The Tsunami and the ILO response
Responding to the Tsunami: The ILO's role

Not long after the Tsunami hit land across the Indian Ocean on 26 December 2004, the ILO swung into action. Offices in Bangkok, Colombo, Jakarta, New Delhi and elsewhere, along with colleagues in Geneva, worked with national authorities and the United Nations and its specialized agencies to assist the relief effort and begin mobilizing for the long reconstruction period ahead. Now, some 100 days on, it's time to take stock of what has been accomplished and what remains to be done.

Since the year 2000, the ILO has responded to several countries afflicted by natural disasters, including Hurricane Mitch in Central America, the Mozambique floods of 2000, the Gujarat earthquake of 2001 in India and the El Salvador earthquake of 2001. In 2001, the ILO also assisted Ethiopia in the restoration of livelihoods in drought-affected areas, and in 2003, Algeria with post-earthquake employment recovery. In Iran in 2004, the Organization developed a programme for post-earthquake employment recovery and the reduction of socioeconomic vulnerability.

In its response to natural disasters, the ILO gives priority to recovering jobs, reactivating the local economy and reducing people’s economic vulnerability. These not only address immediate needs, but also contribute to strengthening people’s resilience to future disasters and to accelerating the whole recovery process.

This response to natural disasters and other crises is important, because such events threaten the ILO’s overriding goal of promoting opportunities for all women and men to obtain decent productive work in conditions of equity, security and human dignity. In the aftermath of natural disasters there is a real danger that inequality and insecurity may grow, as disasters tend to have the greatest impact on the poorest and most vulnerable populations.

The ILO strategy for responding to natural disasters focuses on reviving local economies through decentralization of the national and international reconstruction efforts, and by involving the use of local resources, including local labour. It also involves boosting local economies through investments in local enterprises and supply of goods and services. This includes practical measures to reduce future vulnerability to crises.

Natural disasters are not the only crises that the ILO has responded to. The relevance of the ILO in the reconstruction of conflict-affected countries and improvement of their people’s material welfare is closely linked to the Organization’s origins at the end of the First World War under the Treaty of Versailles (1919). This Treaty recognized that employment promotion was critical for building sustainable peace.

In many ways, the ILO has sought to realize this mandate since then.
Tsunami

The massive earthquake and Tsunami that hit Asia last December left hundreds of thousands dead. An estimated 4 million people in India, Indonesia, the Maldives, Malaysia, Myanmar, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Somalia and Thailand faced the loss of their livelihoods and the risk of sinking deeper into poverty. The ILO has launched a number of programmes to help people rebuild their livelihoods. This issue takes a look at the Tsunami disaster and the ILO response.

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Despite robust economic growth, the global employment situation improved only slightly in 2004, with employment increasing and unemployment down marginally. The ILO’s annual Global Employment Trends says employment creation is still a major challenge for policy makers.

Geneva – Granted, the global decline in unemployment in 2004, though slight, marked the first time since the year 2000 that year-over-year unemployment decreased and was only the second decrease since 1994. Robust global economic growth of 5 per cent in 2004 played a large role in these developments.

However, the growth of global employment by 47.7 million, an increase of only 1.7 per cent in the total number of jobs worldwide, remained disappointing, the Global Employment Trends showed, and employment as a share of the working-age population stayed virtually unchanged at 61.8 per cent in 2004, from a revised 61.7 per cent in 2003.

“While any global decline in unemployment is positive, we must not lose sight of the reality that employment creation still remains a major challenge for policy makers”, said ILO Director-General Juan Somavia. “In other words, we need policies that encourage more employment-intensive growth.”

Region by region

The regional employment trend which showed the strongest decline in unemployment was that of Latin American and the Caribbean, where it dropped from 9.3 per cent in 2003 to 8.6 per cent in 2004, but the improvement in the employment picture was more modest elsewhere.

In the developed economies (which include the EU-25) there was only a slight decline from 7.4 to 7.2 per cent. In Southeast Asia and the Pacific, the rate evolved from 6.5 per cent in 2003 to 6.4 per cent in 2004, while in South Asia the change was from 4.8 per cent to 4.7 per cent. The rate remained unchanged in East Asia at 3.3 per cent and in the Middle East and North Africa at 11.7 per cent. Meanwhile, in sub-Saharan Africa, unemployment edged up slightly from 10 per cent to 10.1 per cent despite a 4.4 per cent GDP growth rate registered in 2004.

The ILO report says that in addition to creating new jobs, other key challenges facing policy makers today included eliminating decent work “deficits” wherever they exist. Declines in unemployment rates do not in themselves indicate improvements in decent work “deficits”; they are only the tip of the iceberg. In most of the developing world, “employment” and “unemployment” are crude measures of the state of people’s livelihoods and well-being. In developing countries, which often lack effective unemployment insurance mechanisms, most people simply cannot afford to...
be unemployed. For example, of the over 2.8 billion workers in the world, nearly half still do not earn enough to lift themselves and their families above the US$2 a day poverty line. Among these working poor, 535 million live with their families in extreme poverty on less than US$1 a day. The focus of policy should therefore not be on unemployment alone, but also on the conditions of work of those who are employed.1

In this regard, the report addresses issues which require immediate attention and a sustained response by governments, international organizations and civil society:

- First, the 26 December Asian Tsunami disaster has left in its wake hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of individuals who, in addition to suffering unimaginable personal loss, now find themselves stripped of their livelihoods and at risk of slipping deeply into poverty if their jobs and incomes are not restored.
- Second, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which the ILO estimates will be responsible for the death of 3.2 million people of working-age globally in the course of this one year – 2005 – requires that attention be focused on the labour market impact of the epidemic and mitigating the economic and social effects.
- Third, globalization is bringing both opportunities and challenges to the world’s workers. Developments in global trade policies in 2005, such as trade in agricultural goods between developing and developed economies, will likely have important consequences.
- Fourth, the trend towards the outsourcing as well as the insourcing of manufacturing and service sector jobs brings labour market challenges for both developing and developed economies.
- Fifth, the ongoing decent work “deficits” in the growing informal economy in many developing countries highlights the need for a specific focus on improving working conditions and creating more and better job opportunities in the formal economy.
- Finally, the significant problem of youth unemployment remains as relevant as ever in 2005, particularly in regions marked with civil conflict.

In sum, the world faces serious and very diverse employment challenges in the coming year. The Global Employment Trends Brief provides further details on these important issues that will shape labour market policies throughout the coming year.

1 Subsequent ILO work on this subject will incorporate additional labour market indicators, including status in employment and employment by sector. These indicators are particularly relevant for developing regions, because they measure the number of people in wage employment and in sectors that may be dominated by informal employment and unpaid family work.

2 Differences from earlier estimates are due to revisions of the IMF estimates of GDP growth used in the model. For further technical information on the world and regional estimation processes, see http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/wrest.htm.
Table 1: Unemployment in the world, 1994, 1999, 2002-04 (millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>140.3</td>
<td>170.3</td>
<td>194.3</td>
<td>180.9</td>
<td>180.2</td>
<td>184.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>102.8</td>
<td>107.0</td>
<td>110.0</td>
<td>109.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>75.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2: Labour market indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Change in unemployment rate (percentage point)</th>
<th>Unemployment rate (%)</th>
<th>GDP growth rate (%)</th>
<th>Employment to population ratio (%)</th>
<th>Annual labour force growth rate (%)</th>
<th>Annual GDP growth rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed Economies and European Union</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe (non EU)</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3: Global working poverty, 1994 - 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>$1 WP Estimate (in millions)</th>
<th>Share of $1 WP in Global Employment</th>
<th>$2 WP Estimate (in millions)</th>
<th>Share of $2 WP in Global Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>1 325</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>1 300</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>1 289</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>1 299</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>1 318</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>1 308</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>1 326</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>1 377</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>1 382</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>1 387</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>1 382</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The European Region of the ILO is vast, spanning Europe and Central Asia from the Atlantic to the Pacific, as well as a diversity of cultures and societies. Despite this, the 50 member States of the European Region found common ground for “a common future of democracy, economic prosperity and social justice” at the 7th ILO European Regional Meeting held in Budapest from 14 to 18 February.

BUDAPEST – The conclusions of the 7th ILO European Regional Meeting were unequivocal. After a week of discussions, marked by a new effort to be more “interactive”, more than 600 worker, employer and government representatives adopted a sweeping set of conclusions saying “good governance, economic and social progress, and the fight against corruption rests on democratic institutions drawing their legitimacy from freely elected representation, effective social dialogue, fundamental principles and rights at work, and the rule of law”.

The byword at the meeting was dialogue, between member States representing every phase of Europe’s current evolution – ranging from the European Union 25 to the countries covered by the Stability Pact for the Reconstruction of South-East Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Council of Europe.

Indeed, diversity was illustrated by the presence of more than 30 ministers of labour, four heads of government – Mr. Ferenc Gyurcsány, Prime Minis-
Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO (left) and Mr. Philippe Séguin, Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body.

Mr. Michel Barde, Employer spokesperson, and Mrs. Ursula Englen-Kefer, Worker spokesperson, also delivered major statements to the delegates. The Hungarian Minister of Employment and Labour, Gabor Csizmar, was elected chair of the four-day meeting. And the Chairman of the ILO Governing Body, Philippe Séguin, chaired an Informal Ministerial Meeting in Hungary’s ornate Parliament building to discuss the 2004 report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization.

Jobs, growth and a fair globalization

The meeting opened against the backdrop of a new ILO report painting a sombre picture of the global and European employment situation. The annual Global Employment Trends confirmed that despite robust growth, the global economy is failing to create enough new jobs. In Europe and Central Asia, despite a healthy 3.5 per cent economic growth rate in 2004, the number of jobs grew by only 0.5 per cent, according to the report. (See separate box, European and Central Asian Employment Trends, p. 10)

“The harsh reality is that the global economy is not creating enough jobs nor stemming the tide of the growth of the informal economy where more than a billion workers live in grinding poverty”, Mr. Somavia said. “In many ways, 2004 was a lost year for jobs.”

“The challenges are great, but so too is the creativity of tripartism and social dialogue”, Mr.
Somavia commented. “In every country, we see new solutions emerging to meet the changing agendas of workers and employers. Amidst all these complexities, there is one shared aspiration.”

In terms of remedying the global employment situation, social dialogue and achieving a fair globalization were seen as key. Mr. Somavia, the Prime Ministers of Hungary, Luxembourg, Kazakhstan and Malta, and tripartite representatives including Mr. François Périgot, President, International Organization of Employers, and Mr. John Monks, General-Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation, discussed the issue at a panel discussion entitled “Will social dialogue survive globalization?”

The answer came in terms of the agreement by delegates that the report of the ILO-supported World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization is a “useful stimulus to dialogue at the national, regional and international levels on the promotion of decent work as a global goal”. The delegates also welcomed a resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2004 urging that the Commission’s recommendations be taken into account in the forthcoming review of the Millennium Development Goals.

