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TRIPARTISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY  
Building on bedrock

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INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

# The three keys to the ILO: Opening the door to tripartism



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GENEVA – To say that tripartism is inscribed in the very foundations of the ILO is more than metaphor. When work began in 1923 on the Organization's first permanent headquarters, today the Centre William Rappard and home to the World Trade Organization (WTO), the building had three foundation stones instead of the usual one, with the ILO motto, "Si vis pacem, cole justitiam",<sup>1</sup> enshrined in the central stone. But the symbolism didn't end there.

The creation of the ILO in 1919 had unlocked the gates to a tripartite collaboration between governments, workers and employers to improve labour laws and standards worldwide. In this spirit, Mr. Epitoux, the building's architect, specially commissioned three keys and a triple lock for the gate of the new Office from the Geneva engraver Gustave Durouvenoz-Duvernay. The three keys were wrought in the letters "ILO" on one side and "BIT" on the other, in the Office's two official languages.

At the opening ceremony on 6 June 1926, Arthur Fontaine, Chairman of the ILO Governing Body, handed one key each to Vice-Chairmen Mr. J. Carlier, Employer representative, and Mr. Jouhaux, Worker representative. Under the watchful eyes of

then Director Albert Thomas, the three turned the keys in quick succession and Mr. Fontaine said, "Each group enters the ILO through the same door, to collaborate on the same task. Each group has the duty to guard our building, our statutes and our common purpose."<sup>2</sup>

The three keys have remained a

potent symbol of the organization ever since. Apparently, though, funds for the building construction didn't quite stretch to gold and the original keys were made bronze. A set of gold keys does, however, exist, 18-carat replicas which were presented to ILO Director-General David Morse in 1970 by the Governing Body as a retirement gift, "in recognition of his undying dedication to the ILO"<sup>3</sup>

The original lock, which was more symbolic than functional as it had no mechanism, languished for years after the ILO left the Centre William Rappard for its current headquarters a kilometre or so away. But in 1993, a Swiss farmer broke off the lock in an attempt to climb the gate during a protest against the then General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). A dutiful GATT official found the lock and returned it to the ILO archivist – receiving two bottles of spirits for his pains.

<sup>1</sup> "If you want peace, cultivate justice"

<sup>2</sup> *International Labour Conference, VIII Session, Geneva, 1926, Vol 1, Annex VI, p. 424.*

<sup>3</sup> *Minutes of the Governing Body, 180th Session, Geneva, 29 May 1970, p.19.*

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## Tripartism and the ILO

The world's governments, workers and employers meeting on equal terms. There is only one place where that happens – the ILO. Tripartism is the name of this process, which plays a crucial role in formulating labour policy, promoting social justice, and setting and monitoring labour standards world-wide.

Tripartism is at the very heart of the ILO's work. It builds dialogue and consensus, sets the organization's goals, brings together the actors capable of identifying problems in the world of work, and above all, finding possible solutions.

In short, as Director-General Juan Somavia puts it, tripartism is "the ILO's bedrock".



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In this issue, journalist Ian Graham reports on recent developments in tripartism and its significance to the ILO and to its constituents. **Page 4**

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Created in 1919, the International Labour Organization (ILO) brings together governments, employers and workers of its 175 member States in common action to improve social protection and conditions of life and work throughout the world. The International Labour Office, in Geneva, is the permanent Secretariat of the Organization.

# Tripartism in the 21<sup>st</sup> cen



© Paprika

**T**he world's governments, workers and employers meeting on equal terms. There is only one place where that happens – the ILO. Tripartism is the name of this process, which plays a crucial role in formulating labour policy, promoting social justice, and setting and monitoring labour standards worldwide. In this article, journalist Ian Graham reports on recent developments in tripartism and its significance to the ILO and to its constituents

GENEVA – Tripartism is at the very heart of the ILO's work. It builds dialogue and consensus. It sets the organization's goals and ways of achieving them. It brings together the actors capable of ident-

ifying problems in the world of work, and above all of finding possible solutions to them.

It is vital to the ILO's major current priority – the “Decent Work Agenda”. And it is also why, uniquely, the ILO survived the collapse of the League of Nations and continued with renewed vigour into the post-war world of globalization and the United Nations.

In short, as Director-General Juan Somavia puts it, tripartism is “the ILO's bedrock”.

So when, at its 90th Session in June 2002, the International Labour Conference adopted a detailed Resolution on tripartism and social dialogue, people sat up and took notice. Is tripartism in trouble? By no means. Government, worker and employer delegates urged the ILO to “consolidate the tripartite nature of the Organization”. Tripartism has a bright future in a globalized world. But like every worthwhile institution, it needs both maintenance and development to keep pace with new developments.

A crucial question is the evolution of tripartism and social dialogue at other levels. The ILO actively encourages their development in member States, and there is considerable evidence that they are thriving both regionally and nationally (see boxes).

But much remains to be done. Governments should “ensure that the necessary preconditions exist for social dialogue”, the Conference stressed. These include “respect for the fundamental principles and the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining, a sound industrial relations environment, and respect for the role of the social partners”. Few would argue with that. Social dialogue is a central element of democratic societies. Yet, all too many countries still curb the basic rights which make such dialogue possible.

Another key to the future of tripartism lies in the representative nature of its constituents. Worker and employer delegates at the Conference sent an important memo to themselves: keep on organizing. The ILO is the only UN agency with a direct link to civil society through its constituents. Why are employers and workers entitled to a special international organization in which they can carry on a dialogue with governments and each other?



# ury: Building on bedrock

Because they shape something that is central to human economy, society, and identity. That something is work. In many countries, trade unions are in fact the most representative of all nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), while employers' organizations are the only voice of the business and enterprise world.

So the ILO is not a forum for special pleading. It is an agent of wider progress. But its mandate ultimately depends on the extent to which the workers' organizations represent workers and the employers' organizations represent employers. That is why the Resolution called on workers' organizations to "continue to empower workers in sectors where representation is low in order to enable them to exercise their rights and defend their interests", and on employers' organizations to "reach out to sectors where representation levels are low in order to support the development of a business environment in which tripartism and social dialogue can flourish".

Organizing is, of course, primarily the task of the unions and employers themselves. However, the ILO's own programmes have boosted organizing in many countries, and will continue to do so.

## TRIPARTISM AND NGOS

A closely related question is the involvement of other groups in the ILO's work. For several reasons, this issue has become more pressing in recent years. The rise of the NGOs is an important factor. Their growing international clout has a number of causes. Environmental concerns, for example, have affected almost every sphere of human life. So has the women's movement.

A new breed of NGO has emerged – professionalized, vocal and media-friendly. They often receive strong support from those who feel the establishment doesn't always address their concerns, such as young people. They engage in other spheres which have a bearing on ILO concerns – poverty reduction and development are good cases in point. Indeed, NGOs do some good work on issues within the ILO's remit. Child labour, for example.

Meanwhile, the private sector has been responding to the campaigns and the underlying challenges. Corporate social responsibility is the new trend. Increasingly, firms are looking to a "triple bottom line" – environmental and social as well as economic. Planet, people, and profits.



### TRIPARTISM ON THE GROUND

**T**he ILO encourages tripartism and social dialogue within member States, by promoting a social dialogue at the national level which involves trade unions and employers in the formulation and, where appropriate, implementation of national policy on social and economic affairs, and a host of other issues. For instance, when the ILO launched a pioneering "Decent Work" programme in the Philippines last May, it brought together the unions, employers, and government under a joint declaration pledging cooperation to ensure the campaign's success.

Tripartism can help to shape national consensus during difficult transitions. In South Africa, a swift move from apartheid to tripartism smoothed the path for a major overhaul of labour legislation by the incoming ANC government. As a result, South

Africa now has a modern, progressive set of labour laws which is helping to overcome past inequalities.

Recent research confirms the usefulness of the ILO policy of encouraging social dialogue at the national level because of its benefits to society, business, and the economy. For instance, a 1995 study of UK unions found that in workplaces with a joint management-union safety committee, serious accident rates were less than half of those at firms without one.<sup>1</sup> And ILO research shows a clear link between collective bargaining and greater income equality; countries where collective agreements cover more than 60 per cent of the population and countries with a high trade union density all have a better distribution of income than those which don't.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Labour Education*, No. 126, 1/2002.

<sup>2</sup> *Collective Bargaining and Income Equality in an Integrating World*, Susan Hayter, ILO.

>> So are three partners enough in today's ILO? Should other players be present? If so, in what capacity? Rightly, the tripartite partners treat these questions with caution. The ILO is neither the World Economic Forum nor the World Social Forum. It has a distinct, well-defined role in the promotion of global labour standards. Much of that work is specialized and technical. It must be free of undue pressure, whether political or commercial. To dilute ILO tripartism would be to put the organization's effectiveness at risk.

So tripartism should remain precisely that – a process involving three partners. The International Labour Conference, the Governing Body, and the Director-General have all made that quite clear.

This is not to say, however, that the ILO should have no contact with NGOs; indeed, employers and trade unions are often in close contact with them. The Conference Resolution noted the “valuable contributions of civil society institutions and organizations” which assist the ILO in its work, “particularly in the fields of child labour, migrant labour and workers with disabilities”. It also recognized “the potential for the International Labour Office to collaborate with civil society following appropriate consultations with the tripartite constituents”.

The bottom line is that no NGO can effectively participate in the ILO's work if it does not have specific competencies in the subject matter in question. The ILO will not be engaging with any particular NGO unless and until it gets the go-ahead from the government, worker and employer representatives. While tripartite dialogue is well-oiled and has delivered, cooperation between the ILO and non-state actors should be based on strict criteria.

Beyond that, the Resolution is concerned mainly with ways in which the ILO itself can strengthen tripartism. These points were immediately taken on board by the Director-General. Last November, he provided the Governing Body with a detailed response. It sets out the measures already in operation, as well as plans for further action. Some of the main points:

- Consolidating tripartism within the ILO: An action plan for strengthening tripartism and social dialogue could foster new partnerships and synergies, both at ILO headquarters and in the regions. This could result from a “creative cross-sectoral integration of activities”. The plan “could cover priority issues of the four ILO technical sectors”, such as poverty reduction, gender equality, the informal economy, HIV/AIDS, crisis relief, employment,

training, and lifelong learning. Internships or exchange programmes with unions, employers' organizations, tripartite institutions, and labour administrations, would allow ILO staff “from any technical department – not only from the Social Dialogue sector” to get first-hand work experience of “the strategies and practices relating to social dialogue”.

- Strengthening employers' and workers' organizations: Employers' organizations “are central to the social dialogue process”. However, “in most developing countries and in countries in transition, employers' organizations need to be further strengthened”. The technical cooperation programme delivered by the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) is designed to enhance the technical capacities of employers' organizations in their areas of competence, which in turn enhances their effective participation in tripartite/bipartite framework contexts. Meanwhile, the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) “will promote tripartism, social dialogue and related ILO instruments as vital elements of good governance and democracy across all of its workers' capacity and institution-building activities”. ACTRAV programmes will put more emphasis on “strengthening workers' participation in national tripartite bodies, making it possible for them to influence social policies and labour legislation”. All-in-all, ACTRAV and ACT/EMP will be more directly involved in a wider range of ILO activities in the future.

- Promoting ILO standards on social dialogue: The core ILO Conventions are “key to effective social dialogue”, says the Director-General's report. By continuing to press all governments to apply these standards in practice, the ILO is also helping to promote social dialogue. Similarly, programmes are under way to promote the ILO Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144) and the Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150). Tripartite consultation is required under Convention 144 when governments respond to the ILO; for instance, when answering ILO questionnaires or reporting on implementation of ILO standards. In some countries, compliance with this Convention has led to broader tripartite consultation on national issues. Convention 150 emphasizes the involvement of the social partners in labour market reform and in the management of social security or employment institutions.

- Achieving the ILO's strategic objectives: Social dialogue and tripartism are not aims in themselves, but

are indispensable for achieving those of the organization, so "their promotion should be the goal of all ILO sectors", insists the Director-General. Multidisciplinary activities such as the ILO InFocus Programme on Strengthening Social Dialogue, launched in the year 2000, aim to help the tripartite constituents to "use social dialogue in the fields of standards and fundamental principles and rights at work, employment and social protection".

• Strengthening tripartism in the field: "One of the key rewards of social dialogue," the Director-General points out, "is building mutually satisfactory relationships between the three social partners." He goes on to detail recent ILO successes in promoting tripartism in South Asia, Central Africa and Central and Eastern Europe. In Central Asia, "there is a need for basic bilateral capacity-building for trade unions

and employers before any meaningful social dialogue capacity-building can take place". The ILO will concentrate on meeting that need.

Globally and nationally, tripartism has proved its worth. In the interests of workers, employers, and society at large, the ILO is carrying that precious heritage forward into the new millennium.

#### EXTENDING TRIPARTISM IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

**N**owhere is social dialogue more deeply rooted than in Western Europe, and nowhere has recent social change been more profound than in Eastern Europe. Tripartism has played an important role in the transition of several Central and Eastern European countries. With much of Eastern Europe poised to join the European Union, the time is right to compare the Eastern and Western experiences and map out a future for European social dialogue.

This is the issue facing worker, employer and government representatives from the 13 EU accession countries as they discuss social dialogue and labour law reform. The EU has demonstrated renewed interest in the matter. In October 2002, Denmark, which held the rotating presidency of the EU at the time on the theme of "social inclusion through social dialogue", organized a conference in the Danish town of Elsinore (Helsingor) on "Tripartism in an Enlarged EU", which drew a wide range of social partners, ministers and technical experts from the EU, its member States, the candidate countries, and the ILO.

Within the EU, social dialogue has been gradually expanded and formalized. These days, it focuses on the creation of a "Social Europe" encompassing employment promotion, improved living and working conditions, appropriate social and employment protection, structured labour-management dialogue, human resource development with a view to lasting and better employment, and the promotion of

life-long learning. In recent years, these initiatives have been extended to the candidate countries, in preparation for accession to the EU.

The main recommendation from the Elsinore conference was the creation of an annual Tripartite Social Summit for the EU. The idea is backed by the Danish government and by Greece, which now holds the EU presidency, as well as by the European Commission, the EU's powerful "civil service". The annual summit would, the conference said, enable governments and the social partners to "achieve sustainable progress and maintain the initiatives that are vital to a vibrant tripartite social dialogue".

Social dialogue as part of good governance is one of the values shared between the ILO and the EU, and employment is a key issue for the EU during accession. "One of the real achievements of the last decade in most, if not all, of the accession countries has been their commitment to ensuring that the social partners have the political and social space to fully play their role," said ILO Executive Director Sally Paxton. "The social partners should be closely associated with any decisions linked to the reform of labour markets and social protection schemes. A combination of genuine social dialogue and sound macroeconomic and labour market policies will substantially contribute to the economic success of the accession countries, and ease the accession process."

# Uncertain prospects: New picture of world employment



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<sup>1</sup> *Global Employment Trends, International Labour Office (Geneva 2003). ISBN 92-2-113360-5, 35 Swiss Francs. To obtain a copy go to the Publications Bureau Website, [www.ilo.org/publns](http://www.ilo.org/publns)*

<sup>2</sup> *For more information, see [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org), press release ILO/03/01, or go to "Employment", then "Employment Strategy", at [www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/index.htm)*

**A** new ILO report, "Global Employment Trends"<sup>1</sup>, says 180 million people around the world were estimated unemployed at the end of 2002, an increase of 20 million since the year 2000<sup>2</sup>. Without strong economic recovery in 2003, prospects for a reversal of this trend appear unlikely

GENEVA – Two years of economic slowdown have sent the number of unemployed up sharply worldwide. The new ILO report, published in January, says that in parallel, these job losses have swelled the ranks of the working poor, pushing more people into badly-paid and precarious jobs in the informal sector, where there is a near total lack of unemployment or social security coverage.

