



FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Making decent work a global goal:
Recent developments and a proposal
for a Globalization Policy Forum****Introduction**

1. In its March 2005 session, a consensus emerged within the Working Party and the Governing Body that the promotion of decent work as a global goal is the ILO's distinctive contribution to ensuring progress towards a fair globalization.¹ This perspective is now an integral part of the Programme and Budget for 2006-07 and the Decent Work Country Programmes. The Working Party identified certain modalities through which that goal could be advanced, and requested the Office to take a number of steps to move forward on this agenda. The present paper summarizes relevant activities and events which have occurred since the last meeting of the Working Party, including progress with the Policy Coherence Initiative. As requested, it also submits a concrete proposal for one of the modalities concerned, a globalization policy forum (GPF), taking due account of the views expressed during the Working Party discussion in March 2005.

Recent developments

2. A number of events have occurred since the Working Party last met which build on the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. Of greatest significance was the support in the UN 2005 World Summit Outcome to the ILO's work. Over 150 Heads of State and Government from around the world unanimously stated that they –

strongly support fair globalization and resolve to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of our relevant national and international policies, as well as national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies, as part of our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These measures should also encompass the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, as defined in International Labour Organization Convention

¹ See the oral report of the Chairperson of the Working Party, GB.292/15(Rev.).

No. 182, and forced labour. We also resolve to ensure full respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work.²

3. In April, a conference was organized in Washington, DC, by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs, and the Global Fairness Initiative, with the participation of the ILO and a number of academic experts. The conference addressed the theme, *Help wanted: More and better jobs in a globalized economy*. The opening panel heard presentations from the Director-General, as well as from the World Bank Chief Economist, François Bourguignon; the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Delhi and World Commissioner, Deepak Nayyar; and a member of the US House of Representatives, the Honourable Sherrod Brown of Ohio. A publication of the several papers presented is planned for early 2006.
4. The Office has prepared succinct “policy briefs” outlining the main messages and recommendations of the World Commission report. The policy briefs are intended to be broadly disseminated in policy circles and events such as September’s World Summit in New York. It should be recalled that the Commission’s report has already been translated into 15 languages.

Policy Coherence Initiative

5. It will be recalled that at the March 2005 meeting of the Working Party the Office was encouraged to continue its efforts to pursue policy coherence at international, regional and national levels. The World Commission had recommended that “Policy Coherence Initiatives be undertaken by the relevant organizations on key issues addressing the social dimension of globalization”. The intent of such initiatives would be to “make a contribution to a more fair and inclusive globalization” and that “in the first instance” a PCI should “address the question of global growth, investment, and employment creation”.³
6. At the invitation of the ILO, a PCI has been launched and, to date, three meetings have been held, two in the course of 2004, and the latest in June 2005. Participants in the meetings have come from the following organizations: FAO, IFAD, IMF, UNDESA, UNDP, UNIDO, World Bank and WTO. UNESCO has recently signalled its interest in taking part in future meetings.
7. The two meetings in 2004 can be described as largely organizational in at least three ways. First, participants discussed and agreed that policy coherence in the multilateral system could still be improved, while acknowledging the role that the United Nations Millennium Declaration had played in forging greater coherence. Second, participants reached a clear consensus that the initiative in no way constituted a new institutional entity, that the participation of the organizations would be from within the respective mandates of each, and that participation itself was voluntary and self-financed. Third, on the basis of a brief note that had been prepared by the Office, participants discussed and agreed upon the way to move forward in addressing the theme of growth, investment and employment creation.
8. In an initial exploration of the topic, it was decided to divide it into two sub-themes, the first having to do with labour market institutions and employment performance in developing countries, and the second dwelling on the growth and investment nexus as it

² 2005 UN World Summit Outcome, A/60/L.1, para. 47.

