The Millennium Declaration, the MDGs and the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda: Overview

The goal of Decent Work for All and the pledges in the Millennium Declaration go hand in hand. In this information folder, one brief for each of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) shows how the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda, in a context of fair globalization, is essential for achieving these shared aims.

The briefs contain references [in brackets] and links to much more information about how decent and productive employment, social protection, rights at work and dialogue contribute to the MDGs. They are available in English, French and Spanish.

Decent Work Agenda for growth with equity

The ILO Decent Work Agenda strives for economic growth with equity through a coherent blend of social and economic goals. It has four elements:

- **Employment** – the principal route out of poverty is productive work
- **Rights** – without them, men and women will not be empowered to escape from poverty
- **Protection** – social protection safeguards against poverty
- **Dialogue** – the participation of employers’ and workers’ organizations in shaping government policy for poverty reduction is key.

The ILO’s role and partners

Together with partners, the ILO’s work aims at the “more peaceful, prosperous and just world” envisaged in the Millennium Declaration. It does this through policy advice, information dissemination, research, statistics, technical assistance, capacity building, standards and advocacy.

The ILO works closely with other multilateral organizations and civil society in support of the Millennium Declaration. The ILO’s structure – comprising representatives of employers and workers as well as governments – brings together vital allies in the fight against poverty. Their participation in crafting a poverty reduction strategy buttresses its sustainability.

The ILO’s unique experience in adopting international labour standards through dialogue involving governments, employers and workers has produced universal social norms, and methods of assiting in and monitoring their implementation. These standards form part of international human rights law and national legal systems.

The Millennium Declaration and the MDGs

The MDGs are based on the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000). The Declaration focuses on development and poverty eradication through peace and security, values and human rights, democracy and good governance. It identifies the fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility. Through it, UN Member States pledge to ensure greater coherence in policies across the international system. The Declaration builds on earlier international commitments, such as productive and freely chosen employment (World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 1995).

Progress towards the MDGs

Priorities relating to MDGs are increasingly mirrored in national poverty reduction strategies (PRSs) and in national budgets. The ILO stresses the importance of country ownership and of customizing the MDGs to national circumstances. For growth with equity, decent employment and incomes must be at the heart of economic and social policy.

The MDGs set time-bound and measurable targets. Regular reporting on progress towards targets set under each MDG occurs at the national, regional and international levels. Within the UN system, the ILO takes the lead in reporting on trends concerning –

- the rate of women’s non-agricultural wage employment – Indicator 11, under Goal 3 on Gender Equality.
- the unemployment rate among youth aged 15-24 – Indicator 45, linked to Target 16, under Goal 8 on Cooperation for Development.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations, founded in 1919. It has 178 Member States.

“Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere.”

ILO Constitution

The 8 MDGs

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

“Decent jobs that provide income empower the poor, especially women and younger people.”

In larger freedom, United Nations Secretary-General’s 2005 report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.
Decent Work and the Millennium Development Goals

With other UN agencies, the ILO is working towards improved indicators for employment, including its informal dimension.

Decent work and poverty reduction

The briefs in this folder illustrate how the ILO Decent Work Agenda contributes to all 8 MDGs in the global fight against poverty.

**Goal 1** – halving the proportion of the world’s people with income of under one dollar a day – and **Goal 8** – cooperation for development – are overarching goals towards poverty reduction. They, along with **Goal 7** on sustainable development, rely on decent work for their attainment.

Achieving **Goal 3** on gender equality is a condition for meeting all the MDGs. The brief on MDG 3 explains how gender mainstreaming is embedded in all of the ILO’s work.

Decent work for parents, smooth school to work transition and the elimination of child labour are essential to attain the goal of universal primary education (**Goal 2**).

Social protection contributes directly to the health-related MDGs (**Goals 4, 5 and 6**), and other aspects of the Decent Work Agenda contribute indirectly.

Respect for rights at work sustains progress towards poverty reduction while reinforcing democracy and underpinning peace. Freedom of association and the elimination of forced labour, child labour and discrimination enable people to free themselves from poverty.

Effective dialogue between government, employers’ and workers’ organizations supports inclusive policy reform. Institutions that foster social dialogue support improved governance and social stability -- necessary conditions for achieving all of the MDGs.

Needed: A fair globalization

The Millennium Declaration notes that “the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world’s people.” On their own, neither the MDGs nor the elements of the Decent Work Agenda are sufficient to implement the Millennium Declaration.

“**Decent work for all should be made a global goal and pursued through more coherent policy within the multilateral system.**” World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization (2004).

With the political will to make the Millennium Declaration, a fair globalization and decent work a reality, poverty can be vanquished.

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ILO, 4 route des Morillons, 1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland – http://www.ilo.org/
1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

As the ILO’s Declaration of Philadelphia notes, "poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere" [5]. The ILO promotes poverty reduction at the policy level and in practice through its Decent Work Agenda.

A fair globalization is a necessary condition to attain both MDG 1 and decent work. As part of sound macroeconomic policy, freely chosen and productive employment — underpinned by rights, social protection, and democratic participation as embodied in social dialogue — is key to poverty reduction.

Pro-poor Growth – Decent Work – Fair Globalization

“Efforts to fulfil our collective commitments to fight poverty will fall short unless we focus on creating job opportunities and decent work for all.”

ILO Director-General, on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, 2004.

Economic growth is essential but not sufficient for the achievement of MDG 1. Macro-economic and structural policies that promote employment, economic inclusion, empowerment and social investment are key. Growth must be "pro-poor", which implies changes in the institutions, laws, and practices that perpetuate poverty.

In its 2004 report, the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, launched by the ILO, suggests practical means of ensuring that the benefits of globalization reach more people. Building on the Monterrey consensus on financing for development, it recommends making decent work a global goal along with fairer rules to support development (see MDG 8).

**Decent work and poverty reduction**

The ILO approach to poverty reduction is promoting decent work for all. Its four pillars are:

- Employment – the principal route out of poverty is through work and income;
- Rights – without them, people will not be empowered to escape from poverty;
- Social protection – it safeguards income and underpins health;
- Dialogue – the participation of employers’ and workers’ organizations in shaping government policy for poverty reduction ensures that it is appropriate and sustainable.

