



Gender Equality in the World of Work



ILO Electronic Newsletter

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This newsletter is produced three times yearly by the Bureau for Gender Equality, based at the secretariat of the International Labour Organization (ILO). It is e-mailed to the organization's staff and constituents, the UN system, civil society groups and others interested in ILO initiatives concerning gender mainstreaming and its activities that aim to help promote equality between women and men.

Readers are encouraged to reproduce or circulate the text in full or part—kindly credit and inform the Bureau for Gender Equality, ILO, 4 route des Morillons, 1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland, fax +41 22 799 6388, gender@ilo.org (also use to e-mail “subscribe” or “unsubscribe” requests), www.ilo.org/gender

EVENTS

- **Women Covering Conflict**

While women in the newsroom are no longer a novelty, they still face gender-related challenges at every level of the profession. Many women journalists are criticized by their communities for choosing to cover dangerous subjects; others have to battle discrimination within their organizations to obtain such assignments.

These challenges were discussed at ILO headquarters in Geneva on 7 March at a panel entitled Dangerous Assignments: Women Covering Conflict. The event, organized by the Department of Communication (DCOMM) and co-sponsored by the Bureau for Gender Equality, was held to commemorate International Women's Day.

“Since the days of Eleanor Roosevelt's ‘women only’ press conferences designed to force editors to hire female journalists”, said Juan Somavia, ILO Director-General, “women have gone from the fashion page to the front page and the frontline. They have broken through the glass ceiling in order to break the news, and they bring a unique perspective to the conflicts and wars that

increasingly characterize our times”.

Speaking by satellite link from the Iraqi capital, Rym Brahimi of CNN said the situation there was tense, especially for women. Women there were disheartened, she observed, and were turning to religion as a means of comfort. Despite the situation which she described as frightening, Ms. Brahimi said, “You just go on. I'm here to do a job. This is very important.”

The need for women to strive more than men in dangerous jobs was part of the evolution of women in journalism, said Kate Adie, Chief News Correspondent of the BBC. During the Bosnian war she had encountered many women journalists in Sarajevo who had expressed the feeling that they “had to be there as this is the assignment to get”. But, she said, they had to “run while men could walk.”

Other panellists were Christine Anyanwu, a Nigerian journalist imprisoned for three years in solitary confinement in the 1990s for reporting on an alleged coup against then-Nigerian President Sani Abacha, and Nadia Mehdid, an Algerian who is Foreign Editor for the London-based newspaper *Asharq Al Awsat*.

Panellists agreed that whether covering conflict and dangerous situations or doing their daily reporting, women reporters often worked for the rights of other women, and were more interested in reporting on issues of how society copes with conflict and attempts at reconstruction. They also often covered other types of conflict, such as conflicting perceptions of women's role in society, to wars of information, extremism and other forms of overt and more subtle violence aimed against women in many societies.

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- **Inter-Agency Task Team on HIV/AIDS**

A meeting of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT) on Gender Equality and HIV/AIDS was held in New York on 23-24 January. The meeting was organized by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, of which ILO is a member. The ILO Liaison Office based in New York represented the organization at the meeting.

Discussions focused on developing a unified task plan, based on shared understandings of the principle gender equality issues that impact the HIV/AIDS work of task team members. Another objective was to develop strategies to ensure that UNAIDS and other budget allocations reflect the priorities developed by the task team.

The steering committee for the task team held its first meeting on 5 March in New York, where it

is based. One of its first tasks is to update the existing UNAIDS *Gender Resource Package*, to which ILO is contributing.

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- **Commission on the Status of Women**

As the informal economy grows, more women are in precarious and occasional jobs—thus greater exposure to violence and discrimination because of their marginalized status in labour markets. This was one of the trends highlighted by ILO at the 47th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held in New York from 3-15 March. The Commission was discussing the themes of participation in and access of women to the media and information and communication technologies, and women's human rights including the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls.

“Those who have a double vulnerability to discrimination and violence”, said Jane Zhang, Director of the ILO Bureau for Gender Equality, “are women workers in export processing enterprises in free trade zones and migrants and workers of different ethnic origin”.

Violence against women and girls was one of the critical areas of concern identified by the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in 1995 in Beijing, noted Ms. Zhang, and one of the most serious violations of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. It was a major obstacle to achieving the objectives of gender equality, development and peace.

Also stressed was the critical relevance of equality between women and men to achieving all of the Millennium Development Goals, which were agreed on by world leaders at the United Nations Millennium Summit held in New York in 2000. One of the eight goals specifically addresses gender equality and empowerment of women. It was important to develop innovative and feasible strategies to realize this goal, noted Ms. Zhang. However, she said, “we firmly believe that gender equality concerns are highly relevant to achieving all the other goals and should be effectively incorporated”.

These were mutually reinforcing—thus an important task ahead was how to engender all the processes of implementation and adopt an integrated and gender mainstreaming approach to attaining the goals. This “is a challenge before us”, stressed Ms. Zhang, “and a challenge we must

meet”.

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- **Discrimination Against Women**

The ILO presented a summary of findings during the 28th session of the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, held in New York from 13-31 January. The session was considering reports submitted by the following countries under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women: Albania, Canada, El Salvador, Kenya, Luxembourg, Norway and Switzerland.

