Special ILC Event: Jobs after war

On the 10th June 2003, for the fifth consecutive year, the ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS), together with the Bureau for Workers’ Activities (ACTRAV) and the Bureau of Employers’ Activities (ACT/EMP) organized a high-level tripartite consultation on “Jobs after war - ILO’s role in promoting peace and stability in post-crisis situations”, on the occasion of the International Labour Conference.

This event consisted of 2 complementary meetings:
First, Mr. G. Hultin, Executive Director, Employment Sector, inaugurated a photo exhibition and made the opening remarks at an open forum on “Afghanistan: paving the way”. He stressed that “Employment is central to overcoming many post-war challenges in Afghanistan”. Mr Nodera, Regional Director for Asia; Mr Islam, Director, Recovery and Reconstruction; Mr Bashiri, Deputy Minister of Afghanistan; and Mr Salter, Senior ILO Coordinator in Kabul, focused their speeches on a variety of ILO achievements, cooperation with others organisations, and the necessity of the promotion of Decent Work, a synonym of peace-building and stability in Afghanistan.

This forum was followed by a projection of the film “Rising from the Ashes - Out of Poverty”, which illustrated the role IFP/CRISIS can play in promoting peace and stability in crises and post-crises situations.

The president of the conference, Lord Bill Brett, Chairman of the Governing Body of the ILO, made the opening remark: “Jobs are critical for reintegrating the diverse conflict-affected groups and to build a bridge between relief and development”.

The high-level tripartite conference generated a lively, interesting and challenging inter-agency discussion on the critical issues of jobs in post conflict situations, as an integral part of promoting peace, economic development and security.

Special attention has been given to the critical situation in Afghanistan, Iraq and Côte d’Ivoire. His Excellency, Mr. Hubert Oulaye, the Minister of Labour of Côte d’Ivoire, drew attention to the fact that “The root cause of the Cote d’Ivoire crisis is an unemployment crisis.” In the same tone, Mr. Taleb Rifai, ILO Regional Director, Office for Arab States, emphasized that: “The aim in Iraq is to improve the capacity of the constituencies when they have become in place and empower the social partners to contribute to the rebuilding of an independent and democratic new Iraq”.

Speakers especially focused their attention on ILO’s expertise and role in post conflict situations. Mr. Khurshid Ahmad, General Secretary Federation of Trade Unions, Pakistan stressed that “One major role of the ILO in helping countries is to rebuild and facilitate Social Dialogue”. Mr. Gaspard Nzisabira, Executive Secretary Employers’ Association, Burundi added that: “We need the ILO to support the interventions of promotion of the Decent Work made by the Worker’s and Employer’s Burundi association.”

All speakers agreed that to provide durable solutions to crisis, the ILO expand its partnerships with other UN and non-UN organizations. Mr. Ekber Menemenicioglu, Director UNHCR, Regional Bureau for Central Asia, South West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East, introduced the context and the challenges in Afghanistan and Iraq. He also underlined that “we must begin inter-agency cooperation at an early planning stage by fielding a team of experts from our offices in these fields.”

Mr Riswanul Islam, Director of ILO Recovery and Reconstruction programme ended the meeting with a book launch-“Jobs after war: a critical challenge in the peace and reconstruction puzzle” - edited by Mrs. Eugenia Date-Bah, Director ILO Crisis Response Programme; IFP/CRISIS.