



Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Newsletter

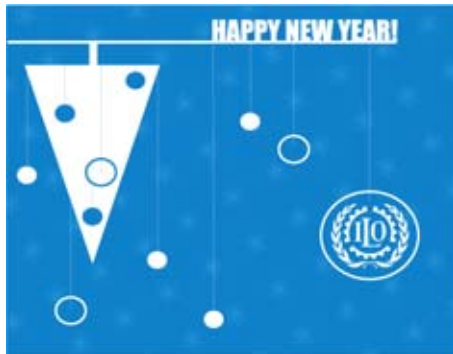


International
Labour
Organization

www.ilo.ru

ISSN 1811-1351

4 (31) DECEMBER 2007



Dear friends,

As 2007 draws to a close, it is good to take stock of our efforts and accomplishments, as well as the challenges that remain to be addressed in the new year. My six months as director of the Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central

Asia have brought me in close contact with many good people across the region who are working for the values that the ILO espouses - decent work for all people, and societies that provide social justice for all their citizens and residents.

The development of Decent Work Country Programmes with five countries was a landmark achievement of the office for 2007. These agreements are providing our regional cooperation with a new focus and momentum. They provide a framework for joint work with governments, trade unions, and employer associations, aimed at achieving tangible improvements related to employment, social protection, social dialogue and adherence with international labour standards. Improving gender equality and protecting migrant workers constitute important cross cutting themes in our work across

the region. The ILO Subregional office is continuing to discuss and develop such agreements with our other partners in the remaining countries as well and expect that 2008 will witness the signing of several additional ones.

Through them, we will expand the scope of our efforts to develop new skills, decent employment options and avenues for collective action for the people of the region.

I send my warmest holiday greetings to all our partners across the region and wish you the very best for the new year.

Yours,

Elaine Fultz,
Director of the ILO Subregional Office
for Eastern Europe and Central Asia



ILO Forum marks 30th anniversary of the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles on Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy

This year, the ILO marks the 30th Anniversary of one of its most significant achievements – the adoption of the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy. The anniversary forms the basis for “MultiForum 07” which began on November 15, and brought together around 200 participants from companies, governments and labour organizations from around the world.

The ILO’s pioneering Multinational Enterprises Declaration (MNE Declaration), first adopted in November 1977, was an important first step at the time by the international community to bring the social dimension to the forces shaping globalisation. And in the view of ILO Director-General Juan Somavia, it’s an instrument that has actually grown more relevant as the years have passed.

The MNE Declaration has undergone a number of revisions, most recently last year, but the message of 1977 remains substantially the same one today.

Multinational enterprises these days play a vastly more important role in the world economy than they did back then: around 65,000 multinationals together employ more than 90 million people, or

one in 20 of the global workforce. These are successful businesses which, more and more, are giving attention to issues of corporate social responsibility, including a socially responsible approach to labour relations. As Mr. Somavia points out, companies are increasingly aware of the positive link between economic and social performance.

As the MNE Declaration’s full title – the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy – suggests, this was a document which was drawn up through the ILO’s unique three-way partnership between governments, employers’ bodies and workers’ organisations. It is this element of consensus behind the text which gives it its status and strength.

The MNE Declaration, originally the result of several years’ discussion at a time when multinationals were often viewed with considerable hostility, proposes a code for global good business practice. As the text itself states, the aim is to encourage the positive contribution which multinationals can make and to minimise and resolve any difficulties.

Guidelines are by their nature voluntary, and multinational enterprises are

under no obligation to adopt the practices which they propose. Nevertheless, the evidence since the MNE Declaration’s adoption in 1977 is that companies do understand the benefits of socially responsible labour practices. “Progressive enterprises realise the value of being ahead of the curve on corporate responsibility, as social and environmental criteria are increasingly influencing consumer decision-making and investment decisions of individuals and institutions”, says Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Director of the Employment sector of the ILO.

