



# Newsletter

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## Fair Globalisation for the Russian Federation

*In February 2002 the International Labour Organization established "The World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization" to respond to the needs of people as they cope with the unprecedented challenges which globalization has brought to their lives, their families, and to the societies in which they live.*

Ms. Valentina Matvienko was invited by Juan Somavia, the Director General of the ILO to contribute to the deliberation of the World Commission in her personal capacity as Vice Prime Minister of the Russian Federation. The Commission examined ways in which international organizations can contribute to a more inclusive globalization process that is fair for all.

Russia has been identified to be among the first countries where the Commission piloted national consultations. The first national round table on "The Social Dimension of Globalization" with about 50 participants representing a wide range of stakeholders from state and public institutions was held on September 25, 2002 in Moscow. As was mentioned in the welcoming address of Ms. Matvienko "the general task formulated at largest international forums timed to the beginning of the new millennium – is to transform globalization into a locomotive

of social and economic progress and to make its benefits available to all the states". She reaffirmed that "we have always been for the increased role and strengthened authority of the UN and the ILO in the XXIst century. We are assured that the issues of social development will stay among the priorities on the agenda of these international organizations".

The final report of the Commission was launched in 2004. The report has a critical but positive message and calls for: making decent work a key goal of economic policy, better international policies and more accountable institutions. It reaffirms the need for mobilizing action for change and recognizes the importance of good national governance, respect for human rights and gender equality, social equality and the rule of law, effective role of the state and sound institutions to support and supervise markets. It also asserts the need for regular national reviews of the social implications of economic, financial and trade policies, Policy Coherence Initiative by relevant UN bodies, the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO and the ILO on key issues addressing the social dimension of globalization, a Globalization Forum among interested international organizations, as part of a sustained effort to make dialogue between different points of view the foundation of a fairer globalisation, joint research programmes on key issues among UNCTAD, WTO and ILO, and wider participation of non-state actors, people and countries in the making of policies which affect them making globalization fair for all.

As stated by Lord Brett "The history of the UN is littered with worthy reports on many subjects, most of which gather dust with their recommendations having been applauded but not implemented. To ensure that fate does not befall the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation Report, the Commissioners have sought to stimulate discussion and consideration of the Report and its important conclusions on every continent. It is important to get

the support of those who participated in the dialogues held during the World Commission's two year deliberations and the reactions to the report in different regions of the world. In this context the meeting in St. Petersburg on the 13<sup>th</sup> September is of great significance".

The World Commission's report was very well received in the Russian Federation and the ILO tripartite constituents requested the ILO to launch the report in the Russian Federation. The ILO is responding to this request and initiating a national round table on "A Fair Globalization for the Russian Federation" to be held in Saint Petersburg on September 13<sup>th</sup> with the participation of two Commissioners Ms. Matvienko and Lord Brett. There will be about 70 participants representing business, labour, government, legislative and also international organizations present at the meeting, who will present their viewpoints on how the recommendations of the World Commission's Report can be implemented within the Russian context aiming at making globalization fair for all.

It is expected that the outcome of the Russian meeting in a form of a communiqué, which will make a most valuable contribution to the upcoming discussions at the United Nations General Assembly reviewing the progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. ■

### Valentina I. Matvienko Commissioner, WCSDG

Governor of St. Petersburg since 2003. before that Ms. Matvienko served as Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation with responsibility for social



issues, education and culture. She was also responsible for relations between the Government and trade unions, social movements and associations, religious organizations and mass media. Prior to that Ms. Matvienko was a diplomat and long-serving Government official.

### Lord Brett (Bill Brett), Commissioner, WCSDG

Since January of 2004 Director of the ILO London Office. Chair of the ILO Governing Body for 2002-2003 period. Before that Lord Brett served as a member of the Workers' Group of the Governing Body of the ILO for ten years and Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body for nine years. He has had a long and committed career with trade unions. He was appointed a member of the House of Lords of the United Kingdom in June 1999.





## Maternity protection in the Russian Federation and ILO Convention No. 183

Article by Svetlana G. Misikhina

*The ILO Convention No. 183, "Convention concerning the revision of the Maternity Protection Convention, 1952", was adopted by the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation on June 15, 2000. Convention No. 183 was adopted as a convention revising provisions of Convention No. 103 (1952) and Recommendation No. 95 (1952) on maternity protection to widen the coverage (all employed women instead of different categories of employed women), strengthen protection (14 weeks of maternity leave instead of 12 weeks) and to recognize the diversity of economic and social development of countries. To date, Convention No. 183 has been ratified by 10 countries, in particular, Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Cuba, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia.*

### Provisions of Convention No. 183

The section of the Convention entitled «Health Protection» provides that pregnant or breastfeeding women are not obliged to perform work which is prejudicial or significantly risky to the health of the mother or child.

