

**FOR INFORMATION**

SECOND ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Implementation of the Global
Employment Agenda: An update**

1. This paper provides an update on the implementation of the Global Employment Agenda (GEA) during the period March–October 2008. Activities and events supporting the implementation of the GEA are reported according to the four priority areas identified in the “vision” document that was presented to the Committee in March 2006. The four priority areas are: (1) making employment central in economic and social policy-making at the global, regional and national levels; (2) the informal economy; (3) youth employment; and (4) meeting the special needs of Africa.

**I. Making employment central in economic
and social policy-making**

2. The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008, adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 97th Session (2008), recognizes the importance of countries’ commitment to place full and productive employment and decent work for all “as central objectives of their relevant national and international policies”; and includes a call for the promotion of the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), as among the “most significant”. The Office will continue to support member States in this context using the GEA framework for the country-level design of employment policies.

(a) Global***MDG target on “full and productive
employment and decent work for all”***

3. The ILO worked with the United Nations to establish a new target under Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1: “Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”, denoted as Target 1.B: “Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people”.
4. Four indicators, mostly relating to employment, were defined by the UN experts to monitor progress towards the new target: (i) the employment-to-population ratio; (ii) labour productivity growth rates as quantitative measures of full and productive employment; (iii)

the share of vulnerable employment in total employment; and (iv) the share of working poor (living on US\$1 per day) in total employment as broad measures of decent work. As part of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG indicators, the Office assembled data and contributed to the analysis of the Indicators in *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2008*. The report was discussed at the High-level Event on the Millennium Development Goals convened by the United Nations.

***Global employment trends for women, 2008;
Global employment trends for youth, 2008***

5. The Office reports *Global employment trends for women* (March 2008) and *Global employment trends for youth* (October 2008) received widespread media coverage and focused attention on the particular labour market vulnerabilities of these two population segments.

***Outcome of general discussions during
the 97th Session of the International
Labour Conference***

- (a) Skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development

6. The conclusions adopted by the Conference Committee on Skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development expressed the commitment of constituents to strengthen vocational training and lifelong learning as a central pillar of employability for workers and sustainability for enterprises. The conclusions build on the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), and support GEA core elements on employability through improved knowledge and skills and on promoting technological change for higher productivity and job creation and improved standards of living.
7. The Committee agreed that countries that have managed to improve both productivity and employment growth have targeted their skills development policies towards three objectives: matching supply to current demand for skills, helping workers and enterprises adjust to change; and anticipating and delivering the skills needed in the future. This requires effective inter-ministerial institutions, social dialogue, and linking skills development policies to national and sector development strategies.
8. The conclusions set priorities for research, technical cooperation and advocacy work. The Office was also called upon to coordinate support for skills development at the country level under the “Delivering as One” framework.
9. Follow-up action has started in the following areas:
- the Committee’s conclusions have been published in a reader-friendly format in several languages while promotional materials and the corresponding web site now reflect the central themes of the conclusions;
 - a cross-country review of National Qualification Frameworks to compare policy objective expectations, implementation and results has been launched, in collaboration with the Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (CINTERFOR);

- a research agenda is planned on skill needs implications of climate change, to be used in developing tools on skills forecasting;
- a joint technical meeting with the Turin Centre incorporated research findings and the conclusions into their courses on skills development policies and vocational training institution management;
- consultations have begun with UNESCO, the World Bank, and other agencies and donors on joint research and on coordinating efforts at the UN Country Team level to improve coherence between basic education and vocational training.

(b) Promoting rural employment for poverty reduction

10. The Conference Committee on Rural Employment adopted a plan of action on the promotion of rural employment for poverty reduction, urging the Office to implement an integrated strategy to support member States to promote productive and decent employment in rural areas. Implementing the plan requires practical interventions across the four strategic objectives of the ILO, at global, national and local levels, addressing specific economic sectors. The Conference also passed a resolution calling for the ILO to convene a tripartite technical workshop on the global food crisis and its impact on decent work.

