



SECOND ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: Technical cooperation priorities and action plans regarding elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour**Introduction**

1. The Governing Body established at its 282nd Session in November 2001 a Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour (SAP-FL) with a mandate to spearhead the ILO's future activities in this area and give them more comprehensiveness, vision and cohesion.¹
2. ILO action against forced labour has steadily gathered momentum over the past four years, mirrored by increased global awareness of the problem and greater willingness on the part of member States to confront it. In the 2005 Global Report under the follow-up to the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Director-General called for a global alliance against forced labour, backed by adequate resources and led by the ILO, with the aim of eliminating all forms of forced labour globally by 2015.²
3. To meet this objective, the next four-year period will be of crucial importance. The ILO has given an estimate of 12.3 million forced labourers worldwide, together with regional estimates, indicating that forced labour is a global problem. It also remains hidden, escaping national statistics and surveys. Legislation is often framed too generally to capture many forms of forced labour, and law enforcement is often weak. Improved understanding of the nature and extent of the problem, clear laws and policies against forced labour, and adequate measures for its prevention and the rehabilitation of forced labour victims, are all needed for the effective eradication of forced labour.

¹ GB.282/TC/5 and GB.282/11.

² See Global Report I(B), 2005: *A global alliance against forced labour*, and *Provisional Record* No. 12 of the 93rd Session of the ILC.

The first action plan: Achievements and lessons learned

4. The first action plan established basic parameters of a technical cooperation approach on forced labour. These were divided into: research and advisory services, including appropriate legislation and awareness raising; and programmes and projects. Projects should address mainly: recruitment, debt bondage and domestic work under forced labour conditions; and trafficking resulting in forced labour situations. Surveys could prepare the ground for specific strategies against forced labour. The forced labour outcomes of trafficking should be tackled through action in both origin and destination countries.
5. ILO activities have followed this broad approach. Awareness raising culminated in extensive media coverage of the 2005 Global Report. Policy advice, training and advocacy have influenced global approaches to anti-trafficking, with forced labour concerns now figuring high on anti-trafficking agendas. International partners increasingly see the need to address forced labour dimensions of trafficking in prevention and law enforcement.
6. Operational projects have been developed in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. A significant focus has been on Asia where the numbers affected by forced labour are the greatest.
7. Lessons learned include:
 - ILO constituents must be fully involved in projects, and capacity building on forced labour is vital for the social partners;
 - effective action against forced labour requires inter-ministerial coordination, best achieved through formal policies and action plans, and linking the components of legislation and law enforcement, monitoring, prevention and rehabilitation;
 - because forced labour in developing countries is often rooted in longstanding patterns of poverty and discrimination, comprehensive action is best anchored in poverty reduction and anti-discrimination strategies;
 - as debt bondage underlies much modern forced labour, microfinance-led activities can reduce those in or at risk of bondage by promoting incomes and social capital;
 - to eradicate forced labour related to trafficking, cooperation across national and regional boundaries is essential, with coordinated action in countries of origin and destination;
 - investigating forced labour at the national level requires innovative research methods;
 - there is need for further research on causes and economic underpinnings of forced labour, and on cultural attitudes, to harness diverse national actors to the global alliance.

Second action plan

General considerations

8. The action plan will address the concerns identified in the Global Report, maintaining a balance between operational projects, advisory services, and surveys and research. While it

emphasizes direct action against forced labour, and support to victims, some groundwork will usually be necessary. Thus, an initial priority will be to assist member States develop mechanisms for coordinated action, including improved data gathering on forced labour. All activities, while spearheaded by the DECLARATION's SAP-FL programme, will seek to draw on pertinent Office expertise (including ACT/EMP, ACTRAV, DCOMM, EMPSTRAT, GENDER, INST, INTEGRATION, IPEC, MIGRANT, NORMES, SFU and TURIN).

9. There will be continued outreach to international partners, particularly development agencies and financial institutions concerned with poverty reduction, which will be encouraged to address forced labour concerns as pertinent to their mandates. A strategic consultation will bring together the ILO's tripartite constituents with other major actors against forced labour.

Basic goals and targets, and implementation structures

10. Member States in which significant forced labour has been detected should be assisted to establish time-bound action programmes for the eradication of forced labour. Some countries have already adopted broad-based policies and action plans against forced and bonded labour, or human trafficking. In 2006-07 the ILO will work with further pilot countries on such plans. The experience will be reviewed, to identify lessons learned and develop elements of good practice for future national action programmes.

Survey methods and data gathering on forced labour

11. Reliable national statistics on forced labour can provide the benchmarks by which progress can be measured over time. The ILO will provide training and capacity building on appropriate methodologies, disaggregating forced labour by types, gender and age. Five countries from different regions will initially be selected for conducting national estimates, guided by a planning workshop in 2006. Following a review, further countries may be selected for additional estimates. The findings will be assessed in the 2009 Global Report.