Together, these four pillars of the ILO Decent Work Agenda support coherent and gender-sensitive poverty reduction strategies.

At the country level, the ILO works for the inclusion of decent work goals in Poverty Reduction Strategies [9, 11]. The four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda serve as entry-points based on the national priorities of governments and employers’ and workers’ organizations. These social partners are vital civil society allies in the fight against poverty.

The ILO undertakes research and analysis in areas that are essential to poverty reduction, using sex disaggregated labour statistics and indicators. The data are reflected in the Yearbook of Labour Statistics, Key Indicators of the Labour Market, and Global Employment Trends. For MDG monitoring, the ILO is the lead agency tracking progress in relation to the employment of women (Goal 3, Indicator 11) and youth (Goal 8, Indicator 45).

Working with partners, the ILO examines the interplay of economic and social policies and their impact on the world of work. In advising governments, it analyses the impact of global developments in trade, capital flows, commodity prices and economic fluctuations on poverty, employment, social protection and rights for men and women, boys and girls. The ILO backs up policy advice with practical tools and capacity-building initiatives.

**Working out of poverty – Employment is key**

“Poverty elimination is impossible unless the economy generates opportunities for investment, entrepreneurship, job creation and sustainable livelihoods. The principal route out of poverty is work.”


The world is facing a jobs crisis, especially for youth. This undermines social stability. The work and income available to poor people are usually not enough to break out of poverty. Successfully reducing poverty and hunger requires treating decent and productive employment as a central part of macroeconomic policy (see MDG 8). It would also contribute to achieving the other...
Decent Work and the Millennium Development Goals – MDG 1

MDGs. Adequate employment for parents would reduce child labour, for example, which in its worst forms deprives children of education and feeds the cycle of poverty.

The ILO assists governments in formulating national policies, including those inspired by the Global Employment Agenda [12], an international strategy to promote freely chosen productive employment.

Core elements of the Global Employment Agenda are –

- productive employment for poverty reduction and development
- active labour market policies for employment, poverty reduction, security in change and equity
- trade and investment for productive employment and market access for developing countries
- technological change for higher productivity, job creation and improved living standards
- macroeconomic policy for growth and employment
- decent employment through entrepreneurship
- employability by improving knowledge and skills.

The GEA places special emphasis on gender equality and on youth.

Specific ILO initiatives include:

- acting as the lead agency in the UN/ILO/World Bank Youth Employment Network to promote decent and productive work for youth, who are especially vulnerable to unemployment[13];
- promoting strategies for training and skills development with UNESCO [38];
- pursuing an integrated approach to decent work in relation to the informal economy [36];
- policies and legal frameworks that are conducive to micro-, small and medium enterprises [16], which create most jobs in developing countries. These form part of sound labour legislation that reflects social dialogue involving employers and workers [39];
- labour-based approaches in public investment programmes in construction (e.g. roads, irrigation, sanitation, schools, clinics). Such approaches provide productive employment and higher income for the poor and opportunities for local entrepreneurs while expanding infrastructure for growth [24];
- promoting cooperatives, in conjunction with the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), workers’ organizations and employers’ organizations. Cooperatives generate incomes, provide social services, encourage participation and defend workers’ interests [21];
- comprehensive participatory strategies for local economic and social development with decent work and poverty alleviation as the ultimate goal [34];
- extending access to microfinance by linking the experience of trade unions and employers to the microfinance movement [40].

With some 75 per cent of the poor living in rural areas, targeting agriculture is vital for reducing hunger and poverty. Globally, agriculture accounts for 40 per cent of workers in developing countries. Food availability is critical, but not sufficient for reducing hunger. Another vital means is to improve the productivity and incomes of poor workers. The ILO –

- promotes productive work and decent working conditions in sectors directly or indirectly linked to agriculture;
- takes into account the special characteristics of agricultural work, including gender concerns, child labour and illiteracy [15].

As more and more people move from rural to urban areas, a focus on urban slums is also critical (see MDG 7). The ILO works with UN HABITAT in encouraging municipalities to provide quality urban services in ways that improve access for the poor while creating decent jobs and promoting entrepreneurship. A set of tools supports this work.

Millennium Declaration, 2000: 189 nations committed “to develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work”.

African Union Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, 2004: Heads of State undertook to make employment creation a central objective of economic and social policies at national, regional, and continental levels. Similar commitments have been made in other regions.

2005 is the UN International Year of Microcredit, recognising micro-credit’s contribution to poverty reduction.

Poverty Reduction Strategies [11]: describe the macroeconomic, structural and social policies of a country to promote growth and reduce poverty, and define external financing needs, including debt relief. The UNDP and the WB recommend that the PRSPs should provide a road map towards country-level achievement of the MDGs.
Rights empower the poor

“People in poverty need voice to obtain recognition of rights and demand respect. They need representation and participation. [...] Without rights and empowerment, the poor will not get out of poverty.”


Hazardous, exploitative and unhealthy work environments are more likely to be experienced by poor women and men, children and youth. International labour standards – developed through dialogue between representatives of governments, employers and workers, are tools in the fight against poverty. The ILO promotes rights at work and monitors the implementation of voluntarily ratified Conventions protecting these rights.

The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work [7] highlights the importance for economic and social progress of the eight ILO core Conventions that are reflected in the Declaration’s principles. The ILO supports efforts to make these principles a reality in practice.

Empowerment lies at the heart of poverty reduction, and freedom of association lies at the heart of empowerment. Where health workers and teachers can exercise rights and enjoy decent working conditions, for instance, the poverty-related MDGs on education and health are more likely to be achieved.

The ILO Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour [31] focuses on the worst forms of child labour that perpetuate poverty and educational deprivation. Recognizing that productive employment must be freely chosen, the Global Alliance against Forced Labour is tackling the conditions that keep bonded and forced labourers in a pernicious poverty trap.

