



THIRD ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Evaluation**Independent evaluation of the ILO's country programme for Zambia: 2001–07****I. Introduction**

1. This summary report highlights the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of an independent evaluation of the ILO's country programme for Zambia. It is based on an assessment of approaches taken, progress being made against country-level strategies and outcomes, and lessons learned to inform future strategy development of the Zambia Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP). The evaluation also focuses on the ILO's positioning in relation to its constituents, United Nations partner agencies and the broader national development context, and includes recommendations to strengthen the ILO's contribution to Zambia. The full report is available on the ILO evaluation web site.¹

II. Country-level strategy and programming framework

2. In recent years, Zambia has recovered from an earlier economic slide. Levels of human development in Zambia, which showed a steady decline since 1990, indicate a modest recovery beginning in 2002, suggesting that growth is translating, albeit slowly, into broad-based employment and wealth creation.
3. The Government of Zambia has launched its Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP) for Zambia 2006–10. It articulates five key sector-wide policy priorities linked to labour markets and employment, which, in turn, are informed by the National Employment and Labour Market Policy (NELMP).
4. The ILO has been actively supporting Zambia in advancing the Decent Work Agenda since its introduction as the core ILO policy framework and strategy in 2000. Since 2004, the ILO's programme of support to Zambia has been based on the NELMP, which has

¹ <http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationreports/Countryprogramme/lang--en/index.htm>.

informed the DWCP. The DWCP design is also clearly shaped by the ILO project-level interventions launched in previous years and integrates a number of approaches already under way in Zambia. Over the past six years, ILO financial support has totalled just under US\$25 million in extra-budgetary resources and approximately US\$3 million in regular budget and programme support income for the ILO Lusaka Office since 2000, as well as technical missions from the Harare Subregional Office and headquarters.

5. Three main priorities have been identified for Zambia's DWCP:
 - more and better employment for youth, women and people with disabilities, supported by enhanced labour market information (LMI) systems;
 - responding to HIV and AIDS challenges in the world of work; and
 - elimination of child labour, particularly in its worst forms.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

6. The Zambia evaluation concludes that the ILO has designed a comprehensive operational framework through the Zambia DWCP, which brings together an effective combination of its comparative technical advantage and related country priorities. The evaluation further concludes that the ILO has been innovating in order to adjust to a very dynamic change process in the overall joint assistance strategies between the Government, the UN system and other development assistance agencies. The ILO programme in Zambia has been responding to the opportunities offered by the new aid environment in creating partnerships for policy development, capacity building and joint implementation or funding of new programmes.
7. However, several weaknesses have also been identified in the evaluation. These relate to issues of operational focus, technical integration and capacities for implementation. The biggest challenge faced by the ILO Lusaka Office is its capacity to respond to emerging institutional and policy developments in Zambia, and to capitalize on the opportunities being presented to contribute to the national priority of "Broad-based wealth and job creation through citizenry participation and technological advancement".

The ILO's relevance in Zambia

8. The ILO's work has great relevance in Zambia at this time. This is widely recognized by both the Government and the social partners. The ILO in Zambia has also been instrumental in highlighting the discrepancy between the stated government objectives of broad-based employment growth and the limited explicit support from the international development community. Currently, only the ILO, Zambia's Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS), and to some extent the social partners, are actively involved in supporting the FNDP employment sector strategy.
9. The ILO's unique contributions within the decent work priorities are recognized, but also mixed with concerns about the scale and sustainability of capacities. This is especially the case given the widely acknowledged need to expand employment and social protection for the population, in which poverty rates have remained high and human development indicators poor.
10. In recent years, the ILO's integration within the UN system has expanded. The current move by the ILO programme in Zambia to expand sectoral partnerships within the Government and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is

highly commended. In addition to the partnerships that have been developed, new opportunities exist, such as with the government ministries mandated to improve the livelihoods of rural and vulnerable persons.

11. Legislative gains made with the regional labour administration support projects need to be reinforced for sustainability. Additional areas of the national social protection agenda are present in the DWCP, such as gender, HIV and AIDS in the workplace and elimination of child labour, that also require ongoing capacity building in the MLSS and tripartite partners to ensure that capacities are sustained.
12. To move the Decent Work Agenda forward it is necessary to increase its presence in the Government's own internal monitoring system that guides the FNDP implementation. The monitoring systems for the NELMP need to be strengthened, and the MLSS contribution to higher-level reporting facilitated. The launching of the 2008 labour force survey provides a timely opportunity for targeted studies on critical employment policy areas.

Recommendations

- (1) In coordination with the MLSS and channelled through the government strategy on macroeconomic policy, the ILO Lusaka Office, with support from headquarters, should prepare a concept note on how the employment situation in Zambia can be integrated into the overall monitoring of the FNDP so that the note can contribute to the FNDP mid-term evaluation scheduled for late 2008.
- (2) The ILO Lusaka Office should more directly integrate these macroeconomic policy aspects into its DWCP strategy, including more specifically on how the 2005 and 2008 labour force surveys can be compared to assess changes in the employment situation in Zambia, identify programming priorities and target needs, and to focus policy discussions.
- (3) The ILO should take advantage of the upcoming 2008 mid-term reviews of the UNDAF and FNDP to ensure that the issues of employment and gender are covered in the terms of reference and included in the broader UNDAF and FNDP monitoring framework and indicators.

