

World of **Work**



International
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Equality at work



**ILO Global Report
pull-out poster**

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Also in this issue

Indigenous women and discrimination • Equality at work: Making it happen • RFID and workplace surveillance • European flexicurity? • Discrimination in recruitment • Special feature: Translating the ILO message to the world

75 years ago . . . Remembering Albert Thomas



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“At 3.30 a.m. on the morning of 8th May, 1932, I was awakened by the insistent ringing of my telephone... ‘Sorry to disturb you’ said the voice of a friend, ‘but I’ve bad news. Albert Thomas is dead. He died suddenly in Paris last night.’”

Albert Thomas, the ILO’s first Director (1919-32), “came to be wholly identified with the International Labour Office. The object which it was designed to achieve, social justice, was the ruling and the consuming passion of his life.” Thus wrote Edward J. Phelan, who worked closely with Albert Thomas from 1920 and was later to become Director-General himself.

Albert Thomas’s brilliant career in France as journalist, politician, Cabinet Minister and Ambassador was well known, but in 1919 his election as Director of the ILO came as a surprise. “From that moment he gave himself entirely to his new work . . . In a few years he created, out of a little group of officials housed in a private residence in London in 1920, an institution which reaches into all the world . . .”. Under his leadership the International Labour Conference adopted 33 international Conventions covering fundamental issues such as hours of work, minimum age, health insurance, maternity protection, unemployment, right of association, protection against accidents at work, minimum wages and forced labour.

It is clear from the accounts of those

who knew him that Thomas’s personality played a great part in the achievements of the ILO’s first decade. The Chairman of the Governing Body Sir Atul Chatterjee, had this to say: “He was one of the great world statesmen of his time . . . his vision and his ardour embraced not merely the ideals of social justice . . . but the wider cause of good will and good understanding between the nations . . . He could do the work of several ordinary men. The range of his interests was unlimited. He was a great and persuasive orator. His mind was as quick and penetrating as his memory was retentive. He was an outstanding organizer, and still more remarkable were his powers of initiative and leadership. Possessing all the qualities of what might be described as a combative personality, he devoted himself wholeheartedly to a service of conciliation. The strength of his character was equalled by its kindness and benevolence.”

Harold Butler, who succeeded him, referred to his “faith, energy, courage and spirit of sacrifice” and in 1933 told the International Labour Conference: “the improvement of social conditions, the preservation of individual human rights, and the furtherance of social justice . . . It was on this foundation that he succeeded in creating a tradition which we have inherited . . . The best memorial which we can raise to his work is to preserve and strengthen that tradition.”

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Equality at work

The world of work is a unique entry point for combating discrimination. Despite major advances, inequalities persist, afflicting millions worldwide and preventing societies from realizing their full potential. *World of Work* focuses on the ILO's new Global Report *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges*, looks at both new and old forms of discrimination in the workplace and reports on some success stories.

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Created in 1919, the International Labour Organization (ILO) brings together governments, employers and workers of its 180 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 Global Report **Insidious** The new face of discrimination and in



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* *Equality at Work: Tackling the challenges. Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, International Labour Conference, 96th Session 2007, International Labour Office, Geneva

This Report may also be consulted on the ILO Internet site (www.ilo.org/declaration). ISBN 978-92-2-118130-9 ISSN 0074-6681

At workplaces where different people gather, one thing remains the same: despite major advances in addressing discrimination at work, inequalities between mainstream groups and those vulnerable to discrimination remain stubbornly persistent and continue to afflict millions of people worldwide. A new ILO report entitled *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges** provides the most comprehensive study to date on equality at work, illuminating what has been accomplished and what remains to be done to eliminate this insidious practice. It also assesses the effectiveness of conventional and new policy instruments in creating more diverse and more equal workplaces.

GENEVA – In the four years since its last global report on discrimination, the ILO has crafted a mixed assessment of advances and failures in the global fight for equality at work.

On the positive side, efforts by ILO member States to stamp out workplace discrimination have moved forward significantly. As of the end of 2006, nine out of ten member States had ratified the two core Conventions on discrimination – the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) and the Discrimination (Employment and occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) – thereby committing to creating legislation and policies that prevent discrimination.

New initiatives – such as the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS – have revolutionized the public and private response to AIDS in the world of work. And more and more countries are creating specialized institutions to deal with discrimination at the workplace.

Nevertheless, the scales measuring equality versus inequality remain unbalanced. Law enforcement remains weak. And in many countries, the offices that have been created to deal with discrim-

ess and insecurity: equality in the world of work

ination aren't properly staffed or funded. While anti-discrimination efforts are increasing in the formal economy, a growing informal economy represents a vast and moving target for public policies seeking to remove obstacles preventing hundreds of millions of people from enjoying equal opportunities at work.

Old forms of discrimination – based on gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, unfair treatment of young or older persons, people with disabilities, persons living with HIV/AIDS, or on the basis of sexual orientation – remain rampant in some societies and cultures. Meanwhile, new forms of discrimination are emerging. In particular, practices that penalize those with a genetic predisposition to developing certain diseases or those who have lifestyles considered unhealthy – such as smoking, even away from the workplace – are the new front-line of discrimination at work.

The main message of the Global Report is that to tackle discrimination at work, the creation of more equal societies must become a central goal of development policies. The promotion of equal opportunities for decent work for all women and men, irrespective of race, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation, is one of the means to advance in this direction.

For some people discrimination means not having a particular job they want and for which they are qualified, while for others, it may mean not having a job at all. Such economic discrimination may translate into social and economic disadvantages and spark “political instability and social upheaval, which upset investment and economic growth”.

“These barriers to equality can prevent societies from realizing the full potential of today’s globalized economy,” the Report says.

“Discrimination at work is ‘a violation of

human rights’ that literally wastes human talents, with detrimental effects on productivity and economic growth,” says ILO Director-General Juan Somavia who will submit the Report to the 96th International Labour Conference when it meets in May. “Discrimination generates ‘socio-economic inequalities that undermine social cohesion and solidarity and is a brake on poverty reduction.’”

The Report is part of a series of studies issued annually on core ILO labour issues and was prepared under the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1998. The Declaration focuses on four fundamental principles – freedom of association, the elimination of child labour, the elimination of forced labour and discrimination. Each issue is subject to a major study every four years.

Insidious and often invisible

Discrimination is frequently embedded in the way in which workplaces operate and is rooted in prevalent cultural and social values and norms. Discrimination doesn't distinguish between formal and informal workplaces, although in the latter it may take more overt forms since it is outside the

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>> protection provided by labour laws and enforcement mechanisms.

A recent development is the emergence of practices that penalize persons with “a genetic predisposition to developing certain diseases or those who have lifestyles considered unhealthy”. The rapid developments in genetics and related new technologies have made it easier to obtain information on genetic status. The Report states that genetic screening has important implications for the workplace, where, for example, employers might have an interest in excluding employees whose genetic status shows a predisposition to developing a certain disease in the future. Genetic discrimination at the workplace has been proven and successfully contested in several courts around the world.

Another main theme throughout the Report is the persistence of gender gaps in employment and pay and the need for integrated policies addressing sex discrimination in remuneration and occupational segregation by sex, while reconciling work and family responsibilities. Women’s participation in the labour force and in paid employment has maintained an upward trend in almost all regions of the world, but the gender gap in unemployment has proven more resistant. Female labour force participation rates continued to rise significantly, thus narrowing the worldwide gender gap in labour participation rates by 3.5 percentage points. Neverthe-

less, despite phenomenal advances in women’s educational attainments, women continue to earn less than men everywhere.

What can we do?

The Global Report recommends a series of steps to combat discrimination and achieve the ILO’s proposed action plan. These include promoting gender equality through more integrated and better-coordinated global action; mainstreaming non-discrimination and equality into ILO Decent Work Country Programmes taking into account specific needs of different groups; enacting better laws and promoting better enforcement; more effective non-regulatory initiatives such as government purchasing, and lending and investment policies; and helping workers and employers make equality a reality at the workplace through mechanisms such as collective bargaining agreements and codes of conduct.

One approach recommended by the Report in achieving equality at work is to complement anti-discrimination policy measures – such as comprehensive laws, effective enforcement mechanisms and properly funded specialized bodies – with other policy instruments, such as active labour market policies and public procurement policies pursuing non-discrimination and equality goals.



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Equality at work: Tackling the challenges

is the second Global Report on this subject. It examines discrimination and inequality at work, and looks at what needs to be done to eliminate them. The Report also assesses the effectiveness of conventional and new policy instruments, such as active labour market policies and public procurement, in creating more diverse and more equal workplaces. It reviews initiatives by employers' and workers' organizations to address issues such as pay equity in collective agreements, human resource management policies and corporate social responsibility. And it highlights measures that can enhance the employability of people who are vulnerable to discrimination and improve the job placement function in the private and public sectors, while making labour markets operate more efficiently.

This new Global Report recognizes that fighting discrimination requires national, regional and global responses, and places efforts to combat it in the wider strategic framework of the ILO goal of decent work for all men and women. It concludes by proposing follow-up action to ensure that the promotion of equal opportunities for all in the world of work can become a reality.



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ILO CONVENTIONS

National political commitment to combat discrimination and promote equal treatment and opportunities at the workplace is widespread, as shown by the almost universal ratification of the two main ILO instruments in this area, the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). Only a handful of member States have yet to ratify these Conventions.

For the most recent list of ratifications of these and other ILO Conventions, see <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/norm/index.htm>

STEPS TO COMBAT DISCRIMINATION

- Promoting gender equality through more integrated and better-coordinated global action;
- Mainstreaming non-discrimination and equality into ILO Decent Work Country Programmes taking into account specific needs of different groups;
- Better laws and better enforcement;
- More effective non-regulatory initiatives such as government purchasing, and lending and investment policies;
- Helping to equip the Social Partners to make equality a reality at the workplace through mechanisms such as collective bargaining agreements and codes of conduct.

KEY POINTS

- Discrimination rooted in society's values and norms needs to be addressed and eliminated
- There is no single definition of discrimination, nor any one indicator to measure its impact
- Laws alone have not reduced discrimination at work
- Equality at work requires effective labour market and anti-discriminatory policies
- Reducing discrimination nationally requires supportive economic and trade policies
- Gender discrimination affects the largest number of people

DEFINITIONS

What is discrimination? Discrimination in employment means treating people differently because of characteristics that are not related to their merit or the requirements of the job. These characteristics include race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction and social origin. Discrimination at work is a violation of a human right that results in a waste of human talents, with detrimental effects on productivity and economic growth, and generates socio-economic inequalities that undermine social cohesion and solidarity. It acts as a brake on the reduction of poverty.

When is different treatment not discriminatory? Different treatment and rewards based on different levels of productivity are not discriminatory. Some workers and some occupations are more productive than others, reflecting different skills, qualifications and abilities. This leads to different returns at work – and it is fair and efficient. Different treatment based on individual merit, such as talents, knowledge and skill, is not discriminatory. Different treatment to meet the special needs of some individuals – and make sure that they have equal opportunities – is not discriminatory. This is often known as affirmative action.

Indigenous women overcome multiple obstacles



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Indigenous peoples around the world suffer from discrimination in the world of work, but indigenous women can be particularly hard hit by the double whammy of ethnicity and gender. Jessie Fredlund of the ILO Gender Bureau and INDISCO looks at the problem and finds some success stories in Bangladesh.

GENEVA – Despite the immense diversity of indigenous cultures, the challenges confronting indigenous peoples are often strikingly alike. Several issues come to the forefront across the continents:

- In addition to facing discrimination due to their ethnicity, members of indigenous communities often belong to linguistic minorities, causing hardship in education, employment and everyday life.
- Many lands once belonging to indigenous peoples have been encroached upon and settled by newcomers. With little legal protection, indigenous peoples can rarely recover the lands they traditionally occupied.
- Indigenous communities are often situated in remote, rural areas, where they lack infrastructure and access to larger markets.

- Indigenous communities have also played a historically important role in environmental protection. Traditional livelihoods in indigenous communities may depend upon plant and animal species and other parts of fragile ecosystems. Environmental damage therefore often most severely impacts their economies.
- Land reform and property laws have restricted many nomadic indigenous groups, often making their traditional occupations untenable.
- As they are often marginalized, even where they might constitute a national majority group, most indigenous and tribal peoples lack clout in national and even local government, and their interests and needs are often ignored by decision-makers.
- Years of discrimination have cast many indigenous people into poverty, thus further damaging their chances at empowerment and opportunities to improve their situation.

The intersection of ethnic and gender identities means that indigenous women often face multiple discrimination. Frequently excluded from decision-making at all levels, indigenous women number among the world's most disadvantaged people. Even in those indigenous societies where women were historically empowered, drastic changes in economic and political structures in recent decades have eroded women's traditional opportunities for financial independence. The hardship caused by the destruction of traditional industries has often fallen unduly on women, robbing them of social safety nets and opportunities for employment. Indigenous women often face disproportionately high mortality rates, low literacy rates and high levels of poverty.

Three women in Bangladesh

Indigenous and tribal peoples make up only around 1 per cent of the total population in Bangladesh; the ethnic majority, Bengalis, constitute 98 per cent. In a country already hard hit by poverty, Bangladesh's indigenous peoples often find themselves among the poorest of the poor. They face discrimination in education, employment and civil rights. Decades of violence between indigenous-led insurgencies and government security forces in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region of Bangladesh aggravated social tensions and led to serious human and civil rights abuses against

members of indigenous communities. The impact of these injustices persists today despite the signing of a peace accord nearly ten years ago.