“A fully inclusive and equitable globalization… creates opportunities for all”, Mr. Somavia said. “This governance issue will dominate national and international debate for years to come. We cannot expand the reach of democracy and ignore the demands of the people for decent work. Decent work in a fair globalization is an attainable goal.”

In their conclusions, delegates noted that globalization and rapid economic integration posed common challenges to countries, enterprises and workers in the European and Central Asian region. They called for “a common view of the need for greater policy coherence, at home, regionally and globally, between economic, social, financial and trade policies and policies for decent work” based on the fundamental principles and rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue.

Delegates also called on the ILO to strengthen its partnerships with donor countries and the European Commission in providing technical cooperation for decent work policies in countries requesting such assistance.

Spanning people’s lives and work

The meeting, which greatly benefited from the support of the Hungarian Government and the Luxembourg EU Presidency, took a novel approach to developing policies to support people through various transitions in their lives and work, identifying four key areas of transition – from education to employment, moving from job to job, moving from country to country, and from work to security in old age.

The conclusions urge governments, in consultation with the social partners, to address the needs of young workers in “national employment strategies”; encourage the ILO to pursue tripartite consultations on flexibility and security for enterprises and workers in order to help meet the challenges of enhanced competition resulting from globalization and adaptation to rapidly changing markets; call on the tripartite social partners to support the development of a non-binding multilateral framework for a rights-based approach to labour migration adopted at the ILO annual International Labour Conference in June 2004; and requested the ILO to provide technical assistance to constituents in the region and facilitate the exchange of experience in the design and management of pension systems.
Unemployment in Europe and Central Asia\(^1\) remained unchanged in 2004 at 35 million, according to a supplement to the annual ILO Global Employment Trends prepared for the 7th ILO European Regional Meeting\(^2\).

A closer look at the European and Central Asian region\(^1\) showed that the unemployment rate decreased from 9.1 per cent to 9 per cent in the European Union (EU-25), from 8.5 per cent to 8.3 per cent in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS countries and from 4.2 per cent to 4.1 per cent in non-EU countries in Western Europe\(^4\). During 2004, employment grew by only 2 million (or 0.5 per cent) in the Europe and Central Asia region as a whole despite GDP growth of 3.5 per cent, the report said. Thereby the employment intensity of growth worsened compared to 2003 when GDP growth of 2.2 per cent led to employment growth of 0.4 per cent.

Though the current unemployment rate in the EU-25 is lower than the 11.2 per cent rate of a decade ago, it remains considerably higher in the emerging countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS states where it increased from a level of 6.5 per cent in 1994. In non-EU countries in Western Europe, unemployment remained almost static over the ten years at just above 4 per cent. With the exception of the latter countries, unemployment rates in the other regions are higher than the world on average.

However, an analysis of labour market indicators in the region also noted that despite the somewhat stagnant evolution of employment and unemployment, labour productivity (measured as output per person employed) showed considerable improvement, especially in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS countries, where it increased by an annual average growth rate of over 4 per cent over the past 5 years. The EU-25 also saw higher productivity growth than the world on average during this period, mainly driven by the performance of the new member States.

In Europe and Central Asia, the ILO noted that several countries in the region appeared to have succeeded in sustaining low levels of unemployment and high labour market participation rates, without an acceleration of inflation or a worsening of income inequality. The ILO report for its 7th European Regional Conference\(^6\) says social dialogue has played a pivotal role in balancing social pressure with economic constraints and joins with the EU Employment Taskforce in calling for increased flexibility and security for workers and enterprises, attracting more people to the labour market, investing more and more effectively in human capital, and ensuring the effective implementation of reforms through better governance in order to deal with the employment issue.

As we mark the first year following an enlargement of the European Union, the European Regional Meeting was highly symbolic,” said Friedrich Buttler, Director of the ILO European Region. “First, it was a unique meeting of East and West in the capital of a new member State in Central Europe that shows both faces of Europe – old as well as new. In addition, the very positive development of the relationship with the European Union, represented at the highest level by the Presidency of the European Council and by the European Commission, added a powerful force to our efforts to forge a common future. It showed, in clear detail, the new face of the ILO and its member States in this region.”

For more information

Gender, globalization, governance and migration were among the most discussed issues in Budapest. For a background look at each of these issues and others, as well as photos and four films prepared for the meeting, see www.ilo.org/communication and click on Events and Campaigns.
Checking your pay online
Feeling underpaid? Check “Wage Indicator”!

If one thing is certain, few people feel overpaid for their work. But many of us worry that we may be earning less than the next person. Usually, this is privileged information. Now, a new service, “Wage Indicator online”, is changing that. Journalist Andrew Bibby explains how www.wageindicator.org offers new transparency to the age-old question of who earns what.

AMSTERDAM – You are working in the Netherlands, with 10 years’ experience. You like your job, your work colleagues and your life, but something is nagging you. You believe that other workers in your trade are earning more than you. How can you find out?

In some countries and in some occupational groups, collective bargaining ensures a certain degree of transparency and fairness in pay, even if the reality can sometimes be a long way from what is formally negotiated. But in many parts of the world collective bargaining is weak. Even in a country like the Netherlands, with a relatively strong tradition of social partnership, one in five workers are not covered by any kind of collective agreement.

In situations like these, the economic principle that says that pay levels find their own equilibrium as labour supply and demand interact can seem very far from the real world. Typically, individuals negotiating their own pay are likely to be much less informed about current market rates than their employers.

So the answer could lie, perhaps, in a little collective self-help, making the most of the opportunities presented by the Internet. This, at least, is the logic behind Wage Indicator, a project originating in the Netherlands which is now operating in eight other European countries, and may soon be extended worldwide.

The idea is simple: individuals visit the www.wageindicator.org Web site and check a database of what other people doing the same work are being paid. Not only that, but they are also encouraged to do something in return: submit their own pay information into the database, so that little by little the information it contains becomes more comprehensive. The more people participate, the more accurate the data becomes.

The gender element
The Wage Indicator concept has its roots back in 1999, when three Dutch women came together to discuss what could be done to help women workers find accurate information about wage rates.

They came up with the idea of a Vrouwenloonwijzer (Women’s Wage Indicator) that was launched in 2000 as a partnership between the largest Dutch trade union federation FNV, the University of Amsterdam, and a major national women’s magazine. Already by May 2001, when the service was extended to male workers and renamed simply ‘Wage Indicator’, over 15,000 women had contributed their pay data.

By the end of 2003, according to Kea Tijdens of the University of Amsterdam, one of the women at the original meeting in 1999, the numbers participating in the service and contributing their own pay information had grown to well over 50,000 people. The Wage Indicator initiative is now being developed by a specially established foundation,
the Stichting Loonwijzer, a partnership which continues to include the FNV union and the University of Amsterdam and which now also includes the commercial recruitment Web site Monsterboard (www.monsterboard.nl).

The standard online pay survey includes over 1,700 occupational groups and professions (categorized according to standard occupation taxonomy). Since wage rates depend not just on occupation but on many other factors, a whole range of other questions, including individuals’ past employment record, their age, the area where they live and the extent of their education and vocational training, are also included in the questionnaire. Pay can also be affected as a result of discrimination, for example, on grounds of gender or ethnicity; and one additional advantage of Wage Indicator is that it is building up valuable data demonstrating the degree of pay discrimination being suffered by women and migrant workers.

A new kind of wage transparency

For Friedrich Buttler, the ILO’s regional director for Europe and Central Asia, the value of the Wage Indicator initiative is the transparency which it helps bring to the labour market. “Encouraging people to build up a publicly owned database on the Internet through their own voluntary supply of wage information demonstrates how the Internet can be a tool to generate new and easily accessible information,” he says. “This approach can help to generate more realistic information about wage levels, wage structures and wage discrimination.”

But to work effectively, the salary comparison information has to be accurate. Part of Kea Tijdens’ role has been to examine the methodology of the service and to ensure that the data collected are as representative as possible. Information submitted is put through a series of filters to ensure that it is genuine before being added to the database; multiple entries from the same e-mail address can be spotted and if, need be, eliminated.

“Trust is an important attribute of the Wage Indicator Web site,” Kea Tijdens says. “We assume that visitors trust the information provided by the wage site and that they trust that the information they leave behind is handled with integrity.” Trade union participation is of extreme importance in establishing this trust, she adds.

FNV is not the only trade union to engage in this area. In Switzerland the small /syndikat union, set up for workers in IT and new media, has run a similar Paychecker (Lohnchecker) for several years. Currently, about 4,500 people have contributed to the survey, representing about 6.5% of the relevant labour force in Switzerland. The /syndikat Web site identifies bottom quartile, median and top quartile pay averages for a range of IT occupations. This means, for example, that a call centre operator could check online and discover that the current median pay for that occupation is 54,300 Swiss francs, with a top to bottom quartile spread of 58,775 to 50,000 francs.

In 2004, the idea of online pay comparisons took a significant leap forward when the Wage Indicator idea went international. Helped by three-year funding from the European Union, a network of sister Web sites has been established in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the UK. As in the Netherlands, social partners are playing a significant role in this work. For Germany’s www.lohnspiegel.de Web site, for example, partners include the German union federation DGB and the two largest unions, IG Metal and ver.di. In Britain, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) is a member of the Paywizard consortium (www.paywizard.co.uk), as is the specialist consultancy service Income Data Services.

These developments, and the use of the same basic questionnaire on all the Wage Indicator family of Web sites, potentially enables individual workers to compare their pay directly with colleagues working in other countries. But what really excites the Wage Indicator Foundation is the prospect of bringing in sister Web sites from outside Europe. Professor Richard Freeman of Harvard University is taking a lead in plans for a similar service in the US, whilst plans are being worked on for Wage Indicator to spread to South Africa, India, Korea, Brazil and Mexico. In India, for example, the Union Network International affiliate, IT Professionals Forum, is keen to participate.

At a time when both work and workers are increasingly migrating across national frontiers, the possibility that ordinary individuals may soon be able to get immediate international pay comparison data is certainly an intriguing one.
Promoting ILO Conventions and Recommendations: The cooperatives experience

The adoption of new ILO Conventions and Recommendations by the annual International Labour Conference typically follows many months and years of preparatory work and debate. What happens then, however, is not the end of a process but rather the beginning. This background brief explains how the practical work of promoting ILO Conventions and Recommendations begins as a way of ensuring that the words are translated into action.

ILO Recommendation No. 193 on the Promotion of Cooperatives (co-ops) marked the first time in nearly 40 years that the International Labour Conference directly addressed the role of cooperatives in the world of work, a sector which collectively is far more significant in employment terms than all multinational corporations taken together. The new Recommendation (adopted in 2002) defines cooperatives as autonomous organizations of people “united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise” and sets a framework within which governments and social partners are encouraged to work to promote co-op development.

