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# **Strategic plan for the future action of ILO/Cinterfor**

International Labour Office



**CINTERFOR**

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The Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (Cinterfor) is an ILO technical service, set up in 1964 with the aim of encouraging and coordinating the action of the Latin American and Caribbean institutes, organisations and agencies involved in vocational training.

The Centre publications can be obtained through ILO local offices in many countries, or direct from ILO/Cinterfor, Casilla de correo 1761, e-mail: [dirmvd@cinterfor.org.uy](mailto:dirmvd@cinterfor.org.uy). Fax 902 1305, Montevideo, Uruguay

Web site: [www.cinterfor.org.uy](http://www.cinterfor.org.uy)

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## Presentation

The challenges Latin America and the Caribbean region is facing, the need to reconcile its economic and social growth Agendas as well as the goals set by the formulation of a Decent Work Hemispheric Agenda based on the ILO strategic objectives, have been among others, the most outstanding factors in this context where ILO/Cinterfor member institutions comprise their new strategic plan.

Certainly, nowadays, vocational training keeps and exhibits a most defined role in national agendas, its connection with subjects such as social inclusion, the access to decent works, professional and personal realization, national productivity and competitiveness, make clear the necessity to deepen in the articulation and cooperation efforts that ILO/Cinterfor has always facilitated.

The Strategic Plan is presented as a document arising from a wide analysis and consultation process and as well as an instrument of change, dynamic and affirmative that allows all institutions associated to the ILO/Cinterfor network and all ILO tripartite mandates a deeper identification with their objectives and, to other areas of the Organization, a more articulated and integrated job.

So the Centre assumes explicitly from now on, a vocational training knowledge development role and articulates its action in ten priority areas. The strategic plan of ILO/Cinterfor contained in this document, presents a brief revision of the regional situation related to training, raises the Centre's perspective course, exposes its mission and vision and raises the implementation strategic and its action plan for the next short and medium-term period.



# Strategic plan for the future action of ILO/Cinterfor

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. In December 2006 the Director General of the ILO initiated a process leading to the formulation of a new middle term strategic plan to guide the work of the Inter-American Research and Documentation Centre on Vocational Training (Cinterfor) in the years ahead. ILO/Cinterfor was originally established in 1963 in Montevideo (Uruguay) at the request of ILO member countries in the Americas.

2. This proposed action plan is the fruit of analysis of the work processes in the Centre and wide-ranging consultations with the institutions associated with ILO/Cinterfor, the ILO's tripartite constituents, ILO offices and technical departments and international cooperation partners, in relation to the relevance of the Centre's thematic agenda, the quality of the services it provides and the effectiveness of its institutional mechanisms. In particular, a written questionnaire was sent to all ILO/Cinterfor members and several meetings were organized with senior managers of partner institutions to review ideas and suggestions.

## **II. VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

3. Since 2003 Latin America and the Caribbean have been in a phase of sustained economic growth. Its aggregate gross domestic product grew by 5.3 per cent in 2006, at a higher rate than the United States, Japan and the euro zone. This has led to an improvement in the main labour indicators as

regards the quantity and quality of employment. In the last year, urban unemployment and youth unemployment rates have fallen slightly, and there has been a moderate increase in the purchasing power of wages.

4. However, the main labour market indicators show that the region is still a long way from achieving the millennium development goal of eradicating extreme poverty by 2015. For the first time since 1980, poverty rate fell below 40 per cent and extreme poverty rate fell below 15 per cent of the population. Still, some 105.6 million people live with less than US\$ 2 per day in the region.

5. The ILO estimates that in 2006 17.5 million people were unemployed in urban areas in the region, in addition to massive under-employment and precarious employment in the informal economy. When the composition of the labour market is analyzed, big gaps still emerge as regards gender, ethnicity, age and geographical area. The trends in the region confirm ILO's concern that, although sustainable employment cannot be created without economic growth, economic growth alone cannot generate enough quality employment unless it is accompanied by policies and programmes that are specifically designed to this end.

6. While sub-regional political and economic integration is proceeding slowly, in recent years countries in the region have been dynamically seeking bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements with their neighbours and with countries or trading blocs outside the region. The economies in Latin America and the Caribbean are exposed to the global market, and this poses a challenge for their production systems and workforce to attain the required levels of quality and competitiveness, while sectors that are more vulnerable to international competition may need re-structuring.

7. The Latin American and Caribbean countries have been part of the global economy for many years, but up to now they have not reaped the economic benefits that other regions have enjoyed, nor have they absorbed the social costs of change. Unlike in Asia, the changeover from being commodity exporters to exporters of manufactured products has not been concentrated in labour intensive sectors and technologies. Many countries are in a delicate fiscal situation and this has worked against implementing robust

public investment policies or measures to alleviate the adverse effects of changes in production.

8. However, the current economic climate is favourable, and this means that today the region has a historic opportunity to implement policies and programmes geared to making production systems more competitive and labour markets more effective, and to fostering equity and social integration. Furthermore, the Latin American and Caribbean countries cannot, and should not seek to, base their competition with Asian countries on low labour costs. This means they have to invest heavily in the education, quality, health, social security, productivity, and responsibility of the workforce. This is the only response that will be sustainable over time. The growing employment and greater economic activity in the region need a clear framework of policies to foster training and human resources development.

9. The future development of the Latin American and Caribbean countries will depend on how well they can reconcile their economic agenda with their social agenda in the long term. This means that the different countries will have to adopt a strategy of cooperation and social dialogue among themselves so as to harmonize their labour policies. Moreover, within each country the government and the social partners will have to work towards a consensus based on finding equilibrium between the needs of the production sector, the workers' right to decent jobs, and every individual's right to life-long education as an essential component of the human development concept.

10. Poverty is usually accompanied by low performance indicators in relation to access to education, capacity to remain in education and to successfully enter into the labour market. Average educational indicators in Latin America and the Caribbean are indeed affected by the low performance of the poor. Young people between 25 and 30 years belonging to the highest income quintile spend on average 5.5 more years in education than people belonging to the lowest quintile.

11. Greater access to education and training is closely related to the evolution of public investment in this sector. In that regard, public and private expenditure in education is on a growing trend in the region. Between 1990

and 2002, public expenditure as a percentage of the GDP increased on average from 4.1 to 4.7 per cent. In this context, though statistical evidence is scarce, investment in vocational training accounts for less than 1 per cent of the GDP in most countries of the region. Hence the objective set in the Decent Work Agenda for the Hemisphere to increase investment in training by at least one half per cent of the GNP over the next ten years.

12. In that regard, perspectives are encouraging if we consider that, according to the World Bank, rates of poverty drops by 25 to 40 per cent if heads of households have completed secondary education. The likelihood of falling into poverty is further reduced by 10 per cent if heads of household have obtained a higher education certificate. However, the World Bank also estimates that low educational performance tends to be inherited between generations. Hence the need for substantial investment in education and skills development to break the vicious circle of low education, low income and low productivity.

