



**Statement by Juan Somavia
Director-General of the International Labour Office
on the occasion of
Human Rights Day
(10 December 2004)**

The gathering pace of globalization has renewed the ILO's commitment to promoting and ensuring human rights for all.

As the United Nations system unites to ensure the delivery of the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, there is a growing understanding that eradicating extreme poverty cannot be achieved without a commitment to putting the creation of decent jobs in the very centre of national and international policies.

The exclusion of so many people around the world from the benefits of globalization means that they are more subject than ever to the daily violations of workers' rights that accompany poverty: child labour, forced labour, discrimination, and lack of access to freedom of association and protection of the right to organize and bargain. And without these rights, they have no access to the other universally recognized rights: a safe and healthy working environment, a decent income for themselves and their families, reasonable conditions of work, and others.

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals is an integrated challenge—and the ILO is committed to doing its part. Promoting the right to education through universal primary education for example cannot be achieved unless children are removed from child labour. Promoting gender equality and empowering women is central to the ILO's human rights mandate, and has become one of its mainstreamed objectives in all ILO work. Combating HIV/AIDS and other obstacles to the realization of the right to health is often best addressed through the world of work.

The ILO remains committed in this our 85th anniversary year to working together to ensure that human rights are guaranteed for everyone.