Says ILO Director-General Juan Somavia, "The deteriorating world employment picture and the

prospects of a weak or delayed recovery are very disturbing. A continuation of these trends will dramatically increase the number of unemployed and working poor. A full-scale global recession could have grave consequences for the social and political stability of large parts of the world."

The employment downturn has reversed many of the gains achieved in reducing poverty in the late 90s, and threatens to jeopardise the United Nations Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to halve world poverty by 2015. The ILO estimates that by the end of 2002, the number of workers not earning enough to keep themselves and their families above the US\$1 a day poverty line may well have returned to 550 million, the level recorded in 1998.

Women, who tend to work in sectors vulnerable to economic shocks, and first-time job seekers, suffered most. All regions witnessed an increase in the



# ILO report paints grim ent

unemployment rate, though to a different extent. With little prospect of strong growth in 2003, the report says proactive policies are needed to boost employment and combat any further increases in poverty.

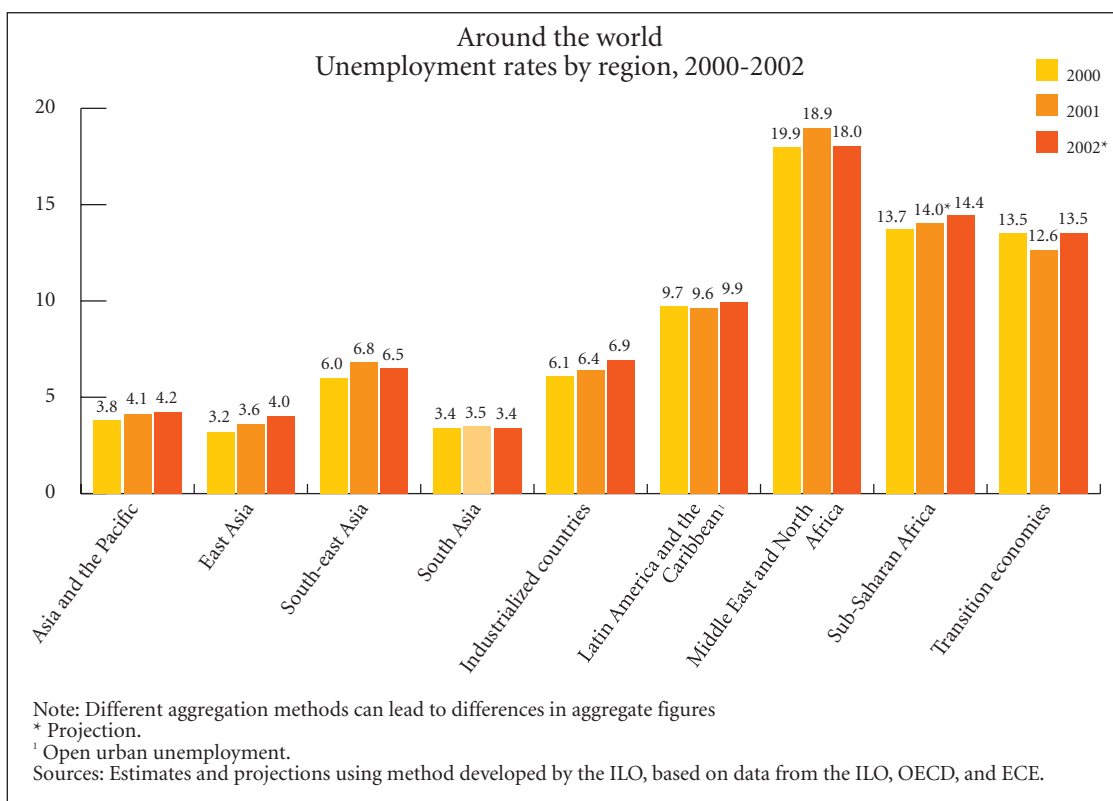
## THE EFFECTS OF 2001 ARE STILL BEING FELT

Unemployment began to grow soon after the information and communication technology (ICT) bubble burst in Spring 2001, sparking an economic slowdown. The aftermath of the September 11 attacks in New York and Washington, DC, brought further shocks and amplified the economic slide.

Together with slower growth in industrialized nations, a decline in world trade meant job losses in the export-oriented industries of developing countries. Worst hit were labour-intensive, export-oriented sec-

tors, such as the garment industry which largely employ women. Signs of a rebound in world trade occurred in mid 2002, with a modest projection of a 1 per cent expansion for 2002. As demand from the industrialized world remains weak, the employment situation in countries heavily dependent on exports is unlikely to improve much in the long term.

In addition, weakening confidence among investors brutally exposed the financial fragility of countries in several regions, with the ensuing crises putting many people out of work. In Argentina, for example, unemployment jumped above 20 per cent in 2002, with knock-on effects in neighbouring countries. Armed conflicts and violence also contributed to higher unemployment and poverty in countries as far apart as Colombia and Nepal. In the Middle East, joblessness spiralled in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while the recession in Israel continued.



>> The global economic downturn affected regions differently. Here is a global picture:

- Industrialized countries saw the sharpest increase in the unemployment rate of all regions between 2000 and 2002 as a result of the global slowdown, from 6.1 per cent to 6.9 per cent. In North America, unemployment rose substantially, from 4.8 per cent to 5.6 per cent in the United States. In the European Union, unemployment actually decreased between 2000 and 2001, from 7.8 per cent to 7.4 per cent, but headed up again in 2002 to 7.6 per cent.

- In Latin America and the Caribbean, financial crisis combined with global slowdown sent the unemployment rate skyrocketing in many countries. Falling economic growth increased joblessness in almost all of Latin America and the Caribbean between 2001 and 2002, bringing the unemployment rate to nearly 10 per cent despite fewer people entering the work force. Youth unemployment in the region hit 16 per cent in 2001, up from 12 per cent in 1997, with nearly all new jobs for young people emerging in the informal economy.

- Asia suffered most severely from the bursting ICT bubble, which cut exports to the industrialized countries. South-east Asia faced the 2001 downturn just as it was beginning to recover from the 1997/98 financial crisis, posting a rise in unemployment from 6 per cent in 2000 to 6.8 per cent in 2001, with a slight fall to 6.5 per cent projected for 2002. Individual south-east Asian countries varied considerably. Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam sustained high growth rates, due to improved access to markets in industrial economies or improved performance in the agricultural sector.

- East Asia recorded significantly lower output growth and deteriorating employment during the two-year period. In China, the official figure for urban unemployment in 2001 was 3.6 per cent, though recent estimates suggest it might be as high as 7.5 per cent today because of high underemployment in the agricultural sector and an end to the practice of keeping redundant workers in the public sector, known as labour hoarding.

- South Asian economies proved resilient during 2001/02, though security concerns, poor weather conditions, a slowdown in exports, and declining tourism revenues caused the employment situation to worsen. Poverty increased, as did the number of working poor. Unemployment rates in Pakistan, for example, climbed

in recent years to nearly 8 per cent, though generally the deterioration in employment in the region points to a greater number of people with low incomes and poor working conditions in the informal economy, rather than sharp increases in unemployment rates.

- Sub-Saharan Africa managed to sustain a fairly constant economic growth rate, though in per capita terms it is often below 1 per cent. In addition to child labour and job loss due to conflicts, an issue of growing importance for the region is the “brain drain” syphoning off much-needed human capital. The health situation, especially HIV/AIDS, is also having a severe impact on human capital. In Tanzania, for example, a recent study showed the HIV/AIDS epidemic was forcing more and more children and juveniles aged 10 to 19 into the labour force as the number of adults aged 20 to 35 fell ill or died<sup>3</sup>.

- The Middle East and North Africa experienced a dramatic decline in overall economic conditions over the past two years, with GDP growth falling from more than 6 per cent in 2000 to 1.5 per cent in 2001. Dismissals and redundancies resulting from reductions in the size of the public sector pushed up unemployment, which reached double-digit levels in some countries. Youth unemployment is distressingly high in some countries, including Syria, Algeria, Bahrain and Morocco. Moreover, the Gulf countries are increasingly adopting policies to replace migrant workers with their own nationals, a move that could have significant consequences for employment as well as remittances to countries supplying labour.

- Unemployment in transition economies is on the increase again after falling from 13.5 per cent in 2000 to 12.6 per cent in 2001. Despite the economic recovery and high growth rates these countries experienced during 2000 and 2001, unemployment returned to the 13.5 per cent level in 2002 due largely to the continuing trend of enterprises seeking to become more competitive by phasing out labour-intensive technologies and ending labour hoarding. At the same time, governments are cutting employment in the public sector. Accelerating structural change in anticipation of accession to the EU has also pushed up unemployment in the candidate countries.

### SHAPING RECOVERY

How to fix this? A staggering 1 billion new jobs are needed to get on track for the goal of halving world poverty by 2010, the report says. Regional projections

<sup>3</sup> Arndt, C., Wobst, P., *HIV/AIDS and labor markets in Tanzania*, Discussion Paper No. 102, Trade and Macroeconomics Division. Washington, DC, 2002. IFPRI.

of the number of new entrants into the job market over the coming decade show that the bulk of these jobs must be in Asia (60 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa (15 per cent).

This is no easy task. The ILO has estimated the rate of growth of output which would halve both unemployment and working poverty rates by 2010 (see Box below). The additional jobs which need to be generated to achieve this target require a per capita growth rate of over 2 per cent globally, and on the order of 3 to 6 per cent regionally.

Given that such high rates of growth seem optimistic for 2003, the report calls for active employment policies together with efforts to sustain the momentum of the global economy.

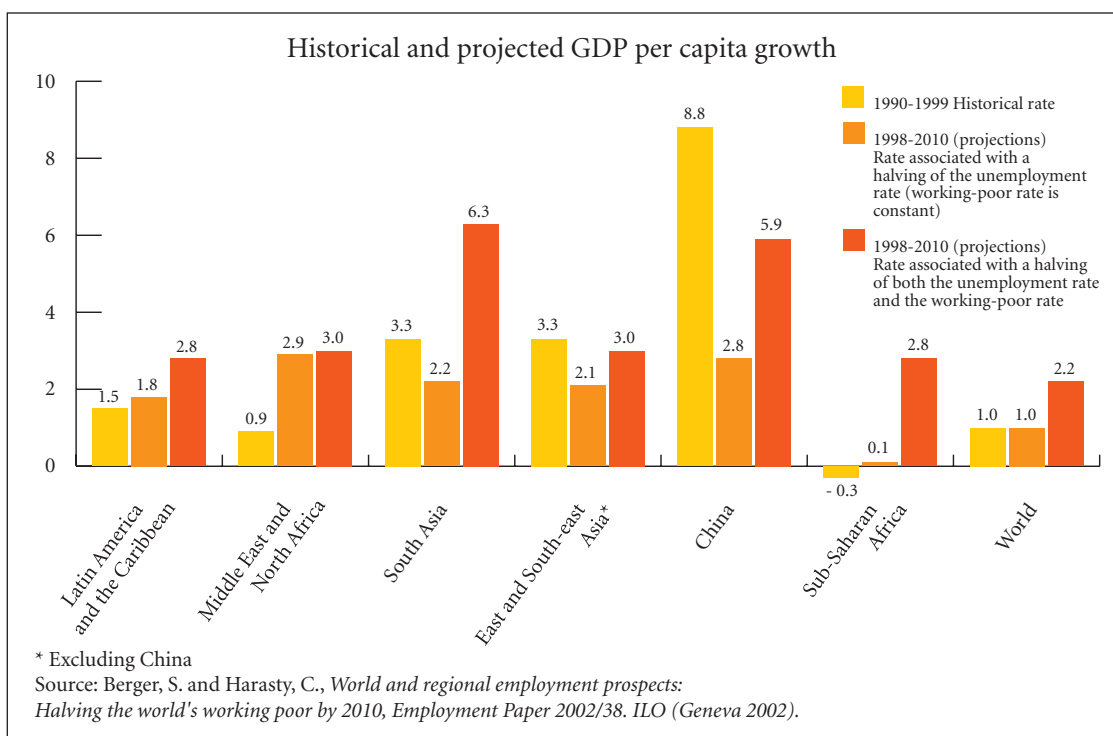
“If these jobs are to contribute to alleviating poverty, they must be productive and offer decent conditions,” Mr. Somavia says. “Both faster economic growth and policies to promote the creation of decent and productive work opportunities are needed.” The report identifies three key ways of doing so:

- First, a “pro-jobs” policy which could “jump-start” growth and stimulate employment-intensive investment is essential. This means fiscal measures to provide incentives for the private sector to favour employment creation, accompanied by public infrastructure programmes.
- Second, policymakers need to focus on reducing the vulnerability of developing countries and the poorest

members of society to external shocks. Active labour market policies, including social safety nets, are needed to reduce economic insecurity in a globalized world. In addition, development strategies should include diversification of the output base to spread and dilute risks of vulnerability, a cut in industrial country tariff barriers to manufactured goods, reducing exposure to swings in commodity exports, and reduced protection of rich countries’ agricultural sectors. Also needed are stronger transport, energy, and communications infrastructures.

- Third, countries should adopt “pro-poor” policies to help women and men secure productive and decent work in conditions of freedom, security and human dignity. This involves supporting the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises and their coverage by a social security system, as well as investment in education and health-care systems, which improve the ability of the labour force to work productively. In addition, ending restrictions on the right to organize, tackling discrimination, and child and forced labour are essential steps toward the economic, social, and political empowerment of the poor.

“Only through pro-jobs and pro-poor policies can we address this growing employment crisis and place decent work at the heart of economic and social policies,” Mr. Somavia says. “Faster economic growth is necessary, but it is not enough. Failure of policy-makers to act now could have grave consequences for us all.”



# A Bad trip? Economic worry cut **tourism** jobs

**M**illions of jobs in the world tourism sector have been lost due to political turmoil, the global economic downturn, and growing unease among many travellers, with little prospect of any recovery in employment in the sector before 2005, says a new ILO report<sup>1</sup>. As people stay closer to home, jobs are drying up fast

GENEVA – For the world tourism industry, the past two years have been the ultimate bad trip.

A new ILO report, “The impact of the 2001-2002 crisis on the hotel and tourism industry”, says the jobs market in the sector has been hit hard since September 2001, with tourism-related businesses shedding some 6.6 million jobs worldwide – or one out of every 12 workers in the sector.

Says ILO Director-General Juan Somavia, “The expected recovery of the tourism industry in 2002 simply did not occur. After several years of 4 per cent growth or more, stagnant demand for travel and tourism last year caused a continued loss of jobs with no sign of a turnaround in 2003.”

## FEAR FACTOR

Factors hampering a recovery are fears of more attacks on tourists such as those which occurred in

Bali and Kenya in 2002, as well as political developments in the Middle East and elsewhere, changing consumer travel preferences, and the general state of the global economy, the ILO report says.

According to the report, the hotel and tourism industry has been suffering from the combined effects of a general economic downturn that began in early 2001, and the shock wave from the September 11 attacks in the United States. While economic recession had already brought down the industry’s previously strong 4.5 per cent annual growth rate to well below 4 per cent, the industry’s growth rate plunged for the whole year 2001, into negative territory between -1 per cent and -5 per cent.

In 2001, receipts from cross-border tourism dropped by 5.1 per cent at constant US dollar prices, and the number of international tourist arrivals worldwide fell by 0.6 per cent. The worst losses were felt in the Middle East and the Americas, particularly North America, where international tourist arrivals were down by 6.8 per cent in the whole year 2001, but as much as 22.6 per cent in the last four months of that year compared to equivalent periods of 2000.

