



90 years working for social justice

Message by Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO on the occasion of the ILO's 90th anniversary

On 21 April 2009 we launch a global celebration of the ILO's 90th anniversary.



Promoting decent work for all

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the United Nations agency devoted to 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 rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue in handling work-related issues.

The ILO works through its tripartite membership in 182 countries - governments, employers and workers, all of whom jointly shape its policies and programmes. ILO is the global body responsible for drawing up and overseeing international labour standards.

The ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean, based in Trinidad and Tobago, serves 13 ILO member States and 8 non-metropolitan territories of the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. The Office works closely with United Nations agencies, including through five UN Country Teams, and regional organizations such as CARICOM.

Member States:

Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago

Non-metropolitan territories:

Anguilla, Aruba, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Turks and Caicos Islands.

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Events around the world will bring together the ILO's tripartite constituents—governments, workers and employers—and others who are mobilizing for decent work for all. These local dialogues will have global significance and impact.

They will draw strength from our history. They will tap the long experience, knowledge and networks of the ILO to address the challenges of today and to shape a better future.

We mark this anniversary at a time of profound economic and social upheaval. But for the ILO, crisis has historically provided a crucible for change. Emerging from the cataclysm of the First World War, the Organization was founded on the basic conviction that "universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice".

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.

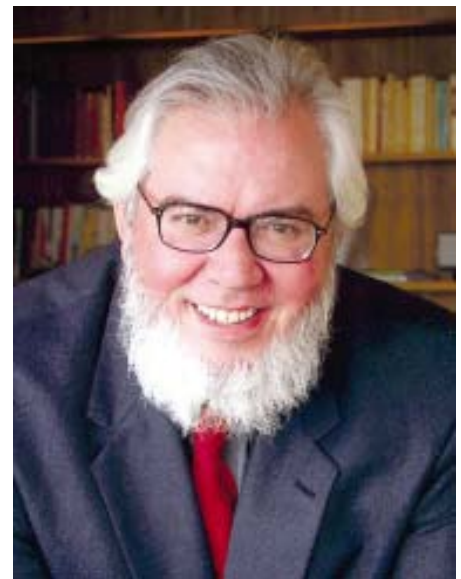
These values and action were recognized by the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969. Those values continue to guide and define our work today.

What we are doing is more than



a celebration of our past. It is a strategic opportunity to focus on the pressing priorities of people today – the need for jobs, social protection, rights at work – and to forge solutions through dialogue.

Gathering against a backdrop of rising unemployment and underemployment, business closures, deteriorating conditions of work and the undermining of respect for rights at work, along with growing



Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO

inequality, poverty and insecurity, Heads of State and Government, parliamentarians, academics, members of civil society and activists will join to reaffirm the ILO's mission—to steer a course towards social justice and a world of work based on human values.

Our values and action have set the norms for the treatment and well-being of workers – women and men – including freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, equality of opportunity and non discrimination, freedom from forced labour and from child labour and safe and healthy work.

These values and action have helped create sustainable enterprises that generate jobs, develop skills for all persons—wherever they live, whoever they are—and promote a movement for corporate social responsibility.

These values and action are needed more than ever to create a

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Seeking sustainable solutions through social dialogue ILO convenes regional conference on global financial crisis

As the ILO commemorates its 90th anniversary, the ILO's values and action take on greater resonance as the world faces a global financial and

social security and social cohesion. It explored practical measures for overcoming the social and labour consequences of the crisis.

were: employment-promoting macro-economic policies that foster increased investment, trade, competitiveness and job opportunities; social protection programmes for the most vulnerable groups of workers; and legislation to support and promote social dialogue mechanisms.

The Conference came on the heels of calls by the Director-General of the ILO, Juan Somavia for a "Global Jobs Pact" to forestall a "prolonged and severe" jobs crisis that would lead to a massive increase in unemployment and working poverty. The commitment to support employment by stimulating growth, investing in training and through labour market policies, was reiterated by leaders of the recently concluded G-20 Summit.

For further information on the ILO Tripartite Caribbean Conference, including the conclusions, please visit: www.ilocarib.org.tt



Hon. Bruce Golding, Prime Minister of Jamaica delivers the keynote address at the opening of the ILO Tripartite Caribbean Conference. Looking on are Hon. Pearnel Charles, Minister of Labour and Social Security, Jamaica and Dr. Ana Teresa Romero, Director, ILO Subregional Office

economic crisis - the greatest crisis since the end of World War II.

