some of the advantages – and pitfalls – of a scheme which has been in operation for so long.

Countries in which apprenticeships are widespread tend to experience rates of youth unemployment which are relatively low compared to those of adults. In Switzerland, some 60 per cent of all young people pass through the dual apprenticeship system on their way to achieving regular full-time employment. The apparent success of apprenticeship systems which combine school and work attracts the attention of countries with high rates of youth unemployment as well as donors engaged in supporting reform of the educational sector in lower income countries. There are some useful ideas here.

The *books* in this issue cover substantial ground. Sex bias in occupational health, another round of counter arguments to the end of work hypothesis, the history of labour law (in France), possible ways of adapting European systems of social protection and the full record of the interdisciplinary analysis of the future of work which was the basis of an earlier special issue of the *International Labour Review* (Vol. 135, No. 6) are all presented here, as are recent ILO publications on working conditions in the garment industry, gender segregation in Nordic labour markets, social exclusion, poverty alleviation, the Asian financial crisis, management development and urban employment.

An index to Volume 137 – in chronological order, and by author and subject – concludes the issue.

enterprise forum

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International Labour Office
Geneva, 5/6 November

New challenges and new opportunities for the world of work

In light of the success of Enterprise Forum 96, the ILO is more than ever convinced that social progress and enterprise competitiveness are not only compatible but support one another. The process of globalization is creating new challenges and new opportunities for the world of work, requiring an in-depth reflection on ways in which to deal with this situation. One thing is certain, there is a need to situate both the enterprise and the human being at the centre of any economic activity. Globalization has given rise to a *New Spirit of Enterprise*, which has stimulated the development of a values-based approach to enterprise competitiveness. Enterprise Forum 99 will present the most up-to-date thinking by those at the cutting edge of enterprise development.

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