

INTRODUCTION

The present publication reflects the main documents submitted to the *Tripartite Inter-American Seminar on Vocational Training, Productivity and Decent Work*, held at Rio de Janeiro on 16 and 17 May 2002, and it also contains other articles contributing from different angles to the topics of that important event.

The seminar was attended by tripartite delegations from Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and Trinidad & Tobago, as well as representatives of governments, employers' and workers' organizations from Bolivia, Spain, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay, with the main objective of establishing, analysing, exchanging and disseminating experiences regarding vocational training policies, organization and management at national, regional and international level.

This publication comprises three main subject areas, each one consisting of two articles. The first area deals with the theme of vocational training and decent work, the second one with the financing of vocational training, and the third one with occupational competencies.

It starts with an article by **Gerry Rodgers**, that considers the role that the decent work paradigm is destined to play in the global economy. It describes and analyses the principal dimensions of the concept and their interrelations. It underlines the need to develop a more equitable framework for globalization, preventing the social exclusion of an increasingly larger proportion of the world population which, unfortunately, is one of the characteristics of the current integration model of the world economy.

Secondly, a paper by **Fernando Casanova** discusses the transformation processes that have taken place in the field of vocational training in Latin America and the Caribbean in recent decades, and the way in which vocational training institutions have faced them. He pays special attention to the links between training and some aspects of the social and economic development of the countries concerned, such as productivity, competitiveness and the pursuit of decent work.

The following article, by **Jaime Ramírez Guerrero**, provides a bird's eye view of the funding of vocational training in the region. From a descriptive point of view,

the author enumerates the various financing arrangements and sources that exist nowadays in the region, and from an analytical point of view, he tries to identify the most significant trends in the manner in which countries of the region are mobilising public and private resources in these kinds of investments.

Regina Galhardi's contribution, supplementing the preceding one, focuses on a study of innovations in the ways vocational training is financed in the region. This author tells us that the financing of training activities ranks high on the agenda of public policies and is also an area in which a number of new arrangements are apparent, including a wide diversity of actors, employers' and workers' organizations among them.

Fernando Vargas' paper is divided into two parts. In the first one he provides an overview of the application of the principles and methodologies of training and certification based on occupational competencies in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the second one he discusses the veracity of four widely disseminated assertions on the subject at hand.

George Gamerdinger's article, for its part, identifies, describes and analyses the broad tendencies and emerging aspects that characterise the development of human resources and vocational training in the English and Dutch speaking Caribbean. Among the traits that are becoming distinctive of technical vocational education and training in that region, the author ascribes fundamental importance to the creation of national systems of training and standardisation of qualifications.

The publication ends with an account of the main lines of discussion and conclusions of the Tripartite Inter-American Seminar on Vocational Training, Productivity and Decent Work that, as pointed out earlier, constitutes the source of most of the papers included here.

With this book, Cinterfor/ILO endeavours to provide English-speaking readers with a state-of-the-art situation of vocational training in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as an important documental source of a number of researchers that have scrutinised the links and interrelations between training, productivity and decent work.