New tourism trends also show an inclination of travellers to stay closer to home. Experts agree that patterns such as “sea, sand, and sun” – and particularly the desire of many tourists to travel to faraway, exotic destinations – are likely going out of fashion.

“Developing countries will face a particular challenge in order to compensate for a decline in long distance travel”, said Mr. Somavia.

Bali is a good example: after the terrorist attack, the island’s tourism industry is trying to make up for the declining number of tourists from Japan, Australia, and Western markets by attracting budget tourists from neighbouring countries like Singapore and Malaysia, as well as domestic visitors from Indonesia’s main island of Java.

One of the countries most affected by the September 11 events is the United States, with international tourist arrivals having fallen on average more than 30 per cent from the level of the same period the previous year, the report says. Travel expenditure dropped by 5.8 per cent in 2001. There was still no recovery in consumer expenditure levels on travel in

**THE ILO SCHEDULED A REGIONAL TRIPARTITE MEETING ON EMPLOYMENT IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, IN BANGKOK FROM 13 TO 15 MAY 2003, TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF JOBS AND TRAVEL**

**O**nly China, Croatia, Cyprus, Slovenia, Turkey, Viet Nam and a few other countries have reported higher numbers of foreign tourists, apparently due to an influx of travellers from nearby who are opting to stay closer to home on their holidays rather than visit far-flung places requiring long-haul travel.

As a result, while industry officials see a modest recovery for the travel and tourism sector in 2003, they are forecasting only minimal job gains. This means the year will likely end with a total of 6.4 million jobs lost since the beginning of the downturn.

<sup>1</sup> See “The impact of the 2001-2002 crisis on the hotel and tourism industry”, International Labour Office, January 2003. Available online at: [www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/papers/tourism/impact.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/papers/tourism/impact.pdf) ISBN 92-2-113223-4



# the downturn, war, and losses worldwide



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**CLOSING SHOP:**  
Will the tourists return?

the US in 2002 (-0.4 per cent). Although overall travel expenditures in the US are expected to rise by 5 per cent in 2003, reaching the mark of US\$ 555.6 million, this result would still be below that of the year 2000.

In the United States alone, employment in the whole industry was down 5.8 per cent in 2001, with an estimated 1.1 million jobs lost. Two-thirds of the estimated 760,000 expected job losses for 2002 in US metropolitan areas are in travel, tourism, and related sectors.

Countries near the United States also received significantly fewer tourists in 2001 than at the same time of the year before; e.g., Canada (-19 per cent), Cuba (-26 per cent), the Dominican Republic (-25 per cent), Mexico (-24 per cent), and Jamaica (-20 per cent).

In Europe, countries expecting a high proportion of tourists originating from the United States experienced steep declines in international tourism in 2001,

including the United Kingdom (-12 per cent), Germany (-17 per cent), Switzerland (-16 per cent), Italy (-11 per cent), and Austria (-9 per cent). Elsewhere, the Philippines (-25 per cent) and Australia (-21 per cent) registered double-digit declines.

Other countries experienced a significant drop in their 2001 total tourist numbers because, rightly or wrongly, they were associated with security risks not necessarily connected to the September 11 events. These countries included Egypt (-16 per cent), Nepal (-22 per cent), and Sri Lanka (-16 per cent). Morocco's tourist industry recorded a 43 per cent revenue drop in January 2002, compared to January 2001.

## SOME WINNERS, BUT NOT MANY

Among the rare winners in 2001, were countries in Southern Europe, a region which continues to receive higher numbers of foreign tourists than in previous years, probably because they provide a convenient alternative to long-haul destinations





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>> for many European tourists. Thus Turkey (+12 per cent), Croatia (+12 per cent), Slovenia (+11 per cent), Spain (+3 per cent), Greece (+2 per cent) and Cyprus (+1 per cent) all benefited in 2001.

Another winner was China, which experienced an impressive growth in both domestic and

inbound tourism. Total annual revenue from tourism has grown on average by 12.7 per cent over recent years, much faster than the country's gross domestic product (GDP), which grew by an average rate of 7.4 per cent.

#### FLYING SLOW: AIRLINES STRUGGLE BACK

##### **A** recent ILO study says civil aviation is suffering the same sort of delays as the tourism industry

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) expected zero growth for 2002, and a rebound of activities in 2003, and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) even predicted a 3 per cent drop in passenger traffic in 2002, and some recovery in 2003 on the order of 6 per cent.

According to the ILO report, developments in 2002 have once again shown that there is no such thing as a global homogenous airline industry. North American carriers continue to largely dominate the world market with a 40 per cent share. Europe and the Asia/Pacific region come next with a 25 per cent share each. Latin America (5 per cent), the Middle East (3 per cent), and Africa (2 per cent) are left way behind.

The ILO meeting on civil aviation in January 2002, noted that the employment effects of the economic downturn combined with the 11 September events resulted in the loss of 400,000 jobs in all segments of air transport. In 2002, many airlines were forced to announce further restructuring measures, including job cuts, because of low passenger demand, higher fuel prices, and the delayed economic recovery.

The airline industry in the United States cut more than one out of every ten jobs during 2001. In 2002, major US carriers announced further job cuts amounting to some 31,000 jobs. However, there is also some positive employment news as several airlines, including America West Airlines, British European and Virgin, Lufthansa, Quantas, and Southwest Airlines, have started rehiring staff.

The bankruptcy filings by US Airways and United Airlines could set the stage for a dramatic restructuring of the industry. The efforts by the two American companies to bring down debt and labour costs could have a domino effect on wages and working conditions in other carriers, both in the United States and elsewhere. In recent years, wages paid by US airlines in alliance with other partners were used as an upward benchmark for wage demands by employees of their alliance partners.

*Hans von Rohland, with SECTOR reports*

For more information, see the ILO SECTOR Web site, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/sectors/transp.htm>

IN VIET NAM, TOURISTS MEAN JOBS

**V**iet Nam has bucked the global trends in world tourism, benefiting from an increased number of arrivals since 2001. The appeal of a country only recently opened to visitors, offering dramatic landscapes and poignant reminders of its eventful history has not been lost on tourists. Tourism constitutes a major area of growth for a traditionally agrarian economy (the ILO estimates that 69 per cent of the labour force still works in agriculture)<sup>2</sup>, and employment in the tourism sector is rapidly expanding. Lucy Ahad of *World of Work* recently visited the country and drew a profile of two Vietnamese tourist workers.

Tho Nguyen Xuan is a victim of war. Born 43 years ago near the DMZ which marked the demarcation line between the old North and South Vietnam, he now works as a guide not far from where his native village was destroyed in 1967 by American bombs.

Today Tho works for the DMZ bus tour company, and takes tourists around the desolate areas where shell craters are still visible and landmines make sticking to well-marked paths essential. The visit includes the landmarks made famous by coverage of the Vietnam war: the Rockpile, Hamburger Hill, the Cu Chi tunnels. The tours are increasingly popular: in 1991, their first year, 100 people attended; in 2001, the figure was 16,000.

Tho has worked in the tourist industry since 1995, when he got a job in the Dong Ha tourist office. He quickly identified a knowledge of English, which he'd first picked up from the American GIs as a child, as his most valuable asset in the job market, and took evening classes to improve his prospects. Today he is paid US\$50 a month – with two children, he claims that money is tight, but drives off on a smart motorbike. He works six days a week, from 9 to 5, and his holidays include the traditional five days of Tet for the lunar new year and other national days. Sickness leave is covered under a government insurance plan. Tho enjoys his job but wants to make more money. He is very much aware of the possibilities offered by the growing number of tourist dollars; he just needs to find a way to take maximum advantage of them.

Phung Ba Bang is 21, single, and works as a waiter and trek guide in Sa Pa, North Vietnam. Born in a small village in the mountains of northern Vietnam, as a child he shared his time between school and work in the rice fields, where his parents work for up to 12 hours a day.

For him, as for many others of his generation, social success means finding an alternative to peasant life.

Bang managed this through education, a basic knowledge of English, and a job in the tourist sector. In Sa Pa, an old mountain resort where French colonials went to escape the unbearable heat of Hanoi in the dry season, he guides visitors through breathtaking scenery and the traditional villages of ethnic minorities, such as the Black Hmong people.

When not waiting tables, Bang takes tourists up Fan Xi Fang, the ceiling of Indochina, 3,143 m high, with views into China and Laos. He works ten hours a day, seven days a week, but can take 1 to 3 days off a month, plus traditional Vietnamese holidays. Sick leave is unpaid. He divides his pay of US\$40 a month with his uncle, in whose house he lives, spending the rest on food and "visiting friends". There is little left to save, but he dreams of one day improving his earning potential, perhaps becoming a doctor for wealthy tourists who can't make it up the mountain.

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**VIET NAM opens its doors to tourism**

<sup>2</sup> *Key Indicators of the Labour Market 2001-2002, International Labour Office. Figure is for 1997.*



A VITAL LINK, BUT A HEALTHY ONE?

# Emergency service better working conditions



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**T**he attacks of 11 September 2001 turned public attention to the working conditions of the hundreds of thousands of men and women whose daily work involves saving lives and fighting fires, crime, violence, and even terror attacks. From 27 to 31 January, a tripartite meeting focused on workers in the public emergency services (PES) – firefighters, police, paramedics and others – and found that they face new challenges due to deteriorating conditions of work. Now, new guidelines may help to improve life in the PES

GENEVA – The details in an ILO report<sup>1</sup> prepared for the meeting were grim: in one day, 343 firemen and 50 police officers died at the World Trade Center in September 2001, nearly half the fatalities suffered by the New York Fire Department

(NYFD) in its entire 136 year history. The numbers provide a stark indicator of the risks of working in the public emergency services. But according to the report, they don't tell the whole story.

The *Joint meeting on public emergency services: Social dialogue in a changing environment*, brought together representatives of governments, workers, and private sector employers to discuss trends in working conditions, occupational safety and health, human resources planning, social dialogue, and rights at work in these hazardous professions.

What they found, and the report highlights, is that as well as rising challenges in their day-to-day work, public emergency workers also face longer hours, a shrinking workforce and a lack of fundamental rights at work.

## EMPLOYMENT TRENDS: DIVERSITY IN NUMBERS

The problem is simple: while an expansion of public emergency services seems to be increasingly necessary, budgetary constraints have led a number of governments to reduce funding for such services.

In European countries, there is an average of one firefighter for every 1,000 to 1,200 inhabitants. Precise figures are often difficult to find in the developing world, but the report cites the case of Mali, where 329 firemen service a population of 11 million.

By contrast, in the United States, employment in the three emergency services has considerably increased; between 1982 and 1999, expenditures for the police grew by a factor of 3.6 at all levels, and by a factor of 6 at the federal level. The number of police personnel has increased from 724,000 to 1,017,922. Budgetary allocations for national police also increased by 35 per cent in Japan and by 30 per cent in Australia, over several years in the 1990s.

In the United Kingdom, the shortage of police officers available for patrol duty (5 per cent of the 125,000 policemen below the rank of superintendent

<sup>1</sup> *Public emergency services: Social Dialogue in a changing environment* (ILO, Geneva 2003), JMPES/2003.



# workers: Fighting for conditions

ent) is provoking a debate on the development of community policing, a two-tier system using privately run local patrol forces in the fight against delinquency and vandalism.

As of 20 June 2002, 156 member States had ratified ILO Convention No. 111 on equal opportunity in employment, but the reality in the PES ranks is somewhat different: few women work in firefighting and other emergency services. The report puts this down to “archaic social and cultural stereotypes”, and specifies that the almost universal justification given for this discrimination is the inherent dangerous character of these professions.

A further imbalance persists in the low number of ethnic or racial minorities working in PES. This can lie at the root of inter-community tensions. As a result, many authorities are making efforts to integrate minorities into their services.

With few exceptions, these professionals are compelled to work 40- to 60-hour work weeks. The range varies: from the 35-hour working week collectively agreed in France, to an average of 50 hours among American firefighters (56 in Los Angeles), and the 60 hours which firefighters in Tokyo claim to work – even though they are allowed to take naps. Australian policemen put in between 40 and 52 hours.

Pay differs from one country to another, though as a general rule equality between men and women is not respected. It can be derisory: in Mali, firemen receive a salary of 40,000 CFA francs on average (around 60 Euros), when average monthly rent is 20,000 CFA and a bag of rice 13,000.

## STRESS AND VIOLENCE AT WORK

Stress, defined as “a relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being”, is a constant companion in these risky professions. Surprisingly, PES workers tend to cite administrative or organizational

factors (insufficient salary, limited career options, “administrative hassles”, lack of support) as a greater source of stress than factors specifically related to their tasks, such as rotating shift work, interference with family life, and fear of illness or violence.

Violence at work is another fact of life in the PES sector and a major cause of increased levels of stress. It finds expression in sexual and racial harassment, intimidation, abuse, threat, or aggression.

Stress and the inability to cope with it are undoubtedly one of the reasons for the significantly higher suicide rate among police officers than for that of other municipal workers. In the United States, suicide accounted for a massive 13.8 per cent of all police deaths, as opposed to 3 per cent in all other occupations combined.

Post-traumatic stress is another common condition among PES workers. The report pinpoints stress management procedures, such as debriefings after critical incidents and access to counselling – which are not always available or encouraged – as key to preventing post-traumatic stress disorder.

## BRINGING THE POLICE AND THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER: A GUARANTEE OF EFFECTIVENESS

Today, many public services have adopted a community-based approach, more proactive than reactive, with encouraging results in large multi-ethnic cities. Some of the first initiatives came from the New York Police Department, which saw a 44 per cent reduction in overall crime and a 69 per cent drop in murders committed between 1993 and 1997.

However, lack of communication between the police and minority communities is still a source of danger, for instance in some European countries which have become multi-cultural and multi-racial. Economic difficulties and rising unemployment have provoked resentment and hostility towards ethnic minorities, leading to xenophobia and racial vio-



## A VITAL LINK, BUT A HEALTHY ONE?



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>> lence. Creating a better dialogue between emergency workers and the community is the avenue which could help combat these.

Strategies in the fight against sexism and sexual harassment will be more effective, says the report, if they include a strong commitment by management, a clear definition of penalties and an effective complaint mechanism. Beginning with the recruitment stage, all discrimination against women and minorities, either direct or indirect, should not be tolerated.

Operations at the site of the September 11 attack highlighted the importance of good coordination of the available means of rescue. On that day, firefight-

ers, policemen, and paramedics carried out the largest rescue operation in the history of the United States, evacuating more than 25,000 people. But unreliable communications cost lives. "Some believe that the worst tragedy for firefighters at the [site] was the fact that communications between chief officers and the units sent up into the buildings were sporadic", says the report's author.

## PROMOTING SOCIAL DIALOGUE

When issues such as these are at stake, social dialogue is all the more essential to reach a consensus on how to improve conditions of work. The ILO has an arsenal of legal instruments intended to facilitate social dialogue and protect fundamental rights at work. But it is not always accepted that these standards apply to Public Emergency Services. Some member States impose restrictions on the application to the public sector of Convention No. 87 on freedom of association and the right to organize, for instance. A large number of the 152 countries which have ratified Convention No. 98 concerning the right to organize and to collective bargaining – including Germany and Japan – refuse these to civil servants. Firemen and policemen are generally deprived of the right to strike, with the notable exception of the police in France (excluding "gendarmes").

The ILO has a key role to play in promoting social dialogue to give workers in the Public Emergency Services the chance to have their say in how to improve conditions in their work and in their lives.

