International Internship Course on Labour and Social Policies for Decent Work

Geneva, 14 May – 3 June 2003

A Report

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Twenty-four participants from twenty-three countries attended the 38th Annual Internship Course on Labour and Social Policies for Decent Work, organized by the International Institute for Labour Studies, on behalf of the ILO. The main objective of the Course was to enhance the capacity of participants to contribute to labour and social policy development in their respective countries. To this end the course focused attention on: (a) stimulating cross-national exchange of views and experiences among ILO constituents; (b) encouraging an integrated approach to social and economic policies; and (c) enhancing awareness of ILO principles and programmes.

The participants

Fifteen women and nine men, who were middle and senior level officials representing the tripartite community of the ILO from Caribbean, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East regions were selected and invited to take part in the three-week training course. The age of participants ranged from 25 to 47 years and the average was 36 years. The names of the participants, their respective countries and the tripartite constituency they belonged to are listed below.

Mr. Samuel James   Antigua     Government
Ms. Falgunee Boon   Bangladesh    Workers
Ms. Doreen Deane   Barbados     Workers
Mr. Jigme Tenzin   Bhutan      Government (V)
Ms. Kopano Ollyn   Botswana    Employers
Ms. Anelia Andreeva   Bulgaria  Government
Ms. Jasenka Vuksic   Croatia    Workers
Ms. Eva Lettlova   Czech Republic  Government
Ms. Eela Velstrom   Estonia     Employers
Mr. Ousman Sallah   Gambia      Workers
Ms. Virginia Kakalioura   Greece    Employers
Ms. Sri Winarni   Indonesia    Employers
Ms. Laura Zickute   Lithuania    Employers
Ms. Jacinta Ochieng   Kenya      Workers
Mr. Justus Otakwa   Kenya      Workers
Mr. Zebrohn Kambuto   Malawi    Government
Mr. Satyam Gopee   Mauritius    Workers
Mr. Binod Joshi   Nepal        Employers
Mr. Abdul Qadir   Pakistan    Workers (V)
Ms. Bernadine Dublin   St Vincent and the Grenadines Government
Ms. Palaporn Ratanaparichon   Thailand Government
Ms. Helen Rambally   Trinidad    Employers
Mr. Ali Al Katheer   United Arab Emirates Government
Ms. Redha Qarhash   Yemen       Workers

The participants from Bhutan and Pakistan took part in the course as volunteers. More information on the course along with an agenda of the entire training programme is appended to this report.

Prior to the course, the participants were invited to list their expectations of the course and identify their areas of special interest and concern. The responses brought to light
that they shared a common interest in several topics that are central to the mission and mandate of the ILO, such as:

- Occupational safety and health
- The ILO structure, organization and activities
- International labour standards, including the core labour standards, and their effective promotion
- Reporting on ILO conventions
- Child labour
- Gender
- Social dimensions of globalization, and how this affects various regions and countries represented by participants
- Employment promotion, especially relating to young people
- Decent Work and how it relates to the social-economic policies in developing countries
- The informal economy
- Social protection
- Migration (international and intra-regional)
- Collective bargaining, tripartite and bipartite
- Mediation and reconciliation of labour disputes
- Social dialogue

The results of the survey were taken into account in designing the course curriculum and that several topics of special interest were incorporated into the lectures, seminars and discussions sessions of the training course.

**Content and themes**

The course content reflected the main concerns of the ILO and its constituents. The overarching theme of Decent Work and the strategic objectives relevant to the theme figured prominently in the agenda.

In general, the course was thematically organized. During the first week, there was greater exposure to the ILO as an international organization having a special mandate, and to the concept of Decent Work and its different dimensions. The second week and part of the third week were devoted to a further exploration of the four strategic objectives: Rights at Work, Employment, Social Protection and Social Dialogue. The third week was spent on an intensive study and discussion of several cross-cutting themes relevant to the work of the ILO.

A unique feature of the course this year was that it placed emphasis on using the services of several distinguished academic scholars with specialization in the core disciplines of the ILO. Earlier the Institute had commissioned the preparation of four studies on the strategic objectives for Decent Work to leading academics in different fields of specialization. The consultants: Sarosh Kuruvilla of Cornell University, Ashwani Saith of ISS The Hague, Bob Hepple of Cambridge University and Martin Godfrey, formerly of Sussex University, were invited to deliver special lectures and to facilitate discussions and exercises for group work, based on their studies.
Focus on the International Labour Organization (ILO) - The content of this theme was developed with a view to providing the participants a comprehensive description of the ILO in terms of its constitution, structure, constituents, origin, evolution, mandate and the means of action. Through lectures and simulation exercises, participants were introduced to the functioning of tripartism in the various organs of the organization. Additionally, for the first time ever, a veritable ILO historian, Mr. Aamir Ali, gave a presentation on the origin of the Organization and its evolution.

