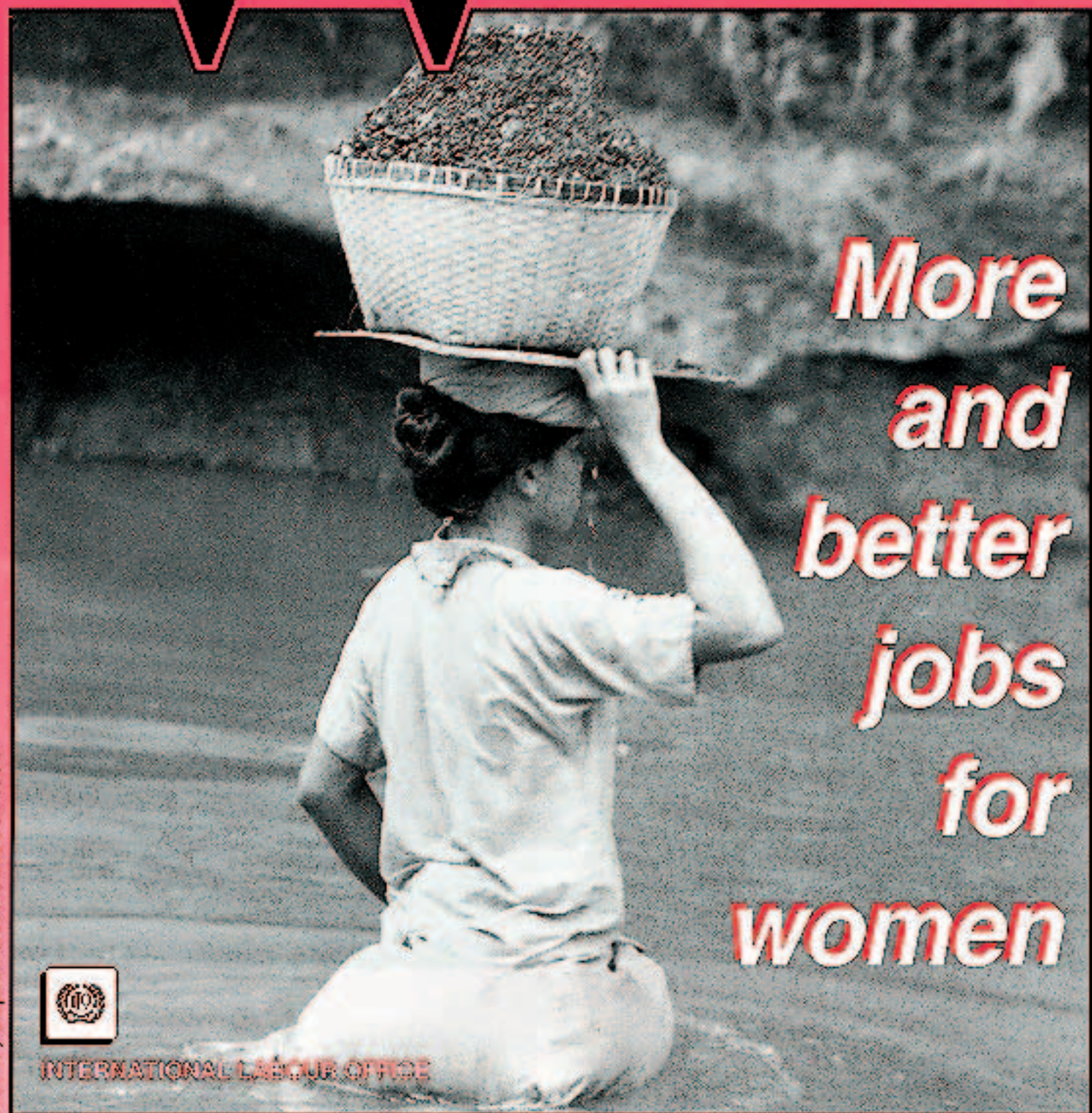


WORLD OF **Work**

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ILO



*More
and
better
jobs
for
women*



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

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Created in 1919, the international Labour Organization (ILO) brings together governments, employers and workers of its 174 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.

ILO Enterprise Forum 1996

The ILO's first Enterprise Forum will take place 8-9 November in Geneva (see pp. 30-31 for more details and registration form) with high-level participation from companies, governments, and employers' and workers' organizations, universities and business schools, from many of the ILO's 174 member States.

Why an Enterprise Forum organized by the ILO? While the main focus of the ILO's efforts is on national policy and international labour standards, its activities at the enterprise level to generate freely chosen and productive employment have grown in importance: as the Director-General wrote in his *Report to the 83rd International Labour Conference*, "In an increasingly globalized economy, quality jobs can only be created and sustained by viable and competitive enterprises."

One of the principal conclusions of the 1995 World Social Summit in Copenhagen was that the ILO has a central role in the emerging debate on the role of enterprises in addressing a range of development issues. What should the role of the enterprise be in addressing issues such as employment creation, skills development, the protection of workers, poverty alleviation and empowerment?

The Enterprise Forum is a new ILO venue for addressing these issues. Its main theme is: "Enterprise and the ILO: Promoting social progress and enterprise competitiveness in a global economy", and the Forum will consider the subject in four panel debates: 1) Implications of a changing world economy for enterprises and the ILO; 2) Enterprises and jobs; 3) Social initiatives by enterprises; 4) The future role of the social partners at the enterprise level. Forty panellists and speakers from around the world are set to lead the discussions.

Since the ILO's Governing Body will meet the week after the Enterprise Forum, the results of the Forum can be taken into account when the Governing Body discusses future enterprise-related activities in the ILO's 1998-99 Programme and Budget Proposals. The Forum will enhance participants' awareness of the ILO and its activities, and support the ILO's continued dialogue and practical cooperation with its constituents.

The possibility of a second ILO Enterprise Forum, provisionally set for November 1998, is already being discussed; this first Forum is only the beginning of a series of new ILO enterprise activities. Using it to follow-up on the important Conference discussions in 1997-98 on "General conditions to stimulate job creation in small and medium-sized enterprises" and other enterprise and employment initiatives, the Forum is set to become a significant means of ensuring that the engines of job generation – enterprises – play an important role in the ILO. □



Jacques Maillard



Bonetas

Women swell ranks of working poor

Women continue to work longer hours for less pay and in worse jobs than men in every country in the world, says the ILO in a new report* which highlights “serious discrimination in job opportunities and working conditions for women”.

Although women work more, they still account for an overwhelming majority (70%) of the over 1 billion people living in poverty. And women suffer higher rates of underemployment and unemployment than men.

According to the report’s author, ILO economist Ms. Lin Lim, “The bottom line is that while more and more women are working, the great majority of them are simply swelling the ranks of the working poor.” She argues that while there has

been some progress, notably in industrialized countries, “women’s economic activities remain highly concentrated in low-wage, low-productivity and precarious forms of employment, with men dominating the highest-paying occupations and women the lowest, earning only 50-80% of what men earn”.

In a Preface to the report, Michel Hansenne, Director-General of the ILO, highlights the growing economic contribution of women to the global economy:

“Their relatively cheap labour has represented the cornerstone of export-oriented industrialization and international competitiveness for many developing countries, while their willingness to give up home and family to become migrant workers has greatly increased some countries’ foreign exchange earnings.” None the less, writes Hansenne, “equality of opportunity and treatment for women in employment has yet to be achieved anywhere in the world”.

The report, issued as an ILO follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development, highlights the growing economic significance of women's employment and suggests policies for ensuring better terms and conditions of work for them.

The ILO notes that over 45% of all the world's women (aged 15 to 64) are now economically active. In industrialized countries, well over half of all women work, compared to roughly 37% of Western European women and 30% of US women just two decades ago. In Eastern Europe female participation has been traditionally high, over 50%, and has remained so despite the economic transition underway. In south-east Asia the percentage of working women climbed to 54% from 49% and in the Caribbean to 49% from 38%. In south Asia, 44% of women work, compared to only 25% two decades ago.

Even in regions where female participation in the workforce is comparatively low, the percentage increases have been great: in Latin America it went from 22 to 34% and in northern Africa from 8 to 21%. In regional terms, only the Gulf States continue to resist the trend toward increased female employment; however, the number of female migrant workers to these countries is increasing steadily.

Discrimination starts early

The report highlights discrimination in education as one of the main causes of female poverty and underemployment, with women accounting for more than two-thirds of the nearly 1 billion adult illiterates. In some developing countries, such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, and Togo in Africa, and Afghanistan and Nepal in Asia, more than 90% of women aged 25 and up have never been to school. Of the approximately 100 million children in the world without any access to primary education, 60% are girls.

Even where education and vocational training are available, many institutions "continue to offer stereotyped 'feminine' skills for girls", such as typing, nursing, sewing, catering and waitressing, as opposed to scientific or technical knowledge. In poorer countries, girls are much more likely than boys to interrupt or halt their schooling in order to tend to domestic tasks, in spite of the obvious benefits of increased education for girls. Says Lin Lim, "each additional year of schooling has been shown to raise a woman's earnings

by about 15%, compared with 11% for a man, to reduce fertility rates by 5-10% and to avert 43 infant deaths per 1,000 educated girls".

Gender discrimination, the report says, extends from education to the workplace. Among the most glaring forms of discrimination in job markets are: "unequal hiring and promotion standards, unequal access to training and retraining, unequal access to credit and other productive resources, unequal pay for equal work, occupational segregation and unequal participation in economic decision making".

A striking example of the concentration of women in low-paying sectors is found in the garment-producing industry, where more than two-thirds of the entire global workforce is female and which absorbs almost one-fifth of the female labour force in manufacturing.

Even in better-paid sectors, women work at the lower end of the pay scale. Overall, nearly two-thirds of women employed in manufacturing are categorized as "labourers, operators and production workers; only 5% are in professional and technical occupations, and 2% in administrative and managerial positions".

In the services sector, where most women work, they continue to be clustered at or near the bottom rungs of the employment ladder and pay scales, holding "only 14% of administrative and management jobs and less than 6% of senior management jobs". In the OECD countries, women make up between 65 and 90% of all part-time workers.

More work for less pay: feminine jobs

Occupational segregation on the basis of gender remains high for all regions of the world, irrespective of development levels. The report cites data for some 500 non-agricultural occupations in the United States, the United Kingdom and France showing that approximately 45% of the labour force is organized around gender-dominated occupations in which either women or men make up at least 80% of the workforce. In Japan, women make up 95% of the workforce in such occupations as day care, hospital attendants and nurses, kindergarten teachers, housekeepers, maids and entertainers.

"Not only do men and women have different occupations," says Lin Lim, "men commonly do work of higher pay and status; for example most school administrators and doctors are men whereas most teachers and nurses are women."

In East and south-east Asia, women provide up to 80% of the workforce in export processing zones. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 71% of all female workers are concentrated in the service sector, but the number of unrecorded female workers in manufacturing is thought to be high. In Asia and Africa, most women workers (more than 80% in sub-Saharan Africa) are found in the agricultural sector – where wages are generally among the lowest – and more than



Jacques Maillard

Unequal pay for equal work is one of the most glaring forms of gender discrimination.



one-third of women in non-agricultural activities are in the informal sector. In spite of women's preponderance in agriculture, it is estimated that only 5% of rural credit from multilateral banks ever reaches them.

Women predominate in informal sector work, usually because it is the only employment they can find and where incomes are often at poverty levels. In the Dominican Republic, for example, 70% of women in the informal sector earn incomes below the poverty level.

In all regions of the world, the report

notes, females work longer hours for lower wages than their male counterparts. In developed countries, women work at least two hours more per week than men, though five to 10 hours more per week is not unusual. In Australia, Canada and Germany, the hourly work burdens of men and women are roughly equal, but in Italy women work 28% more than men, in Austria 12% more and in France 11%. In Japan, the time women spend on unpaid work is nine times greater than that of men.

In developing countries women spend

between 31 and 42 hours per week in unpaid activities, versus five to 15 hours for men. In Kenya women spend 10 times more on domestic tasks than men. In India, women and girls spend at least 20 hours more per week on domestic work. Family responsibilities, the report notes, nearly always weigh more heavily on women than on men, "even for the relatively small numbers of women whose education and skills qualify them for higher-level jobs".

Last hired, first fired

In addition to being the last hired, women are also among the first fired. The report finds that "women's unemployment rates tend to be higher than those of men". In developed regions of the world, officially reported unemployment rates among women for recent years are anywhere from 50 to 100% higher than for men, although in absolute terms more men are openly unemployed (because of their higher labour-force participation rates).