## NEW GUIDELINES ON SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN PUBLIC EMERGENCY SERVICES

**T**he *Joint meeting on public emergency services* adopted a set of guidelines which recognize the vital role played by front-line emergency service workers in responding to the increasing threats to life and property today, and point the way to achieving higher standards of working and living in the sector.

The guidelines stress that PES must be adequately funded, so that well-trained and properly supported workers can deliver quality services. And quality services require adequate investment by the governments and users of the services. The message is especially significant for many developing countries where budgetary allocations for PES are grossly inadequate.

The meeting emphasized that all PES workers should be able to effectively exercise their fundamental rights at work in accordance with the 1998 ILO *Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*. Social dialogue mechanisms, which are key in giving emergency service workers an effective voice in determining the conditions which make for effective services, should be constructed where they do not exist. This is particularly significant because PES workers in many countries are still very much restricted in their exercise of basic rights, like freedom of association and collective bargaining, even regarding safety and health at work.

With support from the social partners, the ILO will be able to promote these guidelines, which are non-binding, as part of future follow-up activities, including a possible revision of national legislation or adoption of new practices.

For further information, see the guidelines on the Sectoral Activities page of the ILO Web site, or at this address: [www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/techmeet/jmpes03/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/techmeet/jmpes03/index.htm)

# Organizing self-employed workers

**A** self-employed IT consultant is at work in her office in Malmö, southern Sweden, when the phone rings. It's a call centre agent, engaging in some direct telemarketing. Except it isn't another business which is initiating the call, but a trade union

STOCKHOLM – Sweden's technical and clerical trade union Svenska Industritjänstemannaförbundet (SIF) is one of a growing number of trade unions encouraging the self-employed to consider union membership. SIF isn't afraid of using modern marketing techniques in this process, and they seem to be working. The union says it is converting 5 to 8 per cent of its cold calls into membership, making this a cost-effective way of recruiting new members.

FNV Bondgenoten of the Netherlands has a similar story, targeting the self-employed using direct mail and direct telephone techniques. Callers are working their way through lists of 15,000 micro-businesses every six months, and expect to have 20 per cent of the 130,000 or so self-employed workers in their sector unionized within ten years.

This kind of activity may seem surprising coming from a trade union. Aren't unions there to offer collective representation for employees in their dealings with employers? Can they really meet the interests of the self-employed, who, after all, are effectively small-business people engaged in running their own enterprises?

Some unions point out that they have a long history of recruiting the genuinely self-employed, particularly in sectors such as the media and entertainment. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), for example, has reported that about 23

per cent of the members of IFJ-affiliated unions run their own businesses as freelancers, with as high as 50 per cent in Central and South America. Trade unions representing actors and musicians also have very strong freelance membership bases.

However, in the last few years generalist unions have also been reaching out to the self-employed. Sweden's SIF is a good example. It debated the issue of self-employed members long and hard in 1996, before agreeing to admit them into its ranks. The need to respond to labour market developments, in particular the growth in the number of consultants and subcontractors, was the main argument in favour of doing so. The new arrangement began in 1998, and since then approximately 2,100 self-employed people have joined SIF.

Another union following the same path is the French managers' and professionals' organization, CFDT-Cadres, which launched its Réseau Professionnels Autonomes (Network for Independent Professionals) in September 2002. CFDT-Cadres says this initiative, initially a three-year pilot programme, aims to demonstrate that unions have a role to play in representing individuals working in new ways.

Among the target professions for the Network are independent consultants, graphic designers, software engineers, and freelance journalists, well-educated and qualified people, which the union says exist at the margins of the employed workforce and whose rights need to be better protected. The Network (initially focused on Paris and its region) aims to offer members access to professional information and legal assistance as part of their membership subscription, and will make other services such as social insurance and pensions available at additional cost.



## CREATING THE DIGITAL UNION

**>> GLOBAL SERVICES GROW**

Outside of Europe, unions are also turning their attention to the issue of the self-employed. Gilbert Awinongya from ICU Ghana, pointed out recently that as many as 80 per cent of the workers in his country are in the informal economy. "The self-employed have different needs and we try to find out what these needs are. We don't tell them what the union has to offer, we ask them what they want us to do," he told his audience.

Other unions are trying to help their freelance members find business. In Australia, the professional engineers', scientists' and managers' union, APESMA, has created its own employment and recruitment agency, ETM Recruitment. APESMA already has a significant percentage of self-employed members, and John Vines, the union's executive director, sees this as one way to encourage more to join. Eventually, he says, up to half of the union's membership could be self-employed.

Unions seeking to meet the needs of the self-employed must, however, ensure that they have the facilities in place to meet these workers' needs. Almost by definition this is likely to mean a shift from collective representation and bargaining to the servicing of individual needs, a transition which can put pressure on union staffing and administrative structures. New technology plays a role. CFDT-Cadres, for example, plans to focus its work with freelancers around a new Web site, [www.professionnels-autonomes.net](http://www.professionnels-autonomes.net), seen as an important channel for service delivery to members.

The Danish union HK uses the Web site [www.freelancer.dk](http://www.freelancer.dk) for what amounts to a "digital trade union". This Web site has a private section offering specific advice and information, accessible only to HK members who pay a monthly subscription fee of about US\$40. The public section of the site includes the facility for all freelancers to advertise their services in a searchable database. Over 2,000 people have taken advantage of this.

The largest German union, ver.di, has combined a dedicated Web site with a call centre help line service for its Mediafon operation, provided for its members in the media industry, including freelancers. The call centre has the facility to transfer more specialized enquiries, for example about tax or legal matters, to advisers with appropriate expertise. One useful benefit for ver.di is that Mediafon provides something of an early warning system, flagging new problems and concerns as they arise, and enabling the union to

respond quickly. Mediafon can be used by non-members as well as union members; ver.di says about 15 per cent of non-members using the service end up joining.

**LEGAL ISSUES GROW**

As the Mediafon example suggests, legal issues often loom large in the concerns of self-employed workers. SIF says it can offer its members in Sweden up to ten hours a year of individual legal advice in areas such as business and contract law. FNV Bondgenoten also says that contracts are a major issue for its self-employed members, and union offers help in chasing unpaid and overdue invoices. Legal support for court hearings is provided free, though there is a charge for tax advice.

Self-employed individuals are likely to have more insurance needs than those working in traditional employment relationships, including typically sickness and ill-health protection, property insurance and professional indemnity coverage. APESMA is one of many unions trying to use its size and bargaining muscle to negotiate discounted premiums for its members. SIF, which selects products from a number of approved insurers, can arrange policies to top up the limited Swedish state provision in case of ill health.

One issue which unions setting out to attract self-employed members must face is how to integrate them into existing democratic and organizational structures. In particular, the relationship between self-employed and employee members – whose interests are likely to be much more focused on traditional collective bargaining processes, and who may indeed view their own pay standards and employment conditions as under threat from outsourcing – needs to be carefully managed. In the Netherlands, FNV Bondgenoten has chosen to resolve this issue by creating a new autonomous union for the self-employed. FNV Zelfstandige Bondgenoten, created in June 1999, has its own staff and legal statutes, though in practice it still works closely with its parent body. Eventually, however, the new union may become a full affiliate in its own right of the Dutch trade union federation FNV.

Perhaps the most radical – and some would say controversial – move came from the Norwegian finance service union, Finansforbundet, in 2002. Last summer it launched Rom as a separate non-profit organization aiming to provide support and advice on work-related matters to a wide range of "human



capital” workers, including those running their own small businesses. Unlike Finansforbundet, Rom does not claim to be a trade union, and those who sign up for the services it offers (at a cost of about US\$38 a month) become subscribers rather than members. Rom offers legal advice, training, and discounts on services such as insurance products. It is also building up a network of mentors and coaches, to provide one-to-one advice sessions on career issues.

The union hopes that Rom, which is designed to appeal to employees as well as the self-employed, will attract workers who would not consider joining a traditional trade union. There are, in fact, a million people in the workforce in Norway who are not union members, and Rom has the relatively modest target of persuading 12,000 of these to subscribe to the new service by the year 2005. New subscribers sign up over the Internet at a dedicated Web site [www.rom.no](http://www.rom.no), making the service cost-effective and easy to manage.

By wooing the self-employed, unions are adjusting to the changing world of work and to new contractual relationships in the workplace. In a post-industrial knowledge-based economy, traditional industrial relations may need to be extended into new areas. But there could be another reason: if unions do not provide the advice and support which, it seems, workers increasingly require, straightforward commercial operators could target the market. A service like Rom could, after all, be offered by anyone; what Finansforbundet in Norway has done is simply to get in first.

*Andrew Bibby is a freelance writer and journalist living in London*



## PLANET WORK

### WORKPLACE ISSUES

■ The **California** dockworkers' strike which ended last year (See *World of Work*, No. 45, December 2002) shows that danger is part of the job. The Pacific Maritime Association, which represents the cargo companies, says dockworkers had an injury rate of 8.4 per 100 workers in 2001, much higher than the national average of 6.1 per 100 workers. Management and employees can't agree on the cause. Cargo companies say workers were using safety as an excuse to slow down. Workers, meanwhile, said management, pushing for faster work, compromised safety. Others contend that accidents stemmed from macho workers competing to see who could work the fastest and move the most. Whatever the case, officials say there's only one way to stop injuries altogether – and that is to stop work – but neither side wants that. One former US government safety official says the only solution is to strive for “zero” accidents, adding, “If you don't strive for zero, you won't get close to it.” – *Source, Wall Street Journal, 16 October 2002*



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■ Journalists are enjoying new independence in **Afghanistan**. In January, a new Association of Journalists was

### A REVIEW OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN LABOUR ISSUES



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established in Herat. A seminar marking the establishment of the Association also involved female students from the journalism department of Herat University. In a separate but related development, women in Herat were granted the right to work in radio and television for the first time in a decade. Women were banned from working in the media during the period of mujahedeen rule and the prohibition was extended during Taliban rule. – *Sources, BBC World Service, January 2003, Takhasos (news), Afghanistan, monitored by the BBC, January 2003*

■ “Personal time” off is a growing issue in the **United States**. A recent survey by CCH, Inc., a human resources concern, says the number of employees citing personal reasons for missing work in 2002 rose to 21 per cent, nearly doubling the rate in 2001. Total absenteeism seems to depend on company “morale”. Companies with “poor morale” had an absentee rate of 2.4 per cent. Those with “good” morale saw a lower absentee rate of 1.9 per cent. The survey quoted managers as saying the problem seems to reflect a “shift in priorities” over the past year. – *Source, Wall Street Journal, October 2002*

■ Workplace smoking in **Poland** remains a contentious issue. The recent decision by an employer in the Polish city of Lodz to establish a special smoking room for employees wound up in court when a labour inspector declared the move discriminatory – against smokers. Although the court failed to issue an unequivocal ruling on the case, it did, however, take a stand on one thing: smoking in company toilets was dubbed against “civilized norms”. – *Source, Polish News Bulletin, February 2003*

### HOME WORK

■ Four million workers in the **UK** with children under the age of six will soon be entitled to request more flexible working hours. A new “family-friendly” law, set to take effect on 6 April, will allow the four million parents of under-sixes, plus some 200,000 parents of disabled children up to the age of 18, to request more flexible hours in order to spend more time with their children. The law says employers will have to provide strong business arguments to say no. – *Source, BBC News, January 2003*

■ Teleworking appears to be growing in leaps and bounds – on the Internet – and is promoting productivity as well. A recent search by a **Malaysian** journalist turned up 249,000 Web sites citing “telecommuting”, while a search for sites on “teleworking” returned 88,000 related hits. According to two surveys cited by the journalist, teleworking can increase productivity by 20 to 45 per cent through savings on space, airconditioning and lighting, as well as through higher productivity of employees working at their own pace.

– Source, *New Straits Times, Malaysia, February 2003*

## MIGRATION

■ The Labour Ministry of the **Republic of Korea** launched a month-long effort to inspect human rights conditions at some 600 firms employing mostly foreign workers. The move resulted from reports that some migrants were having wages withheld, or suffering from verbal or physical abuse. Government statistics show that 2,300 companies failed to pay US\$4.3 million in wages to foreign workers on time in 2002. Of some 361,000 migrant workers in Korea as of December, only 72,000, or 19.9 per cent had legal status. The Republic has been named a “haven for illegal foreign workers”, with the highest proportion of undocumented migrant workers in the world.

– Source, *Korea Times, February 2003*

■ Teachers from **New Zealand** are increasingly become part of a “talent tug-of-war”, and are being enticed to come home by government relocation grants of NZ\$5,000. According to reports, there are no firm figures for the number of New Zealanders teaching in the UK, although one agency which handles the trade in teachers for both countries estimates there may be some 2,000

at any one time – a drop in the ocean of some 400,000 teachers in British state schools. New Zealand currently has about 43,000 teachers for a population of 3 million, and 323 vacancies in its secondary schools alone. Two key sought-after returnees: male and Maori teachers.

– Source, *The Guardian, UK, February 2003*

## GENDER

■ The so-called “Boom-Boom Room” class-action involving female workers’ complaints of sexual bullying is still reverberating in the **United States**. In the most recent settlement, a woman broker working for a prominent New York firm

won nearly US\$3.2 million in compensatory and punitive damages from her firm, after claiming that male co-workers played pornographic videos and exposed her to a “sexually hostile” work environment which included bringing female strippers to the office and engaging in phone sex over speaker phones during working hours. The Boom-Boom Room case, which set a precedent five years ago, involved 1,920 women working for the same company. Of those, 95 per cent have received settlements. Ninety-one are still pending. Meanwhile, the company says it has become a “progressive hirer” and has increased the number of female brokers on its staff.

– Source, *Dow Jones Newswire, December 2002*

## HAIR TO DYE, GONE TOMORROW?



© AFP

Some 85 per cent of young Japanese women dye their hair – colouring the pure black strands of their birth with red, orange and brown, according to the Japan Soap and Detergent Association. This may be extremely stylish while in school, but when it comes to finding a job, hair colour ideals are still extremely conservative.

“We can’t tell people not to dye their hair, but it will narrow their choice of work,” says an official of Manpower, Inc., quoted in the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper in Tokyo. A worker at one hair salon, Mademoiselle, near Asia University, added that some women were going back to black for job interviews, then returning to various colours once the job search was over. Others are opting for the *furita* life of non-permanent work to keep their blonde or brown colouring.

“Most seem to know what is best for them,” says a career counsellor at Waseda University of Tokyo. “The students think that

hairstyle is a way of showing individuality, but they don’t feel they should demonstrate individuality at an interview.”

– Source, *The Asahi Shimbun, January 2003*





## PLANET WORK

A REVIEW OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS  
IN LABOUR ISSUES

### YOUTH AND AGE

**T**he fascination with youth at the top of the management pile is diminishing in the industrialized world, according to recent reports in *Britain's Financial Times*, and a study by the Harvard University Business School in the **United States**. No longer is the future, as one magazine put it just two years ago, "Younger than You Think". These days, it seems to be getting older.

According to the *Financial Times*, five years ago to be young meant to be powerful, and to be 36 meant to be over-the-hill. But times change. Economic slowdown and the bursting of the dot.com bubble brought many firms' obsession with youth back to earth, and now, instead of being "cool", being experienced is "in".

According to a recent study in the *Harvard Business Review*, entitled, "The Young, the Clueless", young managers often failed not for lack of experience but because they were "too young to have acquired self-knowledge, tact or any other relevant people skills".

Still, does age mean greater emotional intelligence on the job? Not so, says the *Financial Times* and the *Harvard Business Review*, noting that "greater self-knowledge" doesn't necessarily come with age. Some chief executives were exceedingly smug and "charmed by the sound of their own voices".