Co-ops have a potentially important part to play in the development of decent work, a role that the ILO Director-General Juan Somavia himself highlighted recently. “Guided by human and social values, they draw on collective strength to promote the well-being of members, their families and their communities. They are important advocates for a globalization which recognizes and respects the rights, aspirations, needs and identity of people,” he said.

To work closely with international and national co-op organizations, the ILO has its own Cooperative Branch (COOP), which was actively engaged in the preparatory work behind Recommendation No. 193. But having seen the Recommendation adopted, how could the opportunity which it represented best be grasped? How, in other words, could the promotion of cooperatives Recommendation be taken out from the ILO’s home in Geneva and become a tool of practical use around the world?

The team of the Cooperative Branch describes how they set to work, firstly arranging for the text itself to be translated into over 30 languages, from Arabic to Vietnamese. These documents were then used as the basis for a series of briefing meetings and conferences, many arranged in partnership with the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and other international and national co-op organizations. Ten global events, 25 regional meetings and 35 national conferences were held, and the ILO also arranged to brief other UN and international agencies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
Motional materials, including wall calendars and a CD-ROM, were produced.

So far, so good. But what was really needed, according to the Cooperative Branch, was a resource which helped spell out how the Recommendation could be used by partner agencies and by the ILO’s own field staff to bring about concrete improvements at the policy, legal, institutional and managerial levels.

Since 2004, ILO COOP has a tool to assist it. The English version of a new 60-page guidance and training pack, Promoting Cooperatives: A guide to ILO Recommendation 193, was launched in July, and work is now getting underway to produce companion French and Spanish language versions.

The pack, according to its author, Stirling Smith, is designed for two audiences. One group is made up of the ILO social partners, including ministries of labour, and his employers’ and workers’ organizations, which may be familiar with the ILO but not know very much about co-ops. The other group is cooperators (members of co-ops) who by contrast may not know very much about the ILO and its system of Conventions and Recommendations.

The pack is not afraid to spell out, therefore, the background to the new Recommendation. It explains among other things the origins of the ILO, its role in the UN family of agencies, and its unique tripartite structure. It describes the way in which ILO Conventions and Recommendations are drawn up and adopted, and explains the way in which Conventions are ratified. It also describes the particular history of Recommendation No. 193, tracing it back to an ILO Governing Body decision in 1999, and also pointing out that it replaces an earlier ILO Recommendation first adopted in 1966.

In a similar way, the pack explains the nature of today’s cooperative movement, tracing its roots in early nineteenth-century Europe and spelling out the set of principles, known as the Statement on Cooperative Identity, which has been developed by the International Cooperative Alliance and which is accepted today by co-ops worldwide. The role which co-ops can play in meeting the UN’s Millennium Development Goals is discussed as well.

Also included in the pack is a detailed activity, designed for small groups to undertake, by which the standards in Recommendation No. 193 can be compared directly with current co-op legislation. This, according to Pauline Green, president of ICA Europe, is a key area where the Recommendation can assist. “It is vitally important that the legislative framework is improved to give cooperatives a level playing-field with other forms of business. The new guide will be a tremendous help to cooperative organizations in getting their legal framework reviewed,” she says.

The Promoting Cooperatives: A guide to ILO Recommendation 193 pack is the result of a three-way partnership, between the ILO, the ICA and the Cooperative College in the UK, with the funding for the work provided by the UK Government’s Department for International Development. The pack was officially launched during a ceremony held on 6 July in the House of Commons in the UK. Since publication, it has been used at several meetings and events, including a training course on Cooperative Policy and Legislation held at the ILO International Training Centre in Turin, 18-29 October 2004 where eleven countries from Bolivia to Sri Lanka were represented. The guide can be ordered by sending an email to coop@ilo.org.
The massive earthquake and Tsunami that hit Asia last December left hundreds of thousands dead. What’s more, an estimated 4 million people in India, Indonesia, the Maldives, Malaysia, Myanmar, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Somalia and Thailand faced the loss of their livelihoods and the risk of sinking deeper into poverty. The ILO has launched a number of programmes to help people rebuild their livelihoods. During the first critical days following the disaster, the ILO worked on the ground to plan for early recovery and rehabilitation, whilst at the same time addressing the most immediate reconstruction needs. The ILO response is based on the recognized need for action aimed at generating employment and new forms of earning a livelihood.
The main elements of the ILO integrated response strategy are:

- introducing labour-based technology in reconstruction to quickly generate jobs and income while rebuilding basic infrastructure;
- boosting the revival of local economies through the local economic development (LED) approach, which emphasizes identification of economic opportunities, business promotion, employment-friendly investments, social finance, establishment of cooperatives, social dialogue and empowerment of local communities;
- setting up emergency public employment services, providing training to help in the recovery of the labour market and putting job seekers in touch with available jobs;
- providing technical advice and support on social safety nets and social protection catering to people in both the formal and informal economies.

In all this, the ILO is trying to address the needs of the most vulnerable group – the many orphaned children who faced traffickers and the dangers of the worst forms of child labour. Some of the young people have seen their futures washed away in the undertow. Still, children were not the only vulnerable group; there were the women who had to become heads of households; and the migrant workers who had nowhere to migrate back to.

To date, the total regular budget and extra-budgetary resources mobilized and pledged in support of the ILO response to the earthquake and Tsunami amount to US$13.2 million. The ILO submitted two proposals, one for Indonesia and one for Sri Lanka, amounting to US$15.4 million as part of the UN Flash Appeal, launched nine days after the disaster to fund the critical work of some 40 UN agencies and NGOs. Since then, some 18 concept notes have been drafted and shared with potential donors for the different affected countries, and projects are under way through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) joint programming.

The ILO-IPEC activities in Indonesia and Sri Lanka are designed to respond to existing and emerging child labour issues in the context of the country’s post-Tsunami rehabilitation and development process. The projects adopt a dual strategy: guidance, advice and support to policy-makers for the integration of child labour concerns in the country’s overall emergency response, and targeted interventions to reduce and prevent child labour through a range of social services.

In Indonesia, ILO-IPEC moved quickly to start up a new programme in Banda Aceh. Together with the local Manpower Office, ILO-IPEC provides basic skills training programmes to 15–17 year old youth living in camps for displaced persons. A Children’s Centre is being established which will provide a range of services to children both in the camps, and in communities where many Tsunami-affected children live. In the coming months, the IPEC programme will be further extended, with a particular focus on vulnerable older children.

In Sri Lanka, targeted intervention will specifically be undertaken in two Tsunami-affected districts – in the Eastern Province, the District of Trincomalee, Kinnya; and in the Southern Province, the District of Galle, Koggala. Working with community structures, affected children will be provided with educational and training opportunities as well as access to social services, and access to local and national social safety nets for their families and guardians.
The Indonesian province of Aceh, with a population of 4.2 million, had an estimated 250,000 unemployed people before the Tsunami hit the island of Sumatra. After the disaster, it is estimated that an additional 600,000 people lost their jobs. The ILO has established employment centres that are providing job registration and placement services, and identifying training needs and opportunities. Alan Boulton from the ILO office in Jakarta visited Banda Aceh before Easter and sent the following report.

BANDA ACEH – The airport in Banda Aceh is not as busy now as it was just some months ago, with very few foreign military aircraft or personnel to be seen. On the way into town, you drive by one of the mass graves for the Tsunami victims.

“When I visited the province two months ago, the stench from this place and the earth-moving equipment at work was my first impression of the massive scale of the disaster”, says Alan Boulton, Director of the ILO Jakarta Office. “Now the area is being landscaped and a nice fence has been built. I am glad they are doing that”, he adds.

Accompanying the Indonesian Minister for Manpower and Transmigration, H.E. Fahmi Idris, the first meeting Boulton attended was a presentation of cheques to widows and families of workers of the giant Lafarge cement plant which was severely damaged by the Tsunami.

The Minister visited the provincial Vocational Training Institute in Banda Aceh and officially opened the Employment Services for the People of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (ESPNAD) on 21 March. The majority of job losses have occurred in the services sector, followed by agriculture, plantations, fishing and small businesses.

ESPNAD started its operation on 7 February and has already registered more than 9,000 job-seekers. Almost 400 people have been placed in temporary or fixed term employment. The registration process assists in identifying skill gaps and in providing access to appropriate training.

In his speech, the Minister said that “the Government appreciated the initiative of the ILO in collaborating with the provincial Manpower Office and establishing the employment services”. He said it is important to utilize Acehnese people in recovery and reconstruction work and to increase their skills and capacities so that they can be actively involved.

“When I first visited Banda Aceh with National Manpower officials just after the Tsunami, on 13-14 January, the ILO had no activities or presence in Aceh”, says Boulton. "Today, we have Employment Services Centres in the provincial capital Banda Aceh and Meulaboh, with another to open in Lhokseumawe in a few weeks.”

These Centres are providing job registration and placement services and identifying training needs and opportunities. The ESPNAD Network is also developing a database of skilled people which can be used by employers and contractors in the reconstruction work that is to take place in the coming months and years in Banda Aceh. In the process, the Centres will be identifying the gaps in skills needed as a basis to provide appropriate skills training.

In addition to vocational training courses on construction skills and for supervisors in debris removal operations, a special series of training workshops for children between the ages of 15 and 17 is being implemented, with modules on furniture making, sewing/embroidery and basic computer skills. A total of 192 children will receive training, for twelve days each.

For people interested in self-employment or in setting up a small enterprise, a series of short-cycle courses focuses on how to start and improve your business (SIYB Programme). Fifty individuals have been trained so that they can now in turn act as educators for people in their various organizations and institutions, targeting young women and men up to the age of 28 years, women entrepreneurs, trade union members, and others.

The ILO has also contributed to the development of the Government Master Plan for Reconstruction, including major inputs relating to the income generation and employment strategy.
After the Tsunami: A photo report

ILO Photographer Marcel Crozet visited hard-hit Tsunami areas and filed this photo report. Pictures often tell stories better than words, but in the wake of the Tsunami, even photographs cannot tell the whole story. To say that the Indian Ocean earthquake and tidal wave of 26 December 2004 left a swathe of destruction does not do justice to the devastation. But my assignment was not just to show the effects of the Tsunami. I went to chronicle something less tangible: the hope and the human spirit that survived the initial tidal wave, and the struggle to recover livelihoods that had been washed away.

My travels took me to Thailand, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Wherever the waves hit, the flooding destroyed homes and buildings, roads and bridges, water and electricity supplies, crops, irrigation and fishery infrastructure, productive assets and small businesses. Furthermore, the impact on the predominantly poor communities – where people mainly live off the sea and marginal land – was not only a loss of income, but the transformation of their meagre possessions into flotsam.

But there were also signs of hope. In Thailand, Workers are clearing away the rubble in Hambantota and have even rebuilt the communications tower.