13. Specific sources of investment in vocational training have remained stable over the past few years in the region. The main funding source remains contributions from enterprise payrolls, oscillating between 0.25 and 2.5 per cent of the salary mass. In the Eighties, some Labour Ministries (such as Brazil, Argentina, Chile) started to participate in financing. This tendency has been maintained, but not further deepened. Additional research would be required to identify and measure funds from international sources such as development banks that throughout the past decade invested in competency certification and quality accreditation for private vocational training providers. In any case, educational expenditure in the region averages between US\$ 150 and US\$ 1,700 per student per year, compared to an average US\$ 4,100 in OECD countries.

14. There are many ways in which vocational training can contribute to the Decent Work Agenda: education as an alternative to child labour, access to training for employment as an instrument to fight inequality and social discrimination, human resources development as an object of effective collective bargaining, linking vocational training with employment, vocational orientation and guidance policies, the development of entrepreneurial skills,

working conditions and the environment, health and safety at work as an essential part of the training curriculum, integrating vocational training and social security coverage in initial labour market insertion and in production re-structuring, and promoting effective social dialogue in the planning and management of training programmes.

15. There is increasing agreement that decent work is the path to follow, and this consensus led Latin American heads of State and government to make a commitment, at the 4th Americas Summit (Mar del Plata, 2005) to *“Implement active policies that generate decent work, and are geared to creating the conditions for quality employment and to giving economic policies and globalization a strong ethical and human component by putting the individual at the centre of work, the enterprise and the economy. We will promote decent work, which means basic rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue”*.

16. In 2006, the 16th American Region Meeting of the ILO in Brasilia unanimously passed an Agenda for the Hemisphere (2006-2015) to promote decent work. This agenda includes policies to foster respect for basic rights at work, to generate more jobs through sustained growth, to make social protection more efficient and widen its coverage, and to promote tripartite systems and social dialogue to give legitimacy to policies that promote decent work. The agenda also establishes policies in eleven areas of specific intervention and gives priority to promoting decent work programmes in each country.

17. In the same sphere as the Agenda for the Hemisphere, the ILO has set the objective of making human resources more competitive and extending vocational training coverage to embrace vulnerable groups. The target is for these countries to increase their investment in training by at least one half of a percentage point (as a percentage of GNP) over the next ten years, and double the current returns on investment in training. Vocational training is specifically mentioned as a basic component of other priority areas on the Agenda for the Hemisphere (gender equality, youth employment, small and medium enterprises, the rural sector and local development) and in different decent work country programmes formulated between the ILO and its tripartite constituents.

18. The main subject for discussion at the 2006 International Labour Conference will be the development of skills to improve productivity, employment and socio-economic development. Thus the question of employability and vocational training has remained at the forefront of ILO action since Recommendation 195 on Human Resources Development was approved in June 2004.

19. In 2005 the ILO/Cinterfor Technical Committee meeting in the Dominican Republic emphasised that development policies in the countries in the region are acknowledging more and more that human talent is an indispensable element in the production equation. There is now general agreement that effective competitiveness strategies must be accompanied by policies and programmes that are clearly geared to developing workers' capabilities and knowledge and to effectively integrating workers into society and into the world of enterprise.

20. Vocational training lies at the interface between education policies and labour policies, and it has the potential to become a laboratory for experiments with comprehensive approaches that can contribute to responsible citizenship, to developing the production sector, and to the more equitable distribution of wealth and opportunities. This is why it is important, but this is also why finding institutional responses that transcend the traditional administrative segmentation between different public policies is such a complex matter. In the Americas this challenge has been met with a variety of political and institutional responses, and this in itself feeds into ILO/Cinterfor's task of promoting experience sharing and horizontal cooperation.

21. There are still barriers between the education sector and the labour market, and these have to be overcome if education is to respond to people's aspirations for employment and decent work at different times in their lives, not only when they enter the labour market for the first time but also when they are older. As to the labour sector, there is concern that adequate linkages are needed not only to be able to respond to the needs of enterprises but also in the wider sphere of employment and labour policies and programmes.

22. Since 1963, when ILO/Cinterfor was set up, vocational training institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean have evolved at an extraordi-

nary rate, and in many cases they have come to be recognized and appreciated by the general public as being among their country's most outstanding institutions. In most countries in the region they have political authority, their programmes have credibility and their finances are solid. Their programmes are geared not only to enhance production, with strategies that have sectoral and local focuses, but also to the social environment through programmes for groups that are unemployed and lack labour skills. They are also catering to the leading technology sectors; this is clear from the way they are implementing far-reaching reforms in training centres and schools, overhauling programmes, acquiring new didactic equipment and keeping their teaching staff constantly up to date. There is no doubt that, in this sphere, some of the most innovative experiences in the world are to be found in Latin America and the Caribbean.

23. National education and work systems and vocational training institutions in the region are coping with economic and social challenges that all countries, whatever their level of economic development, have to face. To what extent can education systems keep up to date and tailor their skills development services to the market needs and to the demands of technological innovation, with the aim not only of producing responsible citizens but also of training workers so they can obtain decent and productive employment? How are vocational training programmes and institutions responding to the double challenge of catering to the demands of enterprises engaged in production and also helping towards the goals of public policies to promote economic growth and reduce poverty? How well are education and training systems equipped to reach those wide swathes of a country's workforce that, for ethnic, geographical, cultural, social or gender reasons, have inadequate access to basic or higher education, or to information about what the labour market and the production sector demand? How are these systems responding to the need to identify and programme the labour profiles and competencies that will be in demand in the long term in function of the evolution of markets, technological progress and national economic and production strategies? How can the new generations be imbued with the spirit of enterprise, and how can sustainability and competitiveness be promoted in new micro and small enterprises?

24. In response to these challenges, national education and work systems have developed a variety of institutional models and ways of relating to the labour market, and in these the following overall trends stand out:

- a. In almost all the countries in the region, the technical education and vocational training sectors recognize that institutions and programmes have to be more integrated into the transition process from school to work, and flexible connections between the education system and the labour market that are adapted to the different target groups have to be identified.
- b. In most countries in the region there is at least one national institution specialized in vocational training. One of the distinctive characteristics of vocational training in the Americas is that it is institutionalized, but there is still an urgent need for institutional development and modernization.
- c. In some countries the State is still responsible for the design and management of vocational training systems, while in others these functions have been partially taken over by the private sector.
- d. Very often the different national vocational training institutions have different areas of responsibility. In some countries they basically play a standard-setting, certifying or financing role, but in most they still have overall responsibility for designing policies and implementing programmes. In some cases the institution is also responsible for vocational orientation and guidance.
- e. The different national systems are financed in different ways, which range from general taxation, compulsory contributions based on enterprise payrolls, and at least partial payment by the users (particularly by enterprises).
- f. Most of the institutions have a tripartite management or consultation mechanism, but in different specific instances the social partners participate, and are visible, to a greater or lesser extent.
- g. In general, the sphere of responsibility and the effective scope of the different national systems cover initial training for young people

seeking employment, training and re-training for unemployed adults, and continuing training for employed workers. The institutions have different kinds of connections with enterprises for training in the workplace. On their part, the main and more dynamic enterprises are developing their own internal training capacity.

