INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

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Committee on Technical Cooperation

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SECOND ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Further developments regarding technical cooperation activities in the United Nations system

1. Introduction

1. The major development of significance during the reporting period (November 2001-August 2002) since the previous report, [1] was the ILO joining the *United Nations Development Group (UNDG)* in the first half of the year. In reaffirming the ILO's commitment to partnership within the United Nations system, the Director-General stated in his letter to the UN Secretary-General on joining the UNDG that the ILO was strongly committed to coherence and cooperation within the United Nations system and to the reform process initiated by the Secretary-General. The Director-General underlined the importance of all agencies working more closely together in order to make the different dimensions of economic and social progress mutually supportive.

2. The Director-General also stressed how vital it was that assistance provided by the organizations of the United Nations should promote an integrated approach at the national level. The ILO would integrate its actions more closely with its United Nations partners by being a member of the UNDG and participating in its support groups. Through the UNDG the Office would be positioning itself for increased participation with other agencies in supporting the implementation of the *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* as a major common objective on the UNDG's agenda. This report also highlights current relations with UNDP and WFP in the context of both technical collaboration and funding prospects.

2. Highlights of major developments

3. As a new member of the UNDG, the Office attended for the first time a meeting of this Group in Rome, (19 April 2002) which coincided with the meeting of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), which has replaced the former Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). A major item on the agenda was the implementation of the MDGs based on the paper: *The United Nations and the MDGs: A*

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[1] GB.282/TC/3.

core strategy, prepared at the request of the CEB in order to address the reporting system on the achievements of the MDGs, both at global and national levels. [2] The strategy outlines four main components of the United Nations system support for operationalizing the MDGs:

(1) the *Millennium Project*, a research project;

(2) *operational activities at the country level*;

(3) the *Millennium Campaign*, aimed at generating momentum and support and mobilizing resources; and

(4) monitoring implementation of the MDGs at global, regional and national levels.

4. Whilst the role of the ILO in the MDGs is consistent with the overall United Nations strategy, its specific strategy will focus on both the international and national levels. At the international level, it will contribute to the "development and implementation of strategies for decent and productive work for youth" *(MDG target 16 in Goal 8: Global Partnership for Development),* supported by the United Nations High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network (YEN) as announced by the UN Secretary-General, the ILO and the World Bank at the *Millennium Summit*. In partnership with youth, the network will focus on investment in education and vocational training, provision of equal opportunities for young men and women, thus making it easier for them to start and run enterprises and placing employment at the centre of macroeconomic policy. Within the ILO, youth employment will link with equal opportunities, skills development, entrepreneurship, job creation and the elimination of child labour – all of which are key elements in poverty eradication. Beyond the focus on youth employment, the ILO will also contribute to the other MDGs and targets whenever there are opportunities for drawing on the integrated Decent Work Agenda, e.g. in areas of education and training, maternal health and gender equality.

5. At the national level, the primary ILO entry point is *Goal 1: Poverty Reduction*. The Office will continue to stress the role of employment as the main strategy to fight poverty. Linkages between the Decent Work Agenda and MDGs will be developed – focusing especially on ways to relate decent work targets and indicators with those of the MDGs. In this respect, the Policy Integration Department will play a major role. The Development Cooperation Department (CODEV) will be providing field offices with briefing materials as they become available and offering continuous guidance. The Office will also focus on HIV/AIDS and gender equality as priorities in all its programmes.

6. However, during the discussions on MDGs at the UNDG meeting in New York in July 2002, which was attended by Mr. François Trémeaud, the Office expressed the view that developing countries should not be unduly pushed towards goals that were unattainable under present international trade and financial conditions. This should be carefully taken into account and looked into. The importance of employment was also raised and it was felt that this should be tackled in broad terms. The Office emphasized that the *Millennium Campaign* should actively involve, through the United Nations Communication Group, the communications units of all United Nations agencies. Further discussions were also held with Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on MDGs, on the need to link the ongoing work of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization with that of the *Millennium Project* by highlighting

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[2] See: *ILO's work to implement the MDGs*: Paper prepared for the UNDG Meeting in New York (1-3 July 2002).

particularly the obstacles, such as the international financial system, which could impede the achievement of the MDGs.

3. ECOSOC 2002: High-level and operational activities segments

7. The Council met in New York and the Office was represented at the high-level segment by the Executive Director in charge of the Regions. The Office also actively participated in and contributed to the discussions at the high-level round table devoted to *Africa: Progress towards Millennium Development Goals for human resources development.* It also took part in the panel on migration: *Better managing migration for sustainable development.* The ILO was further involved in the two informal ministerial meetings devoted to information technology and human resources development which led to interesting contacts for the Turin Centre on distant learning and its participation in the United Nations Open University Project. In the high-level segment, the Council received the United Nations Secretary-General's report on the theme: *The contribution of human resources development, including in areas of health and education, to the process of development.* In preparation for this report, three one-day round table discussions were held early in the year on the sub-themes: *Health and development, education and development* and *human resources development.*

8. In the operational activities segment, the Council received the report of the UN Secretary-General on the *United Nations system support* for capacity building [3] to which the Office has made a contribution. The report reviews United Nations efforts in capacity building in response to General Assembly resolution 56/201. The report emphasized the importance of national ownership of capacity building, human resource development and technical cooperation programmes of member States. It also underlined the need for human resources that have the capacity to design country-driven development strategies as well as for comprehensive human resource policies that create the capacity to translate these strategies into practice in a participatory, country-owned process.

