



FOR INFORMATION

SEVENTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Report of the Director-General

Eighth Supplementary Report: The ILO at 90: Countdown to a century of social progress

Information on preparations for the 90th anniversary

Introduction

1. The year 2009 will mark the 90th anniversary of the ILO.
2. The ILO has played an influential role in economic and social policy development throughout much of the twentieth century and remains at the forefront of dialogue and action in the world of work in the twenty-first century. The ILO must, however, be in harmony with its times, respond to new challenges and seize new opportunities. To meet the needs of its constituents and society at large its activities are in a constant state of adaptation, no less so today than in the past. Acknowledging the accomplishments of the past can help the ILO look forward to new ways of promoting the goals, values and principles of the Organization and its constituents, and to realize the Decent Work Agenda in the decade leading up to the centenary in 2019. That will be the leitmotif of the 90th anniversary.
3. The 90th anniversary provides an opportunity to reinforce the ILO's position as the leading source of knowledge and expertise on the world of work. It provides a unique platform for the Office and constituents to reach out to all those concerned with the world of work, consolidating and showcasing the achievements of the past and debating responses to the challenges of the future. And, today, to work together to make the global goal of decent work a progressive national reality.
4. This paper identifies a number of opportunities to raise the profile of the ILO and its work. Some of them draw on the ILO Century Project now being developed at the International Institute for Labour Studies. Others are based on ideas from around the ILO. The aim will be to reach not only constituents and other relevant actors, but also the public at large.

Activities proposed to mark the anniversary

High-level national events

5. High-level national events on “social dialogue on decent work for a fair globalization” are planned in as many countries as possible. Events will be organized locally by the tripartite constituents with ILO support and will take place worldwide on the same day. They will bring together ILO constituents with leading political actors, parliamentarians, academics and local authorities to promote policy convergence around decent work objectives that reflect national priorities. Taken all together, these country events will strengthen the ILO’s knowledge base in the countries concerned, reinforce national and international networks, and stimulate new local actions and initiatives. The fact that they will all be held on the same day will highlight both national commitments to and the global significance of decent work.

Media and communication activities

6. Various media and communication activities linked to the high-level national events outlined above will be promoted.
7. A special issue of the *World of Work* magazine will be published in January 2009. It will examine where we have been, where we are and where we are heading, with a series of articles projecting the anticipated evolution of key trends in the future. The issue, tentatively entitled “The state of the world of work to come”, will include substantive articles analysing current issues and future challenges to be faced by the ILO. Over the course of 2009, the *World of Work* will examine historical achievements and issues through a prism that looks both backwards and forwards; analyse events that have cemented or may reaffirm the ILO’s position as the leader on labour matters; and provide a platform for ongoing regional decent work decades. Eminent personalities, experts and researchers will be invited to contribute articles.
8. A film archive project of old and new video footage will provide a permanent visual record of the history and achievements of the ILO. The ILO was created at about the same time as film archiving was being developed and has a rich visual archive of its historical work. A project is being launched to identify and restore as many pieces of film as possible and transfer them to an easily exploitable medium. This would enable the ILO to hold a festival of its old films, interspersed with current productions, and copies could be made available to all country offices in order for similar viewings to be held locally. An archive of films in different languages related to social and labour issues could also be considered.

Activities under the ILO Century Project

9. This Project began at the International Institute for Labour Studies in 2007. Progress was reported to the Institute’s Board and the Governing Body in November 2007 and work on the Project was included in the Institute’s 2008–09 programme.¹ The main objective is to enhance knowledge within the ILO of the Organization’s contribution to thinking and policy development on social and economic issues, and to expand the use and influence of that knowledge. The Project includes: historical reviews of ILO ideas and their impact in its different fields of work, reflecting tripartite perspectives; improved archives and library collections; biographies and oral histories of key figures among constituents and staff; and

¹ GB.300/PFA/3/1.

educational programmes and capacity building for all concerned with the ILO. It will draw on past achievements in order to look forward towards the centenary in 2019.

10. A number of outputs of the Project are expected to contribute to the 90th anniversary celebration. First, an overview volume is being prepared on the history of ILO ideas and their impact. Due to be published at the end of 2008, this book will provide background elements for tripartite dialogue in a high-profile event.
11. Second, it is proposed to organize tripartite discussions during major ILO meetings in 2009 centred around the past and future contributions of the ILO, drawing on both the above book and other papers under preparation as part of the Century Project. This includes the International Labour Conference, the Governing Body sessions in March and November, and the European Regional Meeting.
12. Third, work is under way to bring together materials on past Directors and Directors-General. In particular, a book on Edward Phelan and a translation of an existing biography of Albert Thomas would be published in 2009. An event around the book on Edward Phelan, an Irish national, is foreseen in collaboration with the ILO's Irish constituents.
13. Fourth, the Project is beginning a series of oral history interviews of key ILO figures. The first, with Francis Blanchard, was undertaken personally by the Director-General in February 2008. Another one, with Michel Hansenne, is envisaged. More such interviews are planned for the second half of 2008 and early 2009. Audiovisual extracts of these interviews should be available for use in events during 2009.
14. Fifth, a photo essay on the history of the ILO and a chronological display of ILO action in relation to key global developments over the last century will be prepared.
15. Sixth, advantage will be taken of the events and activities of other national, regional or global networks. For instance, a special event is planned at the 15th World Congress of the International Industrial Relations Association, to be held in Sydney in August 2009. ILO events may also be organized at regular meetings of national and regional academic networks concerned with labour and social policy issues.

Further proposals

16. Plans for putting the above proposals into effect are under development. Other ideas are also under review and could be developed further as funds become available and opportune moments for their implementation are identified.
17. It is hoped that ILO constituents will seize this opportunity to promote the identity and messages of the ILO. Governments, employers, and workers are invited to consider ways to mark the anniversary at both national and global levels, and to reflect them in their own plans.

Geneva, 11 March 2008.

Submitted for information.