Decent Work - The main theme of the course was the overarching goal of the ILO to promote “opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.” The sessions concerning this theme covered the rationale for the Decent Work agenda, strategic objectives and the means of action before the ILO for attaining Decent Work for all. The participants were exposed to the many facets through which the ILO works to formulate and implement labour and social policies in pursuit of the goal.

A lecture by Dharam Ghai entitled “Decent Work concepts, measures and strategic objectives” introduced the main theme of the course and also set the tone for further discussions on the strategic objectives and on the means of action for Decent Work.

- Decent Work and the Rights at Work - Professor Bob Hepple’s lecture highlighted the need for a progressive realization of the rights. The lecture was followed up by several ILO Officials who discussed a variety of issues related to the adoption, ratification and enforcement of major International Labour Standards. Particular attention was given to the fundamental right of Freedom of Association and to the procedures and practices for implementing this right. The ILO initiatives for a progressive elimination of child labour received a prominent place in the course agenda.

- Employment - Professor Martin Godfrey presented the employment dimensions of Decent Work focusing on the opportunities for productive work, including wage employment, self-employment and unpaid family work under conditions of freedom, equity and in the absence of coercion and discrimination. He advocated the need for a common set of indicators for analyzing employment trends to be applied universally and highlighted the importance of productivity-centered strategies for employment promotion in all countries, developed, developing and transitional. Building on the theme of employment, subsequent presenters addressed the Global Employment Agenda and the ILO initiatives aimed at the removal of poverty, development of skills and the creation of quality jobs through enterprise promotion.

- Social Protection - The main theme advocated under this heading was that employment generation must be accompanied by policies to ensure satisfactory working conditions, improved health care and assured income during old age and in other contingencies for all those belonging to the world of work. Professor Ashwani Saith and several ILO experts discussed the necessity and practicality of expanding social protection schemes with special focus on the weak and the vulnerable in society. He advocated a multi-dimensional approach to reviewing the vulnerabilities of people, and argued that there is no “one size fits all approach” in social protection. It is important to develop programmes addressed to the specific needs and priorities of particular social groups facing vulnerability, he added.
• **Social Dialogue** - Social dialogue was projected as the means by which rights are defended, employment promoted, and social protection secured. Professor Sarosh Kuruvilla introduced the concept of social dialogue, raised pertinent questions on achieving development without sacrificing labour rights, and provided examples of tripartite and bipartite negotiations fostering social dialogue in different countries. He presented many practical examples, mainly from Asia and America, sparking a lively debate and discussion among the participants on how globalization is changing and promoting labour rights. Other presenters on social dialogue reviewed the challenges posed by globalization to tripartite constituents and discussed strategies to strengthen partners and to enhance their capabilities for contributing to Decent Work.

**Teaching methods**

In addition to the lectures by ILO Officials and outside experts, the internship course included discussions within the framework of working groups, simulation exercises, field visits, and participation in the opening day of the International Labour Conference. All of the teaching materials used in the course were converted into an electronic format, and placed on a special website for future use of the participants.

**Presentations**

The lectures and workshops of the course were held for durations of one to two hours, with the second half of the time allotted to “question and answer” sessions. On average, there were three lectures, which also included special workshops, held on each day of the course. Lecturers used PowerPoint slides or overhead transparencies, copies of which were made available to the participants during or after the lecture.

The lectures and workshops, besides enabling participants to learn more on the conceptual and operational dimensions of Decent Work, also provided them with a forum for intensive discussions and networking. The question and answer sessions were especially useful. In addition, the participants took part in special exercises for assessing the situation of Decent Work in their countries and then contributed to policy debates centered on the strategies for Decent Work adapted to their country’s situations.

**Working groups**

The internship course placed special emphasis on group work by the participants. Special care was taken to constitute these groups and to balance them in terms of gender, regions and tripartite constituencies. The teamwork, the discussions and the group exercises were organized in an informal and relaxed setting; they fostered greater interaction among the participants on the policy orientation and operational dimensions of Decent Work. The sessions of the working groups were held in Conference Room XI of the ILO.
Group exercises
The group exercises were designed to complement the presentations by academic scholars on the four strategic objectives of the ILO. In connection with Martin Godfrey’s presentation on the Employment Dimensions of Decent Work, the groups worked on indicators of employment in different countries, including the index of labour morale and analyzed the results.