Although women have played a major role in development efforts in the country, much of Bangladeshi society has yet to fully accept the idea of women working outside the home. Indigenous women often have little financial security; they are dependent on male family members. But what happens when that safety net vanishes?

Sujata Begum Khukumoni, a Muslim belonging to the Manipuri indigenous group in eastern Bangladesh, was only 9 years old when her father, a rice-seller, lost two trucks of rice in an accident, casting her family into debt. Seven years later, Khuku's younger brother suffered a serious injury that left him severely scarred. As Khuku's father slipped into depression, she found herself shouldering the responsibility of providing for herself and her younger siblings.

Fifteen-year-old Khuku joined Urilai Mahila Samiti, a women's self-help group supported by the ILO project Women's Empowerment through Employment and Health (WEEH). After training in business, handicraft development and horticulture, she decided to take out small loans to finance tomato cultivation and weaving. Through these two activities, she has become the primary breadwinner in her family. At the age of 20 she now supports herself and her siblings and manages her family's savings and finances. She has plans to improve her businesses with further help from ILO-WEEH and her women's group.

Six years ago, Julie Martelson, a young indigenous Khasia woman living in the forests of eastern Bangladesh, saw her life suddenly fall apart: her husband, a *paan* leaf grower, died unexpectedly, leaving 26-year-old Julie a widowed mother of three. Like most Khasia in the area, Julie and her husband did not own their land but had to lease it from the government although their peoples have been using it for generations. As in many indigenous communities, most Khasia have no land titles; traditionally the land was considered to be the common property of the community, but often had no official recognition as such. Without land ownership, required as collateral against loans, most Khasia farmers – especially women – have almost no opportunities to gain credit.

Even before her husband's death, Julie had realized the potential for improving their livelihood





© Philip Gain

>> with the help of loans. Joining a women's credit group in her community, she was able to borrow enough money to hire several workers to help her continue *paan* cultivation. Employing local labourers to work in the field, Julie concentrated on the post-harvesting processing and took charge of selling the leaves to distributors.

Julie has since remarried, and now works with her second husband in *paan* production. She still sells the leaves and, in accordance with the Khasias' matrilineal society, controls the family finances. Through training sponsored by the ILO project Women Empowerment through Decent Employment (WEDE), she has been able to increase her profits and expand the business through improved access to credit. Julie's hard work and astute business sense have paid off, and for her children, whom she can now afford to send to a good school, the future looks bright.

Sanoi Sinha is a 54-year-old Hindu woman and, like Khuku, a member of the indigenous Manipuri people. For most of her life, Sanoi had enjoyed relative security from her father's and husband's incomes. But in 1994 her husband was diagnosed with leukaemia and the family quickly sank into debt to pay for treatment. Despite their efforts, he died the following year, leaving Sanoi and her two unmarried daughters with nothing but a house and small garden.

Sanoi had joined a women's credit and self-help group several years before her husband's death, and with the help of NGO- and ILO-sponsored training was able to start a weaving business, using the skills she had gained from years of weaving as a pastime. She took out several loans to buy equipment and supplies, and began making a variety of traditional and non-traditional products. With her proceeds and further loans, she was able to build a workshop for her looms. Today, her loans are nearly paid off, and she hopes to take out more money soon to finance the purchase of a new loom and the hiring of an additional weaver. Although she must still work hard to support herself and her daughters, she has high hopes for the future.

Turning the tables

Khuku, Julie and Sanoi were able to find strength in their roles as indigenous women. All three come from societies where relations between women and men were traditionally more flexible than in mainstream Bangladeshi society today. Khuku remarked to the ILO that being Manipuri was what freed her to find work outside the home, since Bengali Muslim families often restrict girls in this regard. Julie finds that being Khasia, one of the only two matrilineal societies in Bangladesh, gave her greater control over finances.

"It is the women in Khasia society who control the funds," she explains.

Khuku, Julie and Sanoi also used their knowledge of traditional indigenous industries as a starting point for their businesses. Khuku began to learn traditional Manipuri weaving when she was only 5 years old. Sanoi's weaving business draws on the same knowledge, passed down through generations of Manipuri women. In cultivating *paan* leaves, Julie also tapped the knowledge of her community, using the traditional livelihood as a basis for a successful and expanding business.

Like these women, thousands of indigenous women throughout Bangladesh and around the world are taking fate into their own hands and working to overcome poverty and discrimination. Traditional knowledge and values, coupled with economic support from governments, NGOs and agencies such as the ILO, provide indigenous women with unique opportunities to better themselves, their families and their communities.

These stories, and many others like them, provide hope in the face of the often dismal situations

of indigenous peoples. In Bangladesh the ILO-WEH project, in conjunction with its partner NGOs, has joined forces with women in indigenous communities in the fight against poverty and injustice. The project has provided training for indigenous women and men in business management, productive skills, and women's and labour rights. The organizations have also helped provide microinsurance to families and have lent support in the establishment of microcredit groups, enabling women and men to combine their new knowledge and longstanding traditions in the form of new enterprises.

The project in Bangladesh is just one of numerous projects carried out by the ILO and partner NGOs in recent years. In Central America, a recent ILO project has used education and training to help indigenous women start their own ecotourism businesses. Another ILO project has aided urban indigenous women in the Philippines in the development of weaving businesses. Cameroonian

indigenous women have received support from the ILO in order to start horticulture businesses, market handicrafts, and open stores. The ILO in India has helped support the formation of cooperatives for savings, loans and entrepreneurship among indigenous women. And that's just to name a few examples (see sidebar).

The increasing focus on indigenous women recognizes that, in addition to being the most disadvantaged, women are also key to improving their communities as a whole. Women are often the centre of indigenous families. Their empowerment is essential for the well-being of their families, and in turn, their communities. Indigenous women are often the custodians of a wealth of traditional knowledge. Also, women across cultures take primary responsibility for raising children; they are children's first and most important teachers. Knowledge given to women is likely to pass on to future generations, multiplying opportunities for their children and grandchildren.

THE ILO AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The ILO has long been at the forefront in addressing the needs and rights of indigenous peoples. The organization's history of involvement dates back to the 1920s, when it began advocating against the exploitation of "native workers". By the 1950s the ILO had begun to explicitly address the concerns of indigenous workers, adopting the Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention (No.107) in 1957, the first international treaty of its kind.

Over the following three decades, indigenous people around the world began to organize to make their voices heard on an international level. During the 1970s, the United Nations and partner organizations began to re-examine their approaches to indigenous concerns, finding themselves the subjects of increasing criticism for treating the eventual destruction of indigenous cultures as inevitable. In response, the ILO adopted a new Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (No.169) in 1989. This Convention sets as goals both the creation of opportunities for decent work among indigenous peoples *and* the protection of their unique cultures.

The ILO's work for indigenous peoples is twofold. The Project to Promote ILO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (PRO 169) works at the policy level to integrate the principles set forth in Convention No. 169 into government practices, to

increase dialogue between indigenous peoples and national governments, and to raise awareness and understanding of the Convention. In this regard, it also undertakes capacity-building initiatives for all concerned actors at national, regional and international levels. In 2006, PRO 169 was particularly active in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Congo, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Kenya, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines and the Russian Federation. PRO 169 also cooperates with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to research legislation in Africa protecting indigenous and tribal peoples. The ILO-INDISCO programme complements the work of PRO 169 by undertaking initiatives on economic development and decent work that is appropriate for the particular cultures, aspirations and specificities of indigenous peoples. In 2006, INDISCO undertook activities in Cambodia, Kenya and the Philippines.

In recent years, women in indigenous communities have received increasing attention from the ILO and throughout the international community. In 1999, ILO Director-General Juan Somavia announced the Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming, giving an increased voice to women in all ILO programmes, including its work on behalf of indigenous peoples.

Equality at work

Making it happen



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Winning the war against discrimination in the workplace requires the joint efforts of different actors: national governments to adopt and enforce the laws; international and regional organizations to harmonize regulations and disseminate best practices; and social partners as well as enterprises to endorse equality goals. Manuela Tomei, ILO Senior Specialist on Discrimination, shares some of the stories encountered in putting the Global Report together. This article was prepared in collaboration with Marika Cioffi.

SOFIA – Gheorge*, a Bulgarian national belonging to the Roma community, submitted an applica-

tion for a vacancy advertised by a private company. He did not mention his ethnic origin in his application. But when he was called for a job interview, he was discouraged from expecting to be hired. Several weeks later, without receiving any explanation, he was told his interview had not been successful. He brought a legal action. Although the company argued that its refusal was not due to his ethnic origin it failed to prove that there had been no breach of the principle of equal treatment. The Sofia District Court established that there was sufficient circumstantial evidence of a causal link between his ethnicity and the company's refusal to recruit him. Gheorge was awarded full compensation based on Bulgaria's Protection against Discrimination Act.

This ruling, destined to become a landmark, was the first in Bulgaria to identify cases of discrimination by inference, according to the special rule under which the burden of proof is shifted from the alleged victim of discrimination to the person or enterprise accused of discrimination. The reversal of the burden of the proof has been recently introduced in the national laws of the European Union Member States under the impetus of the European Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, and the European Directive 2000/78/EC¹ establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment irrespective of religion, age, disability and sexual orientation. It responds to the goal of facilitating the resolution of individual discrimination cases through legal channels. Recognizing the difficulty for the plaintiff to produce the evidence that shows that she or he has been subject to unlawful treatment, this principle places on the employer the onus of proving that objective reasons, not arbitrary considerations, have given rise to a different treatment.

The law: An essential step in combating discrimination

Gheorge's case shows the importance of the existence of sound laws in combating discrimi-

* Names in this article have been changed to protect identities

ation. Coherent and comprehensive anti-discrimination laws are indeed the sine qua non condition for achieving equality in the workplace. They demonstrate governments' commitment to this goal, while providing guidance about how to achieve it and pointing to the cost of non-compliance. National regulatory frameworks reflect national legal traditions as well as the prevalent national circumstances and aspirations. In industrialized countries there is a tendency towards the adoption of single comprehensive texts, prohibiting discrimination on a number of grounds. This is the case in many EU countries that have recently transposed into national laws the above-mentioned European Directives. Developing countries tend to enact specific laws addressing issues of crucial importance and immediacy such as discrimination based on HIV/AIDS status, as is the case in many African countries.

Well-informed labour courts and labour inspectors

But laws are not sufficient to eradicate discrimination at work. Making sure that the wider public and specific groups such as judges, labour inspectors, workers and employers understand them is key to ensuring their observance and enforcement.

Labour courts frequently remain co-responsible, alongside specialized institutions in the areas of human rights and equality, for the supervision and enforcement of anti-discrimination law.

Courts not only hear individual cases, determine whether or not discrimination has occurred and decide about the corresponding legal consequences. Through case law, they can also strengthen and further develop the national legislation.

The landmark case of Vishaka vs. State of Rajasthan, India is a case in point. On that occasion, and for the first time, the Supreme Court of India defined “sexual harassment” as a violation of women’s human rights and outlined guidelines for its prevention and redress. This meant a radical change in the legal definition of “sexual harassment”, until then characterized as “eve teasing”. This judgment challenged the prevalent social tolerance towards violence against women based on the belief that women’s appearance in public places was “provocative” and, thus, susceptible of engendering male violence.

Labour inspection services constitute another invaluable means of creating more equal workplaces. Labour inspectors can inspect establishments, obtain confidential information and thus monitor legal compliance without waiting for the alleged victim of discrimination to lodge a complaint. They are able to bring cases before the courts or intervene in court proceedings instituted by another party. Through technical advice and supply of information, they can make an important contribution in the prevention and redress of discrimination cases. The experience of the *núcleos* in Brazil is illustrative (see sidebar).

¹ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2000/l_303/l_30320001202en00160022.pdf



Throughout Central and Eastern Europe the Roma minorities are subject to discrimination. Here, a Roma man on a street in Pest.



© Matias Costa/Panos Pictures



PROMOTING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN BRAZIL WHAT CAN BE LEARNT FROM THE *NÚCLEOS*?

The Centres for Prevention of Discrimination in Employment and Occupation, known as *núcleos*, were established in 1995 by the Brazilian Ministry of Labour in cooperation with the ILO. They are responsible for receiving and examining complaints of discrimination, providing mediation services and engaging in awareness-raising activities. Despite some shortcomings, especially in the first years, the *núcleos* have successfully engaged in building constructive dialogue with enterprises and developing promising partnerships with universities and NGOs.

With the ILO's technical assistance, a number of changes have been introduced in the way the *núcleos* operate as well as in their reporting lines. In 2006 a Special Advisory Unit on Discrimination and Equality Issues, reporting directly to the Executive Secretary of the Ministry, was established – thus raising the profile of these matters in the Ministry.

Alexim, J.C.; Cappelin, P.; Lettieri, C. et al. *A experiência dos núcleos de promoção da igualdade de oportunidades e combate à discriminação no emprego e na ocupação*. Brasília, ILO 2005.

Beyond legal approaches

Non-legal approaches are also very relevant when seeking to combat discrimination. The creation and growth of specialized equality bodies, such as equality commissions or Ombudspersons, testify to this. Mandated with the task of promoting equality, these institutions can cover one or more grounds of discrimination. The advantage of multi-ground bodies (more common in the industrialized world) is that they provide more effective support to people who may face multiple forms of discrimination, facilitate the transfer of knowledge from areas where law and policy are more developed to “newer” areas, and ensure a more cost-effective use of staff and other resources. But potential risks

associated with these umbrella institutions are a loss of focus on any particular ground, thus undermining overall effectiveness, and difficulties in working with a larger number of groups subject to discrimination, especially when resources are scarce.