...
hotels were being reconstructed and people working in tourism were awaiting the arrival of new visitors. In Sri Lanka, a fishing industry that had literally been washed away was reviving through the work of people on land using the Internet and e-mails: the only available means of communication. And in Indonesia, not only local workers and authorities swung into action, but even elephants were put to work to help with the reconstruction of cities and towns (see back cover).

At the ILO in Geneva, experts estimated the damage. But there, and in the ILO offices in Bangkok, Colombo, Jakarta, New Delhi and Banda Aceh, they also fashioned a message of hope: that with adequate aid for reconstruction and repair of shattered workplaces and lost equipment, half of those initially without work or income could be back on their feet before the end of the year.

This was the challenge that I sought to illustrate with my photos.
Hiring casual workers for reconstruction and cleaning up is a first step to improve the employment situation in the province. According to ILO estimates, around 600,000 people in the most affected regions in Indonesia have lost their sole source of livelihood.

A child who survived the disaster in Lhok Nga. 40,000 people lived in this small town before it disappeared under the 70-foot Tsunami.

Boats have been dragged inland and grounded several miles away from the coastline. According to ILO estimates, the unemployment rate in the affected Indonesian provinces could be 30 per cent or higher, up dramatically from the 6.8 per cent rate in the provinces prior to the disaster.

Rachmat, a tradesman from Peunayong, finds the remains of his accountancy files in what is left of his shop.

No harvest to look forward to in Lami Pisang: more than 40,000 ha of rice fields have been devastated by the Tsunami in Banda Aceh province in the North of Sumatra.
14 year-old Salatin works on this site in Banda Aceh for a Medan-based construction company. Children between the ages of 15 and 17 living in the camps for displaced persons in Aceh are the target of new training programmes launched by the ILO in March. In the coming months, the IPEC programme will be further extended, with a particular focus on vulnerable older children.

Economic activities pick up slowly in Ule Lheu as people start to piece their lives together.

Factories were destroyed, killing hundreds of people, and leaving survivors without any means of livelihood.

17-year old Rahmad was at the university which was destroyed by the Tsunami. He came home to find his house a pile of debris under which most of his family perished. (Banda Aceh).
In the past few years, a great deal of progress has been made in improving the working conditions of textile factory workers in Cambodia. An ILO monitoring process has helped employers and workers to create not only a safer working environment, but better working conditions. This article shows how this ILO project has led to increases in productivity while boosting the credibility of the factories with international buyers.

SIHANOUKVILLE – In a makeshift, one-room hut balanced on stilts, Sok-Keng helps her four brothers and sisters get ready for the day. Outside, the driving, unrelenting rain has already flooded the kitchen, a modest area on the ground floor next to the animal’s pen. The rainy season has arrived.

As the villagers scurry from hut to tree for cover, the sound of a motorbike outside the door tells Sok-Keng that her father is ready to take her to work at the factory. Happily she hops on the motorbike, the family’s prized possession, and heads off down the gravel path, now transformed into a river of mud.

In this tiny village perched on a cliff above a rock quarry, one can see the ships off-loading goods and loading containers from the picturesque port of Sihanoukville. The ever-increasing traffic tells people that prosperity is coming to this quiet corner of the world. The process of globalization is transforming this town each and every day.

But life in this village is still characterized by back-breaking work in the stone quarry or the fast-paced but tedious work in one of the numerous textile factories that have sprung up over the past few years. No one complains about the work, because everyone here knows that poverty is just a paycheck away.

“Before, I was a soldier. After I was demobilized, I was jobless. Since then I come here to break rocks because there is no other job for me”, says Malika.
without a trace of emotion on her weathered face.

With little education and a lack of opportunities, even the children are pressured, in some way, to contribute to the family’s well-being through chores or some type of income generating activity.

Finding a real job

Three years ago, life was so desperate that Sok-Keng had falsified documents so that she could obtain work at a local textile factory. She had hoped that her work would ease the strain of poverty for her family as well as help pay the school fees for her brothers.

But no sooner had she started work when labour inspectors, who were visiting the factory, noticed Sok-Keng and checked her papers. They quickly found out the simple truth: she had only just turned 14. Under current Cambodian law, the minimum working age is 15 years.

Instead of fining the employer and tossing the young girl out, the International Labour Organization (ILO) worked with the employer to provide Sok-Keng with vocational training as a seamstress, skills she would need in this sector for her future employment. And exceptionally, the employer agreed to pay a stipend to offset the loss of earnings for the family.

“The first time I came to the Vocational Training Centre, I was scared. I could not read or write. But my teacher took care of me and so did my older friends: they taught me to read and write and sew. Now I can make suits,” beamed Sok-Keng.

Standards for competitive advantage

This strategy of working with government and employers’ agencies has been extremely successful for Cambodia in such an important sector.

The textile sector here has grown from a modest US$120 million industry into a major contributor to export earnings now with over US$1.6 billion in annual revenues. The US-Cambodian Bilateral Textile Agreement, signed in 1999, which provided access to the lucrative US market, has fostered this tremendous growth. Access, however, was contingent upon demonstrable improvement of the application of labour law and standards.

Currently, there is a big challenge facing Cambodia and other countries that rely heavily on textiles as a major income earner. On 31 December 2004, the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA), which created a quota system to govern the garment trade, ended.

There is widespread concern that there will be massive job losses in the smaller countries while India and China seem likely to benefit most by capitalizing on economies of scale. The impact is still being assessed and will not be clear from some time to come.

However, in Cambodia there is a feeling that the industry can remain competitive while respecting high labour standards. Cambodia, while adhering to the tenets of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, is also implementing sweeping changes recently announced by Cambodia’s Prime Minister, Hun Sen, to streamline the bureaucracy and reduce corruption.

The ILO is assisting through a number of technical cooperation projects, with funding from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL), to help Cambodian factories compete effectively in a global marketplace, where there is not only intense consumer pressure for quality goods but also concerns for the treatment of the workers making these goods. Since these projects started, a number of international buyers have returned to Cambodia and there has also been an increase in orders from others.

Soun Ratana, a compliance officer at one of the factories working with the ILO, believes the changes have been good for business. “I am happy that the buyers learn about us from the ILO. I receive a lot more orders now for our products by e-mail.”

Even the factory’s management is pleasantly surprised by the results. “You have to look at it from both sides. From one point of view, we’re doing the right thing. We’re trying to improve their...”
lifestyle. On the other hand, if you look at it from a strictly economic point of view, our productivity has gone up,” stated the director of one factory participating in the ILO programme.

The Government has requested that all factories involved in export of goods from Cambodia register with the project in which the enterprises agree to give ILO monitors full access to factory premises, whether the visit is announced or unannounced. Monitors speak freely with union representatives and workers, both inside and outside the factory, and with the factory’s management. Monitors review issues ranging from noise and heat levels and the calculation of overtime pay, to the use of child labour and violations of freedom of association.

In the past few years, a great deal of progress has been made with improvements recorded in almost every factory. The monitoring process seems to be helping the employers and workers not only to produce a safer working environment with better working conditions, but has also shown that these changes can lead to increases in productivity as well as boost the credibility of the Cambodian factories with international buyers.

Recently, the monitors have reported to the Government that child labour is virtually non-existent in the factories which are participating in this programme. For an industry that employs over 200,000 workers and accounts for 80 per cent of the country’s exports, it is an admirable achievement.

“Normally in our monitoring work we find problems regarding work conditions, and at times, some child labour incidents. In our investigations over the past two years we only found three cases of child labour and those cases have not been considered serious. In general, it’s the counterfeiting of documents for children to get the job,” says Chea Sophal, an ILO Programme Assistant and Factory Monitor.

Cambodia is working closely with the international organizations and donors to further develop competitive strategies and meet the growing competition in the textile sector. Cambodia faces some major challenges to growth such as poor education and a deficit of productive skills, particularly in the poverty-ridden countryside, which suffers from an almost total lack of basic infrastructure.

The continued strength of the textile industry, as well as an increasing number of tourists to Cambodia, will be vital as Cambodia tries to develop a private sector that can create enough jobs to address Cambodia’s demographic imbalance. With about 60 per cent of the population aged 20 years or younger, many people will be entering the workforce over the next 10 years.

For Sok-Keng, who is now 17 years old, life is full of possibilities. She now works a full-time job at a new factory making tablecloths and napkins for Western tables. Her job, which is highly sought after because the rate of pay and benefits are better than other local jobs, gives her hope.

“In the future, when I get married, I’ll have children. I want them to learn more than just sewing”, said Sok-Keng with a twinkle in her eye.
The Government of Tanzania, in partnership with the ILO, is seeking to alleviate poverty through education and training for poor women and children, as well as promoting gender equality. This article explains how ILO projects have contributed to change the lives of poor women and their families in the country.

TANGA, Tanzania – Salma Harub Abdala survived with her six children for years on less than one US dollar per day. Her husband abandoned her in the early 1980s, and with only one income, Salma could not afford to pay for adequate housing or for her children’s education.

The situation became even worse when her husband returned home, invalid and paralysed, because his relatives refused to care for him. So Salma had to do it until his death in 1992.

Things changed when Salma started receiving loans from the ILO project “Promoting Gender Equality and Decent Work Throughout All Stages of Life in Tanzania”. “With increased sales and profit, I am able to pay education requirements for my younger children, I have improved the housing condition, and we are able to eat quality meals”, she says, adding that “two of my daughters have directly benefited from the project”.

Salma’s elder daughter joined a Women’s Group in Tanga giving loans to its members, while the
project allowed her younger daughter, aged 16, to attend a training course. Facilitating the transition from school to productive employment through education, training, and provision of alternatives to youth facing an uncertain future, the project allowed increasing numbers of young people to break the cycle of poverty.

They are not the only ones. Hundreds of disadvantaged women in Tanzania are echoing such success stories as they benefit from the loans, microfinance, education, and literacy, entrepreneurial, and leadership training offered by the project. Women who did not previously have access to loans have effectively learned to borrow, profit from, and repay loans.

Asha Rajabu, a member of the Women’s Group in Dar es Salaam, recalls: “I never wanted to take a loan. I was scared of not being able to repay it. My friends encouraged me to take a small loan for trial.” The loan eventually led to a profitable business and the ability to put her three children through school, without the support of a husband. “The project has been a great relief to me,” Asha continues. “I urge all poor women to join the project. At the beginning you feel scared because you have never borrowed a loan or gone to a bank, but once you get started, you feel like you had lost a great deal of time, which could have changed your life.”

Asha’s and Salma’s stories illustrate the particular difficulties that women face in the world of work. The ILO project recognizes that women workers contribute immensely to their families and societies. However, gender discrimination in access to resources, as well as to educational and economic opportunities, continues to undermine women’s efforts to participate effectively in socio-economic development.