In developing regions, where underemployment is the greater problem, available data on open unemployment show considerably higher female than male rates in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia. The report also cites evidence, including in the transition economies of Central and Eastern Europe, that "discrimination against women tends to increase as unemployment levels go up", with the rationale being that men need jobs more than women: the result is that "women, and especially older women, predominate among the long-term unemployed".

Improving jobs and working conditions for women

The ILO argues that "increasing employment opportunities for women is not sufficient; there must be action to improve the terms and conditions of such employment". Steps to enhance the quality of employment for women need to take account of the following issues, all of which are covered by international labour standards:

- Enforcing the principle of "comparable worth by providing equal pay for work of equal value". This is necessary in order to eliminate male-female wage differences within industries and to reduce the large differences between "female" jobs and "male" jobs in the highly gender-segregated world of work.
- Improving occupational safety and

FACTS AND FIGURES ON WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY

- In 1994, approximately 45% of the world's women between the ages of 15 and 64 were economically active.

- In the OECD countries, the number of women in the labour force grew by more than twice the rate for men between 1980 and 1990. Within the European Union, women accounted for 7 million out of the 8 million newly employed.

- In Central and Eastern Europe, both male and female activity rates fell in comparison to their pre-reform levels. However, only in the Czech Republic and Bulgaria did female participation rates decline more than those of men.

- In east and south-east Asia, women provide up to 80% of the workforce in export processing zones.

- In international labour migration, the ratio of females to males is 12:1 among Filipinos migrating to Asian destinations, 3:1 among Indonesians and 3:2 among Sri Lankans.

- In developed countries, women work at least two hours per week more than men and often five- 10 hours per week more. In developing countries, women spend 31-42 hours in unpaid work, while men spend between five and 15 hours in such work.

- In Latin America and the Caribbean, 71% of economically active women are concentrated in the service sector. In developed countries, the figure is about 60%. The concentration of the female labour force in the agricultural sector is

more than 80% in sub-Saharan Africa and at least 50% in Asia.

- Everywhere, women are paid less than men, and there is no indication that this will change soon. The majority of women continue to earn on average about three-fourths of the male wage outside of the agricultural sector.

- Women hold 14% of administrative and management jobs and less than 6% of senior management jobs in the world.

- In industrialized countries, much of the growth in women's labour force participation has been in part-time jobs. Women make up between 65% and 90% of all part-timers in OECD countries.

- In Africa, more than a third of women outside of the agricultural sector work in the informal sector. The figure is 72% in Zambia and 62% in the Gambia. It is 41% in the Republic of Korea, 65 % in Indonesia and over 80% in Lima, Peru.

- In about two-thirds of the countries in developed regions, unemployment rates among women are higher than among men; about 50-100% greater, in general. In Eastern and Central Europe, unemployment rates are higher for women except in Hungary, Lithuania and Slovenia.

- Women make up nearly 70% of the world's poor and more than 65% of the illiterate.

- Only 5% of multilateral banks' rural credit reaches women.



Jacques Matillard

Nearly two-thirds of women employed in manufacturing are labourers, operators or production workers; only 2% are administrators or managers.

health for women workers, in order to alleviate and eliminate environmental and workplace hazards, especially those affecting pregnant and lactating women, as well as measures to reduce occupational stress from, among other factors, "long hours, monotonous assembly line tasks and sexual harassment".

- Measures to reduce labour market vulnerability, especially to improve security in informal or atypical forms of work. Women often have to resort to non-standard employment, involving, for example, part-time or homework, due to the need to combine work and domestic responsibilities. The risk is that such forms of employment are often precarious and not covered by the legal and social security systems applying to standard employment.

- Guaranteeing freedom of association and the right to organize and bargain collectively; for women in the formal sector, collective action, particularly through trade unions, is crucial and collective bargaining needs to take greater account of feminine issues. For women in non-formal, atypical or rural employ-

ment, grassroots mobilization and organization is an important form of empowerment.

- Appropriate labour market regulation, which would take account of women's need for flexibility, special protective measures in such areas as maternity protection and child care, and steps toward eliminating pervasive inequality in opportunities and treatment between men and women workers.

Providing more and better jobs for women will also involve a conducive macro-economic environment, including accurate and realistic data, in order to develop coherent and effective gender-sensitive policies. Policies need to consider the legal framework, enforcement mechanisms, cultural attitudes and public awareness.

Full-time, secure and stable, formal sector employment

The author of the report, Lin Lim, says that measures to improve women's em-

ployment, including education and training programmes, labour legislation covering working conditions, social security arrangements and collective representation and bargaining, have been based on the idea that women would be in full-time, secure and stable, formal sector employment. Taxation and social welfare systems have been built on the image of the man as the breadwinner and the woman as the dependent or secondary earner. "That image no longer applies and procedures need to be reviewed in order to accommodate the reality of today and to ensure that new or non-standard forms of employment for women are not sub-standard in terms of human rights, working conditions, social security and career prospects." □

*More and better jobs for women – An Action Guide. An ILO follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and The World Summit for Social Development by Lin Lim. ISBN 92-2-109459-6. ILO, Geneva, 1996.

Protecting indigenous rights

On 13 June the Minister of Labour of Guatemala formally received notice of the ILO's acceptance of Guatemala's decision to ratify the ILO Convention concerning indigenous and tribal peoples, 1989 (No. 169). The ratification formalizes a commitment to guarantee the rights of the country's majority Mayan population.

The Convention obliges ratifying governments to respect the traditional values of tribal and indigenous peoples and to consult with them on decisions affecting their economic or social development. It also requires governments to respect the land rights of tribal and indigenous peoples.

Ratification of the Convention is a key element in an eight-part, UN-sponsored negotiation that is seeking to put an end to civil war in Guatemala, the longest running civil conflict in Latin America, which has cost nearly a quarter of a million lives during the past three decades.

Mr. Arnoldo Ortiz Moscoso, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Guatemala said this was an "historic milestone in Guatemala's consolidation of democracy and fullest respect for internationally recognised human rights". He called on the international community to help his Government ensure the "full participation of all sectors of society, men and women, workers and employers, in the building of a new, democratic



Over half of Guatemala's population is indigenous. The Government's signing of ILO Convention No. 169 is a major step in returning the country to peace.

Didier Bregnard

culture of tolerance, peace and economic development".

ILO's regional director for Central America, Mr. Ian Chambers, praised the ratification as a major step forward in the peace process: "This international commitment constitutes a formal undertaking to develop the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic nature and character of Guatemalan society already recognized by the country's constitution." Mr. Chambers, who also serves as legal adviser to the peace process, added that "no lasting peace can be guaranteed if such diversity is not recognized and protected, in Guatemala and throughout the world".

As part of the overall peace process, a specific accord based on the ILO Con-

vention was signed in March 1995 in order to recognize and protect indigenous rights and cultural identity. This Convention's ratification strengthens the terms of this process, which seeks to provide a series of mechanisms to ensure dialogue between all organized civil society and government, corresponding to the ILO's view, since 1919, that equitable development can only be achieved through positive interaction between both governmental and non-governmental actors. Guatemala's acceptance of the terms of the Convention will be subject to the ILO's verification procedures, notably those of a committee of independent international legal experts and of the tripartite Committee on the Application of Labour Standards. The ILO and the United Nations are currently engaged in discussions to ensure that their respective verification procedures in Guatemala are mutually reinforcing.

There remain two outstanding issues in the peace negotiations – the role of the army in civil society and constitutional reform. In May 1996, with ILO assistance, parties

to the negotiation reached an accord on a series of socio-economic issues. Under the terms of the socio-economic agreement, Guatemala will increase social investment, notably in education, undertake agrarian reform and institute tripartite consultation on major economic and social issues, particularly within the framework of local development. While the final global peace accord is expected to be signed in mid-September of this year, the ILO and the UN are already working together, along with other bodies of the UN system, in mobilizing international support for the complex effort of transforming these agreements into political and social realities for the people of Guatemala.

AROUND THE CONTINENTS

▲ **WORKERS' PRIVACY:** The ILO is holding a tripartite "Meeting of Experts on Workers' Privacy" at ILO Headquarters in Geneva from 1 to 7 October. Twenty-four official participants from governments, and employers' and workers' organizations, plus observers, will be discussing a draft code of practice on the protection of workers' personal data.

▲ **FOOTWEAR, TEXTILE AND CLOTHING (TCF) INDUSTRIES:** From 28

October to 1 November, the ILO is holding a "Tripartite Meeting on the Globalization of the Footwear, Textiles and Clothing Industries: Effects on Employment and Conditions". Fifty-four delegates divided equally among government, employer and worker representatives will discuss how workers' employment and earnings have been affected by the transnational nature of TCF industries, with a view to producing a set of conclusions and resolutions to guide the ILO's work and to set guideposts for tripartite action in this area.

▲ **CARIBBEAN LABOUR-MARKET DATA BANK:** The Caribbean

MDT (CAMAT), based in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, has created a Labour Market Information Data Bank. A set of 38 tables on subjects such as employment and unemployment levels, wages and incomes, industrial injuries, labour costs and social security benefits will be developed for each country in the subregion (21 in

all) for which data is available. The information is available on request from the ILO Caribbean Office and the Data Bank's information will also serve as the basis for an annual report on labour trends in the subregion. The first report, set to appear late in 1996, will focus on youth employment. For more information: Tel: +1-809-628.1453; fax: +1-809-628.2433.

▲ **REFORMING UKRAINE'S SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM:** At an IMF/World



In the Caribbean, the informal sector accounts for large shares of total employment – approximately 37% in the case of Jamaica – according to the ILO's new regional Data Bank.

Bank-sponsored seminar in Washington in July, the ILO, the IMF and the World Bank put forward proposals for restructuring Ukraine's social security system. There was broad agreement

on the following issues: the pension system should continue to be financed by workers, employers and the Government but requires substantial reform; short-term income relief and unemployment benefits must be streamlined; the scope of eligibility for benefits from the Chernobyl fund must be reviewed; and the means-tested housing benefit should be upgraded. In addition, the IMF recommended social sector savings equivalent to roughly 20% of all social expenditure, or 3.5% of GDP. The ILO and the World Bank will now

undertake a joint project to assist Ukraine in the establishment of a computerized model for managing social expenditures. The model will help the Government to analyse more effectively the quantitative aspects of social policy questions and possible reforms. The project is expected to get underway in November 1996.

▲ **ENSURING THAT ECONOMIC GROWTH GENERATES JOBS IN AFRICA:** In early April,

the ILO, IMF and World Bank met with Southern African trade union leaders in Harare, Zimbabwe to explore ways to incorporate social policy concerns into national growth policies and the lending programmes of the World Bank and IMF. Since the April meeting, the Government and trade unions in Zimbabwe have held discussions with the ILO and IMF on how to ensure

that growth increases employment. The ILO is encouraging other trade unions in Southern Africa to undertake similar social policy dialogues with governments in the region. □

Vietnam: Expanding the social security system

Vietnam's social security system covers only employees of the state and in the larger private-sector enterprises. With the downsizing of the public sector, many people are losing their coverage. The ILO and UNDP are helping the Government to shore up the system.

The year 1996 marks the tenth anniversary of Vietnam's economic reform, a move towards a more market-oriented approach. Since the launching of its "doi moi" (restructuring) policy, Vietnam's economy has experienced a remarkable turnaround: annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth has averaged more than 8% over the past five years and is rising. The signs of prosperity are most evident in the major cities such as Ho Chi Minh City, where youngsters on imported Japanese scooters cruise the streets sporting the latest European fashions.

The change, however, has not been without its hardships, particularly for workers in the state sector. Along with encouraging private enterprises, Vietnam has allowed many of its more inefficient state enterprises to be shut down or merged with other companies. Downsizing over the last 10 years has whittled 14,000-plus state-owned enterprises down to a hardcore group which today numbers some 7,000 firms. "There have been hundreds of thousands of workers who have already had to seek alternative employment, who have lost their jobs as state-owned enterprises have gone out of business," notes Roy Morey, Resident Representative in Hanoi for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The implications for Vietnam's system of social protection are huge. Of the country's 38 million-strong labour force, an estimated 33 million are currently employed; of these, only 5.6 million are covered under the present state-run social insurance system. Until recently, state-sponsored pensions, sick pay, injury compensation and maternity benefits were



Jacques Maillard

Of the country's 38 million-strong labour force, only 5.6 million are covered under the present state-run social insurance system.

restricted to workers employed by the Government or working in state-owned enterprises. As more state enterprises face closure, the number of workers falling outside the Government's social safety net threatens to grow even bigger. "It will be very difficult in the long run to develop a comprehensive programme on state-owned enterprise reform without facing up to the social security implications," argues Catherine Comtet, Director of the Bangkok Area Office of the ILO. The ILO has been working with the Vietnamese Government since 1994 to design, plan and implement a social

security system which would extend coverage to excluded sectors and provide support to workers who are disadvantaged in the current transition process.