Meanwhile, the UK National Office of Statistics says that the average age of the British worker is creeping upward and will soon reach 40 as the population continues to age, with fewer replacement births.

Among the significant implications: older workers are less likely to change jobs and less prone to leave to work in other parts of the country. They are also less likely to lose their jobs, and even less likely to find another one if they do. The study also said the loyalty of older workers saved money on recruitment costs and it increased productivity.

Still, older workers are less likely to be educated in state-of-the-art skills, such as IT, and have less incentive to improve their skills through education. And the ultimate downside is this: as working age rises so does the tendency to seek redundancy payments and long-term disability benefits, and never work again.

— Source, *Financial Times*, February 2003

### OFFICE RELATIONSHIPS? MOST LOOK ELSEWHERE

**D**o office work and romance go hand-in-hand? Less and less, according to a new study by Ajilon Finance, a global accounting and financial staffing agency. The survey of some 600 office workers in the United States found that 6 out of 10 American office workers, even if unmarried or unattached, wouldn't date a co-worker. While some 45 per cent of the men surveyed said they might consider it, only 30 per cent of the women in the study said they'd go out with a colleague.

One key factor in the office dating game appears to be company policy; in workplaces with an anti-dating policy, only 26 per cent of those surveyed said they'd go against the grain. Where there was no dating policy, the survey found that 48 per cent would consider an office romance. The ultimate conclusion: over the past decade, both men and women have become less inclined to seek romance at work. The survey attributed this development to increasing competition, stress, emphasis on productivity, and the longer working hours needed to get the job done. So if someone now says they're "staying late at the office" to work, they're probably telling the truth.

— Source, *Business Wire*, February 2003





# Battlefields, hot spots and danger zones

## Women break the glass ceiling to break the news

Women in the world's newsrooms are no longer a rarity. Except on the war front. Though women today make up 40 per cent of the world's media, they face special and unique challenges when they head from the front pages to the front line. This year's International Women's Day event at the ILO focused on how women who cover dangerous stories often find social issues there too

Kate Adie, award-winning reporter and writer, has seen more wars than most generals as BBC Chief News Correspondent. "War is not a boy's game," she says. "Half of the people involved are women." Ms. Adie was part of a panel discussion on "Dangerous Assignments: Women covering conflict", held at the ILO in March to focus on the obstacles and dangers they face in the exercise of their profession, and the special vision which they bring to it.

For women, covering dangerous stories is more than just a job – it is part of the "gender evolution" in journalism. During the Bosnian war, Ms. Adie says, many women journalists literally fought to get there because it was *the* assignment to have. Never mind gender balance, she says. If you're a woman who wants to cover war, "You have to run while men can walk..."

Panel members agreed, however, that women bring more to danger zones than a keen desire to prove themselves. They have a different way of perceiving war, and while maintaining a sharp professional eye also see how societies cope with conflict and reconstruction.

There is also a need to look for the wider story of women's struggles during times of peace. Christine Anyanwu, a Nigerian journalist who served three years of a life sentence in prison in 1995 for reporting on an alleged coup against then-Nigerian President Sani Abacha, and has won a number of press freedom prizes, says after a career of tough assignments she will now establish her own radio station to broadcast the voices of women more strongly in Nigeria.

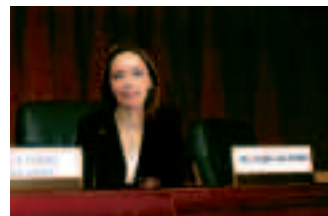
Nadia Mehdid, Algeria, is Foreign Editor at Asharq Al Awsat and the only female journalist in its London headquarters. She says women reporters often cover conflicts that go beyond the shooting. These range from conflicts in the perception of women's role in society, to wars of information, extremists and other forms of overt and more subtle violence aimed against women in many societies. "We often face derogatory and narrow forms of vision, that are based on realities limited to one culture or the other," she says. Perceptions aside, a dangerous job is a dangerous job, said Rym Brahimi of CNN, who appeared by satellite link with Baghdad where she is on assignment, "I didn't cover Afghanistan. But you just go on. I'm here to do a job. This is very important."

*"Since the days of Eleanor Roosevelt's 'women only' press conferences designed to force editors to hire female journalists, women have gone from the fashion page to the front page and the front line. They have broken through the glass ceiling in order to break the news and they bring a unique perspective to the conflicts and wars that increasingly characterize our times."*

– Juan Somavia



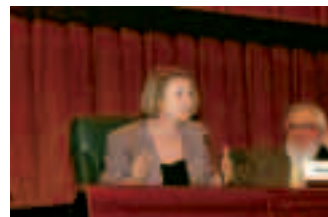
Christine Anyanwu (right)



Nadia Mehdid



Rym Brahimi



Kate Adie

# Microcredit summit – Reaching out to the world's poorest

<sup>1</sup> From an article entitled, "How does microfinance fit into ILO's broader strategy?" on <http://www.microcredit-summit.org/newsletter/resources8.htm>, accessed on 3/2/2003.

Providing credit to the poorest people in the world is no small task. From 10 to 13 November 2002, the Microcredit Summit Campaign (MSC) held its "+5 Conference" in New York to report on the progress made towards its goal of reaching 100 million of the world's poorest families by 2005. The Campaign aims to ensure that these people, and especially women, have access to credit for self-employment and other financial and business services

GENEVA – "Without access to credit and other financial services, small and micro-enter-

prises cannot make the investments that create or sustain jobs."<sup>1</sup> As ILO Director-General Juan Somavia emphasizes, a healthy financial sector is crucial in maintaining and improving employment and social security.

In many developing countries, the financial system is poorly developed and those who wish to save have few options. Entrepreneurs regularly face credit shortages, and few people can obtain insurance to help them manage their risks – all of which impede development and job creation. In the 1980s, a group of microfinance organizations were able to demonstrate that it was possible to lend very small amounts, often less than US\$10, to a large number of poor people. One of the best known is the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, which has lent over US\$1 billion to more than two million borrowers.

Inspired by the success of Grameen and other

## RUIG FINANCES ILO PROJECTS

Microfinance is an effective means of reducing poverty, but many microcredit schemes struggle to sustain their long-term financial viability. The ILO is participating in a research partnership with Cambridge University, the University of Geneva, and the Institute of Development Studies, on a project which will explore ways to ensure the continuation of microfinance schemes. "Global solidarity: towards a more rational and transparent promotion of microfinance institutions", will analyze and compare the potential impact of subsidies on microcredit institutions and on the local financial market. Their findings will help to formulate policy options for governments of developing countries as well as the international donor community.

The project is one of two involving ILO specialists to have received funding from the Geneva International Academic Network (GIAN, or RUIG under its French acronym), a unique network which promotes the collaboration between international organizations and academia in the pursuit of peace and justice. The second project, "Structural causes of violence: an analysis

through the human rights perspective", brings together the World Organization Against Torture, universities in Geneva, Lausanne, and Paris, as well as special rapporteurs from the UN High Commission on Human Rights. It will analyze how the deprivation of economic, social and cultural rights can contribute to the occurrence of violence perpetrated or tolerated by the state, such as summary executions, forced disappearances, torture and other cruel and inhuman treatment.

The projects were selected from the proposals for 2002, and are expected to be published in early 2005.

GIAN-RUIG was co-founded by the University of Geneva (Unige), the Institute for International Studies (IUHEI), and the Institute of Development Studies (IUED). Its budget for financing research activities in 2003 is 2.4 million Swiss francs. The next deadline for submitting research proposals is 2 April 2003. It also has a "Small Grant" category for which proposals are considered at all times. For more information, please consult the Web site [www.ruig-gian.org](http://www.ruig-gian.org)

institutions, the Microcredit Summit Campaign (MCS) was founded to promote the work of microfinance institutions in extending credit facilities in developing countries, and to raise global awareness of the role of microfinance in combating poverty and boosting employment. In particular, it aims to ensure that people worldwide living in absolute poverty on less than US\$1 a day have access to financial services. The first Conference was held in 1997, when the ambitious nine-year campaign was launched.

Thousands of microfinance practitioners and proponents, including a number of high-profile speakers, among them Hillary Clinton, gathered at the +5 Conference. MSC Director, Sam Daly-Harris, reported that as of 31 December, 2001, some 2,000 microfinance institutions had reached 55 million people around the globe, 27 million of whom were among the world's poorest. This is a significant achievement, but a massive 38 per cent annual client growth rate is now required to stay on track. The ILO provided technical input to the Conference on how to manage the high growth.

The ILO has long recognized the importance of the financial sector in poverty reduction and job creation, and through its Social Finance



© ILO / Crozet

Programme provides technical support to microfinance institutions in its areas of expertise – for example migrant remittances, microinsurance, human resource development in credit institutions, and post-conflict microfinance. The ILO is an active supporter of the MSC, and the Director-General is a member of its Executive Committee. Most recently, in November 2002, the Governing Body of the ILO underlined the key role of microfinance in creating decent work and called on the Office to expand and strengthen its work in the area.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> GB.285/13

# Indigenous mountain peoples: Living on the edge

## ILO-INDISCO convenes conference in Chiang Mai, northern Thailand

Some 300 million indigenous and tribal peoples live in over 70 countries. Most live in remote mountainous areas, often economically segregated from lowland urban areas. Almost without exception, they occupy a poor and marginalized position in national societies, and suffer from high levels of poverty and unemployment. A recent conference in Thailand met to address challenges faced by these people







© Indisco, ILO

>> CHIANG MAI, Thailand – The “Regional Workshop on Indigenous Practices of Sustainable Resource Management in Asian Highlands”, took place amid renewed international attention to the issues facing indigenous and tribal peoples. The UN General Assembly declared 1995-2004 as the “International Decade of Indigenous People”. The December meeting – organized by INDISCO, the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Programme, together with partner agencies GTZ<sup>1</sup> and InWent<sup>2</sup>, and locally based indigenous peoples’ NGO, IMPECT<sup>3</sup> – was also timed to coincide with the declared “International Year of Mountains”.

The UN Declaration recognizes the immense importance of mountain regions as a water resource, a hoard of biodiversity, and for its recreational space, agriculture and rich cultural heritage. The Workshop built on the momentum of the Year, while focusing on the issue of safeguarding the employment and ways of life of indigenous highland peoples.

Eighty per cent of mountain people live below the poverty line, and indigenous peoples, a significant percentage of the mountain population, are often among the poorest of the poor. Mountain areas are resource-rich but face specific problems. While carrying fresh water for half the earth’s population, they are particularly vulnerable to economic exploitation and climate change. Mountain cloud forests disappear at 1.1 per cent annually – a rate greater than that of the most endangered rain forests. In parallel, sophisticated indigenous knowledge systems are being lost through assimilation into mainstream societies. Mountainous areas are also among the most conflict-prone zones on earth. As a result, traditional ways of life, which for centuries have provided highland peoples

with sustainable livelihoods adapted to the local environment, are under threat.

The conference brought together indigenous leaders, government representatives, and academics from the entire region to identify best practices for sustaining the livelihoods of mountain peoples. Discussions at both group and plenary level focused on the three themes of highland ecology, highland economy, and highland culture.

The recommendations called for a three-pronged approach to protect, preserve and promote traditional knowledge and practices. In a keynote address, ILO Regional Director Yasuyuki Nodera highlighted the importance of preserving local customs and traditional knowledge systems. He stressed that all efforts to find sustainable solutions should be adapted to the social, cultural, religious, and spiritual specificities of the peoples concerned. The ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) – the only Convention in international law which recognizes the specific needs and rights of indigenous peoples – should serve as a framework for this.

Above all, indigenous and tribal people should be empowered to make their voices heard. ILO-INDISCO supports indigenous and tribal peoples through capacity-building and institutional strengthening of their organizations. Government policies and forest laws which recognize the rights of indigenous peoples over ancestral land, and leave the control and management of its resources to village communities should be encouraged.

Indigenous and tribal peoples are determined to succeed and to find economic challenges with ecological demands. This should be within reach. ILO-INDISCO, together with the German partners, is hoping to move towards this by working on conceptualization and resource mobilization for project proposals.

<sup>1</sup> *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit GmbH (German Association for Technical Cooperation).*

<sup>2</sup> *Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung GmbH (Capacity Building International, Germany).*

<sup>3</sup> *Inter Mountain Peoples’ Education and Culture in Thailand Association.*



# ILO proposes “road map to the future” for Saudi economy and society

With preparations under way to join the WTO, Saudi Arabia is looking to keep a competitive edge in a global market. To this end, it will have to consider shifting from an oil-based economy to a more diversified one with greater input from the private sector and increased participation of Saudi nationals in the labour market. An ILO mission to Saudi Arabia has prepared a report<sup>1</sup> providing a “road map to the future” for employment and labour market policies in the country

The Saudi economy is heavily dependent on foreign workers. 4.6 million, or 71 per cent of the country’s workforce is made up of non-Saudis. The Government has taken the initiative to increase participation of Saudi women in the labour market, which holds great potential for them since only 10.2 per cent of women now hold jobs.

In an effort to increase Saudi participation in the workforce (“Saudization”), the Government is promoting work among Saudi men and women, with particular focus on youth, where unemployment reaches 32 per cent compared to 8.2 per cent among Saudis as a whole.

Among Saudi nationals the problem is one of a mismatch in education and employability. To integrate them into an economy thriving on a large pool of skilled and relatively cheap foreign labour, Saudis will have to be retrained in competencies needed in the marketplace.

The ILO report discusses various policy options, such as the setting of a minimum wage system. But the private sector is reluctant to invest in less efficient nationals and sustain a rise in the cost of production. Although a minimum wage could foster equality in pay, where workers are

paid unequally for the same work (non-Saudis, women, etc.), the system will have to be linked to other measures to raise the skill-level of Saudis.

The report also recommends subsidies to entice Saudis into jobs through training contracts. The Human Development Resources Fund should play an active part in assisting with this. Here, the employer will be responsible for providing the necessary skills training while the employee will commit to completing it. If the employee leaves before training ends, (s)he will have to reimburse the cost of the training to the employer.

To compete on a global level, and on the strength of the national labour force, the Saudi economy will probably have to diversify, and that will imply more hazardous activities. The construction sector for example, one of the most dangerous industries, will require thousands of skilled Saudi workers to fulfil its “Saudization” target of 20 per cent. This will necessitate significant improvements in safety and health conditions in the workplace in order to attract Saudis. Similarly, in the oil and petrochemical industries, which contribute up to 90 per cent of the Kingdom’s income, a comprehensive occupational safety and health strategy must be established.

The report further recommends greater involvement from government agencies and the assurance that making decisions will be based on an improved labour market information system. This system will build upon existing databases and improve analysis which can be published in a timely manner.

<sup>1</sup> *Saudi Arabia: Managing Markets in Transition, ILO*

# Lima: American Regional Meeting held amid soaring unemployment

Amid the highest unemployment rates in the region for 22 years, delegates from 22 countries took part in the 15th American Regional Meeting of the ILO in Lima, Peru, from 10 to 13 December. The meeting concluded that the region needs to create more and better jobs through more and better enterprises

LIMA – Job creation became the central policy proposal as the unemployment rate for Latin America and the Caribbean rose to 17 million in late 2002. Most dramatic increase: Argentina, where joblessness rose from 16.4 per cent to 21.5 per cent. Prospects for economic recovery seemed pessimistic because the region would have to grow by an average of at least 4 per cent per year to avoid an increase in unemployment

**ILO DIRECTOR-GENERAL**  
**Juan Somavia welcomes**  
**President Alejandro Toledo**  
**of Peru at his arrival to the**  
**opening ceremony of the**  
**15th American Regional**  
**Meeting of the ILO in Lima.**



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and lack of social protection, and by approximately 6 per cent in order to reverse them in the future. While the predominance of poor-quality jobs, unemployment, lack of social protection, and poverty seem overwhelming, the ILO said the return of annual 3 per cent economic growth could cut unemployment to 8.6 per cent next year.