The MNE Declaration covers a range of issues, and can be seen as complementing the ILO’s Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work adopted in 1998. It includes a section on employment protection and job security, also covering issues of equality of opportunity and treatment. Another part of the MNE Declaration focuses on the need to encourage skills training, whilst there are additional clauses promoting good conditions of work and appropriate action to ensure high occupational safety and health standards as well as to encourage sound industrial relations. ■



ILO Governing Body concludes its 300th session

The Governing Body of the International Labour Office concluded its 300th session following wide-ranging discussions among its government, employer and worker members on basic labour rights in Myanmar, Belarus and other countries as well as the impact of climate change on jobs, corporate social responsibility, and the implications of United Nations (UN) reform on ILO technical cooperation.

The Governing Body was in session between 1-15 November under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Dayan Jayatilaka, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the UN in Geneva.

The Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization held a panel discussion on climate change and decent work. The Working Party encouraged the ILO to promote a socially just transition to green jobs. It discussed preparations for a joint ILO/World Trade Organization Secretariat study on the links between globalization, trade and informal employment.

Among other issues, the Committee on Social and Employment Policy examined collective bargaining and the

Decent Work Agenda and the implementation of the ILO's Global Employment Agenda.

The Subcommittee on Multinational Enterprise updated the Governing Body members on corporate social responsibility related activities worldwide and participation of ILO constituents in the UN Global Compact's local networks. The Committee on Technical Cooperation reviewed the implementation of the ILO's Decent Work Country Programmes, technical cooperation priorities with respect to UN reforms, including UN agencies "delivering as one" in eight pilot countries and the ILO/United Nations Development Programme partnership.

The Governing Body also considered the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008-09 and the ILO's support for gender equality in the world of work.

The Governing Body examined the situation of forced labour in Myanmar on the basis of reports by the ILO Liaison Officer in Yangon, and follow-up on actions of the Government of Belarus to comply with ILO recommendations related to freedom of association.

The Governing Body considered trade union rights in Belarus for the fourth time, in particular measures taken to implement recommendations of the 2004 Commission of Inquiry and ILO mission to the country in June 2007.

Taking note of the information given by the Minister of Labour of Belarus, the Governing Body welcomed the Government's stated intention to reach an agreement among all parties concerned on the question of trade union legislation. All trade unions and employers' organizations should be able to function freely and obtain recognition in law and practice.

While expecting that significant progress towards satisfactory solutions will be made in Belarus, the Governing Body decided to review developments in the country with respect to freedom of association at its March 2008 session.

The Governing Body approved the 348th Report of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association, drawing special attention to the cases of Colombia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Guatemala and Indonesia. ■



ILO delegation visits Tbilisi to discuss prospects for signing Decent Work Country Programme

At the invitation of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia a high-level ILO delegation led by Executive Director Kari Tapiola visited Georgia on September 26-28 to hold discussions with the government and social partners on labour and social issues in Georgia, including prospects for signing a Decent Work Country Program (DWCP) and cooperation on ensuring that Georgia's new labour code complies with ILO standards.

The delegation also included Officer-in-Charge of the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia Alena Nesporova, ILO Sugregional Office Director Elaine Fultz, International Labour Standards Specialist of the ILO Subregional Office Alain Pelce, and programme coordinator Olga Mzhavandze.

During the meeting tripartite part-



ners agreed to start preparations for signing the Decent Work Country Programme. Among suggested DWCP priorities are youth employment, including development of business skills of young people; vocational education and training for the development of human resources in Georgia; and capacity building for social partners and social dialogue. Besides, employers

indicated the need to cover occupational safety and health issues, while workers would like to address the role of labour inspection and the child labour problem.

It was also decided to hold a roundtable meeting in early 2008 to discuss the Labour Code and the implementation of labour law in Georgia and to determine further needs and action based on an expert analysis by ILO and Georgian officials.

During the visit the tripartite partners decided that the ILO would carry out a rapid assessment on child labour in Georgia. This assessment will be discussed at a tripartite workshop, so as to develop a common understanding on the extent and nature of child labour in Georgia and to ensure that Georgia is in conformity with ILO Conventions No.138 and No.142. ■



December 1 – World AIDS Day

Keeping the Promise: Stop AIDS – Take the lead

HIV/AIDS Code of Practice published in Kyrgyz language

On the eve of the World Aids Day Kyrgyzstan's capital Bishkek hosted a roundtable meeting devoted to the presentation of the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work in the Kyrgyz language.

Representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, organizations of employers and entrepreneurs, and trade unions attended the meeting. UN agencies, Ministry of Health, Education and Science, other interested parties were represented as well.

The roundtable's objective was to discuss practical implementation of the Code for establishing the HIV/AIDS prevention programmes among the working population of the Republic.

Participants developed recommendations on mainstreaming the major principles of the Code in the planned HIV/AIDS educational programmes in the workplace. Concrete steps to involve social partners in the implementation of the state programme for counteracting AIDS

for 2006-2010 were proposed. They were based on the ILO Code of Practice.

Participants agreed that the ILO Code of Practice in the Kyrgyz language would become an effective instrument of counteracting HIV/AIDS in the world of work in Kyrgyzstan.

Baku discusses HIV/AIDS at workplace

On October 23, Baku hosted a round table meeting on HIV/AIDS at the workplace. It was organized by the National Confederation of the Entrepreneurs' (Employers) Organizations of Azerbaijan and the ILO.

The discussion was devoted to the findings of the sociological study on employers' awareness on HIV/AIDS and willingness to combat the infection. The study was conducted in three regions of Azerbaijan in June-October 2007. It covered three sectors of economy – agriculture, transport and tourism (hotels).

Representatives of the Confederation of the Entrepreneurs' (Employers), the Confederation of Trade Unions, the Min-



President of the National Confederation of the Entrepreneurs' (Employers) Organizations of Azerbaijan, A.Mamedov, delivers a speech

istry of Labour and Social Protection of Azerbaijan, and of other interested ministries took an active part in the round table discussions.

Participants highly estimated the study and highlighted the importance of preventive activities in the HIV/AIDS field. They outlined specific recommendations related to the development of HIV prevention programs. ■



December 3 - International Day of Disabled Persons

ILO calls for new efforts to support people with disabilities in the world of work

GENEVA (ILO News) – Despite significant progress in recent years in improving the livelihoods of persons with disabilities, new efforts are needed to break down barriers that still prevent millions from working and contributing to the economic growth of their societies, according to a new ILO report released for the International Day of Disabled Persons on 3 December.

What's more, the new report, entitled "*The right to decent work of persons with disabilities*", says such significant and sustained efforts are vital, not only to promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in employment, rural development and poverty reduction programmes, but also in moving toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals for halving poverty by the year 2015.

The ILO estimates that some 650 million people – or one out of every 10 people in the world – has a disability, and that of these, approximately 470 million are of working age. While many are

successfully employed and fully integrated into society, people with disabilities as a group face disproportionate levels of poverty and unemployment.

"There is a strong link between disability and poverty", the new ILO report says, adding that an estimated 80 per cent of all people with disabilities in the world live in developing countries. Of these, some 426 million live below the poverty line and often represent the 15-to-20 per cent most vulnerable and marginalized poor in such countries.

"Decent work is the ILO's primary goal for everyone, including people with disabilities", says ILO Director-General Juan Somavia. "When we promote the rights and dignity of people with disabilities, we are empowering individuals, enriching societies and strengthening economies."

Citing World Bank studies estimating that social exclusion from the workplace costs the global economy between US\$ 1.37 to US\$ 1.94 trillion in estimated annual loss in GDP, the ILO Skills

and Employability Department added that "providing decent work for people with disabilities thus makes social as well as economic sense".

The ILO said the new UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted in December of last year will reinforce national and international efforts and provide a renewed impetus in eliminating discrimination on the basis of disability and in positively promoting inclusion. The principles of the new UN Convention are in line with relevant ILO standards, including Convention No. 159 on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons).

This year's International Day marks a new effort by the ILO to promote the principle of decent work among people with disabilities. The ILO said it hopes the event would help foster greater understanding of issues affecting people with disabilities in the world of work and help mobilize new support for their rights at work. ■



Russia's OSH system to be reformed

Following a directive from First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, the Russian Health and Social Development Ministry has drafted a programme aimed at improving working conditions and occupational safety and health in the country until 2025. Under the document an OSH system based on professional risks assessment will be introduced in Russia in 2011.