- h. All the systems have to deal with the problem of access to education, vocational training and decent jobs for large vulnerable sectors of the labour market and in particular for women, who are mainly in precarious and low productivity employment in the informal and rural economy. This is important not only in pursuit of social cohesion but also because the demands of economic growth and international competitiveness make it essential that the productive potential of the whole workforce should be taken advantage of.
- i. Another challenge facing vocational training institutions is that they will have to become agile enough to anticipate and adapt to the rapid changes in demand from the production sector as a consequence of insertion into the world economy, increased competitiveness and technological innovation.
- j. National training institutions are organized and run in different ways but, whatever the system, they are employing innovative approaches in how they design and execute training, such as the competencies model, quality assurance, the application of new technologies, the provision of new services like enterprise development, support for entrepreneurship, and technological services.
- k. The national training institutions in the region already share experiences and learning with each other, but beyond that they are also working together to define regional or sub-regional qualifications frameworks as part of current or future regional integration processes and to manage migratory flows. Besides that, there is an increasing demand for quality certification systems that are transparent and will permit qualifications from one country to be compared with those from another.

### **III. A REFLECTION ON ILO/CINTERFOR'S PROSPECTS**

#### **ILO/Cinterfor's role**

25. Many of these vocational training institutions are highly developed and complex and they have very diverse experiences and approaches. This adds up to a basic stock of capital that can be shared through horizontal cooperation, so they can find out about and learn from each other's experiences. This is why ILO/Cinterfor exists. At the present time, thanks in part to ILO/Cinterfor's work, these institutions know each other and have access to and share each other's information about their respective strategies, activities and lessons learned. They also share technical and didactic material and very often work together on horizontal cooperation and technical assistance programmes.

26. In this new and more complex scenario, the question arises as to how ILO/Cinterfor's activities should evolve in the future so as to continue to be relevant and to contribute added value in promoting and facilitating cooperation between institutions in the context of ILO strategies to foster decent and productive work. Vocational training has become very important in the region and in the world, and in December 2006, the Director General of the ILO decided that it would be a good time to reflect in depth about ILO/Cinterfor's future role and prospects so that, when a new Director for the Centre was designated, it would be possible to select someone with the most suitable profile and qualifications.

27. A process of analysis and consultation took place from February to May 2007, and the following conclusions emerged:

- a. Technical and vocational education and training and human resources development is still a priority in the Latin American and Caribbean countries, and its ultimate aim is to promote economic and production competitiveness and improve the quantity and quality of employment.
- b. The institutions associated with ILO/Cinterfor still want experience-sharing and horizontal cooperation in the region to be facilitated.

- c. ILO/Cinterfor's past and present work is widely recognized as a key element in this horizontal cooperation, and there are frequent calls for its role to be strengthened and extended. There is general appreciation that the subjects the Centre deals with are pertinent to the priorities and needs of the national systems.
- d. However, these national systems are so diverse at the present time, and the challenges they face are so complex, that ILO/Cinterfor has to keep investing substantially in its technical, technological and methodological capabilities so as to maintain its strong practical and methodological leadership and show that its efforts to coordinate the network in the region contribute added value.
- e. In addition, the concern has been expressed to strengthen support and horizontal cooperation to the institutions in greater need for assistance and support, including through facilitating access to ILO/Cinterfor by those institutions that are not yet members of the network.
- f. The scope of the work of ILO/Cinterfor should progressively be expanded to encompass the analysis and promotion of good vocational training practices in the enterprise.
- g. Apart from promoting and facilitating horizontal cooperation, ILO/Cinterfor also has to act as an instrument to disseminate the values and principles embodied in the ILO Decent Work Agenda in the sphere of vocational training and education for work. That includes fundamental principles and rights at work, employment policies as an instrument to fight against poverty, social dialogue and tripartism, and gender equality. As such, ILO/Cinterfor is fully integrated into ILO's global programme on skills development and employability.
- h. With regard to ILO's tripartite approach, efforts should be intensified to promote experiences and good practices in social dialogue and to involve the social partners in the different phases of the vocational training cycle, from the planning and management of systems through to training in enterprises and collective bargaining. The field

of vocational training lends itself to a social dialogue approach on concrete interests and is fertile in possibilities for agreements that benefit the tripartite constituents. At the same time, the perspective and priorities of the final users of vocational training –i.e. entrepreneurs and workers– should be represented in a more structured and permanent manner in the activity of the ILO/Cinterfor network.

- i. The role of ILO/Cinterfor in this area needs to be more precisely defined as regards complementarity with the work of other ILO programmes, in particular the Skills and Employability Department, which is responsible for developing ILO policies, standards and tools in vocational training and employability, the Regional Office for the Americas in its leadership role in the Agenda for the Hemisphere, the field offices, which are in charge of defining national priorities and providing direct technical assistance to tripartite constituents in the framework of decent work country programmes, and the International Training Centre in Turin, which specializes in training human resources for governments, employers' and workers' organizations, and national institutions.
- j. To reflect these concerns, it would be useful for ILO/Cinterfor to identify, out of the wide spectrum of subjects on the work agendas of national institutions, a limited number of core areas in which action is a high priority. The Centre should be pro-active in these areas and promote the collective construction and management of knowledge, the sharing of good practices, training and technical support. These high priority core areas can be handled with a results-based management approach, and with an emphasis on making impacts that are measurable over time. This should not interfere with the Centre's ongoing task of providing information and technical support to individual members of the network about other matters that are pertinent to their activities.
- k. The present level of information exchange among national institutions, and the fact that the members of ILO/Cinterfor are still contributing annually after more than forty years, is a very important

indicator of how solid the Centre is as an institution. But, as with all international cooperation, a long-term strategy ought to be designed and progressively put into practice. The aim is for the associated institutions to gradually take greater ownership for the Centre so as to make sure that the network is sustainable and effective in the long term.

1. It would be beneficial to further open up the ILO/Cinterfor network to specialized institutions and centres of excellence outside the region since these could provide new knowledge and experiences, fresh resources for the functioning of the Centre, and opportunities for bilateral y multilateral technical cooperation. ILO/Cinterfor's mission is more to initiate and facilitate processes with the member institutions than to directly implement projects and programmes, but the Centre needs to keep constantly up to date and strengthen its operational capabilities in order to maintain its leadership and continue its technical dialogue with the members of the network.

