



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

“The 2005 World Summit Outcome document: Implications for the ILO”

**Address by Juan Somavia,
Director-General of the International Labour Office
to the Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization
at the 295th Session of the Governing Body
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Mr. Chairperson, Vice-Chairs,
Members of the Governing Body,
Dear friends,

In September last year, at the United Nations General Assembly Summit, more than 150 Heads of State and Government adopted a wide-ranging Outcome Document that reaffirms the commitment to multilateralism and international cooperation. It calls for a fundamental overhaul of the multilateral system.

Today, I would like to address the policy implications of the Outcome Document for the ILO and its work with its constituents in member States and with the international community.

We have prepared a [paper](#) that examines the Outcome Document and draws conclusions in the areas of policy, management, and technical cooperation. As you know, these issues fall within the domain of a variety of different Committees of the Governing Body. I addressed management reform in the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee (PFAC). Some issues were taken up in the Technical Cooperation Committee. Today I will be focusing on policy issues.

The Outcome Document: Relevance for the ILO

A central message of the Outcome Document is that concrete progress on the interlinked issues of development, security and human rights will be achieved better and quicker if the UN system reforms, developing new approaches, institutions and operational tools. It invites us to depart from business as usual and entrenched institutional positions.

In addition, it was generally agreed that the Summit’s Outcome Document would provide comprehensive policy guidance for the work of the UN secretariat, its funds, programmes and specialized agencies, respecting the governing systems of each one. All entities of the UN system have been asked to bring the Outcome Document to the attention of their governance structures and to implement their priorities and programmes in the light of this guidance.

The Outcome Document: Significance for the Decent Work Agenda

The Outcome Document marked an unprecedented leap in global recognition – at the highest political level – of the relevance and centrality of the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda for the entire international community.

For the first time ever, the United Nations General Assembly Summit gave the ILO’s mandate, values and contemporary expression of its strategic programme priorities and focus, such a prominent and clear place in the advancement of the overall international agenda.

I refer to paragraph 47, which addresses the crucial role of employment and decent work for all, in international and national policies and strategies. It reads:

We strongly support fair globalization and resolve to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of our relevant national and international policies as well as our national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies, as part of our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These measures should also encompass the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, as defined in ILO Convention no. 182, and forced labour. We also resolve to ensure full respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work.

Let me draw four conclusions.

Firstly, it places full and productive employment and decent work for all as a central objective of relevant national and international policies. In this way it stresses the importance of recognizing employment and decent work as a deliberate objective of economic and social policies and not just a hoped-for by product of economic growth. At the same time, it connects employment and decent work with the broader policy environment set out in the Outcome Document.

Secondly, it spells out explicitly the role of full and productive employment and decent work for all in development strategies and in poverty reduction, stressing, in particular, its relevance for women and young people. By setting employment and decent work as a global goal, side by side with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the international community is filling a glaring gap. The Outcome Document not only calls for employment and decent work to be a global goal in its own right, but also sees it as a means to achieve the broader set of internationally agreed goals, including the MDGs.

Thirdly, it recognizes the linkages between development and fundamental principles and rights at work, thus acknowledging the importance of the normative dimensions of the work of the ILO. This connects with the underlying thread of the overall document in pursuit of an integrated three-pronged international agenda fostering peace and security, development, and human rights and the rule of law.

Fourthly, it links the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all with fair globalization. In so doing, it recognizes the crucial importance of the economic and social dimensions of the world of work in making globalization more equitable and inclusive.

The major message we should take from this is that the Decent Work Agenda that we have conceived and promoted together in tripartite fashion within the ILO, is now at the centre of the broader international political vision and at the core of the global policy agenda. It has been taken up in the Summits of African leaders, in the Americas, in initiatives of the Asian Development Bank and elsewhere.

All of this represents an exceptional endorsement of the objectives that the tripartite ILO has been putting forward to advance economic prosperity and social justice in the world. It also demonstrates the unparalleled support of the broader international community to our vision and engagement in making decent work a global and a national reality.

Opportunities to promote and operationalize this commitment have thus multiplied. Realizing them requires coherent strategies and partnerships at different levels, as well as action to integrate decent work objectives into relevant development frameworks.