The powers of these institutions differ considerably by country and over time. They can range from the promotion of information campaigns on equality laws and the remedies available to the development of check lists and guidelines for human resource managers and public officials, or the development of national equality policies. They may also receive complaints or carry out investigations on their own initiative and issue recommendations (see sidebar).

SPECIALIZED EQUALITY BODIES A PROMOTIONAL APPROACH TOWARDS EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Since 2001, the Ombudsperson in Sweden has been assisting the social partners, through information and training activities, to meet their obligations under the Equal Opportunities Act.

Further to an investigation by the Equality Opportunities Commission of Hong Kong, China, the Hong Kong District Court awarded damages to three men who had been either refused a job or dismissed from their positions on the ground that their parents were affected by schizophrenia. The investigation by the Commission was able to reveal the link of the dismissal of the three men to their family history, allowing them to claim genetic discrimination (*The Guardian*, 1 Oct. 2000).

The Ontario Human Rights Commission in Canada has developed a policy to help appease possible tensions that may arise in the workplace between religious requirements, such as observing periods of prayer at particular times during a day or respecting certain dress codes, and established workplace practices.

In Mexico, the first national public policy ever to combat discrimination was launched under the auspices of the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination (CONAPRED) created in 2003. This institution is presently working to develop a set of indicators aimed at measuring discrimination and influencing public policies accordingly.

The key role of the social partners

Employers' and workers' organizations are another central piece of the equation. No matter how much change the law may undergo and how effectively it may be enforced, little progress can be expected if the social partners are not on board.

Trade unions and enterprises can join forces to overcome constraints that may emerge in the workplace, such as work-family tensions. Reconciling work and care responsibilities is an issue of growing concern for industrialized and developing countries and economies in transition alike. Long working hours, the intensification of work and the need for both men and women to earn a living make it necessary to devise ways that enable workers with family obligations to both look after their families and work for pay. In Bangkok, Thailand, the company TOT PLC and the trade union agreed to set up a childcare centre to assist employees on a cost-sharing basis: the company provided the premises, the union pays the teachers' salaries, while the parents bring children's blankets, diapers and bottles of water and milk.

Collective bargaining has been another means whereby employers' and workers' organizations have sought to address work-family reconciliation issues. While clauses of this type are more common in industrialized countries, progress is beginning to be seen in Latin America too, with clauses on paternity leave or childcare arrangements in collective agreements that go beyond what is required by national legislation.

Corporate social responsibility

Enterprises can also contribute to give practical effect to the principle of equality and non-discrimination through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. When endorsed by management and embedded in the company's policy and practice, these can help create more diverse workplaces. IBM, for instance, was among the first major US companies to adopt a policy stating that all employees should be treated equally, irrespective of their sexual orientation. Since then, a number of measures have been adopted including a dedicated, full-time global resource aimed at identifying gay and lesbian suppliers as part of IBM's minority-supplier initiative. In 2002 the company included "sexual orientation" in its US and Global Corporate Policy Statements on Diversity. While this constitutes an important step forward, IBM is confronted with the challenge of ensuring the application of its own policy across the world in countries with different cultural backgrounds and national laws.

Addressing multiple discrimination in the informal economy

Discrimination does not make a distinction between formal and informal work, but tends to be more overt in the informal economy which falls outside the scope of anti-discrimination laws and institutions. Moreover, discrimination often exacerbates or perpetuates poverty, while poverty furthers discrimination in a vicious cycle. And people who suffer from multiple forms of discrimination, i.e. they may be black, of older age and with a physical disability, tend to be over-represented among the poorest. Removing institutional and policy obstacles that prevent people from obtaining access to skills, capital and other productive assets, not only because they are poor but also because of their gender and disability, is an effective way of combating discrimination at work. The story of Letensea, a woman wounded in combat and currently running a stall in a local market in East Africa, is uplifting: "I dream of being a good trader, a real professional. That's why I decided to continue with my studies. I really like what I'm doing. My life is my work."

Letensea's dream was partly made possible through an ILO technical cooperation project "Developing Entrepreneurship among Women with Disabilities" that targets war-disabled women in East Africa. The project combines training in micro-enterprise skills with financial support to start a business activity through partnerships with local NGOs and micro-finance institutions.

The workplace is the battleground in the war against discrimination in society at large. Discrimination will persist as long as stereotypes and biases are not defused. There is an urgent need for all stakeholders to try harder to develop awareness of the pervasiveness and cost of discrimination, and to devise the solutions together.



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RFID and surveillance in the workplace



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Use of Radio Frequency Identification Microchips – RFID for short – is rapidly developing into a technology application of major global importance. Andrew Bibby reports on its implications for surveillance and monitoring of workers.

GENEVA – In logistics, RFID permits consignments to be individually monitored and tracked. In agriculture, RFID chips are used in ear tags for cattle and other livestock (and later after slaughter, for meat tracking). In public transport, RFID-enabled pre-payment cards such as Hong Kong's Octopus card are increasingly common, and are also finding additional uses as electronic "purses" to replace low-value cash transactions. In retailing, RFID tagging of individual products is predicted shortly to take over from barcodes. In business generally, RFID chips offer an extremely efficient way of asset tracking and inventory control.¹

RFID has a role, it seems, literally from cradle to grave. Some maternity hospitals are choosing, for safety purposes, to place RFID-tagged bracelets on newborn babies, and a number of old people's homes for similar reasons are tagging residents with dementia. And at least one company now customizes RFID tags for placing with bodies in burial grounds.

What is this apparently ubiquitous technology? Each RFID tag is a tiny microchip, in some cases no larger than a grain of rice, which holds data about the tagged object. Tags have a small antenna attached, used to transmit the data to an RFID reader. Normally, RFID operates over short distances – as when Octopus card-holders gain entry to Hong Kong's mass transit railway, for example – though some RFID tags can be read several kilometres away. Tags are typically passive, operating only when "woken up" by the reader, though micro-battery-equipped active tags are also available.

¹ *Social and labour implications of the increased use of advanced retail technologies*, ILO, Geneva 2006.

It is when RFID is used in the workplace that the use of this technology begins to run into controversy. The main issue is over the prospect that employers will be able to use RFID to monitor, openly or covertly, the movements and activities of employees. This concern has been expressed by a number of national trade unions, as well as by Philip Jennings, General Secretary of Union Network International (UNI), whose organization has recently drawn attention to growing electronic surveillance at work. "RFID can potentially mean that individuals are never able to feel genuinely off-duty, even during their breaks and time-off," Mr Jennings says.

RFID is seen by unions, in other words, in much the same way as they view more established technology applications like video monitoring and email monitoring, as raising issues of employee privacy in the workplace.

How much cause do unions have for this concern? The use of RFID which attracts the biggest headlines is the idea that chips can be implanted under the human skin so that an individual becomes RFID-readable wherever they go. What might seem like a science fiction scenario is, in fact, already in limited use. One nightclub, for example, invites its members to have RFID chips implanted as a convenient way to gain admission and pay for drinks. Implanted chips are also being promoted as a valuable way of holding individuals' medical history, enabling medics to retrieve this information in emergencies. In the workplace context, however, implanting workers in this way is currently highly unusual. The most quoted example is from Mexico where eighteen officials working for the Mexican Attorney General's office voluntarily received implants to enable them automatically to access restricted areas.

Less headline-grabbing but much more widespread is the growing trend to put RFID chips into employee uniforms. Industry sources say that one company alone has sold twenty million such tags, which are designed to be able to withstand frequent washing at high temperatures and ironing without damage to the microchip. In due course, suppliers believe it will be possible to use threads actually woven into the cloth as RFID antennae.

In one example from Las Vegas a casino manager reportedly monitored the activities of his staff through the RFID chips in their uniforms, and later disciplined one member of staff for wasting time. However, there are other examples from the same industry where uniform tagging has been imple-

mented satisfactorily. At the large Star City casino complex in Sydney, for instance, there were initial staff concerns when RFID tags were inserted in uniforms, but these seem to have been quickly overcome. The union there, the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union (LHMU) says that since uniforms are not worn away from the premises there is no risk of staff being monitored when off-duty. The LHMU adds that the casino was, in any case, already a highly monitored environment with many hundreds of cameras in place.

In general, where employers are choosing to put RFID tags into uniforms the reason is usually for laundry management purposes. Garments laundered commercially have traditionally been tagged with alphanumeric or barcode tags, with hundreds of millions of identity tags of these kind sold each year. RFID is, in a sense, simply a development of this usage.

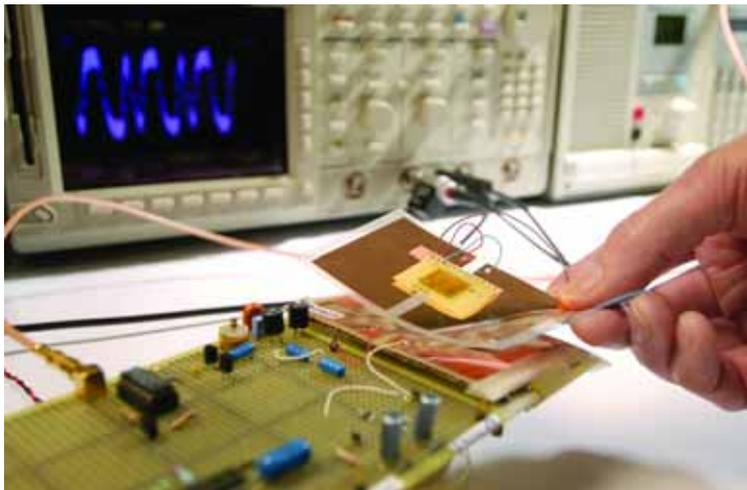
Nevertheless, RFID tags introduced for non-contentious purposes can subsequently be used in other ways, particularly for employee monitoring. By far the most widespread use of RFID in the workplace is for staff name badges and entry passes. Data collected from RFID chips embedded in staff passes can be used much more extensively. One IT company, for example, advertises software which integrates entry system data into a range of other reports, including records of staff attendance, overtime worked, absence and early leaving. The data are easily consolidated with HR employee records and with wage and payroll reports.

An admittedly small survey undertaken in the United States by the RAND Corporation might suggest that this capability is being widely exploited by employers. RAND surveyed six US organizations, all of which were found to link entry system data to other databases. What particularly concerned RAND's researchers was the lack of transparency in how these data were being used. The

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>> report commented that “explicit, written policies about how such cards [staff entry cards] are used generally do not exist and employees are not being told about whatever policies are being followed”. It went on to make a more substantive point: “Using such systems has modified the traditional balance of personal convenience, workplace safety and security, and individual privacy, leading to the loss of ‘practical obscurity’. Such systems also raise challenges for the meaning and implementation of fair information practices.”

RAND’s researchers were clearly surprised at what they found. Their study suggests that any employee with an RFID-based entry card should be “uneasy” when reading their report.

What might be called “database creep” appears in many cases to be unthinking rather than deliberately planned by employers, who may simply be making use of facilities automatically supplied on software they have acquired. Nevertheless, Philip Jennings of UNI sees this as an area where union attention is needed. “For many workers, the sense that their employer may be surreptitiously monitoring them leaves a bad taste in the mouth,” he says. “Far from information technology helping to release human potential and build a knowledge society, it sometimes seems as though it is being used to reduce the potential for independent thought and action in the workplace.” In 2006 UNI produced a Code of Good Practice covering RFID in the workplace (see sidebar).

The RFID industry believes that public concern about the technology is misplaced, and – as with barcodes – will be allayed as RFID becomes better known. The main RFID world trade body AIM Global has produced a privacy policy which (although produced primarily with consumer products in mind) asserts the right “to

ELECTRONIC MONITORING AT WORK

Like many technological applications, RFID can be positive or negative for workers, depending on how it is used.

- A mine in Sweden has been using RFID since 2003 to improve the safety of miners. Reading ranges are installed at strategic access points in the mine. The RFID tags worn by miners are activated when they are in range of an access point. When a mining accident occurs the recorder flashes the number and last location of the miners and send out alarms to warn those in the vicinity of the accident area. The system pinpoints the location of any trapped miners and facilitates rescue operations. In workplaces such as mines, RFID can act as a lifesaver.
- On the other hand, the technology has been used by some Japanese employers to monitor the efficiency of their employees. Workers carry mandatory RFID tags whose data is analysed to show how much each individual contributes to production. The system has raised concerns about trust between employer and employees; however, the

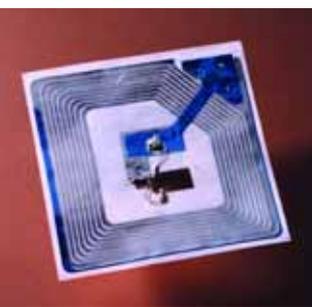
data protection issue is whether employers have a legitimate reason for such monitoring and whether this use of personal data is proportionate to the interests it serves.

The ILO Code of Practice, *Protection of workers’ personal data*, includes the following section on monitoring:

6.14 (1) If workers are monitored they should be informed in advance of the reasons for monitoring, the time schedule, the method and techniques used and the data to be collected, and the employer must minimize the intrusion on the privacy of workers.

(2) Secret monitoring should be permitted only: (a) if it is in conformity with national legislation; or (b) if there is suspicion on reasonable grounds of criminal activity or other serious wrongdoing.

(3) Continuous monitoring should be permitted only if required for health and safety or the protection of property.



LEGISLATION OR SELF-REGULATION?

Although data protection legislation is in force in many countries, its application to the increasing use of RFID is not always clear, and there are many who would prefer to see codes of conduct and other standards put in place to monitor and self-regulate the use of the technology.