### **The ILO/Cinterfor mission**

28. In this report we present a proposal for ILO/Cinterfor's strategic orientation in the medium term, and this will be the basis for formulating two-year work programmes. It includes an annex with guidelines for the action plan for the two years from the 2007 meeting of the Technical Committee to the next meeting, scheduled for 2009. The strategic plan has been combined with the work plan in a single document since the latter flows from the former and amounts to the first stage in its implementation in this new phase in the life of the Centre.

29. In March 1962, in the ILO Governing Body resolution about setting up ILO/Cinterfor, the Centre's mission was defined as follows: *"The Centre should be an instrument to promote permanent and active cooperation among the national organizations in charge of vocational training. To do this it should ensure information exchange and undertake research to benefit all the countries in the con-*

*... and seek to promote the development of vocational training and its incorporation into economic and education planning”.*

30. Some years afterwards the Centre’s role was defined as follows:

- a. To promote and strengthen horizontal cooperation for the development and modernization of vocational training in the Latin American and Caribbean countries.
- b. To contribute to the design of public policies and the implementation of vocational training programmes through promoting strategic alliances between governments and employers’ and workers’ organizations.
- c. To develop a vocational training information network in the region by disseminating information, experiences and technological innovations and accumulated knowledge in the region and in the world.
- d. To promote research and study activities to help towards institutionalizing and establishing training plans and programmes that meet the requirements of efficiency, competitiveness and social equity.

31. Recent consultations have shown that the current formulation is still pertinent, and no sweeping revisions are required. ILO/Cinterfor’s updated mission can be described as *“the development of a permanent learning and horizontal cooperation community among the national organizations in charge of vocational training disseminating knowledge, experiences and good practices in the field of vocational training and human resources development for the creation of decent and productive work in Latin America and the Caribbean”.*

32. However, some minor changes in the descriptions of the Centre’s functions are suggested. These are as follows:

- a. To promote and strengthen horizontal cooperation for the **institutional** development and modernization of vocational training in the Latin American and Caribbean countries **and between the region of the Americas and other regions in the world.**
- b. To contribute to the design **and management** of public policies and

**investment in vocational training programmes in line with the Decent Work Agenda and in the framework of the national plans and strategies defined between the ILO and governments and employers' and workers' organizations.**

- c. To develop a **learning community and the management of accumulated knowledge** in vocational training in the region through the **critical retrieval, systematization and** dissemination of information, experiences and technological innovations and accumulated knowledge in the region and in the world.
- d. To promote research and study activities to help towards institutionalizing and establishing training plans and programmes that meet the requirements of efficiency, competitiveness, **productivity, quality, social equity and respect for international labour standards.**

33. It is also suggested that ILO/Cinterfor's full title (The Inter-American Research and Documentation Centre on Vocational Training) should be changed to "**The Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training**" so as to reflect with greater precision the wide range of services and activities the Centre is currently engaged in. However, it is suggested that the acronym **ILO/Cinterfor** be retained as it is widely recognized and has international credibility.

### **The vision and the expected results**

34. ILO/Cinterfor's long term vision is to be a regional centre of excellence articulating a network of national vocational training and work education institutions, which share and systematically apply knowledge, experiences and good practices in the field of training and human resources development field, so as to promote decent and productive work in Latin America and the Caribbean.

35. In the medium term, ILO/Cinterfor's basic task will be to assist vocational training in the region to develop, and in this its main role will be to analyze, systematize and help in the collective construction of knowledge.

The Centre will expand its capability to disseminate information about trends, compared models and policies in training. It will play a double role of providing information and being a reference source about national education and work systems and training policies and institutions. It will promote information exchange, and analyze and interpret the progress made in vocational training policies and action. In this way it will establish itself as a centre of excellence in the region, the coordinating hub of a network of national vocational training and education for work institutions, supported by the ILO.

36. In the framework of this overall vision, the plan is to achieve the following results within five years:

- i. That the knowledge, experience and good practices provided by the ILO/Cinterfor network will have helped vocational training and work education institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean develop and modernize.
- ii. That measurable progress will have been made towards making human resources more competitive and employable, widening the coverage of quality vocational training among vulnerable groups, and raising the percentage amount that countries invest in training, as laid down in the Decent Work Agenda for the Hemisphere.
- iii. Those experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean, channelled through ILO/Cinterfor and the ILO, will have had an influence on the formulation of policies and the development of national education and work systems and vocational training institutions in other parts of the world.
- iv. That a permanent, dynamic learning community about vocational training and work education will be firmly in place in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- v. Those significant steps will have been taken towards consolidating ILO/Cinterfor's position as part of the inter-American institutional framework, and that national institutions will participate more in the planning, management and financing of the Centre.

## **IV. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

### **Basic pillars of the strategy**

36. The strategy to implement the Centre's renewed vision will rest on four basic pillars.

37. The first crucial aspect is that ILO/Cinterfor's members should play a bigger role in the Centre, and that national training institutions will gradually assume greater responsibility for orienting and managing it. To this end, a six point strategy is suggested:

- To strengthen the Programme and Budget Committee's role in guidance and supervision. It could meet more frequently (once per year, at meetings called by the Director of ILO/Cinterfor) and include representation from the ILO and its constituents so as to ensure the consistency of decision making, monitoring and evaluation of the Centre's programmes.
- To initiate dialogue with representatives from regional institutions (the Organization of American States, the Ibero-American Secretary General, and sub-regional groups) so as to anchor ILO/Cinterfor more firmly in an institutional framework that is sustainable in the long term. This will make the Centre less dependent on international cooperation for technical and financial support.
- To identify national institutions that can share responsibility with ILO/Cinterfor for leading the coordination of the network in priority subject areas, with technical and financial support from the Centre.
- To set up a roster of national specialists who can be periodically seconded from their own institutions to provide technical assistance to other institutions in the network, with technical and financial support from ILO/Cinterfor.
- To have national institutions with the capability and the will to expand their role in regional or sub-regional horizontal cooperation to progressively increase their financial participation in ways and time frames that are feasible.

- To widen ILO/Cinterfor's membership in the region to include national institutions involved in designing and running national education and labour systems, such as other Ministries of Labour and Education, institutions of higher technological education, universities and academic centres that are recognized as competent in vocational and employment training, and institutions linked to national employers' and workers' organizations that directly implement large vocational training programmes in their respective countries.

38. The second pillar of the implementation strategy involves a selective effort to open up ILO/Cinterfor membership to specialized institutions and centres of excellence outside the region, based on a very positive experience with Spain. This will be a move towards the following general objectives:

- To broaden the scope of information exchange and good practices to include innovative programmes and approaches that have already been tried and tested in other geographical contexts, and to learn from experiences from all over the world.
- To facilitate the launch of new bilateral or multilateral cooperation and exchange programmes to the benefit of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- As a result, to access additional resources in support of the development of vocational training systems in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- To identify and take advantage of new communication and cooperation channels to make innovative experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean known in the rest of the world.

