

Strategic objective No. 4:

Strengthen tripartism and social dialogue

133. Social dialogue reflects the basic ILO constitutional principle of tripartism, and is thus at the core of ILO action. It is a strategic objective in its own right and a fundamental process for achieving all ILO objectives. However, many countries face difficulties in using social dialogue to its full potential. Today, there are three major factors that help to explain that situation and that ILO work is expected to influence for the better.

134. The first factor is the lack of effective social dialogue frameworks and institutions in many countries. Many governments are not committed to meaningful dialogue with the social partners on social and economic policy issues. This can be reflected in a lack of guarantees for freedom of association and collective bargaining, especially where the public sector is the major employer and where informal employment is common. Even when those guarantees exist and are normally respected, privatization and public sector reform processes have often proceeded without the degree of social dialogue for more positive outcomes.

135. The lack of effective social dialogue frameworks and institutions can also result from cases in which employers' and workers' organizations are neither strong nor independent of government influence. Even where the climate is more supportive, employers' and workers' organizations often lack broad membership bases and effective services. Many find they have less influence over policy decisions than they once did and some lack a capacity to address increasingly complex policy debates.

136. The second factor is rapid change in the traditional environment for social dialogue, due partly to globalization. National and industry-level collective bargaining is giving way to enterprise level decision-making and more fragmented labour markets. Governments often take a less active role in the labour market and their labour ministries usually have minimal influence on major government economic and social policy choices. Key decisions are being made by the many new or growing regional or subregional organizations that may or may not involve a role for social partners.

137. The third factor concerns representation and links to other groups. For example, labour ministries and employers' and workers' organizations do not always address issues of particular concern to women effectively. This reflects the low representation of women as participants and decision-makers in many organizations. Some of these organizations also need to develop effective strategies to work with the many groups in civil society with interests in workplace, social and economic issues.

Table 7. Strategic resources for Social dialogue by operational objective

Operational objective	Proposed regular budget strategic resources (in constant 2000-01 US \$)	Estimated extra-budgetary expenditure (in constant 2000-01 US \$)
4a Stronger social partners	60,915,313	15,000,000
4b Strengthening governments and the institutions of social dialogue	34,832,160	5,220,000
<i>Total 2002-03</i>	<i>95,747,473</i>	<i>20,220,000</i>
<i>Revised 2000-01</i>	<i>93,883,233</i>	<i>24,513,000</i>

138. This table gives the total strategic resources expected to be available for Social Dialogue. The increases in regular budget resources relate primarily to the contribution of cross-cutting programmes, adjustments in the composition of regional technical staff and pro rata changes in support services. It is expected that the projected fall in extrabudgetary expenditure will be compensated by work funded in relation to the Declaration, especially for strengthening of employers' and workers' organizations, labour legislation, labour administration and industrial relations.

Decent work

139. Promoting a participatory process that gives a voice to those most directly involved in the world of work is essential to the conceptual framework of decent work. This cannot take place in a vacuum. ILO activities in support of social dialogue exist to strengthen the capacities of partners to achieve specific decent work priorities at a national, regional or sectoral level. They are also meant to bring the experience of working men and women to the global forefront.

140. To do so, the ILO will expand its research base and its work with other international organizations, especially those most involved with economic and social development. It will continue its support to workers' and employers' organizations and labour ministries that are faced with the challenges of a rapidly evolving environment. Much of this work will take place through cooperation under all strategic objectives and will involve collaboration between headquarters and field operations. Mostly it will centre on helping to build coherent country-level strategies for decent work based on full participation of social partners. The ILO's work on sectoral activities will require action under each of the strategic objectives, guided by the selection of agenda items for sectoral meetings by the Governing Body and by the results of those meetings. Coordinated work on social dialogue to promote decent wages through wage-fixing machinery and collective bargaining, including reducing the persistent gender wage gap will be other priorities. In addition to the specific actions described throughout this strategic objective, other inter-sectoral collaboration will include:

- with the Standards and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Sector: promoting fundamental principles and rights at work as the underpinning of successful social dialogue, the participation of employers' and workers' organizations in action under the Declaration and IPEC, as well as in standard setting, supervisory processes and action to improve the application of standards;
- with the Employment Sector: building the capacity of the social partners to participate effectively in the formulation and implementation of employment and productivity-related policies and programmes;
- with the Social Protection Sector:
 - ◆ the development of programmes on HIV/AIDS involving employers' and workers' organizations and labour administrations;
 - ◆ joint action on occupational safety and health, concentrating on key sectors such as mining, construction, forestry, chemicals and agriculture; and
 - ◆ work on the role of employers' and workers' organizations in improving working conditions in both small and larger enterprises.

Operational objective 4a: Social partners

The representation, services and influence of the social partners are strengthened.

Indicator 4a.1:

Employers' or workers' organizations that provide new or improved services to their members or strengthen their capacity to provide such services.

Target:

Employers' organizations in 20 member States.

Workers' organizations in 30 countries.

Indicator 4a.2:

Employers' or workers' organizations that take policy or practical initiatives to extend representation of their organizations.

Target:

Employers' organizations in 10 member States.

Workers' organizations in 30 countries.

Indicator 4a.3:

Member States in which the social partners have greater capacity to influence economic and social policies and programmes.

Target:

15 additional member States.

Strategies:**Employers' organizations**

141. The ILO strategy to support the development of employers' organizations and to attract new members to those groups will continue to stress strategic planning and in-depth dialogue that will enable identification of the priorities of specific organizations. This will primarily take place through the work of the Bureau for Employers' Activities in collaboration with field specialists.

142. Achievement of this operational objective is critically linked to the improved management of employers' organizations. Accordingly, the main vehicles will be: staff training, support for networking with other employers' organizations and institutions, building or improving organizational information and applied research capacities, support for service development through information, research and training materials, and strengthening the organizational capacity to bring about the changes needed for business and socio-economic development.

143. One way that ILO will support the delivery of new or improved services will be by using case studies on benchmarked best practices in employers' organization services that will be available by the end of 2001.

144. Support will be provided to employers' organizations to enable them to develop services, including for small enterprises. As part of that, work will take place to diagnose or identify obstacles to attracting small enterprises as members and programmes will be designed to assist in the promotion of women's entrepreneurship. The benefits of those services should help to attract new members to these organizations, including enterprises headed by women.

145. Employers' organizations will receive support on human resource management issues for members to apply in their own workplaces. The values expressed in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work will figure prominently in this work. Employers in developing and transition economies will have access to training on international labour standards issues, based on a Bureau publication.

146. The ability of employers' organizations to participate effectively on behalf of members through social dialogue on enterprise growth and development, competitiveness and labour market issues is important. The ILO will work with employers' organizations to enhance the technical competencies of these organizations on topics that are often the focus of dialogue, such as competitiveness policies and labour law and relations reform. In particular, this should help them better influence the policy environment and deal with specific opportunities and situations at the national level.

147. If additional extra-budgetary funds become available, employers' organizations are interested in using \$2.8 million towards four specific activities: support for campaigns to address HIV/AIDS in the workplace in Africa and Asia to complement the larger HIV/AIDS strategies; assistance in improving understanding and application of the Declaration among employers; projects through which employers' organizations would foster entrepreneurship among women, and expanded technical cooperation to help more employers' organizations participate effectively in social dialogue on competitiveness and labour law and relations issues.

Workers' organizations

148. The ILO will continue to use a comprehensive strategy to support workers' organizations in providing new or improved services and in extending their representation, primarily through the work of the Bureau for Workers' Activities. That strategy will be proactive in identifying opportunities to advance the decent work agenda and responsive to requests for specific assistance. It will

involve collaboration with workers' organizations, international trade union organizations and all ILO sectors and field offices. Most of the work towards targets will be achieved through technical cooperation.

