

Introduction

“This Recommendation is a forward-looking and policy-oriented instrument that addresses the enormous challenges we face in developing the knowledge, skills and employability of all people in the twenty-first century”

JUAN SOMAVÍA, International Labour Conference, 2004.

National and international objectives to achieve full employment, secure social integration and promote sustainable economic growth become complex and more demanding within the framework of the multiple economic, social and technological changes that unequally affect different societies. The need to adapt politically and institutionally to respond to the new needs and take advantage of the new opportunities involve increasing agreement as regards the fact that acquisition of competencies and investment in education and training are the key to economic and social development.

In the new ILO Recommendation 195 concerning the development of human resources, suggestions and recommendations are made linked to different socio-labour topics and problems that constitute crucial axes for the development of strategies and policies in the areas of training, labour relations and the world of work. Among them the role of training in the economic and social development of each country is to be highlighted, as well as its link with decent work and the many mechanisms to be developed to generate efficient and effective training processes.

This publication was produced mainly with the objectives of dissemination and promotion in mind. In order to fulfil them, and to publicise and provide incentives for the execution of the contents of Recommendation 195, it is aimed here at developing the conceptualisations that are explicit and implicit in this new standard, in order to enrich and provide details regarding the scope of its innovations. To do so the background and justification of its creation shall be set

forth and the main conceptual contributions referring to training and its link to topics such as productivity, equality and social inclusion and decent work, among others, shall be described (Chapters I and II). Also to be highlighted are the contributions to the configuration of training systems and policies addressing the subject of lifelong learning and competency-based training and certification, as challenges of education and training, as well as the role of vocational guidance and services to support training (Chapter III), without forgetting the importance assigned in this Recommendation to the social dialogue (Chapter IV). The closing chapter of the publication is devoted to resources for the sustainability and continuity of training policies, where a description and analysis is provided addressing the Recommendation's treatment of subjects such as economic and tax incentives regarding training, research and international co-operation in matters of employment and training policies.

International labour standards, adopted by the International Labour Conference in the form of Recommendations, do not impose on member States the same kind of obligations as those imposed by Conventions, and nor do they require ratification by those States. The Recommendations tend to provide guidance for State policies in the field they are addressing, and in this sense the new Recommendation concerning the development of human resources sets forth innovations and important challenges in matters of employment and training policies for countries of all regions, with no exception whatsoever. These contributions are anchored in the systematisation of efforts and good practices advanced in the last decades by the various actors in vocational training in the world. In this sense, the training institutions and agencies of Latin America and the Caribbean have been making inroads into several of the main conceptual aspects and practical recommendations of this new governing instrument of the ILO to an extent that has varied over time, insofar as the comprehensiveness of approaches and the results obtained is concerned. From this point of view, Cinterfor/ILO believes that the recovery of some of these work experiences constitutes a substantive contribution both in terms of the framework and grounding of the proposals of the Recommendation and of strengthening and boosting the innovation and continuous improvement which these proposals call forth.

Because of this, this publication aims at spreading and promoting an exceptionally useful instrument for training agencies of the region, and to recognise in these agencies actors who are often pioneers and innovators in the world of training on a global scale.