39. The third pillar is to seek greater synergy with other ILO programmes and other actors in international cooperation that are involved in vocational training, education for work and active labour market policies. As regards the ILO, these would be:

- The ILO offices responsible for coordinating the organization's policies and programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean. ILO/Cinterfor will provide back-up for strategies and priorities defined by ILO offices, and support the work of their specialists, if any, with

knowledge and experiences that have matured in the Centre's network. The Centre will also closely coordinate the technical support provided for national vocational training institutions with the wider work that they do. In other cases, in agreement with the ILO offices responsible, the Centre will provide more direct technical support under the coordination and guidance of the ILO Skills and Employability Department (SKILLS). One specific area of cooperation will be the involvement, where relevant, of national vocational training and education institutions in decent work country decent work country programmes that have been agreed between the ILO and their directors.

- The ILO Regional Office for the Americas, especially with respect to its leadership role in running and monitoring the Decent Work Agenda for the Hemisphere and decent work country programmes. In functional terms, the Centre reports to the Regional Office and operates in accordance with its policies and strategies.
- The ILO Skills and Employability Department (SKILLS), which will be ILO/Cinterfor's privileged interlocutor as regards the elaboration of new standards, policies and products, and the transfer of experiences from and to Latin America and the Caribbean. ILO/Cinterfor will take advantage of its learning community to adapt and disseminate the policies and tools developed by the ILO in the area of employability and human resources development, to obtain feedback from national systems and institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean and to foster horizontal cooperation between the Americas and other regions in the world through SKILLS. ILO/Cinterfor will systematically cooperate with SKILLS and ILO specialists on developing a common research agenda and on formulating the Centre's work plan and on possible technical cooperation proposals. The lines and concrete mechanisms for cooperation between SKILLS and ILO/Cinterfor will be defined through a joint programme document to be prepared before the end of 2007.
- Other ILO technical departments, programmes and projects that may contribute to strengthening the development of vocational training

systems and curricula through the introduction of specific elements from the Decent Work Agenda in the areas of labour rights, employment policies, health and safety at work, social protection, social dialogue and tripartism, and gender equality.

- In particular, the Bureaus of Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) and for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), in the area of coordinating the concerns of ILO constituents with the vocational training agenda in the region.
- The International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin. ILO/Cinterfor will cooperate with the Turin Centre in joint systematic planning of training activities for the staff of national vocational training institutions and representatives from the tripartite constituency of the ILO. This cooperative effort is aimed at exploiting the comparative advantages of the two centres, the need to join forces and make optimum use of resources, and the possibility of passing on ILO/Cinterfor's experience to other regions in the world.

40. As part of a wider ILO strategy, ILO/Cinterfor will seek greater cooperation with the following:

- Other organizations and United Nations agencies that share the same vision as ILO/Cinterfor and the ILO as to the need to put the principles and content of the United Nations reform into practice. As part of this agenda, approaches should be harmonized and opportunities sought for cooperating and combining efforts in education for work with organizations such as UNESCO, ECLAC and the UNDP.
- The development banks (the World Bank and the IDB), which play an important role in promoting and financing education and training systems and programmes in the region. Permanent dialogue will be sought with the the banks with a view to exerting an influence on the formulation and implementation of programmes in support of national institutions.
- Multilateral and bilateral cooperation agencies, with special emphasis on those that have branches or institutions specialized in areas pertinent to ILO/Cinterfor (e.g. the European Commission and its specialized centres).

41. The fourth and last element in the strategy to put the Centre's renewed mission into practice is to establish work plans around a defined number of core priorities that have been agreed between the members of the network and the ILO constituents. For each core element work plans will be prepared in accordance with a results-based programming and management approach. In these plans, concrete outcomes will be defined, as well as indicators of achievement and assessment criteria, trying to ensure that the necessary feedback mechanisms are in place and that each core element fits into a systemic vision of the training process. In each area, the Centre will seek to establish a strategic partnership with a national institution willing to share joint responsibility for promoting and coordinating the project and producing the expected results. ILO/Cinterfor itself will still be responsible for systematizing these results. The new work planning methodology is dealt with in greater detail below, in the chapter on the 2007-2009 action plan.

### **The tripartite dimension**

42. At present, ILO's tripartite constituents take part in the life of ILO/Cinterfor in a variety of ways:

- Through participating in the deliberations of the ILO Governing Body.
- Through delegations from the employers' and workers' groups taking part in Technical Committee meetings.
- Some Ministries of Labour are members of ILO/Cinterfor.
- Most national vocational training institutions are under the authority of Ministries of Labour.
- Most national vocational training institutions have tripartite boards or consultative councils.
- The subject of social dialogue in vocational training is one of the core elements of ILO/Cinterfor's work. The Centre has also carried out specific activities with employers' and workers' organizations.

43. In order to maintain and strengthen the tripartite focus in ILO/Cinterfor's activities, the Centre will also seek to:

- Widen ILO/Cinterfor's membership to bring in other Ministries of Labour in the region, where relevant.
- Promote direct membership of ILO/Cinterfor for national or regional vocational training institutions that have links to the entrepreneurial or trade union sectors.
- Promote greater participation of ILO's constituents in consultations with national institutions about the Centre's orientation and strategy (see the chapter on the institutional framework).
- Likewise, promote a more direct and systematic participation in ILO/Cinterfor of the entrepreneur and trade union groups that represent the productive sectors that are recipient of vocational training, as well as the operators of vocational training in the enterprise.
- Reserve and/or negotiate resources and establish specific budgets for tripartite constituents' representatives to take part in strategic activities in the Centre's work plan, including the training of trade union and entrepreneurial leaders, the development of virtual networks and training manuals.
- Engage in systematic consultations with the employers' and workers' sectors of the ILO Governing Body and with international and regional employers' and workers' organizations at their request.
- Maintain and intensify activities in the area of vocational training and employers' and workers' organizations.

### **The relationship with the host country**

44. A particularly important aspect of the life of the Centre is that it has a privileged relationship with Uruguay, where its headquarters are located. This country has always given ILO/Cinterfor political, financial and logistical support, and as part of the ILO system, ILO/Cinterfor will continue to provide political, technical and administrative backing for

ILO activities in Uruguay. This connection is especially important this year since Uruguay has served as a pilot country in the United Nations reform, and the government recently signed an agreement with the ILO for the launch of decent work country programme. ILO/Cinterfor has a privileged relationship with national academic institutions and centres in Uruguay, and it can boast one of the best documentation centres on aspects of the world of work in the country. No doubt more widespread dissemination of this information among Uruguayan students and researchers would be of benefit to the host country.

### **ILO/Cinterfor's resources and capabilities**

45. To put the strategy outlined above into operation, ILO/Cinterfor is not going to adopt an aggressive resource mobilization policy, nor will it compete with other sectors of the ILO or with member institutions that are responsible for executing international cooperation programmes in their own countries or in third countries. The financial resources currently provided by the ILO, the member countries and the government of Uruguay amount to a solid base that enables the Centre to do its job.