The programme is aimed to change the Soviet time occupational safety and health system as a part of the government's new demographic programme. Its end goals are to reduce the high death rate, occupational accidents and diseases (Russia's occupational death rate exceeds the EU's by 4.5 times) and

to improve workplace quality and working conditions.

The programme will be implemented in three stages. During the first stage (2008-2010) it is planned to reduce the death rate among employable population, occupational accidents and diseases by at least 8-10 percent.

During the second stage (2010-2015) the programme seeks to reduce the occupation mortality index (the number of occupational deaths per 1,000 workers) to 0.1 and the number of dangerous jobs to 18-20 percent (at present, this rate makes up 41 percent).

By 2025 Russia's OSH system should reach EU standards: dangerous

jobs – 3.5 percent and occupational mortality index – 0,05-0,08.

“This concept is much better than the old system of workplace certification,” said senior OSH specialist of the ILO Subregional Office, Wiking Husberg.

“Russia's OSH situation is very difficult. The system needs changes. Ten years ago there was no recognition that safe work is economically viable, but now people understand that occupational accidents impose a heavy cost. Some enterprises have already introduced this system, but the problem is in small and medium companies,” he said. ■

OSH Project in North-West Russia – new prospects



Since 2005 the ILO Subregional Office has been implementing project on improved occupational safety and health (OSH) system in North-West Russia.

ILO's growing attention to North-West Russia is not accidental. Russia's highest occupational accident rate per 1,000 workers has been registered there. For example, the Russian federal statistics service stated that in 2006 this rate in the North-West federal district was 3.9 compared to 2.9 in the rest of Russia.

During 2007 the list of Russian partners in the project expanded. Among key partners are the Leningrad region committee for labour and social protection of population (with which the ILO signed a plan of joint actions within the framework of the 2007-2008 project), the department of the state employment service of the Republic of Karelia, the Murmansk region commit-

tee for labour and social development, the federation of trade unions of St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region, and occupational safety training centres.

Among the key areas of the project's future work are assistance with practical introduction of OSH management systems at enterprises based on GOST 12.0.230-2007, which fully corresponds to ILO-OSH-2001 Guidelines; awareness raising of economic costs arising from poor working conditions; and promotion of effective social partnership in OSH at the enterprise level.

On October 29, the St. Petersburg-based OSH centre hosted a workshop to present new training courses on occupation safety and health, including those on risk assessment and management at enterprises and on economy and OSH. Participants in the workshop – representatives of 54 organizations of St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region – pointed to the need to introduce new courses in the curriculum of educational institutions.

On November 8, St. Petersburg hosted a seminar on modern decisions to ensure safety of construction workers. It was organized with the assistance of the St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region committees for labour and social protection, the association of construction workers of St. Petersburg



and the Leningrad region and the centre for promotion of modern occupational safety tools. Representatives of forty construction companies showed interest in ILO's modern approaches to OSH management based on accident prevention policies.

Special mention should be made to OSH Days regularly marked in municipalities of the Leningrad region. On November 21, the town of Lodeinoye Pole organized this event bringing together representatives of 70 organizations.

Low awareness of employers is one of the obstacles to promoting ILO's OSH approaches in North-West Russia. Taking this into account the project will develop and publish informational booklets on modern OSH trends.

The ILO will take further steps to promote its OSH approaches in other regions of North-West Russia. ■

Results of OSH projects in port sector summed up in St Petersburg



On October 26, St. Petersburg hosted a meeting to present results of the two consecutive Flemish-funded projects - Improvement of safety and health and working conditions in the maritime industry and Improving management of operations and occupational safety and health in the port sector. The first project took place in St. Petersburg from January 2004 till March 2006 and the second one - from March 2006 till December 2007. The projects were implemented by the ILO, the Antwerp/Flanders Port Training Centre (APEC) and the Russian Central Marine Research and Design Institute.

The goal of the projects was to contribute to the improvement of the health, safety and working conditions of port workers as well as the efficiency and modernization of the port operations in the Russian Federation; and to strengthen the capacity of the relevant government institutions and the social partners to ensure an adequate implementation of the labour protection policies and regulations within the maritime sector (shipping and ports) in St. Petersburg.