ILO work on the rights of indigenous peoples and on equality in relation to gender, race, ethnicity and disability aims at groups most affected by poverty. Gender mainstreaming in all of the ILO’s work acts as a reminder that women are disproportionately poor. Equal opportunities for employment, training and entrepreneurship help to reduce poverty.

Relevant international labour standards and texts [7 and 8]

Many ILO instruments set the conditions necessary to prevent women and men from falling into poverty or to enable them to escape from poverty, including –

- ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, reflecting the values of the eight core Conventions on –
  - Freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining
  - Elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour
  - Abolition of child labour
  - Elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation
- Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)
- Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122)
- Rural Workers’ Organizations Convention, 1975 (No. 141) and Recommendation, 1984 (No. 169)
- Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142) and Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195).
- Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)
- Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169)
- Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998 (No. 189)
- Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193)

Social protection: Reaching the poor

“Poor people are unprotected people. [...] The earning power of those living in poverty is suppressed by marginalization and lack of support systems. The ILO is working to find new ways to provide social protection...”


The poor are the least protected. Some 80 per cent of the world’s poor men and women have little or no social protection. Sickness – whether from HIV/AIDS or other illness - disability, maternity and old age can plunge a family into poverty and keep it there. Well designed social protection helps secure economic growth and income stability while enhancing equity, thus ensuring the sustainability of growth [87]. By supporting wider access to care services and facilities, social protection also contributes to attaining the MDG goals on health.
Decent Work and the Millennium Development Goals – MDG 1

The ILO –

- promotes the extension of social protection to reach the poor through its Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All in cooperation with governments, social security institutions, trade unions, employers’ organizations, community-based organizations and civil society [26];
- pilots the extension of social security to unprotected men and women through the Global Social Trust, involving the transfer of contributions from people in wealthier nations to those in poorer countries [27];
- promotes and advises on safe and healthy working conditions to protect all workers, with special attention to those in micro- and small enterprises and the informal economy [37].

Social dialogue for sustainable Poverty Reduction Strategies

‘People in poverty … know dialogue is the way to solve problems peacefully. […] The ILO can offer those living in poverty its experience in dialogue and conflict resolution as a way of advancing their interests.’ Working out of Poverty. ILO, 2003.

The ILO is actively supporting the involvement of employer and worker representatives in Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) processes in close cooperation with national authorities [10, 35]. The employment-poverty nexus in the PRSs, as well as equity alongside growth, are key issues. With a view to sustainable poverty reduction, the ILO –

- stresses the role of freely chosen, productive employment and the other aspects of decent work in poverty alleviation;
- assists the social partners in influencing the drafting and implementation of PRSs through social dialogue;
- urges development organizations and governments to listen to the voices of the social partners in the interest of sustainable poverty reduction.

The ILO works with others in the UN system, the World Bank and the IMF in relation to PRSs. Some PRSs now give more emphasis to employment, gender equality, child labour and other world of work issues that are critical for poverty reduction. Greater involvement of employers’ organizations and trade unions reflects the role that they and institutions supporting social dialogue play in maintaining the social stability that is so important for development.

ILO publications relevant to MDG 1

- The role of employment in promoting the Millennium Development Goals, ILO/UNDP, 2005.
- The ILO and the follow up of the World Summit on Social Development. ILO, 2005.

Blue text and numbers in brackets [...] are linked to websites. See attached list of reference materials.

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2. Achieve universal primary education

A child who is educated is more empowered to escape from poverty. The achievement of MDG 2 depends on national investments in education that are used wisely and efficiently. This includes the provision of skilled and motivated teachers, adequate teaching materials and school infrastructure, as advocated in the Dakar Framework for Action on Education For All (EFA) [44]. The right to compulsory schooling up to the minimum age for employment, as reinforced by ILO Convention No. 138 [8] on child labour, is essential.

Education through decent work

Through the Decent Work Agenda, the ILO contributes to the achievement of MDG 2 by promoting universally accessible, free and compulsory education; supporting rights of teachers and conditions that are conducive to the provision of quality education; working to eliminate child labour; promoting decent employment and training for people of working age; and encouraging child benefits and other social security measures for poor families. A gender mainstreaming approach focuses on the girl child.

Wanted: Skilled and motivated teachers

One of the most important investments for the realisation of MDG 2 is in skilled and motivated teachers. The extent to which teachers' voices are heard often determines the success or failure of education reforms. Teacher to pupil ratios and teachers' skill levels, motivation and sense of professional responsibility are among the major factors influencing repetition rates, student performance and other quality indicators. Yet there is a decline in teachers' working conditions and salaries and a consequent global shortage of teachers.

The ILO [23 and 45] contributes to EFA by –

- promoting the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Teachers, which contains guidelines on educational policy, curricula, teacher training, employment and working conditions and teachers’ participation in decision-making [46];
- developing skills training for teachers;
- upholding the rights of teachers to organize and bargain collectively [47];
- researching, promoting and sharing information on standards and best practices.

Eliminating child labour

A second key factor contributing to MDG 2 is the elimination of child labour, a major impediment to universal primary and other education. Children who work full time cannot attend school. The educational achievement of children who combine work and school often suffers, and they often tend to drop out of school to take up full-time work.

The ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) [31] is promoting EFA in a decent work context through country-based programmes, technical cooperation and policy dialogue by –

- raising general awareness of child labour and education among communities, parents and policymakers;
- removing the cost of and physical barriers to schooling;
- promoting institutional arrangements in the formal school system to enrol working children and children at risk;
- promoting reintegration into formal schools and vocational training for children removed from hazardous work;
- training teachers on child labour issues in cooperation with the two major international teachers’ organizations – Education International (EI) and the World Confederation of Teachers (WCT);
- advocating increased investment in basic education, harmonized legislation on child labour and education, and political commitment.

Target 3

Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

Indicators

6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education
7. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 [primary completion rate]
8. Literacy rate of 15-24-year-olds

Education for All (EFA) [44] –

World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien, Thailand, 1990:
Delegates from 155 countries agreed to universalize primary education and reduce illiteracy by 2000.