46. Nevertheless, given ILO/Cinterfor's current situation, it cannot be denied that a modest injection of fresh resources would have a multiplier effect on the Centre's substantive, methodological and technological capabilities. At the present time, the Centre's technical capability in the different subject areas it deals with is uneven; in some areas it is technically competent in its own right but in others it is more geared to facilitating the search for information and the identification of experts. Investment in ILO/Cinterfor would not aim at widening its field of operations beyond its essential function of promoting horizontal cooperation and linkages among national training systems and the ILO, but to enabling the Centre to maintain and develop its capability to provide high quality services with a proven track record to a range of institutions that are more and more sophisticated and demanding.

47. To achieve this, the following steps would be desirable:

- To diversify and stabilize the Centre's staff of technical specialists.
- To fuse the information, documentation, research, publishing, comparative analysis and critical systematization, networking and e-learning functions into a new knowledge management unit.
- To undertake ongoing staff development and upgrading for the personnel at the Centre, geared in particular to the use of new technologies, strategic planning, project formulation and management.
- To make adequate investment in information technologies to underpin the effectiveness and scope of networking, e-learning and on-line technical assistance.
- To adopt a policy of intensifying the information flow about ILO/Cinterfor's activities, for example by promoting the Centre's web site on different search engines and with the documentation and library services and webmasters of current and potential ILO/Cinterfor members.

48. During the consultations with ILO/Cinterfor members it was frankly suggested that some national institutions with the necessary capacity and will could gradually increase their financial contribution to ILO/Cinterfor, to the extent that their legal constitution and budget programming cycles allow. This, however, should be seen as a consequence of members' greater ownership of the Centre rather than the starting point of such a process.

49. There are various ways in which ILO/Cinterfor could acquire additional resources without increasing the fees paid by member institutions or the ILO. The following options are available:

- To increase membership in the region, for example by bringing in higher technological education systems and institutions.
- To increase membership outside the region.
- To obtain international cooperation resources to strengthen some core components of the Centre's programme. The technical cooperation projects the Centre could formulate and submit for international cooperation funding, in the framework of ILO policies and

procedures, will be aimed at strengthening the production and systematization of knowledge and supporting the network operations in priority subject areas and diversifying its linguistic capacity, rather than executing large scale national programmes or projects.

- To partially reorganize the Centre staffing to free resources that would be allocated directly to technical work and knowledge development.
- To achieve a more systematic synergy with the activities and programmes of the ILO offices in the region, the ILO's Employment Sector and the International Training Centre in Turin, through structured joint programming mechanisms.
- To identify possibilities for alliances and associations with important international bodies that are active in vocational training.

## **V. THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK**

50. At the present time ILO/Cinterfor is governed through two parallel mechanisms. On the one hand, the Technical Committee which has met every two years since 1995, is responsible for approving the Centre's work plan. The smaller Programme and Budget Committee, which currently consists of representatives from twelve national institutions, examines the Centre's management, administration and finances in greater detail and submits a report to the plenary session of the Technical Committee. It meets before every Technical Committee meeting.

51. On the other hand, ILO/Cinterfor's strategies and programmes are discussed and approved by the ILO Governing Body through the Programme and Budget process, which decides on allocations for ILO programmes in each biennium. The Governing Body's decision-making process is not synchronized with that of the Technical Committee, so there is a risk that the two decision-making mechanisms may come into conflict. However, up to now there have been no problems of inconsistency or disagreement over priorities in the Centre's programme, thanks to the way successive directors have used persuasion and managed dialogue.

52. In order to bring the decision-making and monitoring processes into harmony, and with a view to getting national institutions to participate more and assume greater responsibility, it is proposed that the Programme and Budget Committee mechanism be reformed. The suggestion is that the Committee should meet every year to guide and monitor how the Centre's action plan is implemented and run. It is also proposed that this Committee should be made up of representatives from ILO/Cinterfor member institutions, appointed in accordance with rotation and sub-regional representation criteria, representatives from the ILO Governing Body, a representative from the ILO Regional Office and a representative from the ILO Skills and Employability Department (SKILLS). In addition, donors that directly finance parts of the Centre's work plan should be invited to attend Committee meetings as observers.

53. So as to foster the institutionalization of sub-regional cooperation, ILO/Cinterfor could attend senior management meetings of existing sub-regional networks, such as the Caribbean and Central America, at least once a year. This would be closely coordinated with sub-regional ILO specialists in each case. ILO/Cinterfor would report on and discuss the progress made in the implementation of its strategic and work plans, and explore avenues for further cooperation.

## **VI. EVALUATION**

54. In the first half of 2009, ILO/Cinterfor will carry out an internal evaluation of the results of its new programme and institutional strategy, in good time to report on its findings at the subsequent Technical Committee meeting. It is proposed that there should also be an external evaluation in 2010 and 2011, guided and supervised by the overhauled Programme and Budget Committee.

# ANNEX

## THE 2007-2009 WORK PROGRAMME

### Introduction

1. In recent years ILO/Cinterfor's work programme has been geared to strengthening training as an essential component in the array of policies that ought to converge to make decent work a guiding principle in national economic, social and environmental strategies; to promote public policies that foster employability among the economically active population in general, with particular attention to improving equitable access to pertinent quality training programmes for young people, poor or vulnerable women and unemployed adults of both sexes; to develop training programmes that foster national and regional employability, competitiveness and productivity; and lastly to reinforce training's great potential as a privileged space for tripartite cooperation and social dialogue, and make governments and employers' and workers' organizations better able to play a role in formulating policies and planning and running training schemes in the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

2. ILO/Cinterfor's programme is part of a framework of priorities and strategies laid down in the ILO Decent Work Agenda. The core elements of the programme are the four strategic objectives that correspond to fundamental principles and rights at work, employment creation for women and men, enhancing the coverage of social protection and promoting tripartite systems and social dialogue. It also involves regional coordination in the form of the Agenda for the Hemisphere, which was passed by the members of the organization in 2006.

3. The work plan approved in 2005 proposed three broad areas of action and a more specific thematic menu that are listed next:

Strengthening training as a means to increase opportunities for access to employment and decent work:

- Quality management, relevance and equity.
- Financing.
- Productivity.
- Application of ICT's.
- Gender.
- Actions at the sectoral, local and subregional levels.
- Personnel development.
- Lifelong training.
- National frameworks.
- Labour competencies.
- Certification

Development of competencies among unemployed young people and adults of both sexes:

- Young people.
- Informal economy.
- Populations in rural areas.
- Poor and rural women.
- Ethnic groups and indigenous populations.
- Integration of populations with different capacities.

Strengthening social partners and the development of social dialogue in training

- Training institutions.
- Employers.
- Trade unions.
- Governments (Ministries of Labour, Education, VTI's).
- Bipartita, tripartite, local and sectoral management.

