

NEWS

Eastern Europe & Central Asia



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The ILO Moscow Office works in close cooperation with the other UN Agencies in Moscow and the 10 countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia

The end of the biennium is a time for drawing conclusions about the past and looking forward to future activities. A short version of the Summary of the ILO Moscow activities in 2000-2001 is available on the Office website at <http://www.ilo.ru/en/acts2k01.htm>

One of the distinctive features of the ILO Moscow/Eastern Europe and Central Asia Team activities in the current biennium has been the close cooperation with the entire UN Community of the 10 countries. There is no doubt, that the interagency cooperation received a boost in March 2000, when the Director of the ILO Moscow Office Mr. Jean-Victor Gruat was appointed the Resident-Coordinator of the UN System in Russian Federation A.I. (until March 2001).

Please find below the Anticipated Priorities for the coming biennium of 2002-2003, which has been drafted in accordance with the ILO Operational Objectives.

ANTICIPATED PRIORITIES FOR 2002-2003

(ACCORDING TO THE ILO OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES)

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ONE

Promote and realise standards and fundamental principles and rights at work

1a. Standards and fundamental principles and rights at work ILO member States give effect to the principles and rights concerning freedom of association and collective bargaining and the elimination of forced labour, child labour and discrimination in employment and occupation.

1b. Child labour Child labour is progressively eliminated, priority being given to the urgent elimination of its worst forms and to providing alternatives for children and families

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE TWO

Create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income

2a. Employment policy support ILO constituents are better equipped to analyse trends in national and global Employment and labour markets, and to elaborate, advocate and implement effective strategies for the promotion of decent employment for men and women.

2b. Knowledge, skills and employability ILO constituents invest more in training and skills development to provide men and women improved and equal access to decent jobs.

2c. Employment creation ILO member States and constituents are better equipped to design and implement employment promotion programmes in the areas of enterprise development and employment-intensive investment, including in post-crisis situations, paying particular attention to the situation of women.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE THREE

Enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all

3a. Social Security Member States broaden the scope and the instruments of social security systems (including the informal sector and the working poor), improve and diversify benefits, strengthen governance and management, and develop policies to combat adverse effects of social and economic insecurity.

3b. Working conditions ILO constituents target and take effective action to improve safety and health and conditions of work, with special attention to the most hazardous conditions at the workplace.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FOUR

Strengthen tripartism and social dialogue

4a. Social partners The representation, services and influence of the social partners are strengthened.

4b. Governments and institutions of social dialogue The legal frameworks, institutions, machinery and processes for social dialogue are strengthened.



The Policy of Social Protection of Population Adopted in Kazakhstan

On June 27, 2001, the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan adopted a new Policy for Social Protection.

After adoption of the policy it is intended to introduce new legislation which will improve the social protection system of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

It is intended to have a two-stage implementation process.

I stage (2001-2002):

Conducting actuarial calculations, drawing-up and adopting legislation on mandatory employer social insurance for occupational injury from July 2002; drawing up and adoption of legislation on invalidity and survivors, amending existing legislation on pension and taxation, development of pension annuities, preparation of leg-

islation to regularize the activity of the Social Insurance Fund; and introduction of information system.

II stage (2003-2005):

Inclusion of unemployment in the list of mandatory social insurance risks, transition to benefits being paid on a unified national individual record basis, improvement of the assessment of incomes, progressive alignment of minimum wage and subsistence level; development of new forms of targeted assistance to individuals at risk, inclusion of lump-sum allowance at childbirth and family allowances into mandatory types of assistance financed from the state budget.

The unofficial translation of the entire text is available at <http://www.ilo.ru/en/cp/kz/concept.pdf>



Current situation in the social and labour spheres in Georgia

On October 2, 2001, the Programme of Cooperation between the ILO and Georgia for the years 2002-2003 has been signed in Tbilisi. The full version of the document is available on the ILO Moscow website at http://www.ilo.ru/en/CP/GE/pc0203_e.htm.

In 1991, Georgia declared independence and began to move toward a market economy. The past ten years were very hard for the country. The economic construction process was interrupted by internal tensions even during the first few years of independence. Civil war and ethnic conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia resulted in destroyed economies, lost territories, 300,000 refugees and thousands of dead. During 1992-93, national enterprises output decreased by six times and operated at 15-18% compared to 1989. Light and heavy industry equipment was sacked and illegally exported. Unemployment and inflation reached peak levels. A stabilization program, instigated together with the International Monetary Fund, was put into place in 1995. Economic decline was stopped and in 1997 some progress was achieved. By the end of 1998, under the influence of the so-called Asian crisis budget crisis re-emerged in Georgia, which ultimately resulted in an economic crisis. The problems caused by the Chechnya war and the flow of refugees from Chechnya also contributed to the situation. These problems still pose significant difficulties for Georgia and its economy. Nowadays, the country faces a poorly developed economy and multiple levels of unemployment. The country's trade and debt deficits indicate the fragility of the Georgian economy. Such a situation may put into jeopardy the principles of social justice – so essential to universal and lasting peace.

According to data for 1989 there were 5.1 million inhabitants in Georgia. According to expert calculations, over 500-800,000 employable people between the ages of 25-50 left Georgia to seek jobs. According to the independent experts, more than 60% country's residents are below the poverty level. In spite of these negative indicators, there have been significant changes to the economic structure and the trade, service, transportation and communication spheres are currently developing well.

During the last year (2000) the Government of Georgia realized serious reforms in the spheres of social protection, employment and labour relations. Also, special attention is paid to the state adjustment of the points of labour migration. There are new drafts of law "On the Employment", "On the Labour Migration" and "Labour Laws Code", drafts of normative acts and "Conceptual Directions of State Employment Policy".