Women, and especially single mothers, are expected to fulfill multiple roles as workers and care givers, making it impossible to hold a full-time job in the formal economy. For these women and those who have not had the opportunity to complete the training needed to find decent work, the informal economy is often the only option.

Workers in the informal economy, however, do not have social protection or benefits, are poorly paid, and are more likely to have hazardous jobs, such as in the sex industry. Whether in the informal economy or in the formal economy where they do most of the part-time or casual work, poor women hold jobs that are precarious at best. Their concentration in low-paying and insecure jobs, and continued sexual harassment leaves women powerless and helpless.

But the project addresses not only the elimination of discrimination of women in employment and occupation. Its schooling and training activities for girls and young women also cover another major concern of the ILO, the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. Tanzania is among the first three countries which committed themselves to the Time Bound Programme for elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

Working Out of Poverty

The report of the Director-General to the International Labour Conference in 2003, Working Out of Poverty, noted that “identifying the key stages of life when people are vulnerable to falling into poverty is the starting point for understanding the dynamics of life and work of poor communities…if girls, compared to boys, face negative cultural attitudes and practices and discriminations from birth, they will grow up to be women with greater constraints and few choices and opportunities. In turn, they will be less able to influence positively the lives of their daughters and sons, so that poverty is likely to be passed on from one generation to the next”.

The ILO project in Tanzania has taken into account the feminization of poverty as well as its transmission from one generation to the next. It will work not only to improve the lives of the women directly impacted by the project, but also to
enable continuous changes in the lives of women and their children in years to come. The project thus represents an important step in Tanzania’s overall Poverty Reduction Strategy.

According to the project philosophy, there can be decent work and poverty reduction only if girls and boys have equal opportunities for education and are not forced into hazardous forms of work by poverty. Girls and women may choose, have a voice, combine work and family and make smooth transitions from one stage of life to another.

The project promotes knowledge that will help women to ensure that discrimination encountered at one stage in life is not perpetuated at later stages and gains made at one stage are not lost as a person ages. The major intervention strategies include access to formal and non-formal education, employment creation, and promotion of gender equality.

Through this life-cycle approach, the ILO hopes to create a sustainable programme which will contribute to the UN Millennium Development Goals of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women; and which will continue following the termination of the project. Substantial gains have already been made in all areas.

“Initially, we were afraid of borrowing. We did not know that as poor women, we could borrow and repay loans... It is only after training that we developed the confidence to borrow, and without it, we would not have been able to invest the loans productively ... There has been tremendous improvement in our lives”, says a member of the Tanga Women’s Group.

Promoting Leadership

The recognition of women workers’ immense contribution to their families and societies will further the impact of the project. It will also enable women to better advocate for themselves, leading to the empowerment of future generations. The formation of women’s groups is perhaps the most clearly effective change thus brought about.

Another member of the Women’s Group in Tanga reports: “At the beginning, women were reluctant to join the group. Now many of our friends want to join the groups after seeing the benefits. Women have been motivated, and are gradually forming groups. The demand to participate in the project is very high in our area.”

Women and youth are receiving training which will allow them to make their voices heard throughout the community. Salma attests, “Now I know what to do when I attend and chair meetings. In the past, I honestly did not know how to run meetings and reach effective and democratic decisions. Through the confidence I gained in the project, I contested and won a seat in the Regional Executive Committee... I am also the chairperson of the Project Monitoring Committee in Tanga Municipality.”

Future plans to further facilitate the empowerment of poor women and children and broaden the impact of the project include continuing assistance, training, and capacity building for women and youth to formalize their groups/associations to Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOS). A high-level national workshop is intended to scale up the project to national-level policies and programmes. Further elements would be a needs assessment for youth participating in the project and expanding family-friendly programmes such as professionally staffed day-care centres.

Gender equality is central to the core mandate of the ILO, which is to promote decent work both as a human right and as a positive productive factor. The ILO approach to mainstreaming gender equality involves rights-based strategies for the economic empowerment of women and men as a fundamental step to protecting and promoting the rights of all workers.

The project “Promoting Gender Equality and Decent Work throughout All Stages of Life” is part of the ILO/Netherlands Partnership Programme (ILO/NPP) 2004-2006. This programme actively supports the ILO efforts to promote gender equality through several projects. Amongst these are efforts to prevent exploitative child domestic work and bonded labour; promote youth employment and increase the employability of marginalized groups; and promote social security and poverty reduction for unprotected informal economy workers.
Women may get equal billing with male stars these days, but behind the scenes it is a different story. An annual study of the top 250 domestic grossing films in the United States showed that women comprised only 17 per cent of workers in key, behind-the-scenes roles in 2003, a figure that has not budged since 1998. The study defined key, behind-the-scenes jobs as executive producers, producers, directors, writers, editors or cinematographers. Among those six job categories, the women were mostly likely to fill the role of producer, with the smallest number of women working as cinematographers. Women directed only 6 per cent of the top 250 films, and by genre, women were three times more likely to work on documentaries and romantic comedies than on science fiction or horror films. The most significant development was the rise of women working as screenwriters or directors on films nominated for Academy Awards – 11 women in all. Only three women have ever been nominated for Best Director in the 77-year history of the Academy Awards and none has ever won the Oscar.

So what are women doing about this? A lot.

In New Zealand, the 2004 International Summit of Women in Film and Television offered seminars on audiences of the future, selling ideas, the art of the pitch, the indigenous voice in the international marketplace, and social responsibility in storytelling, among others. In recent years New Zealand has come to be considered by many in the film industry as an ideal location for film production as well as a source of talented women directors such as Jane Campion, Christine Jeffers, Gaylene Preston and Nikki Caro. When organizers of the 2003 London Film Festival were asked what they attributed the strength of the New Zealand film industry to, they cited the determination of New Zealand film-makers to set their own standards and their refusal to follow international trends. One of New Zealand’s female directors, Gaylene Preston, added that unlike movies elsewhere in the world, which are driven by the “committee process” and boardroom meetings, New Zealand films were often “cooked up around the kitchen table”.

In Australia, this year’s Summer '05 Short Film Festival in Canberra screened a record number of films by female directors. The seven films represented just fewer than half the total number of directors featured. The festival focuses on the work of independent film makers from the Canberra region. Co-Director Marisa Martin said, “The organizers were thrilled to be screening the work of so many talented young women from the region.”

Meanwhile, gender disparities within the UK film industry are sizeable. According to a recent survey by the UK Film Council and the industry’s training body, Skillset, while women account for a third of the industry’s workforce, only 16 per cent earn UK£50,000 or more a year, compared to 30 per cent of men. In the lower wage earning brackets, 35 per cent of women earn less than UK£20,000 per year, versus 18 per cent of the men. The study says this may be due, in part, to the fact that few women work in the more technical areas of the business – camera, electrical, audio and construction – and are concentrated instead in such professions as hairdressing and makeup. Networking seems the key to getting hired: the study says the vast majority of all people in the UK film industry –
81 per cent – are recruited by word of mouth. The UK Film Council, in conjunction with Skillset, has now initiated a UK£50 million project to improve training and increase opportunities within the industry.

– Source, BBC News Online and The Guardian, February 2005

■ What role can women play in the film industry? These days advocacy is one of them. The Global Campaign for Microbicides, for example, has produced a film entitled “In Women’s Hands”, about women and their personal battles against HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. The film demonstrates the universality of “women’s vulnerability” to such infections, profiling women living in the US, UK and South Africa. The film aims not only at informing a wide audience about the potential role of microbicides, but also to engage donors, policy makers, advocates and the public on issues surrounding microbicide research and development.


■ In India, women are experiencing similar recognition. Made By Women, held last year, was the first international women’s film festival to be organized. The festival travelled to the country’s seven biggest cities over a period of two months and showcased award-winning, contemporary films directed by women from Iran, Australia, India, Czech Republic and Argentina. The aims of the festival is to “[put] new audiences in touch with intelligent and challenging work made by women film makers of all races, classes, ages, and abilities – and to celebrate the vision, spirit and drive of women in film”. Such efforts are being welcomed in the Indian film industry, long famous for its “Bollywood” productions. A new study entitled “The Changing Status of Women in West Bengal (1970-2000): the Challenge Ahead, released by the West Bengal Commission for Women in February, 2005”, however, focuses on more than entertainment. Social issues pertinent to women include dowry deaths and domestic violence. The study also spoke of exploitation of women in the industry, noting that a new wave of films is breaking the gender mould by depicting professional women positively as “professionals and liberated as opposed to the passive stereotypes portrayed earlier”.


International Women’s Day at the ILO, Geneva: Two internationally recognized film directors – Claire Denis of France and Pamela Rooks of India – discussed issues such as gender equality and the role of women in the film industry.
In **Canada**, 20 government and industry partners have launched a new study aimed at providing a national profile of employment trends for women and minorities and examining the impact of major technological changes, globalization and an increasingly multicultural audience. The 2004 study, *Framework: Employment in Canadian Screen-Based Media*, identifies sectors of the industry in which there are skill gaps, opportunities for growth and other development issues. The National Film Board of Canada is supporting these efforts by hosting a national roundtable on the issue of diversity.

— Source, *Women in Film and Television* – Toronto, June 2004

In 2004, **South Africa** celebrated 10 years of democracy and to mark the occasion, the annual African Women’s Film Festival held its first African Women Filmmakers Awards. The festival is produced by Women of the Sun, a non-profit African media and resource exchange group. The Awards ceremony, co-sponsored by the South African Broadcasting Corporation, featured multiple categories including Lifetime Achievement Award, Best Film, Best Director, and Up and Coming Film maker. A spokeswoman for Women of the Sun said the awards marked, “a new dawn in the industry. The hard work and competence of women film makers will be exhibited in an industry that has always been perceived as a male domain”. Women of the Sun helps support the work of new and established filmmakers in **South Africa**, **Kenya**, **Nigeria**, **Namibia** and **Zimbabwe**. Although the primary focus of the festival is on African films, it also showcased women’s films from other developing regions in Asia and South America.


Do women film makers employ their craft for the purpose of social advocacy more frequently then their male counterparts? Are they doing so to a greater or lesser degree now than 20 or 30 years ago? These are interesting, but perplexing questions on which there seems neither hard, statistical data nor consensus. Women can not claim that men uniformly ignore sensitive social and political issues in deference to commercial considerations – the recently acclaimed issue-oriented films such as *Maria Full of Grace*, *Sometimes in April* and *The Day My God Died* were all directed by men. Women do, however, have the unique ability to give a women’s perspective on how issues and events affect women. That has been a common thread in women’s movie-making throughout the industry’s history, but these films are certainly a minority of mainstream movies.