Amidst a decline in demand for tourism, an economic slowdown, job

"The global financial crisis which confronts the region requires concerted action and structural reform not imposed by the International Monetary Fund...In developing those programmes, governments will have to demonstrate the political will as they have to take tough decisions, to be open and frank with the people, the private sector and the trade unions."

- Prime Minister Bruce Golding of Jamaica in his address to the ILO Caribbean Tripartite Conference.

losses and other effects of the global financial crisis on the Caribbean region, the ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean convened a Tripartite Caribbean Conference on the global financial crisis on 1-2 April 2009 in Kingston, Jamaica.

Held under the theme of "Promoting Human Prosperity beyond the Global Financial Crisis: Seeking Sustainable Solutions through Social Dialogue" the Conference deliberated on the impact of the crisis on employment, enterprises, decent work,

organizations of the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean committed to a "united internationally competitive and self-sufficient Caribbean community realized through the implementation of sound and socially-sensitive policies" that were people-centred, to support social and economic advancement. Emphasis was placed on social dialogue, mutual respect and partnership in governance, as mechanisms for realizing decent work, human prosperity, social justice, peace and stability.

An action plan based on nine guiding principles was adopted.

Among the items that the delegates called for

The Conference was hosted by the ILO in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Jamaica, the Caribbean Congress of Labour and the Caribbean Employers' Confederation. Some 100 high-level representatives of governments, employers' and workers'



Prime Minister Bruce Golding greets Mr. Lincoln Lewis, General Secretary, Caribbean Congress of Labour, Dr. Ana Teresa Romero of ILO, and Mr. Marcel Meyer, President, Caribbean Employers' Confederation.



Representatives of regional and international organizations and the University of the West Indies were on hand to share their expertise. Above: Mr. Neil Pierre of ECLAC, Dr. Lester Henry of UWI and Dr. Maurice Odle of CARICOM.



Several Ministers of Labour were part of the tripartite delegations to the Conference. From right to left are Senator the Hon. Arni Walters of Barbados, Hon. Rennie Dumas of Trinidad and Tobago, Hon. Gabriel A. Martinez of Belize and Senator the Hon. Dion Foulkes of The Bahamas. Partially hidden is the Hon. Dr. Joyce D. Amarello-Williams of Suriname.



An information display at the Conference highlighted the ILO's 90th anniversary.

The International Labour Organization - A Historical Journey

As the ILO celebrates its 90th anniversary, ILO Caribbean Newslink highlights the milestones in ILO's history that have helped shaped the organization today.

(Adapted from the ILO's World of Work magazine. December 2008. Photos courtesy ILO Historical Photo Archives)

1919 The International Labour Organization was created in 1919, as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I. In addition to the creation of the League of Nations, the Treaty of Versailles provided for a specific organization to deal with labour. The ILO's Constitution was drafted by the Commission on



The Commission on International Labour Legislation meeting during the Paris Peace Conference

International Labour Legislation during the Paris Peace Conference, (above) and was later embedded in the Treaty of Versailles. The Commission was composed of representatives from each of the five great powers of the time: United States, British Empire, France, Italy and Japan, along with representatives from Belgium, Cuba, Poland and Czechoslovakia. This resulted in a tripartite organization, the only one of its kind bringing together representatives of governments, employers and workers in its executive bodies.



First International Labour Conference, Washington, DC

The First Session of the International Labour Conference was held in Washington, DC from October to November 1919 at which 40 countries and territories were represented. The Conference adopted six ILO Conventions, including Convention No. 1 on the eight-hour work day.

1922 Equally important as the annual session of the International Labour Conference was the Governing Body of the ILO, a tripartite council elected by the Conference, with responsibility for overseeing the

work of the Office. At its inception, the Governing Body was composed of 12 Government members, 6 Employer members and 6 Worker members. Since the inception of the ILO, States of chief industrial importance are automatically included among the Government members of the Governing Body. Today, the Governing Body has expanded to 28 Government members, 14 Employer members and 14 Worker members.

1926 The three keys, representative



of the tripartite nature of the ILO, were used to inaugurate the new ILO building on the shores of Lake Geneva on 6 June 1926. Tripartism, originally an idea formulated by the British delegation to the Commission on International Labour Legislation, allowed the ILO to tackle issues "most real to most people the world over."

1920s During the 1920s, the ILO introduced a number of national correspondents to help facilitate operations worldwide. Nowadays, offices are spread over the globe.

1926 A Committee of Experts was set up in 1926 as a supervisory system on the application of ILO standards. The Committee, which exists today, is composed of independent jurists responsible for examining government reports and presenting its own report each year to the Conference.

