

BOARD47th Session
Geneva, November 2005

FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**A possible Decent Work Prize:
Issues and options****I. Introduction**

1. During its meeting in November 2003, the Board of the IILS decided that a Task Force should examine the possibility of creating a “Decent Work Prize” and evaluate the role of the Institute in its establishment and administration. During the Board meeting in November 2004, a document reviewing this issue was presented and discussed. Interest in the creation of a prize was expressed, along with some questions as to its exact nature and title. If a prize were created, it should be designed to reinforce the programmes of the Institute and the ILO. It was agreed that further consultations should be held and a new document should be submitted to the Board in November 2005.
2. Three options are considered in this paper: an award which consists of a research fellowship; a higher profile research prize; and a prize with a broader scope. The first two would be built on existing Institute activities. The third would be new.

II. A research fellowship as the prize

3. During the discussion of this issue in the Institute’s Board meeting in 2004, it was suggested that the IILS might award a research prize to researchers in developing countries, and further discussions in the course of 2005 confirmed that it would be desirable to explore this idea further.
4. The IILS already offers a fellowship to researchers from developing countries, the Phelan Fellowship. Edward Phelan, former Director-General of the ILO (1941-48), bequeathed a sum to the International Institute for Labour Studies, of which the interest is to be used in the form of “bourses” (grants or scholarships) associated with his name. In 2000, the IILS established a research fellowship financed from this source. The research fellowship is conferred on a young researcher from a developing country. Candidates are sought by publicizing the fellowship within the Institute’s networks. The fellow works at the Institute for six months on a research topic in one of the priority areas of the Institute’s programme.
5. This scholarship scheme could be upgraded into a prize, while remaining within the terms of the Phelan Legacy, in order to achieve greater effectiveness in terms of networking and visibility. The aim would be to attract particularly talented young scholars working in

research institutes or universities in developing countries. The Prize Fellowship would provide opportunities to such researchers to enrich their ongoing research with an ILO perspective, and so help build research capacity in developing countries. The outcome of their research would be presented to a wider ILO public, and would normally give rise to a paper to be published by the Institute.

6. If this option were pursued, the nomination and selection process should start with a call for proposals from researchers, subject to a set of criteria for eligibility of the individuals in terms of nationality, experience and qualifications, and criteria for the selection of research topic in terms of quality, innovation and relevance to the Institute programme. This would be given extensive publicity among research institutes in developing countries. The Prize Fellowship could also be publicized through international journals, conferences, electronic networks and the Institute's web site. A short list of nominations would be drawn up by Institute staff, and the final choice made by a jury appointed in consultation with the Board.

III. A higher profile research prize

7. An alternative approach is to design a research prize with a higher profile and greater visibility, intended to recognize scholarship of the highest level. The prize would reward outstanding contributions to the advancement of knowledge on key ILO concerns.
8. It should be recalled that the Institute already organizes regular Social Policy Lectures endowed by the Nobel Peace Prize. These are held every two years, on a rotating basis in different parts of the world. Distinguished academics are invited to give these lectures, which are subsequently published by the Institute. Tripartite debates and other events are organized around the lectures in the country where the lectures are given.
9. It would be possible to create a research prize with worldwide visibility and impact by building on these existing arrangements. It would include not only the honour of the prize itself, including a financial award, but also the prestige of giving the Nobel Prize Social Policy Lectures. The prize might include a fellowship at the International Institute for Labour Studies, or perhaps – since leading scholars may not be able to spend a long period at the Institute – the option to nominate a promising younger researcher for the Phelan Fellowship.
10. This prize could be made more prestigious by presenting it at a tripartite ceremony in a plenary session of the International Labour Conference, and including an appropriate mark of recognition on the part of all three ILO constituent groups. The press would be invited and extensive media coverage encouraged. The Nobel Peace Prize Lectures would also be given appropriate status and diffusion through the use of the global media. The name of the winner, the lectures and photos of the ceremony would be displayed prominently on the ILO web site. As a symbol, the winner of the prize might receive an appropriate object such as an original piece of art connected in some way with the ILO.
11. For such a prize it would be possible to attract high-level nominations. Nominations would be invited from a wide variety of sources. As in the case of the previous option, a short list would be drawn up by Institute staff, and the final choice made by a jury appointed in consultation with the Board, consisting of eminent personalities with an international scientific reputation, and chaired by a leading academic.

IV. A broader prize

12. A third option would be a prize with broader scope, designed to recognize outstanding contributions to the advancement of knowledge, policy and practice in key domains of the Decent Work Agenda. The award winners might be policy-makers, public figures, employers, trade unionists, scholars, authors or journalists.
13. Such a prize could provide powerful support to the ILO agenda, and could, like the research prize, generate both visibility and impact if presented to outstanding personalities in a prestigious event. A wide search for nominations and a high-level jury with tripartite consensus would be required, as in the previous option.
14. The prize would recognize innovative thinking, new approaches and outstanding practice, and would be awarded in a number of different categories:
 - the first category would be research, along the lines of the research prize described above;
 - a second category would cover innovative policy development;
 - a third category would concern communication and media coverage;
 - a fourth would specifically reflect outstanding contributions by ILO constituents;
 - a fifth would recognize life commitment.

In this case, the research prize described above could be considered as a first step, which might subsequently be extended to other categories as feasible, taking into account the initial experience with the research prize.

V. Considerations

Funding

15. It is realistic to assume that the attraction of the prize would have to come mainly from the prestige of its award, rather than its financial value. However, some funding is essential. The first and second options would draw on existing endowments as sources of funding. It should nevertheless be borne in mind that the resources generated by these endowments depend on international financial conditions, and recent returns have been modest. A shift in investments would be required to ensure an adequate income stream while protecting the endowment capital. If the second option includes the Phelan Fellowship as well as the Nobel Peace Prize it would have the advantage of drawing on two endowments, rather than one. A larger sum could be mobilized by only awarding the prize every second year, or by seeking outside sponsors. Sufficient funding would have to be assured prior to the launch of the prize.
16. The third option could not be fully funded from existing endowments and a separate fund would have to be established. It seems unlikely that substantial resources could be found within the ILO's regular budget for a prize, so external sponsorship would have to be considered, or external funding to augment the existing Nobel Peace Prize endowment.

Organization

17. Of the three options, the first is the easiest to implement since it is essentially a reinforcement of an existing Institute activity. Organizing the second would require greater additional work, but, again, a part is already foreseen under existing activities and the additional effort could be managed within the Institute's programme.
18. Since the third option would have a broader scope, it would probably be better managed by the Office rather than by the Institute, and would require new arrangements to be put in place by the Governing Body.

Title

19. The title of the prize would vary according to the option chosen. The first option might be described as the "Edward Phelan Prize Fellowship for Research on Labour and Social Policy". The second option might be described as the ILO Decent Work Prize. A subtitle could include a reference to the Nobel Peace Prize. The third option could again be referred to as the ILO Decent Work Prize with a subtitle which reflects its broader scope.
20. The Board of the Institute may wish to review these issues and options and provide guidance on the next steps to be taken. It is suggested to move forward on options 1 or 2, and recommend to the Governing Body to consider at an appropriate time whether to expand the scope of the Decent Work Prize to other categories. In this case, the cost implications and organizational arrangements would have to be reviewed by the Governing Body. In any case the search for extra-budgetary contributions which could augment the Nobel Prize Fund should continue.

Geneva, 13 October 2005.