Argentina

El Director General de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo, señor Juan Somavía, en su primera visita oficial a la República Argentina, entre los días 22 al 23 de septiembre de 2003, consolidó el apoyo que la OIT viene brindando a la Argentina desde la crisis de 2001.

Se entrevistó con el presidente Néstor Kirchner y le expresó personalmente el respaldo de la OIT a su gestión para sacar al país de la crisis por la vía productiva. Asimismo, elogió el acuerdo argentino con el FMI y destacó que la generación de empleo está en el "corazón de la solución de los problemas" de la Argentina y la forma en que se encararon las negociaciones, que por primera vez vinculan crecimiento y empleo, con políticas sociales y con una serie de criterios que no son los tradicionales.

La OIT, dijo el señor Somavía "va a levantar la voz para que desde otros organismos internacionales se le dé a la Argentina el espacio para que esa política pueda ser posible".

Posteriormente el Director General de la OIT se reunió en el Ministerio de trabajo con el señor Ministro Dr.Carlos Tomada. Durante esta reunión el señor Somavía se mostró de acuerdo con las políticas que impulsa el Ministerio de Trabajo, centradas en la generación de empleo y destacó la importancia del proyecto que actualmente se encuentra en ejecución desde el 2002 "Enfrentando los retos al trabajo decente en la crisis Argentina" y que cuenta con financiamiento de la OIT, como así también el proyecto de cooperación técnica denominado “Programa integrado de apoyo a la reactivación del empleo en la Argentina” recientemente aprobado para su financiamiento por el Gobierno italiano, el que con una inversión total estimada en €13 millones de Euros (incluyendo €9.1 millones de financiación externa y €4 millones de contraparte nacional) comenzará a ejecutarse a inicios del 2004.

Afghanistan

Many are the ongoing programmes recently started in Afghanistan. Among them, it is highly promising a project devoted to promote entrepreneurship among women (Entrepreneurship Development and Handicrafts for Women in Afghanistan). The main purpose of this project financed by Italy and implemented by the ILO Turin Centre, will be to improve the quality of handicraft productions assuring self-reliance for the target beneficiaries. The project will focus in fact on autonomous enterprise development, rather than on individual handicraft skills improvement. This direct enterprise development will target approximately 100 women / entrepreneurs, will train a selected team of trainers and will promote business awareness in the new Afghan public service. Handicraft quality control, product development, competitiveness and creation of local partnerships will be integral part of the programme.

Inter-Agency Cooperation

IFP/Crisis participated in the 2 days “UNHCR/WFP Workshop on Self Reliance Assessment”, held in Geneva on 22-23 September. This workshop testified to the growing and intensifying cooperation between ILO and UNHCR. The workshop on Self Reliance Assessment aimed at identifying key factors influencing it, methods to assess it, methods to target interventions, maximisations of the use of impact assessment findings.

IFP/CRIISIS contributed to the works by highlighting the socio-economic aspects of self-reliance. Furthermore IFP/CRIISIS stressed the need of anticipating as soon as possible the process of assessing the status of self-reliance of the refugee population as an imperative measure leading to their reintegration.
Sudan

Mukesh Kapila, the UN Resident Coordinator in Sudan, on Wednesday 22 October addressed a donors’ meeting in Geneva, describing the peace process in Sudan in very optimistic terms. He said to be confident that, due to the very positive atmosphere surrounding the Machakos talks, a comprehensive agreement between the Sudanese Government and the SPLM could be signed in February 2004. The UN has an observer status at the peace talks.

As the peace process makes progress, more important will be to make preparations for the reintegrations of over 5 million IDPs, half a million refugees and massive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration needs (DDR programmes). UN agencies are currently engaged in preparing an effective transitional strategy, conceptualizing frameworks compatible with the millennium development goals. According to Kapila, humanitarian needs will remain predominant in the next two years but recovery activities are already gaining momentum, especially in the Nuba Mountains, where the ILO is also present. Quick start programmes are being prepared by UN agencies and extra attention will be given to areas of resettlement where repair and rehabilitation programmes will be implemented as a first priority. Capacity building and good governance programmes will be among the priorities to underpin the peace process achievements. The UN will also establish a common funding modality for transitional assistance to Sudan. An initial 150 million dollars will be sought to support this phase. Some countries, such as Norway, the UK, the Netherlands, Italy and Sweden have already indicated their intention to contribute towards this joint UN fund.

Atelier in Accra

On 15 October in Accra, Ghana, a seminar was opened to Plan a Technical Assistance Programme to Build Capacity of the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) and its Affiliates on Conflict Early Warning/Prevention, Resolution, Peace Building and Post-Conflict Reconstruction.

Employment in Crisis – A research Programme

ILO IFP/CRISIS is participating in this research programme presented to the media in a Press Conference on Thursday 23 October, along with the other laureates of the third tendering procedure of the Geneva International Academic Network (GIAN-RUIG). The full title of the programme is: “Strengthening the Employment and Related Socio-Economic Dimensions in Response to Conflict and Natural Disaster Situations” and it aims at conducting research with an emphasis on the employment and related social and economic aspects of three crisis typologies: armed conflict, socio-economic crises, and natural disasters). With the contribution of the GIAN-RUIG, the Crisis department of the International Labour Organization (ILO IFP/Crisis) and the Graduate Institute of International Studies (GIIS-HEI) will initiate this research endeavour in partnership with representatives of UNDP, UNHCR, the Graduate Institute of Development Studies, as well as with several departments of the University of Geneva (CUEH, ETI), and the Business Humanitarian Forum. Employment and job creation are becoming an essential ingredient of any crisis response program, a fact that experience has highlighted in many crisis contexts and diverse crises types on a world scale, and a fact that manifestly needs further studying: in Sierra Leone and Sudan (civil war), in Angola and Afghanistan (post-conflict), in Uruguay and Viet Nam (socio-economic crisis) or in Central America and Indonesia (natural disasters)... The members of this interdisciplinary project team acknowledged the large potential and urgent need for expanding the focused knowledge base and adopting new methodologies to foster a sharper and more enduring response to crisis through the crucial prism of employment.
Mozambique

A capacity building workshop took place in Maputo, from 7 to 9 October, on the subject of “Crisis Preparedness and Response to Natural disasters and other crises in Mozambique”.

The workshop objectives involved:

(i) Making the ILO social partners (Workers’ and Employers’ Organisations, and the Ministry of Labour of Mozambique) better informed and better equipped with ILO IFP/Crisis tools to be able to significantly reduce the negative employment and socio-economic impact of future natural disasters in Mozambique.

(ii) Establishing a Plan of Action which will see the ILO and the social partners more actively involved within the Mozambique national framework for disaster prevention and management.

At the end of the training, some 20 participants were able to design, develop and mobilise resources for crisis prevention and response in Mozambique. This important workshop was organised by the ILO Sub Regional office in Harare. The SRO office focal person from IFP/Crisis in Southern Africa, Ms. Sina Chuma-Mkandawire lead a team from the Harare Office comprising, Mr. Edson Mugore, Specialist in Crisis Response, Consultant Mr. Mbugua, Specialist in Community based capacity building and Mr. Sibanda, Regional Adviser on labour-based technology for infrastructure development programs.

IFPCrisis was represented by ILO consultant Ms. Alessandra Molz and by Mr. Mike Shone, Senior Specialist in Crisis Response, who participated in all workshop sessions along with other representatives from UNDP, WFP, UNOCHA, FAO and INGC.