149. In many cases, the focus of efforts will be to support the continuing development of existing workers' organizations. This will include work in countries with several main trade union federations to bring those groups together to develop strategies for new or improved services. As part of this, the bureau and worker specialists in the field will assist national trade unions to adopt strategic planning. Combined with targeted workers' education activities, these efforts will enhance the coherence and focus of trade union efforts through better coordinated activities.

150. The ILO will continue to provide basic, medium and advanced workers' education programmes to trade union representatives, especially in developing and transition economies. Attention to topics such as basic workers' rights, representation and trade union organization, industrial relations, collective bargaining and grievance handling all support the ongoing services of unions. They are essential to ILO work to help foster new trade unions, such as those emerging in Cambodia and East Timor.

151. New publications will be developed to support workers' education. Expected issues for this will be workers and HIV/AIDS, migrant workers and social security. Website access to publications will be provided in cooperation with the Turin Centre. The ILO will promote distance education using new communication technologies to expand constituent access to adult and workers' education sources. Assistance in promoting and upgrading the use of information technology in workers' education, particularly in developing countries, as well as in the general administration of trade unions will be a focus of some technical cooperation activities.

152. Beyond these traditional roles of workers' education, a programme of research will help to strengthen the capacity of trade union organizations to participate effectively in debates on globalization and the new financial architecture. The research will contribute to the elaboration of proposals for policy changes with international trade union organizations and their national affiliates. The results will be disseminated at sectoral, national and regional levels.

153. As part of assisting workers' organizations to mainstream gender issues, trade unions will be encouraged to pursue strategies to attract more women as members, by focusing on work settings that are more predominantly female. Through workers' education programmes, trade unions will also have tools to support greater involvement and leadership by women.

154. All these programmes are increasingly expected to have impacts outside the traditional workplace. They will enable trade unions and their members to be more effective partners in social dialogue across all decent work issues. Consistent with that orientation, support for education on organizing techniques will increasingly address the new contexts arising from, for example, structural adjustment, industrial restructuring and privatization.

155. Workers' organizations will also receive support to reach out to groups of workers who may not be in the formal sectors that they typically represent. Work to address the needs of women, youth, rural workers and those in the informal sector will help to build a stronger voice for people facing social exclusion.

156. If additional extra-budgetary funds become available, the Bureau and workers' organizations have identified five specific activities that would require \$4 million. These are: additional support for campaigns to address HIV/AIDS in the workplace with action plans for workers and workers' organizations; support for workers' organizations to understand and address information technology issues; greater support for projects to act on decent work issues for rural workers; expanded support for occupational safety and health issues including "greening" working environments, and initiatives to enable workers' organizations to better represent migrant workers and their concerns.

Operational objective 4b: Governments and institutions of social dialogue

The legal frameworks, institutions, machinery and processes for social dialogue are strengthened.

The **InFocus Programme on Social Dialogue** aims to promote the benefits of social dialogue across the social and economic agenda, strengthen the institutions of social dialogue and strengthen the parties to social dialogue.

Its work is largely addressed under Operational objective 4b and is critical to the approaches for all strategic objectives.

Indicator 4b.1:

Member States that ratify ILO Conventions addressing the institutions or practice of social dialogue.

Target:

10 ratifications of Convention No. 144.

15 ratifications of Conventions covering specific sectors.

Strategy:

157. Freedom of association is central to social dialogue and to progress on the decent work agenda. Therefore, the ILO will promote the ratification of international labour standards relevant to social dialogue with a particular focus on the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). This will take place through a ratification initiative in cooperation with the ILO constituents at the national level. That initiative will raise the awareness of sectoral partners and bipartite and tripartite bodies on how they can become involved in ratification processes. It will engage labour ministries, parliamentarians and parliamentary bodies. This will be supported through the development of advocacy materials. Similar approaches will be used in a collaborative effort to promote the ratification and implementation of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), and other ILO Conventions.