World Education Forum, Senegal, 2000:
delegates from 164 countries reaffirmed their commitment to EFA by adopting the Dakar Framework for Action – a practical strategy for achieving EFA.

In developing countries, one child in three does not complete five years of schooling. When they do so, the quality of their education often remains low. According to UNESCO, there were 104 million children of primary-school age not enrolled in school in 2000; the majority were girls.
Child labour and education: A clear link

The term “child labour” is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity – work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children. It can deprive them of the opportunity to attend school, oblige them to leave school prematurely, or detrimentally combine school attendance with work. History has shown how instrumental education has been in eradicating child labour, building a skilled workforce and promoting development. MDG 2 cannot be achieved without the progressive elimination of child labour.

The ILO works with partners to secure broad support for EFA and the progressive elimination of child labour, such as through the Global Campaign for Education [49] and the UN Girl’s Education Initiative [51].

Working children often belong to groups discriminated against in terms of ethnicity and culture: the ILO addresses exclusion mechanisms affecting the education of indigenous and tribal peoples [32]. The fight against trafficking in children also contributes to MDG 2.

Education, decent work and increased family income

Family income and the availability of decent work for adults are determining factors in parents’ decision to send their child to school. Creating decent work for parents is the third key factor in the ILO’s contribution to the achievement of MDG 2: the lower their level of adult educational attainment, the smaller their chance of a decent income and sending their children to school.

The ILO supports policy development that promotes –

- access to literacy for vulnerable and socially excluded parents;
- skills development, such as technical and vocational training and basic business skills training, in combination with literacy [38];
- enterprise development and enhanced access to credit;
- the extension of social security and social protection measures as part of poverty reduction strategies. Examples are the ILO Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All [26] and the ILO/UNCTAD Minimum Income for School Attendance (MISA) Initiative [52].

Relevant international labour standards [8]

- Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138): minimum age for admission to employment or work shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, shall not be less than 15 years (or, where specified, 14 years).
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182): calls for immediate action for the effective elimination of the worst forms of child labour, taking into account the importance of free basic education.
- Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169): includes provisions on development, including education, and protection of rights.
- Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102).

ILO publications relevant to MDG 2

- Good practices: Gender mainstreaming in actions against child labour. ILO, 2002.
- The appeal of minimum income programmes in Latin America, ILO, 1999.

Blue text and numbers in brackets [...] are linked to websites. See attached list of reference materials.
Gender equality and the empowerment of women are essential to overcome poverty. The achievement of all of the Goals depends on progress under MDG 3. The ILO works to advance understanding of the vital links between decent work, poverty reduction and gender equality. Women's greater access to employment and income underpins efforts to close the gender gap in education and to empower women.

### Decent work and gender equality

Gender equality cross-cuts the ILO Decent Work Agenda, which encompasses rights, employment and income, social protection and social dialogue. The ILO mainstreams gender concerns in all of its policies and programmes through:

- Promotion of equality of opportunity in access to jobs, income-earning activities, assets, education and training;
- Gender-specific interventions as well as action aimed at both men and women;
- Social protection initiatives;
- Women's empowerment through organizations of employers and workers;
- Social dialogue and collective bargaining for gender equality;
- Promotion of respect for rights and international labour standards.

Decent, productive jobs are the most effective route out of poverty [3]. But gender inequality in the labour market persists through occupational segregation, wage gaps, higher relative unemployment rates, overrepresentation in the informal economy, inadequate social protection and economic insecurity. Related to women's standing in households, their employment can contribute to achieving the MDGs on health and education, as illustrated in the report prepared for ILO/UNDP, *The role of employment in promoting the Millennium Development Goals* (2005).

### Measuring progress

Policymakers need better data to chart progress in relation to jobs. For Goal 3, Indicator 11 - “Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector” – the ILO is responsible for compiling and analysing the master set of data at national, regional and global levels. This feeds into the review of the Millennium Declaration [53] and the eight Goals [18]. The ILO and others are recommending an improved indicator that would refer to formal and informal employment in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors for men and women.

### Ensuring a gender-equitable world of work

The ILO Action Plan on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming (2001) helps institutionalize gender mainstreaming and promote gender equality in the world of work [54]. The Plan entails:

- gender analyses of social and labour issues and gender-specific development tools;
- gender-disaggregated data and indicators;
- a new mainstreaming methodology to ensure that gender concerns are incorporated in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all ILO activities.

The ILO Bureau for Gender Equality [25] -

- disseminates information on gender issues;
- assists ILO constituents and staff to be more effective in increasing gender equality [55];
- monitors the implementation of the ILO's strategy for gender equality;
- liaises with the UN system, NGOs, academic and women's organizations.

The Bureau tracks the representation of women in ILO meetings, and highlights resolutions such as that adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2004 on the promotion of gender equality, pay equity and maternity protection [56].

### Gender and poverty reduction

The ILO promotes gender concerns in poverty reduction strategies. The involvement of representatives of employers and of workers is key to their sustainability. ILO gender-specific resources include:

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**Target 4**

*Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education* preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015

**Indicators**

9. Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education

10. Ratio of literate women to men 15-24 years old

11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector

12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

“Promoting gender equality and eliminating all forms of discrimination at work are essential to defeating poverty.”

*Working out of Poverty*  
(ILO, 2003)

It is necessary to ensure that gender equality is a primary goal in all area(s) of social and economic development – Platform for Action to bring gender into the mainstream of society, *UN Fourth World Conference on Women*, Beijing, 1995.
The Capacity Building Programme on Gender Equality, Poverty and Employment (GPE) provides syntheses of main issues, reviews of gender-sensitized policies to eradicate poverty, and success stories; a Modular Package Guide assists policymakers, workers’ and employers’ organizations [57].

Managing and Sharing Knowledge on Gender Equality in the World of Work provides an information base on integrating gender into education policies, employment strategies and national development plans [58].

Women’s Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE) develops strategic partnerships and promotes economic opportunities for women entrepreneurs, and better advocacy and voice for women operating in business [43]. Its training package and factsheets address a range of entrepreneurship issues.