Tripartite participation and partnership

13. The tripartite partners in Zambia are currently facing a weakened institutional support environment. This prevents them from effectively engaging with DWCP implementation. At present, the resources channelled to the Zambia Federation of Employers, the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions and the Federation of Free Trade Unions largely fall outside DWCP implementation. There is reportedly too little exchange between various ILO internal players regarding workplans and activities.
14. Economic liberalization has also brought increasing complexity to tripartite relations, which require a renewed emphasis on social dialogue. It is important for the ILO to consider how to reorient its internal structures to respond more effectively.

Recommendations

- (4) The ILO Lusaka Office should move to form a tripartite advisory committee for implementation of the Zambia DWCP and work with the committee to combine technical resources into a better coordinated plan of action.

- (5) The Regional Office for Africa should work with the ILO Lusaka Office to develop annual workplans for the DWCP that map out the various activities to be undertaken and ensure a coordinated and transparent set of activities. Better coordination within the ILO's regional structure is required to ensure that tripartite partners get the full support from available resources. The Harare Subregional Office and the ILO Lusaka Office should also have regular joint meetings to work out coherent strategies for supporting social partners within the broader DWCP framework.
- (6) The Office should find means to continue support to tripartite partners to ensure that further gains are made in strengthening labour administration and on reaching tripartite agreements to ensure integration of ratified ILO Conventions into Zambia's forthcoming legislative reforms of the Industrial Labour Relations Act and the Employment Act.

Focus and coherence of country programme design and strategies

15. The ILO programme in Zambia has good focus in relation to the wider UN and international donor context. On the other hand, the DWCP outcomes and strategies require better integration within the ILO's structure in order to become more effective. Sustained attention has to be paid to increasing the level of coherence and integration both horizontally and vertically in the ILO to support this effort.
16. The ILO Lusaka Office has begun reshaping its strategy for mobilizing resources and new technical support initiatives. Coordination with other parts of the ILO in this endeavour needs to be improved, however. It was widely perceived among its stakeholders that ILO Lusaka needs to shift focus away from pilot projects requiring project implementation units, to institutional capacity building of its constituents and other national partners, with links to ongoing FNDP budgetary support mechanisms for sustainability.
17. In the area of HIV and AIDS in the workplace, the ILO has a clear role to play in helping to bridge national policies with actual implementation at the enterprise level. There is a need at the enterprise and industry levels for more comprehensive monitoring of the quality of interventions and support that are being provided. National and UN stakeholders want ILO involvement in resolving these gaps.
18. The ILO is promoting the dual goals of employment growth and protection of workers. The primary focus of this model in the past has been on the formal employment sector, but this now needs to be revitalized in the context of the broader informal economy linked to each of the DWCP priorities.

Recommendations

- (7) The Office should plan as a matter of urgency to mobilize resources in the area of HIV and AIDS in the workplace. A technical mission should design an appropriate means of upgrading ILO action in this priority area, and to ensure more effective collaboration between Zambia's social partners, the National AIDS Council, the Zambia Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS and related networks addressing workplace policies and practices.
- (8) The ILO Lusaka Office should consolidate its work targeting the informal economy to make it more visible and tangible. It should also review priorities and intervention approaches to increase its support to those working in the informal economy.

- (9) Future resource mobilization should closely align itself with and reinforce the Zambia DWCP strategies and organizational approaches. Stand-alone projects which technically and operationally operate outside the DWCP framework should no longer be undertaken. The Office should specifically appraise proposals for adequate integration into national strategies, institutions and processes and approve only those meeting the agreed criteria. It is also recommended that the Office improve guidance to field staff on how to mobilize resources within donor joint-assistance strategies and UNDAF contexts.

Evidence of the direct and indirect impact of the ILO's contribution

19. The evaluation found evidence of the ILO's contribution and impact at many levels. Impact was most evident among the tripartite partners, which have significantly internalized the ILO's technical contributions within their own programmes and operations, and made effective use of support during difficult times. Given its strong track record of tripartite partnership in the country, the ILO Lusaka Office was well positioned to have an impact on the FNDP by being instrumental in giving greater visibility to the MLSS and the labour sector as a whole. As a result, employment, workers' rights and social protection issues are now gaining better recognition within the UN system, and to a more limited extent within the cooperating partners and international financial institutions.
20. Capacity building and pilot efforts with the tripartite partners and others have been a large part of the ILO's programme in Zambia and have been of value. However, given ongoing organizational challenges for the ILO constituents, and the changing economic environment, the sustainability of capacity could not be assessed. The ILO can help constituents to better monitor and report on this.
21. There is a need for better tracking of the ILO's country programme results and impact. Zambia's DWCP has a results-based framework with indicators linked to the eight outcomes profiled. The ILO Lusaka Office, however, needs to develop monitoring plans for each of these outcomes, which will in the process also add focus and specificity to the intended results identified. Progress is also required on the plans to introduce a standard template to link DWCP operations and to provide access to all workplans and progress reports, at both project and outcome levels. Finally, the ILO Lusaka Office can aim for stronger synergies between the DWCP and MLSS performance monitoring systems.