11. Follow-up action has started in the following areas:

- the conclusions are being taken into account in the preparation of the Programme and Budget for 2010–11 and the Strategic Policy Framework for 2010–15;
- a number of regions and countries have built on the conclusions to include the promotion of rural employment for poverty reduction as part of their Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs);
- consultations are taking place with constituents for the tripartite technical workshop on the global rise in food prices and its impact on decent work;
- an international seminar on Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Development (WIND) in October 2008 discussed strategies to promote occupational safety and health in rural enterprises and communities as part of an integrated approach to decent work;
- a joint meeting is planned with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on gender and rural employment in March 2009.

12. Further follow-up is envisaged through the establishment of a cross-departmental task force.

A training course on private employment agencies (PrEA)

13. In 2007, the Office published a *Guide to private employment agencies: Regulation, monitoring and enforcement* to provide guidance to national legislators in drafting legal frameworks in line with the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181), and the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188). In order to improve and strengthen capacities of policy-makers and national experts to assist constituents in managing issues regarding private employment agencies, the Office developed a training course with the

Turin Centre. The course will use the guide's examples of country legislation and specific provisions from both developing and developed countries. Technical cooperation projects on migration and trafficking in the Western Balkans and in the Mekong subregion have also made good use of the Guide, which has been translated into several languages (Albanian, Arabic, Chinese, French, Serbian and Spanish).

ILO–OECD Joint Conference on Promoting Responsible Business Conduct

14. The ILO and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) jointly organized a high-level conference on “Employment and Industrial Relations: Promoting Responsible Business Conduct in a Globalizing Economy” in Paris (June 2008), as a follow-up to the Group of Eight (G8) discussion on the social dimensions of globalization at the 2007 G8 Summit. Some 300 representatives of governments, employers' and workers' organizations from 45 countries shared experiences on increasing employment, improving respect for workers' rights and strengthening industrial relations. This conference provided an opportunity for the ILO and the OECD to explore and develop potential synergies between the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

(b) Regional

Extending the campaign on social security for all

15. Workers in the formal and informal economy can only work their way out of poverty if they are in a physical and mental state of health and sufficiently educated to take up productive work. The ILO Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All is based on the recognition of this fact and advocates investments in basic social security benefits (the so-called social security floor) as a precondition for successful labour market policies early in national development. The social security floor could consist of universal access to essential health services, basic child benefits that permit children to go to school, basic social assistance for the unemployed that maintains their ability to work, and basic old-age and disability pensions that protect households against dependency-related poverty. In this context, the Office conducted a series of regional seminars in Santiago (December 2007), Amman (April 2008) and New Delhi (June 2008).¹ There was basic agreement that building up a social security floor could, in the future, become a key component of national employment and development strategies.

(c) National

India

16. Since 2007, the Office and the Ministry of Labour and Employment have been working together to formulate an employment policy for India, focused on: (i) accelerating the growth of employment in the formal economy, and (ii) improving the quality of jobs (in terms of productivity, earnings and protection of workers) in the informal economy. A diagnostic framework was adopted to identify the factors responsible for the observed slow growth of employment, and design policy responses accordingly. The diagnosis was

¹ See also GB.303/ESP/3.

conducted in policy areas which correspond to several core elements of the ILO's GEA: (i) economic policies (including macroeconomic and sector-level policies); (ii) policies for enterprise development with particular focus on micro- and small enterprises; (iii) labour market policies; and (iv) skills and employability. This involved several in-depth studies, as well as consultations with stakeholders that included various central government ministries and departments, state governments, the economic advisory council to the Prime Minister, the National Planning Commission, the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector, employers' and workers' organizations, the academic community, civil society and the media.

17. A national consultation meeting in May 2008 discussed the basic elements of the employment strategy. Following the meeting, a number of "working groups" was set up to formulate recommendations for employment-focused policies in specific areas. Based on the reports of the working groups, as well as the technical document, a draft national employment policy was prepared. This draft policy will be discussed in different forums before it is finalized.

Indonesia

18. The Government of Indonesia has been implementing a "triple-track development strategy" (pro-growth, pro-employment and pro-poor). In August 2008, the National Development Planning Agency and the Office, with the support of the Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration held a policy dialogue on "A strategy for creating decent and productive employment in Indonesia". The dialogue provided a platform to discuss and analyse the current and medium-term employment challenges and opportunities facing Indonesia and the possible components of a national comprehensive employment strategy as outlined in a background document prepared by the Office.
19. Through the policy dialogue the constituents reaffirmed their commitment to support a comprehensive employment strategy, based on the core elements of the GEA. Furthermore, the outcomes of the discussion will be used as inputs into the development of the next Medium-Term Development Plan.