9. In this respect, the Secretary-General underscored the fact that the United Nations development cooperation programmes and coordination tools such as the Common Country Assessment (CCA), the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) can only succeed if they are nationally owned; consequently, enhancing the quality of the human resources involved in their design and implementation was crucial. Furthermore the report revealed that training stood out as one of the main tools in capacity building although there was ample room for strengthening other means to stimulate capacity building.

10. The Secretary-General noted in his report that significant efforts had been made within the United Nations system to change support for capacity building from a project-by-project approach to programmes, utilizing comprehensive multidisciplinary and/or sectoral approaches. The report, noted for example, that the ILO's initiatives to address child labour had emphasized not only local capacity and institutions engaging in effective actions against child labour but also mainstreaming child labour concerns in the national policy dialogue on poverty eradication and building a better knowledge base on child labour in society. The Office contributed to the Secretary-General's report.

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[3] E/2002/58.

11. The Council also received the report of the Secretary-General on: *Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 56/201* [4] on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. The report highlights progress on the CCA/UNDAF process but notes that there is still a need to continue to improve their preparation and quality. The report observed that at that point, [5] 101 CCAs and 53 UNDAFs had been completed, while 32 CCAs and 28 UNDAFs were still in progress. A new round of UNDAFs was planned to start in 2002 in five countries which had recently harmonized their programming cycles (Benin, Ecuador, Kenya, Madagascar and Pakistan).

12. One of the major objectives underlined by the UNDG workplan for 2002 is to increase the overall quality and effectiveness of country-level coordination, which places greater emphasis on the quality and effectiveness of the CCA and UNDAF processes – particularly in the implementation of the provisions of resolution 56/201. Some of the actions envisaged are to: (i) review the guidelines for the two instruments; (ii) integrate lessons learned from their recent evaluation; (iii) facilitate higher quality and effectiveness of country-level programming; (iv) foster an integrated approach to coordination on selected substantive development priorities; (v) strengthen the focus on the commitments, goals and targets of the *Millennium Declaration*; (vi) further harmonize programming cycles and simplify procedures; and (vii) take into account conflict prevention aspects of development cooperation. The review exercise is already under way. The Office, through the relevant field offices, will actively participate in the UNDG-led processes in this regard, with a view to integrating national decent work programmes in broader United Nations coordination efforts.

13. It was also noted in the same report that the CCAs and UNDAFs had created favourable conditions for joint programming and that efforts were under way to strengthen collaboration through joint initiatives and programmes, mid-term reviews and other evaluation efforts. The Secretary-General requested the Council to encourage the United Nations system organizations to continue with these efforts in order to create greater synergies with the governments of recipients countries and other development partners on development programming and activities, integrating them with national planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation in accordance with the programme approach.

14. In the high-level policy exchange with heads of United Nations agencies, the Council stressed partnership and improved coordination of development efforts. The President of the Council, Mr Ivan Simonóvic (Croatia), urged the Council to harness the international community's sense of enthusiasm and renewed resolve to identify new ways to eradicate poverty, achieve sustained economic growth and promote sustainable development. With regard to its own role, the Council underlined its importance, major responsibility and its unique opportunity to develop and promote an integrated and consistent follow-up to the pre-eminent goals of the *Millennium Declaration* and other commitments. The Council considered its role as catalytic in ensuring that all the actors were brought together to implement these commitments.

15. At the operational activities segment, the Council re-emphasized the role of international development cooperation in assisting developing countries to cope with their development challenges which, it stressed, was a key function of the United Nations system in this respect. It emphasized the importance of capacity building reflecting a major change in the

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[4] E/2002/47.

[5] The current figures available with UNDG are 105 CCAs, 63 UNDAFs (ECOSOC/6012).

way development assistance was delivered; and as the focus shifted from development assistance to development partnership, it was important to put emphasis on capacity building. The European Union particularly underscored the link between capacity building and national ownership.

16. With regard to crisis response and conflict prevention, the Council adopted a draft resolution: *Ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflicts*. It encouraged close cooperation between such a group and the *Working Group of the Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa* in the areas related to the fulfilment of its mandate. Several Council members, especially the *European Union* and the *Group of 77*, welcomed the establishment of the *Ad hoc advisory group* and the adoption of the resolution as an innovative response to the search for solutions to the conflicts in Africa.

4. Conclusions

17. The Committee should note that the Office will continue to be an active player in the continuing United Nations reform process by integrating its action clearly and effectively with that of the UNDG – especially in the promotion of the MDGs and their implementation at national and international levels. This action will also be strongly reflected in the Programme and Budget for the 2004-05 biennium.

18. The Office will also continue to monitor developments and evolution of common United Nations system programme frameworks such as the CCA/UNDAF and PRSPs as means to support member States in achieving their development goals.

Geneva, 2 October 2002.

Submitted for information.