

5th IIRA REGIONAL CONGRESS OF THE AMERICAS

Santiago de Chile, 26-28 July 2005

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN CAPITAL

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

Organized by the [Chilean Industrial Relations Association \(ACHIR\)](#), which is affiliated to the International Industrial Relations Association, the Fifth Congress of the Americas will take place from 26 to 28 July in Santiago de Chile.

THEME OF THE CONGRESS:

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN CAPITAL

A feature of the American Continent is the coexistence of economies with the highest levels of economic and social development, as in the case of the United States and Canada, and other countries where the reality is one of high levels of poverty and underdevelopment, and yet others defined as "emerging", which have achieved sustained economic growth in recent years.

This well-known asymmetry makes it difficult to establish a common language in the American continent when tackling the most important issues that affect industrial relations and social protection systems, in a context of far-reaching changes making themselves felt in a globalized environment of international trade driven and sustained by scientific and technological innovation.

For example, the concepts of "labour flexibility" and "protection for the unemployed person" mean one thing in North America and something else in Central or South America, where there are well-known legal and economic differences, especially with regard to social security, and differing levels of worker protection with regard to work-related contingencies.

As the organizers of the forthcoming Fifth Regional Congress of the Americas in Chile, we believe that through the Congress, the particular perspectives that we, as Latin-Americans, have with regard to "Industrial Relations and the Protection of Human Capital" should set the tone with a view to a more flexible dialogue with our colleagues from North America, Europe, Asia and other regions of the world with a higher level of economic and social development.

In the light of these principles and in the context of the Fifth Regional Congress, a number of subsidiary themes can be formulated, allowing participants adequate scope to highlight the conditions in their respective countries, whatever their level of social and economic development, and reflecting the need for a process which means for achieving harmonization under conditions of growing hemispheric interdependency stimulate the bilateral and multilateral agreements on integration that have been concluded or will be concluded in the Region.

These subsidiary themes include:

I. THE GLOBALIZED ECONOMY AND MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL PROTECTION NETWORKS

In the "New Economy", problems created by the globalization process are exacerbated in those countries that lack appropriate structures or effective social protection systems that would make it possible to protect workers against work-related contingencies like unemployment, retirement, occupational accidents and diseases, and other risks faced by migrant workers.

This theme will allow an examination of the different contingencies that may face workers in our countries in terms of the different occupational risks and the legislation protecting workers in the area of social security under the differing conditions in the countries of the American continent; participants in the Congress will be able to discuss and present papers on these topics in workshops and plenary sessions, in particular under the following headings:

1. Risks arising from periods of unemployment
2. Risks relating to health and ageing vs. health plans and pension programmes
3. Risks faced by migrant workers
4. Risks arising from moves to replace people with technology
5. Risks arising from failure of labour to adapt to technological change
6. Risks relating to occupational accidents and diseases
7. Employers' responsibilities with regard to social protection

II. TRAINING

There is a consensus that the priority for the countries of Latin America is further training and the improvement of skills development for workers, which will give them access to the labour market on better terms, such as to wages, benefits and job opportunities.

It must be a primary function of governments to direct resources towards generating investment in the human capital of their countries, through training and development, and it must be an obligation for enterprises to cooperate with a view to ensuring that workers can raise their productivity through adequate training, allowing workers to move to other enterprises able to pay more for their newly acquired skills.

As part of this topic relating to training, we propose the following areas for consideration:

1. Training of employers and workers as tools of productivity
2. Training within enterprises: apprenticeship agreements, practical internships, dual training.
3. Continuous training as a strategy for updating skills
4. Training for new forms of work (such as telecommuting)

III. CHALLENGES TO INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN THE AMERICAS AND THE NEED FOR SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Industrial relations in all their complexity develop from the particular traditions and work cultures present in each country.

In the countries of Latin America, in addition to the traditional systems of individual and collective bargaining and trade union movement which defends workers' rights, and the protection provided by the State through labour administration systems, there is also an underlying informal sector where social protection does not exist, where the stark picture is one of constant poverty.

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This sector, in a context of far-reaching economic and social changes currently being experienced by is giving rise to new, atypical forms of employment and a growing trend towards various forms of subcontracting and temporary employment.

All these factors, which are very much a part of conditions in Latin America, mean that it is opportu examine the new challenges on our Continent under the following headings:

1. Overcoming the problems arising from the exclusion and segmentation of the informal sector ; disabled workers
2. Transformation of traditional labour relations: Subcontracting, short-term contracts, atypical co etc.
3. Free trade agreements and the protection of workers' rights
4. Industrial relations in the public sector.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE OF THE CONGRESS

The CHILEAN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ASSOCIATION (President: OCTAVIO AGUILA MAGGI) has appointed the members of the Organizing Committee of the Fifth Regional Congress c Americas, which will be chaired by JOSEPH RAMOS QUIÑONES, and the Secretary-General wi EMILIO MORGADO VALENZUELA.

The members of the Organizing Committee are academics and members of the Association. The Ex Secretary of the Congress will be Professor PATRICIO ZEBALLOS SAAVEDRA.

PRESENTATION AND SELECTION OF PAPERS

An academic commission will select from the papers freely submitted by interested parties on one or the themes of the Congress (see programme attached), on the basis of a résumé that must be not long 500 words.

The timetable for those wishing to present papers will be as follows:

Abstract of paper and summary CV to be sent by e-mail to: achir@ctcinternet.cl	By 31 January 2005.
Text of the paper (10 double-spaced A4 pages, in Spanish or English, with free translation) to be sent by e-mail to: achir@ctcinternet.cl	By 30 April 2005.
Selection results	30 May 2005.

Participants whose papers are selected will be entitled to:

- A discount of 50% on the registration fee;
- Present his or her paper at the appropriate plenary, subject to a limit of five minutes;
- The paper will be included in the official published collection of papers presented at the Congress.

Papers that are not selected will also be distributed among Congress participants in the form of a specially produced CD. Participants with papers that have not been selected will be entitled to a 25% discount on the registration fee.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE CONGRESS: Spanish, English and Portuguese.

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REGISTRATION TIMETABLE	By 30 May 2005	By 30 June 2005	30 June 2005 onwards
Participants	US\$ 180.00	US\$ 200.00	US\$ 220.00
Members of the International Industrial Relations Association, national industrial relations associations, academics	US\$ 150.00	US\$ 160.00	US\$ 180.00

Last Update: 14 July 2004.