This calls on the ILO to work on a number of fronts.

First, at country level. The Outcome Document has emphasized support for national ownership and direction of the development process, and the alignment of development cooperation activities around national development priorities and frameworks.

The ILO's Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) are the main instrument for cooperation with member States, and the expression of tripartite priority setting, engagement and ownership in support of decent work as a central objective of national development strategies and plans.

The progressive implementation of DWCPs is the ILO's specific contribution to international development frameworks, such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), poverty reduction strategies (PRS) and national MDG strategies, and the focus of partnership with donors and other actors in development cooperation. DWCPs are an important vehicle for ILO engagement with UN policy reform, and greater operational coordination at the country level. These issues were elaborated on in the discussion of the Technical Cooperation Committee.

Second, within the ILO itself. The strategies and activities needed to make decent work a global goal and a national reality form the backbone of the ILO's work programme and are featured in the Programme and Budget for 2006-07.

Within the framework of results-based management, all technical sectors are in the process of compiling a checklist of the policy instruments, policy options, knowledge base, tools and products, including building on lessons from experience, in relation to each of the ILO strategic objectives.

Last week, the Committee on Employment and Social Policy considered the results of this approach for the Employment Sector. We are engaged in the exercise in other technical sectors.

The complete overview and the internal and external linkages between the four strategic objectives, will be a major platform for ILO action at the international, regional, national, local and sectoral level, most notably through DWCPs.

Third, at the inter-agency level. The ILO has spearheaded an initiative to assist UN system organizations in their efforts to help countries realize their commitment to promote productive employment and decent work for all.

At its recent meeting, the High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) of the United Nations Chief Executive's Board (CEB), invited the ILO to work with other interested organizations on the development of an "employment and decent work promotion tool".

The aim is to help other UN agencies, individually and collectively, to assess their policies, programmes and activities in their specific fields of activity, against their potential outcomes in terms of employment and decent work, and to advise countries accordingly.

When completed, this tool will represent the first UN system-wide approach to the implementation of a commitment made at the 2005 World Summit and according to the needs of individual countries.

The International Financial Institutions are key actors in this regard. An interesting example which shows the role they can have in promoting the Decent Work Agenda was the adoption, last month, of new Performance and Policy Standards by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank Group. These standards outline the ways in which private sector borrowers must comply with guidance based on the ILO's fundamental principles and rights at work, and other ILO standards on safety and health, conditions of work and retrenchment. It took us some time to get there. But this is a major outcome of inter-agency cooperation.

Fourth, at the inter-governmental level. The significance of productive employment in making further progress on the United Nations wider development agenda resonated loudly and strongly when member States of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) decided that the theme of the first High-level Segment since the World Summit would be, "*Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development*".

The ILO is working with its constituents and with other international organizations to prepare a successful ECOSOC meeting next July, here in Geneva. Our goal is a meeting that will deliver a significant concrete outcome that will be useful to member States, the multilateral system and the donor community.

These efforts have been reinforced by the recent decision of the UN Commission on Social Development to select the issue of "*Promoting full employment*" for its 2007-08 work cycle. The ILO will also continue its efforts to advocate for decent work in the governance structures of the Bretton Woods institutions.

Fifth, with the donor community. Within the context of an evolving development cooperation architecture, the ILO is working with multilateral, regional and individual development cooperation agencies to systematically integrate the objectives of productive employment and decent work in their policy dialogue and programming cycles with countries and regions.

We have begun a dialogue with major ILO donors to increase and align their development financing with nationally designed employment policies and programmes, and increasing the fiscal space necessary to pursue these objectives.

This dialogue fits well with the initiatives that have been emerging such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of February 2005 in which donors and developing countries agreed for the first time to use indicators and targets to be better able to measure aid effectiveness. It involves some 50 concrete commitments by donors and developing countries. Donor countries, for example, have agreed to base any conditions on aid to developing countries on their own poverty reduction strategies while developing countries undertook to strengthen their capacity to manage development resources.