4. Written and verbal consultations with representatives from ILO/Cinterfor members show that these areas are still relevant in the operations of national institutions, so there is no drastic change of direction in the proposals for activities over the next two years. The main priorities are still as follows:

- a. *To develop the institutional dimension of education, training and work systems to respond to the needs of the productive sector, decent employment, and economic and social policy priorities.* The plan is for ILO/Cinterfor to continue to work towards strengthening the institutional dimension of the national bodies responsible for training in Latin America and the Caribbean (vocational training institutions, Ministries of Labour and employers' and workers' organizations) with the aim of fostering quality, relevance and equity in their programmes and so as to generate integrated education and work systems that are able to respond to demands and opportunities in the labour market, people's aspirations for decent employment, and long term strategies for economic development, investment and the diversification of production.
- b. *Vocational training as a tool to combat poverty by reducing unemployment and under-employment.* ILO/Cinterfor will give support for designing and launching training programmes which are coordinated with employment policies and geared to the needs populations that are more vulnerable to unemployment such as young people of both sexes, vulnerable women living in poverty, and adults whose skills are of a low level or not pertinent. This also includes programmes to develop entrepreneurship, to stimulate not only individual initiative but also other more extensive undertakings in local communities, cooperatives, youth organizations, workers' organizations, etc.
- c. *Social dialogue in the planning and management of vocational training.* ILO/Cinterfor will continue its policy to promote tripartite mechanisms to guide and manage training systems; help to strengthen unions so they can press more effectively for programmes

to improve workers' competencies and capabilities; help employers to identify which competencies and skills they need to be able to maintain and raise productivity and become more competitive; and work to improve coordination between the education system and the world of enterprises. It will also assist the public sector in the formulation of employment and training policies that foster access to and equal opportunities in training.

5. The common denominator is the Decent Work Agenda for the Hemisphere. ILO/Cinterfor will take advantage of its regional position to facilitate and promote this, and it will encourage training institutions to adopt some of the points on the Agenda such as mainstreaming gender equality, health and safety at work, youth employment, attending to the informal economy, micro and small enterprises, etc., in the framework of the priorities jointly established by the ILO and its constituents in decent work country programmes.

### **The core components of the programme**

6. It also emerged from the consultations that the Centre's work plan has to have some more visible core components in its activities and in the definition of results obtained so that its members and constituents would have a basis for evaluating the pertinence and effectiveness of ILO/Cinterfor's performance. Based on an analysis and ranking of priorities as regards the demand for information and support, and on proposals for cooperation the Centre has received, ten operational areas have been tentatively defined. The plan is that in the next two years ILO/Cinterfor will concentrate its efforts and available resources in these areas, in addition to a menu of basic services.

7. As regards basic knowledge management services in the vocational training area, the Centre will progressively build towards structuring its offer of knowledge in the form of a database that generates added value by analyzing, comparing and supplying information about models, systems,

and vocational training institutions and policies. This means developing analytic information that can be accessed instantly so that associate institutions will be able to have added value information about trends, progress, good practices and results in training in the region.

8. ILO/Cinterfor's operational areas will be as follows:

- a. Youth employment and the transition from school to work.* The core element of action here has to do with integrating the basic education system, technical education, certified vocational training, dual training, apprenticeship in enterprises and labour insertion for young people. Emphasis will be placed on the articulation of vocational training with basic education and labour policies.
- b. Lifelong learning for employability and citizenship.* This will involve in plant training, including small enterprises as well as cooperative enterprises, national qualifications frameworks and training and certification in labour competencies as part of ongoing training for employed and unemployed workers, to respond to demands and opportunities in the labour market.
- c. Financing and investment in vocational training.* The Centre will identify and apply research methodology on sources of funding as well as comparative analysis of the impact of different financing mechanisms, such as taxes, payroll-based contributions, charging enterprises or users in accordance with the laws and practices in each country. The outcome of such experiences will be analyzed with a view to influencing the design of public policies, encouraging the investment of both public and private resources in training and employability and measuring its real impact.
- d. Quality management, relevance and equity in training.* The Centre will work on mechanisms to ensure quality, and measures of relevance and equity, as interdependent dimensions of the work of vocational training institutions, with a view to optimizing the use of public and private funds allocated to human resources development.

- e. The use of new information and communication technologies in vocational training.* The Centre will intensify information sharing about innovative experiences in the use of ICTs –such as institutions’ web sites, virtual classrooms, training by Internet or by mobile phone– to reach a wider target group of workers, to make the training offer more flexible in function of the conditions and characteristics of the labour supply, to improve the quality and effectiveness of curricular design, to evaluate the relevance of current models of e-learning, mobile training and decentralized training to develop trainers’ and workers’ competencies.
- f. Curricular development and thematic and pedagogic innovations.* Updated information will be provided on innovative experiences regarding the introduction of new key aspects in curricular programmes, such as new didactic strategies that promote knowledge management at innovative training environments, entrepreneurship development, productivity and training in health and safety at work, labour rights, and pedagogic aspects of curricular design and teacher training.
- g. Training for the employability of vulnerable groups in the informal, domestic and rural economy.* The Centre will examine the needs and possibilities to modify educational and training systems to facilitate access to decent jobs in the formal economy –including enterprise development– for social groups with low levels of education and scant opportunities to access formal vocational training programmes for gender, ethnic, language, geographical, cultural, social, special needs and other reasons.
- h. Social dialogue in vocational training.* The Centre will continue and intensify its comparative analyses of the diverse mechanisms and experiences whereby the tripartite constituents of the ILO participate in the planning, management and execution of vocational training programmes. This also applies to efforts to make employers’ and workers’ organizations better able to participate in defining policies and running vocational training, and to developing collective bar-

gaining in this sector, with special emphasis on negotiating training in the workplace.

- i. Vocational training and gender equality.* The Centre will analyze and promote experiences as to mainstreaming the gender perspective in vocational training, to ensure that it is relevant to the individuals and their social and economic environment. The aim will be to reduce gender barriers in access to training, permanent updating and employment, and to combat the segregation of job profiles.
- j. Integration processes, homologation of job profiles and regional qualifications frameworks.* In relation to the different regional integration processes and migration agreements, the Centre will tackle the need to achieve progressively greater coordination among national training and human resources development systems and to develop competency certification programmes and mechanisms that have regional or sub-regional validity. Particular attention will be paid to the qualifications framework experiences in current regional processes like the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM), the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), and the Central American Integration System (SICA).

9. Across this working agenda, the Centre will foster the development of specialized sectoral networks and cooperation mechanisms in areas that the member institutions themselves identify as having priority, such as the rural sector, the tourism sector, the textile sector, the printing industry, the construction sector, and other areas the institutions wish to promote.

10. ILO/Cinterfor is responsible for ensuring through a stronger knowledge management focus that its work in the defined core elements shall not be detrimental to a systemic and holistic vision of training processes.

