



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

The Office of National Coordinator in Albania

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INFO LETTER

(Celebration of ILO 90th Anniversary in Albania)

On 6th of May 2009, a commemorative event on the 90th Anniversary of ILO has been organized in Tirana in the presence of the President of the Republic, his H.E. Mr. Bamir Topi, the UN Resident Coordinator Ms Gulden Turkoz-Cosslett, the Heads of UN Agencies working in Albania in the frame of One UN, the Deputy Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (also President of 2007 International Labour Conference and Vice President of 8th ERM of Lisbon) Mr Kastriot Sulka, all Head Departments of Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Heads of worker's and employer's organizations, the directors of dependent institutions of MOLSAEO, namely the State Labour Inspectorate, State Social Service, National Employment Service, as well as representatives of civil society. The ILO was represented in this event by Mr Mark Levin, Director of ILO SRO Budapest, staff of NC Office and other ILO Project Implementation Units¹.

After the show of the short film on the ILO History, the meeting was addressed by Mr Mark Levin, who welcomed the President of the Republic and the other guests and shortly explained the mission of ILO, the development targets for Albania in the frame of 2008-2010 Decent Work Country Programme, the cooperation with other UN Agencies and ILO Social Partners, and put some light in the current global financial and economic crisis, emphasizing the fact that the "ILO has responded to many crises through the world of work with consistent policy messages and practical action in pursuit of social justice"².

Ms Gulden Turkoz-Cosslett, UNRC, after congratulating the International Labor Organization for its 90 years of meaningful contributions to the global society, provided some examples of the organization's efforts to bring about social justice in the labour markets around the world and also its valuable contribution as part of the Delivering as One UN

¹ For more see "List of Participants" (Annex 1)

² For more see Annex 2

Initiative in Albania. She also highlighted the leading role of ILO in the promotion of decent and productive employment, ensuring fundamental rights at work, and enhancing social protection and social dialogue through the Decent Work Country Programme. She placed a special emphasis to the call for ILO to support countries and help them respond to the current financial crisis, made by the statement of the G20 leaders meeting held in London recently, and expressed the conviction that the ILO unique structure where employers, workers and governments are brought together is a successful tool to achieve that³.

The President of the Republic of Albania, Mr Bamir Topi, in his speech, considered that “beyond any doubt the ILO is one of the most important organizations in global scale”. He mentioned that the ILO succeeded to build up a win-win functional system for governments, employers and workers which are constrained to coexist. The President expressed his special gratification that through this commemorative day he could express a special evaluation on the endless efforts of the ILO for broadening the social dialogue, promoting the labour standards, the freedom of association, elimination of child labour and all forms of discrimination, placing the employment in the center of economic and social policies, and its commitment on spreading out the social security coverage to all groups of the society. He also mentioned the special importance of ensuring Occupational Safety and Health standards.

The President praised the special role given to the ILO by the recently G20 Summit in finding responsive solutions *vis-a-vis* the current financial and economic crisis. For the first time the President addressed problems related to the economic crisis, present in the Albanian Economy (the government so far denies the existence of crisis in Albania-probably due the forthcoming general elections of June 2009). He called for unity and serious engagement when facing any disequilibrium that might be created because of the global crisis effects, thus advising parties to give up from trying taking advantage from this particular situation. The President underlined that the prevention of crisis impact calls for necessary compromises in order to avoid tensions which normally rise during elections periods because this is the only way to reach a vivid social dialogue, which requires a proactive role of trade unions and employers’ organizations.

Also the President in its speech considered the support to employment through promotion of economic growth, the investment in education and training through active labour market policies as goals that deserve the special attention, the commitment and the joint efforts of government and employer’s and workers’ organizations. Concluding the President called for the revision of the Employment Strategy asking to pay more attention to

³ For more see Annex 3

employment of youth, women and residents of remote areas and suburbs of big cities. He also called for the strengthening of social dialogue and asked workers and employers to play their special role as social interlocutors, because common people's interests need to be represented not only by political parties, but by their natural interlocutors as well. The President encourages that because, as he said, "he is the guarantor of social cohesion" and also because "this is in compliance with the ILO philosophy".