³ World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization: *A fair globalization: Creating opportunities for all*, Geneva, ILO, 2004, paras. 608-611.

related to employment. The first of these sub-themes became the subject of the third meeting in 2005. The ILO, the IMF and the World Bank each presented the results of their original research relating to the sub-theme. These papers have been posted on the ILO's Policy Integration Department web site.⁴

9. The intent of this meeting was to gauge how close or otherwise agencies were in their respective analyses of labour market institutions and their impact on employment. The meeting afforded an excellent and constructive exchange of views on methodologies and findings. Points of convergence and divergence of views can be found in the summary of the meeting, also posted on the ILO's web site under the Policy Integration Department. In future meetings the effort will continue to jointly identify "information gaps" and explore the feasibility of conducting joint research projects to address these. If the overall intent in the end is to explore how policies can be more coherent in promoting a fairer globalization through growth, investment and job creation then it is clear that the analytical and empirical basis on which policies need to be based must be clear as a foundation for policy convergence.
10. A fourth meeting, this time on the second sub-theme, is planned for late in 2005. It is moreover the case that the ILO's analysis of the nexus between growth, investment and employment creation needs to draw on the perspectives of our constituents, the key stakeholders in that nexus. To that end, a tripartite, subregional workshop on this theme is being planned for southern Africa in December 2005. The ILO has also proposed to contribute a paper on this theme for discussion in the G8 labour ministers' meeting under the Russian G8 presidency in 2006. In September, an ILO paper on the financial liberalization dimension of this theme was presented at a G24 Technical Group Meeting of Developing Country Finance Ministers at the request of their secretariat. Participants welcomed the paper and found the subject of the consequences of financial openness for employment and income distribution very relevant and important. The Office will continue to work with the G24 technical secretariat on these and similar issues.

Other follow-up activities

11. At the invitation of the President of ECOSOC, the Director-General addressed the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council. His remarks emphasized the relevance of the Decent Work Agenda and the World Commission's recommendations to the World Summit in September, and to the successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. He invited the Council to address the global jobs crisis as part of its coordinating responsibilities within the UN system. His remarks were echoed by speakers as an important contribution to the outcome of the World Summit.
12. Also in September, the Helsinki Conference took place. This event was the culmination of the Helsinki Process. During the Conference there was extensive reference to the World Commission report. The Co-Chairs of the World Commission, Presidents Halonen and Mkapa, opened the Conference and highlighted key messages from the World Commission report. Increasingly the Helsinki Process and its follow-up is seen as taking forward these messages. It was significant, for instance, that one of the five round tables of the

⁴ IMF: "Unemployment and labor market institutions: Why reforms pay off": http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/integration/download/publicat/4_3_346_imf_paper_on_unemployment_and_labor_market_institutions_pci_meeting_june_2005.pdf ;WB: "Impacts of active labor market programs": http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/integration/download/publicat/4_3_342_wb_paper_on_social_protection_to_pci_meeting_june_2005.pdf ; Summary of the PC meeting (June 2005): http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/integration/download/publicat/4_3_341_synopsis.pdf .

Conference was devoted specifically to decent work. It is expected that this and related themes will be pursued in future multi-stakeholder initiatives.

13. Towards the promotion of a fairer globalization at national level, the ILO continues to work with its constituents on the development of national strategies to respond to globalization, with particular reference to the goal of decent work. The Office has ongoing work in the United Republic of Tanzania (with the Office of the President), in Burkina Faso with the support of Minister Tou, an ex-officio member of the Commission and former ILO Governing Body Chairperson, and with funding from the Government of France, and in Argentina where the focus of work is on improving coherence between economic and social policy.
14. Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg and the International Institute for Labour Studies jointly organized a policy forum in April 2005, "Dialogue on Fair Globalization in the Southern African Region", bringing together representatives from academia, social partners, NGOs and policy practitioners from ten southern African countries. Discussion centred around two topics: the recommendations of the World Commission report relevant to the ILO, and prospects and strategies for achieving a fair globalization in southern Africa.
15. During 2005, several of the country-level decent work pilot programmes which are presently under way have addressed decent work policies in the context of national responses to globalization, notably in Morocco and Bangladesh. At the regional level, a meeting was held in September 2005 in Amman to distil the policy implications of the messages of the World Commission report for the Arab States. Participants came from North Africa and Turkey in addition to countries covered from the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States in Beirut. A major focus was on priority issues in the region, such as migration, the informal economy and technology.
16. Irrespective of whether the link to the World Commission report is explicit, it is increasingly evident that the importance of decent work as a global goal is finding considerable resonance in the international and regional system. High-level consultations between the European Commission and the ILO were held in early October, for example, and the agenda was overwhelmingly directed to the promotion of decent work and the social dimension of globalization, and the future of EC/ILO collaboration. Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, in an address to the European Economic and Social Committee, said that decent work should be considered as the ninth Millennium Development Goal and that cooperation policies of the European Commission should promote decent work for all. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) released in August its report, *Key Indicators 2005: Labor markets in Asia: Promoting full, productive and decent employment*, and noted in the accompanying press release that "the objectives of full, productive, and decent employment ... [must] ... become central to policy-making" in the Asian region. The central importance of decent work for poverty reduction is also the major theme of UNIFEM's flagship publication, *Progress of the World's women 2005: Women, work and poverty*, published in August.
17. In June of this year, development cooperation ministers met in the context of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD. Sweden highlighted the need to align development cooperation policies with employment and decent work issues. A follow-up meeting will be held at the end of November in Stockholm.
18. The Commission report has been presented and discussed at several meetings involving the development community, such as the World Bank's annual conference for development economists in Amsterdam in May, and the UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER) conference, "WIDER thinking ahead: The future of