The ILO findings were based on reports of its Committee of Experts on some of these countries in areas pertinent to the Convention’s articles. These included issues such as equal pay, discrimination, maternity protection, parental leave, workers’ family responsibilities and employment policy. The ILO findings were taken into account when conclusions and recommendations were made on how the countries were implementing the Convention.

The ILO Committee of Experts’ reports were also presented to the 29th pre-sessional working group on the following countries: Costa Rica, Ecuador, France, Japan, Morocco, New Zealand and Slovenia. The 29th session, in which ILO will also participate, will begin on 30 June.

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- **Unions for Women; Women for Unions**

Unions around the world should reform their structures in order to be more inclusive of women and young people, and to reflect the increasing numbers of women joining union ranks. The alternative is “a slow death”. This was the call made by participants at the Eighth World

Women's Conference of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), held in Melbourne, Australia on 18-21 February. The theme of the conference, whose sponsors included the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), was Unions for Women; Women for Unions.

"This event helped to bring together more than 500 women from around the world", said Elizabeth Tinoco, Specialist on Workers' Activities at ACTRAV. "Their objectives were to design innovative strategies to make trade unions relevant to working women, and to enhance women's key role in building and strengthening trade unions".

The conference, which was hosted by the Australian Confederation of Trade Unions (ACTU), also aimed to contribute to building and strengthening women's solidarity networks both within and beyond the trade union structures.

During a panel entitled Are Unions Ensuring Equality of Treatment and Opportunities for Women Workers in the Global Economy, Senior Specialist Linda Wirth of the ILO Bureau for Gender Equality stressed the importance of managing change. The way production and services were organized, she noted, was changing rapidly with information and communication technologies, privatization of public services, and globalization. These were driving the use of a variety of types of labour contracts through the supply chains.

"Emphasis is now put on employability rather than job security", said Ms. Wirth, "and the ever-growing division and tension between the 'haves' of the global economy and the 'have-nots'. If organizations are to manage these changes effectively, they need to critically look at how they operate and whether their priorities and strategies are sufficiently responding to external realities or are too focused on internal dynamics. They need to decide whether their institutional structures and procedures need updating—and above all whether they are democratic in terms of equality between women and men".

Recommendations of the conference included a call for promoting and negotiating the adoption of an ILO convention and recommendation on sexual harassment; a campaign for ratifying and implementing ILO Convention 156 on workers with family responsibilities; broadening the ICFTU campaign for ratifying ILO Convention 183 on maternity protection; and launching an ICFTU campaign on the right to a living wage with a focus on women workers and pay equity.

Participants also called for recognition that organizing within the informal economy should be a major preoccupation of the ICFTU. They said strong alliances should be created with cooperatives and other ICFTU member organizations. Related to this, a liaison forum should be set up so that ICFTU members already organizing informal economy workers could meet other workers' organizations, cooperatives, women's organizations and associations involved in organizing in the informal economy.

National trade unions were urged to adopt gender equality policies, and conduct analysis of

impacts on women and men of union budgets. They were also encouraged to carry out gender equality audits that would lead to equality action plans with timeframes, as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Promotion of more women in positions of responsibility within the ILO, as well as ensuring more representation of women at higher levels in the ILO Governing Body Conference, were also recommended.

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• **Inter-Regional Consultation on Gender Mainstreaming**

Priority actions and mechanisms for enhancing the ILO gender mainstreaming strategy—as well as promoting gender equality in the world of work at the country level—were the focus of discussions at the annual Inter-Regional Consultation on Gender Mainstreaming, held 3-5 February in Turin, Italy.

At the consultation, organized by the Bureau for Gender Equality and International Training Centre of the ILO, around 50 participants discussed issues including progress and gaps in implementing the strategy; indicators and evaluation measures on gender equality; entry points and strategies for promoting gender equality at the country level; and a revised ILO Action Plan on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming.

“We have achieved much over the past year,” said Jane Zhang, Director of the Bureau for Gender Equality, “but the task before the ILO Gender Network is how to be effective agents of change. We all must effect change—both individually and collectively—to implement strategies on gender mainstreaming. In order to achieve this we need to adopt feasible aims that are combined with a vision and ambition in our organizations’ context. Let’s stay focused and put our efforts on implementation”.

Participatory sessions were organized around three modules: Decent Work and Gender Equality Indicators, Review of Gender Mainstreaming in the ILO, and Strategic Planning on Decent Work and Gender Equality.

During a final session on entry points and strategies, working groups presented suggestions for revising the ILO Action Plan on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming, and prioritized strategies and tactics for operationalizing and implementing gender mainstreaming. The revised action plan

and suggested strategies served as inputs for follow-up discussions held from 3-5 February in Geneva during a strategic planning workshop.

Contact: ILO Bureau for Gender Equality (see contact numbers on front page).

- **Decent Work and the Informal Economy**

Developing a framework for ILO action to follow up conclusions on decent work and the informal economy, adopted by the International Labour Conference (ILC) in June 2002, was the objective of a workshop held in Turin, Italy. At the ILO Staff Workshop on Decent Work and the Informal Economy, which took place at the International Training Centre of the ILO from 10-12 February, participants first reviewed the ILC conclusions. These identify the bulk of workers in the informal economy as women and youth who are especially without representation and voice. Feminization of poverty and gender discrimination meant that women were more likely to be among “the most vulnerable and marginalized groups that tend to end up in the informal economy”.