Recommendations

- (10) The ILO Lusaka Office should work with the MLSS to ensure strong operational links to national development monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assure better integration into a national workplan for DWCP implementation. This should be accompanied with support for capacity development.
- (11) The ILO Lusaka Office should move quickly to revise and finalize the current results framework and a time-bound monitoring plan for the DWCP outcomes.

Efficiency and adequacy of ILO organizational arrangements

22. The Regional Office, the Subregional Office and the ILO Lusaka Office have made impressive progress in articulating a vision and set of priorities in Zambia, and are now focusing on how to ensure that the programme will be country driven and better known in Zambia.
23. The different roles and responsibilities of the three offices are not, however, always clear, and current practices have become somewhat outdated since the introduction of DWCPs. There is a need to revisit these to ensure that technical missions are more responsive to DWCP commitments and become an integral part of the delivery of specific workplans linked to the DWCP.
24. The ILO Lusaka Office is very tightly staffed, resulting in uneven support and coordination for the work associated with an integrated country programme approach. Current capacities are largely fragmented across project-delineated groupings.

Recommendation

- (12) It is recommended that the ILO Lusaka Office develop a strategy that builds synergies between staff and support functions funded from technical cooperation and from the regular budget, to create a more efficient and effective organizational approach to implementation. In addition, new resource mobilization initiatives should as far as possible incorporate these strategies in order to ensure more coherence and efficiency.

IV. Comments from the Office on the evaluation

25. The Regional Office for Africa welcomes the general conclusion that the DWCP process has been able to strategically position the ILO as an innovative development partner in creating partnerships for policy development, capacity building and joint implementation or funding of new programmes.
26. The Regional Office notes with some concern the fact that it is only the ILO, Zambia's MLSS, and to some extent the social partners that are supportive of an FNDP employment sector strategy. More work, therefore, needs to be done in terms of mainstreaming full employment and decent work issues at the national level, highlighting their respective contributions to poverty alleviation.
27. The Regional Office notes that the new aid environment provides the ILO with the opportunity to showcase the developmental role of the Decent Work Agenda. The 2008 mid-term review of the UNDAF and the FNDP should be the entry points for the ILO to better integrate the DWCP into these processes.
28. With regard to "Tripartite participation and partnership", the Regional Office notes that ILO funds are sometimes channelled outside the DWCP framework. This is being addressed through building the regional capacity for results-based management and programming at all levels.
29. In order to address the observation that "there is reportedly too little exchange between various ILO internal players regarding workplans and activities", the Regional Office plans

to instil greater coordination by making the DWCP an effective programming framework for all ILO interventions.

30. The Regional Office will continue to work with the bureaux for employers' and workers' activities to ensure that workers' and employers' capacities are strengthened. Efforts will further be made to ensure that the upcoming legislative reforms pay attention to the ratified ILO Conventions.

V. Comments from the Zambia constituents

31. The Government of the Republic of Zambia considers the report to be very timely. It has taken the initiative to set up a tripartite-*plus* national steering committee (NSC) to coordinate the implementation of the Zambia DWCP. It is envisaged that the ILO will assist in the formulation of the DWCP implementation plan, as well as the monitoring tools.
32. The Government of Zambia observes that the DWCP, through the first DWCP priority, recognizes the problem of unemployment especially among young people, women, and people with disabilities. It further recognizes that this is more so for the rural population. The Government is looking forward to DWCP interventions that will respond to all the priorities identified, and in particular this one.
33. The Government concurs with the observation of the evaluation team that the ILO needs to shift focus from pilot projects to institutional capacity building. This observation is in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005). The ILO is encouraged to observe the Declaration and plan project implementation with a bias towards capacity building and sustainability.
34. The Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE) and the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) are in agreement with the position stated by the independent evaluators concerning the country-level strategy and programming framework. They welcome the recommendation on the need to reinforce tripartism, and underline the need for programmes that will build the capacity of the MLSS and the social partners. There is a strong need in the ZFE and the ZCTU for specific capacity-building concerning HIV and AIDS in the workplace. The ZFE is willing to take the lead in tackling HIV and AIDS in the workplace, and the ZCTU looks forward to bipartite programmes that will build the capacity of both employers' and workers' organizations in this area.
35. *The Committee may wish to recommend to the Governing Body that it request the Director-General to take into consideration the above findings and recommendations, together with the deliberations of the Committee, for continuing support to Zambia through the ILO's DWCP.*

Geneva, 7 October 2008.

Point for decision: Paragraph 35.