International labour standards in support of rights for women

International labour standards require the elimination of sex discrimination in employment and occupation, while also providing for equal remuneration and maternity protection. Further, they guarantee freedom of association for employers and workers. Monitoring of ratified Conventions by an independent ILO expert group keeps the spotlight on how these instruments are applied. In addition, global reports under the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998 [7] illustrate how countries can ensure respect for the principle of eliminating discrimination. Raising awareness of equal rights helps to create a culture of opportunity.

Relevant international labour standards [8]

- Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)
- Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156) and Recommendation (No. 165), 1981
- Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183)
- Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142) and Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195)

Ensuring equal access to education

Serious disparities in access to education between girls and boys exist in many countries. Women need education to break out of the low-skill, low-wage and vulnerable work that in turn discourages their children’s school attendance (see MDG 2). Literacy training, skills development, promotion of teachers’ status and rights, and the fight against child labour also contribute to achieving MDG 3. The ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) participates in the UN Girl’s Education Initiative [51]. Faced with limited resources, parents may invest in the education of sons only, and focus their daughters on household and domestic work. The ILO cooperates with teachers’ unions to reduce the dropout rates of girls at risk of child labour. This forms part of ILO efforts towards gender equality.

ILO publications relevant to MDG 3

- The role of employment in promoting the Millennium Development Goals. ILO/UNDP, 2005.
- Gender equality and decent work: good practices at the workplace. ILO, 2005.
- Employers’ organizations taking the lead on gender equality: case studies from 10 countries. ILO, 2005.

The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) forbids discrimination based on sex in all fields of women’s lives, including employment [59]. All ILO member States are obliged to promote, respect and realize the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation, forced labour and child labour, as well as ensure respect for freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998 [7].


Women still face higher unemployment rates than men in spite of a strong increase in the number of working women in the last 10 years. Women still lack equal pay. Addressing differences in legal rights, labour market opportunities, public life participation and decision-making is crucial to improve the situation of women and reduce poverty. ILO Global Employment Trends for Women, 2004 [60].
Decent Work and the Millennium Development Goals – MDG 3


Blue text and numbers in brackets [...] are linked to websites. See attached list of reference materials.

ILO, 4 route des Morillons, 1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland – http://www.ilo.org
4. Reduce child mortality

Despite progress in some regions, child mortality rates remain intolerably high in poor countries and among the poorest families. **Most of these deaths can be prevented.** Improving child protection and the status of women is key to achieving MDG 4. The ILO supports efforts to reach Goal 4 with a focus on working mothers, health care workers, combating child labour and extending social protection.

**Decent work and child health**

Through its Decent Work Agenda (jobs, rights, social protection and dialogue), the ILO contributes to the achievement of MDG 4 by promoting –

- access to health care family benefits and other social security measures for all families;
- investment in human resources and infrastructure in the health field;
- maternity protection for all women workers during pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding;
- good working conditions and safety and health standards;
- work-family policies enabling parents to care better for their children;
- the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

**Access to health services and social security**

Half of all under-5 deaths are due to preventable diseases. Better essential primary health services for maternal and child health must be accessible to all segments of the population. The need is especially great in rural and isolated areas.

Too often, health workers work under difficult conditions and earn little. This results in a lack of skilled health workers. Having more skilled birth attendants, for instance, would reduce early neonatal deaths, which represented 20 per cent of under-5 deaths in 2000.

Low levels of maternal schooling, especially among young mothers, also result in higher rates of malnutrition and mortality among children. When child mortality rates are high, households tend to have more children and invest less in each child.

The ILO contributes to MDG 4 by promoting –

- universal access to health care and the extension of social security to non-covered groups, through its Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All \[26\];
- universal access to primary health services for women, including pre- and post-natal services, safe childbirth and reproductive health services, such as information on mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS \[29\];
- resource mobilization to finance social protection benefits in poor countries through the ILO Global Social Trust \[27\], with a focus on basic primary health services;
- health workers’ training, improved salaries and working conditions, freedom of association and collective bargaining \[28\];
- strengthening of educational and training opportunities and income-earning activities for women;
- improving the status of women and girls in society.

**Maternity protection and work-family policies**

Maternity protection, including breastfeeding, is critical for the health of working women’s babies. The ILO helps to reduce under-5 child mortality rates through the extension of maternity protection to women workers \[62\].

Increased household incomes, especially for women, tend to lower child mortality. But social norms and the lack of child care facilities often hamper combining work and childcare. Many poor women are forced to bring their children to work, where the environment may present dangers to health.

**Target 5**

Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

**Indicators**

13. Under-five mortality
14. Infant mortality rate
15. Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles

The ILO supports the “Health For All” strategy of the World Health Organization \[61\]}

Half of under-5 deaths are due to five diseases: pneumonia, diarrhoea, measles, malaria and AIDS-related infection.

Progress in the reduction of child mortality has slowed in some regions because of the spread of AIDS and the resurgence of malaria and tuberculosis. Unsafe water, malnutrition, inadequate immunization, lack of education and lack of access to basic health and social services are other major contributing factors.

Low levels of income and of education for women translate into malnutrition and poor quality of care for children. A study of 25 developing countries showed that a few years of maternal schooling would reduce child mortality by about 15 per cent.
Sometimes very young siblings accompany brothers and sisters to work. More than 100 million children below 15 work in hazardous occupations – mostly in agriculture – and are exposed to serious health risks. Some 22,000 children are estimated to be killed at work every year. At the same time, serious injuries and deaths of small children left alone during working hours are also regularly reported. Thus ILO thus -

- helps governments, workers’ organizations and employers develop policies for improved work-family balance [62];
- works for the progressive elimination of the worst and most hazardous forms of child labour [31].

Safety at work and hazardous child labour

Physical, chemical and biological risks at work that affect reproductive health must also be reduced through the provision of safe working conditions. The ILO thus promotes a global strategy for occupational safety and health aimed at reducing work-related accidents and diseases [37]. The involvement of employers’ and workers’ organizations is a key part of this strategy.