Low living standards of the population arising from this social problem indicate to the necessity of achieving an active state policy in all directions.

With this in mind, Georgia signed European Society Charter in June 2000 and is determined to proceed with ILO support.

Russia urged to ratify C182

The problem of child labour in Russia has increased recently, following the economic crisis of the 90s. Russian society found itself having to face the new challenge of homeless children. The children - separated from their homes and families and thrown on the streets - were both easy prey to criminals and a supply of cheap labour. Nowadays the state institutions and numerous NGOs actively support the disadvantaged group, but quite often this aid is not effective, since few people understand the phenomenon of street children.

But there is an international organization - the ILO, which has a good understanding of the problem, through its programme - IPEC, the International Programme for Elimination of Child Labour. This International Labour Organization project coordinates technical cooperation in the field of combating the child labour, including its worst forms, in dozens of countries.

IPEC has accumulated expertise in fighting the worst forms of child labour since the launch of a Project "Street Children of St. Petersburg: from Exploitation to Education" in 2000. According to an estimate, there are 30 to 50 thousands working children in the second largest city of Russian Federation. The IPEC objective is to improve their working conditions and - at best - to bring 5000 children back to school from their workplaces.

The basis of IPEC activities in Russia is the ILO Convention of 1999 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (No.182). In order to promote it, the ILO Moscow Office and the Russian Ministry of Labour and Social Development organized the international tripartite workshop in June 2001.

It has been noted, and a previous analysis showed, that most children are involved in agriculture and in small and medium businesses. In addition, representatives of some ministries have drawn attention to the use of children in the war in the territory of the Chechen Republic.

As regards the low level of awareness among the public on the acuteness and scope of the problem in Russia, the participants of the workshop have suggested that a nation-wide media campaign be organized in order to sensitise civil society on the issue of engaging children in the worst forms of child labour detrimental to



50 to 70 percent of the Saint-Petersburg street children are below 13 years old

their lives, health, and morals.

The workshop as a whole was in favour of the ratification of the ILO Convention of 1999 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (No.182), and most of the participants have urged the ratification of the Convention by the Russian Federation in the near future.

The main reasons given by the participants for ratifying the Convention are the following:

- The current legislation in Russia could serve as a good base for implementation of standards fixed in the ILO Convention No.182;
- The nature and dimensions of the problems, related to the worst forms of child labour demand strong tripartite cooperation and especially governmental structures activities;
- Most agencies and organizations represented at the workshop have declared their willingness to join the movement for the elimination of conditions leading to the use of child labour, especially in its worst forms.

Participants have been unanimous in their wish to organize a nation-wide conference in the first quarter of 2002 in order to discuss the problems of combating child labour and its worst forms. This conference would involve a large number of the agencies and organizations concerned.

More information about IPEC activities in Russia can be obtained from Ms. Pirjo Mikkonen, IPEC Coordinator in Russia, tel. (095) 933 08 23 or e-mail mikkonen@ilo.ru

We make the ILO experience available to everyone

Ludmila Ouskova, ILO Moscow Public Relations Officer:

The ILO Moscow Office places high priority on book publishing, which has been demonstrated in recent years by the significant increase of the number of publications..

In 2000-2001 the experts of the Moscow Bureau produced about 20 publications which included researches on the most important international labour and social problems, normative reference books, collections on labour and health protection, materials on the issues of social protection, textbooks on management.

In particular, a broad section of readers might be interested in the books like “The Enlightenment of the Economic Reform in China to CIS Countries” by Professor Hou Wenruo (EECAT Series #6) and “Socially Responsible Restructuring of the Enterprises”. The former contains an analysis of the 20 year-long reform of the service of employment and the social security system in the People’s Republic of China. The latter is the first attempt at considering the complex issues of organizational, legal and social problems, that arise at the restructuring of enterprises.

Occasionally ILO Moscow Publications have risen new issues for consideration by the 10 CIS countries. For example, a successful attempt at dealing with the complex phenomenon of poverty was made in the publication “Russia: Preparing to fight poverty: Analysis and methodological approaches”. The acute problem the CIS countries face, of fighting against child labor, is touched upon in two publications, “Action Against Child Labour” and “Analysis of the situation of the working street-children in St. Petersburg”.

A priority for the publishing activity of the Moscow Office is to the “EECAT Series” (materials drawn up by the experts of the Group for Eastern Europe and Central Asia),

being published since 1999. Within this series, nine publications on a wide range of problems were released, including the reform of the labour legislation in Russia, employment and policy in the labour markets of the countries in transition, fundamentals of the cooperative movement, methods of the migration statistics and other vital issues of the social-labour sphere.

A big demand for the information given by the ILO has caused changes in the ways of presenting the data. In two last years the Moscow Office has released some reference materials on compact discs. For instance, the 4th edition of the “Encyclopaedia on Occupational Safety and Health” (published in 2000) and the Collection of texts of all the ILO conventions

and recommendations are distributed in CD-ROM version. Both the projects are also present on the Internet (check the details of these resources on <http://www.ilo.ru/en/projects.htm>). A full and updated list of the Bureau’s publications in Russian is available on <http://www.ilo.ru/en/PUBS/ilopubs.htm>.

Those who are interested in social and labour sphere and related problems can always follow the new publications of the Moscow Office and obtain the texts of some of them as well. In this case, the long distances of Eurasia are not an obstacle!

Update!

The second volume of the “Encyclopaedia on Occupational Safety and Health”, 4th edition, in Russian, arrived to the Office Library. In 2000 a CD-ROM version was presented to the public, and now this world-renowned edition is also available on paper.

The second volume contains the following sections of the Encyclopaedia: Section 5 - Psychological and Organizational Factors, Section 6 - General Hazards, Section 7 - The Environment, and Section 8 - Accidents and Safety Management.