Indicator 4b.2:

Member States that adopt legislation based on ILO standards and advice, with the involvement of the social partners.

Target:

10 additional member States.

Strategy:

158. Labour legislation is a constitutional obligation, a major means to implement the decent work agenda and a way to promote the Declaration. So, the ILO will continue to respond to member States with assistance on the adoption, reform or enforcement of labour legislation that fully reflects international labour standards. Most of this work takes place through extra-budgetary resources.

159. To help achieve the target, a comparative study will be published by the end of 2003 on national and regional labour law reform. It will identify lessons learned, issues of concern to workers' and employers' organizations and the impact of social dialogue. The results should promote social dialogue on labour law reform and contribute to active ILO participation in subregional and regional economic integration processes.

160. Because privatization and restructuring have made the public sector a significant focal point of labour legislation issues, the ILO will provide technical assistance to enable governments, as

employers, to engage in more effective social dialogue with their employees during periods of structural adjustment and transition. This will include promotion of the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), and sectoral standards as part of assistance to strengthen labour ministries and the labour policies and practices of other government departments. The findings of comparative research of public service legislation and practice in selected countries will be used to support these and related advisory services.

161. If available, an additional \$2 million in new extra-budgetary resources would provide technical assistance and support to assist ten more countries to improve labour legislation within the decent work framework.

Indicator 4b.3:

Member States that establish or strengthen legal frameworks, institutions, machinery or processes for social dialogue.

Target:

20 additional member States.

Strategy:

162. The ILO is increasingly building a capacity and information base to support structures and processes for better social dialogue at all levels, including national, sectoral and enterprise. In 2002-03, some ILO dialogue-building activities will cover the forestry, construction and agriculture sectors as well as service sectors such as education, health and postal services. Other initiatives are expected in sectors where workers' and employers' organizations have shown an interest in bipartite cooperation. Projected sectors for these global initiatives include the maritime sector (including fishing), the chemical industry and transport. Other work may take place regarding social dialogue on employment and human resources development issues in sectors undergoing restructuring and privatization. The ILO will also promote social dialogue in its actions supporting the Declaration, on child labour and on HIV/AIDS.

163. An information base will be developed as an aid in strengthening the institutions, machinery and processes of social dialogue. This will take place by documenting comparative experiences, information exchanged at meetings, and case studies analysing the factors contributing to the success or failure of social dialogue. Research results will be used in ongoing technical assistance and should help to improve institutional effectiveness. They will support the establishment and strengthening of dispute settlement mechanisms and tripartite wage-fixing machinery and will be applicable to capacity building on conciliation, mediation, negotiation and collective bargaining skills across all strategic objectives. Training programmes for strengthening social dialogue institutions will be developed in collaboration with the Turin Centre.

164. Research and analysis of social dialogue issues and impacts will help inform choices on the decent work agenda. For example, the role and impact of corporate voluntary initiatives in furthering social dialogue will be assessed, helping to shape the content of expected publications on voluntary private initiatives in specific industrial and service sectors. The impacts of various forms of social dialogue on the competitiveness and productivity of enterprises and their effect on the improvement of working conditions will be studied as will experience with strategic partnerships between the tripartite parties and civil society organizations. Networking with universities and other educational institutions will promote a culture of social dialogue.

165. Additional extra-budgetary resources could capitalize on the interest which exists to support projects promoting sound systems of industrial relations, including effective bipartite and tripartite social dialogue institutions, in targeted countries of three regions: Arab States, South Asia and CIS countries. The projected cost of these projects totals \$7.5 million.