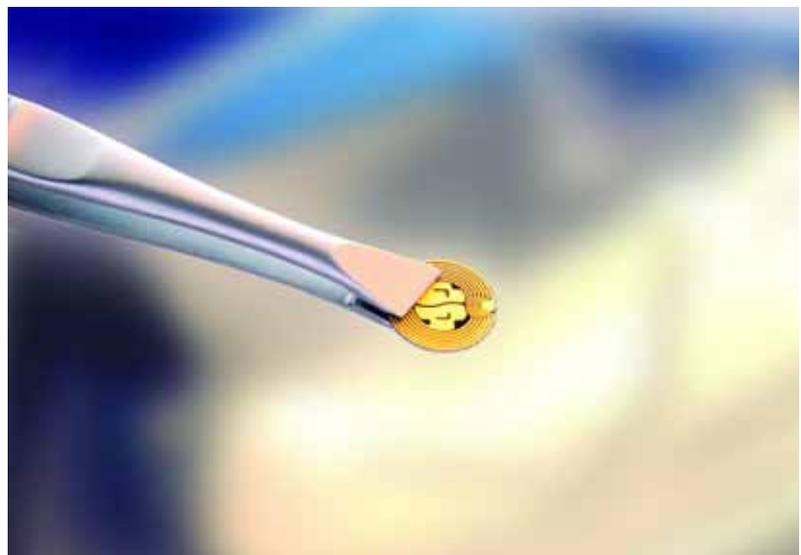
- The ILO Code of Practice, *Protection of workers' personal data* was adopted by a Meeting of Experts on Workers' Privacy approved by the ILO's Governing Body in 1996. The experts were appointed following consultations with governments and employers' and workers' organizations, according to the ILO's tripartite system. While RFID is not specifically mentioned, the Code contains a section on monitoring (see sidebar "Electronic monitoring at work").
- In the European Union, the implications of RFID were examined by the EU's expert group on data protection issues in a working document published in January 2005 (*Working document on data protection issues related to RFID technology*, Article 29, Data Protection Working Party). It recommended the following principles: visibility of RFID tags and RFID readers; the right of workers to access and correct data on their RFID tags; the usage of privacy-enhancing technologies, for example through deactivation keys; the visibility of high-level query details – who the data controller is, or why the data is collected; consent withdrawal; and confidentiality of personal data. The working party expressed its concern that some

RFID applications could violate human dignity as well as data protection rights. It concluded that personal data collected using RFID technology would generally fall within the obligations of the European Directive on Data Protection (95/46/EC).

- In the United Kingdom, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has issued a Technical Guidance note giving a brief summary of RFID technology and looking at how the Data Protection Act 1998 applies to its use. The Act will apply "where personal data is collected, generated or disclosed using RFID either directly or indirectly", and RFID users will need to consider the data protection principles of fair processing, use limitation, data quality, data retention, and security. "In a world of 'ubiquitous computing', says the ICO, " security and privacy safeguards should be built into the architecture of RFID systems rather than added on later."
- *RFID in the workplace: UNI Code of Good Practice* was drawn up by Union Network International in 2006. Its purpose is "to ensure that RFID technology in the workplace is introduced in accordance with the International Labour Organization's agreed core labour standards, in agreement with best data protection principles, and in line with the fundamental human right for individual privacy. The aim must be for RFID to be used in the workplace to the benefit of both companies and their employees, by improving the working environment."

know when, where and why tags are being read".

The growing use of RFID tags comes at a time when other technological changes are also raising concerns about employee privacy. Most notably, GPS satellite navigation, mobile telephony and wi-fi computer communication make it potentially much easier to track and monitor an individual's movements. Used well (for example, in monitoring the movements of health staff making home visits) these technologies can positively enhance employee safety. Used unthinkingly, they can add to employee stress. As one US truck driver monitored by GPS put it, "It's kind of like Big Brother is watching a little bit . . . I get testy in the deli when I'm waiting in line for coffee, because it's like, hey, they're watching me, I've got to go."



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Translating the ILO message to the world



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As the ILO gets ready for the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference, Olga Bogdanova goes behind the scenes to talk to some of the key players – the interpreters.

GENEVA – The delegates find their seats, take up their earphones, switch the channel to their preferred language and are ready for work. Concentrating on the Conference debate, they hardly notice that the people who take the floor are speaking different languages – so clearly and smoothly are their speeches interpreted.

This is “quality interpretation” as Althea Wright-Byll puts it. Wright-Byll is the ILO chief interpreter, leading the team of more than 300 interpreters who come to the ILC every year from all over the world.

These people are the true elite of the interpreters’ club. Besides perfect knowledge of their mother tongue they speak at least four foreign languages; they do simultaneous interpretation at the ILC sessions and consecutive interpretation at the Director-General’s meetings with delegations, where they sometimes need to reconstitute a 10- to 20-minute speech. They possess in-depth knowledge of the culture and history of the countries

whose languages they interpret. They even need to follow up on political developments in those countries in order to be able to translate all the nuances of a speech. Around 70 per cent of them are women.

With such qualifications they are constantly in demand. They are recruited for the ILC a year in advance. But at the same time the interest is mutual – they like to reserve the month of June in their diaries for the International Labour Conference.

“It’s an important and prestigious assignment for me – both professionally and personally,” says Dmitry Boulakovsky, Russian interpreter. “Apart from my professional interests, I feel privileged to be associated with this global forum, to facilitate discussions on issues that are vital to all the world’s peoples.”

Many interpreters have worked at the ILC for ten years and more – some even 20 years. As may be imagined, during that time they have become expert in ILO terminology. But each Conference still brings something new. On the first day of the ILC a special briefing session is held for the interpreters’ team. This is the only time when they change places with the delegates, become an audience and listen to presentations by the ILC committee secretaries. The secretaries describe the major issues to be discussed, introduce new terms (“flexicurity”, for instance, was a real challenge in many languages) and also give some background information on preceding work and debate so that if the speakers allude to these they will be understood and not misinterpreted.

Interpretation at the ILC is provided in the seven official ILO languages – English, French, Spanish, Russian, German, Arabic and Chinese. The Government of Japan has supported interpretation in Japanese. In addition, there is also so-called “passive Portuguese” interpretation, which means delegates may speak Portuguese, but translation into that language is not provided.

Let’s have an inside look on how the interpreters’ work is organized.

For Althea Wright-Byll each Conference day starts the day before, when she gets tomorrow’s schedule from the committee secretaries. The schedule can include up to 40 meetings plus a plenary sitting, each requiring interpretation. She distributes her “troops” like a general, leaving no flank unattended. Every morning a clear work schedule appears on the wall; each interpreter may also

check his or her schedule at any time on an individually assigned telephone reference line; and in addition, additional reference materials will be put in interpreters’ personal pigeonholes if needed.

There are several team leaders, who liaise with Committee chairpersons and find out how the debate is proceeding and what the developments in the meeting room are. In this way the interpreters are able to understand what the delegates have referred to and translate it properly if it comes up again. The Committee chairpersons, in turn, listen to the interpretation, and make any necessary “on-line” corrections through the team leaders – for instance not to say “contract labour” but “employment relationship”. Such two-way communication helps to update in a timely manner the unique glossary in seven languages that is maintained by the interpreters’ team. The glossary is divided by sectors and is also supplemented by the authors of ILO reports, by the committees and the translation service. Special attention is paid to difficult terms that absolutely must not be misinterpreted – such as “employment relationship”.

What does the Conference look like from the interpreter’s booth?

“We take the speech either ‘from the hall’ as we say (i.e. directly from the speaker), or, if the language is not known, ‘from the booth’ – from another interpreter,” says Dmitry Boulakovsky. “But you need not worry that such a double translation might distort the meaning. The interpreters here are top professionals, and we work as a team: we ‘feel’ each other, so the quality of interpretation would never suffer.”

“Yes, team spirit is key for our job,” agrees Althea Wright Byll. “There is no place for competition here; competition is destructive for our work. Our interpreters work 3-hour shifts in pairs, replacing each other every 30 minutes. But if you think they relax during their breaks you could not be more mistaken. They are constantly on the alert, ready to rush to the booth when there is a problem, say, with the translation of some term, and quickly scratch on a piece of paper how it is translated in their language. Simultaneous interpretation must not stop, and it is our collective responsibility to provide this.”

Like any job, simultaneous interpretation has its own ‘underwater rocks’. One of them is fast speech, especially at the plenary where the delegates read a prepared text, which is always faster than free





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>> speech. There is a special “slow down” button on the stand, but the interpreters never use it: people get so nervous when they take the floor that they take it for a ‘time over’ signal and start to speak even faster.

Guess what is most difficult to translate? Not ILO terminology, not legal jargon. Most difficult are the jokes and religious quotations. Jokes require fast reactions, imagination and creative thinking. For religious quotations, an interpreter must be very well educated, familiar with the history and culture of the country in question.

“Our team works very hard, and my job is to ensure proper organization, good working conditions and harmony,” says Althea Wright Byll. She is being too modest. In fact she monitors and coordinates the entire functioning of this complicated system. People come to her with all their problems – technical, medical, personal. In between Conferences she visits language schools in Geneva looking for talented students; several of them have already joined the team. She makes sure that the younger interpreters are placed with the more experienced

ones, gradually increasing the difficulty of their work.

“This is my second ILC,” says Shiho Kawamura, Japanese interpreter. “I started last year with less responsible assignments. This year I was already given the Occupational Safety and Health Committee, and I am proud to say that I did well, although the subject and the terminology were quite complicated.”

In this team they do many things in their own way, including the traditional Interpreters’ Party. This takes place not at the end of the ILC as one might expect, but at the beginning of its second week while the whole team is still in Geneva. It’s an informal and friendly party; they invite the Director-General, committee chairpersons, technicians, computer experts – everyone for whom and with whom they have worked. As always, at this year’s party they will raise a glass to the “team work” and “quality interpretation” demonstrated at the International Labour Conference, translating the ILO’s message to the world.

Can the European social model survive?

Is flexicurity the answer?

The search for a better combination of flexibility and security is a major challenge within the European Union, and not only in the accession countries. Two major new studies from the ILO look at different aspects of employment and working conditions.

Unemployment, growing competition and the shift of the EU from 10 to 27 Member States have had a deep impact on employment and working conditions in the European Union, says *The evolving world of work in the enlarged EU: Progress and vulnerability*.¹ Based on case studies from Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom, the study provides timely information on social policy and labour market trends in the EU enlargement process and how these may affect workers and their families.

“On the one hand, labour market innovations such as a greater diversity in employment contracts and working time arrangements facilitate labour market entry and exit . . . on the other, they entail new risks, particularly for women, immigrants, younger and older people,” says Daniel Vaughan-Whitehead, a senior ILO expert on working conditions and one of the editors of the study.

According to the study, employment creation in Europe is occurring mainly in less regulated sectors, such as retail, personal services and so on, which affect mainly young workers. According to Vaughan-Whitehead, “problems are most acute for this age group which represents our future”.

The study presents information on trends in all important elements of the world of work in the enlarged EU-27: employment contracts, working

time and work intensity, wages, training, health and safety, social dialogue and workers’ participation, and work-family balance.

“It does this from an original perspective, through a series of case studies like the one on Ivan (see sidebar) and other self-employed and employed people in EU countries. That highlights what practices are put in place at enterprise level, and how different working and employment conditions are combined and interact at local level,” explains Vaughan-Whitehead.

At the same time the study tries to identify those vulnerable workers who often represent the myriads of “working poor” in a country. It also offers a valuable analysis of those workers who may be exposed to more than one risk. “This approach well suits the new Lisbon target of the European Union of creating ‘more and better jobs’ and the EU contributions to the implementation of the ILO’s



¹ *The evolving world of work in the enlarged EU: Progress and vulnerability*, edited by François Eyraud and Daniel Vaughan-Whitehead, International Labour Office and European Commission, Geneva, 2007.

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>> Decent Work Agenda in the world,” says Vaughan-Whitehead.

The study calls on policy-makers, as well as economic and social actors, to pay more attention to the vulnerability of workers, working conditions and employment quality – that is, not only wages or working time but other issues such as reconciliation of work and family life.

Central and South-Eastern Europe: Positive trends, persisting problems and new challenges

Balancing flexibility and security has both an economic and a social rationale, according to Sandrine Cazes and Alena Nesperova, authors of *Flexicurity: A relevant approach in Central and Eastern Europe*.² Although economic growth has accelerated in Central and South-Eastern Europe since 2000, it has not adequately translated into employment creation. Youth unemployment has also worsened and protection at the workplace has decreased. The study argues that an approach combining flexibility and security is the most relevant for the region and suggests appropriate reforms of economic, labour market and social policies.

In the 1990s the difficult transition process in Central and South-Eastern Europe was marked by massive job destruction and only a limited creation of new jobs. Things have moved on now to a stabilization and liberalization phase. Labour market patterns in the new and the old Member States of the European Union (EU) are converging. Flexible forms of employment, in particular fixed-term contracts, are increasing.

Employment protection legislation has been further liberalized to reach OECD levels, while protection of workers through collective bargaining has weakened as a result of declining unionization and the decreasing coverage by collective agreements. This lower level of job security has only par-

tially been counterbalanced by increasing employment and income security through better access to job mediation, retraining and other programmes promoting re-employment of laid-off workers and longer-paid unemployment benefits.

