

***ILO International Symposium on  
Employer's Organizations and the  
Challenges facing Business Today***

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**Information Note by  
the Bureau for Employers' Activities  
on the Conclusions of the International Symposium on  
the Future of Employers' Organizations  
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INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

# INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this Information Note is to provide participants with information on work undertaken by the Bureau for Employers' Activities (hereafter referred to as "ACT/EMP") which gave effect to the Conclusions of the International Symposium on the future of Employers' Organisations held in April 1999. The Conclusions did not imply that ACT/EMP was expected to follow up on all of them. It depended on whether employers' organizations wished to follow up on them, and whether they wished to have support from ACT/EMP to do so as a part of the negotiated annual technical cooperation programmes entered into between ACT/EMP and the constituents.
2. For convenience the Conclusions have been divided into ten generic categories.

## **Corporate Social Responsibility, Promoting Corporate Governance and Good Governance**

3. Several programmes relative to the Global Compact and the Principles in the ILO Declaration were conducted, linked in part to the social responsibility of employers and EOs, such as:
  - A subregional meeting in Tunis for African employers, in collaboration with several other organizations. The meeting led to the development of an employers' strategy for the promotion of the Global Compact in Africa;
  - Following the endorsement of the Global Compact by the presidents and chief executive officers of the employers' organizations of the Asia-Pacific region at the 5<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific High-Level Employers' Conference (Singapore, October 2000), ACT/EMP organized a regional promotional workshop for employers in Bangkok in December 2001 to increase knowledge of the Global Compact and encourage employers to implement its principles. This was followed up with a project in the region financed by the Netherlands, designed to train trainers in the four labour principles of the Global Compact and train managers to implement them;
  - The principles in the ILO Declaration were included as part of the curriculum of a Diploma in Industrial Relations conducted by ACT/EMP for the EO in Malaysia for participants from enterprises;
  - Following the allocation of a part of the 2000-2001 budget surplus for

activities to promote the Global Compact, ACT/EMP has begun a project covering all regions to encourage business to adopt the principles of the Global Compact and to train trainers and managers in the four labour principles of the Global Compact. Regional promotional seminars have already been held in Latin America, the Middle Eastern and North African Arab States and for African employers. Country based programmes have also been held in Poland and in Serbia and Montenegro.

4. Employment creation and poverty reduction under the Jobs for Africa Programme was the subject of a regional meeting in Kenya in collaboration with several other organizations. This led to the identification of employer policy inputs to national strategies and programmes, such as an investment friendly environment for job creation and tripartite-based action schemes. This initiative related to the good governance policies needed for employment creation in the region.
5. The promotion of good governance as a key to achieving decent work in the context of globalization was the subject of a subregional workshop for southern African EOs held in Lesotho.

#### **Regional and International Activities and Cooperation Among Employers' Organizations**

6. The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) led to the collaboration among employers in the African private sector at a meeting in Senegal, at which employers developed institutional, strategic and operational measures concerning resource mobilization, trade and regional integration required to give effect to the objectives of NEPAD.
7. The role of and actions needed by EOs to promote and facilitate West African integration, and to address the challenges faced by West African small and medium enterprises in the context of integration and globalization, were the subject of a subregional meeting of West African EOs held in Burkina Faso.
8. ACT/EMP is supporting the creation of the African Centre for Enterprise Promotion (ACEP) initiated by the Pan-African Employers' Confederation (PEC), in order to strengthen the capacity of the private sector to participate effectively in the policies and process of wealth and employment creation in Africa. This think tank will act as an interface, initiating partnerships and developing interactive relationships between economic, political and social actors by providing relevant information and pointing out real opportunities based on the NEPAD process. The objective is to strengthen competitive factors such as the dynamism of the local economy, globalization, governance, finance, infrastructure, management, technology and human resources

acting as an interface between the private sector and the institutional and sectoral structures of the NEPAD. In order to achieve its mission, the centre will focus its energies on developing and promoting a full range of benchmarking techniques.