Under the «Maternity Leave» section, pregnant women are entitled to a period of maternity leave of not less than 14 weeks. Leave shall be provided in the case of illness, complications, or risk of complications arising out of pregnancy or childbirth ("in case of illness").

Under the «Benefits» section, benefits will be provided to women on leave due to pregnancy and childbirth, or in case of illness, at a level not less than two-thirds of the woman's previous earnings. Such benefits are available to a large majority of the women to whom this Convention applies. These benefits shall be provided through compulsory social insurance or public funds. When a woman is not entitled to such benefits, she will be eligible for social assistance. This Section also makes provisions for the need to provide prenatal, childbirth, and postnatal care.

Under the section entitled «Employment Protection and Non-Discrimination», it is unlawful for an employer to terminate the employment of a woman during her pregnancy or absence on leave in case of illness, or during a period following her return to work, "except on grounds unrelated to the pregnancy or birth of the child and its consequences or nursing". After termina-

tion of maternity leave, the woman should have the right to return to her previous or an equivalent job. The member states shall adopt measures to ensure that maternity does not constitute a source of discrimination in employment.

The «Breastfeeding Mothers» section provides a woman with the right to one or more daily paid breaks or a daily reduction of hours of work to breastfeed her child.

### Russian Legislative Provisions

A number of legislative and standard acts on maternity protection have been developed and passed in the Russian Federation.

Under Articles 253 and 254 of the Labour Code of the Russian Federation ("Labour Code"), no woman is obliged to perform hard and unhealthy and/or hazardous work, and a pregnant woman can (a) be moved to another job, or (b) work with a decreased rate of output.

Under Article 255 of the Labour Code, women can apply for prenatal and postnatal leaves of 70 calendar days each.

Leave in cases of short-term sickness, pregnancy, and childbirth are provided by the Fundamental Principles of the Russian Legislation on Public Health Care. Under Article 255 of the Labour Code, antenatal leave is increased in cases of multiple pregnancy, and postnatal leave is increased in cases of complications or multiple childbirth.

A maternity benefit in the Russian Federation is set at the amount of average earnings (income) at the place of employment for women covered by public social insurance, and some others categories of women (Federal Law No. 81-FZ). In the first quarter of 2003, the average daily amount of maternity benefits was 63.3% of the average daily wage, i.e. almost in compliance with provisions of the Convention No.183.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that women in Russia are also entitled to other benefits. Where her family's income is below the subsistence minimum, a woman may also apply for state social assistance.

Fundamental Principles of the Russian Legislation on Public Health Care defines the right of pregnant women to prenatal, childbirth, and postnatal care at the expense of special funds for protection of public health and other sources.

Under Article 4 of Federal Law No. 81-FZ maternity benefits are financed by the Social In-



Svetlana Misikhina, Social Protection and Labour Market Statistics Expert, ILO Subregional Office in Moscow; PhD

urance Fund of the Russian Federation, federal budget fund, and budget funds of regions of the Russian Federation.

Article 261 of the Labour Code provides "it is unlawful for an employer to terminate the employment of a pregnant woman, except in the event of liquidation of the organisation. Likewise, it is unlawful for an employer to terminate the employment contract of a woman who has children younger than 36 months".

Article 3 of the Labour Code prohibits the deprivation of workers' rights and liberties on the basis of circumstances other than their work-related qualities. Under Article 64 of the Labour Code, "it is unlawful to refuse an employment contract to a woman on the basis of her pregnancy or children". Article 65 of the Labour Code prohibits employers from requiring a pregnancy test.

Under Article 258 of the Labour Code, an employed woman with a child under 18 months is entitled to paid breaks to breastfeed her child.

Despite significant measures taken by the Russian Federation to ensure the maternity protection, some employers do not comply. In 2002, Federal Labour Inspection agencies carried out a number of inspections to check compliance with provisions of the laws on labour and labour safety of women. Inspectors identified and removed more than 34,000 violations, among which numbered violations of Article 261 of the Labour Code, "Guarantees to pregnant women and women with children under termination of employment" (Gender Problems in Russia. World Bank, 2004).

So the Russian Federation has achieved important results in maternity protection that is to a great extent in conformity with the provisions of the ILO Convention No.183 despite the fact that the Russian Federation has not ratified it. Nevertheless the issue of implementation of maternity protection legislation is of a great importance. ■



## Seafarers Identity Card: Ratification of the ILO Convention No. 185

*An international labour standard designed to create a new biometric identity verification system for the world's 1.2 million maritime workers has received sufficient ratifications to go into force in February 2005.*

ILO Convention No. 185, adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2003 to bolster international security in the global sea shipping industry, received its second ratification from Jordan. The Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention, 2003 (No. 185) was previously ratified by France. Two member States must ratify the Convention before it can go into force.