The delegates agreed that despite the growing woes in the region, attempts should be made to halt the increase in economic and social problems. With this in mind, there was a call to strengthen democracy in the region; figures showed that support for democracy in Latin America had fallen from 61 per cent to 56 per cent in 2002 (Latinbarometro). Indeed the delegates agreed that the strengthening of institutions and “mechanisms that underpin democratic systems and the respect of human rights and fundamental rights at work”<sup>1</sup>, was imperative.

It was also “essential to assist and strengthen the organizations of employers and workers throughout the region as pillars of any decent work policy, and to develop fully their capacity to meet the needs of their members and to participate effectively in the process of social dialogue”. This was especially important because corruption was seen to continue to be an obstacle to investment, social progress, and democratic stability in the region, and the ILO should push forward its elimination.

The 15th American Regional Meeting served as a further step in meeting the challenges of creating decent and productive work in order to eliminate poverty in the region. The need for productive investment to create work, income, and consumption, and an examination of the link between international trade distortions, and employment and decent work deficits in the countries of the Americas, were seen as essential ways to embark on the road to recovery.

<sup>1</sup> *Draft Report of the Fifteenth American Regional Meeting, ILO*

# EU enlargement: An opportunity to fight discrimination against the Roma?

The debate on human rights abuses against the Romani ethnic minority has sharpened recently with the imminent accession of ten countries from Central and Eastern Europe to the European Union (EU), several of which have substantial Romani minority populations. A new ILO/UNDP survey represents a first serious attempt to provide a systematic and comparable picture of the various aspects of life for the Roma in this area

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GENEVA – A recent spate of legal actions involving Roma families from Eastern and Central Europe have highlighted discrimination against the group. Now, it appears that the accession of Central and Eastern European states to the EU may prove to be a human rights breakthrough for the Roma, who wish to enjoy the same rights as their fellow EU citizens.

“Discussion of the Roma issue is highly charged and dominated by strongly held beliefs on all sides, but it is very clear that the Romani population in Central and Eastern Europe have been the main losers in the process of transition to a market economy,” says former ILO expert and co-author of the report Niall O’Higgins. “ILO-definition unemployment rates of the Roma population are two-and-a-half to four times the rates of the majority populations.”

However, systematic collection of information on this group is relatively rare. A recent UNDP Regional Human Development Report, “Avoiding the Dependency Trap”, based on an ILO/UNDP survey of Roma families in five countries of the region (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia) with substantial Roma minorities (5 to 10 per cent of the population) goes some way to filling the information gap.

The ILO/UNDP survey confirms the position of the Roma among the poorest in these countries. Also of concern, particularly in light of the ILO goal of promoting decent work, is the very high level of involvement of the Roma in the informal sector, resulting from difficulties in access to the regular labour market for this group. The report contains a Human Development Index for the Roma in Romania, which puts them on a par with relatively poor countries in Africa such as Swaziland or Zimbabwe.

The report clearly identifies improved access to decent work as the central element of a strategy to improve the situation of the Roma in Central and Eastern Europe. It also demonstrates the key role to be played by education in such a strategy. The ILO/UNDP survey shows the importance of educational levels in determining unemployment rates; those with incomplete primary education are nearly twice as likely to be unemployed as those with secondary education. This raises the issue of improving the access of Romani children to good quality education and adapting educational systems so as to allow their integration.

The report concludes that the countries under study have done much to remove sources of direct discrimination as identified by the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), but much remains to be done to provide the Roma minority with a level playing field in terms of their access to decent work.



# Lifelong learning in the mechanical and electrical engineering industries



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By the end of 2010, the education and training of over 80 per cent of the workers in the mechanical and electrical engineering (MEE) industries will be inadequate, if not outdated. Most industrialized countries are suffering from skills shortages as more sectors of the MEE industry come under pressure from global competition. Journalist Taina Evans reports on a recent ILO tripartite meeting which discussed this issue

GENEVA – “In the past, a worker needed one set of skills to guarantee him/her a job for 10, 20 years, even a lifetime. Today, workers are going to have to train and retrain all their lives,” says Morton Bahr, president of the Communications Workers of America.

Lifelong learning is a challenge to present vocational education and training systems (VET), which have to keep up with the demands of a rapidly changing market. In fact, education and training systems face enormous challenges all over the world. A recent ILO report<sup>1</sup> shows that retraining and lifelong learning are the most significant goals of the new labour market.

The economic downturn in 2001 caused the loss of some 350,000 jobs in the electronics sector. Lay-offs were further increased by the events of 11 September 2001. In line with this, the United States Department of Labor has estimated that in the next five to ten years, 75 per cent of today's jobs in America will cease to exist in their present form. This implies significant educational and retraining programmes. In Europe, employers' and industry associations in the metalworking and electronics sectors are concerned about the current skills shortage and its impact on welfare and employability.

In a world fast changing from an industrial era to one of ICT, there is need for learning which pro-

<sup>1</sup> *Lifelong learning in the mechanical and electrical engineering industries, International Labour Office, Geneva 2002.*



motes “trainability” and employability. For the individual, this means developing the capacity to find, keep, and change employment, or to generate self-employment.

For the enterprise, employable skills means workers who are able to respond to changing industry needs, and contribute to company growth and competitiveness. For the state, it means creating a workforce with flexible skills which can meet the ever new demands of the labour market.

The skills which enhance an individual’s employability are identified as:

- Intellectual skills, diagnosis and analysis, innovation, and learning to learn
- Social and interpersonal skills, such as decision-making, teamwork, and adaptability
- Business and entrepreneurial skills, including creativity and innovation, calculated risk-taking, and an understanding of basic business concepts
- Multiple technical skills in generic areas which

facilitate occupational mobility.

Many countries now include skills training in the regular school curriculum (US and Germany), but this is not the case worldwide. Although employers, governments and trade unions bemoan the skills shortages and the mismatch between qualifications and the needs of the labour market, little effort has been made to correct the problem. Equally, despite its economic importance, the role of the private sector in training and education has been largely overlooked in official policymaking.

With the challenges of globalization and technological change, VET should be demand-driven. The private sector and trade unions should play a prominent and formal role in its assessment and delivery. VET must become a decentralized and market-driven system responding to the private sector. A clear collaboration between all three sectors, workers, employers, and the state, would minimize conflicts of interest and significantly improve their joint ability to increase wealth and raise standards of living for all.

## Interview: Jean-Robert Cadet — founder and member of the Restavec Children Foundation

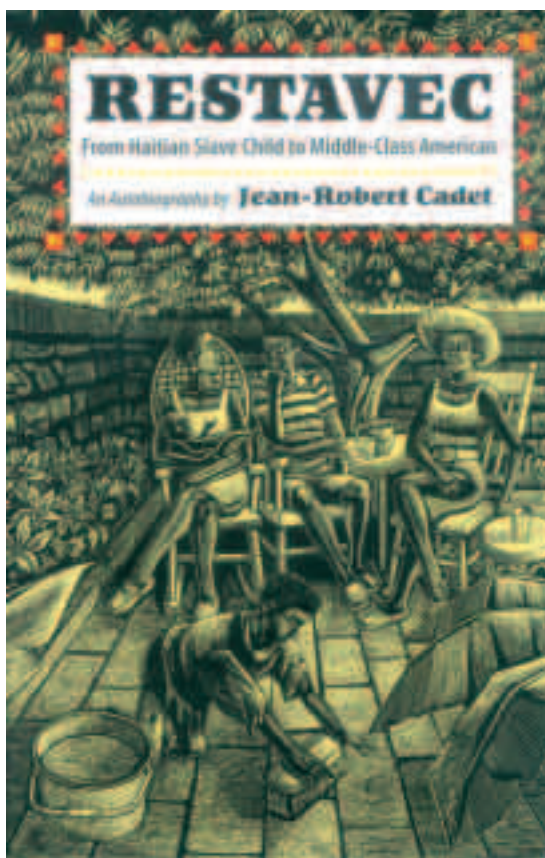


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Jean-Robert Cadet, a Haitian by birth, founded the Restavec Children Foundation (RCF) in 2000, after spending his own childhood as a Restavec, a child slave, in Haiti. At a recent event held at the ILO in Geneva, he told his heart-rending story. Taina Evans, a freelance writer, interviewed him for *World of Work*

Cadet’s escape from servitude began when his mistress moved to the USA and was obliged to send him to school there. The first time he slept





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>> on a bed was at the age of 18 when he joined the US Army. He went on to do a BA in International Studies at the University of South Florida and an MA in American History at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio, where he now teaches. His life's mission is to prevent other children from toiling in domestic servitude. As Haiti prepares to celebrate its 200th anniversary of independence on 1 January 2004, Cadet renews his call to the Haitian government to end this form of exploitation.

*World of Work: Mr Cadet, what exactly is a Restavec?*

**J-R. Cadet:** In French a Restavec means, literally, a child who “stays with” somebody who is not of their immediate family...But in fact, a Restavec is not a sort of guest – he or she is a slave in all but name. A Restavec is a child of a poor family, who is taken in by a richer family, who usually promises the birth parents that the child will be given some schooling and more opportunities than they could provide themselves. Instead, the child becomes a slave, isolated from care, love, their siblings, from any form of schooling or medical

assistance, made to undergo long days of work with no pay, and forced to live in terrible conditions. And all of this under constant physical and verbal threat.

*WoW: How many children are there living as Restavecs in Haiti?*

**Cadet:** There are about 300,000 Restavecs living in Haiti, although there are some children who are taken abroad by their owners – as was my case. It was after being taken to the US by my owner that I became free.

*WoW: What do owners expect from their Restavecs?*

**Cadet:** A Restavec is a slave. As such, they are expected to perform any tasks that their owners order them to do, however degrading, dangerous, or dirty. They are not seen as human, and are not even thought of as being really Haitian – it is as though they came from another country. They are not even seen as children. There is no need to learn the child's name, give them clothes, or even treat them like a human being. The child can be tortured to death and his or her body dumped, and nobody, not the law, the government or private persons, will ask why. The same whips sold in the 1700s for slaves can be found today in Port au Prince streets for use on Restavec children.

*WoW: What social class owns Restavecs? Are they a status symbol?*

**Cadet:** Restavecs are seen as a status symbol, especially among the poor in the cities. People who are too poor to have domestic service can instead go to the country, where most Restavec children come from, and take a child to perform all their domestic tasks in the city. For richer people, they are not a status symbol – they are just useful and cheap.

*WoW: What happens to Restavecs once they grow up?*

**Cadet:** Once they grow up, they are usually thrown out onto the streets. Many girls suffer sexual abuse, and are often thrown out once pregnant, although they are sometimes kept,

with their children becoming a second generation of Restavecs. Once on the streets, with no education, no family and no hope, they turn to prostitution and crime.

**WoW:** *What is the worst abuse facing a child about to become a Restavec?*

**Cadet:** The worst form of abuse facing them is exclusion. They must set tables when they cannot eat, fetch water for others, are denied medical care, are not allowed to speak until spoken to, and are put outside when even the family dogs are inside. They are forced to be invisible, but must always be within reach of their owner's voice. Their tasks are never done. They are sometimes even borrowed by other families, seven days a week, and of course with no pay.

They are often excluded from all family activities, including church. And since they are often taken from their birth families when they are very young, they are even excluded from having memories of a time when they had a real childhood. Once a child becomes a Restavec, he or she is no longer a child.

*Cadet's autobiography, "Restavec: From Haitian Slave Child to Middle-Class American", is published in English (University of Texas Press, 1998) and French ("Restavec: Enfant esclave en Haïti", Editions du Seuil, Paris, 2001). He has addressed the US Senate, in September 2000, spoken at the United Nations in New York and Geneva, and produced a documentary with CNN called "Nobody's Children", shown around the world.*

#### CHILD DOMESTIC LABOUR AND IPEC

**T**he ILO estimates that one in every eight children in the world – some 179 million children aged 5 to 17 – is exposed to the worst forms of child labour, which endanger the child's physical, mental or moral well-being. The ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), which has been ratified by over 130 countries, calls for immediate action to ban the worst forms of child labour. The ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), aims to work towards the progressive elimination of child labour by strengthening national capacities to address child labour problems, and by creating a worldwide movement to combat it.

Child domestic labour is sometimes regarded as a permissible exception to minimum age legislation. However, as soon as slavery-like practices occur in relation to it – trafficking, bonded, or any other forced labour, physical and sexual exploitation – it is by definition one of the worst forms of child labour which the ILO says should be immediately abolished.

IPEC has a programme portfolio of US\$9.5 million for action to combat child domestic labour. The programme in Haiti began in January 2000, with a contribution of US\$1.2

million from the US Department of Labor. Its main aim is to raise awareness of the problem in Haiti and to build the capacity of local institutions and grassroots organizations to address the root causes of domestic child labour. Approximately 2,000 Restavec children and others from high-risk communities are targeted with rehabilitation and preventive measures.

A national survey has yielded in-depth information on the situation of child domestic workers, and has been followed up by several interviews on radio and articles in the press on the subject. Workshops have been held for journalists and NGOs. Efforts are underway to harmonize national legislation with ILO child labour Conventions which Haiti has yet to ratify. In addition, the NGO, "L'Escale", is supported to provide basic services to children who have fled from domesticity and to reunite them with their families. A new law prohibiting child abuse has recently been promulgated by the Haitian Legislature, bringing new hope for change.

*For more information about the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and on Restavecs, please see [www.ilo.org/ipec](http://www.ilo.org/ipec)*

# An Association in the service of the ILO

PARIS – On 31 October 2002, in Paris, in the main auditorium of the Economic and Social Council – a symbol of social dialogue in France – the French Association for the ILO (*Association française pour l'OIT*) held a symposium on the subject of “The effectiveness of international labour standards: The example of freedom of association”. Francis Maupain, Special Adviser to the ILO Director-General, described the concrete results which had been obtained through the new procedures (for example, in Myanmar), while Bernard Gernigon outlined the history of the ILO’s efforts to defend freedom of association. The presentations and discussions highlighted practical instances of the ILO’s effectiveness. The full report of the meeting will be published by the Association.

This was the second symposium organized by the Association, which was founded on 6 March 2001, with the aim of helping to publicize the values and work of the ILO in a country which historically has had close ties with the Organization, but where its principles and achievements are little known outside the circle of those actively involved in its activities. From the outset, the Association has had the encouragement and support of the ILO Paris Office, without which the project would not have succeeded.

The Association’s founders noted two main facts. First, the public at large is not well informed about the ILO. Those with a specialized interest in social issues take an interest in its unique structure and acknowledge the relevance of its standards, but also question its ability to enforce them and think that the ILO lacks the means to impose sanctions in cases of non-compliance. This leads many people to the conclusion that the ILO has little real significance, especially for an industrialized country engaged in the construction of a Europe based on social values. However, the Association’s founders also noted that the current debate on the social consequences of globalization raises questions about the importance of putting the ILO’s fundamental principles into practice as international markets are opened up. Opinions differ on the measures which may be needed, but there is no doubt

about the importance of the debate. The symposium was able to offer certain tentative responses to these questions.

Seen in this light, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, of 1998, is of great relevance. The message is beginning to get across that today’s ILO not only has something to say but is equipped with new means of bringing its influence to bear throughout the world.

In December 2001, the Director-General of the ILO, Juan Somavia, spoke at the Association’s first General Meeting. He emphasized the role which an independent and voluntary non-governmental body could play in making the general public aware of the social aspects of globalization. In October 2002, the Association had already organized a first symposium on the current relevance of international labour standards, and this had attracted a certain interest.