Women also make far more documentaries than feature films. According to the leading (and oldest) feminist film distributor in the world, Women Make Movies, women have a greater presence in film production aimed at education and empowerment than in the more mainstream entertainment market. Some contributing factors include the commercial viability of projects, access to financing, technical expertise, and shifting social issues. It is clear, however, that women’s film making has become much more cohesive, visible and vocal on a global scale, with women-based industry groups networking as never before. There is now at least one major women director’s film festival on each continent and many of the films featured have social issues or agendas at their core. Can education and empowerment films ever compete for audiences with unisex themes and mass entertainment? When will women, as a group, reach critical mass in terms of influence and expertise within the mainstream film industry? There are a lot of women around the world, both in front of and behind the camera, who are actively working to find out.

— Source, Center for Social Media 2002

The Swiss première of *Dance Like a Man*, directed by Pamela Rooks, took place on 8 March 2005 in Geneva. It was the highlight of the 2nd International Film Festival on Women and Work, a week-long event open to the public and organized by the ILO to commemorate International Women’s Day (www.iolo/communication).
Their Majesties King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia of Spain visit ILO Headquarters

GENEVA – Their Majesties King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia visited the International Labour Organization (ILO) to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Spain’s cooperation with the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

His Majesty the King of Spain, Juan Carlos I, described the extent of child labour as “appalling”, and called for it to be vigorously combated as part of the effort to give a “human dimension” to the process of globalization.

“More than 240 million children worldwide work daily instead of attending school. This is indeed an appalling figure”, the King said during a speech given at a Special Session attended by government, employer and worker representatives.

The King and Queen of Spain, accompanied by the Spanish Foreign Minister, Miguel Angel Moratinos, were welcomed by the Director-General of the ILO, Juan Somavia, with whom they met privately. The Chairman of the Governing Body of the ILO, Philippe Séguin, chaired the Special Session.

King Juan Carlos I recalled that Spain was a founder Member of the ILO, the oldest organization in the United Nations system, and that his country had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the ILO in 1995 to support IPEC in its efforts to eliminate child labour, particularly in Latin America.

“We want to contribute, through programmes such as the one we are commemorating today, to making economic globalization a positive social force for all the people of the world”, the King of Spain told the ILO. “Our aim is to ensure that the process of globalization does not become entrenched in economics and finance. We hope that it will also have a human dimension”, he added, declaring that in a just society “there is no room for child labour, or forced labour, or labour carried out without adequate safety measures and health regulations. Neither, of course, can there be room for labour which discriminates against workers for reasons of sex, race, creed or nationality”.

292nd session of the ILO Governing Body
Discusses globalization, labour rights, programme and budget for 2006-07

The Governing Body of the ILO held discussions on issues ranging from strategies for new partnerships in order to promote a fair globalization to the respect of basic labour rights.

GENEVA – The Governing Body’s Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization discussed proposals for the ILO follow-up to the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, released in February 2004. In his conclusions, Mr. Philippe Séguin, Chairman of the Governing Body, said the Working Party had reached a “clear and strong consensus” on the promotion of decent work as a global goal as the ILO’s distinctive contribution to a fair globalization.
The Governing Body also recommended a provisional programme and budget level of US$ 568.6 million for the 2006-07 biennium, estimated at the 2004-05 budget rate of exchange of 1.34 Swiss francs to the US dollar. In constant dollars, the 2006-07 budget proposes moderate growth of 1.1 per cent to address institutional investment needs and extraordinary items.

The final exchange rate and the US dollar level of the budget and the Swiss franc assessment will be determined by the International Labour Conference in June 2005.

Building blocks of the new programme and budget are their focus on decent work as a global goal and the inter-related actions needed at the local, national, regional and international levels to make it happen, including Decent Work Country Programmes.

The programme reinforces and deepens the four strategic objectives of the ILO: promoting standards and fundamental principles and rights at work, creating greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income, enhancing the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all, and strengthening tripartism and social dialogue. It also proposes initiatives on decent work for youth, corporate social responsibility, export processing zones, and the informal economy.
Geneva – Nepal, Guatemala, Venezuela and Zimbabwe are among the serious and urgent cases cited by the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association in its latest report, adopted by the 292nd Session of the ILO Governing Body, for serious infringements of the principle of freedom of association and violations of trade union rights. In its thrice-yearly report to the Governing Body, the Committee examined 30 cases. Altogether there are currently 134 cases before the Committee.

Latest report of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association cites Nepal, Guatemala, Venezuela and Zimbabwe

GENEVA – Nepal, Guatemala, Venezuela and Zimbabwe are among the serious and urgent cases cited by the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association in its latest report, adopted by the 292nd Session of the ILO Governing Body, for serious infringements of the principle of freedom of association and violations of trade union rights. In its thrice-yearly report to the Governing Body, the Committee examined 30 cases. Altogether there are currently 134 cases before the Committee.
Nepal

In its report, the Committee drew special attention to the case of Nepal concerning the arrest and detention of trade unionists, significant prohibitions on the right to strike of workers engaged in a variety of services, and restrictions on the right of workers to stage peaceful demonstrations and to put up banners.

The Committee requested the Government to take the necessary measures to amend the Essential Services Act so as to ensure that the power under the Act was limited to prohibiting strikes in essential services in the strict sense. As regards the prohibition on the assembly of more than five persons, while the Government had indicated that the relevant order had been revoked, the Committee recalled that workers should enjoy the right to peaceful assembly and demonstration to defend their occupational interests.

As regards the allegations of violent intervention in a demonstration and arrest and detention of trade unionists, the Committee requested the Government to ensure that authorities resort to force only in situations where law and order are seriously threatened and that the intervention should be in due proportion to the danger which the authorities are attempting to control.

The Committee also drew the attention of the Governing Body to the cases of Guatemala, Venezuela and Zimbabwe among others.

Guatemala

In the case of Guatemala, the Committee examined serious allegations of violence against trade unionists, and dismissal of union leaders followed by employer refusals to comply with reinstatement orders and undue delays in the proceedings. The Committee underlined the gravity of the allegations of assaults, death threats and intimidation of trade union members, and the attacks on trade union headquarters.

The Committee urged the Government to refer these cases urgently to the Office of the Special Prosecutor for offences against trade unionists and to order urgent investigations.

As regards dismissals of trade unionists, the Committee observed in general that judicial orders for reinstatement are often not complied with and that procedures frequently take years. The Committee also urged the Government to revise the procedure for the protection of union rights provided for in law.

Venezuela

In the case of Venezuela, the Committee dealt with allegations of interference by the authorities following trade union elections. It pointed out that it had already on previous occasions objected to the role assigned by the Constitution and legislation to the National Electoral Council in organizing and supervising trade union elections, including the power to suspend elections.

Requesting the Government to refrain from such interference in the future, the Committee recalled that the organization of elections should be exclusively a matter for the organizations concerned and that the power to suspend elections should be given only to an independent judiciary.

Zimbabwe

The Committee also examined two cases concerning Zimbabwe, both of which concerned allegations of anti-union dismissals aimed at high-level trade union officers. The Committee requested the Government to have independent inquiries carried out into these allegations and to ensure that, if the competent body determines that the dismissals were for anti-union reasons, that these trade union leaders would be rapidly reinstated in their functions, or an equivalent position, without loss of pay or benefits.

In another case concerning further allegations of arbitrary arrests and detentions, anti-union intimidation and harassment, the Committee urged the Government to refrain from resorting to such measures. Referring to an atmosphere of intimidation and fear prejudicial to the normal development of trade union activities, the Committee expressed its overall deep concern with the extreme seriousness of the general trade union climate in Zimbabwe, demonstrated by the number of cases of a similar nature which have recently been brought before it.
Seafarers identity becomes clearer
New international labour Convention for seafarers’ ID documents comes into force

The international Convention that creates the first global biometric identification system for issuing secure identity documents to the 1.2 million seafarers on the world seas came into force as of 9 February 2005.

GENEVA – The Seafarers’ Identity Documents Convention, 2003 (No. 185), adopted by the Government, Employer and Worker delegates to the International Labour Conference in June 2003, has been ratified by France, Jordan and Nigeria. Two countries must ratify the Convention before it can come into force.
Car builders, move over
Shifting gears: Suppliers take the driver’s seat

Auto parts suppliers are playing an increasingly important role in the automotive industry. Their current share of up to two-thirds of the value-added of a car is expected to reach 75 per cent among some manufacturers in the near future, according to a report Automotive industry trends affecting component suppliers prepared for a tripartite meeting on employment development, social dialogue, rights at work and industrial relations in the transport equipment manufacturing industry.¹

The ILO announced in December 2004 that after a six-week test involving 126 volunteer seafarers from 30 countries, two biometric products have already met the requirement of global interoperability and thus can be used to issue the new SIDs.

All countries ratifying Convention No. 185 will be required to issue new SIDs that conform to the requirements specified in the standard known as ILO SID-0002.

According to information received by the ILO, more than 50 countries have submitted the Convention for consideration by their national parliaments. Many, including India, Philippines and Indonesia, which have large numbers of seafarers, are making plans for implementation while considering the ratification of the Convention.

Convention No. 185 replaces the Seafarers’ Identity Document Convention, 1958 (No.108) which, had been ratified by 61 ILO member States, representing more than 60 per cent of the world shipping fleet.

gary, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco and the Philippines. Data for the past ten years show how Mexico’s share of exports of automotive components from its maquiladoras has been increasing rapidly.

The potential for companies in advanced countries to lower labour costs by outsourcing coupled with the pressure to continuously reduce costs, diversify, and deliver to just-in-time schedules, will impact on working conditions in suppliers, and require even greater flexibility on the part of the workforce.

The report noted that both automobile manufacturers and suppliers have been in the forefront of negotiating and signing International Framework Agreements (IFAs) with the International Metalworkers’ Federation and local union representatives. These IFAs promote social dialogue and recognize the core labour standards in accordance with the provisions of the ILO Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, including Conventions Nos. 87 and 98 on freedom of association and collective bargaining, Conventions Nos. 100 and 111 on equal opportunities and treatment, Conventions Nos. 29 and 105 on forced labour and Convention No. 138 on child labour. The companies involved expect their suppliers to adhere to these same standards as part of their continuing business relationship.

The meeting concluded that:

- Safeguarding existing employment was a priority for all economies, as was ensuring that any new investment brought high-quality jobs contributing to improved social and economic conditions and development.

- When outsourcing or restructuring was inevitable, employers, in consultation with trade unions and workers’ representatives, should – as early as practicable – explore alternatives to avoid, reduce or mitigate the negative impacts of restructuring and/or job loss. In such cases, information, consultation and negotiated agreements between workers’ representatives and employers were essential to the process.

- Governments, in consultation with workers’ representatives and employers, had the responsibility to ensure social protection and security in the case of restructuring, as well as to implement active labour market policies, including retraining and lifelong learning throughout the entire production chain that would assist workers to be reassigned within a company or find employment elsewhere.

- Decent work should be a global objective. It was a broad concept stemming from the ILO mandate to improve social justice and included six dimensions: opportunities for work, freedom of choice of employment, productive work, equity in work, security at work, and dignity at work. A reduction in decent work deficits, where they exist, in the industry and all sub-sectors, was essential.