Occupied Arab territories

20. An employment mission visited the occupied Arab territories in August 2007 to revitalize ILO engagements and reactivate the plans for the establishment of the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection. The outcome was the development of a framework document for an ILO programme. This was discussed and endorsed by constituents during a mission in March 2008. The programme aims to create and sustain existing jobs within the current uncertain conditions, and to simultaneously pursue a vision for a future Palestinian State, based on a vibrant economy, quality jobs and good governance. The programme has been aligned with the objectives of the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP) 2008–10 and is based on three components: strengthening labour market governance; improving employability through skills development and local economic development; and supporting private sector sustainability and growth.

Nepal

21. The Office has taken an initiative on employment generation for people living with HIV. A resource centre is currently being established to train, upgrade skills, provide information, build strategic partnerships and raise resources for people living with HIV to either enter the formal workforce, or to create their own small businesses. The programme will be

implemented in close coordination with country-level HIV initiatives, including those in national plans, UN system efforts, bilateral donor programmes, inputs of domestic and international foundations and other partners.

II. Informal economy

Follow-up to the Interregional Symposium on the Informal Economy

22. In March 2008 the Committee was informed about the discussions and conclusions of a tripartite Interregional Symposium on the Informal Economy held in November 2007.² Responding to a follow-up request, the Office supported the African Union Commission in convening an expert group meeting in Africa on the informal economy at the end of October 2008 in Senegal to be followed by a national tripartite and inter-ministerial high-level discussion to prepare an integrated national strategy.
23. At the request of the Hungarian Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, the Office is assisting in the preparation of a national tripartite workshop on the informal economy, to take place in the first quarter of 2009. It will serve as a forum for discussion on the informal economy in the country and will provide an opportunity to learn about international experiences of dealing with specific aspects of the transition to formalization.
24. In several other countries new initiatives are being launched in the context of DWCPs, ranging from mapping the trends, structures and composition of the informal economy (e.g. China, Indonesia, United Republic of Tanzania and Mexico), reviewing the impact of policies (e.g. Brazil and India), supporting comprehensive policy development (Mongolia) to focusing on informality in specific sectors (South Africa and India).
25. New research and knowledge development on the regulatory environment and the informal economy, labour law and micro- and small enterprises, the growth of self-employment, subcontracting and retail trade are being carried out. A special effort is being made to consolidate the statistical database for countries which have applied the new methodology.
26. A consolidated reader of policy briefs that synthesizes the state-of-the-art knowledge on issues, best practices, and ILO tools that facilitate the transition to formality and relate to all relevant aspects of the GEA is under preparation.
27. At the invitation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the Office participated in an international workshop on organizing workers in the informal economy: a challenge for the unions (April 2008). The workshop was followed by the development of an action plan. Support will be given to the implementation of the action plan.
28. In June 2008, the Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor issued its report, *Making the law work for everyone*. The main focus of the report is on four pillars that are crucial to the legal empowerment of those in the informal economy: access to justice, property rights, labour rights and business rights. The Office was associated with the Commission's work, as a member of the Advisory Board, and contributed to the discussions of the working groups, especially the working group on labour rights. The final outcome is an endorsement of the Decent Work Agenda as an empowering and integrated framework with a focus on informal economy workers and businesses.

² GB.301/ESP/6.

III. Youth employment

Spanish MDG Achievement Fund for the thematic window on youth, employment and migration

29. The Committee will recall that the Spanish Government has committed some €528 million, to the MDG Achievement Fund thematic window on youth, employment and migration. The Executive Director of the Employment Sector is the convenor for the global review of the proposals under this thematic window. To date, 15 country proposals have obtained the approval of the Fund's Steering Committee, with nearly US\$18 million earmarked for activities to be implemented by the ILO. The ILO is playing a major role in 14 countries: Albania, China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Serbia, Sudan, Tunisia and Turkey, as well as in Kosovo.³ It is acting as the lead agency in nine countries. The joint programme for Albania, which is led by the ILO, was recently identified as a good example by the MDG Achievement Fund.