### Relevant international labour standards [8]

- Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)
- Medical Care and Sickness Benefits Convention, 1969 (No. 130)
- Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
- Nursing Personnel Convention (No. 149) and Recommendation (No. 157), 1977.
- Occupational Safety and Health Convention (No. 155) and Recommendation (No. 164), 1981
- Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156) and Recommendation (No. 165), 1981
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
- Maternity Protection Convention (No. 183) and Recommendation (No. 191), 2000

### ILO publications relevant to MDG 4

- *Social dialogue in the health services: A tool for practical guidance*. ILO, 2004
- ILO *Work and Family Information Sheet* series.

Blue text and numbers in brackets [...] are linked to websites. See attached list of reference materials.

ILO, 4 route des Morillons, 1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland – http://www.ilo.org
5. Improve maternal health

Each year some eight million women suffer complications during pregnancy. Over half a million die from them. While maternal mortality is improving globally, the risk of dying in pregnancy is dramatically higher in the poorest countries than in the richest ones.

Decent work and maternal health

The ILO addresses the challenges of maternal morbidity and mortality through its Decent Work Agenda: jobs, rights, social protection and dialogue. It contributes to MDG 5 by promoting –

- maternity protection for all women workers during pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding;
- investment in human resources and basic infrastructure in the health field;
- extended access to health services and social security schemes;
- rights and decent working conditions for health workers;
- access for women workers to comprehensive HIV/AIDS services;
- improved education, employment and status for girls and women.

Maternity protection and safe motherhood

Protecting the maternity of women workers is a basic human right and a key element of gender equality. Maternity protection is essential to ensure that women’s work does not threaten health during pregnancy and recovery from childbirth. It enables women to return to their jobs after maternity leave.

Healthy birth outcomes, occupational health, protection against discrimination and the productivity and profitability of enterprises are linked. Expanding maternity protection to increasing numbers of women workers, as foreseen in the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), is critical for the health and well-being of women and their babies. The ILO promotes maternity protection by –

- partnering with employers’, workers’ and other concerned organizations to promote Convention No. 183 and increase awareness of the importance of maternity protection;
- developing tools and providing technical support for the improvement of maternity protection at national and workplace levels;
- conducting research on innovative practices for ensuring maternity protection [19].

The Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) covers –

- access to medical care, including prenatal, childbirth and postnatal care, as well as hospital care when necessary;
- maternity leave: 14 weeks, including 6 weeks’ compulsory post-natal leave;
- cash benefits during leave: two-thirds of previous or insured earnings;
- health protection: the right of pregnant or breastfeeding women not to perform work prejudicial to their or the child’s health;
- breastfeeding: minimum one daily break, with pay;
- employment protection: the right to return to the same or equivalent position at the end of maternity leave;
- non-discrimination: so that maternity does not constitute a source of discrimination in employment.

Target 6

Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality rate

Indicators

16. Maternal mortality ratio
17. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

Globally about 1,400 women die each day in pregnancy and childbirth. In 2000, some 529,000 women died from complications of pregnancy and many millions more suffered disabilities.

The causes of maternal deaths include unsafe delivery practices, obstructed labour and complications linked to abortions. Inadequate health systems, poor quality water and sanitation systems and lack of education among women are contributing factors.

Only 58 per cent of women in developing countries deliver with the assistance of skilled attendants or health personnel. Only 48 per cent give birth in a hospital or health centre. Increasing access to quality maternal care must be complemented by efforts to reach other MDGs, especially Goals 2, 3 and 4.
Access to health services and social security

Effective health systems of improved quality are needed to reduce maternal mortality, especially in rural areas. The ILO is working to achieve universal access to health care and extend social security to non-covered groups through its Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All [26]. The ILO Global Social Trust [27] is mobilizing resources to finance social protection benefits in poor countries. Related ILO action contributing to MDG 5 includes –

- promotion of universal access to essential health services for women workers, particularly pre- and post-natal services, reproductive health services and safe childbirth;
- involvement of women in statutory and community-based social security schemes;
- provision of health education for mothers;
- protection of women workers from HIV/AIDS through workplace-based programmes [29].

Other relevant international labour standards [8]

- The Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) –
  - sets minimum requirements for the provision of health care during pregnancy and confinement, and cash maternity benefits replacing lost income;
  - sets minimum standards for access to preventive and curative health care services in general;
- The Medical Care and Sickness Benefits Convention, 1969 (No. 130) sets minimum standards for access to preventive and curative medical care;
- The Nursing Personnel Convention (No. 149) and Recommendation (No. 157), 1977.

Investment in infrastructure, human resources and education

The right mix of investment, basic health policies and human resources policy can provide skilled health and birth attendants for safe delivery. Training, earnings and the working environment affect skilled attendants’ ability to provide appropriate care. The ILO supports safer pregnancy by –

- facilitating women’s access to health services through the promotion of infrastructure construction using labour-intensive approaches [24];
- promoting freedom of association and collective bargaining for health workers;
- capacity building in workers’ organizations to obtain better working conditions and quality health services through collective bargaining;
- developing training systems for skilled health workers.

Improved services and access to them will not alone suffice to bring significant improvements in maternal health. Educating women and girls enables them to understand issues and seek health services when needed. With its elements of employment, rights, social protection and social dialogue, the ILO Decent Work Agenda supports improved maternal health.

ILO publications relevant to Goal 5


Blue text and numbers in brackets [...] are linked to websites. See attached list of reference materials.

ILO, 4 route des Morillons, 1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland – http://www.ilo.org
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

The HIV pandemic and associated diseases are intensifying poverty, slowing economic growth and reversing a number of development gains. They have an impact on the labour force, on enterprise efficiency, and on the transfer of skills and experience. Recognizing that the workplace has a vital role to play in the wider struggle to limit the spread and effects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the ILO is a co-sponsor of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

Combating HIV/AIDS through decent work

Through the Decent Work Agenda, the ILO promotes integrated action in respect of rights, employment and income generation, and social protection, underpinned by a new dynamic in social dialogue. The ILO focuses on promoting understanding of AIDS as a workplace issue, mobilizing action in the world of work, and strengthening the capacity of workers’ and employers’ organizations to sustain effective programmes. Promotion of social protection contributes to provision of better health services for a wide range of diseases.