Awareness raising, research needs and networks

12. The global alliance will include the academic and policy community, for example business and labour research centres, in furthering understanding of modern forced labour and its causes. Thematic areas might include: economic underpinnings of modern forced labour including debt bondage, and the scope for its prevention through microfinance and other interventions; socio-cultural factors behind forced labour, and the means by which traditional leadership and religious structures could be harnessed against forced labour; an interdisciplinary research programme on forced labour and trafficking, in particular to enhance understanding on the means to identify, and provide appropriate sanctions for, forced labour exploitation; a comparative research programme on forced labour and detention systems; and the scope for reducing poverty through targeted action against forced and bonded labour systems. Through tripartite consultations, particular research themes will be selected and a network of research institutions from different regions consolidated.

Policy guidance and training materials

13. SAP-FL in collaboration with TURIN has developed a range of training and advocacy materials, for example guidance on anti-trafficking legislation and its enforcement, and a training manual on the monitoring of private recruitment agencies. High priority will be given to the development of further materials, as activities of the Global Alliance expand.

Operational projects: Capacity building, direct action and support to victims

14. Project work – at the community as well as national law and policy levels – will be a key aspect. The eradication of forced labour can be a central theme, or at least a major component, of some decent work country programmes. When combating forced labour and trafficking are identified as national priorities, such programmes can prove an excellent means of involving different ILO sectors and departments in integrated action, according to their expertise, and also, where relevant, contributing resources to national action. Gender sensitive projects should address areas where the ILO has particular strengths, covering prevention and rehabilitation, as well as monitoring and law enforcement. All projects will also have a strong awareness-raising and communications component, together with capacity building for government officials and social partners.
15. Projects will be clustered around the two main themes of: (a) forced labour, poverty and discrimination in developing countries; and (b) forced labour, migration and trafficking.
16. In the first area it is proposed to develop at least two such projects annually, distributed between different regions. Work on the eradication of bonded labour systems in South Asia merits further expansion. In Africa, there is scope and need for a regional programme covering countries which have a legacy of slavery. And, in Latin America, there can be a particular focus on the forced labour and discrimination affecting indigenous peoples.
17. Operational projects will continue to emphasize the role of labour and employment institutions (in the broad sense including labour ministries and departments, labour inspectorates and labour justice, public and private employment agencies, and employers' and workers' organizations) in action against forced labour and trafficking. They will further consolidate the existing projects in such diverse regions as West Africa, South-East Asia, China, Central Asia and the Russian Federation, and Eastern and Western Europe. A key aspect of these projects is their integrated approach, addressing all parts of the trafficking cycle in both origin and destination countries, linking anti-trafficking activities to poverty reduction strategies, deriving lessons for law and policy advice from community-based interventions, tackling abusive recruitment systems, and also contributing to broader ILO efforts to improve migration management. Covering domestic workers among others, project activities along these lines will be expanded to Latin America and the Middle East.

Capacity building for employers' and workers' organizations

18. The involvement of these organizations will be of central importance for the global alliance. They will require capacity building and methodological support to contribute to the eradication of forced labour. While detailed activities would need to be elaborated by the respective groups, together with ACT/EMP and ACTRAV, the action plan should serve not only to strengthen the capacities of employers' and workers' organizations on

forced labour but also to integrate the issue better within their overall objectives. To this effect both a business and a workers' alliance against forced labour can be envisaged.

19. Consultations will be held with different employer groups, organized both by region and by economic sector, to review factors behind the risk of forced labour in supply chains and to identify appropriate safeguards. There will be a particular focus on economic sectors (such as agriculture, construction, garments and textiles, and entertainment) where certain problems of forced labour have been identified. There can be a focus on specific industries and economic sectors (to be identified through consultations with employers), during each year of the period.
20. A workers' alliance against forced labour can have multiple objectives. First, it can seek to enhance the outreach of trade unions to the vulnerable groups, including migrants and workers in the informal economy, most at risk of forced labour situations. Second, workers' organizations can play a key role in monitoring recruitment and employment conditions. Third, workers' organizations can be expected to exercise due vigilance, ensuring that the emergence of coercive practices in some parts of the labour market (for example in subcontracting chains, and exploitative practices against some migrant workers) does not lead to a general lowering of labour standards and protection for the workforce. Trade unions might also wish to focus each year on one particular economic sector, or one thematic forced labour concern (such as in agriculture or construction).

Communications and global advocacy

21. As demonstrated by the significant media interest in *A Global Alliance against Forced Labour*, the serious problems of contemporary forced labour have caught the world's attention. While taking a role of leadership, the ILO cannot be expected to solve these problems alone but must galvanize other key actors in the business, finance and development communities. A broad-based communications strategy will establish partnerships with media organizations (radio, television and print), at the national and international level, to develop content and programmes about the impact of forced labour. An interactive web site will be developed by 2006 on action against forced labour, with a changing focus on specific economic sectors and their challenges. The ILO will benefit from the existing communications and distribution networks of Global Alliance partners in order to reach the widest possible audience.
22. The proposed action plan is dependent upon obtaining the necessary resources, where donors have a key role to play.
23. ***The Governing Body may wish to endorse the action plan outlined in this paper, and request that it be kept informed, through the Technical Cooperation Committee, of the implementation of the activities proposed.***

Geneva, 23 September 2005.

Point for decision: Paragraph 23.