World Youth Congress (WYC)

30. The ILO participated in the Fourth World Youth Congress in Quebec (August 2008) that brought together some 600 international young leaders from around the world. The objectives of the Congress were to provide participants with skills and support to enable them to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs and to honour and support the achievements of the most successful young practitioners of youth-led development. This year, along with ten other United Nations organizations, the ILO took the opportunity to advance its Decent Work Agenda, and its achievements in the field of youth employment and entrepreneurship through various workshops and information dissemination.

Youth Employment Network

31. The ILO continues to support and to host the Youth Employment Network (YEN), an inter-agency partnership of the United Nations, the ILO, and the World Bank, currently funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Key developments included the appointment of a new YEN manager and a meeting of the YEN Steering Committee, the secretariat and core partners to define the expected outcomes by the end of 2009. During the third lead country meeting in June 2008, the YEN launched a benchmarking initiative on successful youth employment policies and programmes. The objective is to initiate a regular peer review process for monitoring performance of lead countries. The YEN will also contribute to the multi-stakeholder youth employment programme for the Mano River Union countries.

IV. Meeting the special needs of Africa

Decent work for youth in the Mano River Union countries

32. The ILO has been actively engaged in the formulation of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)/ILO/United Nations Development Programme

³ As defined in United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1244 of 1999.

(UNDP) multi-stakeholder programme, Productive and Decent Work for Youth in the Mano River Union (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone). This four-year programme addresses four components: (i) entrepreneurship development and the establishment of a financial scheme that will be managed by the YEN; (ii) the development of employable skills for young people through the provision of training in partnership with the private sector; (iii) establishment of a subregional labour market intermediation institution, which will address employment services and information services; and (iv) the organization of a subregional youth forum and experience sharing.

33. Heads of State from the Mano River Union countries welcome and support the joint UN initiative as a concrete commitment to “Deliver as One”. They see it as an initial response to increasing calls to view young people as a potential social and economic resource for building peace and stability and as an immediate strategy for addressing youth needs through direct action. The Japanese Government has contributed US\$5 million for an initial phase.

Burkina Faso

34. Since 2006, the ILO has been working closely with the Ministry of Youth and Employment (MYE) and the social partners to formulate a National Employment Policy (NEP) and an Operational Action Plan 2008–11 providing a vision and framework for all national interventions in the employment field. The NEP was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 25 March 2008. Its four key objectives, based explicitly on several core elements of the GEA, are to: create a link between employment policy and other national policies; strengthen the dynamic of job creation by using specific means of action to stimulate employment and improve its quality; improve employability; and improve the functioning of the labour market by facilitating access to employment.
35. An innovative element of the follow-up work is that the ILO is currently supporting the MYE to translate the NEP into budgetary terms in accordance with national modalities, i.e. Public Expenditure Review and Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. It is also trying to strengthen the MYE's capacity to be an effective partner in the poverty reduction strategy process.

Ethiopia

36. The ILO, with support from the SIDA, has supported the formulation of a national employment policy in Ethiopia. A key background paper, *Making economic growth more employment intensive and pro-poor*, was prepared based on extensive research and consultations and presented in Addis Ababa in July 2008. The State Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, in her welcoming speech, stressed the need for enhanced productivity and skills to reduce poverty. She said that the background paper was central to charting the way forward and deepening the employment elements of Ethiopia's Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development also emphasized the centrality of the Plan as the national framework, providing a focus for employment efforts and accelerated, sustained, people-centred economic development.
37. In this context, the national employment policy will take a holistic approach by stressing the linkages and complementarities across the spectrum of industries and businesses and the need to link the policy clearly with trade and marketing domestically, regionally and globally.

Collaboration with UNAIDS on HIV/AIDS in Africa

38. The human resource losses due to the HIV epidemic undermine the capacity of governments in many countries in Africa to promote development and cope with other emerging issues such as the food crisis and climate change. At the same time, the loss of skills and productivity threaten enterprise security and job creation. The Office has provided capacity-building and advisory services to constituents in 33 countries to develop HIV/AIDS workplace policies and programmes, with a focus on HIV prevention and non-discrimination, thus protecting labour and jobs. Projects in five countries provide and promote income generation and employment opportunities for people living with HIV.