Then last November, the Minister for Development Cooperation of Sweden, Carin Jämtin, took the initiative to organize a Conference on the theme of “Work ahead: The link between jobs and poverty”. It was designed as a follow-up to the World Summit and also to prepare for the forthcoming High-level ECOSOC meeting. It brought together representatives of governments, international institutions, employers and trade unions, academics and practitioners from all regions to discuss decent work, jobs and poverty reduction. The meeting had the practical agenda of identifying the key issues to be addressed in tackling employment, labour markets and poverty reduction and to forge alliances needed to get the job done. As Minister Jämtin said in her summary – we must now ensure that the resolve shown at this meeting is expressed in policy.

Sixth, working for policy coherence. Much has been said about the emphasis that the Outcome Document has given to management reform of the UN system and to system-wide coherence through coordinated operations in particular at country-level.

Greater policy coherence is nevertheless essential if the multilateral system, including the International Financial Institutions, is to contribute more significantly and tangibly to improving the lives of people, and creating opportunities for communities and countries. Decent work is a case in point.

Nowhere has this issue been more clearly highlighted than in this Working Party’s own discussions on the social dimension of globalization.

In this forum and many others, we have spoken about the need for coherence between economic and social policies; coherence between trade and financial policies and the objectives of fair globalization and poverty reduction; coherence between economic flexibility and appropriate safety nets, to name a few.

In order to succeed, coherence requires the convergence of international policies around universally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. This is a major challenge for the governance structures of all international organizations. We have reported regularly on our Policy Coherence Initiative.

But the critical source and ultimate guarantee of effective policy coherence is in the hands of countries themselves. Governments and the social partners have to dialogue and aim at consensus building on the policy options to make the global goal of full and productive employment and decent work for all a national reality.

This is not simply a coordination or operational issue, but about creating, respecting and utilizing space for discussing and agreeing on appropriate policy options, instruments and resources to achieve national development objectives.

In governments, there are multiple avenues for policy-making. Many decision-makers beyond ministries of labour, employment and social affairs, need to be convinced and mobilized to facilitate, support and contribute to the coherent policy environment required to put decent work at the heart of national development plans.

And they also need to take consistent policy positions in this regard in the international forums in which they participate – including within the multilateral system. The tripartite constituency of the ILO can activate its powerful influence to bring them all on board.

Seventh, working with others. Similarly, many other interested individuals, institutions and networks in the international, national and local, public and private scene, can add value, knowledge, advocacy, support and broader legitimacy to the decent work objective by mobilizing and extending their support to areas beyond the ILO's reach.

Parliamentarians and local authorities, think-tanks and knowledge networks, research and training institutions, grassroots urban and rural organizations, professional associations, foundations and philanthropic institutions, can usefully join a common cause around decent work and amplify its impact. It is a natural consequence of the general receptivity to the Decent Work Agenda. This is already happening on its own – this closer collaboration with international and national partners that this natural evolution entails, will reinforce the ILO's specific technical expertise within our four strategic objectives: our authority based on standards adopted by this Organization, our expertise in employment creation and enterprise development, social dialogue and social protection, and our uniqueness of action derived from our tripartite governance.

Eighth, working for reform. We are ready to participate in the broader multilateral system's reform process and to be actively involved in discussions on the design of development assistance, and the institutional and organizational set-up best suited to realize the potential of multilateralism to its fullest. And I refer here to our PFAC discussion and my presentation there.

In this regard, the ILO looks forward to making substantial contributions towards the work of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence.

Our Decent Work Agenda and the tremendous impetus given to it by the September 2005 World Summit effectively positions the ILO to contribute to the reform process and to play a leading role in advancing the international agenda spelt out in the Outcome Document.

After all, one of the best ways to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of the international system is by forging solutions around the issues that are most relevant to the lives of people. Collectively resolving to make decent work a global goal and a national reality is the kind of policy reform that will hit home with individuals, families and communities. It is the kind of policy focus that could help renew the entire system.

Our substantive agenda is very much part of the reform process. We should not forget that reform is policy, operations and management, and the three have to go together.

I look forward to continuing working with you in a spirit of partnership and mutual trust, to rise to the challenges that the ILO is now confronted with in the larger global scenario.

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