What impact? Research and policy analysis

The lack of qualitative and quantitative information on the nature and extent of the impact of HIV/AIDS on the labour force and production hampers effective policy response. The report HIV/AIDS and work: global estimates, impact and responses [65] stresses the pivotal importance of the labour market and human development aspects to sustainable economic and social progress.

Policy guidance

Discrimination on the basis of HIV status deprives workers of rights and livelihoods and employers of key staff. Since persons with HIV can still work, a number of countries have adopted or are considering legislation to prohibit such discrimination in employment.

The ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work [66] sets out fundamental principles for policy development and practical guidelines for the development of programmes at enterprise, community and national levels. It promotes a comprehensive approach to workplace action, encompassing –

- the protection of workers’ rights;
- HIV/AIDS prevention through education, gender-aware programmes, and practical support for behaviour change;
- care and support, including access to benefits, reasonable accommodation of tasks at the workplace, as well as treatment in settings where local health systems are inadequate.

An education and training manual on implementing the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work [67] guides the application of the Code. These two tools are being used to develop skills and institutional capacity. New guidance manuals target labour judges and inspectorates.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on children and child labour

The ILO’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) gives particular attention to categories of children suffering from the impact of HIV/AIDS – orphans, HIV/AIDS-infected and affected children - children who are vulnerable to commercial and sexual exploitation. Education on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health is also critical.

Relevant international labour standards [8]

- Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)
- Medical Care and Sickness Benefits Convention (No. 130) and Recommendation (No. 134), 1969
- Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161)
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
- Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183)

Target 7

To have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Indicators

18. HIV prevalence among 15-24 old pregnant women
19. Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate
19a. Condom use at last high-risk sex
19b. Percentage of population aged 15-24 with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS
19c. Contraceptive prevalence rate
20. Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans

Target 8

To have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Indicators

21. Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria
22. Proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures
23. Prevalence of death rates associated with tuberculosis
24. Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under international TB control strategy.

ILO/AIDS Global Estimates Report [65]:

26 million labour force participants and 36 million persons who make economic contributions are HIV-positive worldwide.
Technical cooperation: Advice and capacity building

ILO country-level work focuses on advisory services and on enhancing the capacity of organizations of employers and workers, along with others, to respond at the workplace. A comprehensive report provides details: Technical cooperation: A means to implement the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work [68]. A new toolkit provides guidance for HIV/AIDS workplace behaviour change communication programmes.

Social dialogue and partnerships

The largest global organizations of employers and workers (the International Organization of Employers and International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) have launched a consolidated action plan on fighting HIV/AIDS together. They are carrying out joint activities in eight pilot countries. Guidelines help both employers’ and workers’ organizations promote and support action against HIV/AIDS among their members.

The ILO and WHO joined forces to produce Joint Guidelines on Health Services and HIV/AIDS to assist such services to provide their workers with a safe, healthy and decent working environment in order to reduce HIV/AIDS transmission and improve patient care [29]. In consultation with its social partners, the ILO is preparing guidelines for the education and transport sectors, as well as for small and medium-sized enterprises.

As a partner in the WHO/UNAIDS ‘3 by 5’ initiative [69], the ILO guides workplace health services in this field and promotes a campaign to ‘Know your status’ [70]. The ILO develops public-private partnerships to extend access to treatment.

Social protection: Expanding social security and access to health care

The ILO Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All [26] and other social protection initiatives contribute to MDG 6 through –

- assistance to countries in crafting workable policies to extend access to health care services to all, and particularly to HIV/AIDS victims;
- advice to countries on designing feasible basic income support policies for poor families, targeted also at those who often take care of HIV/AIDS victims and their families, such as girls and the elderly;
- analysis and advice concerning safe and healthy workplaces.

Such measures contribute to combating malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases as well as HIV/AIDS. In addition, provision of better maternity protection can contribute to reduction of mother-child HIV transmission and create opportunities to raise HIV/AIDS awareness.

ILO publications relevant to MDG 6

Legal initiatives to address HIV/AIDS in the world of work. ILO, 2005.

According to The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) [64], the pandemic had claimed nearly 26 million lives by the end of 2003. In all, 38 million people are estimated to be living with HIV or AIDS, 66 per cent of them in sub-Saharan Africa and 18 per cent in South-East Asia. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia 1.5 million people were hit in 2003.

Tuberculosis (TB) is a major cause of death for people with HIV/AIDS. Multi-drug resistant TB is increasing in many countries, due to poor treatment practices. Eight million people develop TB, and nearly two million die annually, over 90 per cent of them in developing countries.

Malaria affects 300 million people and kills at least one million people each year, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa. About three-quarters of these are children under five.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability

The environmental challenges facing the earth affect social and economic development and the world of work. Environmental degradation is linked to unsustainable production and consumption patterns that undermine the livelihoods of the working poor. However, environmental protection and regeneration are also potential sources of employment and income. Thus sustainable development must start with work.

Sustainable development through decent work

The ILO aims to strengthen the social pillar of sustainable development and its integration into the environmental and economic pillars. In the Johannesburg Declaration (2002), States pledged to “increase income-generating employment opportunities, taking into account the ... ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work”. The ILO has developed the Global Employment Agenda (GEA) [12] within its Decent Work Agenda (rights, employment and incomes, social protection and social dialogue). One of the GEA’s core elements is the promotion of “sustainable development for sustainable livelihoods.”

Globalization and sustainable production

“It is through work, [...] in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity, that people can rise out of poverty, earn a decent living and relate to society and the environment in a truly sustainable way.” ILO Director-General, 2002.

To achieve MDG 7, jobs must be environmentally sustainable, and policies more coherent.

The contribution of social dialogue

To be sustainable, governmental environmental and social policies require the participation of employers and workers [39].