Taking part in the meeting were representatives of the Flemish government, APEC as well as representatives of the Russian

Transport Ministry, the State Labour Protection Inspection, the Committee on Labour and Social Development of the St. Petersburg Administration, and the Russian Central Marine Research and Design Institute.

The ILO was represented by Johanna Walgrave, the director of the Social Dialogue, Labour Law and Labour Administration Department, Elaine Fultz, the director of the ILO Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Marios Meletiou, ILO technical specialist (Ports and Transport) of the Maritime Activities, Sectoral Activities Department, Felix Martin-Daza, the project's coordinator and specialist of the ILO International Training Centre in Turin and Roman Litvyakov, regional occupational safety programmes coordinator of the ILO Subregional Office.

According to participants in the meeting, the projects made a great contribution to the improvement of working conditions and occupational safety of Russia's port and shipping sector workers.

The nine-day training on ILO's Port Worker Development Programme (PDP) constituted the final stage of the project on OSH in the port sector. From October 15 till October 25 top managers and senior specialists of ports from Russia's North-West and Southern regions studied the training course and its practical implementation in the ports. Twenty master trainers on the PDP programme were trained. Among the trainees were representatives of the Russian federal ports agency - Rosmorport. It took time and efforts to translate and adapt materials of the PDP programme to hold this training in Russia. A large group of specialists coordinated by experts of the ILO and the occupational

safety and health department under the Central Marine Research and Design Institute did this work.

Trainees expressed confidence that the introduction and development of the PDP programme in Russia will help bring the training of personnel for Russia's maritime container terminals to a qualitatively new level. They also stressed the need to introduce the PDP technologies for training port managers and specialists in Russia. ■

Russia is an important port state with seaports on its coastlines in the Baltic and Black Seas and Arctic and Pacific oceans. Its shipping sector is also important with more than 26,400 seafarers working in its fleet.

In November, 2007, Russia adopted a law on sea ports. In recent years, it signed a number of international maritime agreements (Memorandum of Port State Control and International Safety Management IMO Code). It also ratified the ILO Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 147). At an institutional level, for the implementation of these agreements and standards, Russia created special inspection units under the Maritime Harbour Administration and the Maritime Register of Shipping. The country has also established the centre for occupational safety and health at sea transport (OSH Centre). Regarding the port sector, Russia is undertaking the elaboration of new regulations for the ratification and the implementation of the Dock Work Convention, 1973 (No. 137), the Occupational Safety and Health (Dock Work) Convention, 1979 (No. 152) and the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (No. 28)

Experts discuss Russia's preparation for ratifying ILO's Maritime Labour Convention

On November 28-29, St. Petersburg hosted a seminar on Russia's preparation for ratification of ILO's Maritime Labour Convention of 2006. The seminar was organized by the Russian Transport Ministry and the Admiral Makarov State Maritime Academy.

The seminar was an important further step within the framework of Russia's programme for the Convention's ratification and became a follow-up to the work that began during the visit of an ILO high-level tripartite mission to Russia in February. We wrote about this visit in the March issue of our Newsletter.

Participants in the seminar pointed to

extreme importance of Russia's ratifying the Convention. They stated that Russia, as a great maritime power and a flag state, should in the shortest possible timeframe adjust its inspection and certification system, working conditions, shipping companies' occupational safety management systems in line with the Convention's requirements. By doing so, it can ensure decent working conditions for Russian seafarers and competitiveness of Russian shipping companies on the world shipping market, as well as improving economic efficiency of the country's maritime sector.

The seminar ended in drafting a resolu-

tion that will be submitted to the Transport Ministry.

Taking part in the seminar were 60 specialists, including representatives of the Russian Transport Ministry, the federal agency for sea and river transport, trade union organizations, the Union of Russian Ship Owners, the Russian Maritime Register of Shipping, research organizations and educational centers from all over Russia.

The ILO was represented by Mr. Jean Yves Legouas, Senior Maritime Specialist, and Roman Litvyakov, regional occupational safety programmes coordinator of the ILO Subregional Office. ■



Child labour in Russia: roundtable at State Duma

There are around 3.4 million of working children under 18 years of age in Russia. This group includes those who are recruited for prostitution, who are filmed in pornographic videos, and who work at family enterprises and in agricultural fields, said the head of the State Duma labour and social policy committee, Andrei Isayev.