A big challenge will be to bring in the large number of workers who have never been protected by the safety net. These include workers employed on agricultural cooperatives and by the private sector, a group which, according to the Government's 1991 statistics, makes up close to 90% of the country's labour force.

"We are helping our tripartite constituents to develop their capacity to provide social protection to all working people.

We have to ensure that everyone gains from the changes taking place in Vietnam," says Comtet.

The ILO project, which is being financed by a US\$1.5 million grant from the Netherlands, will include elements such as training, computerization, and advice on financing and investing social security funds. Also tied to this is a joint ILO/UNDP effort to help Vietnam implement its new Labour Code, which came into force in January 1995, facilitating the protection of workers through the enforcement of workplace standards.

Vietnam has already taken a number of steps to institute social protection reform. In January 1995 the government changed its Social Security Scheme to include private enterprises with 10 or more employees in the state benefit system. Terry Whitaker, Chief Technical Advisor to the ILO on the social security project, says that the Government's current thinking is to extend coverage progressively to all workers, including those in cooperatives and private firms with less than 10 workers, and to the self-employed. Coverage may initially be extended through a voluntary system which could later become compulsory.

"A big problem is that workers who are the easiest to identify and collect from are in the formal sector and already in the system," he explains. "Adding 25 million people or so to the system is a huge task. The fact that these people are

from the most difficult sectors to collect from won't make the task any easier."

Also in January 1995 the government established the Vietnam Social Insurance (VSI) Organization. The new institution is responsible for managing all social security activities which were previously split between the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), which dealt with long-term benefit schemes such as pensions, and the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL), which handled short-term schemes including sickness and maternity benefits.

According to Whitaker, VSI is currently operating "with various degrees of success". The organization became operational in July of 1995 and from the outset faced extensive arrears in contributions.

"At present perhaps 30% of state-owned enterprises are not complying or not complying correctly, that is to say they're not paying what they should into the system," he claims. "In the private sector, the rate of non-compliance is much higher. It is estimated that as many as 90% of private firms are still not effectively participating."

The ILO project is also looking at the possibility of combining some activities of VSI with that of the Vietnam Health Insurance (VHI) organization, the country's national healthcare body, in particular by merging what are now two separate

efforts to develop respective computerized membership and collection databases. "Virtually all the members of VSI are also covered by VHI," noted Whitaker. "It's not very efficient collecting parallel contributions under two different systems. This doesn't necessarily mean, however, that the two organizations should be combined - many countries have combined collection for separate systems."

The idea, however, is still in the early stages with further consultations in the offing between Vietnamese officials and the ILO. A final decision on how to proceed is not expected for several months at the earliest.

Regardless of how it proceeds on these issues, Vietnam's Government has clearly endorsed the need for social-security reform. The endorsement was reiterated by delegates to the ruling communist party's Eighth National Congress June 28-July 1, which approved a five-year social and economic development plan calling for expanding social insurance for the working people of all sectors and the obligation of all agencies and enterprises to take part in the system. The plan also calls for improvements in the management and utilization of insurance funds and guarantees for the living standard of pensioners. □

Daniel Pruzin*

*Journalist based in Bangkok

Central American nations join the battle against child labour

The ILO's efforts to end economic exploitation of child labourers got a boost on 13 June when the Governments of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama signed memoranda of understanding with the ILO designed to strengthen national programs to eliminate child labour.

In signing the agreements, the Governments committed themselves to deepening cooperation with trade unions, employer organizations and other social actors involved in the battle against child labour. These groups, in turn, will be able to call upon the resources of the ILO's technical cooperation programme

and the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

IPEC, which was created in 1992, on the basis of projects in six countries, has now signed memoranda of understanding with 19 countries* and is active in well over 20 countries. The aim of the programme is the phased elimination of child labour by strengthening national capacities for dealing with the problem and by promoting a world-wide movement, including research and public information activities, designed to raise awareness of the nature and extent of child labour.

Commenting on IPEC expansion in Central America, Mr. Eduardo Araujo (Project Coordinator for Latin America) said that "these agreements reflect the

broadening public commitment of an entire region to rid itself of the scourge of child labour". IPEC's initial emphasis has to be getting children out of work in dangerous industries and providing alternatives in terms of education and income support, Araujo continued.

The agreements signed follow those signed in early June between the ILO and the Governments of Bolivia and Chile. Similar agreements are set to follow between the ILO and the Governments of Colombia, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela.

*Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkey and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Child labour

Refuting the “nimble fingers” argument

Are tiny hands necessary to weave delicate knots? An ILO study* refutes one of the most common, though fallacious, arguments of apologists for child labour in the hand-woven carpet industry – the so-called “nimble fingers” argument.

Approximately 130,000 children work in India’s hand-knotted carpet industry, 80% of whom are located in Uttar Pradesh, the country’s most populous state (over 140 million people) and the centre of the rug industry. These children account for approximately 22% of all weavers in the region, an ILO study of 362 carpet-weaving establishments and 2,130 weavers estimates.

The working conditions are often poor, involving long hours sitting in one position, breathing cotton and wool fibres, eye-strain from doing very fine work and poor lighting. In the smallest enterprises the only light often available is the natural light filtering in through an open doorway. Only 41% of the firms surveyed consistently have electric lighting.

Children are more likely to work in larger establishments: the smallest enterprises are family operations where the father and other family members might both weave carpets and till a plot of land, whereas the larger businesses use almost all hired labour. In the one-loom enterprises (56% of all enterprises), approximately 14% of weavers are children, while the number of child labourers rises to around 33% in businesses with five or more looms.

Although the proportion of child labour rises with the size of firm, the proportion does not rise as the quality of carpet increases; in fact, children are more likely to work on low-quality than on the highest-quality carpets. There is “no evidence that children dominate any particular design or quality niches”. The opposite would be the case if the “nimble fingers” argument were true, the study contends.

If the “nimble fingers” argument does

not hold in the hand-knotted carpet industry, then it probably does not hold in other industries, the study suggests.

Rejection of the “nimble fingers” argument is reinforced by the ability of adults to master carpet-weaving skills. Many adolescents and young adults who attend government training centres go on to run their own weaving businesses, while weavers say it takes a year to become fully proficient, whether one starts as an adult or a child.

Enterprises often small and impoverished

The workforce of the hand-knotted carpet industry is mired in poverty. Most weaving enterprises in the Indian handknotted carpet industry are small, marginal operations run by poor and illiterate men, the report states, and they have no margin to pay higher wages. Seventy-seven per cent of the employers have never attended school; 55% of them began weaving before age 14, the study finds. An enterprise normally consists of a loom set up in a family’s one-room cottage, with perhaps an additional loom, or looms, in an attached veranda or a shed. Male family members, including children, provide the bulk of the labour.

Women are almost completely absent from the carpet-weaving industry in north India. This is not the case in other countries or other parts of India.

India’s Factories Act has influenced the current structure of the carpet industry, the study finds. Costly health, safety and labour regulations to which large firms are subject do not apply to cottage industries. Only a small proportion of

establishments – 4% of the survey’s weighted sample – have five or more looms.

Competition limits retail price increases

The ILO survey finds that while child and adult weavers have similar productivity, there is a cost advantage to hiring child labour: children earn less while apprentices than do fully-trained weavers, and their addition to the workforce depresses the going wage rate. The ILO study estimates that replacing the 22% of children in the workforce would likely cause the wage bill to rise by about 5%.

Given the small scale of many weaving enterprises and the fact that weaving charges make up approximately 40% of the total production cost, with the loom owner receiving a fee equivalent to 10% of production costs for supervision and provision of looms and premises, it is clear that the use of child labour can add greatly to the revenues and profits of loom owners.

The extra labour costs involved in eliminating child labour become much easier to absorb further down the distribution chain. Importing country wholesalers mark up the carpets around 65%, while foreign retailers typically mark up the carpets by approximately 200%. With sales or value-added tax, the carpets can



easily cost four times as much to the consumer as the Indian export price, Richard Anker, one of the study's authors, explains. This means that the overall savings in production costs from the use of child labour are very small when compared to the foreign retail price.

Finding solutions which satisfy both local weavers and foreign retailers must avoid a beggar-thy-neighbour spiral, the report warns. The study contends that solutions are best elaborated at an international level: "If carpet-producing countries simultaneously implemented a no-child-labour strategy in their hand-knotted carpet industries, none of them would be at a competitive disadvantage."

Methods of reducing child labour such as those used in the garment industry in Bangladesh, where there is tripartite collaboration to ensure that the children are treated well and that there are educational opportunities for them until they are replaced without economic hardship to their families, is not likely to work in the hand-knotted carpet industry, Anker contends. "Neither labelling nor inspection is likely to work here because the industry is too fragmented. It is impossible to control the thousands of cottages where one or two carpets per year are woven. We need solutions that address the general problems of poverty while developing alternative sources of both employment and education."

Anker believes that child labour is

not necessary in the carpet industry. Children do not possess a unique skill and there is a ready pool of surplus adult labour ready to take over from them. "People should not be fooled into thinking that child labour is necessary for the industry to survive. The irreplaceable skills, or "nimble fingers" argument should no longer be used to justify the

use of child labour in the carpet industry or any other industry." □

*Is child labour really necessary in India's carpet industry?, by Deborah Levison, Richard Anker, Shahid Ashraf and Sandhya Barge. Labour Market Paper No. 15, Employment Department, International Labour Office, Geneva, 1996. ISBN 92-2-110205-X.

Employers pledge to combat child labour

With a resolution adopted by its General Council on 3 June in Geneva, the International Organization of Employers (IOE) launched its first-ever action programme against child labour. Its focus is on putting an immediate end to the most intolerable aspects of child labour, while working towards its eventual total elimination.

Taking a pragmatic view that child labour cannot be abolished overnight due to the grinding poverty which forces families to put their children to work, a major priority of the IOE's programme will be to protect the health and future of those children who must continue to work.

The programme centres on creating a healthy working environment and education and training opportunities for working children, while compiling examples of members' activities in a handbook which will serve as a guide on best practice.

Drafting of the first edition of the handbook is planned to start this year. The IOE resolution calls on its Executive Committee, in the meantime, to collect information from members on child labour initiatives and create a database of companies and organizations active in combatting child labour.

IOE members agreed in the resolution to take steps immediately to put an end to slave-like and dangerous

forms of child labour, while developing formal policies with a view to its eventual elimination in all sectors.

Until child labour can be eradicated universally, those children still working should be provided with day care centres, schools and training facilities, while their access to health care should also be improved, the IOE resolution notes. When children are removed from work, IOE members must ensure that the situation of the children and their families improves.

Individual members' actions will be complemented by IOE efforts to ensure that best business experience is incorporated into international and national policies for the eradication of child labour.

While acknowledging that further concerted action is required, the IOE also wants to ensure that "simplistic solutions which can merely throw children out of work without providing alternative means of livelihood for them and their families" are not undertaken. It also wants to see the positive efforts of enterprises to limit child labour recognized, and the handbook will become one of the major vehicles for doing this.

It will include examples of good practice and lessons learned from past experiences as well as bibliographies of reference material and helpful contacts in various countries. This last element will be particularly useful in establishing networks of mutually supportive groups and individuals, the IOE believes.

The IOE wants to set out examples of "inspiring work being done by some companies and employers' organizations. For example, cases of combining improved working conditions and shortened hours with provision for schooling for the children concerned", as IOE Vice-Chairman Abraham Katz (President of the U.S. Council for International Business) told the special meeting at ministerial level on child labour organized during the June 1996 International Labour Conference (*see pp. 18-20*).



Marie Dorigny



Jacques Maillard

Homeworkers: First comprehensive international standards

Eight million Americans, 1 million Japanese and at least 2.1 million Europeans can be classified as homeworkers, according to an ILO report*. In many other countries, the phenomenon is even more widespread, with, for example, 6 million Filipinos and 20% of the population in Central Java (Indonesia) engaged in homework. Many Latin Americans also work from home, especially in the garment industry, and the practice also appears to be widespread in Africa.