11. For each core element in the programme the Centre will proceed in the following way:

- i. To identify one or several institutions to share leadership and thematic or sectoral coordination with ILO/Cinterfor. If more than one institution is interested in assuming some kind of thematic leadership, the main core elements of the work programme could be organized into more specific sub-areas (particularly in sectoral vocational training) or coordinated sub-groups could be set up.
- ii. To jointly formulate multi-annual operational projects, based on co-financing from the leader institutions, ILO/Cinterfor, the ILO, other participating institutions that take part and external donors.
- iii. To prioritize and schedule activities in relation to the volume of resources mobilized and the institutions' direct participation.
- iv. To foster joint management of activities. This could include regional technical meetings for the launch, monitoring and evaluation of the projects, work in virtual networks, the production of publications, and bilateral and multilateral exchanges, training and technical assistance.
- v. ILO/Cinterfor will systematize the results of each project so as to maintain and demonstrate the coherence of the different components with a holistic and systemic vision of vocational training.

12. The projects will all begin in the two year period following the 38th meeting of the Technical Committee, but the starting date, duration, scope and intensity of each individual project will depend on the capability of ILO/Cinterfor and the institutions in the network to mobilize resources and combine their efforts to achieve the objectives in question. Most of the projects will probably last longer than two years. The Technical Committee will be kept informed of progress in each thematic core component; this information will be included in the Centre's activity report.

13. The design and implementation of each project will be coordinated with the Skills and Employability Department (SKILLS) and the ILO Regional Office, so as to make sure the project's quality and relevance conforms to ILO policies and priorities, and a combined effort will be made so as to optimize the use of the technical and financial resources available.

14. In addition to launching the thematic core activities outlined above, the following events will be programmed in the 2007-2009 period:

- i. A regional meeting on comparative analysis of the national vocational training and work education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean, to prepare the subject for discussion at the International Labour Conference of June 2008.
- ii. A programming meeting of international cooperation officers in the member institutions.
- iii. A technical workshop to analyze the feasibility and focus of a new edition of the regional vocational training Olympics, in response to requests from several national institutions.

15. The support that ILO/Cinterfor usually provides for technical meetings programmed by the institutions and consultancy services or technical assistance in specific cases on request by institutions will be dealt with in the same way as always, through direct contact and depending on the human and financial resources available.

## **Work instruments**

16. To put the programme of action into operation, the Centre will make use of a group of tools that are coordinated to optimize the way the resources available are used.

- a. *Research and dissemination of publications about knowledge and experiences.* The material ILO/Cinterfor publishes will be concentrated around the ten core elements of the programme mentioned above, and the different collections that the Centre normally publishes will be updated where necessary. The Centre will follow a two tier policy. First, it will make a pro-active effort to programme and finance a limited number of publications and studies on priority subjects on the work agenda, in close cooperation with the ILO and the leading national institutions in the different areas. Second,

it will continue adding publications proposed by other institutions and individuals to its catalogue of publications. These will deal with subjects pertinent to ILO/Cinterfor's area of work, and will include master and doctorate theses by researchers and young academics so as to bring innovative analyses and proposals into the implementation of programmes and the design of policies and strategies in a given field. So as to ensure that ILO/Cinterfor publications are relevant, coherent and of good quality, a Publications Committee under the head of the new Knowledge Management Unit will be set up. The composition of this committee will vary depending on the type and subject area of different publications, and it will include experts from ILO/Cinterfor, from the member institutions, from the ILO, from other academic institutions and from international cooperation agencies. Furthermore, the possibility of disseminating more ILO/Cinterfor publications through co-publishing agreements with national institutions will be explored. The Centre will continue to increase the number of publications in English, not just by translating and adapting material from other languages but also by fostering original writing that deals with subject areas and experiences that are more relevant to the institutions in the English-speaking Caribbean. To this end, partnerships will be sought with Caribbean academic institutions. Cooperation agreements with Brazilian institutions will be sought so as to boost the production and dissemination of information in Portuguese. The Centre will also seek resources to begin publishing a limited number of items in French and Dutch, so as to make it easier for institutions in Haiti and Suriname to participate.

- b. The electronic diffusion of knowledge and tools applicable to training.* The Centre will continue to consolidate its web portal ([www.cinterfor.org.uy](http://www.cinterfor.org.uy)). This is one of ILO/Cinterfor's most valuable instruments for discharging its responsibilities to the member States. It will continue to improve the didactic organization of the portal by updating the information in the various sub-sites and re-organizing these where necessary. A virtual bank of learning re-

sources from the institutions will be set up. As part of ILO/Cinterfor's activity in the new area of knowledge management, its web site management will be completely integrated with its documentation centre in order to strengthen and take advantage of the virtual library.

- c. Interaction with users through information technology.* This is a growing trend. The Centre has various help lines available for users. Another consultation and communications system that is coming more and more into use is the teleconference, and this should be encouraged. The Centre will continue to work to strengthen institutions through distance modalities, including holding teleconferences on different priority subjects in the work plan. To help in this, ILO/Cinterfor's web site should progressively develop interactive modes by hosting discussion fora, running distance training programmes and providing on-line technical assistance.
- d. Consultation, information and technical assistance.* These functions are based on the network of collaborators the Centre has made available to the institutions, and also on its own experts in different areas. An outstanding element here is that the institutions themselves cooperate by making their staff and technicians available to support other institutions in the network, and ILO/Cinterfor provides the link through which this technical support is channelled. To do this more effectively, the Centre will set up a roster of specialists from different countries that can be periodically seconded from their institutions to undertake technical advisory missions to other institutions in the network, with ILO/Cinterfor providing technical and financial support. Closer linkages will be forged with the available pool of technical expertise through a network of sub-regional specialists and the ILO Skills and Employability Department (SKILLS).
- e. Regional technical meetings.* ILO/Cinterfor will try to hold at least one regional meeting for each of its priority areas, so as to share and make comparative analyses of experiences and good practices from different countries. These meetings will also be a suitable forum to

mould and validate the Centre's work strategies with respect to the priority core elements in the action plan.

- f. *Promotion of activities with national institutions.* Besides the activities that ILO/Cinterfor itself and the leader institutions in each thematic area promote, the Centre will continue to support initiatives from national institutions that organize seminars, training events, discussion workshops, etc. These are very useful for initiating projects, evaluating progress and discussing innovations in training.
- g. *Personnel development and training.* ILO/Cinterfor and the ILO have a basic strategy of training and developing personnel from national institutions. To do this a two-pronged strategy will be adopted: to promote a limited number of regional training programmes, and to respond to requests from individual institutions. To optimize the use of the resources available and ensure that ILO activity is coherent, a two year programme of activities will be set jointly with the ILO International Training Centre in Turin to work on all areas of common interest, with a particular focus on face-to-face and distance training. In response to requests from the institutions, the necessary contacts will be set up to facilitate personnel exchanges so both parties can learn from each other's experiences and training. This will be promoted among institutions since there is a wealth of experience and good practices in the region in priority areas of the plan of action agreed between the Centre and the institutions in the network.



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