Mr Kastriot Sulka, Deputy Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, congratulating the ILO for the very successful cooperation with the Albanian Government in the past 18 years, provided concrete facts of this cooperation putting special emphasis on drafting of labour legislations, where ILO has played a very important role through direct technical assistance. Mr Sulka also praised the assistance of ILO in the field of International Labour Conventions. With 51 ratified ILC, Albania has put a solid base in introducing and implementing labour standards. Mr Sulka mentioned his elections as President of 2007 International Labour Conference and Vice President of 8th ERM of Lisbon, considering this not only as a personal achievement, but furthermore as an appreciation of Albania by the International community, a proof that Albania is standing as an equal country among equals in the international arena.

At the end, the event was addressed by the representatives of social partners. All of them expressed their gratitude towards ILO for the continuous assistance offered in strengthening of their capacities and making them real actors in the social dialogue process. The social partners expressed also their commitment in the implementation of 2008-2010 Decent Work Country Programme for Albania and called for enhancing the cooperation relations with the ILO.

The event was followed by a Cocktail.

The Commemoration of the ILO 90th Anniversary had the greatest media coverage an ILO event has ever had in Albania in the past 18 years. This includes:

- Top News TV, a 24 hours news Channel, broadcasted live the event;
- Top News TV, repeated a short version of the event each hour for 24 hours in row;
- News 24 TV, a 24 hours news Channel, broadcasted a short version of the event each hour for 24 hours in row;
- Ora News TV, a 24 hours news Channel, broadcasted a short version of the event each hour for 24 hours in row;

- RTSH (Radio and Television of Albania), the only public channel, broadcasted news on this event in its news editions.
- Top Channel TV, the channel with the highest audience in Albania (national status TV), broadcasted the news on the event as the first headline in the 17:30 hours news edition, and the second headline during the other news editions;
- Klan TV, the 2nd channel with the highest audience in Albania (national status TV), broadcasted the news on the event in all the news editions starting from 15:30 hour;

The news of the three abovementioned TV contained information/views from the event and also message/views from an interview taken to Mr Mark Levin at the closure of the event.

- Six other televisions of minor coverage (local TV), also broadcasted news on the event;
- Top Channel TV, interviewed live next morning the ILO NC in Albania (for 15 minutes);
- Printed media - 14 newspapers (almost every newspaper printed in Albania) covered the event⁴.

As a conclusion, taking into account the considerations of participants in the event including the President of the Republic, it can be said that the cooperation ILO-Albania in the past eighteen years has been a successful one. All parties committed themselves to continue this cooperation in the years to come.

ALFRED TOPI

National Coordinator
Albania

⁴ For more See the Press Clippings on the ILO 90th Anniversary in Albania

ANNEX I

Participants List

90th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ILO

6 May 2009

Hotel Tirana International

No	Name	Organisation
1.	Bamir Topi	President of the Republic
2.	Dashmir Xhaxhiu	Head of Cabinet of the President's Office
3.	Kasem Seferi	Advisor of the President
4.	Gulden Turkoz-Cosslett	UNRC
5.	Carlo Benedetti	UNRC Office
6.	Nora Kushti	UNDO Communication Officer
7.	Mark Levin	ILO SRO Budapest
8.	Alfred Topi	ILO NC Tirana
9.	Dorina Nika	ILO NC Office
10.	Etleva Vertopi	IPEC Programme manager
11.	Daniela Zampini	YEM Chief Technical Advisor
12.	Teuta Zejno	YEM Programme

13.	Manuela Bello	UNFPA Assistant Representative
14.	Teuta Berberi	UNHCR
15.	Anne Margaret Westin	IMF Resident Representative
16.	Nicoleta Giordano	IOM Chief of Mission
17.	Anshu Banerjee	WHO Representative
18.	Christine Arab	UNIFEM Representative
19.	Norimasa Shimomura	UNDP Country Director
20.	Kastriot Sulkaj	MOLSAEO Deputy Minister
21.	Andrea Marto	MOLSAEO Secretary General
22.	Muharrem Xhelili	MOLSAEO Director
23.	Astrit Kuka	MOLSAEO Director
24.	Oljana Ifti	MOLSAEO Director
25.	Bujar Cani	MOLSAEO Director
26.	Albana Shtylla	MOLSAEO Director
27.	Gramoz Xhangolli	MOLSAEO Specialist
28.	Alma Lahe	MOLSAEO Communication Officer
29.	Spiro Kuro	NES Deputy Director
30.	Thoma Melo	State Labour Inspectorate Director General
31.	Shefikat Ngjelo	KOPSH President