Following Ashwani Saith’s lecture on Social Protection, the focus of group exercises was on identifying the vulnerabilities of social groups such as women, children and migrant workers, creating a matrix of such vulnerabilities and then discussing policies and programmes to minimize these vulnerabilities.

The third group session focused on Rights at Work, on the progressive realization of rights and how this could be attained in the countries represented. The groups were asked to examine one of the core labour standards and to see how any country might go about further realizing this right. The findings were discussed in a plenary session led by Bob Hepple.

The fourth session examined Sarosh Kuruvilla’s proposal for creating national social dialogue data sheets and for analyzing the trends in dialogue in every country over time. Each group took up specific indicators listed in Kuruvilla’s paper, examined whether and how far these indicators would give an unbiased measure of dialogue in a country. As they shared experiences from their own countries, the discussions brought to light how vast the differences were, in terms of the practices and procedures, for dialogue across countries.

Assessment of Decent Work by participants
After the initial round of group sessions, the participants were invited to select any one of the four strategic objectives for Decent Work, which they could work on for a final presentation. They were regrouped into four, each group focusing on Social Dialogue, Employment Dimensions, Rights at Work and Social Protection. The members of the group were encouraged to build on the results of the previous group exercises and to evaluate the state of Decent Work in their countries in relation to the strategic objective chosen. They were requested to prepare a short report summing up their assessment for presentation in a plenary seminar. The groups were given 20 minutes each for presentation on the final day of the course.

The Social Protection group chose to focus on the vulnerabilities of women workers and used the following indicators to evaluate the status of women in their own countries: employment opportunities, wage differentials, education, career development, flexible working hours, maternity leave and entrepreneurship development. They analyzed the similarities and differences among countries and made policy oriented recommendations for correcting the imbalances.

The Rights at Work group chose to focus on the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (No. 87) and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (No. 98). Here they followed the framework for realizing a right as developed by Bob Hepple: willingness to adhere, obligation to respect, obligation to protect and obligation to fulfill. Each participant analyzed his/her country’s current situation regarding these rights and made recommendations
on how the government could go about to further realize the right. A representative of the group summed up the findings and also highlighted the similarities and differences among countries.

The Employment Dimensions group took up three indicators: labor force participation rate, employment to population ratios and wages. These indicators were broken up by gender and age of workers and then examined for a period of at least 10 years. The countries represented in the group were divided into four types based on the level of development: industrial economies, newly industrialized, transition and developing economies. Analyzing the indicators, the group pointed out that there is a need for custom-made employment strategies in different environments; but regardless of the development level, there is also need for public policy initiatives towards improving the employment situation.

The Social Dialogue group focused on four sets of indicators put forth by Sarosh Kuruvilla: tripartite processes, institutional framework and structures for dialogue, parallel workplace representation, and administrative capacity for monitoring social dialogue. The indicators were used to throw light on different countries in relation to the presence of rights for association, the political commitment to hold dialogue and the strengthening of social partners. The group found that the situation of social dialogue varies in each country depending on cultural and historical factors, economic development, and political systems.

Some remarks on the group exercises
This year the Institute could draw on the services of consultants who were commissioned to prepare special studies on Decent Work. These resource persons served as excellent facilitators for the group sessions. It must be added that the group exercises were somewhat hastily prepared and as such they were pitched at a higher academic level. The time elapsed between the completion of the studies, and the commencement of the course, did not leave much time for converting the studies into user-friendly pedagogical materials. As for next year’s internship course, the Institute intends to make use of the services of professional pedagogues who will prepare proper training modules and practical exercises on the components of Decent Work, based on the studies already commissioned.

The participants also felt that they needed more time for completing the assignments and group exercises of the course. The final presentations based on group work proved to be an informative and insightful outcome of the course. Nonetheless, many participants admitted to having had to spend too much time preparing for their presentations. With more careful planning and preparations in advance, the group assignments could have been turned into more effective and qualitatively superior learning exercises for the participants.

Simulation exercise
John Sendanyoye, of the Sectoral Activities Department, presented and facilitated a simulation exercise about mergers and acquisitions in the commerce industry. This component of the course allowed participants to experience the unique tripartite negotiation of the ILO firsthand. While this was a valuable experience, there were
some comments that there was not enough time to complete the exercise. It was also noted that not all participants had done the necessary reading before the exercise.

**Reading materials**

On the first day of the course, participants were given selected reading materials relevant to the themes and topics of the course. In addition, many of the presenters handed out reports, working papers, ILO publications, and relevant articles. Several participants made use of a special discount facility for the purchase of ILO publications. As in previous years, the participants were furnished with a detailed bibliography on resources available within and outside the ILO. A special folder of reading materials, which included 12 articles related to Decent Work taken from the *International Labour Review*, was also given to each course participant.