development economics”, in Helsinki in June. Finally, the report’s main messages have been presented to visiting university groups, such as one from New York University in July, or at universities themselves.

The rationale for a globalization policy forum (GPF)

19. The International Labour Conference discussion on the World Commission’s recommendations for promoting decent work for a fair globalization showed that, while falling within our full mandate, they are broad in scope and so suggest that the ILO would need to seek to make decent work a common cause with key partners in the formal multilateral system, and more widely among the diverse networks of state and non-state actors characterized as the emerging global community in the report.
20. This process would reinforce global tripartism by strengthening the capabilities and reach of social partners and of the Office to promote ILO objectives and values at national and international levels. In pursuing this idea, Governing Body members and the Director-General have stated clearly on several occasions that the well-established functioning of the mechanisms for tripartite governance of the ILO should not be disturbed. Indeed, employers’ organizations, companies, unions and their federations, as well as many governments, have already acquired considerable and varied experience in such forms of outreach and dialogue which should be drawn upon by the ILO. The ILO’s successful experience in working with a broader range of partners, notably on gender equality, child labour, youth employment and local economic development, has already shown the potential value of this method of work.
21. The rationale and value added of a GPF for the ILO is therefore part of a broader strategy to promote decent work as a global goal in the course of the 2006-07 programme cycle. In particular, it would be an important means to promote decent work as a common objective among international organizations, and so respond to the ambition of the world’s Heads of State and Government, as reflected in the UN 2005 World Summit Outcome (A/60/L.1). Such support to the ILO Agenda gives a strong foundation to the proposed forum.
22. The preparation of the forum, including detailed design, agenda, participation and outreach activities, would be carried out by the Office in close consultation with the Officers of the Governing Body, and subject to regular reporting to the Working Party for its review and approval. The Director-General and the Officers would oversee and guide the process, in consultation with the constituents. They would ensure full tripartite involvement in the conception and design of this initiative.

Outreach and engagement in 2006

23. The preparation of the globalization policy forum would call for a number of outreach and mobilization initiatives. They fall into three interrelated domains:
 - mapping of relevant and representative regional and international associations, networks and coalitions with a potential interest in the Decent Work Agenda. In addition to those international associations and networks already in direct relationship with the ILO, including of course those of the ILO’s constituents and the ILO Special List, this would extend to a broader pool of potential partners which share ILO goals and values, including parliamentarians, local authorities, associations of economic and social councils, cooperatives, consumers’ associations, major international and

regional NGOs, youth organizations, foundations, think tanks, academia and the media;

- active exchange with these entities to determine the degree of interest they have in the Decent Work Agenda from their perspectives, priorities and areas of activity, their capabilities and expertise, and, where appropriate, to encourage them to commit to the Decent Work Agenda and support the activities of ILO constituents;
- identifying potential areas of eventual joint activities and partnerships, pooling of knowledge and research on innovative policy developments, organizing forums and debates, and promoting capacity building for constituents.