9. In the Asia-Pacific region, ACT/EMP provided support for the creation of the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Employers (CAPE) in 2001. This was also a follow-up to a decision taken by the 5<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Employers' Conference (Singapore, 2000), referred to earlier. Since then ACT/EMP has collaborated with CAPE in the holding of a workshop on performance-related and skills-based pay, within the overall theme of competitiveness that the Asia-Pacific employers have chosen.
10. ACT/EMP also supports the annual meetings of the Presidents from the Employers' Organizations in Latin America and of the ASEAN Confederation of Employers with technical input and information on developments which help these groups in their deliberations.
11. ACT/EMP supported the following activities in Europe aimed at promoting regional/international cooperation amongst employers' organisations:
  - The South Eastern European Employers' Forum (SEEEF) was created in late 1999 with the objective of facilitating exchange of information and experience among national employers' organizations from South Eastern Europe;
  - The Accession Countries Employers' Organization Network (ACEON) was set up in 2001 to promote cooperation on issues of importance relating to EU accession;
  - The Network of experts in labour law from South Eastern European Employers' Organizations was established in 2002 to intensify information exchange in view of the ongoing reforms taking place throughout the region.

### **Anticipating and Identifying Enterprise Needs**

12. Since globalization, competition and competitiveness issues are central to enterprise needs and concerns, a research-based publication *Competition: An Agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* was produced. The purpose was to assist EOs to identify enterprise needs in this area, provide their members with requisite information and knowledge, and to enable EOs to formulate and develop policy proposals which would contribute to industry and national competitiveness.
13. The publication was followed up by programmes such as the following, in some of which the publication was resource material:

- A workshop for 15 Asia-Pacific EOs to strengthen their capacity to provide services to enhance the competitiveness of their members in the new business environment;
  - A High-Level Symposium for employers in Kenya on Competitiveness;
  - Two Symposia in India on enterprise competitiveness through productivity and the quality of the workforce;
  - Assistance to the EO in Costa Rica to identify the obstacles to national competitiveness, which enabled it to prepare a draft law to overcome the identified obstacles;
  - Programmes with EOs in Thailand, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Honduras, Mauritius, Botswana and Lesotho on various aspects of competitiveness;
  - In cooperation with EMPACT/ITC Turin, a series of workshops was held to improve the strategic planning capacities of EOs in South Eastern European countries;
  - A study on the role of Belarusian EOs in social dialogue was conducted and made practical proposals for action/strategies by EOs to work to improve their effectiveness.
14. A subregional workshop for senior officials of eight EOs in Southern Africa was held to identify the problems, issues and trends in industrial relations in the subregion, with a view to formulating strategies for this purpose.
15. The impact of AIDS on enterprise competitiveness was the subject of an employers' meeting in Cameroon, which led to the elaboration of a code of conduct and benchmarking in terms of "best practice", and prepared them for a sub-regional workshop on HIV/AIDS organized by ILO/UNAIDS.
16. Assistance to the EO in Mauritania led to the creation of an EO training centre to provide entrepreneurs with the requisite knowledge and skills, particularly in business management. Consequently
- several entrepreneurs were trained;
  - a network of small enterprise support institutions was created and their trainers trained;
  - training material in French and Arabic was produced.

17. Following upon a training programme on training needs in the context of globalization, the EO in Mauritius conducted a survey among enterprises, on the basis of which it proposed to the government training policy reforms based on the current and emerging enterprise needs.
18. As a follow up to the High-Level Symposium in April 1999, a High-Level Symposium of Employers' Organizations in 12 African countries on the Future of Employers' Organizations was held to take stock of their current status, identify emerging issues they would need to address and the organizational development changes or issues they would have to address.

### **Relationships with NGOs, etc.**

19. With a view to assisting EOs in their dealings with non-governmental organizations, the following initiatives were taken:
  - Three studies to identify the potential for collaboration between EOs and NGOs were prepared for Kenya, Morocco and Mali;
  - Similar studies were undertaken in Bangladesh, Malaysia and the Philippines.
20. In the Philippines, the services of an NGO which works in monitoring compliance with supplier codes of United States-based global buyers were engaged to train trainers of the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines to help managers of export enterprises to prepare their companies better for inspection.

### **Workplace Relations**

21. A training programme for 15 EOs from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, the Caribbean and the Arab states was conducted with the assistance of the Irish Business and Employers' Confederation. ACT/EMP's input into this programme covered:
  - Means and methods of improving workplace relations;
  - Impact of competitiveness (globalization and industrial relations, human resource development and management, the focus on workplace relations, changes in labour markets, and the implications of the changing nature of work and employment for labour law and industrial relations).

