

## **NEW ZEALAND DECENT WORK ACTION PLAN (DWAP)**

### **Decent Work in the New Zealand Context**

Decent Work Action Plans resulted from an idea put forward by the New Zealand Minister of Labour, and supported by the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (NZCTU) and Business New Zealand (Business NZ), at the ILO Asian Regional Meeting in 2001.

As Decent Work action plans are a “bottom up” approach to realising the ILO’s Decent Work agenda at the national level, the New Zealand tripartite partners have developed a working definition of decent work for the New Zealand context:

*Decent work recognises differing needs; provides satisfying and productive work; adequate income and social protection; stability for people and their families; respects peoples’ rights; allows people time for other activities; and gives people a say and an opportunity for involvement.*

The New Zealand DWAP is a planning tool to enable planning to take place, as opposed to a completed plan. It will initially take the form of a stocktake of existing New Zealand policies, legislation and priorities, to be grouped under the four areas of Decent Work. Analysis will then be done on the current state of progress and gaps in New Zealand’s achievement of Decent Work.

### **The objectives of the DWAP**

The DWAP will capture activities across Government. It will be a useful tool to capture knowledge of Government activities and interagency involvement and collaboration that contribute towards Decent Work. The DWAP will also capture activities in the private sector and community that contribute towards Decent Work.

The DWAP will provide an important tool to assist the government to assess progress against, and allocate resources to achieve, the government’s outcomes where they are aligned with the ILO’s Decent Work programme.

### **The work programme of the DWAP**

In 2003, Department of Labour officials, in consultation with Business NZ and NZCTU, developed a four stage process to develop and implement the DWAP, with the aim of presenting a finalised DWAP to the ILO Asian Regional Meeting in 2005.

The four stages identified to develop and implement the DWAP are:

- a Stage One [Establishment]: this phase has been completed, culminating with the tripartite presentation of New Zealand’s model of a national plan of action at the ILO Subregional Forum, held in Auckland from 6-8 October 2003.
- b Stage Two [Information Gathering]: work overseen by the tripartite Steering Group to gather information, in two stages, being an initial

stocktake (by the Department of Labour, Business NZ and NZCTU) of activity linked to the Department of Labour under the four areas of Decent Work; followed by a stocktake (involving a broader group) of wider activity by government.

- c Stage Three [Analysis]: analysis of the current progress and deficits of New Zealand's activity against the four areas of Decent Work, judged against desired Government outcomes.
- d Stage Four [Plan Development]: Drafting of the DWAP, culminating in a presentation by the Minister of Labour to the ILO's Asian Regional Meeting in October 2005.
- e Ongoing [Plan review and technical support]: Community engagement on the DWAP. Review of the DWAP, regular updates and identification of areas where New Zealand can offer technical support to other ILO member States.

### **Major Social Development Priorities**

**Workplace Productivity** – the Workplace Productivity Working Group was established in February 2004 to advise the Government on the current situation and possible future policy options for lifting workplace productivity. The Working Group consisting of industry and government representatives identified seven complementary reinforcing drivers of workplace productivity:

- o building leadership and management capacity
- o creating productive workplace cultures
- o encouraging innovation and the use of technology
- o investing in people and skills
- o organising work
- o networking and collaborating
- o measuring what happens

**Paid Parental Leave** – from 1 December 2004 the eligibility criteria for paid parental leave was extended to include employees with six months service with the same employer and the duration of paid leave was extended from 12 to 14 weeks progressively by 1 December 2005.

**Pay and Employment Equity** – the Government is proceeding to implement the action plan for pay and employment equity in the public service, public health and public education sectors. Pay and employment equity audits are a key strategy of the plan. A tripartite Steering Group, informed by pay and employment equity expertise, has been set up to lead and evaluate the progress and implementation of the action plan.

**Work-Life Balance** – this project seeks to identify and promote policies and practices that help people to balance participation in paid work with the other activities that are important to them. There is also a specific objective of providing advice to government on what it can do. Business NZ has been consulted and NZCTU are project partners on the Work-Life balance project.

**Workplace Health and Safety Strategy for New Zealand to 2015** –this strategy is being developed to provide a national vision and strategic direction for workplace health and safety over the next ten years. A draft strategy has been

developed which identifies that we will make future gains by promoting preventive workplace cultures, encouraging greater industry leadership and community engagement, and strengthening the role of government. The stakeholder group for the strategy includes representatives nominated by NZCTU and Business NZ. The implementation of the Strategy requires the involvement of employers, elected health and safety representatives, workers and their unions, employer and industry organisations, and government agencies.

**Holidays Act** - following the implementation of the Holidays Act on 1 April 2004 there have been legislative amendments to address the unintended consequences of the Holidays Act. An evaluation plan is currently being developed to assess the impact of the Act, and any further implementation issues that have arisen, once it has been in place for a year.

**Employment Relations Act review** - amendments have recently been made to the Employment Relations Act 2000. The Employment Relations Act has been in place for four years. The Act was reviewed in 2002/03, and a number of improvements were identified to enhance the original intention of the Act. The resulting Employment Relations Amendment Act (No. 2) 2004 aims to better support the key objectives of promoting collective bargaining, good faith, and the effective resolution of employment relationship problems. It also provides employment protection for employees if their job is affected by the sale or transfer of their employer's business or if their work is contracted out.

**Partnership Resource Centre** - the Partnership Resource Centre, which is attached to the Department of Labour, is a means to promote innovation as well as workplace relations. The centre is to provide expertise, research and best-practice training on partnership, available to both private sector as well as the state sector. NZCTU along with one employer from each of the public and private sectors are on a Steering Committee which provides guidance and advice to the Centre.

**Work being done on considering the ratification of ILO Conventions** – the Government is currently undertaking work programmes to assess whether New Zealand can ratify Convention 138, on minimum age and Convention 155, on Occupational Safety and Health. The work programmes involve undertaking a compatibility assessment of New Zealand's law and practice with the provisions of the Conventions, as New Zealand ratifies a Convention only when there is strict compliance of law, policy and practice with all the provisions of a Convention. All work programmes involve consultation with the NZCTU and Business NZ.

For more information on the priorities outlined above, please visit the New Zealand Department of Labour website at <http://www.dol.govt.nz/>