Jobless growth and labour migration

Although economic growth has accelerated in the region and unemployment has declined, employment has increased in only five of the Central and South-Eastern European countries and even there only modestly, so one can speak of “jobless growth” across the region. Employment levels remain below the levels of the old EU Member States. The fall in unemployment has fed inactivity rather than employment. Another important factor reducing the impact of unemployment has been labour migration, which has accelerated since the enlargement of the EU in 2004.

The most worrying labour market situation until recently was in Poland, where the unemployment rate reached almost 20 per cent in 2002-03 despite good economic performance. Employment in Poland was on the decline until 2004 and started rising only in 2005. The last two years have at last recorded a significant reduction in unemployment, but with labour migration estimated to include well over one million Poles.



² *Flexicurity: A relevant approach in Central and Eastern Europe*, edited by Sandrine Cazes and Alena Nesperova, International Labour Office, Geneva, 2007.



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Who is most at risk?

There has been a decline of labour turnover since 2000 in all countries for which data exist, and a slight lengthening of average job tenures. But there is also increasing labour market segmentation – a higher share of workers staying more than ten years or less than one year with the same employer. The first group are mostly workers of prime age and with higher skills enjoying full-time contracts without limit of time; the second, younger or older workers, typically less skilled, who are trapped in temporary jobs.

The highest barriers to labour market entry or re-entry are faced by young persons, older workers, ethnic minorities, low-skilled workers, women returning from maternity leave and persons with health problems. Many are pushed to use the less and less generous social welfare schemes and a number of them are also involved in informal work to make ends meet.

Gender differences persist across the region. However, there has been a slight tendency towards this gap closing in the case of labour market participation, while the opposite has been observed for employment since 2000. The unemployment situation has also improved more for men than for women. In terms of employment, men have benefited slightly more than women from economic growth.

Many countries have tried to increase the attractiveness of work by increasing the basic minimum wage as compared with unemployment and social benefits. Income protection against risks of enterprise insolvency and bankruptcy has been ensured by establishing wage guarantee funds in an increasing number of countries in the region.

Win-win strategies

The study finds important implications for economic and social policies in Central and South-Eastern Europe. Addressing jobless growth is the most important challenge for employment policy in the region. It is up to the government together with the social partners and representatives of vulnerable social groups and jobless persons to determine their country's employment and social development. Through dialogue, they must decide whether the country will remain driven by predominantly economic goals, or whether it will shape its economic and social policy in line with the EU Lisbon Strategy and the ILO Decent Work Agenda towards a triple objective of full and decent employment, higher labour productivity, and social cohesion and inclusion.



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This book suggests how this can be achieved through a “flexicurity” approach combining a more flexible labour market with stimulation to a secure move towards new, more productive, jobs and protection against a fall into protracted unemployment and poverty. It provides an answer to the dilemma of how to maintain and improve competitiveness while it makes at the same time full use of the potential of social policy as a productive factor. However, there is no one-size-fits-all flexicurity model, and different combinations of flexibility and security can be of service to both employers and workers in different national contexts. Although the balance can be delicate, the pursuit of win-win strategies for both employers and workers lies at the heart of this concept.



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INCREASING SELF-EMPLOYMENT: FOR SATISFACTION OR SURVIVAL?

In Rijeka, Croatia, Ivan, aged 49, owns a small shop in the apartment building where he lives, selling newspapers, tobacco, stationery, toys, books and everything students could possibly need for school.

After a “troublesome start” in 1992, business stabilized after 1996. He hired two employees but in 2000 he realized that he couldn’t afford more than one. Ivan is a very concerned employer: Nena, his employee, has permanent employment, no overtime and no work on weekends. While she enjoyed two maternity leaves, Ivan was on his own, working even harder than usual. And that is already a lot. The shop is open Monday to Saturday from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. and on Sunday mornings from 8 to 12. When asked about annual leave, he laughed: “Not a day off in the last five years!”

Does this amount of work pay? Hardly in monetary terms: the shop’s annual net profit is between EUR 6,000 and EUR 7,500 - that is between EUR 500 and EUR 622 a month for around 90 hours’ work a week.

What about his work-life balance? Ivan thinks it’s worth it: “The children have grown up in a family where they’ve learned that you have to work hard.” On the other hand, Ivan is overworked, “per-



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manently tired”. He still likes his job but he is considering a change: “I can’t go on like this for much longer.”

While Ivan’s case shouldn’t be taken as representative, it certainly illustrates the enormous difficulties faced by the self-employed and small firms in Croatia and other European countries. Many of them work very long hours that deprive them of sleep and rest, not to mention holidays with their families for whom they provide a livelihood.

“If self-employment is a major survival strategy in Croatia as well as a source of satisfaction, for many it is a hard choice, full of risks and associated vulnerabilities,” says Daniel Vaughan-Whitehead.

According to the study, since 2000 there has been a trend to “normalization of labour markets” and “progress in working conditions” in Croatia. This has been supported by political normalization, solid economic growth and growing credibility, coupled with the conditionalities of EU integration. But for too many this “normalization” is merely nominal, while real employment and working conditions have remained hard or even worsened.

The share of self-employed is increasing in most new Member States, but also in Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom – and it is across the board, from manual workers to professionals and technicians. Some are quite happy with their status, which gives them more autonomy, but for others, the price to be paid – irregular income, increased stress and excessive hours – makes self-employment more a survival strategy than a free choice.



PLANET WORK

A REVIEW OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN LABOUR ISSUES

Hiring? Discrimination in recruitment

Discrimination in recruitment is a prevailing problem around the globe. For Planet Work Vidya Ravi looked at both established and emerging forms, and how workers, their advocates, employers, and lawmakers are responding to the issue.

The hiring practices of many companies and recruitment agencies take the form of indirect discrimination against a particular race, sex, age, ethnic background, sexual orientation, or even genetic profile. While many companies are accused of rejecting CVs based on the applicant's name, sex or ethnic origin, others take the issue to another level by adopting a mandatory test (either HIV test or even a genetic profile) as a part of the recruitment process. Where should the line be drawn? What extent of right does the employer have to the personal information of applicants, or to make hiring decisions based on such information?

ESTABLISHED FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

■ Gender discrimination has always existed in employment and most States have now implemented legislation protecting the rights of women workers. In China for example, labour law stipulates that workers shall not be discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity, race, sex or religious beliefs. But 85 per cent of 3,424 respondents of a survey in ten large cities, including Beijing and Shanghai, said discrimination in work and employment did exist and 58 per cent considered the problem severe. Because the legislation does not elaborate the clauses, many companies can pursue discriminatory hiring practices without actually being in breach of the law. Women are especially targeted and often face discrimination in



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recruitment on the basis of their appearance, marital status, and height. (*Northeast Network*, 8 January 2007)

■ Discrimination based on a person's race or ethnic background is one of the most recognized and prevalent forms of discrimination. BBC's Radio Five Live conducted a test in the United Kingdom in order to pinpoint the source and direction of discrimination in recruitment. CVs from six fictitious candidates with traditional white, black and Asian names were presented to 50 firms. All the applicants were given the same standard of qualifications and experience. The results from this testing survey showed that the white "candidates" were far more likely to be called for interviews than similarly qualified black or Asian "candidates". (*BBC News*, 12 July 2004)

■ The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC)

underlines the recruitment process of companies as the starting point for discrimination in employment. In France, current statistics stand at 5 per cent unemployment rate for university graduates and 26.5 per cent for university graduates of North African descent (INSEE). EUMC Director Beate Winkler says that this is due to discriminatory hiring practices: "People with a Maghrebi name have five times less chance to be invited for an interview than people with a purely French name". (*The Paris Times*, 1 December 2006)

THE ROLE OF EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS

■ The French Government has called for companies to set up internal systems that would conceal an applicant's personal data from managers who initially review job applications. By using this system of anonymous job applica-



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A REVIEW OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN LABOUR ISSUES

tions, France is trying to overcome discrimination in employment and, and at the same time, protect the country's egalitarian principles by not resorting to the American model of affirmative action (see sidebar). According to a poll conducted by CSA and France Info, 47 per cent of respondents oppose the practice of positive discrimination while 44 per cent support it. (Angus Reid, 26 December 2006)

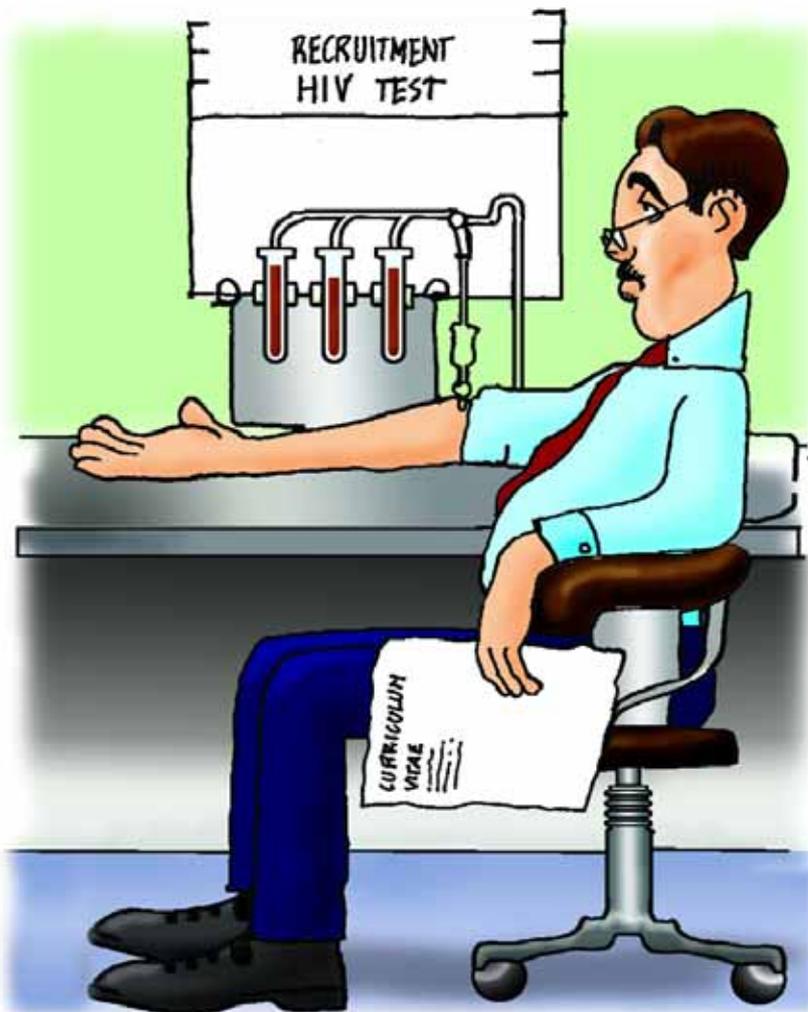
■ Over the last two decades, the United States has employed a rigorous affirmative action policy. However, many past cases of racial discrimination are culminating just now, sparking debates about the efficiency of employment tribunals and hiring procedures. A racial discrimination lawsuit against the Alabama Department of Transportation for discrimination practices in recruitment against African-Americans is nearing its end after 21 years of legal battles. The lawsuit has involved more than six different governors and has cost the state US\$200 million. The completion of the case means that after ten years of a hiring freeze, the state can focus on instituting race-neutral testing for jobs and promotions. And the awareness that the case has brought has resulted in the increase in African-American representation in the department. In 2003, the staff was 35 per cent black, statistically higher than the overall labour market and, more significantly, higher than Alabama's 24 per cent black population. (*Decatur Daily News*, 8 January 2007)



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■ A disability discrimination lawsuit against Wal-Mart continues. In January 2004, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission filed a case against Arkansas-based Wal-Mart for violating the Disabilities Act when it refused to hire a man with cerebral palsy. Steven Bradley, who uses crutches and a wheelchair, was refused employment. The company withheld comment on why it refused to hire Bradley, only citing its anti-discrimination policy. Yet, EEOC has accused Wal-Mart of using a pre-employment questionnaire that violated the Disabilities Act between 1994 and 1998 and has covered several other cases in which the company had failed to accommodate and even dismissed employees with disabilities. (*Forbes*, 14 February 2007)

■ In the United Kingdom, laws banning age discrimination in the workplace came into effect in October 2006. The new policies cover a range of employment issues, including prohibiting employers from discriminating against applicants under the age of 65 on grounds of age, specifying that a new recruit should be above or below a certain age, and firing or denying opportunities to workers on the basis of their age. The laws came into place following increasing awareness that the practice of ageism in employment has become endemic across the country. Ageism bars skilled applicants access to the labour market, incurs added recruitment and retention costs for companies, and adds to stereotypes that brand older workers as inflexible and hard to train and



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younger workers as inexperienced. (BBC News, 25 September 2006)

■ Brazil started taking measures to address and combat race discrimination in 2001, instituting the Special Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality (SEPPIR) in 2003. This public policy initiative was founded with the goal of wiping out the effects of Brazil's long and recent history of slavery and forced labour. It aims to coordinate policies to protect individual rights and the rights of marginalized groups, raise awareness and develop projects to alleviate the poverty faced by the majority of the black population. SEPPIR has adopted active labour market poli-

cies such as job training and creating networks of inclusion giving wider access to education and decent work. Although the enforcement of these new policies is still a problem, SEPPIR signifies a breakthrough attempt to address long-neglected issues in Brazilian society. (Ethical Corporation, 4 February 2007)

DIRECT DISCRIMINATION

■ Direct discrimination in recruitment is still common. A recent job advert in a Singapore online job portal specified: "Non-Indians preferred." The advertisement was posted by Frontline technologies, who later

apologized and removed the discriminatory requirement from the posting. This incident sparked debates about the prevalence of discrimination in Singaporean society. Malay and Indian jobseekers complain that they are often asked when submitting applications if they can speak or even write Chinese, not if they are qualified to do the work. Statistics show that two out of three workers in Singapore complain of having experienced discrimination of some sort in the workplace, citing age as the top factor (29 per cent), followed by race (19 per cent), gender (11 per cent), and disability (2 per cent). (Today Online, 29 December 2006)

■ In some parts of the world discrimination is based not on race, but on caste, a system of societal division that exists predominantly in South Asia. The caste system is rooted in age-old traditions that assign particular occupations to people according to their birthright. Accordingly, low-caste communities are assigned menial tasks and denied access to the labour market in the areas of production, processing, and sale of food items, domestic work, and services in public and private sector.