Participants in the workshop developed a framework of proposals under the inter-related themes of governance, representation/voice, macro policy, productivity/market enhancement and addressing vulnerabilities. Gender and poverty were identified as transversal issues. The roles to be played by the social partners were highlighted.

Poor women were clearly identified as among vulnerable groups in the informal economy. A core problem discussed in addressing vulnerabilities was the lack of effective inclusion mechanisms to allow the access of vulnerable groups at the micro level to basic social services and productive resources; at the meso level, for them to effectively coordinate with existing agencies and organizations to provide services that respond to their needs; and at the macro level for them to effectively contribute to policies and programmes that improve their access to such services.

Participants proposed a series of outputs that the ILO could develop to address these problems. Lines of ILO action identified included: assisting constituents to better understand the implications of changes in the organization of work and production and the ensuing challenges for organizing; equipping trade unions and employers’ organizations to identify and meet the representational needs of informal economy actors; developing alliances and coalitions between trade unions’, employers’ organizations and other actors; ensuring the transfer of know-how between constituents and other informal economy actors; and providing policy advice to member States on removing barriers to organization and representation in the informal economy.

The ILO’s work with constituents to strengthen their capacity in regard to gender equality policies, strategies and gender mainstreaming can be a strategic support to these proposed lines of

action. This work includes assistance for alliance building with women's organizations in the informal economy as part of the promotion of democratic, independent, membership-based organizations of wage workers, own-account workers, self-employed persons or employers in the informal economy. A significant challenge for the ILO is to work more with women's groups to inform them about labour rights and the Decent Work Agenda, as well as to assist more women to participate in membership-based organizations such as trade unions and employers' organizations.

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- **Gender Audit Facilitation Refresher Courses**

Facilitation techniques and improvements to a newly-revised manual for gender auditors were the focus of two training courses held at ILO headquarters in Geneva in January and February. Each course, which took place over two half-days, brought together staff who had volunteered to participate as auditors during the First ILO Gender Audit from October 2001 through April 2002.

“These courses provide an opportunity for ILO gender auditors to come together and share their experiences from the first ILO Gender Audit, which was also the first such participatory gender audit of its kind in the UN system”, said Linda Wirth, Senior Specialist of the ILO Bureau for Gender Equality, and Coordinator of the audits. “As part of preparations for the Second ILO Gender Audit, which is taking place this year, we are holding the courses to help auditors improve facilitation skills and to gather their suggestions on the newly-revised auditor manual and other ways to improve the audit process”.

Participants in the refresher courses stressed the importance of semi-structured interviews as a way to gain valuable information about how work units were integrating gender into their work.

They also highlighted the importance of facilitating feedback sessions with audited units in a way that promoted ownership and acceptance of areas to improve in gender mainstreaming.

Suggestions for improving the newly-revised manual included adding sample questions when facilitating workshops with ILO constituents and partners. Auditors also identified and prioritized the most useful participatory methods in the manual.

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TECHNICAL COOPERATION

- **Enhancing Gender Mainstreaming Capacity of ILO Constituents**

Conducting gender analysis of issues related to the world of work was the focus of a training workshop in Katmandu held from 25-27 February. Around 20 senior officials of the Nepalese Ministry of Land Reform participated in the workshop, which was held as part of the Inter-Regional Project on Enhancing the Gender Mainstreaming Capacity of ILO Constituents. The project—which also covers China, Tanzania and Uganda—is coordinated by the ILO Bureau for Gender Equality.

Among other things, participants identified gaps concerning gender issues in the Ministry's policies, programmes and human resources development strategies.

“The component of the inter-regional project in Nepal”, said Jane Zhang, Bureau for Gender Equality Director and Coordinator of the project, “is small in terms of resources but high in significance and implications. This is because it aims to integrate gender into all the major ongoing ILO activities in the country including projects on bonded labour, child labour, trafficking in human beings, social protection and social dialogue”.

Equality between women and men in the workplace was also the focus of a workshop held in Kampala on 17-18 February. Around 40 representatives of the Ugandan Labour Ministry, employers' and workers' organizations, and civil society groups discussed the need for more sex-disaggregated data in both national statistics and those related to their organizations and civil society groups, and for more gender sensitization activities within them.

In Dar es Salaam during a meeting on 14 February of the task force that is implementing the project in Tanzania, around 15 participants representing partner organizations discussed joint activities. They agreed to establish terms of reference for a consultant who will be hired to develop gender analysis tools, which will also be applied in capacity building initiatives with the organizations.

The inter-regional project in the four countries aims to strengthen the implementing partner organizations' capacity to integrate the experiences and needs of women as well as of men into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their policies and programmes.

In this way it seeks to help ensure that women and men benefit equally from the partners' activities.

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AFRICA

• Gender Mainstreaming in Small and Medium Enterprises

Support of gender mainstreaming in small and medium enterprises in Tanzania was the theme of discussions at a roundtable, held 19 February in Dar es Salaam, by the ILO InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development (IFP/SEED).

The event included representatives of the Small and Medium Enterprise Section of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, which will implement the Tanzanian Government's new policy on small and medium enterprises, and mainstream gender equality into all the aspects of the policy.