22. ACT/EMP organised seminars on collective bargaining in cooperation with the EOs in Bulgaria, Latvia and Azerbaijan. Workshops on aspects of social dialogue were held in Poland, Romania and Belarus.

### **Development of New Relevant Services and New Ways of Delivering Services**

23. A training programme for safety and health focal points in 15 employers' organizations from Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the Arab States was conducted with the assistance of the Irish Business and Employers' Confederation. The purpose was to assist the participating organizations to develop new OSH services, or to expand existing ones. This was followed by a specially designed programme in OSH for the EO in Mauritius. The EO in Jordan used the training to, in turn, provide training in industrial safety management for enterprises and to develop an OSH consultancy service. A programme was developed in Honduras, Republica Dominicana, Bolivia and Paraguay to help EOs take a more proactive approach to Safety and Health and to establish new advisory services. The EO in Sri Lanka followed up by training trainers in selected sectors, conducting programmes in high-risk sectors, and providing safety audit services to enterprises.
24. Several programmes on gender equality were conducted. One was a workshop for the employers' organizations in Kenya on gender in management development, to encourage enterprises to take gender issues into account in their management policies, and to create capacity in the employers' organization to address gender issues. Another was conducted in Peru for the employers' organization and 55 enterprises. Workshops were also organised for the employers' organization in the Seychelles and in Nigeria. In each instance, the workshops were designed to improve the capacity of participants to analyse their current situation regarding gender equality in employment, and be better equipped to promote equal opportunity policies for men and women so as to permit a fuller use of human resources.
25. The ILO Resolution on Youth Employment (1998) was given effect through the preparation of a Handbook on Youth Employment for use by employers' organizations to enable them to address youth employment problems in their countries. A sub-regional seminar was held for employers' organizations in South Asia on Youth Employment to discuss their role in promoting employment opportunities for youth, based on the handbook. In Chile, a handbook on "proposals to promote youth employment" was prepared for the use of employers' organizations and their members.
26. In Kenya the employers' organization was assisted to review its overall functions, role and services, followed by recommendations on enhancing its effectiveness and services. As a result, the organization re-focussed its strategic plan; developed a

strategy for marketing its services, and developed its information system (e.g. improved its communication with members both in terms of content and ways of communicating). The identification of staff training needs resulted in a training programme for the industrial relations staff to assist them to update their advisory services, negotiation (and collective bargaining) function, and their industrial relations training services. A workshop for Kenyan employers on human resource management, development and utilization led to increased requests for the organization's productivity-related services.

27. The EOs in China, Mongolia and Vietnam were assisted in expanding their services through increasing their relevant capacities in using knowledge for policy analysis, information for the planned management of their policy advocacy role, and in skills in policy advocacy. This was achieved through training in the management of the lobbying function, covering aspects such as an annual plan for lobbying, lobbying strategies and an organizational set up for lobbying. This was followed by the provision of knowledge to the EOs in communication dynamics, audience analysis, media relations and interviews, crisis communication, interview techniques, and writing and presenting press releases.
28. The EOs of a number of countries in the Asia and Africa were beneficiaries of a Norway-funded project on cleaner production, a process which enhances environmental, business and workplace outcomes through reducing waste and improving employee relations. The experience has been the subject of a publication *Cleaner production in the workplace* (ACT/EMP/40).
29. A new information service to members on terms and conditions of employment, collective bargaining and employment related matters was commenced by the EO in the Philippines in consequence of technical assistance given to it. Since then, the EO has produced increasingly sophisticated analyses of salaries and corporate compensation, constituting valuable original data which is not otherwise available as well as a new revenue source for the EO.
30. The EO in Mongolia was assisted to commence delivery of the ILO WISE programme, through training provided to 12 trainers, leading to several enterprises integrating WISE into their management practices and WISE becoming a sought-after service of the EO.
31. The EO in Sri Lanka was assisted through advisory services to develop action plans to develop new services and for the creation of data bases to support existing services.
32. In order to support service delivery through training, a regional training programme was conducted for Asia-Pacific employers' organizations in the knowledge and skills required to be a good trainer, and in performance management and appraisal.