A globalization policy forum on “decent work for a fair globalization”

24. It is proposed that a globalization policy forum be held at ILO headquarters in April 2007, with the following objectives, to:

- offer a space for dialogue to facilitate greater convergence of views and coherence of action among different contributions to making decent work a progressive reality;
- promote decent work as a global goal among interested international organizations;
- support efforts by constituents in member States to advance national Decent Work Agendas by promoting a balanced international policy environment;
- take stock of contributions to decent work among representatives of issue-oriented networks and coalitions with diverse and complementary knowledge and capabilities;
- share experiences of the ILO’s constituents in the development and implementation of Decent Work Country Programmes;
- identify common areas of joint action such as research and innovative policy development, and capacity building;
- seek as an outcome that the participating networks, organizations and individuals commit themselves to specific action to promote decent work for a fair globalization.

25. The GPF would thus be a working session to exchange points of view, to identify common areas of interest, and to build commitment to action. It would consider a number of specific issues through a combination of plenary and break-out sessions, which could be held over a three-day period. Examples of specific issues that the GPF could address include:

- extending respect for rights and improving governance in order to upgrade the informal economy;
- potential areas of joint activities and partnerships to make decent work a central economic and social policy objective, nationally and internationally, notably in the next phase of implementation of the MDGs;
- support and capacity building for Decent Work Country Programmes in international development cooperation initiatives;
- topics relating to global production systems, such as policy development for export processing zones and promotion of national micro, small and medium enterprises;

- potential areas of policy convergence among interested international organizations on decent work objectives.
26. Within the forum, a specific session might explore the role of selected key networks, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the global network of united cities and local governments.

Background report

27. The United Nations General Assembly resolution on the World Commission report (A/RES/59/57) invited relevant organizations of the United Nations system and other relevant multilateral bodies to provide to the Secretary-General information on their activities to promote an inclusive and equitable globalization. This information, and other reports of the multilateral organizations concerned, could provide the elements for a background report to the forum which reviews the actions to promote a fair globalization by the different multilateral organizations concerned. The different networks participating in the forum could also provide similar information. This report might subsequently provide important inputs to a possible “State of globalization report”.

Criteria for participation

28. Representatives of interested governments and international organizations would be invited to participate and encouraged to do so especially if they would wish to support or be associated with the joint activities discussed during the forum, as well as participate in the debates. Participants representing workers’ and employers’ organizations would be chosen by the groups in the usual way.
29. There would also be participants representing the different categories of networks outlined in paragraph 23 above. They would be expected to have undertaken consultations within their networks on potential areas of collaboration where their priorities and those of the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda could mesh.
30. The Forum would be designed to give space for diverse perspectives/views while offering opportunities for convergence through dialogue. This would require that participants be committed to the value of dialogue that lies at the heart of the ILO’s action, and which underpinned the work of the World Commission.

Number of participants and costs

31. It would be premature to determine the exact number of participants, as this would be largely a function of the Office’s and constituents’ outreach activities in 2006. It is however envisaged that there could be 200-250 participants. Preliminary estimates would put the costs of organizing a forum of this size at about US\$350,000, primarily to cover preparation, material arrangements and travel costs. This estimate assumes that many participants would cover the costs of their own participation, as was the case for the Global Employment Forum in 2001. While the ILO Programme and Budget for 2006-07 includes funds earmarked for the follow-up of the World Commission, extra-budgetary funding

could also be sought, as it was for the Global Employment Forum,⁵ in order to ensure balanced representation from different regions of the world.

Timing

32. April 2007 is envisaged as an appropriate timing for the event in order to match with the spring meeting of the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination, which is scheduled to be hosted by the Office in Geneva. This would help ensure high-level representation of key agencies of the multilateral system.

Proposed next steps

33. The Working Party is invited to consider the above proposals, and may wish to recommend to the Governing Body that it decide to hold a globalization policy forum in April 2007.
34. The preparatory work for the forum, including detailed design, agenda, participation and outreach activities, would be carried out by the Office in close consultation with the Officers of the Governing Body, and subject to regular reporting to the Working Party for its review and approval. The Director-General and the Officers would oversee and guide the process, in consultation with the constituents. They would ensure full tripartite involvement in the conception and design of this initiative.

Geneva, 17 October 2005.

⁵ There were about 750 participants in the 2001 Global Employment Forum, for which the overall cost was some US\$525,000.