“We are joining efforts to help ensure that gender mainstreaming in small and medium enterprises in Tanzania becomes a reality”, said Gerry Finnegan, Senior Specialist of the IFP/SEED team on Women’s Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE). "In this way, the ILO's support for women's entrepreneurship and gender equality in Tanzania helps to build on the needs and priorities of the Government".

For this reason, the roundtable included representatives of the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children as well as the Ministry of Labour, Youth Development and Sports, among others, in order to agree on plans for supporting the new policy.

Discussions focused on ways IFP/SEED, as part of the ILO-Ireland Aid Partnership Programme, will support creation of a Gender Mainstreaming Unit as part of the new policy. Also addressed were the ways in which stronger links can be forged between these efforts and the ILO Inter-Regional Project on Enhancing Gender Mainstreaming Capacity of ILO Constituents, which is taking place in four countries including Tanzania.

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Challenges to Women

Challenges to women—including work/family issues, violence and HIV/AIDS—were the focus of an event held on 10 March in Yaounde, Cameroon by the ILO Multi-Disciplinary Team for Central Africa (OIT/EMAC). In order to commemorate International Women’s Day, four women

representing the team shared their views on these challenges.

“We want to bring attention to important challenges and issues that women in Africa are concerned with”, said Françoise Achio, Director of OIT/EMAC. “Reconciling work and family life is a challenge to women, as well as to men, everywhere. No woman should be the victim of physical, psychological or other forms of violence, whether in the home, at the workplace or anywhere else. And women have a crucial role to play in strengthening HIV/AIDS prevention efforts and breaking the vicious cycle of silence that perpetuates spread of the pandemic”.

Several months before the event, OIT/EMAC received an award for its "remarkable support to women entrepreneurs" in the country. The *Palme du Mérite* (Merit Award) was presented to the team from the *Association Mondiale des Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises* (World Association of Women Heads of Business), and *Foire Promote 2002* (Promotion Fair 2002).

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- **Gender, Poverty and Employment in Francophone Africa**

An adaptation for use in French-speaking Africa of the ILO Capacity Building Programme on Gender, Poverty and Employment (GPE) was launched during a two-week training of trainers' course in Italy.

The course on Gender Equality, Employment Promotion and Poverty Eradication began on 31 March at the International Training Centre of the ILO, based in Turin, and was conducted in English, French and Arabic.

The adaptation in French highlights priority issues concerning gender mainstreaming and equality between women and men in the context of francophone countries in Africa.

The GPE multimedia training and information tool, which also exists in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic, contains modules on issues related to integrating gender into all aspects of poverty and employment planning and interventions.

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More information about GPE: www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/informal/gpe

- **Gender and HIV/AIDS**

Gender and HIV/AIDS was theme of a conference held in Antananarivo, Madagascar on 7 March in observance of International Women's Day. Discussions at the event, co-sponsored by ILO and five other UN system organizations, focused on how women's empowerment and gender equality can help strengthen the fight against HIV infection.

Women—and especially girls—were vulnerable to the spread and effects of HIV/AIDS, noted speakers. They highlighted strategies to empower women and girls including information sharing and awareness raising within communities about the effects of HIV/AIDS. They also discussed concrete actions in which communities, women and youth could participate to help stop spread of the pandemic.

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ARAB STATES

- **International Forum of Women Entrepreneurs**

Enhancing economic partnerships through global networks of women entrepreneurs was the theme of the First International Expo and Forum of Women Entrepreneurs organized by the *Association des Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises du Maroc* (AFEM—Association of Women Heads of Business in Morocco) held 20-22 February in Casablanca.

Around 200 women and men from almost 15 countries participated in the forum, whose supporting partners included the European Union Assistance and Support Program of Professional Associations, and the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP).

“Employers' organizations represent a key asset in any society: its enterprises”, said Mohamed Ali Ould Sidi, Responsible at ACT/EMP for Employers' Activities in Africa. “Successful enterprises—including more and more launched by women entrepreneurs—are at the heart of any strategy to create employment and improve living standards. Organizations such as AFEM and its initiative to hold this first such forum in Morocco also contribute to creating the conditions for enterprise success by influencing the environment in which they do business, and building on member organizations' strengths”.

Participants discussed the constantly-changing context that all entrepreneurs, and especially those in Morocco, are facing as a result of globalization and reforms including economic, legal, administrative, financial and tax-related. In addition to these, participants agreed, women

entrepreneurs faced additional challenges including access to credit for start-up and expansion of businesses, as well as family/work issues.

Speakers stressed the importance for all entrepreneurs—and especially women—of transparency in institutions and in decision-making at all levels. They discussed new approaches to competition and cooperation in the marketplace, innovative ways of financing market research and product development, and the “value-added” of leadership and management styles based on the strengths of consultative processes, consensus-building and risk-taking.

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ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

- **Women's Empowerment and Millennium Development Goals**

A forum in Tokyo on 6 March commemorated International Women's Day by focusing on Women's Empowerment: The Key to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The theme of the event, jointly organized by United Nations agencies represented in Japan including ILO, was the same chosen for the day during 2003 by the United Nations.