At a roundtable on international experience in the elimination of child labour on October 8, he urged the creation of a separate department focusing on the needs of children and adolescents.

According to the Russian federal labour and employment service, employment of underage workers is one of employers' major violations. In January-June alone a total of 8,529 such cases were registered. As a rule, underage employees work in agriculture, trade and industries. Over this period improper working conditions caused the death of five children and injuries to another seventeen.

Child labourers often do not undergo medical examinations and do not conclude labour contracts. Large numbers of them have to work long hours without breaks and on weekends, some exceeding 200 hours of work a month. Their compensation is often only a quarter of

the average wage. According to official data of the Russian state statistics service, 219,900 young people aged between 15 to 17 years were employed in 2006.

Experts say the reason for such damaging forms of child labour is not only neglect of a child, parents' poverty or unemployment. A widespread misunderstanding that early employment strengthens character and engrains skills is also to blame.

"Possibly, that is why the first article of the Labour Code contains no provision on child labour. Besides, the law stipulates that a child can be employed after reaching 14 years of age with consent of parents. And many employers use this norm," said ILO expert, Vitaly Savin. He believes it is necessary to spell out more clearly where a fourteen-year old can be employed and under what conditions.

The roundtable meeting also focused on the worst forms of child labour such as sexual exploitation of children. The deputy head of the Duma committee for women, family and youth affairs, Tamara Fratsova, called for amendments to the Criminal Code to toughen punishment for involvement of children in begging and prostitution. ■



Kyrgyzstan hosts job fair

On November 3-4, the first national job fair was held in Bishkek, the Kyrgyz Republic. The event was organized by the state committee on migration and employment with the support of the ILO's project on boosting youth employment. The na-



tional job fair was a non-commercial event aimed at establishing direct contact between employers and job seekers.

Job seekers could visit exhibition stands of different companies, get information on vacancies available and obtain invitations for interviews, watch the companies' presentations and find more information about the companies' activities and policies. Visitors could participate in master-classes for job-seekers on career guidance, CV writing, interview behavior and professional selection tests.

In his opening remarks Deputy Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic Nur uulu Dosbol stated that such events would contribute to employment promotion and poverty reduction. The head of the state committee on migration and employment Aigul Ryskulova expressed gratitude to the ILO for assistance in organizing the first-



ever national job fair in the Republic.

Taking part in the job fair were forty local business companies, private recruitment agencies, universities, career centers, representatives of the international association Labour Migration (Russia), employers from Turkey, Kazakhstan and South Korea.

According to the committee, during two days over 20,000 job seekers visited the event, including 3,000 who received job offers. ■



Azerbaijan plans to ratify ILO's Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention

Azerbaijan will soon ratify ILO's Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (C 156), according to participants in a roundtable meeting in Baku on October 24. The meeting was organized within the framework of ILO's project on promoting youth employment.

Participants discussed the difficulties Azerbaijani workers face in trying to combine work and family responsibilities.

Taking part in the meeting were the deputy head of the state committee for family, women and children affairs, Ainur Saryeva, the chairman of the Azerbaijan Trade Unions Confederation, Sattar Mekhbaliyev, and the president of the Azerbaijan Entrepreneurs Confederation, Alekper Mamedov. Senior international labour standards specialist Alan Pelce of the ILO Subregional Office also participated.

Participants stated that Azerbaijan's legislative base meets most of the re-

quirements of the Convention, although certain amendments and addenda to the laws should be made. However, the most pressing need is to focus on the application of the legislation.

Sattar Mekhbaliyev stressed that Azerbaijan had adopted a national strategy to ensure gender equality. Employers should hire workers not on the basis of gender, but of skills and knowledge, he said.

He confirmed that to a large extent Azerbaijan is ready for ratification of the Convention.

"But we should answer several issues – how to harmoniously combine work and family responsibilities, what are the roles of the government, employers and trade unions in this issue and how to use other countries' successful experience," Mekhbaliyev said.

He stated that Azerbaijan would take into account all recommendations of ILO experts. ■

December 18 – International Migrants Day

Two projects on labour migration governance presented in Tajikistan

The International Labour Organization and the United Nations Development Programme presented in Dushanbe on October 17 two joint projects to prevent human trafficking and manage labour migration.