Home workers are normally paid on a piece-rate basis and they may earn as much as two-thirds less than “in-workers” for comparable work in terms of quantity and quality. There is no regulation over the number of hours they work and they rarely have the same social protection that “in-workers” doing the same work enjoy. “Overwork, in turn, undermines health and damages the quality of life generally,” the report says. Women account for the vast majority of homeworkers (as

much as 95%) and child labour is often associated with home work.

Delegates to the 83rd International Labour Conference agreed, however, that home work can also yield substantial benefits to employers, workers and national economies. For many workers, particularly women, home work provides an opportunity to earn an income while attending to domestic needs. For some professionals, working at home may even be the preferred option.

In order to assist countries to improve their legislation and their practices in this sector, the 83rd Session of the International Labour Conference, which met 4-20 June in Geneva, adopted the first international comprehensive standards – an ILO Convention and Recommendation – covering homeworkers.**

*Home work, Report for the 82nd Session (1995) of the International Labour Conference, International Labour Office, Geneva, 1994. ISBN 92-2-109417-0; ISSN 0074-6681.

**Vote on the Convention: Yes-246; No-14; Abstentions-152 (most of the employers' delegates abstained). Vote on the Recommendation: Yes-303; No-4; Abstentions-111 (many of the employers' delegates abstained).

President Jacques Chirac at the Conference

“The economy must be made to serve people”

“In order to make a success of globalization for the benefit of all...the economy must be made to serve people,” said French President Jacques Chirac in a speech delivered 11 June in a special session of the Conference. Excerpts of his speech follow.

“One is bound to acknowledge, however, that this process of globalization has its downside also. In the industrialized nations, it is imposing rapid, and consequently painful restructuring, with adverse effects on the employment situation. In the poorest countries, meanwhile, it is liable to lead to greater inequality. And it is accentuating the risk of certain parts of the world becoming marginalized.

We must therefore learn to control this process of globalization better....

We first need to create the conditions for sustainable, jobs-creating growth. We must take full advantage of all the possibilities the new technologies afford us, and especially information technologies... We must also develop the service sector, and define new forms of work organization that answer both the needs of employers and the aspirations of employees.

Above all, we need to invest in people, allowing each and every worker access to lifelong vocational training...

We must learn to replace the concept of a ‘job for life’ by that of ‘employability’. For behind this ungainly word, in fact, lies a new approach to organizing our society: it is up to governments, employers and the unions to figure out together ways to allow all workers to move from one job to another, throughout their working lives, and to receive appropriate training while retaining their welfare protection.

But we must also work to prevent and

combat the exclusion of low-skilled workers, by lowering indirect labour costs wherever these place an undue burden on the cost of unskilled labour. We need active policies to help the most vulnerable people in society to return to work, by adjusting our tax and welfare systems so as to ‘make work pay’.

To make a success of globalization, each of us must remain faithful to the cultural models we have inherited from our history, and to our conception of mankind. That explains my deep attachment to the European social model, based on the idea of welfare to protect people against the vicissitudes of life, based on a tradition of social dialogue and collective bargaining, and on the role of the state as guardian and guarantor of national cohesion....

But it is to the poorest countries that we must turn our thoughts to also, and in the first place... Having access to neither capital nor markets, the poorest countries face the threat of marginalization....

Our ambition must be to keep official development aid at a sufficiently high level, and to increase its effectiveness

“ We must learn to replace the concept of a ‘job for life’ by that of ‘employability’ ”

by reforming the international institutions with development responsibilities. But this new partnership also implies the need for the developing countries to put in place appropriate policies...

In order to make a success of globalization for the benefit of all, whether in the industrialized countries or in the countries in transition, in the emerging countries or in the very poorest countries, the economy must be made to serve people, and not people the economy....

The World Summit in Copenhagen



Marcel Crozet

President Jacques Chirac of France with ILO Director-General Michel Hansenne, and (in background) the Governing Body President Yvon Chotard on 11 June.

underscored the role and expertise of the ILO. It called upon all States to ratify and implement the fundamental standards drawn up by your organization, and entrusted it with the task of participating in the application of the Summit’s action programme in the field of employment and social development.

Convinced of the importance of the ILO’s role in tackling the social aspects of globalization, I insisted that the ILO should be fully involved, on a par with the OECD, in the preparation and follow-up to the G7 Jobs Conference in Lille...

How can we fail to [refer to] the social dimension of international trade? The ILO may take pride in being the first world forum to engage in a constructive debate on this issue, notwithstanding the hostility of some, the perhaps exaggerated hopes of others, and the apprehension of many....

France believes we must seek a way to link respect for the social dimension as expressed in the fundamental standards I have just referred to, on the one hand, and the liberalization of international trade, on the other.

I would like this question to be placed on the agenda of the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, in Singapore....

If we are to overcome the current opposition between the economic and the social dimensions, if we are to place people back at the heart of development in our societies, then yes, we must rely on the International Labour Organization, and, first of all, we must give it our full support.

Tomorrow, as in the past, France will stand by it.” □

Standards on homeworkers

The Conference adopted a Convention and a Recommendation on home work – the first comprehensive international standards in favour of a growing but often invisible workforce. The Convention:

- obliges any ratifying member State to “adopt, implement and periodically review a national policies on home work aimed at improving the situation of homeworkers”;
- calls on ratifying countries to develop national policy on homeworkers in consultation with employers’ and workers’ organizations and other organizations concerned with homeworkers;
- ensures that the national policy “promote[s] equality of treatment between homeworkers and other wage earners” in such areas as the right to organize, protection against discrimination, remuneration, occupational safety and health, social security and maternity protection, and training.

Delegates recognized that home work can be advantageous to employers, workers and national economies. It increases labour market flexibility, reaching out to rural areas and filling gaps in employment, while it can also offer a valid employment alternative for those who are obliged to stay at home. For some professionals, working at home may even be the preferred option.

However, home work is an activity which largely escapes administrative control. The ranks of the low-paid and frequently clandestine force of homeworkers are growing in developing and industrialized countries alike. Women account for the vast majority of homeworkers (as much as 95%) and child labour is often associated with home work. The ILO Convention also calls on governments to include homeworkers in labour statistics and labour inspection systems.

The Convention on home work is supplemented by a Recommendation, which sets out specific internationally-agreed provisions designed to serve as guidelines for national policy. The provisions in the proposed Recommendation call for equal treatment and registration of homeworkers. Collection of data on homeworkers and their employers is mainly intended to provide a basis for the national policy on home work. Finally, member States are called upon to promote and support programmes which provide direct assistance to homeworkers. A whole range of such programmes is enumerated and they cover a wide spectrum of means to improve the social and economic situation of homeworkers.



Myanmar and Nigeria for Conventions

Myanmar specially highlighted the work of the Committee expressed “great disappointment over several years to eliminate child labour by Myanmar of the Forced Labour Convention (No. 29) and Recommendation (No. 87). The Government of Nigeria has not ratified Convention No. 87, and that there were serious problems with the Convention (Employment and Occupation) Convention. The cases are given on page 21.

Landmarks

- Approximately 2,600 government, employer and worker delegates from 160 member States of the ILO took part in the Conference.
- The Caribbean island nation of St. Kitts and Nevis became the 174th member State of the ILO on 19 June.



Mr. AHMED AHMED ELAMAWY (*Minister of Manpower and Immigration, Egypt*) – “We also feel that it is indispensable to give assistance and expertise to the countries concerned, in particular the least developed ones. In view of the scarce resources, we wonder whether there is a need to create a data base. Would it not be better to devote our resources to activities in the field? We feel that it does not fall within the purview of the ILO to study the commercial or trading aspects or international intervention and their impact on trade with developing countries. We must realize that poverty and the absence of economic development are the main reasons for child labour. We have to work hand-in-hand with other organizations such as the WTO. This does not fall specifically within the purview of the ILO. Therefore, we would be against any link between employment or child labour and international trade. This would constitute a form of concealed neo-protectionism.”

Mr. AH LEK DATO'LIM (*Minister of Human Resources, Malaysia*) – “As stated in the ILO’s document* before us, poverty is the greatest single force which drives children into employment for their own and their family’s survival. There is a need to establish the right instrument and to follow the right course to handle this problem. International labour standards and national legislation cannot themselves guarantee the right process for eliminating child labour. Sanctional measures, as proposed by those who want to link international trade with the issues of child labour, under the guise of protecting the children, would only accelerate the deterioration of economic conditions and lead to further poverty.”



Jacques Maillard

Ms. CARMEN YOLANDA CACERES (*Vice-Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Guatemala*) – “The Government of Guatemala is very much committed to combating child labour. We recognize, with great regret, that a good part of our national economy rests on the work done by children. We recognize that if we do not do something today to eradicate child labour, the future of the country will be decided and we shall continue to be an underdeveloped country...It is necessary to reach the whole of the national community and make it understand that using child labour is condemning our future. Making people more aware of the problem will facilitate, or make less difficult, other types of action. The experience achieved by the unit has led us to conclude that the eradication of child labour is a process which could be speeded up if all sectors of society were to commit themselves to this target.”

Mr. WILLIAM BRETT (*Vice-Chairman (Workers), ILO Governing Body, United Kingdom*) – “I would like personally to suggest that either through IPEC or the ILO we consider having a meeting of labour inspectors – in other words an experts’ meeting, where those who are tackling the problem and all the difficulties of enforcement can exchange views....I think it is essential that we are seen to be taking action at this meeting and not just speaking fine words and the Workers’ group would commend the recommendation from, and suggestion of, the United States to undertake a study on a programme on voluntary labelling. It seems an excellent suggestion and I think if we do not gather from this meeting today a number of suggestions and if the Governing Body and IPEC do not ensure that the resources are available to meet some of these suggestions, then we will stand accused of uttering kind and fine words without having any intention to put them into practice. I think we are starting on an important day.”

Mr. ROBERT REICH (*Secretary of Labor, United States*) – “The question before us is not so much whether we want child labour but what we do about it. What we must pursue here, I believe, are practical means to achieve the ends we all desire and I believe that the answer lies in at least four areas.

First, we have to continue to increase global public awareness of the problem, including the awareness of governments....Awareness alone, in the absence of changed behaviour, will not bring results and that is why I want to emphasize this second area...spurring other national and international institutions to participate in the solution....Thirdly, I believe that we can and should look to adopt additional international law that may be useful here. We very much welcome the work towards a new ILO Convention in 1998 and we will be active participants in this effort. We should examine what role the World Trade Organization could play. As I stated yesterday in the plenary session, trade liberalization and implementation of core labour standards must go hand-in-hand.

Fourthly, beyond building awareness, providing resources for education and

Working ag child

**On 12 June the Conference ho
level on child labour which hi
commitment to the eradication
of future action. Below is a sele**

Mr. LEONARDO QUISUMBING (*Secretary of Labour and Employment, Philippines*) – “The Philippines has been an active participant in the ILO’s Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour since 1994, in recognition of the importance and urgency of the programme’s content for the elimination of child labour through the strengthening of national capacities. At this juncture, may I join all those ministers who aspire to have a new Convention on the problem of child labour.”

enforcing and writing new international law, we can and should do more to find incentives to eliminate child labour...Our current efforts therefore, have sought to enlist the help of major retailers and major businesses and their consumers in ensuring that at least minimum standards are observed in the production of garments made and sold in the United States – United States labour laws in the case of domestically produced items and minimum ILO standards in the case of imported items...We are exploring other initiatives to enlist consumer support. For example, a voluntary labelling programme has now emerged for hand-knotted carpets. This system has gained wide attention in the United States and I am exploring this issue further with regard to other products. Indeed, I would like to propose that we ask the Secretariat of the ILO to produce a study on extending such voluntary labelling programmes to other sectors where child labour is a problem. We should ask that this study be ready for our consideration within a year. Labelling programmes are likely to go forward with or without the ILO, but I believe that tripartite involvement and cooperation is the best approach. The United States is prepared to fully participate in such an effort.”

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sted an informal meeting at ministerial
ghlighted ILO constituents' continuing
n of child labour and possible courses
ction of excerpts from the presentations.

Mr. ATSAIN ACHI (*Minister of Employment, Public Service and Social Welfare, Côte d'Ivoire*) – “The fight against child labour must be a global one and it must be part and parcel of an ongoing, active participatory programme. It is not realistic to try to cure symptoms of a disease without trying to understand the reasons for them. Abolishing child labour by Conventions or standards is also not the best way to eradicate it. We are involved in an ongoing combat which extends beyond national and international programmes; we must also have sectoral actions which try to come to grips with the root of the problem, to which I referred earlier.