“ILO jointly organized this event in order to help promote awareness in Japan about the links between women's empowerment and ending poverty”, said Mitsuko Horiuchi, Director of the Tokyo Branch Office and Special Regional Adviser on Gender Issues. “The Millennium Goals, which were set by world leaders in 2000 at the United Nations Millennium Summit, include cutting the number of hungry people in half by 2015, and empowering women and promoting equality between women and men”.

During the forum representatives of the UN, academia, NGOs and the media shared their views. An “information market place” featured initiatives aimed at empowering women and achieving the Millennium Goals.

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- **Trafficking of Women to Japan**

Increasing awareness about Japan as a destination country for international trafficking of women was the aim of a symposium held on 22 January in Tokyo. The event was organized by the ILO Tokyo Branch Office and the Asia Foundation, with cooperation of the Civil Society Organizations Network of Japan.

The event provided an opportunity for views on trafficking in persons from various perspectives: NGOs assisting trafficked victims, law enforcement agencies, the diplomatic community, and policymakers. A 23-year old Colombian woman also told participants about her two-year ordeal in Japan as an enslaved prostitute.

“The general public fails to see the women as victims”, said Masahiro Suga, Senior Assistant for social issues at the Japanese Foreign Ministry, speaking to the *Herald Tribune/Asahi* newspaper following the symposium. Instead the public views them “as women who entered the trade knowingly and are complaining about a bad deal. I used to share that view, but after the symposium, I saw it was a totally different situation and more serious problem”.

Some panelists told the audience of around 300 people that the Japanese Government should take what they described as a stronger stand on human smuggling schemes. They said large numbers of women from other countries—in Asia as well as Latin America and elsewhere—had been coming to Japan on promises of good jobs.

However once they arrived, the victims were kept virtual prisoners by their “employers” and crime syndicates. After being burdened with unlawful debts, many were then forced into the sex industry.

NGO representatives said although official statistics were not available, they estimated that “tens of thousands” were smuggled yearly into Japan. Some speakers also called on the nation to ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, which supplements the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime.

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- **Women’s Support Project in Cambodia**

The ILO, in association with the Cambodian Ministry of Women’s and Veterans’ Affairs, has launched a project entitled Integrated Economic Empowerment, Entrepreneurship and

Employment for Women (NEEEW).

“This project focus on helping to contribute to economic empowerment of women in the country”, said Gerry Finnegan, Senior Specialist of the team on Women’s Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE) of the ILO InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development (IFP/SEED). “After some 30 years of civil war and political upheaval, Cambodia is experiencing a return to normalcy and stability. However, it will take many years for the nation and its people—especially women—to achieve full recovery”.

Over 50% of women in the country cannot read or write, and there are a significant number of women-headed households. Only a very small industrial base exists in Cambodia, alongside a large informal sector. There is no formal policy or supportive environment for enterprise development, and a lack of effective support services for enterprise creation.

Activities of the project include capacity building of the skills of officials in Women in Development centres, which are overseen by the Ministry of Women’s and Veterans’ Affairs. The centers are to be designed to promote economic empowerment of women.

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EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

• Training Workshop on Gender and Child Labour

Sensitizing policymakers, researchers, local authorities, teachers and parents about gender and child labour issues was the objective of a workshop, held in Albania on 16-17 January, by the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

Participatory sessions during the event, held in Tirana, focused on the reasons gender is an important “lens” for analysis of child labour issues, and the use of practical tools for integrating gender into work in this area.

Improvement of monitoring of activities and strengthening networks were also discussed. Training modules included child labour and gender concepts and theory; gender analysis and

practice; and a module devoted to gender-sensitive monitoring and indicators. The publication *Good Practices: Gender Mainstreaming in Actions Against Child Labour*, translated into Albanian, was among resource materials used. The text—one of the first on this topic in the country—addresses strategies, methodologies and information needs essential to planning and implementing relevant initiatives while integrating concerns and needs of both girls and boys.

The following month, the second of three workshops for IPEC staff and management on gender mainstreaming was held near Geneva. The workshop, which took place on 26-27 February, aimed to introduce participants to methodological tools to regularly integrate gender into IPEC research, advocacy, programmes and projects.

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- **Gender Dimensions of Social Security Reform**

The Gender Dimensions of Social Security Reform in Hungary, The Czech Republic and Poland, to be published in April by the ILO Central and Eastern Europe Team (ILO-CEET), shows that gender equality was not a major driving force in social security reforms since 1989 in the countries concerned.

The study, part of the ILO project on Strengthening Social Security in Central and Eastern Europe through Research and Technical Cooperation, found that in the area of family benefits, all three countries succeeded in targeting scarce resources to those most in need—thus softening some of the financial shocks associated with the shift toward a market economy. Given that women have lower average earnings and higher rates of poverty, this targeting benefited them accordingly, says the study.

“On the other hand”, said Elaine Fultz, Senior Specialist on Social Security at ILO-CEET in Budapest, “this change shifted the nature of the support from wage replacement to poverty alleviation, and it altered the status of beneficiaries from holders of personal rights to petitioners of the state. At the same time, income testing provides a disincentive to economic activity that threatens to capture some women in a trap of dependency on these benefits”.