### **Membership Retention, Expansion and New Categories of Members**

33. A publication entitled *Making and Keeping Members: Direct Communication for Employers' Organizations* by Erik Van Vooren (ACT/EMP/33) provided EOs with information material on this subject. Seminars using this material were held in Romania and Bulgaria.
34. The issue of the relationship between EOs and the informal economy, whether EOs have a role in relation to this part of the economy, and the potential of this economy to provide EOs with new members was addressed in a publication *The Informal Economy: Issues and Challenges*. This material formed part of programmes conducted in:
- India;
  - Costa Rica;
  - 12 EOs in the African region.

### **Knowledge Management and Bringing Knowledge to Members**

35. In giving effect to this conclusion, ACT/EMP produced for employers the following publications which would be of use to them, including in the preparation of policy positions within and outside their countries:
- (i) *Competition: An Agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* by Joseph Prokopenko (ACT/EMP/25)
  - (ii) *The competitiveness of nations and enterprises* by John A. Mathews (ACT/EMP/26)
  - (iii) *Is Globalization the reason for national socio-economic problems?* by Sriyan de Silva (ACT/EMP/27)
  - (iv) *Globalization and employment relations systems: Trends and strategies for the future* by Stephen J. Frenkel (ACT/EMP/28)
  - (v) *Building effective teams* by James Carlopio (ACT/EMP/29)
  - (vi) *Designing and developing more effective organizations* by Sharon K. Parker (ACT/EMP/30)
  - (vii) *Managing organizational change* by James Carlopio and Stephen J.

Frenkel (ACT/EMP/31).

- (viii) *Leadership of the enterprise* by James Carlopio (ACT/EMP/32)
- (ix) *The globalization debate: Issues and challenges* by Linda Y.C. Lim (ACT/EMP/35).
- (x) *Employers' handbook on ILO standards-related activities* by Alfred Wisskirschen and Christian Hess (ACT/EMP/37)
- (xi) *The Informal Economy: Issues and Challenges* by Sriyan de Silva (ACT/EMP/39).

36. Based on these materials and others, several programmes such as the following were conducted to bring relevant knowledge to EOs and their members, and to increase their capacity and those of members to address key issues of concern to employers:

- Since Chief Executive Officers of EOs are critical in this regard, ACT/EMP conducted an Executive Development Programme for Chief Executives of 13 employers' organizations in Asia and the Pacific, designed to provide them with key knowledge and skills to be more effective in leading their organizations. It covered:
  - the competitiveness of nations and enterprises;
  - leadership of the enterprise;
  - designing and developing effective organizations;
  - managing organizational change;
  - building effective teams;
  - globalization and employment relations systems: trends and strategies for the future.

The programme also focussed on skills for decision-making, team building, interpersonal relations and negotiation.

- A programme for employers on Sri Lanka on the impact of globalization on labour relations and human resources development;
- A sub-regional meeting of the EOs in the Caribbean provided them with an analysis of globalization and competitiveness, and how they impact on IR and HRD;
- A subregional workshop for EOs in Africa from the SADAC region addressed the key issues for employers flowing from globalization;
- A similar activity in the form of a seminar was held for Asia-Pacific EOs.

## Benchmarking

37. This subject encompassed a general need of EOs for information on best practices among EOs, relating in particular to services to members. This required information not only on the nature and type of services, but also about how an EO developed that service (i.e. the process). This assumed that EOs would network and use their regional or sub-regional employers' organizations to collect and analyse this information. ACT/EMP undertook the preparation of case studies and information material, with a view to providing EOs with examples EOs could benefit from in developing their own services in the areas covered. These studies, referred to below, were published by ACT/EMP:

- (i) *Training in the Irish Business and Employers' Confederation, the Mauritius Employers' Federation and the Singapore National Employers' Federation* (ACT/EMP/34).
- (ii) *Labour Relations in The Irish Business and Employers' Confederation, the Malaysian Employers' Federation, the Employers' Federation of Ceylon* (ACT/EMP/36).
- (iii) *An employers' body for promoting the market economy* by Hans-Peter Fröhlich, Cologne Institute for Business Research (ACT/EMP/38).