**Internet and CD-ROM**

Prior to the beginning of the course, the participants were requested to take part in a survey gauging their familiarity with computers and the Internet. The survey brought out that a majority of the participants have access to computers and Internet, either at home or at work, and that they are familiar with the use of softwares for word processing. In the light of this survey it was decided to go ahead with the preparation of a special web site and a CD-ROM including all course materials for the participants.

This year, for the first time, the Institute created a website, where all training materials were posted, including PowerPoint presentations and links to relevant websites. Its main purpose was to facilitate interaction among the course participants and the ILO during and after the internship course.

The purpose of preparing a CD-ROM on the course was to compress all the teaching materials into a usable reference document in electronic format, which would help the participants in their future studies and dealings with the ILO. A CD-ROM was presented to each participant along with the course certificate at the concluding session of the course. This was preceded by an orientation session when the participants were briefed on the contents of the CD-ROM and its utilization. The participants were very positive about the potential use of this tool and they appreciated the quality, coverage and depth of the subjects it contained.

The layout of the CD-ROM is quite similar to that of the website. Included in it are all the papers presented, PowerPoint summaries, some key ILO publications, brief biographical sketches of the presenters and all photos taken during the three weeks of the course. For reasons of personal privacy, the contact details of the participants and the speakers are included only on the CD-ROM, and not on the website. We hope that this new initiative will add visibility to the internship course, and help all participants to stay in touch with one another, the ILO and the Institute.
Visits

As in previous years, field visits were organized in connection with the course. One such visit was made on 23 May 2003 to the chocolate factory of Nestlé-Cailler in Broc, Switzerland. It gave the participants a comprehensive understanding of the history and functioning of a leading Swiss enterprise in the confectionary business. A visit to the Nestlé Food museum in Vevey was also organized on the same day.

The participants, while stating their appreciation of the field visits, also made important suggestions towards improving the benefits of such visits. In particular, they expressed a desire to visit industrial enterprises where they would have an opportunity to discuss and learn from the management as well as the workers on the operationalization of Decent Work concepts.

More local visits were organized during the course; one to the United Nations Offices in Geneva, where the participants were given a tour of the building and a brief on its history. The Geneva Offices of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the International Organization of Employers respectively welcomed the worker and employer participants one afternoon, and gave a detailed brief on activities vis-à-vis the ILO.

Feedback mechanisms and overall result

Throughout the course, there were several opportunities for the participants to evaluate the organization of the course and to give suggestions on ways to improve its content and value. The participants were encouraged to take part in a grading exercise evaluating each item on the agenda, in particular the lectures and workshops. In addition, two feedback sessions were held during the second and third weeks, when the participants were requested to give their candid views, positive and negative, on the value added by the course. Towards the end of the course, they were also invited to take part in a lengthy survey, evaluating different aspects of the entire training exercise. The findings of these surveys have been analyzed and summarized by the course staff.

Evaluation of specific sessions: results

Beginning May 19, the participants were asked to evaluate each session in relation to five aspects:

(i) Quality of the presentation  
(ii) Relevance of the topic  
(iii) Duration of the presentation  
(iv) Duration of the discussion  
(v) Reading material provided

They were asked to rate each aspect on a scale of 1 to 3, from 1 for poor to 3 for high. While filling out the survey, each participant was asked to identify oneself only as a member of the government, employer or worker groups. In all, 26 of the sessions were evaluated on an individual basis using this method. The response rate varied, however, from a low of thirteen evaluations to a high of 23 per session. In general, the participants liked all individual sessions. Twenty-two of the sessions received an
average score of 2.3 out of 3. Seventeen sessions received scores of 2.5 or higher and three sessions received scores of 2.8 or higher.¹

On the whole, the comments and suggestions by the participants were very positive, oftentimes praising the quality of the speaker and presentation. However, there were some concerns raised on a higher frequency. These included: the need for more time being set aside for discussions; giving greater attention to the selection of topics for lectures and discussion, also bearing in mind the concerns of ILO constituents; and for allotting more slots to simulation exercises on the functioning of tripartite system.

When the evaluation results are viewed in relation to constituent groups, it becomes apparent that some sessions have been perceived differentially and valued accordingly by the respective groups.² The needs and priorities of different groups varied; but they all appreciated the coverage given to overarching themes of the ILO.

**Final evaluation of the course: results**

At the end of the course, the participants gave valuable feedback on the content of the course, and on their stay in Geneva. Twenty of the participants took part in the survey.