It is for this reason that the ILO must step up its cooperation with the other agencies in the United Nations system so that attempts to combat child labour are considered a prerequisite for creating a sound and sustainable economy.

In the immediate future, the ILO must provide assistance to the countries most involved in child labour to try to alleviate the most disturbing aspects, before establishing more structured programmes. In so doing, the ILO should cooperate with the national and regional offices of UNICEF, UNESCO and the NGOs which are trying to help children at risk. We believe that this approach would not only be effective but also minimize the risk of overlapping our work with other agencies.”

Mr. JEAN-JACQUES OËCHSLIN (*Vice-Chairman [Employers], ILO Governing Body, France*) – “As employers we must also stress the terrible squandering of human resources that child labour represents, at a time when we are all well aware that it is education which makes human resources so valuable, and which constitutes the principal source of the competitiveness of nations. We therefore support all that has been said in relation to the education problem... Probably the most serious problem, and the one of most concern to us all, is child labour in urban and industrial environments. This situation is largely due to the unchecked urbanization of large cities and is present in the informal rather than the formal sector, and even in the underground economy which is linked to low productivity activities and to extreme poverty, as well as to inappropriate education...but more needs to be done and that is why it is important to underline IPEC, which is targeting specific problems.”

Ms. EITHNE FITZGERALD (*Minister for Labour Affairs, Ireland*) – “First of all, I would like to congratulate the President on choosing this topic for this meeting. No topic is more important for the ILO than child labour. Societies can very reasonably be judged on the way they treat their dependent and most vulnerable members, and particularly their children.

Child labour is associated with underdevelopment and poverty. However, the practice of child labour ultimately reinforces that poverty by making it difficult for children to receive an education which is the key to greater prosperity of the individual and of the society – and the key to economic development. We cannot expect parents who are themselves often the victims of poverty to be the main agents of change in the fight against child poverty. Indeed, parents make extraordinary sacrifices on behalf of their children to try to ensure they get an education. The responsibility to fight child poverty rests with governments to set standards and ensure compliance. That takes courage – but it is only through courageous and collective action that the problem of child labour will be successfully overcome.

It is disappointing that only 49 countries have ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and I welcome the proposals for a new Convention in 1998.”

*Child labour: What is to be done? *International Labour Office, Geneva 1996.*



Jacques Maillard

(More on next page)...



Child Labour (cont'd)

Ms. F. CHITAURO (Minister of the Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Zimbabwe) – “There is a need to accommodate the social and cultural traits of each society with regard to the former. A child assisting his parents in family plots and who is allowed enough time to rest and attend school cannot be labelled a child labourer, for indeed some of the skills he or she acquires may very well tie up with his or her agricultural lessons at school and could prove to be of immense benefit at a later stage, especially in this era of increasing unemployment.”

Ms. ARMIDA MURGUIA SANCHEZ (Vice-Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Peru) – “The Government’s absolute conviction in its fight against poverty, and its goal is to reduce extreme poverty by 50%, must constitute its principal instrument to guarantee for the people affected by poverty, and especially children, an adequate level of well-being that will allow them to achieve their full potential.”

Mr. WILHELM HECKER (Secretary of State for Labour and Social Affairs, Germany) – “The fight against child labour has to be tackled from all sides. First of all, we have to create awareness of the problem. Child labour has to be identified for what it is: a crime against humanity. It is particularly important to make consumers aware. The customer is king and he has the choice. No consumer should buy products made by children. The power of the consumer is greater than that of any national regulations. Where there is no demand there is no supply. Bans on imports, customs and other trade restrictions would also hit producers who make their goods without using child labour.

We therefore support voluntary initiatives such as the “Rugmark” campaign. This label is attached to rugs made without child labour – and its success bears witness to the consumer’s clout.

Another line of attack is to help children leave employment. Accusing others does not help anyone. What is really needed is an outstretched hand, providing assistance, and I cannot imagine a better organization than the ILO to do this, since it maintains that: “lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice”. Indeed, in no other area is there so much to do as in the area of child labour. It is for this reason that six years ago Germany helped the ILO establish the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)....

However, sweatshops employing children must be immediately closed. Assistance to countries using child labour must be linked to a ban on this type of labour. Child labour is not merely a sideline. In the Third World, it is a classic form of exploitation and, in point of fact, of slavery. This situation must be changed once and for all. There can be no transitional arrangements.

The Federal Government therefore advocates a dual strategy, linking prohibition with assistance. We have to provide assistance, on the one hand, and ask the beneficiary countries to adhere to the Convention banning child labour, on the other.”

Mr. AD MELKERT (Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, Netherlands) – “The Government of the Netherlands feels that there is an important role for the ILO and its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour. The use of all the ILO’s means of action, particularly its technical cooperation programme, will be essential. Support is needed to enable ILO member States to provide quality education and employable skills training to the younger generation. Enterprise development, job creation, poverty alleviation and social safety nets – in other words, social investment through appropriate structural adjustment and good government practice – are needed to enable adults to provide their children with a future.

A structural change is required in order to provide basic education for all children. In order to monitor progress on this change, it is essential that appropriate statistical and other data be compiled on a regular basis. I would like to propose the establishment of a regular trend report on the transition of child workers from work to school, in order to measure progress. I would like to invite the ILO to come up with a proposal to this effect, in order to ensure that access to education for children world-wide is enhanced.

The ILO has to work more closely with national and international organizations to create a broad social alliance of all parties concerned against the most intolerable forms of child labour. Many countries have already taken positive steps towards the elimination of abusive and hazardous child labour – for instance, through the adoption of effective legislation and implementation measures. It is useful and timely, therefore, to take an inventory of what has already been achieved. Such an inventory might be of great help to other countries that now also wish to set out on the same road.”

Mr. PRASONG BOONPONG (Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Thailand) – “I believe that the problem of child labour is a very difficult and complex one. Abolition is a long-term process which must be complemented by high-level policy and supported by necessary laws and an appropriate budget. National understanding and support are of great importance. My Government is proud of its efforts in providing resources to assist countries to combat child labour. We are also grateful to the Government of Germany for its contribution at the initial stage and for their support.”

Mr. GUILHERME LUIS MAVILA (Minister of Labour, Mozambique) – “It is not enough to pass legislation or ratify Conventions. We need to create conditions which will ensure the efficiency of child protection rules and the education of children up to adult life... Mozambique is one of the world’s poorest countries which will only rid itself of underdevelopment and the sequels of war in the long term, especially in the rural areas where the numbers of schools, hospitals, factories and other jobs have been even further reduced.

In 1995 and 1996, there were thousands of children who could not enrol in schools. These swelled the ranks of those unable to go to school because they were orphans or living in dire poverty. Every year there are between 20 to 25% of school-age children who leave school in search of jobs and join the number of jobless with no immediate prospects on the labour market.

In my country there are thus thousands of street children and young people who sell all sorts of goods on the market in order to survive and buy materials for school. Many other children work under terrible conditions and with no protection; some wash and look after cars, others carry heavy burdens or are subjected to the most degrading physical and moral ill-treatment and are employed as household workers or housemaids.”



U.S. Secretary of Labour Robert Reich speaking at the meeting on child labour.

Jacques Maillard

Standards Committee cites Iran, Myanmar and Nigeria



The Conference endorsed the decisions of the ILO Committee on the Application of Standards which expressed deep concern over the widespread use of forced labour in Myanmar. Its report deplored “the serious situation prevailing in Myanmar”, where recourse to forced labour has been systematic over many years, in violation of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29). The Committee also “firmly required the Government to formally abolish and urgently to cancel the legal provisions and to abandon all practices that were contrary to the Convention”.

In a further development, a complaint procedure was launched against Myanmar under article 26 of the ILO Constitution. A letter signed by 24 Worker Delegates requesting procedures under article 26 said that forced labour in Myanmar is being used “systematically, on an even larger scale, and in an increasing number of areas”. It alleges that “large numbers of forced labourers are now working on railway, road, construction and other infrastructure projects, many of which are related to the Government’s efforts to promote tourism”.

Under the terms of article 26 a special Commission of Inquiry can be established to investigate non-observance of international labour standards and allegations of human-rights abuses in ILO member States. The complaints against Myanmar with respect to forced labour and other grave human rights abuses are severe and of long standing. The procedure under article 26 is usually invoked only in the case of persistent violations and disregard for the decisions of the ILO supervisory bodies.

In particular, the ILO has been pressing the Government of Myanmar to repeal the Village and Town Acts, which provide for the exaction of labour and service under penalty of sanction. Myanmar ratified the ILO Convention against forced labour in 1955.

The labour and human rights practices of Myanmar and Nigeria again drew strong criticism from delegates to the Conference. The Islamic Republic of Iran was also mentioned in a special paragraph concerning allegations of widespread inequality in access to employment and educational opportunities on the basis of religion and gender.

Myanmar was also cited for “serious discrepancies” in the application of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87). The Committee observed that “there were no trade unions in the country whose objective was the defence and the promotion of the interests of the workers”. It urgently requested the Government “to take all necessary measures to guarantee the workers and the employers the right to set up the organizations of their choice”. The Committee also called attention to the absence of progress on this issue in spite of many previous discussions, and regretted “that the ILO mission, which was scheduled by common agreement for May 1996, could not finally be received in Myanmar”. It expressed the firm hope that the Government of Myanmar would cooperate intensively with the ILO so that the “very serious discrepancies between law and practice on the one hand, and the Convention, on the other hand, will be eliminated in the very near future”.

The Government of Nigeria was also cited in a special paragraph for non-observance of Convention No. 87. The Committee noted that “once again it had not been able to discern any progress

despite the observations made over a long period of time by the [ILO] Committee of Experts” regarding “very serious violations of human rights against trade unionists, as well as against the fundamental principles contained in the Convention”. In its conclusions, the Committee regretted the persistence in Nigeria of “legislative provisions that provided for a single trade union system and allowed Government interference in the organization and activities of trade unions”. It insisted that “the Government take immediate measures with a view to the absolute respect of the civic liberties essential to trade union rights”.

The findings involving the Islamic Republic of Iran conclude that there are serious problems in the observance of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), notably with respect to employment policy toward members of the Baha’i community and members of other religious communities who do not enjoy equality of treatment in practice. The Committee urged the Government of Iran to “provide complete and comprehensive information concerning the adoption of a national policy to promote equality without discrimination based on religion, particularly with regard to posts within the judiciary system, election to Islamic Labour Councils and access to university education”. It noted with interest the elimination of restrictions concerning women’s access to education, but, in general, expressed “concern with regard to the lack of equality for women in society and at work”.

The Committee noted that the Government was ready to accept technical cooperation from the International Labour Office and proposed that the Government invite a direct contacts mission to visit the country. The Committee was obliged to note that the Government was not in a position to commit itself in this regard during the Conference. □

Putting manpower to work

Labour-intensive infrastructure development is working in capital-poor countries. Launched in the 1970s, the ILO's Employment-Intensive Programme (EIP) has helped 34 member States undertake 130 infrastructure projects, creating jobs and reducing poverty. Benefits have often been wider, as shown by examples in Ghana and Cambodia.

The Ghanaian rural road network had suffered years of deterioration: deeper erosion gullies, potholes, collapsed bridges. Heavy road maintenance machinery lay idle at the side of the road, victims of scarce foreign exchange which prevented the necessary replacement parts being imported.

The poor condition of many of Ghana's 22,000 kilometres of rural roads caused tonnes of the country's major export, cocoa, to be bottled up in villages cut off from the main road network.

In 1986 the Ghanaian Government sought the aid of the ILO to find a remedy to the problem. With financial

assistance from the World Bank and UNDP, the ILO's programme mobilized the significant potential of two locally available resources: a large number of small, locally-based contractors operating in rural areas, and an underemployed rural labour force ready and willing to work.

Between 1989 and 1995, 1,400 kilometres of roads were restored to a quality equal to that which could have been achieved by equipment-based construction methods and at 5-10% less cost. Between 1986 and 1994 the programme created about 2.6 million work-days of

employment. Average savings in foreign exchange costs were 50%.

Ninety-three contractors, 380 supervisors and 64 engineers received intensive training. The nation-wide expansion of the programme started gradually in 1991 and by mid-1995 all 10 regions of Ghana had been included in the programme.

Cambodia: Jobs, rural regeneration and peace

In Cambodia, the formula is again generating results. The country is facing transition both from civil war to peace and from a command to a market economy. At the same time, some 380,000 refugees returning from the border camps

Labour-intensive projects mean that wages, skills and other economic benefits accrue to local communities.