In Nepal, although the caste system was banned more than two decades ago, the Dalit low-caste community continues to face discrimination. Neglected Community Awareness (NCA), a local NGO, states that Dalit families are still excluded from most economic and development activities. Dalit women's employment is restricted to jobs in the informal economy and many have to endure exploitative work in cities in order to make a living. The Dalit NGO Federation (DNF) records that around 80 per cent of the five-million-strong Dalit population lives below the poverty line. (Reuters Alertnet, 5 January 2007)

■ In the Kenyan Nubian community, discrimination in recruitment and employment is not just a norm, but also institutionalized. The Nubian



PLANET WORK

A REVIEW OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN LABOUR ISSUES

community is not recognized by the State as legal citizens, hence Nubians are often not issued with identity cards. Consequently when applying for jobs, their failure to produce identity cards costs them gainful employment: high rates of unemployment and poverty exist within the community. Nubians are also barred from seeking jobs in the civil service since recruitment to this sector is carried out at the district level, meaning that individuals without an ancestral village are not eligible to apply. (*OhMyNews International*, 23 December 2006)

EMERGING FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

■ An emerging form of discrimination, especially in industrialized countries, is discrimination based on sexual orientation. While in the past there has been no legislation protecting gay and lesbian employees, a growing number of States are adopting laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation.

One of the most debated topics is the United States military service's "Don't ask, don't tell" policy. Introduced in 1993, it compels homosexuals serving in the military to not disclose or even speak of their sexuality. The policy has recently come under attack following the op-ed that John Shalikashvili, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wrote in *The New York Times*, repealing his former stance on the recruitment of homosexuals in the United States military service and asserting that gays and lesbians can serve openly in the armed forces with-



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out undermining the efficacy thereof. Under the "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, 9,500 service members have been discharged for homosexuality, costing taxpayers \$364 million in associated funds for the financial costs incurred by discharging and replacing personnel. (*The New York Times*, 2 January 2007; *The Washington Post*, 14 February 2006)

■ Other newly-recognized forms include HIV/AIDS discrimination at the workplace. Many companies' recruitment policies include manda-

tory HIV/AIDS testing. A range of issues concerning mandatory pre-employment testing in Jamaica was brought to attention in an Editors Forum in October 2006. So far, there are no provisions in the Jamaican constitution banning discrimination in the workplace on grounds of health, and neither does the government legislate for confidentiality of the results of HIV/AIDS tests. Consequently, high levels of stigma and discrimination exist when it comes to recruiting people known to be HIV-positive. The general

DOES POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION WORK?

The goal of positive discrimination policies is to redress past or present discrimination through active measures to ensure equal opportunity and representation in education and employment. These policies are enacted by either awarding extra points for women or minority job applicants (as in the United States); instituting a quota system with reserved seats for disadvantaged castes (as in India); and engaging in a scoring system through which companies have to meet a minimum requirement in representation (as in South Africa). They have had considerable success and are recognized by international human rights law. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination states that "as long as such [affirmative] action is needed to correct discrimination, in fact, it is a case of legitimate differentiation under the Covenant".

However, opponents of positive discrimination argue that it is not justifiable to combat discrimination by perpetrating more acts of discrimination and that it disregards the concept of merit, that is, rewarding people on the basis of their skills and qualifications, not on grounds of their race, sex, ethnicity, or disability. For example, a lawsuit filed in 1997 against the University of Michigan over affirmative action recruiting practices for undergraduates has just reached completion. The

40,000-member class-action lawsuit was in opposition to the admissions policy that awarded extra points on the basis of race and sex of applicants. Although the case has been settled outside the court, it has drawn attention to the issue, and in November 2006 Michigan voters approved Proposal 2, which bans the use of race and gender preferences in university admissions and government hiring.

Unlike the United States, the United Kingdom has maintained a sceptical attitude towards affirmative action. The 2001 Summer Violence riots in the United Kingdom were partly caused by poor white youths' opposition to the alleged discrimination in council funding favouring minority groups (BBC News, 11 December 2001). Keeping in mind past race riots, Martin Temple, director-general of the employers' group, the EEF, asserts that positive discrimination is a "superficially interesting way of doing things, but it brings in all sorts of complexities that employers cannot manage without bringing disadvantages to others" (*Personneltoday.com*, 16 January 2007).

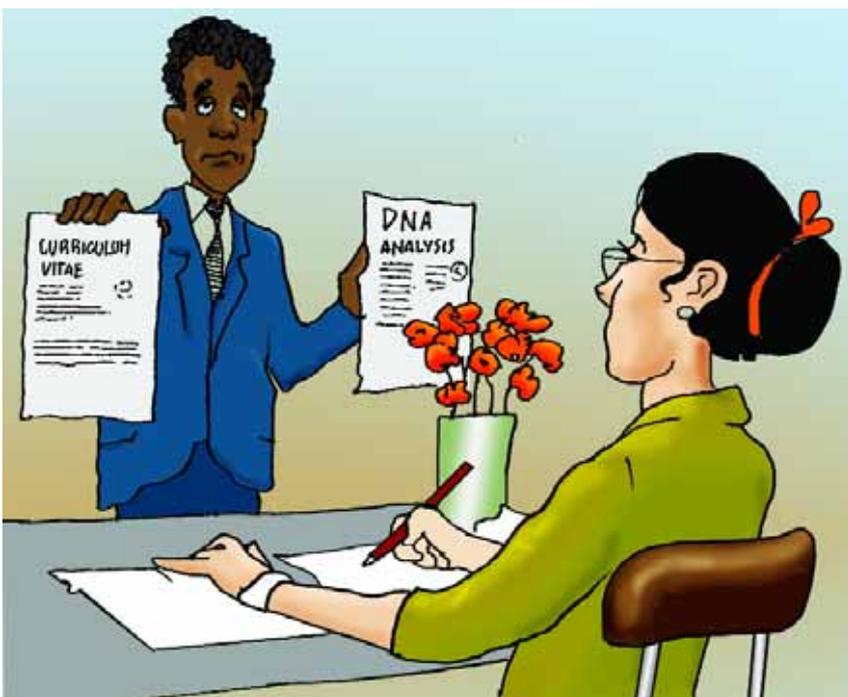
While the concept of positive discrimination is in itself an advocacy for equality of representation and opportunity, the question, as ever, is does the end justify the means?

consensus of the forum, which was composed of representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Jamaica Business Council on HIV/AIDS, the National AIDS Committee, and several employer representatives, was that the issue at stake is not HIV/AIDS itself but

the need for a nation-wide call for employers to relinquish mandatory testing at the workplace and for legislation that prohibits discrimination on grounds of health and protects confidentiality of results in voluntary testing. (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 8 October 2006).

■ Genetic discrimination is emerging in many workplaces in the industrialized world. Some employers are introducing mandatory genetic testing of workers in order to detect the probability of inherited diseases such as diabetes. Mandatory profiling is opposed by many workers and organizations such as the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) on grounds that such information may be misused, cost the employee a position in the company or result in the employee being denied health insurance or charged higher premiums. In February 2007, the United States Senate approved a bill that would prohibit employers from making hiring, firing and promotion decisions based on the genetic information of a current or prospective employee.

(*Kaisernetwork.org*, 1 February 2007)



Global Employment Trends for Women 2007

ILO study warns on the feminization of working poverty



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More women than ever before are in work, but a persistent gap in status, job security, wages and education between women and men is contributing to the “feminization of working poverty”, according to a new report by the International Labour Office (ILO) issued for International Women’s Day.

GENEVA – According to *Global Employment Trends for Women Brief – 2007*, the number of women participating in labour markets – either in work or looking actively for work – is at its highest point. In 2006, the ILO estimated that 1.2 billion of the 2.9 billion workers in the world were women.

However, the ILO said more women than ever before are unemployed (81.8 million), stuck in low productivity jobs in agriculture and services

or receiving less money for doing the same jobs as men. In addition, the share of working-age women who work or are seeking work had actually stopped growing or declined in some regions, partially due to more young women in education rather than work.

“Despite some progress, far too many women are still stuck in the lowest paying jobs, often in the informal economy with insufficient legal protection, little or no social protection, and a high degree of insecurity,” said ILO Director-General Juan Somavia. “Promoting decent work as a fundamental instrument in the global quest for gender equality will go a long way in raising incomes and opportunities for women and lifting families out of poverty.”

The report adds that women must be given the chance to work themselves and their families out of poverty through creation of decent employment opportunities that help them secure productive and remunerative work in conditions of freedom, security and human dignity. Otherwise, the process of feminization of poverty will continue and be passed on to the next generation.

The report shows that today more women out of the total number of women at work are in wage and salaried employment (47.9 per cent) than 10 years ago (42.9 per cent). However, the study also noted that the poorer the region, the more likely it is that women work as unpaid contributing family members or low-income own-account workers, in a higher proportion than men.

In the last *Global Employment Trends for Women – 2004*, it was estimated that women made up at least 60 per cent of the world’s working poor – people who work but don’t earn enough to lift themselves and their families above the US\$1 per person, per day line. According to the current ILO study “there is no reason to believe that this situation has changed considerably”.

Closing but persisting gaps

According to this year’s *Global Employment*

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2007

"Breaking boundaries and driving change"



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GENEVA – The ILO marked International Women's Day this year with a range of events designed to celebrate working women who have been "breaking boundaries and driving change". These included a special public event at ILO headquarters in Geneva featuring Ms Anousheh Ansari, an entrepreneur and first woman private space explorer.

The ILO also issued a new publication composed of articles from *World of Work* magazine 1999-2006 entitled *Gender equality around the world*. The book provides a decade-long overview of challenges and good practices in gender equality in the world of work covering such issues as workplace discrimination, women jobseekers in Estonia, an innovative life-

cycle approach to gender equality in Tanzania, self-employed women in India, progressive policies on paternity leave in Norway, female domestic workers in the Philippines, women who cover wars or find themselves fighting for their lives in armed conflicts, women in sports and many more.

For more information on the report and International Women's Day 2007, please go to www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inf/event/women/2007/index.htm. To obtain a copy of the book *Gender equality around the world*, please visit www.ilo.org/publ. See "Media Shelf" in this issue for prices.

Trends for Women, gender gaps are closing but at slow pace, and the other findings of the report are only partly encouraging:

- In 2006, women were still more likely to be unemployed than men. Whereas the female unemployment rate was 6.6 per cent, unemployment among men was at 6.1 per cent.
- Merely half of working-age women over the age of 15 actually work, whereas more than seven in ten men do.
- There is evidence that wage gaps persist. A review of data available for six occupation groups shows that in most economies, women still earn 90 per cent or less of what their male co-workers earn.
- Access to education and education levels are still far from equal in most regions. In addition, 60 per cent of school drop-outs are girls: they often have to leave school to help in households or to work.

The report concludes that "creating adequate decent and productive work for women is possible, as shown by some of the progress detailed in the report. But policy-makers not only need to place employment at the centre of social and economic policies, they also have to recognize that the challenges faced by women in the world of work require intervention tailored to specific needs."



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WOMEN, MEN, DIFFERENT, EQUAL

GENEVA – The ILO Library and the Gender Bureau have developed a new resource guide on **gender equality in the world of work**.

This guide provides easy access to key ILO publications, statistics which show the extent of sex discrimination in the workplace, and good practices for promoting gender equality. It is an information-rich collection of guidelines, tools, research and data made available via links to ILO and other publications, statistics, ILO labour standards, and other resources around the world.

Researchers and decision-makers will have access to references and the full text of publications on all aspects of gender equality including: equal employment opportunities, the gender wage gap, family friendly workplace policies, gender and globalization, gender-based violence, gender and migration, trafficking in women and girls and more.



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The resource is available in English, French and Spanish:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/support/lib/resource/subject/gender.htm>

<http://www.ilo.org/public/french/support/lib/resource/subject/gender.htm>

<http://www.ilo.org/public/spanish/support/lib/resource/subject/gender.htm>

New support for ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS

Ministers of Health of the European Union and 16 non-EU countries recently adopted the “Bremen Declaration on Responsibility and Partnership – Together Against HIV/AIDS”.

BREMEN – The new Declaration adopted at a Conference organized by the German Government in Bremen, Germany on 11-12 March commits signatories to consider new initiatives for fighting AIDS in the European context, including discrimination and the protection of rights, confidentiality and the reintegration in the labour market of HIV-positive workers on antiretroviral treatment.

The ILO welcomed the Declaration by Ministers of Health from the European Union (EU) on HIV/AIDS, saying it contains provisions that give greater recognition to the role of the workplace, recognizing its central role in the fight against the pandemic. The Declaration invites

governments, employers and workers

to ensure non-discriminatory policies for people living with HIV and care and support for those affected.

The ILO’s presentation to the Conference showed how its work is based on the Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work. The value of the Code was also explicitly recognized in the Declaration.