In addition to France and Jordan, several countries are also taking steps towards ratification of the new instrument. Following the ratification of the new Convention by Jordan, the Convention will enter into force on 9 February 2005. However, countries that have already ratified could begin to issue new Seafarers Identity Documents before the end of the year.

Convention No. 185, adopted to replace the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention

No. 108 (1958), has been hailed as a major step toward strengthening security measures on the high seas and in the world's ports. At the same time, it is also designed to ensure the rights and freedoms of maritime workers and facilitate mobility in the exercise of their profession—for example when they board their ships to work, take shore leave or return home.

“The tragic consequences of terrorism can be aggravated by security measures resulting in hardship for the world's seafarers, including work under detrimental conditions or loss of jobs, and for world shipping in general,” said Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry, Director of the ILO programme that promotes the new instrument. “This convention provides an unprecedented international system for identification freely agreed to on behalf of Governments, ship owners and seafarers.”

In the framework of Convention No. 185, the Governing Body of the ILO approved in March 2004 a biometric verification system, which provides a more rigorous response to the need for

increased security in the maritime industry.

The new identity document for seafarers allows for the use of a "biometric template" to turn two fingerprints of a seafarer into an internationally standardized 2-D barcode on the Seafarer's Identity Document (SID). Employers' groups, workers' groups and governments represented at the Governing Body supported the approval of a new standard as a matter of urgency to meet new security measures already being imposed on seafarers worldwide.

All countries ratifying Convention No.185 will be able to issue new SIDs that conform to the requirements specified in standard ILO SID-0002 Finger Minutiae-Based Biometric Profile for Seafarers' Identity Documents.

The 1958 instrument had been ratified by 61 ILO member States representing 60.7 per cent of the world shipping fleet. These member States also can, under certain conditions, already issue updated documents pending their ratification of the new Convention.

In order to ensure that SIDs are globally recognizable, the ILO is currently preparing to test biometric identity verification systems from a number of suppliers for compatibility with its requirements. ■



## ILO to Improve the Employment Situation in Kyrgyzstan

*In February and March 2004, the Government of Kyrgyzstan adopted a National Employment Concept (Concept), which outlined the main areas needing employment policy reform and intervention. The ILO was asked by the Ministry of Labour to draft a medium/long-term National Employment Programme (NEP) 2004-2010 based on this Concept.*

The ILO specialists drafted the NEP by July 2004. Particular attention was paid to: vocational education, training reforms and development, entrepreneurship development (particularly for SMEs), and active labour market policies (reinvigoration), which reflect policy guidelines provided by the ILO's Global Employment Agenda (GEA).

The target groups, in order of priority, were as follows: youth, women's integration into the labour market, long-term unemployed, and disabled persons. The draft Programme includes a short description of the current economic and labour market situation, risks and assumptions, main objectives and priorities of

the employment programme, implementation mechanisms, institutional procedures, participation and timetable, structure of the programme, necessary resources, evaluation procedures, and other recommendations.

The draft document was presented to the key national stakeholders, international organizations, and bilateral donors active in the sphere of economic development and employment at a seminar on 20 July, 2004, in Bishkek,

during an ILO mission to Kyrgyzstan. This seminar was opened by Roza Aknazarova, Minister of Labour and Social Protection, and subsequently chaired by Murat

Mambetaliev, Deputy Minister.

One of the objectives of the seminar was to invite comments to be included in the NEP. To follow up, the Government will establish a tripartite working group to develop the programme further and reach an agreement on its implementation. The ILO will integrate the comments into the NEP and present it to the Ministry. Upon approval, the Programme is expected to begin in 2005. ■





## Doing Good—One of Life's Great Pleasures

Article by Dilbar Dzhakhongirova

### I

The state, as a social institution, is commonly understood to organize community life, satisfy public needs, and serve public interests - in contrast to a civil society, which is based on private interests. Uzbekistan is now building a socially-oriented, law-governed state with a strong social function.

The value of a law-governed state is increased by the extent to which its people are the source of power: this recognizes the need of individuals and society to be free from unrestrained government intervention, and that the state is obliged to obey the law in everything it does. Its value is further increased by the extent to which there is:

- recognition of the need for a democratic system,
- democratic functioning of the bodies of state authority,
- separation of powers into legislative, executive and judicial branches,
- recognition of, and respect for, an independent judiciary, and
- enhancement of the role and significance of the human factor in the life of public, state and social institutions.

Since the human dimension ultimately determines the direction and effectiveness of all ongoing reforms, human morality, intellect, and enlightenment have great impact on action taken.