- The Meeting noted with interest the work of the ILO Governing Body on EPZs and on corporate social responsibility (CSR). Large employers could assist small- and medium-size enterprises to adapt to changing economic circumstances in their supply chain.

- Research, data collection and monitoring should continue in order to provide an early warning of impending changes and help to ease the social policy burden. The ILO should continue and sustain its work on a regularly maintained and updated database for the metal trades industries to support social dialogue.

Since the ILO meeting, the EU Commission launched a major initiative to boost the competitiveness of the lagging European automobile industry “CARS 21” to carry it into the next century. And in a related development, the United States has submitted a proposal to the WTO to address non-tariff barriers (NTBs) as an integral part of the Doha Round, equally important as addressing tariff barriers themselves.


Sports footwear sector outpaces the retail and apparel sectors in meeting code of conduct obligations

The sports footwear industry, often criticized for alleged violations of fundamental labour standards, has made greater progress in implementing worker-friendly codes of conduct than the apparel and retail sectors, according to a just-published ILO study. The study, *Implementing Codes of Conduct: How businesses manage social performance in global supply chains*, says brand recognition and intense consumer scrutiny have led the sports footwear companies analysed to develop more sophisticated approaches to code implementation. It attributes the success of the sports footwear industry to effectively applying financial and human resources to compliance efforts.

The study is based on interviews with hundreds of managers, activists, government officials, factory workers and worker representatives, as well as visits to over 90 enterprises and suppliers in the US, Europe, China, Viet Nam, Thailand, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Guatemala, Turkey and Honduras.

However, the study also reveals that simply focusing on the numbers does not reveal the entire picture. While a large compliance team can mean improved social performance of a firm’s supply base, it also depends on the role that compliance staff play with suppliers. The research indicates the need for multinational enterprises to move away from a “policing” model of compliance to a more consultative role with workers being empowered to oversee their own workplaces.

This includes having a clear vision reinforced by top management commitment, effective training, and geographically dispersed teams able to provide “hands-on” assistance at the supplier level, the study says.

For example, one of the sports footwear and apparel companies studied reported having a dedicated team of over 100 people whose sole dictate was to oversee corporate social responsibility and code of conduct issues.

The study also highlights the significant challenges facing the retail sector due to the extremely large and continually changing supply bases. In addition, the diversified mix of products handled by this sector results in difficulties identifying the entire supply chain.

In contrast to the footwear sector, for example, a major retailer with a continually changing supply base of over 5,000 factories told researchers that it did not have a separate team responsible for supporting their compliance code. Instead, the study notes, it assigned this responsibility to the quality assurance department, asking 12 people there to spend 25 per cent of their working time on “ethical issues”.

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The plight of children who work in mines and quarries, which are often dangerous, dirty and can pose a grave risk to their health and safety, will be the focus of the fourth World Day Against Child Labour, scheduled for 12 June 2005.

The ILO estimates that some one million children work in small-scale mining and quarrying around the world. What’s more, ILO studies show that these children work in some of the worst conditions imaginable, where they face serious risk of dying on the job or sustaining injuries and health problems that will affect them throughout their lives.

In both surface and underground mines, children work long hours, carry heavy loads, set explosives, sieve sand and dirt, crawl down narrow tunnels, breathe in harmful dusts and work in water – often in the presence of dangerous toxins such as lead and mercury, the ILO says. Children mine diamonds, gold, and precious metals in Africa, gems and rock in Asia, and gold, coal, emeralds and tin in South America. In rock quarries located in many parts of the world, children face safety and health risks from pulling and carrying heavy loads, breathing in hazardous dust and particles and using dangerous tools and crushing equipment.

The experience of the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) – which has conducted pilot projects in Mongolia, Tanzania, Niger and the Andean countries of South America – demonstrates that it is feasible to eliminate child labour in dangerous conditions by helping the mining and quarrying communities acquire legal rights, organize cooperatives or other productive units, improve the health and safety and productivity of adult workers, and secure essential services – such as schools, clean water and sanitation systems – in these often remote regions.

The ILO launched the World Day in June 2002 as a means of raising the visibility of the problem and highlighting the global movement to eliminate child labour, particularly its worst forms. This year, on and about 12 June, local and national organizations and many children’s groups are expected to join with ILO constituents around the world to observe the World Day, which occurs during the annual International Labour Conference in Geneva, and to emphasize the need for the immediate removal of child workers from small-scale mines and quarries.

For more information, please contact ILO Department of Communication in Geneva at (+4122) 799-7912, communication@ilo.org, or www.ilo.org/communication or Susan Gunn at ILO/IPEC at (+4122) 799-6107.
ILO, Thailand review social security gap

Although the Thai government has successfully extended social security in the last decade, some 51 million people, or 80 per cent of the population, still lack social security coverage, according to a new survey carried out by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Thai Government. The findings of the “Thailand Social Security Priority and Needs Survey” were discussed at the “Inter-Governmental Seminar on the Social Security Coverage Extension to the Non-Covered Population” in Bangkok on 7 December. The meeting looked at possible strategies for extending social security coverage, particularly to those in the informal economy.

For more information please contact Sophy Fisher, Regional Information Officer, ILO Bangkok, phone: +66.2288.2482; email: fisher@ilo.org

Labour Relations in Viet Nam

In December 2004, a National Conference on Labour Relations in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, brought together senior Vietnamese government officials, trade union and employer representatives to address policies and trends in industrial relations. The meeting assessed the current labour relations situation in Viet Nam and discussed new roles and responsibilities of trade unions and employers in a socialist market economy. The Vietnamese Government is collaborating with the ILO, under the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, to improve industrial relations at the enterprise level, as well as building capacity of employers’ and workers’ associations.

For more information please contact Sophy Fisher, Regional Information Officer, ILO Bangkok, phone: +66.2288.2482; email: fisher@ilo.org

Safety and health in the construction sector

Standards of occupational safety and health on small construction sites were reviewed at an international workshop in Vientiane, Laos, 16-17 December. More than 50 representatives from Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Thailand and Viet Nam attended the meeting. In 2003, an ILO survey of occupational safety and health conditions in small construction sites in these countries showed an urgent need to improve workers’ safety and health, both at the national, policy-making level and in the workplace.
Guidelines for labour inspection in forestry

- In most countries, the rates of accidents and occupational diseases are still high in the forestry sector. However, the experience of several countries and forest organizations shows that, through practical efforts, the standard of occupational safety and health can be improved considerably. Public labour inspection is one of the fundamental ways of enhancing safety and health and general working conditions in the forestry sector. To assist inspectors and others to implement appropriate practices in forestry management, a tripartite ILO meeting in Geneva on 24-28 January adopted guidelines for labour inspection in forestry. It is planned that the Guidelines will be widely disseminated by the ILO, and social dialogue activities encouraged and facilitated to put them into practice around the world.

For more information, please contact the ILO Sectoral Activities Department, tel: +41.22.799.6036; fax: +41.22.799.7967; e-mail: sector@ilo.org

Promoting the ILO Declaration on Multinational Enterprises

- This year, the ILO has organized three subregional tripartite symposia on labour and employment issues in multinational enterprises and foreign direct investment. The first symposium was held in Pretoria on 25-26 January for the countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC); the second symposium took place in Jakarta on 11-12 April for the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) countries; and the third symposium was held in Montevideo on 25-26 April, covering MERCOSUR countries. In addition to providing an opportunity to promote the ILO Declaration on Multinational Enterprises, these seminars helped to identify issues that might be tackled through subsequent technical cooperation activities.

For further information on the ILO Employment Sector’s activities, please contact tel: +41.22.799.6853 or e-mail: MSU@ilo.org

GTZ, ILO, WHO enhance cooperation in the field of social protection

- Building upon ongoing activities between the German development agency GTZ, the ILO, and the World Health Organization (WHO) in the field of social protection and social health insurance, the three organizations enhanced their cooperation by signing a Letter of Agreement in November 2004. GTZ, ILO and WHO agreed on joint technical cooperation activities that shall be defined by a common Working Group. The Working Group will also foster cooperation in the field at the country and regional level.

For more information please contact Sophy Fisher, Regional Information Officer, ILO Bangkok, phone: +66.2288.2482; email: fisher@ilo.org

For more information, please contact the ILO Sectoral Activities Department, tel: +41.22.799.6960; fax: +41.22.799.8316; email: max@ilo.org
Youth employment and social inclusion in Kosovo
The main objective of the programme that the ILO has been implementing in Kosovo since 2001, with the support of the Italian Government, is to promote the employability of disadvantaged youth. Emphasis is placed on breaking the cycle of discrimination, redressing gender inequalities and increasing the employability of persons with disabilities, low-skilled workers and former detainees. Programmes of a network of seven regional vocational training centres offer over 20 priority occupational profiles and include employability and technological skills, job search techniques and entrepreneurial skills. By mid-2004, over 2,300 jobseekers had been trained by the programme and 40,000 unemployed had received counselling and guidance.

Child trafficking in Albania, Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine
A three-year project funded by the United States and Germany has been launched to develop an environment in which it is possible to prevent and eliminate internal and cross-border trafficking in children for sexual and labour exploitation. The project has three main components: bringing legislation and procedures into line with international commitments and ensuring that national policies address the special needs of the child victims of trafficking; in selected high-risk areas, promotion of youth employment and the long-term reintegration of child victims to reduce the vulnerability of children to trafficking; and the establishment of a regional information exchange network. The project is expected to provide services to 3,700 children and 80 adults and to indirectly benefit 50,000 people.

Improving market access for women entrepreneurs in Estonia
A project on more and better jobs for women adopted an integrated approach to the promotion of rural tourism and handicrafts. This involved activities to strengthen women’s groups involved in rural tourism, build the capacity of local tourism authorities and develop links with existing networks of related businesses. Web site development was used as a key marketing strategy, study tours were organized and training was provided for the women entrepreneurs coming from marginalized groups in society. There is ample scope for the replication of these strategies elsewhere in Estonia and in other transition countries seeking to promote tourism as a strategy for rural regeneration.

Health care systems in Eastern Europe
A review undertaken by the ILO of health care services in the countries of Eastern Europe shows that, despite the continued dedication of many health-care personnel, the years of transition and cuts in public expenditure have taken their toll on state health services, creating a crisis in health care which has contributed...
to the fall in life expectancy in countries such as the Russian Federation and Ukraine. The impact of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis has been worsened by the condition of public health services. Healthcare workers in many countries suffer from low pay, the need to work unpaid overtime and employment insecurity in view of the uncertainty as to future plans for the restructuring of the sector. Moreover, there is very little involvement of the social partners in the discussion of reform measures. The findings of the review are set out in a publication by the ILO and Public Services International (PSI) entitled Corrosive Reform: Failing Health Systems in Eastern Europe, which contains policy recommendations for the improvement of the situation.