Jacques Maillard



Jacques Maillard

Cambodian refugees in Thailand learn to assemble irrigation pumps in an ILO-sponsored vocational training project.

in neighbouring Thailand and 180,000 internally-displaced people and demobilised soldiers are swelling the ranks of those looking for work. An estimated 35% of men and 50% of women are illiterate.

Faced with a dramatic increase in unemployment and the instability this could cause, the ILO and UNDP developed the Employment Generation Programme (EGP) in 1992. With US\$20 million from the Dutch Government, UNDP, UNHCR and WFP, the programme has addressed immediate challenges, particularly the question of poverty alleviation, through small enterprise promotion, training and infrastructure rehabilitation.

EGP has generated 1.5 million work-days of employment. It has provided comprehensive training for 150 road and irrigation engineers, technicians and supervisors. Four hundred kilometres of secondary roads and 66 kilometres of canals have been constructed or rehabilitated. The wages earned stay in the local economy, directly benefiting the most impoverished rural people.

EGP has had several beneficial effects beyond direct job creation. The roads and the renovated irrigation canals are also vital instruments for rural development and, with the help of the EGP, water now reaches an area of 12,000 hectares, part of which has not been irrigated for decades. The farmers who benefit from these projects are already earning substantially higher incomes while the new settlements along the roads

are turning into villages, reducing emigration to the capital, Phnom Penh.

Income and employment from tourism should also increase; the labour-based maintenance programme and road construction project have improved access to one of the most magnificent archaeological sites in the world – Angkor Wat.

The EGP has also helped Cambodia foster small business development and conduct vocational training. Over 2,000 people (60% of whom are women) have received small business training, 1,300 people have started or expanded businesses, 2,000 women have received credit for micro-enterprises (with over US \$1 million disbursed in loans) and 2,000 people have received skills training.

The demining activities carried out in conjunction with the rehabilitation programme have saved many lives.

130 projects in 34 countries

The 34 EIP country programmes, representing some 130 different projects have pursued the three-fold goals of poverty alleviation, protection of workers and democratization.

The EIP targets workers and the unemployed, especially in unorganized sectors. It also helps to establish domestic construction industries by developing small enterprises. Over the past 25 years, it has helped to improve rural transport infrastructure in many countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Af-

rica, where 80% of EIP activities are located.

In Ghana and Lesotho, for example, small contractor training programmes have resulted in the creation of associations of labour-based contractors, while in South Africa, the ILO was able to collaborate with the Government on various social and training aspects of the National Public Works Programme, aiming to maximize job creation through infrastructure development.

The programme promotes democratization at the grass-roots level by assisting people to organize themselves and negotiate with public authorities for a greater share of, and more control over, national investment resources.

“EIP has helped forge new links between employment policies, private sector development and the promotion of relevant labour standards. In introducing investment policies that take into account both economic and, more importantly, social concerns, the ILO can help its constituents to develop new tools to enforce respect of basic labour standards,” says Jan de Veen, an ILO official responsible for EIP sectoral programmes.

EIP projects are underway or planned for Cambodia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Indonesia, Laos, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

□

Hans von Rohland

Uruguay: Making construction work safer

In Uruguay, construction accounts for 20% of work-related deaths and many permanent disabilities. The social partners and the ILO are working on ways to reduce the number of accidents.

A communications tower is being built on a deserted hill in the far north of Uruguay. A 19 year-old construction worker ties up a metal section and starts to haul it into position. When the section is 20 metres from the ground, the knot slips and the part falls on the young man, killing him. He is one of 10 fatal victims of construction accidents in Uruguay in the first half of 1996.

In the capital, Montevideo, a 24-storey hotel in the city centre is nearing completion. At its busiest period, the site had employed about 800 workers. When construction started four years ago, it was forecast that two workers would lose their lives before the building was finished. However, there have been no deaths; the only serious accident turned out to be a carpenter sawing off the tips of three fingers.

In the first incident above, no one in the unions or the Labour Ministry had even been aware that the tower was going up, 20 kilometres from a road. In the Montevideo hotel, there were three union-appointed safety delegates plus an experienced safety technician employed by the construction firm.



Construction accounts for 18% of all labour accidents in Uruguay.

This level of prevention, still exceptional in the country, can and did save workers' lives. In Uruguay, prevention has involved complying with international labour standards promoted by the ILO. The Government now fosters regular discussion with employers and workers, a course which has led to the enforcement of stringent new regulations on the protection of life and limb in the construction industry.

Where dangers lurk

"Death rates remain unacceptably high in our sector," says Ronald Graside, safety coordinator at the Construction Trades Union (SUNCA). According to the Insurance Bank, a State agency channeling financial compensation to the victims and their families, 30 workers lost their lives on building sites in the two-year period 1993-94.

The country, with a population of just over 3 million, had about 60,000 construction workers in 1994. "In 1995 the construction workforce was down to 45,000 as a result of a slowdown in the economy, but we still had 12 fatal accidents, which shows that the death rate remains the same," Graside says.

Construction accounts for over 18% of all labour accidents in Uruguay, coming a close second to agriculture. It also accounts for the highest percentage (20) of total deaths and the majority of permanent disabilities. Construction workers are mostly short-term or informally employed, and less than one-third are unionized.

“Death rates remain unacceptably high in our sector”

The 12,668 construction accidents registered by the Insurance Bank in 1993-94 left 233 workers permanently disabled. Most of these accidents could have been avoided with due observance of safety regulations.

Regulations, to be effective, have to become a source for safe procedures, and very few construction workers have the benefit of close supervision or training in safety matters. Most of those who do follow safe procedures have learned them on the job. This is not enough, as shown by the fact that over half the victims have a record of six months or less as construction workers; the shorter their experience, the greater their chance of suffering an accident.

Change on the way

Under pressure from the unions and public opinion, the Government has launched an emergency plan to bring down the accident rate through increased frequency of labour inspections. But the Ministry of Labour lacks full resources to do this, says Elbio Mendez, a lawyer appointed last year to the key position of Chief Labour Inspector. "We have too few inspectors, too few vehicles (cars have to be hired to answer emergency calls in town), insufficient statistical information and computing facilities. This is now beginning to improve," Mr. Mendez says. "We must also think in terms of training union representatives and our own staff."

In 1994 the Uruguayan National Confederation of Trade Unions (PIT/CNT) and SUNCA had lodged a complaint with the ILO alleging non-observance of, among others, the ILO Convention on Occupational Safety and Health and the Working Environment, 1981 (No. 155), ratified by Uruguay in 1988. The ILO Governing Body concluded this year that there has been no failure to apply the Conventions by the Uruguayan Government, but invited it to improve and strengthen both prevention and labour inspection towards better application of the standards. In 1995 the Government, in fact, had already started to adopt a number of comprehensive safety and health regulations. This year it decreed that worker safety delegates should be appointed at construction sites: at least one for every site over 1.5 metres high or 8 metres deep, or employing more than five workers. Emergency spot checks were also launched throughout the country.

Nearly 650 checks were carried out over a period of six weeks, resulting in partial or complete closure of 46 sites which were found to be unsafe. In half the sites inspected, personal protective measures turned out to be defective. "This campaign has greatly improved labour conditions in construction, particularly in Montevideo where sites are easier to check," Graside says. "It now remains to bring the death rate down. Rural areas are still a no man's land both in terms of lives lost and facilities accorded to union safety representatives."

"We also know that building architects and engineers have only the sketchiest notions of safety in the workplace. Their academic training does not provide for anything else."

The Labour Ministry now hosts weekly meetings of a tripartite (government-employer-worker) committee for the con-

struction industry. Among other results it has produced a safety training plan for the remainder of this year, initially aimed at training worker delegates.

The plan acknowledges the economic and social cost involved in accident-caused deaths or disabilities. Its chief aims are

“The Government has launched an emergency plan to bring down the accident rate through increased frequency of labour inspections”

to train safety delegates in the detection of unsafe conditions and processes, to enable them to propose preventive and corrective measures and create safety awareness among the workers, and to brief the delegates on their own responsibilities as well as those of employers, foremen, prevention specialists, workers, and labour inspectors.

International backstopping

The training plan is based on an analysis of the main risks encountered in actual work situations, which are:

- Electrical hazards: Work on high-voltage conductors, isolation of installations, lighting and machinery;
- Falls: Lack of protective netting and handrails, vigilance on platforms and scaffolding, protection against falling objects;
- Crushing: Falling walls and sides of excavation pits and ditches, falling machinery and loads.

The courses are being financed and organized jointly by the Government and CINTERFOR, the Inter-American Vocational Training Research and Documentation Centre of the ILO in Montevideo. An ILO "Manual on Safety and Health in Construction" and other relevant ILO publications will be used, either directly or as the basis for the design of new teaching aids. □

Mario Trajtenberg*

*Journalist and former ILO official based in Montevideo

SOCIAL PROTECTION

● **China** is continuing to introduce its social security reforms by stages in various cities and regions. The new health insurance scheme financed by contributions, which replaces the former free medical care scheme, is to be extended to 80 cities this year from its present 28 cities and regions. During the next five years the Government plans to extend sickness and old-age insurance to all urban employees in state-owned and private enterprises. Employees will pay 3% of their salary for the new pension scheme and 1% for health insurance. Employers will contribute 20% and 10%, respectively.

● As agreed under the social pact signed at the beginning of the year in **Portugal**, a minimum guaranteed income will be introduced during the second half of 1996. All those whose income is below the present state pension or who can justify having looked for a job and accepted all job interviews proposed by the employment agency, will be entitled to this income. This system will operate on an experimental basis until June 1997, and its extension will depend on the results of the trial.

SOCIAL PARTNERS

● **The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)**, meeting at its World Congress in Brussels in June, discussed ways to cope with the challenges of globalization. The Congress welcomed Michel Hansenne, Director-General of the ILO, who urged that trade unions should proclaim their international solidarity and look beyond their traditional differences. He also highlighted the campaign to promote ratification of the ILO's core human rights Conventions. Michel Camdessus, Managing Director of the IMF, also addressed the Congress and called for solidarity which, he believed, should constitute the "third hand" alongside the "invisible hand" of the market and that of justice guaranteed by the State.

POVERTY

● According to a report published by the World Bank, 1.3 billion people throughout the world live on less than US\$1 a day. This confirms the findings of a UNDP report on human development that, although there was an overall reduction in poverty between 1987 and 1993, the divide between the richest

Working World

Senegal: Job creation programme

● **In Senegal, the Government's first priority job creation programme, launched in January 1995 to alleviate the social repercussions of the devaluation of the CFA franc, came to an end in June 1996. The programme was made up of 25 labour-intensive public utility projects in the areas of**

sanitation, refuse collection, infrastructure development and the renovation and building of schools. Costing a total of 1.18 billion CFA francs (US\$1=502 CFA francs), this programme provided 170,000 workdays for 1,200 young people. Possibilities of extending it are being examined.



Jacques Maillard

and poorest widened. During this period, the number of persons having to survive on less than \$1 per day increased from 1.23 billion to 1.31 billion.

OLDER WORKERS

● Pointing to evidence of age discrimination, associations grouping older unemployed

workers in the **Netherlands** have put the number of persons failing to find a job because of their age at 250,000. As this discrimination affects areas other than employment – such as health, training, accommodation, credit facilities and insurance – the national office against age discrimination organized a day during which a special telephone

number was made available to register age-related complaints. Some 1,600 complaints were registered and a further 19,000 were unable to be dealt with because the lines were engaged. The Ministry of Social Affairs is drafting a bill forbidding employers to refuse a candidate on grounds of age.

● A survey carried out in the **United States of America** by *Personnel Decisions International*, a private global human resources consulting firm, showed that older workers received less feedback about their job performance than their younger counterparts. Among workers over the age of 55, only 39% received feedback from their bosses only once a year or less – while among those in the 18 to 34-year age group, only 14% reported the same infrequency.

CHILD LABOUR

● **The International Football Federation (FIFA) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)** agreed on a code of labour practice to prohibit the use of child labour in the manufacture of FIFA-approved footballs. The Code refers to fundamental ILO Conventions on minimum age, discrimination, forced labour and freedom of association, and it stresses the need to pay fair wages, have decent working conditions and prohibit excessive working hours. Around 30 companies world-wide have indicated their intention to adhere to the FIFA code. The ICFTU worked in conjunction with the ITGLWF (International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation) and FIET (International Federation of Commercial, Clerical, Professional and Technical Employees) in developing and negotiating the code and will continue to work together in determining how adherence to the code will be monitored.