A socially-oriented state is the most important condition precedent for the development of the trade union movement. Without social justice there can be no sustainable democracy, and the trade unions that have an extremely important role to play in this respect must not impede progress: rather, they facilitate the safeguarding of the social gains in society, without which democracy cannot be stable.

The trade unions of Uzbekistan stand firm in the struggle against the evils of international terrorism. They are deeply aware of the fact that terrorism is an enemy of mankind and that fighting it is one of the most important tasks facing the world community. Terrorism brings about radical changes in our mentality and reminds us that the right to life is the most important of all human rights. This is why the trade union movement cannot stand on the sidelines of the struggle against this threat to mankind. In combating terrorism we fight simultaneously all kinds of injustice, and make our contribution to the creation of an international community that is just to all regardless of religious affiliation and race.

### II

The trade unions occupy a special place among public institutions because they are essential to any democratic society, and they alone function within the system of labor relations.

A trade union consists first and foremost of a voluntary movement of workers who join forces in an effort to set forth their joint demands and to protect what they believe to be their rights. Such rights cannot be defined or granted once and for all because problems confronting workers in the workplace cannot be resolved once and for all time. For this reason trade unions, which form a voluntary movement that draws strength from the support provided by its members, have to be continually developing organizations capable of renewing their demands over a long period of time. The trade union organization needs to have a strong presence for another reason: situations and people may change but the need for union activity remains immutable. Workers in any society need protection from injustices such as arbitrary decisions and abuse of office by, and insults from, some employers. Workers are in need of a better position in life, and of more rights and better living standards - none of which can be attained without ongoing organized collective efforts led by a democratic organization.

For many employers, discussing social and economic issues with workers' representatives, and solving problems with joint efforts, have become a normal element of the enterprise management process, which is aimed at, among other things, the reduction of the number of unforeseen incidents. Social dialogue between employers' and workers' representatives can now be regarded as an essential part of the social mechanism, and essential to its smooth operation. The main objective of the dialogue between the social partners is to find a consensus on the development priorities and distribution of the fruits of economic growth, as well as forging solidarity, unity, and fraternity.

The significance of the trade union movement stems first from the fact that it is fully democratic in nature. Trade unions as workers' organizations exist for the workers, who are called upon to define the aims and nature of union activity. The democratic nature of the trade unions manifests itself both internally and externally (in their relations with the employers' organizations, with the government, and with the political parties) in the following ways:

- in equality of all their members (the trade unions bring together all workers irrespective of race, gender or religious affiliation, and grant equal rights to all),
- in trade union control over its members elected to positions, and
- in decision-making procedures.

However, trade unions cannot function efficiently without support from the government, because the government plays a dual role within the framework of the social partnership



Dilbar Dzhakhongirova, Chairperson of the Council, Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan; Oliy Majlis deputy

system. First of all, it is a major employer. Secondly, the government influences the relationship of social partners through law-making and issuing government resolutions, which regulate the social and labor sphere.

For the trade unions it is important in principle that Uzbekistan has chosen a strategy of state building that is based on the prototypes of a socially oriented law-governed state and a civil society with an effective market economy, and enshrined the principles of social partnership in the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. These principles stand above politics and conflicts between political forces.

At present, the formation of a new system of state governance is in full swing in the Republic. It is a system that is fully appropriate for renewed economic relations. Government intervention in economic management is being reduced, free enterprise is developing, and economic relations are being liberalized. These transformations have made it necessary for the trade unions to:

- review their functions, structures, work styles and methods,
- use more constructively their financial resources and methods of new personnel recruitment and job placement,
- evaluate the fulfillment of set assignments from the viewpoint of advanced foreign experience, and
- enhance the efficiency of the system of interaction of the trade union committees at all levels, on the basis of newly introduced information technologies.

Special attention needs to be paid to improved information analysis, evaluation, and prediction in the decision-making process in the regional and central trade union committees and, above all, National Trade Union Center.

On-going social changes demand alterations in trade union organizations. Democracy is not confined to parliamentary institutions. Politi-

cal democracy needs to be backed by social democracy, which means that non-governmental organizations must be able to meet the entire range of social requirements. It is not enough for an organization to protect the rights of its workers. They must be able to understand their rights and exercise them in their day-to-day life.

How can we interest every worker in trade union activities carried out at an enterprise or in society as a whole? How can each and every person be persuaded to take part in the work of a trade union organization? How can trade unions be made more attractive? These are the fundamental questions to which answers must be found today. An organization that is run democratically is an organization that is aware of the fact that each of its steps is backed by all of its members, who together are a force that cannot be disregarded. The trade union movement is renewed by democratization, the process enabling ever more activists to play roles in their respective trade unions' day-to-day lives.