Tajik Labour and Social Protection Minister Emin Sanginov said the first project on Sustainable Partnerships for the Effective Governance of Labour Migration in the Russian Federation, the Caucasus and Central Asia is designed for migrants and their families.

“The project is aimed to make migration management processes sustainable and inclusive of all interested parties”, he said. Sanginov stated that the project will promote national and regional dialogue among social partners discussing more efficient and just norms of migration flows management. During the project’s implementation the results of surveys of changing conditions on the labour market will be taken into account.

According to Sanginov, the project’s duration is two years (January 2007-December 2009). Its budget exceeds 2.4 million US dollars.

The second project on sustainable community development to create jobs and upgrade labour migration management is being implemented in the Rasht valley.

The project is aimed to fight human trafficking in Tajikistan through upgrading employment options taking into account population’s skills, needs and demands. The project’s beneficiaries are potential migrants that may fall victim to human trafficking as well as single-

parent families that have to cope with long-term consequences of migration.

The project was launched on July 1, 2007, and will last till June 30, 2009. The project’s budget totals 1.065 million US dollars.

ILO senior technical adviser Nilim Baruah stressed that labour migrants make a considerable contribution to economic development not only of their own country, but also of a host country.

“Labour migrants’ remittances help improve living standards of migrants and members of their families,” he said. “According to our estimates, over 600,000 labour migrants from Tajikistan work in Russia and Kazakhstan.”

According to the ILO, over 1 million labour migrants from the CIS have been legally registered in Russia since new migration legislation entered into force. Nilim Baruah stated that around 10-12 million irregular migrants continue to work in Russia, including an estimated 30 percent of those engaged in forced labour.

Speaking about Russia’s migration legislation, the ILO expert said registration procedures have become more simplified and affordable for migrants. “The new legislation toughens responsibility of employers who use illegal labour,” he said pointing out that Russia has made significant improvements in its legislation, but lacks capacity for its full implementation.

Nilim Baruah highlighted that trade unions play an important role in the labour migration policy-making. “It is necessary to establish relations between trade unions in different countries and to strengthen contacts of labour migrants with trade unions,” he said. ■

Roundtable meeting on labour migration calls for creating Russian-Tajik labour exchange

Participants in a roundtable meeting on legal regulation of labour migration processes recommended the creation of Russian-Tajik labour exchange. The meeting took place within the framework of the interparliamentary forum on September 18.

According to the Russian federal labour and employment service, Russia issued 36,000 work permits as of January 1, 2007, and employers submitted notifications for only 17 percent of these work permits.

This problem “remains rather acute in relation to labour migrants from Tajikistan as well,” according to the head of the Federation Council committee for CIS affairs, Vadim Gustov.

He admitted that “much has been done in the legal sphere, many documents that put migration onto a legal track have been drafted. But in reality the system does not work.”

He pointed out that mass violations of the current labour legislation are evident, including arbitrariness and injustice in wage payments. Migrants are deprived of normal living and working conditions.

Gustov stressed that at the interparliamentary forum and the roundtable discussion the two countries’ parliamentarians called for signing an intergovernmental agreement on social insurance, for drafting an intergovernmental agreement on readmission and for ratifying the relevant ILO conventions. ■



Azerbaijan to assess the number of unattended children

Azerbaijan’s state committee for family, women and children affairs and the Interior Ministry plan to conduct assessment of the number of unattended children, the committee’s head, Khidzhran Guseinova, said.

“Before the end of the year we plan to hold several assessments, mainly in Baku, to calculate the number of unattended children, as there have been no

official statistics on the issue so far,” she said.

She stated that the committee had proposed that the Education Ministry insist on a stronger role for schools in enforcing the attendance requirement, as the number of unattended children is expanding due to weak control of the school attendance. ■

Information sources:

www.gazeta.ru, www.asiaplus.tj,
www.itar-tass.com, www.day.az,
www.lenobl.ru, www.kommersant.ru,
www.photoforum.ru, www.sbor.ru,
www.saint-petersburg.ru

In Brief

■ More than 70 senior representatives of workers and employers organizations, along with governments, gathered in Geneva from September 24 to September 27 to discuss the impact of globalizing food chains on the 22 million people employed in the food and drink processing industry worldwide. According to a new ILO paper prepared for the meeting, food and drink processing, which accounted for 4 percent of world GDP in 2005, is increasingly subject to greater global integration with close linkages among different stages of the food supply chain, from the field to the factory, and from the factory to the supermarket.