32.	Ismail Varoshi	KOPSH Secretary General
33.	Vladimir Koka	KOP President
34.	Kujtim Shkreli	AI&IA
35.	Edmond Rusmali	KONFINDUSTRIA
36.	Gezim Kalaja	BSPSH President
37.	Sami Karriqi	BSPSH
38.	Bajram Kruja	BSPSH
39.	Sabri Skenderi	BSPSH
40.	Olsa Vila	BSPSH
41.	Kol Nikollaj	KSSH Chairman
42.	Xhaferr Dobrusha	KSSH
43.	Minella Mano	KSSH
44.	Hajdar Kanani	KSSH
45.	Eriselda Hyseni	KSSH
46.	Hasan Shkalla	FSTBSH President
47.	Valbona Agolli	FSTBSH
48.	Eshtem Graçi	USPSH President
49.	Dervish Dumi	USPSH
50.	Qemal Balliu	Free lance expert

ANNEX 2

SPEECH OF MR MARK LEVIN, DIRECTOR OF ILO SRO BUDAPEST

Mr President,
United Nations Resident Coordinator,
Distinguished constituents from the government, employers' and workers' organizations,
Colleagues from the UN family here in Albania,

We have come together to celebrate the ILO's 90th anniversary.

We mark this anniversary at a time of profound economic and social turmoil. For the ILO, crisis has always announced change. The Organization was founded in the aftermath of World War I on the principle that "universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice". In the nine decades since then, the ILO has responded to many crises through the world of work with consistent policy messages and practical action in pursuit of social justice.

The ILO is the only tripartite organization in the United Nations as it brings together representatives of governments, employers and workers on an equal footing – the ILO is rooted in the real economy. The ILO's tripartite constituency has developed together ILO instruments (Conventions and Recommendations) which have been the basis for much of the world's labour legislation and have guided key developments in the world of work. These instruments cover conditions of work, occupational safety and health, social security, employment promotion, human resource development and the fundamental goals of freedom of association and collective bargaining, abolition of forced and child labour and non discrimination. They have also focused on specific groups including migrant and disabled workers.

As the ILO Director-General, Juan Somavia underlined: "Through war and peace, depression and economic growth, governments, workers and employers have continued to come together in dialogue around our table of shared values: that work must be a source of dignity; that labour is not a commodity; and that poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere.

These values and action were recognized by the granting of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969. Those values continue to guide and define our work today. "

The contemporary expression of the ILO's historic mission is the Decent Work Agenda. Decent Work means opportunities for all women and men to obtain productive work in conditions of

freedom, equity, security and human dignity. The ILO's Decent Work Agenda is centred on employment and enterprise, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue. It responds both to people's need for decent work and to the need of productive growth and sustainable development.

Decent work has always been central to the ILO's support to Albania, first during the period 1920 to 1967, and then again from 1991.

The ILO's recent cooperation with Albania started through various technical projects to strengthen the capacity of the Government and the Social Partners and to target the problems of the labour market and labour legislation, trafficking of human beings, child labour, social dialogue, and social security.

To accelerate the economic and social development of Albania, the ILO elaborated a new integrated approach in 2006 with its first Decent Work Country Programme for 2006-2007. The country programme aimed to help the unemployed, workers in the informal economy, the poor, victims of trafficking, the homeless and working children.

When Albania joined the One UN Pilot Programme in 2007, the ILO combined forces with other UN partners in pursuing three of the five development goals of the One UN Programme of Albania. Specifically, the ILO participates in joint One UN programmes with the aim to combat child labour, to reduce the informal economy, to effectively implement international labour standards through social dialogue, to improve national and regional policies on the decent employment of young people, and to enhance the effective operation of the tripartite National Labour Council.