The Association aims to serve anyone engaged in social dialogue, human resources managers, the media and information agencies, and young people, especially students. It is in this spirit that the Association has established a programme of meetings in Paris and the provinces, as well as study trips. Planned subject areas include the impact of the 1998 Declaration, new labour standards, child labour, and the social policies of multinational enterprises.

The Association is independent, and funded exclusively by its members. It provides a free forum in which anyone with an interest in the ILO can be heard, whatever his or her affiliations and convictions.

Associations of this type are as yet few in number, and are found only in Japan and the Republic of Korea. The Associations’s officers can be consulted by anyone wishing to learn from their experience (address: Conseil économique et social, 9, place d’Ipna, 75116 Paris).





## AROUND THE CONTINENTS

### United States, Chile affirm commitment to ILO standards

■ The United States and Chile have reached a free-trade agreement under which they “reaffirm their obligations as members of the International Labour Organization”, and agree to a “cooperative mechanism” to promote respect for ILO fundamental principles. The measure includes an “innovative enforcement mechanism” with monetary penalties to enforce labour and other provisions.

*For further information, please contact the ILO Washington Branch Office,*  
*phone: +1202/653-7652,*  
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### Jobs for youth

■ What are the elements of successful job creation for young people? On 15 to 16 January 2003, a meeting was held at the ILO on “Jobs for Youth: National Strategies for Employment Promotion”. It was a follow-up to the Declaration adopted by the General Assembly of the UN at the Millennium Summit in September 2000, which led to the establishment of a high-level policy network on youth employment, comprised of leaders of private industry, civil society and economic policy. At the meeting, experts and members of the UN Secretary-General’s High-level Panel exchanged ideas on employment strategies for youth, particularly the integration of youth employment into broader employment and

macroeconomic policies. Regional experiences were highlighted in an effort to explore feasible strategies at the national level. Another purpose of the meeting was to assist a working group of the High-level Panel in formulating policies and fleshing out their recommendations on employment creation for youth.

*For further information, please contact the Employment Strategy Department,*  
*phone: +4122/799-6434,*  
*fax: +4122/799-7678,*  
*e-mail: empstrat@ilo.org*

### Improving industrial relations in Viet Nam

■ The recent strong growth of the Vietnamese economy, with massive increases in new business start-ups – nearly 53,000 were registered over the

past year – has boosted the private sector’s role. However, the difficulties of transition to a market economy, as well as the challenges of globalization, are evident in the rise of labour disputes, particularly in the private sector. The ILO will assist the Government in its new role in industrial relations through a new project, “Improve Industrial Relations at Work Place and Promote Working Capacity”, funded by the United States. The project will focus on the promotion of institutions and procedures through which the representatives of labour and management increasingly interact to determine wages, working and employment conditions themselves.

*For further information, please contact the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok,*  
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*fax: +662/288-1735,*  
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## AROUND THE CONTINENTS

A REGULAR REVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION AND ILO-RELATED ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS TAKING PLACE AROUND THE WORLD.



© ILO / M. Crozet

### Promoting the rights of the disabled

■ Half of the world's disabled population live in Asia and the Pacific, and 238 million of this group are of working age. People with disabilities are disproportionately under-represented in schools and training centres, and without the opportunity of education and training this group faces additional hurdles in securing jobs or starting businesses. As a strong proponent of the rights of disabled people to vocational training and employment, the International Labour Office organized the "ILO/Japan Technical Consultation on Vocational Training and Employment of People with Disabilities", from 14 to 16 January at the United Nations' Conference Centre in Bangkok. The meeting was aimed at engaging social partners in a renewed effort to promote the full participation and rights of people with disabilities to decent work. Participants examined the current situation of the disabled in the region with regard to training

and employment within the context of the ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), and the recently adopted ILO Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace.

*For further information, please contact the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, phone: +662/288-1234, fax: +662/288-1735, e-mail: thompsons@ilobkk.or.th*

### Model training centre for people with disabilities

■ Up to 130 people with disabilities in Ukraine can receive free room and board, medical care, and training at a modern vocational rehabilitation centre near Kiev. The training centre, which recently marked its first anniversary, was financed principally by the Govern-

ment. The ILO helped the facility get underway, from seed money for feasibility studies to classroom vocational training modules. The ILO has also equipped two high-tech classrooms at the facility and purchased three minibuses adapted to transporting people with disabilities. Ukraine is in the process of ratifying ILO Convention No. 159, which addresses vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities.

*For further information, please contact the ILO National Correspondent in Kyiv, Ukraine, phone: +38044/225-2003, fax: +38044/225-2003, e-mail: kostryts@ilo.freenet.kiev.ua*

### Migration policies in Southern Africa

■ According to ILO estimates, 20 million African workers live and work outside of their countries of origin, and by 2015, one out of ten African workers will be living and working outside of his or her country. Abuses of migrant workers' rights, poor labour conditions, an increase in irregular migration, and growing xenophobia were cited as important problems to be addressed urgently by governments in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) at a four-day tripartite meeting in Pretoria, from 16 to 19 November 2002. Organized in cooperation with employers' associations and trade unions, the meeting was attended by senior government officials, business executives, and trade union leaders from all 14 SADC countries. A series of

concrete proposals will be tabled for SADC governments as a follow-up to the ILO Forum. They include calls to harmonize migration policies, simplify procedures, effectively ensure protection of migrants' rights, reduce irregular migration by expanding mechanisms of legal migration, and strengthen social dialogue.

*For further information, please contact the International Migration Branch, phone: +4122/799-6667, fax: +4122/799-8836, e-mail: migrant@ilo.org*

## ILO conference on old-age problems in EU accession countries

■ BUDAPEST – Representatives of workers, employers and governments from the 13 EU accession countries gathered in Budapest to discuss issues related to social dialogue and ageing societies on 25 to 26 November 2002.

Ageing of the population is a common challenge faced by both EU accession countries and current EU member States, despite country differences. In the EU accession countries, the average number of men aged 50 and over equalled 27 per cent in 2000, and is expected to reach 40 per cent in 2030, while the average number of women aged 50 and over will increase from 34 to 46 per cent in the same period. In the last 50 years, life expectancy in these countries has increased from 63 to 72 years and a further

increase to 80 is foreseen over the next 50 years.

The meeting examined the role of social dialogue in policy making related to the issue of population ageing and the involvement of older workers in labour markets. The need to foster higher employment rates and the quality of work for older men and women workers was stressed. Demographic changes in the accession countries have led to serious concerns about the financial sustainability of pension systems and the possibility of a growing socially excluded older population.

The conference discussed both pension reform and active labour market policies for older and disabled workers. Policy options dealing with pension reform range from a radical privatization of pension schemes, to reforms of existing public pension systems coupled with voluntary private pension savings options, or a combination of both. The discussion focused on the role of social dialogue in pension reform processes and social partners' involvement in different stages of the discussion on pension reform. Social dialogue can also develop consensus on adequate policy responses aimed at combating age discrimination and increasing employability through lifelong learning.

The conference was opened by Mr. Gerd Anders, Parliamentary Secretary of State, Ministry of Economics and Labour, Germany, followed by addresses by Mr. Peter Kiss, Minister of Employment and Labour, Hungary, Mr. Shinichi Hasegawa, Assistant Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan, and Ms. Patricia O'Donovan,

Director of the InFocus Programme on Social Dialogue, Labour Law and Labour Administration, ILO, Geneva.

The meeting allowed governments, employers and workers in the EU accession countries to exchange views and debate how best to use social dialogue in coping with the challenge brought about by population ageing. The attendance of high-level government, workers' and employers' representatives from all 13 accession countries and the EU facilitated mutual learning from each other's experiences.

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# ILO IN THE PRESS

## TANZANIA

The African, Tuesday, December 3, 2002

### ILO strives to free workplace of AIDS

by staff reporter

THE International Labour Organisation (ILO) is striving to make the workplace a catalyst for efforts to prevent the spread of HIV and reduce its devastating impact, ILO Director-General has said.

Speaking on the World Aids day on Sunday, the ILO chief said more than 40 million people were living with HIV/AIDS. "Nine out of every ten are adults in the prime of life. Most are workers - providers of families, builders of communities, contributors to enterprises and economies," he said.

"Live and let live", the theme of this year's World AIDS Day, focuses on eliminating stigma and discrimination, the ILO chief added.

"UNAIDS identifies these as the major obstacles to effective HIV/AIDS prevention

and care and we know that they are also barriers to achieving social justice.

"Those who must live with HIV/AIDS should not also fall victim to the diseases of the human spirit - discrimination, stigma, and prejudice," he said.

People frightened of discrimination conceal their status and are thus more likely to pass on the infection. They might not seek treatment. They might avoid counselling.

Successful prevention initiatives have common ingredients - they all take a firm stand against discrimination and foster an atmosphere of openness and trust.

The ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS in the World of Work is a blueprint for non-discriminatory policies and support for workers affected by HIV/AIDS.

## TRIBUNE DE GENÈVE

### Le chômage planétaire atteint des sommets

180 millions de personnes sans travail, 550 millions rémunérées un dollar par jour...

«Tendances mondiales de l'emploi. Un titre qui laisse rêveur... pour une étude qui domme des cauchemars. Le rapport que publie aujourd'hui le Bureau international du travail (BIT) parle en effet beaucoup moins d'emploi que de chômage. Premier constat de l'organisation internationale: jamais, dans le monde, le nombre de personnes sans emploi n'a atteint un tel niveau.

Le «monde d'en bas»

Le rapport avance en effet que, fin 2002, le chômage frappe près de 180 millions d'individus sur la planète. Les femmes, les jeunes, au premier chef. Un triste record. D'autant que cette estimation ne prend en compte que les chiffres officiels (de nombreux Etats minorisés - notamment par leur mode de calcul - l'ampleur de ce phénomène) «La situation de l'emploi se détériore dans le monde dramatiquement». Dramatiquement, l'adverbe dont use le directeur général du BIT, Juan Somavia, interpelle-t-il les grands dirigeants du monde réunis en conclave à Davos.

Alors que l'on s'affaire dans la station des Grisons et que le nombre de chômeurs a augmenté de 20 millions en deux ans, le rapport du BIT attire l'attention sur ceux du «monde d'en bas». Ceux que l'organisation internationale appelle quelquefois les «travailleurs pauvres». Ceux qui gagnent un dollar - ou moins - par jour. Au royaume du chômage, les «travailleurs pauvres» sont riva-

Une catégorie en pleine ascension qui comprend désormais 550 millions d'êtres, soit autant qu'en 1990. Et le rapport de comment: «La faiblesse des marchés du travail a réduit à néant les progrès qui avaient été réalisés à la fin des années 1990».

Éclatement de la bulle spéculative du secteur des technologies de l'information et de la communication, attentifs du 11 septembre, baisse de confiance des investisseurs... Autant de facteurs qui expliquent l'ampleur du phénomène. Face à ce chômage galopant, les différents régions du monde ne sont pas dotées des mêmes armes. L'Amérique latine et les Caraïbes paient le lourd tribut: le chômage y atteint près de 10%. En Argentine, il a dépassé les 20% en 2002.

## La Libre

### "L'avenir mondial se joue en Europe"

► Le directeur général du Bureau international du travail était aux forums de Porto Alegre et de Davos.

► Juan Somavia plaide pour une mondialisation équitable.

► Il prend en exemple, mondial, le modèle social européen.

ENTRETIEN  
PIERRE-FRANÇOIS LOVENS  
ET VINCENT ROUCOUR

Le Chilien Juan Somavia, directeur général du Bureau international du Travail (BIT) depuis cinq ans, était à Bruxelles, mardi, pour un séminaire consacré à la contribution de l'Europe au travail de la Commission mondiale de l'Organisation internationale du travail (OIT) sur la dimension sociale de la mondialisation. En premier pour la presse belge, le patron du BIT - organe exécutif de l'OIT, où siègent gouvernements, employeurs et syndicats - a répondu aux questions de "La Libre".

Avec le président brésilien Lula, vous êtes une des rares personnalités à avoir pris part tant au Forum social de Porto Alegre qu'au Forum de Davos. Comment appréhendez-vous ce choc de deux visions de la mondialisation? Des convergences existent-elles?

La Commission mondiale de l'OIT sur la dimension sociale de la mondialisation a précisément pour objectif de dégager des propositions permettant à la mondialisation de bénéficier au plus grand nombre.

## The African

Opinions

### Meeting challenges of international labour standards rules

SINCE the dawn of free trade and the globalisation of economic activities advocacy, tremendous debates have been raging on as to whether these new stipulations could raise world income and help developing countries overcome their poverty within the coming few decades.

Comparative advantage of production hence cost-effectiveness of products across countries with the enlarged market has often been associated with trade. It is held in some quarters that international trade could be beneficial to the developing countries, therefore should be promoted for global economic growth.

It has been observed alongside the above however that certain countries especially those from the developed part of the world persist in maintaining trade barriers against particular imports from the developing countries despite the positive benefits associated with free trade.

It is believed in these societies that unrestricted imports could lead to unskilled workers losing their jobs or be displaced as cheap imports flow into their countries from the developing countries.

The main reason advanced for such developments has been given as lack of standards in production processes in the developing countries. Production processes that we child labour for example have been cited as being capable of reducing production costs through cheap labour hence make products produced with such labour sell cheaply in the world market at the expense of similar goods produced in the developed countries.

This would arise out of the fact that labour standards in the advanced economies are higher hence productive costs are also higher. With this in mind it has been advocated that international labour standards be set up so that a situation is created whereby trade is considered evenly between the developed and the developing countries.

## FINANCIAL TIMES

UN INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE RISE IN JOBLESS FIGURE BLAMED ON TWO YEARS OF ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN

### World unemployment increases to 180m

By David Turner in London

The world's unemployment rate has risen to its highest level since reliable figures began, the UN's labour agency says in a report published today.

There were 180m unemployed people at the end of last year - 20m more than two years ago, according to the International Labour Office.

Even this figure was dwarfed by the world's 550m "working poor" - people who have jobs but live on less than \$1 a day.

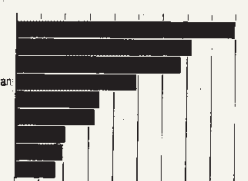
The ILO blamed the rise in the rate - from 5.9 per cent at the end of 2000 to 6.5 per cent at the end of 2002 - on "two years of economic slowdown".

Juan Somavia, director-general of the ILO, said:

### Unemployment rates

% 2002 estimates

- Middle East and North Africa
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Transition economies
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Industrialised countries
- South-East Asia
- Asia and the Pacific
- East Asia
- South Asia



"The world employment situation is deteriorating dramatically.

"While tens of millions of people join the ranks of the unemployed as the working poor, uncertain prospects for a global economic recovery make a reversal of this trend unlikely in 2003."

The ILO said women and young people had been hit particularly hard, since they often had jobs that were particularly vulnerable to economic shocks.

Mr Somavia added that faster economic growth was "necessary, but it is not enough".

## LIAISONS SOCIALES

MULTIMEDIA

Quelle? Comme pour l'Organisation à Ombre ou Porto Alegre, le site bilingue ne revêt aucun caractère symbolique pour les militants de l'anti-mondialisation. C'est pourquoi le site de l'Organisation internationale du travail, cette institution onusienne qui lutte contre les discriminations au travail, déçoit les libéraux et socialistes et les droits des travailleurs partout dans le monde et connaît toutes les formes d'exploitations. A l'issue de la globalisation de l'économie est devenue par son caractère d'opinion le plus en plus large et de la grande relation internationalisation du travail de l'ère du sommet de Johannesburg, débattant de la responsabilité sociale des entreprises, l'actuel

### L'OIT, cette vieille dame qui combat les excès du libéralisme

«L'OIT a un statut unique dans l'air du temps. Mais c'est un bon des lettres qu'une association double comme Human Rights Watch se fait le travail accompli par l'organisation par ailleurs. «Nous n'attendons pas vraiment de contacts avec elle. Nos travaux sont trop éloignés», souligne l'un des porte-parole de l'OIT.