According to UNAIDS, an estimated 270,000 people in Europe were newly infected with HIV in 2006, bringing to 1.7 million the number of people living with HIV – a twenty-fold increase in less than a decade.

For more information on the Conference in Bremen, please go to:

http://www.bmg.bund.de/cln_040/nn_1030704/DE/Themenschwerpunkte/Internationales/EU-Ratspraesidentschaft/Konferenzen/bremen-12-3.html.



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298TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Labour situation in Belarus and Myanmar on the agenda, along with ILO budget, trade and employment

The Governing Body of the International Labour Office addressed a range of issues at its 298th Session in March, including basic labour rights in Myanmar and Belarus, trade and employment, wages around the world, UN reform and the latest report of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association.

GENEVA – The Governing Body reviewed the agreement reached between the ILO and the government of Myanmar on a mechanism for victims of forced labour to seek redress without having to fear reprisals. This agreement, signed on 26 February 2007, sets out the ways in which the ILO Liaison Officer in Yangon would deal with complaints of forced labour, and the first complaints have already been received.

The Governing Body also reviewed the actions of the government of Belarus to comply with the recommendations of a 2004 Commission of Inquiry on trade union rights in that country.

The meeting, scheduled for 8-30 March, examined programme and budget proposals for the 2008-09 biennium. The Director-General proposed a budget of US\$594 million for 2008-09 to be adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2007. In constant 2006-07 US dollars, this is the same budget level as for the present biennium.

The Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization held a panel discussion on trade and employment following the publication in February of a joint ILO/WTO Secretariat review of existing academic literature on this issue (*Trade and employment: Challenges for policy research*, see "Media Shelf"). The discussion was led by Pascal Lamy, Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and ILO Director-General Juan Somavia.

The Working Party also reported on preparations for the ILO Forum on Decent Work for a Fair Globalization to be held in Lisbon on 1-2 November 2007.

Among other issues, the Committee on Social and Employment Policy examined wage developments around the world, the portability of skills and decent work in the informal economy, and heard presentations on employment policy in two countries, Pakistan and Burkina Faso.

The Subcommittee on Multinational Enterprise updated the Governing Body members on corporate social responsibility-related activities worldwide and planning for an event scheduled on 16 November 2007 to mark the 30th anniversary of the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy.

The Committee on Technical Cooperation reviewed highlights of the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) in 2006, public-private partnerships for technical cooperation and the Organization's technical cooperation programme for Colombia.

The Governing Body is the executive body of the Interna-



M. M. S. Mdladlana, Minister of Labour, Republic of South Africa, and Chairman of the Governing Body

tional Labour Office (the Office is the secretariat of the Organization). It meets three times a year, in March, June and November and takes decisions on ILO policy, the agenda of the International Labour Conference and the draft Programme and Budget of the Organization for submission to the Conference. It is composed of 56 titular members (28 Governments, 14 Employers and 14 Workers) and 66 deputy members (28 Governments, 19 Employers and 19 Workers). Ten of the titular government seats are permanently held by States of chief industrial importance (Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States). The other Government members are elected by the Conference every three years.

For more information on the latest session of the Governing Body, please go to www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/reIm/gb/docs/gb298/index.htm.

ILO welcomes EU decision to promote Decent Work for All

Last December, the European Council of Ministers adopted a set of conclusions on the promotion of decent work in the European Union and throughout the world, saying it provided powerful new support to efforts aimed at making decent work a global reality.

BRUSSELS – The ILO welcomed the move, saying that the decision of the European Council was the most recent in a series of moves that have strengthened links between the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda and the policies and actions of the EU, and would pave the way for cooperation that could “realize the innovative power of productive and decent work”.

“Europe is showing leadership on a crucial issue at a crucial time,” said Friedrich Buttler, ILO Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia at a conference on “Promoting Decent Work in the World: The Contribution of the EU” organized by the European Commission in Brussels on 4-5 December. “That leadership – and a stronger partnership between the EU and the ILO – is critical to making decent work a global reality.”

Noting that unemployment in Europe was “disturbingly high” at 17 million – especially among youth under the age of 25 – while half the world’s workers were unable to rise above the US\$2 per person, per day poverty line, Mr Buttler said: “The harsh reality is that despite five years of relatively strong economic performance, the world is not generating enough decent jobs to keep pace with a 40-million annual increase in the global labour force or substantially reduce unemployment and working poverty.”

“This is a tragic waste of human lives and has many troubling implications for our societies,” Mr Buttler said.

The European Council Conclusions on Decent Work for All will position the EU as part of a global strategy on decent work for all. In 2005, the UN World Summit gave strong support to the goal of full and productive employment and decent work for all as part of worldwide efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Another breakthrough occurred in July of this year when the High-level Segment of the UN Economic and Social Council in Geneva endorsed decent work as a global goal.

ASEAN and ILO to cooperate in addressing labour and employment issues

GENEVA – The Secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the International Labour Office (ILO) have signed a Cooperation Agreement to strengthen their collaboration and partnership. ASEAN Secretary-General Ong Keng Yong and ILO Director-General Juan Somavia signed the Agreement in

Geneva. The Agreement signals the commitment of both organizations to address labour and employment issues in the ASEAN region and promote social progress.

Under the Agreement, the ASEAN Secretariat and the ILO will deepen their collaboration in the implementation of programmes and pro-



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jects, including in the areas of occupational health and safety, HIV/AIDS and the workplace, the employment implications of trade liberalization, youth employment, vocational training, social security and labour migration. The two agencies will also cooperate in the exchange of information, research studies, and representation at working level meetings.

ASEAN, comprised of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and

Viet Nam, has a population of more than 560 million spending more than US\$400 billion every year, and a labour force of 330 million. Between 2000 and 2006, the ASEAN region performed at an annual average real GDP growth rate of 5.7 per cent. The region's unemployment rate, however, has increased from 5 per cent to 6.6 per cent during the same period. Exports from ASEAN totalled US\$650 million in 2005, accounting for around 22 per cent of Asia's total exports.

Database of Conditions of **Work and Employment Laws**

Working conditions around the world and national legal standards that govern them are a focus in international debates about the impact of globalization on workers' lives. But finding accurate and timely information about national laws on working conditions involves searching for information in diverse sources and compar-

ing legal measures from different countries and regions. Identifying the current legal information can be difficult and time-consuming.

In response to this problem, the ILO's Conditions of Work and Employment Programme (TRAVAIL) identifies, compares and translates legal provisions on working conditions around



the world. The results of this research can be found in the ILO's Database of Conditions of Work and Employment Laws, available at www.ilo.org/travdatabase.

The Database is the world's leading resource on national legal standards on working conditions. It contains information on laws of more than 100 countries, on three of the most significant aspects of working conditions: maternity protection, minimum wages and working time (see sidebar). Updated annually, the Database is designed to provide this information in an easily accessible fashion and perform customized searches on individual countries and compare work and employment conditions laws in different countries and across regions. It is made available for information purposes only and is not intended to replace consultation of the authoritative legal texts.

For more information on the Database, the Conditions of Work and Employment Programme can be contacted at travail@ilo.org.

WHICH LAWS ARE INCLUDED IN THE DATABASE OF CONDITIONS OF WORK AND EMPLOYMENT LAWS?

Maternity protection

- *Maternity leave and related types of leave*, including adoption leave.
- *Cash benefits* available during leave periods.
- *Medical benefits* related to maternity protection.
- *Health protection* measures, e.g. arrangement of working time, avoidance of dangerous or unhealthy work, provision for breastfeeding.
- Provisions aimed at protecting women from *discrimination* on grounds of maternity and at providing *employment security*.

Minimum wages

- *Minimum wage* levels in national currency and US dollars.
- *Criteria* used to adjust the minimum wage.
- *Determination mechanisms*, e.g. public authorities, collective bargaining.
- *Coverage*: which workers are entitled to the minimum wage?

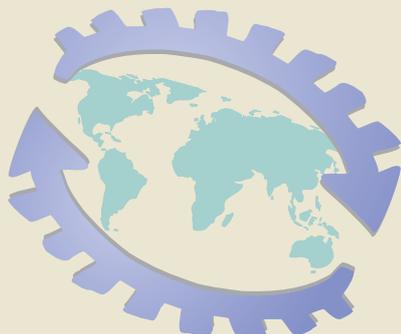
- *Frequency* of adjustment of the minimum wage rates.
- *Control mechanisms*.

Working time

- *Limits* on working hours: daily, weekly and annual.
- *Overtime work*, including hours limits and wage rates.
- *Rest periods* during the day, between working days and at weekends.
- *Annual leave* and public holidays.
- *Night work*, including health protection, additional pay and protection for specific groups (e.g. pregnant workers, young workers).
- *Part-time work*, including equal treatment rights for part-time workers.
- *Worker choice over working hours*: laws that allow workers to choose the length or scheduling of their working hours.

AROUND THE CONTINENTS

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



ILO/ WTO: Joint Study on Trade and Employment

■ This study is the outcome of collaborative research between the World Trade Organization Secretariat and the International Labour Office. It addresses an issue that is of concern to both organizations: the relationship between trade and employment.

On the basis of an overview of the existing academic literature, the study provides an impartial view of what can be said, and with what degree of confidence, on the relationship between trade and employment, an often contentious issue of public debate. Its focus is on the connections between trade policies, and labour and social policies. Writ-

ten in an accessible style, it will be of interest to all those who are involved in this debate: policymakers, trade unionists and employers, as well as trade and labour market economists and other researchers.

To read or buy the study:
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/support/publ/textem.htm#b5511>
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/support/publ/textem.htm#b5511>

ILO Director-General Statement on Guinea

■ On 12 February 2007, the Director-General of the International Labour Office, Juan Somavia, made an urgent call for an end to violence in Guinea and for ensuring the safety of trade union leaders there. "The violence and confrontation in Conakry has already resulted in much loss of life and it threatens civilians and the leaders of trade unions, one of whom, Ms Rabiatou Diallo, is a respected Member of the Governing Body of the ILO. I call on the authorities and all those who effectively exercise power in Guinea to ensure the safety of trade union leaders and immediately negotiate in good faith, to end the violence and find solutions through dialogue to the serious concerns expressed by the workers, the employers and the people of Guinea," Mr Somavia said.

Joint Action Against HIV/AIDS in Africa

■ The African Regional Organisation of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU-AFRO) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) jointly organized a capacity-building meeting on HIV/AIDS for employers and workers in Kampala, Uganda on 12-14 December 2006. The meeting was hosted by the National Organization of Trade Unions (NOTU) and the Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE), with support from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and its International Training Centre in Turin, Italy. The objective of the meeting was to evaluate programmes and activities based on the IOE-ICFTU joint agreement on HIV/AIDS (2003) and joint action plans agreed in Geneva in 2004; to identify persisting challenges; and to build capacity in project/programme management. The meeting also discussed ways of strengthening partnerships with key agencies at national level and of mobilizing resources – particularly through the Global Fund – in order to scale up joint employer and union action on HIV/AIDS through the workplace. The meeting adopted a number of recommendations to ensure follow-up by employers' and workers' organizations and to strengthen

partnerships, especially with the ILO.

For more information, please contact ILO/AIDS at tel.: +41 22 799 8337 fax: +41 22 799 6349 email: iloaid@ilo.org

Brazil: New Web Portal against Child Labour

■ In November 2006, the Brazilian National Forum for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour presented at the National Confederation of Commerce HQ in Brasília, the new Child Labour Portal on the Internet (www.fnpeti.org.br) which brings, as breaking news, the latest IBOPE Opinion Polls on the worst

forms of child labour in Brazil. This first Child Labour Portal in Portuguese was developed in partnership with the Brazilian Institute of Information in Science and Technology (Ibict) and with the ILO, within the IPEC Time Bound Project in the framework of the National Child Labour Plan of Action of Brazil. The Portal contains data and information on the networking activities of the national and state level fora, agenda, news, legislation and publications as well as information on the whole child labour network of partners. Created to make access to information on child labour easier, the Portal is aimed at students, researchers, specialists, journalists and citizens in general, interested in having access to data and communities that are fighting child labour.

For more information, please contact the ILO office in Brasilia at

tel: +55-6121064600
fax: +55-6133224352
email: brasil@oitbrasil.org.br

Brunei Becomes 180th ILO Member State

■ Brunei Darussalam has become the 180th member State of the International Labour Organization (ILO) following receipt in Geneva of a letter from Mr Pehin Dato Adanan Yusof, Minister of Home Affairs, stating on behalf of the Government that Brunei formally accepts the obligations of the ILO Constitution. Brunei Darussalam's membership became effective on 17 January 2007. The country has been a member of the United Nations since 21 September 1984.

ILO/UN Report Highlights Jobless Growth in Asia

■ The stunning economic growth enjoyed by many Asian developing countries has failed to create enough jobs, improve income distribution and reduce poverty; and this worrisome trend of "jobless growth" has profound implications for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in Asia-Pacific because productive employment is the main channel for poverty reduction. These are the findings of a new joint report issued in February 2007 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) that looks at eight countries; Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The study,

Asian Experience on Growth, Employment and Poverty, focuses on the employment intensity of economic growth as a means of poverty reduction and provides insights into why the employment intensity of growth is declining in some of the fastest-growing Asian economies.

For more information, please contact the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok
tel: +662.288.1234
fax: +662.288.1735 or
e-mail: bangkok@ilo.org



ILO, UNDP JOIN FORCES TO PROMOTE DECENT WORK

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have agreed to strengthen their collaboration and partnership in a major new effort to bolster UN actions designed to reduce poverty and create more decent work.