All these common objectives are incorporated in the new 2008-2010 Decent Work Country Programme for Albania, which is also built on the close cooperation between the ILO, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and employers' and workers' organizations of Albania. The new country programme concentrates on three priorities:
Strengthen the capacity of government institutions and the social partners to improve the governance of the labour market;
Support government action to reduce the informal economy; and
Improve the coverage of the social protection system.

We believe that the ILO, with its unique tripartite structure, is a strong pillar of the UN team in Albania. We are committed to assisting Albania to achieve its development goals, especially through the provision of decent work its citizens. We believe that our active partnership with the government and with employers' organisations and trade unions is absolutely fundamental to achieve these goals. We look forward to the next 90 years of joint endeavour in the cause of social justice.

Thank you for your attention.

ANNEX 3

SPEECH OF MS GULDEN TURKOZ-COSSLETT, UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR IN ALBANIA

Your Excellency, President of the Republic of Albania

Distinguished Guests, UN colleagues

Allow me to begin by congratulating the International Labor Organization for 90 years of meaningful contributions to our global society.

The ILO's proud history includes campaigning against forced labor, designing programmes for the eradication of child labor, promoting opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive working conditions of freedom, equity and human dignity. These are just a few examples of the organization's tireless efforts to bring about social justice in the labor markets around the world. The instruments developed within the tripartite ILO – with the direct representation of governments, employers and workers - have been the basis for much of the world's labour legislation and have guided key developments in the world of work. Over the past ninety years, the ILO has developed labour standards and an international labour code that constitute the main reference for the progress of individuals, enterprises and society at large. The ILO has pioneered principles that have improved working and living conditions for all of us – such as the introduction in the early 1920s of standards on weekly rest, hours of work, maternity protection. Today it continues to bring the voice of the main actors in the world of work by forging consensus at both international and national levels on the importance of the social dimension of globalization. It is in recognition of the work on social justice for lasting peace that the ILO, first specialized Agency of the UN, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969.

The ILO has been playing a lead role in Albania in the promotion of decent and productive employment, ensuring fundamental rights at work, and enhancing social protection and social dialogue. The Decent Work Programme for Albania launched last September in Tirana, builds on these areas and assists Albania in meeting its obligations under the EU-SAA related social security systems.

As you know, Albania is the only country in Europe piloting United Nations Reform through "Delivering as One UN". Over the past eighteen months, 12 UN agencies have come together with increased synergy and efficiency to make the UN system a more focused development partner to Albania. Albania's One UN Programme combines the expertise of individual UN agencies, including ILO, to enhance their contributions to the country's human development.

Through “Delivering as One UN” UN agencies are working together as a single, streamlined UN Team, in advocating for socially inclusive development; supporting the Government in achieving priority national objectives and offering public policy analysis and advice.

As part of these efforts, ILO leads a Joint UN Programme which supports the Albanian Government and the social partners to take collective action to improve the employment prospects of young people – the future of Albania. This Programme supports the improvement of the functioning of the labour market for young people and promotes more and better jobs - including through private - public partnerships - so that our young generations do not have to turn to the informal economy or to migrate in order to earn a living for themselves and their families.

The One UN Programme supports Albania’s drive to become part of the European Union and the aspirations of Albanian citizens to lead better lives – at the same time - the delivering as One UN effort saves time and resources for national and international partners.

There is no doubt that the year 2009 will go down in history as one of the most financially troubling in generations. The threats associated with the global economic slow down concern us all as human beings. It is no coincidence that the statement of the G20 leaders meeting held in London last month made a renewed call for ILO to support countries and help them respond to the current financial crisis. ILO’s strength, created by its three-part organizational structure where employers, workers and governments are brought together to reach consensus and solve problems will be critical to get through these difficult times.

As we celebrate the 90th anniversary of ILO, the UN is committed to continuing our work together to further social justice, ensure decent work and fulfill our commitments through a UN that can deliver development results in Albania.

Thank you.