Promoting workers’ rights through schools in Romania
As part of a German-funded project to promote the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the trade unions in Romania have developed educational components for inclusion in secondary school curricula covering fundamental principles and rights at work, the role of the social partners and the meaning of social dialogue in a democratic society. The project is part of a long-term strategy by Romanian trade unions to attract young people to the union movement through a better understanding of workers’ rights and the values of solidarity.

Development of labour legislation in Ukraine
A United States funded project for the promotion of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work set up a dialogue between the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, employers’ and workers’ organizations, and many other stakeholders focusing on labour legislation. The formulation of the new Labour Code, which received its first reading in Parliament in 2003, received wide media coverage in the country. All of the principles promoted by the Declaration have been covered by the project. Its cornerstone was the development of the rights and institutions related to freedom of association. For many independent representative organizations, participation in the project was an important source of public recognition and helped in the emergence of civil society in Ukraine.

Promoting women’s entrepreneurship through employers’ organizations in Azerbaijan and Georgia
With a view to assisting employers’ organizations in Azerbaijan and Georgia to improve the services they can offer their members, a project has been undertaken to help in the development of strategies and actions to address the needs of women entrepreneurs. Based on a rapid assessment of women’s entrepreneurship in the two countries, two national workshops were held to identify best practices to support women entrepreneurs. As a result of the project, the Association of Women Entrepreneurs was established in Georgia, and the employers’ organization in Azerbaijan is establishing a standing gender committee and an information centre. A final conference to exchange experience on best practices for the provision of stable and long-term support for women entrepreneurs was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, in 2004.

World Day for Safety and Health at Work
One of the initiatives taken by the ILO to raise awareness of the massive impact of work-related accidents and diseases throughout the world has been to declare 28 April, a day long associated by trade unions with the commemoration of victims of occupational accidents and diseases, as World Day for Safety and Health at Work. The ILO first commemorated the World Day in 2003. In both 2003 and 2004, a variety of events were organized on 28 April on the theme of safety and health at work by a long list of countries in Europe and Central Asia. These ranged from tripartite discussions and meetings to radio and television broadcasts, the launching of awareness-raising campaigns and ILO publications, the laying of wreaths and, in certain cases, the observance of one minute of silence for victims.
ILO discusses forced labour and latest situation in Burma

Richard Horsay, the liaison officer of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Rangoon, is planning to present his findings on the forced labor practice in Burma at the upcoming meeting of the governments of the countries in Geneva, Switzerland on 10 November.

The spokesman also confirmed that the letters have been cooperative with the ILO to the extent that it is a sourcing country in terms of forced labor. He is currently working with the ILO on forced labor in Burma, which has been confirmed to be a continuing country of origin in terms of forced labor.

Asia: ILO to tackle unemployment

Kabul, 6 December (UNI) - New centers will be established in Afghanistan to tackle unemployment and provide training opportunities for unemployed people. The International Labour Organization (ILO) announced on Sunday in the capital, Kabul.

The issue of unemployment is very serious in Afghanistan, with many people left idle in more than 10 years of conflict. For example, the ILO estimates that 200,000 young people are unemployed in Kabul, and the Afghan Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) is cooperating to tackle unemployment through the newly established Employment Services Centers (ESC) that will be established in some provinces.

The 12 centers will be set up in Kandahar, Herat, Helmand, Badakhshan and Zabul. The aim is to provide job opportunities to young and disabled workers, to help them gain skills and become productive members of the workforce.

ILO in the Press

Le BIT plaide pour des politiques actives sur le marché du travail

La web de la francophonie

Le BIT plaide pour des politiques actives sur le marché du travail

"Le BIT plaide pour des politiques actives sur le marché du travail..."
Articles have been excerpted and are not always in the exact format in which they appear originally. They are trimmed and rearranged sometimes, for space reasons.
FEATURES

MEDIA SHELF

- **Work in the Global Economy**
  
  
  This book is based on the 6th ILO Social Policy Lectures, which are endowed with the ILO’s Nobel Peace Prize, held in Tokyo, Japan in December 2003.

  In keeping with the topics covered in the lecture series, this volume examines the emerging changes in the world of work as a result of globalization and technological innovation.

  Through the various papers and lectures that make up this compilation, the book explores the different dimensions of labour market flexibility and offers explanations for the diffusion of flexible labour practices among industrial economies. It also provides insight into the recent shift in societal values from the traditional ideal of solidarity towards greater individual economic freedom.

  Globalization has had a visible effect on the growth of markets and on the social behaviour of many countries. This volume discusses this trend, as well as other vital issues, surrounding the global marketplace and how it impacts national employment systems.

- **A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour**
  
  Report of the Director-General
  
  Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, May 2005, ISBN 92-2-115380-6, 35 Swiss francs; US$29.95; £15.95; 25 Euros
  
  This groundbreaking report is the most comprehensive account of contemporary forced labour to date. It provides the first global and regional estimates, by an international organization, of forced labour in the world today, including the number of people affected and how many of them are victims of trafficking, as well as of the profits made by the criminals exploiting trafficked workers.

  Based on these data, the report sheds new light on the gravity of the problem of forced labour. A dynamic picture emerges of three major categories of forced labour: forced labour imposed by the State for economic, political or other purposes; forced labour linked to poverty and discrimination; and forced labour that arises from migration and trafficking of workers across the world, often associated with globalization.

  The report provides clear evidence that the abolition of forced labour represents a challenge for virtually every country in the world – industrialized, transition and developing countries alike. It assesses experience at the national level in taking up this challenge, with particular emphasis on the importance of sound laws and policies and their rigorous enforcement, as well as effective prevention strategies.

  The report also reviews the actions against forced labour taken over the past four years by the ILO and its tripartite partners – governments, employers and workers. It calls for a new global alliance to relegate forced labour to history.

- **Confronting Economic Insecurity in Africa**
  
  
  Drawing on information from all parts of Africa and on surveys of many thousands of Africans and hundreds of workplaces, as well as detailed statistics supplied by government agencies, this book documents some of the main developments in the region.

  It shows that conventional measures of poverty are inadequate to capture the depth of the crisis, and that orthodox anti-poverty measures often fail to reach the poor and most economically insecure. It concludes that, whether for tackling poverty and inequality or the scourge of HIV/AIDS, new systems of social protection are needed that are based on principles of universalism and social solidarity.

- **Safety and Health in Ports**
  
  ILO code of practice. March 2005, ISBN 92-2-115287-1, 40 Swiss francs; US$30; £16.95; 26 Euros. Also available in French and Spanish
  
  Despite new and sophisticated innovations, port work is still considered an occupation with very high accident rates. Every port, in light of its specific circumstances, needs to develop working practices that safeguard the safety and health of portworkers. This essential code of practice, intended to replace both the second edition of the ILO Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Dock Work (1977) and the ILO Guide to Safety and Health in Dock Work (1976), provides valuable advice and assistance to all those charged with the management, operation, maintenance and development of ports and their safety.

  Offering many detailed technical illustrations and examples of good practice, the provisions of this code cover all aspects of port work where goods or passengers are loaded or unloaded or from ships, including work incidental to such loading and unloading activities in the port area. It is not limited to international trade but applies equally to domestic operations, including those on inland waterways.

  While the code looks to the future by including a methodology for considering innovations, it retains advice on older conventional methods as well. New topics, which were not included in the previous publications, are: traffic and vehicular movements of all types; activities on shore and on ship; amended levels of lighting provision; personal protective equipment; ergonomics; provisions for disabled persons; and the specific handling of certain cargoes, for example logs, scrap metal and dangerous goods.

- **Local Economic Development in Post-Crisis Situations**
  
  
  This operational guide proposes the Local Economic Development (LED) approach as a particularly suitable development process for post-crisis situations. As opposed to traditional development approaches, LED uses participation, public-private partnerships and dialogue at the local level as tools for sustainable employment creation. It puts forwards processes and actions to achieve consensus and cooperation at the local, regional and national level, taking into account specific local needs without neglecting the challenges produced by globalization and socio-economic restructuring.

Drawing on the practices and experiences of 25 countries, this book shows how governments, employers’ organizations and trade unions around the world bring gender equality into their institutional structures, policies, programmes and activities.

Examples from the good practices are cited under eight thematic categories such as the use of sex-disaggregated data; strategic partnerships; multi-sectoral approaches in legislation, policies and strategies; strategically placed gender expertise and more. Intended to stimulate fresh ideas and invite adaptation, the book provides step-by-step outlines of the actions undertaken to make the elements of good gender practice visible and comparable, and to make it easier for readers to find the aspects most relevant to their own situations.

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International Labour Review, Volume 144 (2005), Number 1

This issue of the ILR contains four articles, respectively concerned with labour law and new forms of corporate organization; the outlook for the Palestinian economy and labour market; a macroeconomic policy framework for growth, employment and poverty reduction; and unemployment, job quality and poverty in Bulgaria.

The first article, by Marie-Laure Morin, considers the reconfiguration of corporate organization and its consequences for the application of labour law. The author examines the different levels of corporate organization in order to identify the issues raised by today’s new financial and production relationships, both within and between firms. She then turns to the challenges that positive law faces in addressing those relationships, focusing on three questions of crucial concern to labour law: industrial relations and corporate decision-making power; the contract of employment and identification of the employer; and working conditions and occupational safety.

The second article, by Philippe Egger, outlines developments in the Palestinian economy since the 1993 Oslo accords and the limitations of a model marked by dependence on the Israeli economy, and the supply of low-skilled labour in particular. Egger argues that a small, open economy with diversified exports is more likely to provide the numerous and more productive jobs the rapidly growing Palestinian labour force needs.

The third article, by Iyanaatul Islam, argues that conservative macroeconomic policy, as currently understood and practised in many developing countries, is preoccupied with stability at the expense of growth, and with fiscal and inflation targets at the expense of employment. The empirical foundation of macroeconomic conservatism is indeed fragile, and there is a case for developing a viable alternative. Such an alternative is consistent with the substance and spirit of the ILO Decent Work Agenda that emphasizes employment creation, comprehensive social protection, and the strengthening of labour market institutions through social dialogue and protection of labour rights.

The last article, by Alexandre Kolev, seeks to identify the determinants of poverty in Bulgaria and to profile groups at risk of adverse labour-market outcomes. Kolev’s methodology is based on a detailed consideration of income and non-income dimensions of poverty and perceptions of well-being at work. He examines the incidence of poverty in relation to personal, labour-market and household characteristics over the period 1995-2001. Though important to an individual’s poverty status, labour-market circumstances tend merely to mitigate or worsen the dominant effect of family circumstances. Kolev’s findings also suggest that non-income dimensions of poverty – chiefly poor working conditions – pose an important policy challenge.
Tsunami: Even elephants were put to work to help evacuate and recuperate materials in Lam Jame, Indonesia.