

Conference of the *Regulating for Decent Work network*

*Regulating for decent work: innovative labour regulation in a turbulent world*

International Labour Office, 8-10 July 2009

Deregulatory narratives have recently gained ground in both the research and policy arenas in efforts to quantify and compare labour laws and to assess their economic impacts. In initiatives to advance global production and investment too, flexibilisation is advanced as necessary and desirable for enhancing competitiveness and creating employment. These variants of the deregulatory agenda more firmly target less-developed economies while extending further into the traditional corpus of labour law. They also offer policy actors a narrow vision of labour market regulation - one that assumes that the curbing or removal of legal entitlements is the sole pathway to economic prosperity - and thereby obscure the research that points to the design of labour law regimes suited to contemporary economic conditions that also have the potential to foster the wellbeing of workers, their families and communities. Given the pace and intensity of the attacks on labour standards and the signs of an evolving 'global consensus' on the acceptable contours of labour law frameworks, it is timely to scrutinize the emergence of the deregulatory discourse in its contemporary forms, and to consider whether reinforcing rather than retreating from labour laws may be the more promising avenue for future social and economic progress.

The Regulating for Decent Work (RDW) network has been established as a forum to advance research on these questions. It is also intended to facilitate the involvement of academic researchers in policy processes, and in particular with the international body responsible for advancing social justice in the labour field, the International Labour Organization (ILO).

In line with the objectives of the RDW network, the Conference will explore responses to current deregulatory agendas and examine techniques for strengthening regulatory measures in substance or scope and heightening their influence on the practices of working life. Researchers from all regions are encouraged to attend and from a range of disciplines including law, economics, industrial relations, development studies, sociology and geography.