While all three countries have extended equal treatment to men and women with respect to childcare benefits, notes the study, these reforms have not as yet been associated with any behavioral changes. In two of the three countries, large cuts in family benefits left working parents, mostly women, with considerably less support for efforts to balance family and professional responsibilities. Concerning pensions, the study shows that in all three countries the first decade of transformation brought greater losses of protection for women as compared to

men.

These losses reflect two broad trends across Central Europe. First, the strong appeal of individualism in all areas of life shaped the politics of pension reform, leading to benefits that more closely reflect contributions paid—thus a curtailment of redistribution. Given the wage gap between women and men, this trend caused disproportionate losses for women. Second, tight fiscal limitation in all three countries constrained the option for achieving equal treatment, leading to reforms that imposed greater disadvantages on women in some regards.

Three issues in the study are highlighted as meriting attention *vis-à-vis* bringing about greater gender equality in social security. First, in nations that have privatized their pension schemes, the use of separate estimates of life expectancy for men and women in computing benefits would put women at considerable risk. Second, there is great need for adherence to minimum benefit standards that ensure all those with low earnings receive decent levels of protection in retirement. Finally, the study deplores the fact that childcare has been devalued for pension purposes in two of the three countries.

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- **Honoring Women Journalists in Russia**

On 7 March in Moscow ten women journalists received honorary diplomas on behalf of the Russian Federation Ministry of Labour and Social Development, as well as the ILO Moscow Office.

The ceremony, held to commemorate International Women's Day, recognized the journalists for their writing and audio-visual messages in the mass media on socio-economic issues in the country.

In addition to print, the journalists have promoted throughout the Russian Federation the ideals of tolerance, human rights and issues related to equality between women and men in the workplace in film, radio and magazines.

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- **Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for ILO Moscow Office**

The most important recent policy development in gender mainstreaming in the ILO Moscow Office has been the adoption of a gender mainstreaming strategy. A gender audit of the Office in March 2002 highlighted good practices and areas to improve in gender mainstreaming, which were taken into account when developing the strategy.

“It was essential that the strategy was discussed and agreed upon in a consultative, team-based manner”, said Irina Melekh, Gender Focal Point in the ILO Moscow Office, “and contributed to a dialogue among the staff. This helped to strengthen an organizational culture that is more conducive to sharing information and building understanding about ‘beyond gender’ issues. The Director of the Office and all senior specialists have committed to promoting gender equality goals at the political level through actions within the Office, among ILO constituents and through budget allocations. Different opinions still exist on the process of gender mainstreaming, which will need to be taken into account while implementing the strategy and elaborating work plans of staff”.

The ILO Moscow Office is helping to introduce and clarify gender-related concepts and approaches to promote equality between women and men with constituents since in the region there is a general lack of clear national policies or institutional arrangements to pursue these goals.

For this reason the Office strategy has several dimensions. It stipulates both overall and more immediate objectives, focuses on priority gender issues in the region, identifies key areas of ILO interventions, and proposes indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

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- **Women Journalists Covering Conflict**

Humanity, peace and reconciliation are key to settling crises such as the conflict in Cyprus. Women have a crucial role to play in bridging the divisions between communities, including journalists in Cyprus who have helped to shed light on finding a route toward reconciliation.

These were some of the conclusions of a panel held in Belgium on 7 March in order to mark International Women’s Day. The theme of the panel, organized by the Brussels-based office of the ILO and the European Federation of Journalists, was Courage in Coverage: The Cypriot Conflict.

“We are holding this discussion on the eve of International Women’s Day and actually two days

before the deadline for the acceptance of a United Nations peace plan for the divided island”, said Eddy Laurijssen, Director of the ILO in Brussels, “to highlight the situation of women journalists in a conflict area. Two women—one from the Northern part of Cyprus and the other from the Southern part of Cyprus—are here to share their personal experiences in covering the island’s division”.

Sevgul Uludag, a journalist at the newspaper *Yeniduzen*, called attention to what she described as serious violations of freedom of the press in the Northern part of Cyprus. Androula Giorgiadou, Editor in Chief at Public Service Broadcasting based in the Southern part, highlighted efforts by women journalists that she said had helped contribute to overcoming some divisions on the island.

The two journalists had helped to shed new light on a long and serious conflict, observed former CNN reporter Patricia Kelly, who chaired the panel. The conflict on the island often had not reached the front page of newspapers, she noted, because mainstream media many times had failed to focus on conflicts “unless there are bullets flying around”.

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European Federation of Journalists, IPC-Residence Palace, 155 Rue de la Loi, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium, tel. +32 2 235 22 00, fax +32 2 235 22 19, www.ifj.org

• **Advancement of Women and Gender Equality**

Promoting equality between women and men, as well as women’s empowerment, were the themes of a meeting in Budapest on 7 March, the eve of International Women’s Day.

The event was held by UN system organizations with offices in the region including ILO, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

“We are holding this event to highlight contributions by our organizations aimed at helping to advance women and promote gender equality”, said Petra Ulshoefer, Director of the ILO Central and Eastern European Team.

Participants discussed findings of an ILO study on the gender dimensions of social security reform in Hungary, Czech Republic and Poland, a UNDP study on *Social Capital and Women—Why Women Suffer More and Live Longer*, FAO experiences of gender-related impacts of strengthening food security and reducing poverty, and testimony presented by UNHCR of an

African refugee in Hungary.

