

## Brief Report

### Celebration of the ILO's 90 Anniversary in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Sarajevo, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2009

On 28<sup>th</sup> April 2009, the ILO Constituents in Bosnia and Herzegovina gathered in Sarajevo at a tripartite meeting to mark the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ILO and discuss its achievements worldwide and in the country. The meeting was also attended by the members of the UN Country Team in Bosnia and Herzegovina led by Ms. Cristine McNab, UN Resident Coordinator.

The tripartite meeting was opened by Ms. Lejla Tanovic, ILO National Coordinator, who after greeting the attendees on behalf of the Director General of the ILO, and the Director and the Team of the Sub Regional Office in Budapest and her own behalf, informed the attendees about the worldwide activities marking the ILO 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the ILO's Century Project and its aims, in which context she quoted the Director General of the ILO, Mr. Juan Somavia, by recalling that "Working for social justice is more than just the theme for the 90th anniversary of the ILO. It is our assessment of the past and our mandate for the future."

The National Coordinator then made an overview of the ILO achievements in its long standing history, starting from 1919 and its standard setting system through its contribution to the renewal of the world economy after the World Wars I and II and efforts to promote broader international social agenda through the inclusion of a social clause into the international trade system, to its engagement in pointing out the need for building a universal social platform so as to respond to always more expressed requests for fairer globalization.

In the context of globalization, Ms. Tanovic recalled the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work as a first step towards the ILO Decent Work Agenda and a way to incorporate the social dimension into the globalization process. She ended her opening by recalling the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for Fair Globalization, which reaffirmed the values of the Organization, consolidated the Decent Work Agenda and provided a modern vision of the ILO's mandate in the era of globalization, but also indicated the challenges ahead of the Organization in achieving its strategic objectives. With regard to the challenges, she pointed out the most relevant ones such as the provision of support to sustainable enterprises generating jobs, keeping pace with innovations requiring constant improvements in education, training, productivity and shared knowledge, strengthening tripartism and maintaining social dialogue, cooperation with the multilateral system and participation in global governance of globalization, which can be realized through joint efforts and work on their implementation by all.

Mr. Sredoje Novic, Minister of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in his address recalled the Nobel Prize for Peace awarded to the ILO for its contribution to peace recalling that the ILO has always been a vigorous champion of justice permanently advocating the incorporation of social goals into global and national economies, in which mandate the principles of social justice, freedom of association and expression, as well as a need to fight poverty reside.

He further recalled that these principles served as a basis for the ILO's activities in BiH since 1996 through its Decent Work Country Programmes.

The minister recalled that the ILO has been providing its assistance through policy advice and technical cooperation programmes in the development of labour legislation compatible with social model of market economy, establishment and development of industrial democracy, strengthening of labour administration capacities, reduction of unemployment and poverty through the creation of vocational training centres, support to private sector and entrepreneurship through the establishment of the agencies for SME development, overall efforts aimed at the reduction of informal economy and undeclared work, and strengthening social protection system through the provision of expertise in the area of pension and disability insurance and occupational safety and health. He further mentioned the assistance provided to the country so as to comply with its obligations deriving from its membership in the Organization, i.e. provision of the reports on ratified Conventions. He invited the representatives of entity level Ministries and social partners to speak more in detail about the achievements of the Organization given to their direct engagement.

The Minister concluded his speech by recalling 28th April as the World OSH Day, and that health and life at work are one of basic human rights, and OSH one of the pillars of the ILO. He further recalled the figures related to accidents at work or occupational diseases and recalled that work can be decent only if it is safe and healthy, and stressed that all of them, i.e. government, workers and employers have to provide their contribution in order to have safe and healthy work and prevent occupational accidents and diseases.

Ms. Christine McNab addressed the attendees in her capacity of the UN Resident Coordinator. In her speech, she recalled that the ILO has for many years been campaigning for Decent Work and the need for Decent Work is still a high priority, but this agenda has become overshadowed by the global economic crisis and consequent loss of jobs. BiH is vulnerable to the crisis as are all countries, and already there are job losses with reportedly over 20 000 jobs already lost in the formal sector. She then recalled a large informal sector economy in BiH and the difficulties to measure job losses in the informal sector, or to record people moving from the formal sector to informal jobs.

Ms. McNab also stressed that with under-resourced social security systems, many people who are unemployed will suffer from economic insecurity, and this will impact on their lives and the lives of their families because finding new jobs will take time as there is no longer expected to be any growth in the economy in 2009, which makes the work of the ILO even more important. It is essential that people who are still working be given fair conditions of work and payment, i.e. decent work and that workers who are seeking new jobs will be given support and help to do so.

In this context, Ms. McNab said that ILO in BiH will collaborate with other UN agencies in BiH and with Government to work particularly with young people who are seeking work, and who are considering migration as a possibility, or returning to the country after a period of working or studying abroad. In this context she stressed that the project, funded by the Spanish MDG-Achievement Fund, can help young people deal with the very stressful situation of looking

for work during a global economic downturn. The UN agencies in BiH will also work as closely as possible with the ILO in all measures that it takes together with government to ameliorate the situation of workers and businesses suffering from the crisis.

According to the Speaking Order, after these three opening remarks the attendees were addressed by Mr. Cedo Kovacevic, Assistant Minister of Labour and War Invalids Welfare of the Republika Srpska, Ms. Dzana Kadribegovic, Assistant Minister of Labour and Social Policy of the Federation of BiH, Ms. Ranka Misic, President, and Ms. Velka Odzakovic, Secretary, of the Trade Unions Confederation of the Republika Srpska, Mr. Edhem Biber, President of the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of BiH, and Mr. Alija Baksic, Director of the Employers Association of BiH. They all emphasised the energy invested by the ILO in achieving social justice and decent work.