Common people's activity in the trade union movement is, however, not synonymous with anything done spontaneously or in an amateurish way. The trade union movement has developed an entire range of instruments and methods which help it carry on its activities with sufficient effectiveness. Any protection of workers' rights requires good skills to be applied in collective bargaining and effective updating procedures. The rights secured by workers at any given moment, and within a specific context of the existing balance of forces, can only obtain legal status and lasting significance if and when they are incorporated in collective agreements.

It is vitally important to provide training to the rank-and-file trade union members in the use of these technologies, thus guaranteeing that the trade unions will not be run "from above" by a narrow group of professional trade unionists who are "in the know." On the contrary, the objective is to achieve a situation in which as many activists as possible are able to play a role in the day-to-day life of the organization at its lowest level. In this respect, democratization of the trade union organization, and its continuing renewal, can be achieved by training activists to work in the front

lines on the shop floor or at regional levels.

The trade union movement must look to the future – not merely by reacting to emerging problems, but by bearing in mind the experience accumulated by other trade union organizations, studying legislation, and monitoring economic developments. Hence, there is a need for the ongoing instruction of trade union activists, both individually and collectively. Ongoing information analysis and quests for new forms of social protection are necessary.

The role which local trade unions play is enhanced in the new economic situation: they now have a greater role in the development of the trade union movement, which is no longer limited to collective bargaining or signing collective agreements. The movement is also engaged in the handling of individual problems and disputes that arise in the workplace.

The trade unions exist primarily for the purpose of protecting union members in their day-to-day life. Failing this, the risk is high that their members will regard all statements made by their union leaders on "protection of workers' interests" or "defense of workers' rights" as nothing more than "hot air." If the trade union movement wants to win the workers' confidence, it must handle specific practical issues, which means that it must pay attention to all the "little problems" facing each and every worker and make efforts to find solutions that suit the workers concerned. After all, these "little problems" affect workers directly and affect their day-to-day life. Any real protection of the workers' interests begins with specific actions.

### III

It is clear from the above that all these realities give rise to new demands which the trade union leaders have to meet at all levels – from the union committee chairmen to the leaders of the trade union centers. The key demand is for them to act first of all as social leaders. Strong individuals are not necessarily leaders. A leader is a person who has ideas or concepts which can be translated into life by one's own efforts and through mobilization of other people.

One can become a trade union leader if one is ready to act, build relations, and uphold human values. A trade union leader is required

to conduct negotiations, foster proper motivation in the members of a collective, listen, and enlist the cooperation of people of different status; to talk things over and give others their due, as well as delegate authority to members of a team of activists. A union leader must be spontaneous and seek self-perfection, maintain confidence in him or herself, be consistent in the attainment of objectives, and know how to win like-minded people over to one's side.

It is understandable that, in a modern situation, a union leader is not only capable of giving guidance to union members, but also of controlling an entire network of relationships, including those with people who are not formally subordinate to him or her. It means that a trade union leader must know one's social partners and what makes them tick - all there is to know about them, just as well as one knows one's own union activists. A trade union leader must be able to motivate and inspire not only members of a workers' union but also the employers.

How effectively a trade union performs its role in the social partnership system depends largely on the image of each specific union leader. Work to form one's own image begins with the appraisal of one's own strong and weak points, with an analysis of what others think about you. This phase is connected with a rise in one's self-appraisal and growing confidence in one's own potential. An image is only effective when it reflects one's best qualities and is artless and sincere, not high-colored, false or too well engineered, because in the latter case it will work not in favor of but against the trade union leader.

### IV

Thus, in order to implement innovations, it is necessary to work hard, because many different constructive forces are involved in the creation of anything new. It is also necessary to put an end to any imitation of activity and to start working for the future by identifying what is and is not effective. Albert Einstein was right in saying that the most important problems facing us cannot be resolved at the same level of thinking at which we were when we created these problems. This statement is fair not only with regard to problems but also with regard to self-development. ■

## Calendar of events of the ILO Subregional Office in Moscow

### SEPTEMBER

- 14** Presentation seminar on modular courses for OSH in conservation industry. Tashkent, Uzbekistan
- 13-14** Tripartite seminar "Social partnership promotion in the regions of Russia: the role of employers' organizations". Arkhangelsk, RF
- 16** Official launch of the ILO project "HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme". Moscow, RF
- 16** Discussion with National TU Centres on migration, trafficking and forced labour. Moscow, RF
- 17-18** Launch of ILO/trade union project on child labour in Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
- 18-23** Mission to Kyrgyzstan to discuss ILO contribu-

tion to the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

- 21-22** Capacity building on gender mainstreaming for the staff of the ILO technical cooperation projects from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Russia, Uzbekistan. Moscow, RF

**27-29** Official mission to Armenia

- 29-02** Regional Conference on "Migrants in transit countries: sharing responsibility for management and protection". Istanbul, Turkey