La compagnie qui, occupé au creux de son, cette dernière unique en son genre, où se retrouvent gouvernements et représentants des salariés et des employeurs, n'a cessé de s'élargir en ce qui concerne les droits sociaux de l'humanité. Des exemples? Dès 1900, elle a codifié un régime de travail payé, dans que ceux

## Chicago Tribune

29 January 2003

### Brazilian Activists hope 'another world is possible'

PORTO ALEGRE, Brazil -- There was a mood of hope, tempered by sobering realities, as more than 100,000 activist critics of existing global economic rules and institutions rallied in this "happy port" in sunny southern Brazil.

It was the third year for this growing international conclave, the World Social Forum, created mainly by European and Brazilian progressive groups as a counterpart to the longer-established January meetings of business and political elites at the World Economic Forum in snowy Davos, Switzerland.

Their hopes were partly symbolized by the newly elected President of Brazil Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, a former union leader who campaigned for a "decent Brazil" as candidate of the leftist Workers Party. He has long argued that contemporary globalization has delivered little for the world's poor.

"For me, Lula represents hope," said Ubajara Paz de Figueiredo, a priest from the Brazilian countryside, as he joined the throng. "He comes from the lower class, from the people. He will try to take Brazil on a new social way."

For the thousands of activists from around the world, including an estimated 1,000 from the United States, Lula also represented hope that "another world is possible," the mantra of the World Social Forum.

## ASHARQ AL-AWSAT

### وزير العمل السعودي يفتتح الندوة التعريفية حول منظمة العمل الدولية اليوم

الرياض - (الشرق الأوسط)

افتتح وزير العمل والشؤون الاجتماعية الدكتور علي بن إبراهيم الغضنلة اليوم بقاعة الملك فيصل للمؤتمرات بالرياض الندوة التعريفية حول منظمة العمل الدولية التي تنظمها وكالة الوزارة لشؤون العمل ممثلة بإدارة العامة للمعتمدين والدفاع عن منظمة العمل الدولية.

وتهدف الندوة التي تستمر يومين إلى التعرف بمنظمة العمل الدولية من حيث دستور المنظمة وأهدافها والتحديات والنوصيات كما تهدف إلى التعرف بإعلان المبادئ والحقوق الأساسية في العمل بالإضافة إلى التعرف على إمكانيات المنظمة فنياً للاستفادة منها في المملكة. ويشارك في هذه الندوة ممثلون من بعض الجهات الحكومية ذات العلاقة إضافة إلى مجلس الغرف التجارية الصناعية وبعض مؤسسات القطاع الخاص.

يذكر أن السعودية انضمت إلى منظمة العمل الدولية في عام 1976 وهي من المنظمات المختصة لإلام المتحدة حيث تعد المنظمة الوحيدة التي يشارك في اتخاذ القرار فيها أطراف غير الحكومات أصحاب العمل والعمال.

وقد ذات السعودية ممثلة بوزارة العمل والشؤون الاجتماعية على حضور المؤتمر الدولي الذي سيعقد سنويا لهذه المنظمة حيثف كما أن الحكومة السعودية قد صادقت على 15 اتفاقية من الاتفاقيات الصادرة عنها خمس منها من الاتفاقيات الأساسية.






**MEDIA SHELF**


■ **Global Employment Trends 2002.** ILO, Geneva, 2003. ISBN: 92-2-113360-5

Price: 35 Swiss francs

The continuing economic slowdown and uncertain economic prospects have resulted in a grim global employment situation. Incorporating the most recent data available for 2002, this volume provides a valuable analysis of current labour market trends around the world, and identifies the various factors contributing to the downturn affecting many workers today.

The various regions of the world were impacted in different ways by the global economic downturn and post-September 11 developments, and this report reveals how women and young people have been especially hard hit, particularly in the developing world. Covering Latin America and the Caribbean, East Asia, South-east Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa, the transition economies and industrial countries, this volume focuses on the distinct labour market characteristics and challenges faced by each region and economic group.

The report also traces the various factors contributing to the global employment decline, such as the increase in informal sector employment, the decrease in employment in information and communication technology, as well as extensive jobs losses in the travel and tourism industries, and the export and labour-intensive manufacturing sectors.



■ **Employment Trends in the Tobacco Sector: Challenges and Prospects.** ILO, Geneva. TMETS/2003.

ISBN: 92-2-113425-3

Price: 17.50 Swiss francs

This report discusses the various policy issues currently surrounding the tobacco sector while providing an overview of consumption, production, and international trade in tobacco products. The employment situation and the structure of the tobacco industry are also examined. In particular, the report looks at the trends of mergers, acquisitions, closures, and privatization.



■ **Decent Work in Denmark: Employment, social efficiency and economic security.** ILO, Geneva, 2003. ISBN: 92-2-113297-8

Price: 20 Swiss francs

One of the central challenges of the international community today is how to make globalization work for the benefit

of all. This volume examines Denmark – one of the few countries to successfully integrate the global economy on the basis of balanced social and economic policies.

Sustaining competitiveness at a global level while maintaining high standards of labour and social protection is often a challenge, but this study reveals how Denmark has pioneered mechanisms to achieve this crucial balance and promote decent work for all. In fact, this volume shows how such standards are not only a consequence of economic growth, but also an essential basis for growth and competitiveness. It demonstrates how the integration of social and economic policies and the role of social dialogue are instrumental in this regard. Likewise, other dynamic Danish policies are highlighted, such as systems of vocational education and training, an active labour market policy, a combination of labour market flexibility and income security, social protection and welfare reform, and other programs for reconciling work and family life.



■ **Alcohol and Drug Problems at Work: The shift to prevention**

ILO, Geneva, 2003.

ISBN: 92-2-113373-7

Price: 15 Swiss francs

This volume examines the advantages of establishing workplace substance abuse initiatives, and shows how enterprises of all sizes can set up and implement their own programmes to deal with this growing problem.

This timely book looks at the physiological effects of alcohol and drugs, certain social demographic factors which come into play, as well as the array of problems related to intoxication, regular use and dependency, as they affect the workplace. Similarly, the volume considers the overall paradigm shift towards prevention, and demonstrates why the workplace is not only an appropriate place to launch drug and alcohol prevention programmes, but in many ways is a “win-win” proposition for employers and workers alike.

While presenting a useful framework and step-by-step guidance on implementing and sustaining prevention programmes, this book focuses on key concerns, such as programme feasibility, awareness and education campaigns, as well as training for supervisors, key staff, and workers’ representatives.

■ **Implementing the ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work: An education and training manual**

ILO, Geneva, 2002. ISBN: 92-2-113462-8

Price: 50 Swiss francs

A valuable educational and training tool, this comprehensive manual offers practical guidance for formulating viable policies and programmes to combat HIV/AIDS in the world of work.

Aimed at protecting the rights and dignity of workers, their families, and all people living with HIV/AIDS, the education and training material provided here can be applied to all sectors, public and private, formal and informal. Presented in eight modules, it contains a variety of learning options to meet the specific requirements of different groups in various environments and situations. Each module is designed to involve people in active learning through activities such as role play and group work. The manual also includes case study extracts, numerous samples of legislation, policies, and collective agreements, as well as an extensive list of references and resources.

A CD-ROM is also provided, containing core ILO documents about HIV/AIDS in the workplace, including the full text of *HIV/AIDS and the World of Work: An ILO code of practice*, a sample PowerPoint presentation, and an array of fact sheets for use in training.



■ **Public Emergency Services: Social dialogue in a changing environment**

ILO, Geneva. JMPES/2003.

ISBN: 92-2-113399-0

Price: 20 Swiss francs

Particularly since the attack on the World Trade Center in New York in September 2001, increasing attention has been given to the vital role of workers in public emergency services, without whom society cannot function. This timely report looks at the employment trends, working conditions and occupational health and safety issues confronting front-line emergency workers, such as firefighters, police and emergency medical services workers, in addition to examining the state of social dialogue and rights at work for this group.

■ **Work in the World: A teachers' guide to work issues.** ILO, Geneva, 2003.

Second edition. ISBN: 92-2-113302-8

Price: 20 Swiss francs

This teachers’ book is designed to help young people to understand the key political, social, and economic forces which shape their lives, to help them develop knowledge and skills in order to understand their world so that they can participate in it as knowledgeable global citizens.

This book is not prescriptive, but aims to provide teachers with a practical and flexible resource. It covers every aspect of work, from

personal work issues, such as discrimination and health and safety, to more global ones, such as migrant workers and child labour. Each topic includes case studies and glossaries, and is linked to a selection of student activities and related resources. Tried and tested Web sites are also listed.

■ **How to Read a Balance Sheet: An interactive CD-ROM.** ILO, Geneva, 2002.

ISBN 92-2-013263-X. Price: 25 Swiss francs  
Trilingual: English/French/Spanish

Widely acclaimed, translated into more than 20 languages, and used in over 90 countries, this popular training and self-development programme is ideal for those going on to further work in accountancy, or for those wishing to understand basic accounting concepts. It covers profit and loss accounts, and sources and uses of fund statements. It also includes a technical note on inflation accounting and an extensive glossary of terms, making it a useful reference tool as well.

The interactive CD-ROM includes the same sample sheets and exercises as the best-selling text (ISBN 92-2-103898-X), and is suitable for use by individuals as well as groups. It automatically corrects and scores the user's work, and ensures active participation of users at each stage, ensuring rapid and lasting results.

■ **The ILO 2000 International Classification of Radiographs of Pneumoconioses**

ILO, Geneva. Revised edition, 2000.

The COMPLETE SET of Radiographs  
ISBN: 92-2-107177-4. Price: 825 Swiss francs

Pneumoconiosis is a generic term which covers fibrotic lung diseases arising from the inhalation of all kinds of noxious dust. With their potential to cause progressive physical disability, pneumoconioses continue to be among the most serious work-related diseases worldwide. Those caused by inhalations of silica, asbestos, and coal dust are incurable, and result in high numbers of permanently disabled workers and premature deaths. Workers at risk are employed in extremely hazardous conditions, often being deprived of access to qualified medical expertise and systems of health surveillance.

In the continuing struggle to protect the health of workers continually exposed to airborne dust, the ILO has been seeking to improve the understanding of pneumoconiosis problems since 1930. The goals have been to standardize classification methods and facili-

tate international comparisons of data on pneumoconioses, epidemiological investigations, and research reports. Despite seven decades of effort, many scientific reports today provide evidence that the pneumoconioses, and the disablement and premature deaths which they cause, remain endemic in many countries.

The revised (2000) Classification retains continuity with earlier editions (1950, 1958, 1968, 1971, and 1980). It is more concise than the 1980 edition, clarifies some ambiguities in earlier versions, and modifies some of the rules for classifying abnormalities which have been associated with exposure to asbestos dust. The changes are based on a comprehensive review of experience with the 1980 edition of the classification by numerous specialists in many countries, and by detailed discussions at several international meetings, including the Ninth International Conference on Occupational Respiratory Diseases, organized by the ILO and the Government of Japan, in Kyoto, in 1997.

■ **Labordoc is available online at [www.ilo.org/labordoc](http://www.ilo.org/labordoc)**

Labordoc, a flagship database of the ILO, and the world's leading database for literature on the world of work and work-related development issues, became available free of charge on the Internet in December. Labordoc brings together a wealth of worldwide experience and a vast array of ideas and practical knowledge on work and sustainable livelihoods. It is an authoritative resource on the publications of the ILO (more than 40,000 references), and it is a leading source of information published in and about the developing world on work-related issues. Much more than a library catalogue, Labordoc, with over 340,000 references, contains many thousands of references to journal articles and provides access to the full text of more than 4500 online documents. Labordoc is easy to use and its multilingual collection of material can be searched in English, French or Spanish.

For further information, please contact the ILO Bureau of Library and Information Services phone: +4122/799-8675; fax: +4122/799-6516; e-mail: [inform@ilo.org](mailto:inform@ilo.org)



■ **Bulletin of Labour Statistics.** ISSN 0007-4950 (4 issues, 4 supplements, 1 special annual supplement). Annual subscription (2003): 115 Swiss francs

Trilingual: English / French / Spanish

Articles on methodology and special topics. Trilingual tables of current statistics on employment, unemployment, hours of work, wages, consumer prices (with updated supplements for intervening months). Four main issues and four supplements, plus a special annual supplement entitled, "Statistics on occupational wages and hours of work and on food prices", which gives results from the ILO October Inquiry.

■ **International Labour Review**

(Vol. 141, 2002, No. 4) is a special issue of the International Labour Review on Socio-economic security which draws on information from the People's Security Surveys (PSSs) being conducted throughout the world in an attempt to assess both actual and perceived security/insecurity in people's lives, particularly in relation to their work and livelihoods.

In the first article, Richard Anker introduces the surveys carried out and presents the underlying approach and contents of the PSS questionnaire. Joseph A. Ritter and Richard Anker look at what makes a "good job". They analyse PSS data from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Hungary and Ukraine, and examine the relationships between workers' overall job satisfaction and key variables that range from personal characteristics to perceived employer attitudes. María Mercedes Jeria Cáceres assess the effect of vocational training in Argentina, Brazil and Chile. Though, for the worker, training does result in increased work advantages (earnings levels, work-related benefits), it also results in greater work costs (variable income, hours of work and work-related insecurity). Deborah Levison, Joseph A. Ritter, Rosamund Stock and Richard Anker then examine the way that people define distributional justice, and the personal characteristics or situations that influence how they define it. They also examine whether people of lower socio-economic status favour distributional rules that would mitigate their position. Sukti Dasgupta reports on a survey of attitudes towards unions held by unionized and non-unionized workers in Bangladesh, Brazil, Hungary and Tanzania. Even amongst union members, fewer than half thought positively of unions or trusted them (except in Bangladesh). In the last article, Guy Standing reports on the development of the People's Security Surveys, and describes the initial attempts to create indexes of security which are then combined into a micro-level Decent Work Index.

ILO publications for sale can be obtained through major booksellers or ILO local offices in many countries, or directly from ILO Publications, International Labour Office, 4 route des Morillons, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. Tel: +4122/799-7828; fax: +4122/799-6938; e-mail: [pubvente@ilo.org](mailto:pubvente@ilo.org); Web site: <http://www.ilo.org/publns>. Catalogues or lists of new publications are available free of charge from the above address. The ILO Publications Center in the US can be contacted at tel: +301/638-3152; fax: +301/843-0159; e-mail: [ILOPubs@Tasco.com](mailto:ILOPubs@Tasco.com); Web site: <http://www.un.org/depts/ilowbo>.



# WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR JUNE 12 FOCUS FOR 2003: TRAFFICKING IN CHILDREN

Child trafficking is one of the worst forms of child labour. Although no precise figures exist, an estimated 1.2 million children – both boys and girls – are trafficked each year into exploitative work in agriculture, mining, factories, armed conflict or commercial sex work.

This terrible form of child exploitation is the focus of growing global concern. On 12 June 2003, the second World Day Against Child Labour, the ILO will focus attention on trafficking in children – everywhere it occurs and in whatever form – to prevent and stop the practice.

It's high time to act. Left unchecked, the number of children trafficked may rise. For more information on the ILO's efforts to tackle child trafficking and provide a healthier, safer world for children everywhere, you may contact:

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