In addition to sharing views and experiences, speakers identified good practices and lessons learned. Participants, who were about 30% men, included government officials, academics, and representatives of workers' and employers' organizations, as well as NGOs

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RESOURCES

- **Extending Maternity Protection to Women in the Informal Economy: The Case of Nepal**

Over 85% of women in Nepal work in the informal economy, which means a majority have no access to any statutory maternity protection. This is the theme of a paper jointly published by the ILO Conditions of Work and Employment Programme (TRAVAIL) and the Global Programme on Strategies and Tools Against Social Exclusion and Poverty (STEP) of the ILO Social Security Policy and Development Branch.

The paper describes ways that maternity care has been integrated into health micro-insurance schemes in the country. Many of these are managed by community-based structures, trade unions, hospitals, and NGOs whose members belong to the informal economy.

These initiatives can be expanded to cover more women, suggests the paper, and strengths of the existing models can be built upon. Health micro-insurance schemes with a comprehensive maternity protection component would help to secure better health among poor women in the informal economy.

Therefore, concludes the paper, provision for maternity care in a community-based health micro-insurance scheme is one of the strategies for fighting the chain of events leading to maternal death.

It also contributes to achieving one of the Millennium Development Goals, and is a small but important step toward turning into reality the aim of the ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) which is to extend maternity protection to all employed women.

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www.ilo.org/step

Conditions of Work and Employment Programme (TRAVAIL), Social Protection Sector, ILO, tel. +41 22 799 6754, fax +41 22 799 8451, travail@ilo.org, www.ilo.org/protection/condtrav

- **Extending Maternity Protection to Women in the Informal Economy: The Case of VimoSEWA, India**

An estimated 400 million men and women in India—almost 95% of the workforce—are engaged in the informal economy. There are few if any provisions for social protection services to these workers—therefore women in the informal economy do not receive maternity leave or benefits.

The challenge is the focus of this paper jointly published by the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA); ILO Conditions of Work and Employment Programme (TRAVAIL); and the Global Programme on Strategies and Tools Against Social Exclusion and Poverty (STEP) of the ILO Social Security Policy and Development Branch.

The SEWA Integrated Insurance Scheme, known as VimoSEWA, was the first programme in the country to develop a maternity benefits scheme for informal women workers. The paper examines the benefits and related services available through the programme, which was launched in the Gujarat region.

Recommendations include addressing the still huge and unmet need for maternity benefits in the informal economy, including in an integrated and holistic manner with services such as health care and special nutrition.

While the Government can collaborate with SEWA to help build and extend the reach of the programme, healthcare should be extended by the national health department, observes the paper. Government targeting of services could also be improved by involving local women's groups, people's organizations and unions and NGOs, it says.

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Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Opp. Lok Manya Tilak Baug, Bhadra, Ahmedabad

380 001, India, tel. +91 79 550 6477, sewass@icenet.net

- **Study on Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan**

Results of a study on women entrepreneurs in Pakistan—the first of its kind in the country—are summarized in this report entitled *Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan: How to Improve their Bargaining Power*. The study was published by the ILO South Asia Advisory Team (ILO-SAAT), based in New Delhi, and the ILO InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development (IFP/SEED).

The business environment for women in the country, notes the study, includes restrictions on women's mobility, economic participation and business activity. A review of development planning concludes that national gender planning “has remained hostage to the welfare approach” and is devoid of commitment to gender.

However, good practices to promote small enterprise development for women are cited, including action-oriented programmes of employers' organizations and a nationalized commercial bank that provides services to women entrepreneurs.

Policy and institutional initiatives of the Government for the economic empowerment and business development of women are analyzed, followed by findings of a survey of 150 women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. The majority of women surveyed, all of whom employed a minimum of five persons and had dedicated premises for their businesses, said the most important enabling factor to starting their business was help from family.

Barriers during the start-up phase cited by the women were gender biases such as non-cooperation or hostile attitudes toward working women, marketing problems, and lack of financing. Recommendations include establishing a database of women entrepreneurs, holding a gender audit of an institution in the country working for the development of small and medium enterprises, and testing university-based modules on entrepreneurship.

Contact to order: Publications, ILO, 4 route des Morillons, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, pubvente@ilo.org, www.ilo.org/publns

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ILO Office, 58 Khayabane Iqbal, F 8/2, Islamabad, Pakistan, tel. +92 51 2276 456/7/8, fax +92 51 2279 181, islamabad@iloisb.org.pk

InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development

(IFP/SEED), ILO, 4 route des Morillons, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, tel. +41 22 799 6862, fax +41 22 799 7978, ifp-seed@ilo.org, www.ilo.org/seed

- **Household Study of Nicaraguan Migrant Women**

Within the perspective of promoting women's economic and social empowerment through all stages of the life-cycle, a study was commissioned under a project of the ILO Gender Promotion Programme (GENPROM) in Nicaragua on Promoting Employment for Migrant Women and Improved Welfare for the Families.

The report of the study, also available in Spanish, contains findings of a baseline survey of over 200 households in out-migration communities from which women had left to seek employment, mostly as domestic workers in neighbouring Costa Rica. It aims to provide information on how female labour migration may change roles and responsibilities within the household from a gender and life-cycle perspective. This includes how individuals deal with the control of resources and the redistribution of decision-making powers.