TRANSITION ECONOMIES

● **Poland** became the 28th member of the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in early July when Vice-Prime Minister Grzegorz Kolodko and OECD Secretary-General Donald Johnston signed the country's membership agreement at OECD headquarters. Poland thus becomes the third former communist country to join the OECD, after the Czech Republic and Hungary. □

Contributed by: Patrick Bollé of the
International Labour Review

Media shelf

■ **Restructuring the labour market: The South African challenge**, by Guy Standing, John Sender and John Weeks. *International Labour Office, Geneva, 1996. ISBN 92-2-109513-4. Swiss francs 45.*

This review by international experts on behalf of the ILO examines the labour market problems facing South Africa, the range of policy options for tackling these, and how such policies can work in the context of increasing globalization and greater labour market flexibility and insecurity around the world.

South Africa emerged from the apartheid era with a legacy of low economic growth, severe poverty, especially in rural areas and among the black population, extreme inequality and a fragmented labour market. This Review concentrates on ways in which poverty, inequality, unemployment and stagnation can be tackled, through a combination of initiatives in such areas as labour market and employment policies, flexibility and co-operation in industrial relations and wage fixing, carefully managed trade liberalization, and a state-supported selective industrial strategy.

The first chapters of the book trace the main macroeconomic and labour market developments in the country, summarizing relevant applied research on the subject, and emphasizing the evolving regulatory framework and the setting for labour market and employment policy-making. A continuing theme is that existing labour market information underestimates employment and overestimates unemployment: policy-makers, therefore, should treat such data with more caution than has been the case.

Later chapters examine factors influencing labour market developments, focusing on rural labour markets, mining and manufacturing, as well as discussing labour security, the industrial relations context, female employment, land reform, child labour, productivity, working time, work organization, training, and labour market discrimination and flexibility.

The review concludes by assessing the impact of labour market and social policies,

International Labour Review

In Vol. 135 [No. 115 for Spanish], No. 2 of the *International Labour Review**, Robert Lindley examines the school-to-work transition: Does the labour market really demand more of young people now, such that the period of education and training needs to be prolonged? What are the efficiency and equity arguments for subsidizing extended training? For whom?

Alvaro Espina offers a framework for comparing the public pension systems of industrialized countries, with a view to understanding better their hybrid systems and determining best practice. William Roche, Brian Fynes and Terri Morrissey survey experiments with

reducing standard working hours, controlling overtime and early retirement for their impact on employment, and conclude with a discussion of the equity implications.

The issue also offers insights into what makes ILO research distinctive. A.M. Endres and Grant Fleming explore the ILO's contribution to the debates on international economic policy of the 1920s and 1930s, revealing parallels with economic policy debates of the present day.

**International Labour Review*, Vol. 135, No. 2, *International Labour Office, Geneva, 1996. English edition: ISSN 0020-7780; French edition: ISSN 0378-5599; Spanish edition: ISSN 0378-5548.*

highlighting options for the near future. It relates directly to the work of South Africa's Labour Market Commission, whose mandate was to recommend specific measures and a framework for labour market policies to take the country into the twenty-first century.

■ **International Labour Law Documentation, 6-7/1996.** *International Labour Office, Geneva, 1996. ISSN 0020-7756. Swiss francs 100, US\$90, UK£54 for an annual subscription; 50% discount for ILO constituents.*

This bulletin is produced from the database LABORDOC and includes world-wide coverage of publications on labour law, employment, working conditions, management, vocational

training, project evaluation and labour-related aspects of economics, social development, rural development and technological change. The book contains separate English, French and Spanish subject indexes and a separate list of new ILO publications.

■ **International migration statistics: Guidelines for improvement of data collection systems**, by R.E. Bilsborrow, Graeme Hugo, A.S. Oberai and Hania Zlotnik. *International Labour Office, Geneva, 1997. ISBN 92-2-109517-7. Swiss francs 75.*

The first comprehensive publication on this topic, this book aims at strengthening the ability of countries to generate relevant and more meaningful

data on international migration.

The authors cover a wide range of conceptual and analytical issues related to the measurement of flows of international migrants and problems concerning international comparability of migration data. They discuss the potentials and weakness of existing data collection systems (including censuses, population registers, border statistics, and residence and work permit systems) and provide guidance on how to develop and disseminate statistics on international migration.

The book analyses the measurement of migrants' remittance and problems associated with this, as well as ways of gathering remittances data. Attention is also given to specially designed surveys for use in examining the determinants and consequences of international migration. Examination of these issues is crucial for developing realistic and cost-effective migration policies.

■ **Combining work and elder care: A challenge for now and the future**, edited by Irene Hoskins. *International Labour Office, Geneva, 1996. ISBN 92-2-109195-3. Swiss francs 20.*

This book looks at elder care from the points of view of the elderly person in need of care, the employed person responsible for it (the "care-giver") and the employer. It reviews international policies and instruments, notably the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) and Recommendation, 1981 (No. 165) and draws on six studies of industrialized countries (Australia, Canada, France, Japan, Sweden and the United States), as well as a survey conducted by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions.

The focus is on policy-relevant information on the nature and magnitude of working caregivers' problems and on highlighting possible solutions and good practice in both the public and private sectors: flexible leave policies, fiscal advantages, social security provisions, community support and employer-provided services.





■ **Conditions of work digest: Working time around the world, covering 150 countries (Vol. 14, 1995), International Labour Office, Geneva, 1996. ISBN 92-2-109510-X; ISSN 0257-3512. Swiss francs 50.**

This issue provides a comprehensive overview of the different aspects of working-time regulations throughout the world, including actual hours of work, normal hours of work, limits on overtime and absolute maximum hours, premium pay, paid annual leave, public holidays and other types of leave, and periods of rest during the day. This volume covers the basic legal provisions in over 150 countries and contains 16 in-depth country studies (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Hungary, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States).

Highlights of the report include:

- Manufacturing workers in some developing countries work up to 50% more per week than their developed-country counterparts (see Table 1);
- The number of hours worked per week in manufacturing has decreased slightly in most countries between 1984 and 1994;
- Among those countries for which annual data is available, workers in the United States and Japan registered the longest working years while those in western Germany had the shortest working year (see Table 2);
- Workers in the United States have seen their hours worked per year increase by 118 since 1980, while those in Japan have seen theirs decrease by 194. Western German and Swedish workers also experienced large decreases in the length of their working year over the 14-year period;
- Growth in employment in the industrialized world between 1973 and 1993 is due almost entirely to the growth of part-time work;
- As a result, part-time employment as a proportion of total employment has doubled in many industrialized countries (see Table 3);

- Women form the great majority of part-time workers;
- Women's labour-force participation has drastically increased, while men's labour force participation has decreased between 1973 and 1993;
- Increasing numbers of people, however, are involuntarily working part-time. In the United States, 30% of part-time workers are involuntary ones, and the increase in the ratio of part-time to total employment since the early 1970s has been primarily due to workers who usually work part-time but would prefer full-time work; a survey by the European Commission found that 37% of all part-time workers would prefer to work full-time;
- The hiring of part-time workers to ensure coverage of total operating hours is also on the increase. This type of part-time work is frequently not accompanied by premium pay for working unsocial hours, or, indeed, is characterized by lower pay and less social protection.

Table 1: Hours actually worked per week in manufacturing

Country or area	1984	1994
Australia	36.2	38.7
Belgium	33.7	32.4 (1993)
Brazil	46.0 (1985)	43.0
Canada*	38.4	38.6 (1993)
Denmark	33.0	31.5 (1993)
France	38.7	38.6
Germany*	41.0	38.0
Hong Kong	44.8	44.6
Japan	41.7	37.6
Korea, Rep. of	54.3	48.9 (1993)
Mexico	43.4	44.8
Netherlands*	40.3	39.8 (1993)
New Zealand*	40.4	42.0
Norway	37.7	36.9
Singapore	47.8	49.3
South Africa	46.5	44.7 (1992)
Spain	36.5	36.3 (1992)
Sweden	38.1 (1986)	37.8
UK	43.5	43.1 (1993)
USA*	40.7	42.0

*hours paid for

Table 2: Actual annual hours of work in 1980 and 1994 in manufacturing

Country	1980	1994	Difference
United States	1876	1994	+118
Japan	2158	1964	-194
Canada	1852	1898	+46
United Kingdom	1844	1826	-18
Italy	1742	1803	+61
Norway	1669	1667	-2
Sweden	1808	1620	-188
Netherlands	1695	1615	-80
France	1713	1607	-106
Denmark	1649	1581	-68
Belgium	1613	1581	-32
western Germany	1702	1527	-175

Table 3: Size and composition of part-time work, 1973 and 1993

Country	Part-time employment as a proportion of total employment (%)		Women's share in part-time employment (%)	
	1973	1993	1973	1993
Australia	11.9	23.9	79.4	75.3
Austria	6.4	10.1	85.8	89.7
Belgium	3.8	12.8	82.4	89.3
Canada	9.7	17.2	68.4	68.9
Denmark	-----	23.3	-----	74.9
Finland	-----	8.6	-----	63.1
France	5.9	13.7	82.3	83.3
Germany	10.1	15.1	89.0	88.6
Italy	6.4	5.4	58.3	70.5
Japan	13.9	21.1	70.0	67.7
Netherlands	-----	33.4	-----	75.7
New Zealand	11.2	21.2	72.3	74.2
Norway	23.0	27.1	76.4	80.5
Sweden	-----	24.9	-----	81.3
UK	16.0	23.3	90.9	84.5
USA	15.6	17.5	66.0	66.2



● **I am a child ! An ILO film on child labour.**

Few human rights abuses are so unanimously condemned while being so widely practised as child labour. Of the millions of children who are working, many toil in slave-like or hazardous conditions. And though this issue ought to rank high on the world's agenda, in practice it is surrounded by a wall of silence. This film represents an attempt to break that wall. It unveils the intolerable situation of some of the world's youngest and most vulnerable workers. It brings to light the efforts of governments, representatives of civil society and private citizens working for the eradication of child labour world-wide.

Through compelling images and moving personal stories, the viewer discovers children at work in the fields and plantations of Kenya, in the streets and workshops of Thailand, and in the charcoal yards of Brazil. But they could be almost anywhere. They are the innocent victims of poverty and exploitation. To rescue them, to return their childhood to them, is a moral imperative for every humane society worthy of the name. *I am a child* is meant as a contribution to that cause.

Duration: 52 minutes. Available in English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish. I am a child is an ILO production. Director: Miguel Schapira. Camera-Editor: Bernard Vansillette. Bureau of Public Information of the ILO, 4 route des Morillons, CH-1211, Geneva 22, Switzerland. Tel: +4122/799-7949 and +4122/799-6575; Fax: +4122/788-3894.



ployment, social security and other labour-related topics. Since 1965, the ILO Library has recorded the majority of its holdings, and those of ILO specialized documentation centres, in its databases LABORDOC (books, reports and journal articles) and SERIALS (periodicals, legislation and statistics). Each document selected for inclusion in LABORDOC is indexed using descriptors from the ILO Thesaurus: Labour, employment, and training terminology, 4th edition,

1991. LABORDOC on SilverPlatter is a CD-ROM containing the entire database from 1965 to the present, with quarterly updates. Users can search by subject, country or region, language and date. Prices for annual subscriptions vary from US\$895 for a single user to \$3,580 for 13+ simultaneous users. Order forms and further information can be obtained from ILO Publications: tel +4122/799-7828; Fax +4122/799-6358.

LABORDOC from 1980 to the present is available on the

HELECON CD-ROM INTERNATIONAL, published by the Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration Library. The CD-ROM, which is updated three times per year, includes several other databases on European management and economics topics. The annual subscription varies from US\$ 2,200 for a single user to \$3,300 for 11-25 users on a network.

Further information is available from HELECON: (<http://hkkk.fi/~libwww/products/internationale.html>). □

Economic Restructuring and Social Dialogue in the Ivanovo Oblast, Russia

International Labour Office, Geneva, 1996. ISBN 92-2-110302-1. For more information, contact Alena Nesporova at the Budapest Office of the ILO: Tel: +361/153-3520; Fax: +361/153-3683.

Before communism collapsed, Ivanovo Oblast was the consummate planned economy region, providing 34.5% of the Soviet Union's cotton cloth and 9.3% of its woolen cloth. Unfortunately for the 1.2 million people of Ivanovo, a region 300 kilometres north-east of Moscow, the government stopped churning out orders for cloth and few new clients have emerged to take up the slack. Retailers, wholesalers and foreign markets evaporated; the ILO's Central and Eastern Europe Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (CEET), based in Budapest, has estimated that textile production in the region declined by 57% between 1990 and 1994.