Geneva, 7 October 2008.

Submitted for information.

Appendix

Follow-up on guidance given by the Committee (since November 2007)

Agenda item/Guidance decisions	Follow-up
Overview of GEA implementation (GB.300/ESP/2)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Refocusing, and better measurement of the GEA and operational elements of the “vision” document. ■ Better balancing of Office work on the GEA core elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Rethinking of work agenda ongoing in the light of the follow-up actions to the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008. ■ Redrafting of targets and indicators to better reflect application and integration of GEA elements. ■ Incorporation of Conference conclusions in work programme.
Collective bargaining and the Decent Work Agenda (GB.300/ESP/1)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strengthening of the knowledge base around collective bargaining. ■ Technical advisory services should be improved and new tools developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Several studies analysing the impact of collective bargaining on economic and social policy launched. ■ A meeting of experts on industrial relations will be convened in early 2009. ■ Based on thematic and national studies, a publication on negotiating decent work will be published in 2009. ■ Technical advice on legislative and institutional developments concerning industrial relations provided in at least 14 countries. ■ Working papers on women’s participation in social dialogue institutions, on public service employment relations and on employment relations published in 2008. ■ High-level tripartite meeting on collective bargaining in a global economy will be held in the second half of 2009.
The Decent Work Agenda in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) (GB.301/ESP/2)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strengthened efforts to continue capacity building of constituents, especially to facilitate engagement of social partners in the poverty reduction strategy (PRS) process. ■ Continuation of ILO involvement in PRS to better integrate the Decent Work Agenda. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Office continues programme/involvement in several PRS countries, and to work closely with social partners. ■ A seminar will take place in December 2008 for constituents, together with ILO field and headquarters staff, on recent developments in engaging in PRS and national development frameworks from an employment and decent work perspective. ■ An initiative has started on strengthening constituents’ capacity in francophone Africa to produce regular employment and training status reports, for national monitoring of the employment components in PRSPs to support policy decision-making.

Agenda item/Guidance decisions

Follow-up

Progress evaluation of the Global Social Trust pilot project (GB.301/ESP/3)

- Complete the pilot project and documents and share the relevant experience with all institutions that show interest in entering into similar twinning partnerships between industrialized and developing countries.
- Continue to inform regularly the Tripartite Advisory Board of the Global Social Trust (GST) pilot project on the progress made by the pilot project.
- Provide a follow-up report on the results of the contribution collection mechanism, which can be used to decide on the future of the GST initiative.

- Preparatory work on the definition of the cash benefit to be sponsored by the Global Social Trust pilot project and further support to build the budgeting of the health insurance system is ongoing in the framework of a project financed by the Swedish Government. The project reports will be made available through a new internet platform.
- The contribution collection in Luxembourg is ongoing. The NGO Solidarité Syndicale is preparing a submission to apply for government technical cooperation resources to match the collected contributions. The tripartite board of the project was informed on developments in June 2008.

ILO Strategy on promoting women's entrepreneurship development (WED) (GB.301/ESP/4)

- With adoption of the WED strategy, the Office should further elaborate it and draw up detailed action plans.
- Inviting donors to provide financial support to scale up operation.

- In May and June 2008, the strategy was presented at regional meetings for ILO staff in Dar es Salaam and Bangkok to disseminate widely the strategy and to draft action plans to operationalize it.
- The strategy is being refined to leverage resources to respond to the increasing number of requests for WED from member States. Meanwhile, Irish Aid has committed to fund a third phase of the Women's Enterprise Development and Gender Equality project in Africa and Asia.

Report on the InFocus Initiative on export processing zones (EPZs) (GB.301/ESP/3)

- Strengthen research and provide better statistics and data, especially in countries with the largest number of EPZs, regarding issues such as employment levels, sectors concerned, freedom of association, collective bargaining and migrant workers.
- The need for strengthening social dialogue, labour administration and labour inspection.

- Research to be done on freedom of association, collective bargaining and social dialogue mechanisms in selected countries with EPZs.
 - Preparatory statistical work on the basis of a questionnaire sent to ten countries with EPZs to develop a database by the end of the biennium.
 - Consultations under way with constituents on capacity-building activities in Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Costa Rica.
-