166. Another productive use of any new extra-budgetary resources would be to follow up the results of recent sectoral meetings. Specifically, up to \$2 million would support improved promotion and training on safety and health in the South Asian ship-breaking industry. Activities to promote the adoption, awareness and enforcement of maritime labour standards, to apply the decent work agenda onboard ships and to expand the Portworker Development Programme could take place for \$1.2 million. Support for countries dealing with job losses in the fishing sector and

strengthening employers' and workers' organizations in that sector can be pursued effectively for \$450,000. For example, a project in China costing \$1 million could, with the involvement of the tripartite constituents, develop a programme of action and implement pilot activities on mine safety. Collaboration with SafeWork is foreseen. Finally, an additional series of projects valued at \$1 million would enable the ILO to help address recognized education issues through pilot projects on lifelong learning, HIV/AIDS, health, safety and social dialogue in that sector.

Indicator 4b.4:

Member States in which social dialogue institutions or processes specifically address gender issues.

Target:

15 additional member States.

Strategy:

167. Gender issues will be integrated throughout social dialogue efforts. An important contribution to this work will be a major report on the participation of men and women in trade unions, employers' organizations and labour ministries, including in leadership positions. This report to be published by the end of 2003 will include baseline data, compiled by region. It will offer comparative experiences on the mechanisms and strategies that bipartite and tripartite institutions use to promote gender equality. It will identify positive uses of social dialogue to address gender equality issues as well as practical strategies for mainstreaming gender concerns.

168. Technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of labour administrations, workers' and employers' organizations to address gender issues will result in an integrated approach in selected countries. This will include national campaigns to increase women's participation in social dialogue institutions, to be organized with constituents and women's associations.

169. To expand action in this area, \$1.5 million in additional extra-budgetary support could be quickly applied to a project covering five countries. It would provide technical assistance to help define and elaborate rules and policies regarding gender issues, with the involvement of labour administrations and social partners.

Indicator 4b.5:

Member States that ratify or take practical steps to apply the Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150).

Target:

10 additional member States.

Strategy:

170. The ILO will draw on field and sector expertise to identify and act on opportunities to promote the ratification of the Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150). A collaborative approach will be used to support application of that Convention, to promote the Declaration and to strengthen the service role of labour administrations more generally, with an emphasis on issues such as labour inspection and employment services. Technical cooperation programmes will assist ministries and agencies in charge of labour policy and administration to audit and strengthen their administrations. Those programmes will include a special emphasis on strengthening the capacity to address gender issues and to design and implement policies to promote gender equality.

171. The work to support the role of labour administrations as vehicles for encouraging social dialogue represents a valuable potential use of new extra-budgetary resources. In particular, the ILO is prepared to launch a project to assist labour administrations in five countries to introduce new and comprehensive initiatives to begin, promote or enhance social dialogue between private sector employers and workers at an expected cost of \$2 million.

Indicator 4b.6:

International organizations and regional or subregional groupings that integrate social dialogue into labour-related policies, action plans and institution building.

Target:

2 international organizations.

5 regional or subregional organizations.

Strategy:

172. International, regional and subregional initiatives on labour have important implications for workers and employers. This underscores the critical need to bring social dialogue to bear well beyond the traditional ILO bipartite and tripartite networks. For that reason, the ILO will improve its links to international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, and to UN specialized agencies, such as WHO and UNESCO, to encourage greater use of dialogue mechanisms that engage all social partners.

173. The ILO will match that with technical assistance to social partners so that they can contribute more effectively to analysis and action related to the national, regional and global work of international financial institutions and UN specialized agencies. That assistance will also enable social partners to deal with initiatives linked to regional and subregional economic and social organizations. This will involve ensuring that ILO staff and constituents know more about the policies and activities of these organizations, especially as they relate to social and labour issues. This will be reinforced by improved Office-wide coordination for information sharing and identification of opportunities for collaboration with those institutions. Research will address experience with social dialogue in multi-country sectoral agreements and in economic and social pacts at the national, subregional and regional levels.

174. The ILO will also show how social dialogue can have positive impacts through sectoral dialogues. For example, facilitating social dialogue on occupational safety and health in sectors such as construction, forestry, mining, chemicals, maritime (including ship-breaking) and agriculture at the international and national levels should provide opportunities for tripartite agreements on areas in which social partners can work together to promote decent work.