### OCTOBER

- 6-7** Official mission to Georgia to discuss the Programme of Cooperation. Tbilisi, Georgia

**15** Forum of Social Partners. Astana, Kazakhstan

**17** International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

**18-22** Tripartite meeting on OSH in agriculture. Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan

**24** United Nations Day

**26-29** Youth Employment Forum, Baku, Azerbaijan

### NOVEMBER

(...) A week of labour inspection system audit. Astana/Karaganda, Kazakhstan

**3-5** 3rd International Congress "OSH 2004". Moscow, RF

**10-11** Seminar on National Employment Programme and Decent Work Country Programme, Astana, Kazakhstan



## Foundations of Safe Work: Safety Culture and OSH Management Systems

The ILO's campaign for safe work – a fundamental human right – is moving into its next phase. The global scope and cost of accidents and poor working conditions have been effectively imparted through the media in connection with the World Day on Safety and Health. Pilot projects to upgrade national OSH systems and prepare National OSH Programmes to improve working conditions have started in selected countries; the CIS countries have been very active in this respect. The ILO is now starting to discuss a new instrument to improve working conditions. A Questionnaire has been distributed seeking the opinions of its Member States.

### Progress and Challenges

The importance of OSH has increased in the CIS countries in recent years: the countries have approved new OSH laws, the Labour Inspectorates are being upgraded, OSH information and training centres have been created, the World Day on Safety and Health has been widely promoted in capitals and regions, etc.

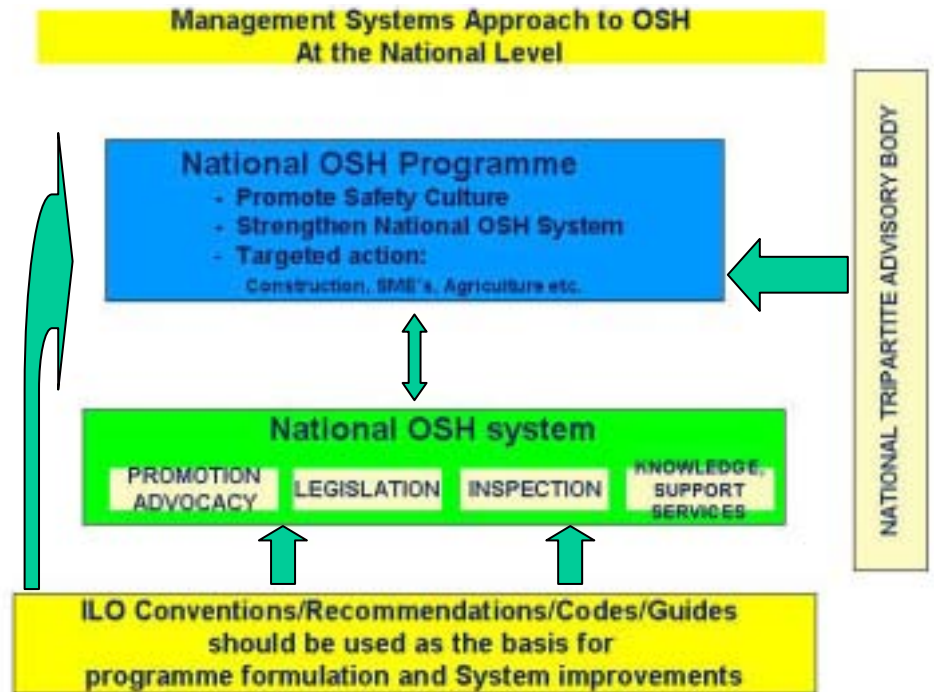
However, we can see contradictory trends: a third or more of the workers perform in sub-standard working conditions, a major part of accidents is not reported, enterprises (especially SMEs) are not aware of safety requirements, poor working conditions are “compensated” instead of prevented, and the real costs of poor working conditions are not recognized, especially the costs of lost productivity and quality.

The OSH specialist community in the CIS countries understands the importance of a systematic approach: the OSH management system during Soviet times (GOST) is familiar to most. The practical implementation of a modernised OSH management system, based on the ILO Guidelines ILO OSH 2001, combined with enterprise structures for social dialogue between workers and employers (safety committees), are now the themes for the most advanced discussions.

How can this be translated into actions at the workplace level?

### A New ILO Framework for OSH

In its report for the next International Labour Conference (ILC) in 2005, the ILO concluded that a safety culture and an OSH management system are the fundamental pillars of an effective OSH strategy. These two pillars have been effectively used in successful enterprises. The



The management systems approach to OSH at the national level

report draws on this experience in presenting a model for a national management system. It describes the links between ILO standards, the national OSH system, and the National OSH Programme, all being elements of a management systems approach.