1944 During the Second World War, the ILO suffered from a number of limitations, but was mostly successful in overcoming them, including being able to hold two wartime conferences.



At the second conference held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the ILO reaffirmed its founding principles in the Declaration of Philadelphia. The Declaration highlights that labour is not a commodity, freedom of association is necessary for sustained progress and poverty everywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere.

1946 The ILO became the first specialized agency associated with the newly formed United Nations.

1949 The ILO's Technical Assistance Programme began in 1949 followed in 1950 by the United



ILO receives Nobel Peace Prize in 1969

Nations Enlarged Programme of Technical Assistance.

1969 In 1969, on the 50th anniversary of its foundation, the ILO received the Nobel Peace Prize for its promotion of social justice and peace among nations.

The ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean was established on 20 October 1969 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

1992 The International Labour Conference approves the new policy of active partnership to bring ILO's technical expertise closer to the constituents through the establishment of multidisciplinary teams in ILO field offices.

1998 In June 1998, the Conference adopts the ILO Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: freedom of association and collective bargaining, abolition of child labour and elimination of forced labour and discrimination.

1999 The decent work concept is introduced.

2008 The Conference adopts the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization to strengthen the ILO's capacity to promote the Decent Work Agenda.

Photo left: Signing of ILO Declaration of Philadelphia

UN Secretary General addresses leaders at the Fifth Summit of the Americas

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was in Trinidad and Tobago for the Fifth Summit of the Americas. On 18 April 2009, he addressed leaders on the theme of “A Prosperity Agenda” which called for them to do their part to head off a possible political crisis coming on the heels of crises in energy, food, climate change and a global recession.

The Secretary-General referred to the impact of climate change on the Americas, including the rising sea levels threatening small Caribbean island states. “By tackling climate change,” he said, “we also deal with the economic crisis — green jobs for green growth.”

While in Port of Spain, Ban Ki-moon took the opportunity to meet with UN staff based in Trinidad and Tobago.



Dr. Ana Teresa Romero, Director, ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean greets UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon. Looking on are Edo Stork (left), Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP and Neil Pierre, Director, UNECLAC.

Message by the ILO Director General

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globalization that is fair and sustainable.

They are needed to offer voice and hope to the peoples of the world.

We offer the building blocks of the Decent Work Agenda: employment creation – including green jobs – through sustainable enterprises; solidarity in the form of social protection; upholding standards and fundamental principles and rights at work; and harnessing the creative power of dialogue and collective bargaining to find the best solutions.

These are the conditions that will enable women and men to obtain work in conditions of freedom, dignity, security and equity – in times of crisis, in recovery and beyond.

Our tripartite legacy is the foundation of our future. Above all, our agenda for the twenty-first century springs from people: fuelled with the renewable energy of the human spirit, the energy and resilience of people and their reasonable demand everywhere for a fair chance at a decent job.

So together, let us answer that legitimate demand. Together, let us make the policy choices that sustain the goal of decent work; and together, let us advance the cause of decent work for social justice and a fair globalization. That’s our mission, our mandate and our responsibility.

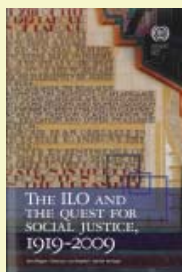
ILO participates in V Summit of the Americas



The International Labour Organization, as one of the 12 member institutions of the Joint Summit Working Group, participated in the preparations for the V Summit of the Americas held on 17-19 April 2009 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The importance of decent work and the role of the ILO in supporting the implementation of the commitments related to decent work - including social protection,

fundamental rights at work, and labour legislation, are explicitly recognized in the Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain.

ILO launches 90th anniversary commemorative publication



The ILO and the Quest for Social Justice 1919-2009
ISBN: 9789221219552
Authors: G. Rodgers; L. Swebston; E. Lee and J. Van Daele
US\$26.00

This book tells the story of the International Labour Organization, founded in 1919 in the belief that universal and lasting peace goes hand in hand with social justice.

This book explores key ideas that the

ILO has championed and applied through the political and economic upheavals of the last 90 years: rights at work, the quality of employment, income protection, employment and poverty reduction, a fair globalization and today’s overriding goal of decent work for all. It tell a remarkable story, with both progress and setbacks, and highlights the challenges ahead in a world where economic crisis underlines the urgency of global action for social justice.

Orders can be placed through the ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean.

ILO VACANCIES

Please visit the ILO webpage at

<http://erecruit.ilo.org>

for a list of current ILO vacancies throughout the world. Qualified candidates from under-represented ILO Caribbean member States are encouraged to apply:

Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.