Particularly significant are the "inter-generational shifts" that occur, with added responsibilities for older women and adolescent girls who are left behind to take care of the family. The report also provides examples of practical interventions at the community level to—on one hand—promote sustainable economic alternatives to migration and—on the other hand—better prepare those women who still decide to migrate.

Contact to order: Publications, ILO, 4 route des Morillons, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, pubvente@ilo.org, www.ilo.org/publins

Gender Promotion Programme (GENPROM), ILO, 4 route des Morillons, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, tel. +41 22 799 6090, fax +41 22 799 7657, genprom@ilo.org, www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/gems/action/repncar.htm

- **Youth Employment: School-to-Work Transition Questionnaires**

This collection of questionnaires, published as part of the ILO Gender Promotion Programme (GENPROM) Series on Gender in the Life Cycle, provides a checklist of questions for conducting structured surveys to collect information on youth.

The questionnaires are designed to help identify—especially for young women—details

including perceptions and aspirations about employment, goals and values, the job search process, family influence on choice of occupation, barriers to and support for entry into the labour market, preferences for wage employment or self-employment, attitudes of employers toward hiring young workers, control over resources, marriage and family responsibilities, and reasons it is harder for young women than men to enter the labour market.

The purpose of a generic questionnaire, with separate modules on context-specific issues, is to enable flexible use and adaptation. Different modules can be combined to gather information on specific research issues. For example, the questionnaire can be used to conduct a socio-economic survey of the intended beneficiaries of a project; analyze factors that facilitate or hinder transition for young women and men from school to work; assess the level of empowerment among youth and their perceptions and aspirations for work and life; determine poverty among young women and men; and identify youth migration trends.

This tool is part of efforts of the ILO along with the United Nations and World Bank—partners of the Youth Employment Network (YEN)—to assist governments and social partners in identifying major youth employment issues, and designing and implementing integrated policy responses.

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- **Discussion Paper: Gender Equality in Employment in Zimbabwe**

This discussion paper entitled *Gender Equality in Employment: The Legal Framework in the Case of Zimbabwe* is now available on the ILO Gender Equality Tool Website (see contact below). The paper, published by the ILO Southern Africa Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (ILO-SAMAT), examines Zimbabwean law *vis-à-vis* gender discrimination, protective laws for women, sexual harassment, maternity protection and discrimination linked to HIV/AIDS.

The paper also analyzes the nation's position regarding international conventions on gender as well as social attitudes to gender equality. Legal provisions, it says, are not the major obstacle to employment of women. Instead, the main impediments are social and cultural attitudes, as well as historical disadvantages regarding access to education and training.

Recommendations include an awareness campaign on gender issues, ensuring that women have equal opportunities in education and training, and an affirmative action programme in employment legislation. The paper also suggests new formulations of gender provisions in the Constitution of Zimbabwe, as well as its entrenchment of trade union rights. Amendments are

proposed for the anti-discrimination provision of the Labour Relations Act, including gender sensitivity. Other issues addressed by the recommendations include maternity protection and sexual harassment.

Contact: A copy of the report can be accessed on www.ilo.org/gender (click on “resources”, then “search by country” and then click on “Zimbabwe”).

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• **Protección Social, Pensiones y Género**

The findings of studies in Argentina, Brazil and Chile on social protection, pensions and gender are discussed in a book in Spanish entitled *Protección, Pensiones y Género*. The book, published by the ILO Multidisciplinary Advisory Team based in Santiago, Chile, evaluates the three national cases and effects of reforms to retirement and pension systems over the last 20 years.

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• **Facts on Women at Work**

Women represent over 40% of the global labour force, according to *Facts on Women at Work*, with around 70% of women in developed countries engaged in paid employment and 60% in developing countries. Over the past two decades, says the fact sheet, growing participation of women in paid jobs has been driving employment trends. Gender gaps in labour force participation have been shrinking, and women’s entrepreneurship development has been impressive.

Worldwide, more women than ever are completing higher levels of education, and better job opportunities in many countries have increased women’s independence and resulted in a new status and role in their families and societies.

Yet progress on three key and interrelated indicators for gender equality is still inadequate: namely the “glass ceiling” (women in management positions), the gender pay gap, and the “sticky floor” (women in the lowest-paid jobs and living in poverty). Statistics in the fact sheet

cite time-use surveys concerning women and men's paid and unpaid work, as well as wage gaps and percentages of women in the informal economy. Also highlighted is the approach and role of the ILO in promoting equality between women and men, and relevant ILO instruments.

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- **Message on International Women's Day**

A message in Spanish about women in Latin America, entitled *Una Reflexión para el Día de la Mujer*, addresses what is described as the lack of women's enjoyment of political, labour and social rights.

The message refers to increasing violence against women in the region. It cites the murder of another three young women on 18 February in the town of Juárez, on the Mexican side of the border with the United States, after a series of such killings. The three had just finished their shift in a *maquila* factory at 4:00 in the morning, when safe public transportation was not available.

Women in the region—like their male counterparts—come from diverse linguistic, cultural, ethnic and class backgrounds, says the message. Thus there is a need for building solidarity among women from all walks of life in order to overcome barriers they face—and, it notes, the internalization of this submission by women themselves.

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