ILO Director-General Juan Somavia and UNDP Administrator Kemal Dervis signed the joint agreement in a public ceremony at ILO headquarters in Geneva. It is designed to promote inclusive economic growth with social development to benefit the bottom 20 to 40 per cent of the population, and bolster UN efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

"We urgently need much more inclusive growth," the joint letter signed by the two agency heads said. "Although we live at a time of unprecedented prosperity, it is also one of exploding inequalities that hamper poverty reduction. Alongside democratic participation, we need economic empowerment, which means decent work for all."

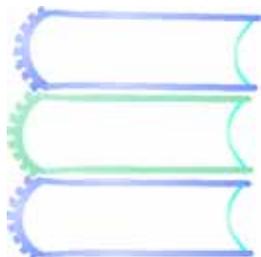
The agreement is a direct follow-up to the 2006 UN Economic and Social Council Ministerial Declaration on decent work and full employment and a practical step towards the implementation of UN system efforts to "deliver as one".

The two agencies have already identified a number of countries which offer the greatest opportunities for combined support from UNDP and the ILO to work together towards making decent work a central element in UN country programmes. The agreement is open to other UN agencies and funds and programmes and will contribute to ongoing UN reform efforts.

The new partnership will give concrete expression to the requirements of UN Resident Coordinators leading UN country teams in more than 130 countries, to be strong and effective advocates of the entire UN agenda. Given UNDP's coordination role, the agreement will be instrumental in advancing the ILO's Decent Work Agenda in UN member States and will provide a boost to the current level of participation by the ILO in UN country programmes.

The ILO will conduct a training programme for UN Resident Coordinators in selected countries and their ILO counterparts at its Turin Centre to broaden understanding of the Decent Work Agenda and map strategies to link decent work country programmes with UN country programmes and national frameworks for coordination and programming.

MEDIA SHELF



■ **Trade and employment: Challenges for policy research**
 Marion Jansen and Eddy Lee
 ISBN 978-92-119551-1; co-publication with the World Trade Organization. Geneva, 2007. US\$12.95; £8; 13 Euros; 20 Swiss francs

This study is the outcome of collaborative research between the World Trade Organization Secretariat and the International Labour Office. It addresses an issue that is of concern to both organizations: the relationship between trade and employment.

On the basis of an overview of the existing academic literature, the study provides an impartial view of what can be said, and with what degree of confidence, on the relationship between trade and employment, an often contentious issue of public debate. Its focus is on the connections between trade policies and labour and social, policies and it will be of interest to all those who are involved in this debate: academics and policy-makers, economists, workers and employers, trade and union specialists.



■ **The evolving world of work in the enlarged EU: Progress and vulnerability**
 François Eyraud and Daniel Vaughan-Whitehead (eds.)
 ISBN 978-92-2-119547-4. Geneva, 2007. US\$65; £33; 50 Euros; 80 Swiss francs

Produced by a working group of leading experts in the field, this book presents timely information on the essential, but rarely studied, area of social pol-

icy in the EU enlargement process. It looks at evolving practices in the world of work and how these may affect – sometimes in a differentiated way – workers and their families. See this book featured on page 23.



■ **Gender equality around the world**
 Articles from *World of Work Magazine*, 1999-2006
 ISBN 978-92-2-119317-3. Geneva, 2007. US\$19.95; £9.95; 18 Euros; 25 Swiss francs

This compelling and comprehensive collection of articles highlights good practices in gender equality in the world of work. The articles, all of which have been featured in the ILO's *World of Work* magazine from 1999 to present, are international in scope, covering such issues as women job seekers in Estonia, an innovative life-cycle approach to gender equality in Tanzania, and progressive policies on paternity leave in Norway.

The initiatives presented here not only reveal the intrinsic nature of gender equality in decent work, but reflect on the ILO's response to critical issues through the support of governments, employers' and workers' organizations across the globe.



■ **Equality at work: Tackling the challenges**
 Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 2007
 ISBN 978-92-2-118130-9. Geneva, 2007. US\$19.95; £11.95; 18 Euros; 35 Swiss francs

This report examines established and emerging trends in discrimination in the workplace and surveys a global picture of the struggle to overcome the problem. It addresses established discrimination issues and the persistence of economic, social and moral implications caused by chronic racial, ethnic, and sex discrimination in employment. It also investigates newly-recognized forms of discrimination such as discrimination based on age and sexual orientation and emerging forms such as genetic and lifestyle discrimination, which are currently under debate in industrialized countries. See the *Global Report* featured on page 4.



■ **Freedom of association: Digest of decisions and principles of the Freedom of Association Committee of the Governing Body of the ILO**

Fifth (revised) edition
 ISBN: 92-2-119031-5. Geneva, 2006. US\$23; £13; 20 Euros; 30 Swiss francs

Since its establishment 55 years ago, the Freedom of Association Committee has dealt with more than 2,500 complaints of infringement of freedom of association submitted to it either by governments or by organizations of employers or workers.

Revised and updated, this digest brings together these decisions and principles in concise form for easy reference and serves as a useful guide to the policies and actions to be adopted so as to ensure the fundamental principles of freedom of association. In addition, for each of the principles and decisions contained in the digest, the corresponding references are given to the previous digest or to the reports, cases and appropriate paragraphs of the Committee's reports, up to its 339th report (November 2005).



■ **Social protection and inclusion: Experiences and policy issues**
 ISBN: 978-92-2-119195-7. Geneva, 2006. US\$22.95. £13; 20 Euros; 30 Swiss francs

Three emerging policy issues derive from this book linked with: gearing social assistance towards social inclusion and employment; achieving universal coverage through a plurality of approaches to reach the excluded; and, asserting social security as a human right under changing circumstances in the world of work.

Examining the role of new social assistance programmes, the book stresses the need for the development of schemes that act on several dimensions of poverty simultaneously. It also explores avenues for extending social protection within local economic development strategies in order to further expand protection to vulnerable people in many weakly developed institutional settings or poor areas. Access to basic social services such as health care, education, housing and nutrition is also examined, as these also play a crucial part towards inclusion and empowerment.



■ **Employers' organizations and HIV/AIDS: Information, tools and good practices for workplace action against HIV/AIDS**

ISBN: 978-92-2-018526-1. Geneva, 2006. US\$20; £11; 17 Euros; 25 Swiss francs. Trilingual CD-ROM English/French/Spanish

This CD-ROM aims to help employers' organizations and their members manage the impact of HIV/AIDS and strengthen the business response to the epidemic. A valuable compilation of guidelines, training materials, and case studies, linked to particular topics, with guidelines on how to:

- get accurate facts about HIV/AIDS
- understand the need for action on HIV/AIDS in the world of work
- find essential information and practical guidance
- learn from good practice and experiences of employers and enterprises in a range of countries



■ **The production of electronic components for the IT industries: Changing labour force requirements in a global economy. Sectoral Activities Programme: TMITI/2007**

ISBN 978-92-2-119459-0. Geneva, 2007. US\$12; £7; 10 Euros; 15 Swiss francs

Prepared for a tripartite meeting in April 2007, this report examines recent developments in the electronic components industry which is the engine driving the IT revolution and employs some 18 million people worldwide. Because of cost advantages, commodity suppliers are often found in export processing zones in low-wage developing countries. The report looks at corporate social responsibility issues and examines recent economic and employment trends in the manufacture of electronic components and products.



■ **ILO activities in Africa 2004-2006. Report of the Director-General. Eleventh African Regional Meeting, Addis Ababa, April 2007**

ISBN 978-92-2-119659-4 Geneva, 2007. US\$12; £7; 10 Euros; 15 Swiss

francs. Also available in French and Arabic

■ **The Decent Work Agenda in Africa 2007-2015. Report of the Director-General. Eleventh African Regional Meeting, Addis Ababa, April 2007**

ISBN 978-92-2-119657-0. US\$12; £7; 10 Euros; 15 Swiss francs. Also available in French and Arabic

Every four years the ILO African Regional Meeting brings together the ILO's tripartite constituents from its 53 member States in Africa. These two



reports provide the background to the debate on the steps needed over the next decade to make decent work a reality in the region and thus provide an effective way to reduce poverty in a sustainable

fashion.

ILO activities in Africa 2004-2006 describes how the ILO has worked with its member States and development partners, particularly the African Union Commission and the Regional Economic Communities, to implement the plan of action adopted by the Ouagadougou Summit at national and regional levels. *The Decent Work Agenda in Africa 2007-2015* contains an analysis of present opportunities and challenges and identifies the key policy issues that will need to be tackled.



■ **Yearbook of Labour Statistics 2006, 65th Issue**

ISBN 978-92-2-019193-4. Geneva, 2006. US\$220; £135; 180 Euros; 275 Swiss francs. Trilingual English/French/Spanish. CD in English only.

Since its first edition in 1935-36, the *Yearbook of Labour Statistics* has established itself as the world's foremost work of statistical reference on labour questions, bringing together in systematic form a mass of data from a vast network of authoritative sources of information in some 190 countries, areas and territories.

This new 65th edition is being released for the first time in two volumes:

- **Volume 1: Time series** continues the format of the previous edition and covers the preceding ten years. It contains 31 tables corresponding to nine major substantive chapters on economically active population, employment, unemployment, hours of work, wages, labour cost, consumer prices, occupational injuries, and strikes and lock-outs.
- **Volume 2: Country profiles** introduces a new format showing the latest available statistics on each of the topics in Volume 1, but listed by country. It also includes global and regional estimates on the economically active population, employment and unemployment.

Data with monthly, quarterly or half-yearly frequency relating to general series on employment, unemployment, hours of work, wages and consumer price indices are published in the *Bulletin of Labour Statistics*.

The CD-ROM also contains the ten volumes of *Sources and methods*, in English only.

ILO publications for sale can be obtained through major booksellers or ILO local offices in many countries, or directly from ILO Publications, International Labour Office, 4 route des Morillons, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. Tel: +4122/799-7828, fax: +4122/799-6938, e-mail: pubvente@ilo.org, web site: <http://www.ilo.org/publns>. Catalogues or lists of new publications are available free of charge from the above address. The ILO Publications Center in North America can be contacted by phone: +613/745 2665, fax: +613/745 7660, e-mail: order.dept@renoufbooks.com. Customers from developing countries can benefit from special discounts on the regular prices indicated in this magazine and may be able to pay in local currency through an ILO field office. For more information, e-mail us at pubvente@ilo.org.

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Promoting decent work for all

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The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the tripartite UN agency which brings together governments, employers and workers of its member states in common action to promote decent work throughout the world. [more >](#)

What's new



Conclusions of the Tripartite Meeting on the Production of Electronic Components for the IT industries

The IT sector has been among the most dynamic and innovative in the globalized economy, creating millions of jobs and wealth worldwide... April 19, 2007



Official site of the Eleventh African Regional Meeting, Addis Ababa, 24-27 April 2007



Combining microinsurance and new technologies to protect the poor - April 3, 2007

- Trade and employment: Panel discussion on issues arising from the joint ILO/WTO Secretariat study on challenges for policy research.
- Global Employment Trends for Women 2007: ILO study warns on the feminization of working poverty - March 7, 2007
- ILO concludes Understanding with Myanmar - February 26, 2007
- ILO, UNDP join forces to promote growth for decent jobs - February 9, 2007

Main aims of ILO's work

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is devoted to **reducing poverty**, achieving **fair globalization** and advancing opportunities for women and men to obtain **decent and productive work** in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Its main aims are to promote:

- Employment creation**
Create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income.
- Rights at work**
Working extensively throughout the world to promote a solid legal framework for respecting basic economic and social rights.
- Social protection**
Enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all.
- Social dialogue**
Bringing together representatives of governments, employers and workers to foster cooperation and to deliver "real world" knowledge about employment and work.

Featured



World of Work Magazine No. 59, April 2007 - [pdf 1707 KB]

- Global Employment Trends - 2007
- Maritime Labour Convention 2006 web site
- NATLEX - country profiles database
- 2007 Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations
- Decent Work Country Programmes

News

- Conclusions of the Tripartite Meeting on the Production of Electronic Components for the IT industries
- ASEAN and ILO to cooperate in addressing labour and employment issues
- ILO and WTO issue new joint study on "Trade and employment: Challenges and policy research"
- ILO Director-General statement on Guinea
- ILO, employers' and workers' organizations strengthen joint action against HIV/AIDS in Africa
- A new web portal against child labour launched in Brazil
- Meeting of G8 labour ministers concludes, ILO Director-General calls for global response to 'jobless growth'
- International Labour Review: special issue on migration
- ILO and Global Compact to hold Policy Dialogue in London on Discrimination in the Workplace. 6th - 7th October
- IFC and ILO team up to improve working conditions in global supply chains
- ILO launches child labour web movie
- International Microfinance Training opts for Turin (Italy) as world capital

Activities

- Labour standards
- Official meetings
 - International Labour Conference
 - Governing Body
- Events and campaigns
- Projects
- Publications
- Statistics and databases
- Training

Resources for

- Journalists and media



Working together to make decent work a global reality



World Day for Safety and Health at Work - 28 April 2007



Child Labour web movie (2min 45sec)

Media center

Photo Library | Videos



Nearly 1.2 million seafarers work for the world's shipping industry. The Maritime Labour Convention clearly sets out, in plain language, a seafarers' "bill of rights" while allowing a sufficient degree of national discretion to deliver those rights with transparency and accountability. It consolidates and updates more than 65 international labour standards adopted over the last 80 years.

- ILO adopts sweeping new charter for maritime sector: New Convention will guarantee "quality shipping" worldwide
- 94th (maritime) session of the International Labour Conference
- Shipping, ports, fisheries, inland waterways