Regarding the organization of the course, the responses have been very positive. All the participants have stated that the course met their expectations, and that it made a useful contribution to their personal and professional development.

The participants were also requested to list the lectures and discussion sessions of the course that they found were the most interesting ones. By and large their listing tallied with the findings from earlier evaluation of individual sessions.³

The comments made by participants showed that they appreciated it most when the lectures were followed by interactive sessions. They found such sessions informative and intellectually stimulating. Many would have preferred to have more opportunities for discussions. They also favoured the lectures that were not heavily academic in orientation and also suggested that in future the speakers should consider using more

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¹ John Sendanyoye’s session of the ILO International Tripartite Sectoral Meeting: Social Dialogue in Action simulation activity, Child Labour Problems and Solutions, presented by Hamid Tabatabai, and Ritash Sarna’s session entitled Staying in touch with the ILO and the Institute through the Internet were among the most favored sessions. Other sessions which received high marks were Freedom of Association: Rights, Principles and Procedures, presented by Anne-Marie La Rosa, Employers’ Activities, presented by Brent Wilton of the IOE, Organization and Structure of the International Labour Conference, presented by Javier Escobar, and Social Security For All, presented by Wouter Van Ginneken.

² For the government participants, the most valuable sessions were: Organization and Structure of the International Labour Conference; The ILO: Origin, Mandate and Strategies, and Staying in touch with the ILO and the Institute through the Internet. The highest scoring sessions for the Employer Group were: Employers’ Activities; The ILO: Origin, Mandate and Strategies; and Staying in touch with the ILO and the Institute through the Internet. For the Worker Group, the best-received sessions were: Child Labour: Problems and Solutions; Social Security for all; and The ILO International Tripartite Sectoral Meeting: Social Dialogue in Action.

³ In a descending order, the responses were as follows: Sarosh Kuruvilla’s Social Dialogue for Decent Work; Anne-Marie La Rosa’s Freedom of Association: Rights, Principles and Procedures; Dharam Ghai’s Decent Work, Concepts, Measures and Indicators; Lin Lim Lean and Ian Croucher’s Mainstreaming Gender Issues; Ashwani Saith’s Decent Work and Social Protection; and Aamir Ali’s The ILO: Origin, Mandate and Strategies.
innovative approaches including the use of illustrative examples from developing countries, in particular, from home countries of those attending the course.

Teamwork and group exercises were identified as the most useful components of the course. These facilitated friendship, cooperation, interaction, exchange of information and networking among the participants. Those who took part in the survey also made the following suggestions towards improving the quality and content of the course.

- There should be more time allotted for group work, in particular for discussion and for data based exercises.
- Group exercises should be better structured and their objectives and methodologies clearly delineated.
- The guidelines for group exercises and presentations by participants should be explained in detail prior to the beginning of the course.
- All participants should be encouraged to take part in the group exercises. The burden of work falling disproportionately on some should be avoided.
- The course materials should be prepared and distributed well in advance so that all will have the time to read and prepare for the related exercises.

Administrative arrangements and social programme

The survey also pointed to a positive assessment by the participants of their stay in Geneva and of the arrangements made for extra-curricular and social activities in connection with the course. This year, unlike in previous years, it was difficult to find a hotel for accommodating all participants for the entire duration of the course. This was mainly due to the G-8 summit, held the neighboring town of Evian during the first week of June.

The participants began their stay at the Hotel des Nations, and ended it at the Hotel Mon Repos. The Hotel des Nations was chosen because of the complimentary breakfast, kitchenette in each room, the central location minutes away from the train station on the bus route and the reasonable price. The participants were quite content with the hotel, as many could take advantage of the kitchenette for preparing meals. One complaint about the hotel was that its laundry service was expensive. In future, it would be best to advise the participants to use private dry cleaning services outside.

Extra-curricular activities formed an important part of the course. The Institute had arranged a bus tour of the old town, a guided tour of the Palais de Nations and two evenings at restaurants specializing in Swiss and French cuisines, also providing live music. All of these activities were well received and highly appreciated.

The course team

The entire staff of the Institute provided valuable services towards organizing the 38th Annual International Internship Course. Jean-Pierre Laviec and David Kucera advised on the selection of course participants. A. V. Jose coordinated the organization of the course for which he was assisted by a team including Sophie Lievre, Claudia Cappa, and Katelin Maher. The team took care of a major part of the preparatory work and administrative arrangements for organizing the course. Thuy Nguyen-Couture gave
additional help for administrative work. Ritash Sarna and Githanjali Christian helped in creating the course website and in preparing the CD-ROM.

Geneva
July 3, 2003