In preparation for the ILC 2005, the ILO is seeking information about the experiences of its Member States through a Questionnaire. This questionnaire concerns the form (Convention, Recommendation, or both of these instruments or Declaration) and content of a possible new instrument establishing a promotional framework for OSH. The elements that can be included in the instrument are: national programmes and systems, awareness raising, management systems, national profiles and information.

The Governments are expected to respond to the Questionnaire by 15 October 2004. The report for the ILC 2005 (No. IV(1), and the questionnaire are available on the ILO web ([www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org) under ILC), in English and Russian, and can be sent from the ILO Moscow on request.

### Importance of the CIS Countries' Experience

The CIS countries have been among the first worldwide to adopt the new ILO methodology: five countries have published national OSH profiles in preparation for National OSH Programmes (see the box on the right). The issues

discussed in the report are at the top of the agenda in several CIS countries: the practical implementation of new OSH laws are planned and discussed, many countries in Central Asia are consolidating, and considering the integration and modernisation of existing labour inspection services, and OSH information and training centres have been established in almost every country.

The discussion and approval of a new ILO OSH instrument will upgrade the national OSH systems in the CIS countries and focus the discussion on the most relevant issues. ■

### OSH in Kazakhstan: 2004

- In February Parliament approved the new “Law on Occupational Safety and Health”
- The Kazakh national OSH profile was finalised in July 2004 (available at [www.ilo.ru/osh](http://www.ilo.ru/osh))
- The national OSH information centre was opened by Minister Karagusova and linked to the ILO-CIS network on June 25
- The National OSH Programme and plan of actions are drafted and under discussion
- Kazakhstan has agreed with the ILO and International Association of Labour Inspections to perform an evaluation (audit) of the Kazakh labour inspection system, planned for the second part of 2004.



## Azerbaijan Employers on Gender Equality

**Mr. Mamedov, we have established strong ties with the organization you are heading. Could you tell our readers in brief about ASK: its functions, activities and plans?**

The National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' (Employers') Associations of Azerbaijan Republic (ASK), is a voluntary, non-commercial, non-government organization that unites employers of the Republic. It was established in 1999. Today more than 1,600 entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial organizations, including about 40 professional associations and employers' unions, are members of ASK.

ASK is one of the social partners in the tripartite General Collective Agreement, signed at the national level, and it represents employers before the government and public authorities, and in member unions. ASK promotes a positive public image of employers and entrepreneurs, supports the development of good labour relations, conducts various training on labour relations and human resources management and etc.

ASK has developed bilateral contacts with other employers' organizations abroad. ASK collaborates with international organizations such as ILO, UNECE, and BSEC, and is a part of a number of international programmes. ASK represents the employers in the Azeri delegation to the International Labour Conference.

Since its inception, ASK has been active in developing cooperation with the ILO in such areas as social dialogue, multinationals and employment, HIV/AIDS, women's entrepreneurial development, youth employment, and child labour, and intends to further this collaboration in other fields.

**As we know, gender equality concerns are on the agenda of your organization. Could you share with us your viewpoint on gender equality in Azerbaijan? Why has ASK started paying attention to the issue?**

Transition to a market economy has profoundly changed the basic political and economic structures in Azerbaijan.

Women constitute 51.2 % of the population. National legislation – the Constitution – ensures men and women equal rights. Women are represented in public administration, Parliament, and various organizations. But this level of representation is low compared to men's. The significant reforms and large-scale programmes conducted since 1994 enhanced interest in women's issues in the country. The number of female-owned enterprises has increased in recent years. Taking into account that promoting entre-

preneurial and small business development are effective, strategic ways to create new jobs, reduce unemployment, and generate income, it is important to ensure that potential and existing female entrepreneurs are not left out of the development processes. Ensuring gender equality in the business sector will promote female entrepreneurship, which is an important contribution to poverty alleviation, women's economic and social empowerment, and reduction of gender inequalities in society.

So far, ASK, as an employers' organization, has not been very involved in the field of gender equality as implemented on a national level. Support to women's entrepreneurship and promotion of women in higher levels of management has become one of the priorities in our policy.

**How are gender equality principles reflected in the structure and procedures of ASK?**

30 % of ASK's permanent staff are women. 20-25% of members in the executive bodies are also women. And women participate in the permanent committees under ASK and are invited to participate in the decision-making processes concerning various economic and legal issues. We encourage more women to enter into business and to seek promotion in management.

**In 2003-2004, ASK and the ILO, as well as the Georgian Employers' Association, implemented a joint project called "Promotion of WED (women's entrepreneurship development) through Employers' Organizations in the Caucuses". What is your assessment of the impact of the project on the current and potential development of women's small business?**

The project started in 2003 and its main objectives are to:

- identify the main trends and specific situations of female entrepreneurs in Azerbaijan,
- collect and analyze information about female entrepreneurs, including their characteristics, contributions, challenges, and concerns,
- examine the existing legislation related to women in business, and
- examine women's participation in business and civil society organizations.

