

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

Tenth African Regional Meeting December 2003

Resolution on the role of social dialogue in addressing HIV/AIDS in the world of work

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The Tenth African Regional Meeting of the International Labour Organization,

Recalling the continuing spread of HIV infection, such that 42 million people worldwide are now living with the virus and millions more are affected by it,

Bearing in mind that the great majority of those infected are between 15 and 49 years of age, and so the most productive segment of the workforce on whom their countries depend,

Understanding the increasingly severe and long-term nature of the impacts of HIV/AIDS on individuals, societies and economies, as a result of the loss of skills, the reduced productivity and profitability of enterprises, contracting tax revenue and market demand, and the loss of investment, at the same time as pressure is mounting on public services and government authorities to cope with the consequences of the epidemic,

Noting with particular concern the threat of HIV/AIDS to the Decent Work Agenda, to the ILO's four strategic objectives, and above all to the tripartite constituents of the ILO, especially to the common interests of employers and workers,

Recognizing the potential of the social partners – especially through joint action - to contribute to national efforts against HIV/AIDS, and the effectiveness of the workplace as an entry point for prevention messages, measures to combat discrimination, and the delivery of care, support and treatment,

Acknowledging the usefulness of *the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work*, and its accompanying education and training manual and other guidelines, as a tool to guide the workplace response to HIV/AIDS,

Noting that the ILO Code of Practice identifies *social dialogue* as one of its key principles, and states that the successful implementation of HIV/AIDS policies and programmes requires cooperation between employers, workers and their representatives and government, where appropriate,

Encouraged by the application of social dialogue to enterprise, sectoral, national and international responses in the world of work, and in particular by the growing collaboration between employers and workers in the fight against HIV/AIDS, as demonstrated by the following key events:

‘Fighting HIV/AIDS together’, a statement of principle and declaration of commitment to joint action by the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), and their affiliated organizations, signed by the General Secretaries of each organization at the ILO on 12 May 2003;

the ICFTU-African Regional Organization (AFRO)/IOE/Pan-African Employers’ Confederation (PEC) HIV/AIDS review workshop, Nairobi, 7-9 April 2003, which brought workers and employers together to review existing workplace initiatives and to plan an intensification of their partnership against HIV/AIDS;

a similar declaration and statement of agreement between the Pan-African Employers’ Confederation and ICFTU-AFRO, Nairobi, 24 September 2003;

the platform of action on fighting HIV/AIDS in the world of work adopted by the Arab Regional Workshop recently organized by the ILO in Algiers;

and a series of consultations to develop a programme of national action plans,

Wishing to extend and intensify the contribution of employers and workers and their organizations, and of the ILO as the agency committed to protecting and promoting their interests within the framework of the UNAIDS partnership,

Invites the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to:

1. Appeal to governments to :

(i) promote and support the efforts of employers and workers to combat HIV/AIDS by providing an enabling legal and policy framework for workplace action, including measures to oppose stigma and discrimination;

(ii) strengthen national AIDS plans through the inclusion of a strategy for the world of work and especially with the involvement of employers’ and workers’ representatives in national coordinating mechanisms;

(iii) work towards a strengthening of public health systems, social protection institutions and education and training authorities, with a view to maintaining capacity in the face of the HIV epidemic and developing it over the longer term.

(iv) facilitate access to financial resources of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) for social partners in the world of work, especially employers' and workers' organizations

2. Appeal to employers, workers and their organizations to:

(i) scale up their joint efforts to reduce the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS, and to implement comprehensive workplace programmes that include prevention, measures to combat stigma and discrimination, and the provision of care and support;

(ii) work in partnership with governments and international donors to extend access to anti-retroviral treatment at the workplace and in the community, especially through opportunities afforded by the "3 x 5" initiative which was launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) in December 2003 and of which the ILO is a partner.

3. Request the Director-General to:

(i) prioritize and accelerate efforts by the tripartite constituents in all countries of the region to take collaborative action to reduce the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS, with particular reference to the roles of the ILO's Bureau of Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) and Bureau of Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and their specialists in the field;

(ii) strengthen the capacity of the constituents by developing policy guidance and training with key leaders, coordinators and organizers in government departments and employers' and workers' organizations who will in turn guide and train others;

(iii) explore the possibility of appointing an HIV/AIDS coordinator in the African Regional Office with responsibility for mobilizing and supporting the constituents;

(iv) identify the ways that each of the four ILO sectors can support the constituents through their own units, programmes and specialists, with resources allocated and programming agreed in a coordinated and transparent way;

(v) ensure that the tripartite inter-regional meeting on best practices in HIV/AIDS workplace policies and programmes, ILO, 15-17 December 2003 takes into account the recommendations on HIV/AIDS of the Tenth African Regional Meeting ;

(vi) support the launch of the IOE-ICFTU National Action Plans on HIV/AIDS through pilot workplace programmes in eight African countries, which will bring

together employers' and workers' organizations to intensify prevention efforts, enforce measures against discrimination, and build capacity for the provision of care and support: to include a meeting at the end of the biennium to take stock of progress and plan the replication of successful interventions;

(vii) in the context of UNAIDS co-sponsorship and UN inter-agency discussions, insist on the vital role of the workplace in tackling HIV/AIDS to ensure support for the social partners throughout the United Nations system and to secure increased funding for HIV/AIDS programmes in the world of work;

(viii) encourage ILO's association with discussions and initiatives by international institutions such as the WHO and WTO, concerning improved access to HIV/AIDS treatment, care and support.