Ivanovo Oblast now has an unemployment rate of 11.7%, the second highest in Russia after Ingushetia (which registered an unemployment rate of 23%), according to CEET. But these figures include only the registered unemployed. Taking into account "hidden unemployment" – unregistered job seekers, plus workers who are formally employed but actually out of work (on so-called administrative leave without pay) or on reduced hours – Ivanovo's real unemployment rate would be at least 25%, the ILO estimates.

At the request of the Russian government, CEET undertook a two-year investigation of means to rejuvenate the region's textile industry. CEET spoke with government officials from Moscow and Ivanovo, trade unions and management from numerous textile companies. In April 1996 the ILO completed its study and made four key

recommendations for restructuring the industry:

- Ivanovo textile companies should develop better relationships with the garment and knitwear enterprises, both in the region and in the rest of the country, so as to serve their clients more efficiently. In the longer term, Ivanovo firms should branch out into producing clothing as well as textiles;
- More flax should be processed, since Russia has an abundant supply of this raw material and linen products are in demand;
- A regional company should be established for the procurement of raw materials;
- Market research needs to be improved so companies know what customers are seeking. Moreover, the region must promote itself so it can draw more clients.



If the textile industry is to be reinvigorated, two major initiatives must be implemented. First, textile companies must be made more competitive and surplus workers retrained and redeployed, second, the region as a whole must diversify and increase its ability to compete. The main means of achieving this, the ILO believes, are through upgrading the technical and social infrastructure (which are in a bad state now) as a basic condition for a well-functioning economy, increasing the efficiency of existing enterprises, stimulating enterprise creation and development, promoting job creation and flexibility and the competitiveness of the regional labour force. In this process, the ILO would provide expert advice and help develop business contacts.

The ILO will begin looking for donor support in the near future. Financing could come, in part, from the Russian Government. Russian banks may be willing to finance some light industry projects while private investors are also a possible source. For the balance of the necessary funding the ILO plans to approach organizations such as the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.



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Enterprise and the ILO: Promoting social progress and enterprise

The ILO and Enterprise: A Strong Partnership

As part of its enterprise activities, the International Labour Organization is organizing an historic forum in November. For the first time, the ILO is gathering labour, employers and governments on the same stage as enterprises and entrepreneurs. This forum will bring together the best minds on the subject of enterprise today: Chief executives and senior managers. Employers and labour leaders. Economic analysts. Business school deans and the Bretton Woods agencies. What is this unprecedented gathering? It's called *Enterprise Forum '96*.

An Agenda for Action

The ILO has prepared an attractive programme based on **four key themes** affecting enterprises today and focusing on the changing world economy, jobs creation, social initiatives and the future

of enterprises and the social partners. Expert presentations will highlight these issues. High-level panellists will discuss them, explore the real and potential contributions of enterprises and entrepreneurs, and suggest ILO action, reform and development. We will discuss and fine-tune the proposed new **ILO Enterprise Strategy** and its **Action Programme**. In the process, those who are there will help set the global agenda for the next century.

Objectives

Enterprise Forum '96 will provide a global meeting place:

- *For CEOs, senior executives and owners of small enterprises* to review experiences, teach and learn, and become acquainted with the social partnership;
- *For the ILO and its tripartite membership* to consolidate relations with enterprises and entrepreneurs, listen to what

they have to say and marshal global mobilization for joint action;

- *For all participants* to renew and generate ideas for a strong partnership and job creation, built on the ILO's unique international status as the meeting point for enterprise, labour and government.

Who's Coming

Enterprise Forum '96 will draw **leaders in today's global economy**. Joining chief executives, senior managers and employers will be workers, planners, economists and government representatives.

At *Enterprise Forum '96* top names in enterprise, from Geneva and around the world will show, in exhibits, how they cope with the new global economy and what enterprises can do.

Enterprise Forum '96 will vividly illustrate the new "active partnership policy" needed to meet today's demanding economic realities.

Keynote speakers

- **Welcoming address** by Mr. M. Hansenne, Director-General of the ILO
- Address by Mr. J-P. Maître, Conseiller d'Etat, Chef du Département de l'économie publique, on "**Geneva and enterprises**"
- Address by Mr. C. Smadja, Managing Director, World Economic Forum, on "**Globalization and enterprises: Playing the winner-takes-all game**"

Session 1: IMPLICATIONS FOR ENTERPRISES AND THE ILO OF CHANGES AFFECTING THE WORLD ECONOMY

Main discussion topics: Global changes and business trends; the quickening pace of change; financial and labour markets; trade liberalization and the changing role of governments; structural adjustment; the emergence of multiple stakeholders in enterprises; human resource development in flexible organizations.

Panellists include:

- Mr. J. Nemoto, Chairman, Japan Federation of Employers' Associations
- Dr. K. Murmann, President, Confederation of German Employers' Associations
- Mr. L. Boyd, Chairman, Business South Africa, and Deputy Chairman, Anglo-American Corporation
- Mr. J.A. Guzmán, Presidente, Confederación de la Producción y del Comercio, Chile
- Mme M. Smet, Ministre de l'Emploi et du Travail, Belgique¹
- Mr. L. Trotman, President, ICFTU

Session 2: ENTERPRISES AND JOBS

Main discussion topics: Increased productivity and competitiveness; training and employability; job generation by small and medium-sized enterprises.

Panellists include:

- Mr. T. Sattelberger, Corporate Senior Vice-President, Lufthansa German Airlines
- Mr. Y. Yamada, Special Assistant to the Secretary-General, Asian Productivity Organization, Japan
- Mr. A.W.A. de Haas, Member of the Board, Netherlands Philips Bedrijven B.V.
- Mr. F. Kales, General Manager, Global Education and Training, IBM International Education Centre (Europe)
- Ms. P. DeDominic, Immediate Past President, National Association of Women Business Owners, USA
- Mr. K. O'Leary, President, SoftKey International, USA
- Mr. A. Jeetun, Director, Mauritius Employers' Federation, and Secretary-General of the Pan-African Employers' Confederation
- Mr. H.K. Chinery-Hesse, Director, Soft Co. Ltd., Ghana



competitiveness in a global economy

ILO, Geneva, 8-9 November 1996

Session 3: SOCIAL INITIATIVES BY ENTERPRISES

Main discussion topics: Recognition of multiple stakeholders in enterprises now that the private sector is the globally accepted engine of growth and development; how this means increased accountability and calls for a wider definition of business success.

Session 4: THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL PARTNERS AT THE ENTERPRISE LEVEL

Main discussion topics: The changing nature of enterprise and the impact on employers' organizations and trade unions; the blurring of boundaries of the enterprise, through networks, alliances and subcontracting, and flat and participative organizations; the rising number of worker-owned enterprises; the role of pension funds in changing patterns of ownership.

Panellists include:

- Ms. K. Jespersen, Minister of Social Affairs, Denmark
- Mr. B. Bacon, Vice-President, World Business Academy
- Mr. B. Stigson, Executive Director, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Geneva
- Mr. S. Ito, Vice-President, Japanese Trade Union, JTUC-RENGO, Tokyo
- Mr. I. Kamprad, Founder and President of IKEA, Sweden*

Panellists include:

- Mr. W. Brett, Vice-Chairman of the Workers' group of the ILO Governing Body and General Secretary of the Institution of Professional Managers and Specialists, UK
- Mr. J.-J. Oechslin, Vice-Chairman of the Employers' group of the ILO Governing Body and President, International Organization of Employers, Geneva
- Mr. G. Trogen, Director-General, ALMEGA Industrial and Chemical Association, Sweden
- Mr. M. Barde, Secrétaire général, Fédération des Syndicats patronaux, Geneva
- Mr. H. Djilani, Président, Union Tunisienne de l'Industrie, du Commerce et de l'Artisanat
- Mr. R.F. Giwa, President, Nigerian Employers' Consulative Association, and Chairman, Lever Brothers Nigeria Plc.
- Mr. V.P. Kolmogorov, Chairman, Russian Coordination Council, Russian Association of Employers

*to be confirmed

Nomination/Registration Form: ILO Enterprise Forum 96, Geneva, 8-9 November, 1996

Name:

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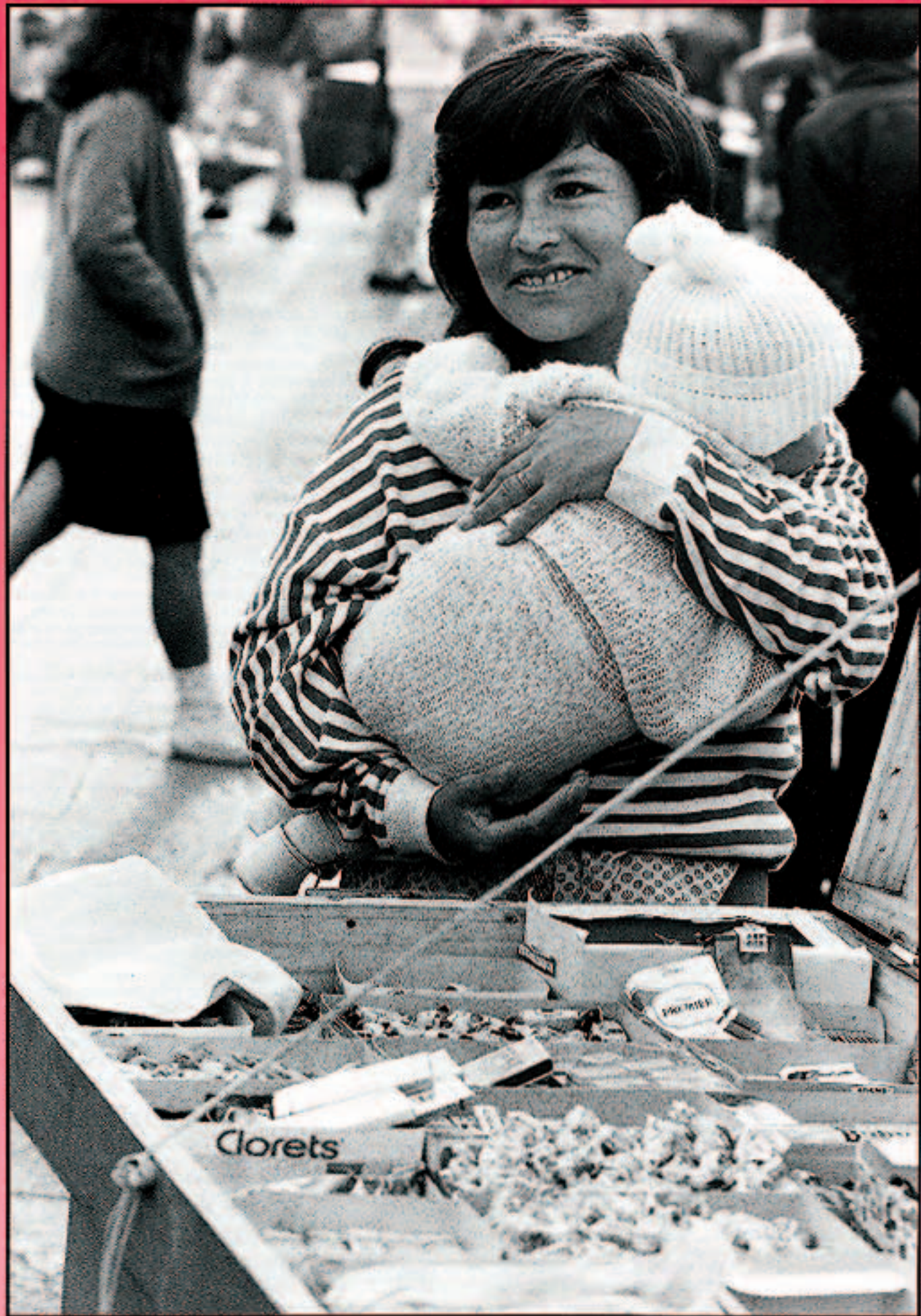
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Arrangements for the Forum: Registration is free. Forum participants will make their own attendance arrangements, and meet their own travel and subsistence costs. Further particulars regarding administrative and joining information will be sent to all participants as it becomes available.

Please return this form by 15 October 1996 to: ILO Enterprise Forum, ENTREPRISE, International Labour Office, 4 route des Morillons, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. Fax: +4122/799-7978; Tel.: +4122/799-8837; E-mail: entforum@hq.ilo.ch



Women work more but account for an overwhelming majority (70%) of the over 1 billion people living in poverty and suffer higher rates of underemployment and unemployment than men.