■ The growing shortage of qualified teachers is registered worldwide. UNESCO estimates that by 2015, 18 million new teachers will be needed globally – 4 million in Africa alone, UN agencies chiefs said on the occasion of the *World Teacher's Day* annually marked on October 5. According to the

UN Information Center, Koïchiro Matsuura Director-General UNESCO, Juan Somavia Director-General ILO, Ann M. Veneman Executive Director UNICEF, Kemal Derviş Administrator UNDP and Thulas Nxesi President Education International put their signatures to the message. They celebrated teachers across continents and thanked them for their continued efforts. They called on governments to create an education system that attracts and retains a well-trained, motivated, effective and gender-balanced teaching staff.

■ On October 11, the Altai territory hosted the *third inter-regional conference on modern aspects of the occupational safety and health management*. Taking part in the conference were 500 directors of enterprises and occupational safety engineers from Barnaul, and experts from the Tomsk, Irkutsk, Novosibirsk and Omsk regions, Moscow and Biysk. Participants discussed the creation of healthy and safe working conditions.

■ *A Training-of-Trainers course on*

ILO's Know About Business programme was held in Baku from October 22 to October 30. Azerbaijani Deputy Education Minister Iskender Iskenderov pointed to the importance of the KAB programme in the development of the vocational education and training (VET) system at the national level and within the framework of cooperation with the ILO. Twenty-two VET teachers, including eleven from regions, and two facilitators from Baku were involved in the training-of-trainers course.

■ Kyrgyzstan's Education and Science Ministry in cooperation with ILO's CAR Capacity Building Project: Regional Programme on the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Central Asia held a *modular training workshop entitled Child Labour and Education. Capacity building and Training of Teachers*. During the workshop specialists of regional education departments received information about child labour, the worst forms of child labour and actions taken in the world community to work out an effective strategy.



Russia: Leningrad region

The Leningrad region situated in Russia's North-West marked its 80th anniversary this year.

It occupies 84,500 square kilometers and has a diversified transport infrastructure. The region has four border checkpoints – one on the border with Estonia and three – on the border with Finland. It is crossed by four federal highways. Russia's largest ports – Vysotsk (see photo on the left), Primorsk and Vyborg – are located on the Baltic Sea coast. Moreover, the region has a unique river system that includes the Volga-Baltic waterway and the Saimesky canal.

The Leningrad region ranks eighth in

electric power production among Russia's other regions. It has the Leningrad nuclear power plant in Sosnovy Bor (see photo on the right) and the Kirishi hydropower plant at its territory.

Bauxites and fuel peat are produced in the region. The forestry and paper-and-pulp industries are also well developed.

The Leningrad region is one of Russia's most promising in investment development. Not only unique geo-political location, natural resources, scientific and technical potential, but also tax breaks for investors contribute to this.

The region is known for monuments of cultural and historic heritage. The re-

gion's north-east has many age-old monuments of Russia's North such as the Church of Saint George in Staraya Ladoga (see photo in the centre) that dates back to 12th century and stone and wood-made villages in Prosvirye that date back to 15th-18th centuries.

Every year 1.5 million tourists visit the 1.7-million-populated Leningrad region.

For several years the ILO has been actively cooperating with the Leningrad region within the framework of projects on improving occupational safety and health in Russia's North-West, on eliminating child labour (IPEC projects) as well as on other initiatives.



ILO Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia
Russia 107031, Moscow, 15 Petrovka st., office 23
Tel.: +7 (495) 933-0810, fax: +7 (495) 933-0820
Web-site: www.ilo.ru E-mail: moscow@ilo.org

Editor: Elena Iskandarova

This newsletter is distributed free of charge. Circulation: 3500 copies

On the issue of distribution please contact: +7 (095) 933-0810 or moscow@ilo.org