The activities implemented within the framework of this project allowed us to collect background information on the scale, scope and profile of women's entrepreneurship in Azerbaijan, and to understand the policy environment for female entrepreneurs, and gaps and barriers that exist. We have been able to identify constraints, including socio-cultural, educational, technological, legal and financial



**Alekper Mamedov**, President, ASK, Chairman of AzerInvest Financial-Industrial Group; Doctor of Science, Professor

factors, facing potential and existing female entrepreneurs in Azerbaijan, and assess personal differences between male and female entrepreneurs. We then started a campaign advocating women's entrepreneurship, and more organizations have become more focused on increasing the economic role of women and solving the problems faced by female partners in our society. The project also created opportunities to provide an overview of efforts being undertaken at the national level by government, NGOs, and business support organisations to empower women economically through support of income-generation, micro and small enterprise development programmes, and credit provisions. One of the important outcomes of the project is the establishment of ties with Georgian colleagues in addressing women's issues and support and encouragement of bilateral business relations between the female entrepreneurs of Azerbaijan and Georgia.

**What are your plans for the future as far as gender issues are concerned?**

A number of initiatives have been taken by government, donors, and NGOs - local and international - to increase the employment opportunities of women, and provide them with the required sources and skills to start-up and develop business. However, in our country, socio-economic barriers and some gender-specific constraints still remain which affect women's access to productive resources, in particular credit, and to markets and various business opportunities.

We will continue to advocate women's entrepreneurship in Azerbaijan, and measures will be taken to provide women with employment opportunities and relevant skills required by a free market economy. We encourage more women to become members of our Confederation and executive bodies and more involved in decision-making. ■





## In Brief

- At the request of the ILO and tripartite partners of Arkhangelsk, Pomor State University started research this August, into the worst forms of child labour in Arkhangelsk region. The study will be conducted in Arkhangelsk, its neighbouring town, Severodvinsk and two parts of the region—Onega and Kholmogory. The final report is due at the end of November.
- On the eve of International Youth Day (August 12), the ILO launched a new report "Global Employment Trends for Youth 2004". According to a new study, youth unemployment has skyrocketed worldwide, over the past decade, to an all time high of some 88 million. Young people aged 15 to 24 now represent nearly half the world's jobless. But the problem goes far beyond the large number of young unemployed people: the report says that young people represent

some 130 million of the world's 550 million working poor unable to lift themselves and their families above the poverty line, the equivalent of US\$ 1 per day.

- The ILO issued the first Global Analysis of HIV/AIDS Impact on the World of Work. According to the new report an estimated 36.5 million people of working age have HIV. By 2005 the global labour force will have lost as many as 28 million workers due to AIDS since the start of the epidemic. The report was presented at the XVth International Conference on AIDS in Bangkok, Thailand, on 11-16 July. The full text of the report can be found at [www.ilo.ru](http://www.ilo.ru).
- In August 24-27, the ILO Subregional Office in Moscow paid an official visit to Georgia. During this mission Pauline Barrett-Reid, Director, and Olga Mzhavanadze, Programme Coordinator, held consultations with tripartite partners of the country—Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia Vladimir Chipashvili, Chairman of the Trade Union

Amalgamation of Georgia Irakli Tugushi and President of the Employers' Association of Georgia Elgudja Meladze.

- This summer, the ILO Subregional Office produced two new publications on OSH in the Russian language: Codes of Practice "On Safety and Health in Construction" and "On Safety in the Use of Asbestos". Both publications are available in the Office and will soon be distributed to the ILO partners in the subregion.
- In June 2004 the ILO and Uzbekistan signed a Programme of Cooperation for 2005-06. The main areas of cooperation are employment, occupational safety and health, social protection and social dialogue. The document was signed in Tashkent on 21 of June 2004 by the Minister of Labour Akildzhan Abidov, Muzaffarbek Sabirov, Chairperson, Chamber of Commodity Producers and Entrepreneurs, Dilbar Dzhakhangirova, Chairperson, Council of Trade Union's Federation and Pauline Barrett-Reid, Director of the ILO Subregional Office in Moscow.



## Countries of the Subregion: Tajikistan

The country is more than just a particular spot on the map and figures on employment and migration flows - it is people, culture, traditions, and many years of history. Wishing to share our experience with the readers, we have

decided to publish photographs taken during official missions to countries covered by the ILO Subregional Office. We start with these professionally developed shots from Tajikistan made by Rodger Reid. ■



Streets of Dushanbe



View from a hotel room



Monument to Omar Hayam in Dushanbe



Nurekskaya hydro electric power station



Engineer at Nurekskaya power station



Tajik wedding reception

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