The ILO acts by –

- strengthening social partners' participation in national poverty reduction strategy (PRS) processes (see MDG 1) and their awareness of sustainable development issues;
- integrating sustainable development issues into trade union work [71];
- introducing labour issues in the UNEP/UNIDO-led National Cleaner Production Centres, [72] which provide environmental and social services to enterprises;
- value chain analyses on interactions between producers, suppliers, global buyers and local consumers;
- capacity building in labour-based environmental services, irrigation and construction;
- the promotion of the labour principles enshrined in the UN Global Compact. [73] The Compact brings together companies, UN agencies and civil society around principles concerning labour, the environment, human rights and governance, [74] including the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. [7]

World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization

In its 2004 report, A Fair Globalization – Creating opportunities for all [1], the Commission called for “greater coherence between economic, social and environmental policies”. It also advocated “a sustainable path of development which provides opportunities for all, expands sustainable livelihoods and employment [...] and reduces disparities between people”.

The environment at work

Workplace accidents can lead to major environmental disasters. The ILO [37] promotes safe and healthy working conditions and environments through –

- international labour standards on occupational health and safety (OHS);
- awareness-raising and the development of national OHS and environment strategies, including through tripartite advisory mechanisms;
- the extension of labour inspection;

Target 9

Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources

Indicators

25. Proportion of land area covered by forest
26. Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area
27. Energy use (metric ton oil equivalent) per $1 GDP (PPP)
28. Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita) and consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs (ODP tons)
29. Proportion of population using solid fuels

Target 10

Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water

Indicators

30. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural
31. Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation, urban and rural

Target 11

By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

Indicators

32. Proportion of households with access to secure tenure
Decent Work and the Millennium Development Goals – MDG 7

- the development of compatible OHS and environmental management systems;
- workplace assessments – environmental, occupational and social – in cooperation with UNEP and trade union federations.

Chemical substances and pesticides can pollute air, water and land, affecting farmers, workers, businesses, consumers and the land. The ILO [75] assists in developing codes of practice and systems for the sustainable use, handling and disposal of toxic and hazardous substances, e.g. in the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals.

The ILO takes part in the Inter-Organization Programme on Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC). An ILO/IMO Committee with the Basel Convention Secretariat promotes the reduction of cross-boundary waste problems.

### Relevant international labour standards [8]

- Employment Policy Convention, 1964, (No. 122) and Recommendation, 1984, (No. 169);
- Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142) and Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195)
- Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention (No. 148) and Recommendation (No. 156) , 1977
- Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)
- Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169)
- Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No. 162) and Recommendation (No. 172) , 1986
- Chemicals Convention (No. 170) and Recommendation (No. 177) , 1990
- Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174)
- Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176)
- Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184)
- Job Creation in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998 (No. 189)
- ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work [7]

### Sustainable economic sectors

The ILO supports Goal 7 in several key sectors [76] by promoting –

- environmentally responsible agricultural practices;
- sustainable tourism that promotes rural and indigenous community initiatives while preserving natural resources [77];
- codes of practice on forestry to improve working conditions and environmental protection;
- rights and better working conditions in small-scale mining;
- standards to prevent large-scale disasters in the oil and gas industries;
- improved working conditions and safe working hours on board ship as ways to protect the marine environment;
- the joint ILO/IMO/FAO revised Document for Guidance on Training and Certification of Fishermen includes a code of conduct for sustainable fisheries.

### Improving the lives of slum dwellers and access to water

In developing regions, 43 per cent of the urban population live in slums. They endure poor water, sanitation and health services, with little employment or security of tenure. Informal work often takes place in substandard dwellings. Improvements require investment in infrastructure and public services and the creation of decent, productive employment.

Pro-poor construction and infrastructure works. Employment-intensive and local resource-based approaches are socially desirable and economically justified for many infrastructure works.
Decent Work and the Millennium Development Goals – MDG 7


- promotes infrastructure using local labour, resources and skills, while ensuring respect for rights;
- provides training and support to informal workers in construction industries, focusing on health and safety. [20]

Local partnerships for small enterprise development. The ILO works through –

- local public-private partnerships and pro-poor procurement, making contracting accessible for small-scale enterprises, while improving access to services and ensuring adequate labour standards; [16]
- community contracting between community groups and local government; this can benefit slum dwellers through community empowerment, job creation, and partnership development; [34]
- assistance to create an enabling legal framework for the formalization of enterprises, strengthened business security, market opportunities, access to financial services and protection of workers; [78]
- policy guidance, technical assistance and advocacy to improve job quality and promote association building.

ILO publications relevant to MDG 7

- Trade Union Actions to Promote Environmentally Sustainable Development. ILO, 1999.
- Trade Unions and Environmentally Sustainable Development. ILO Discussion Booklet/Training Material.
- Using ILO Standards to Promote Environmentally Sustainable Development. ILO Discussion Booklet/Training Material.

Blue text and numbers in brackets [...] are linked to websites. See attached list of reference materials.

ILO, 4 route des Morillons, 1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland – http://www.ilo.org
8. Develop a global partnership for development

MDG 8 reflects the Millennium Declaration’s call for a global partnership for development. It addresses how countries can work together to achieve Goals 1 to 7. MDG 8 covers many areas, ranging from the fairness of the multilateral system to youth employment, technology, development assistance, debt relief and the special needs of developing States. Progress towards Goal 8 is mixed, despite strengthened support from the international community. Greater focus on decent work as part of development would speed up that progress.

**Decent work in a fair global system**

In addition to its work relating to MDGs 1-7, the ILO contributes to MDG 8 through its Decent Work Agenda (decent and productive employment, rights, social protection and social dialogue) by -

- promoting decent work as a global goal in fair globalization;
- calling for greater policy coherence for poverty reduction across the multilateral system;
- encouraging employment from technological change;
- direct monitoring and promotion of the youth employment target under MDG 8;
- capacity building for workers’ and employers’ organizations to participate in national development agendas.

Globalization has the potential to promote open societies, more productive economies and the freer exchange of goods, knowledge and ideas. As the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization (WCSDG) [1] stresses, globalization is fair only when it creates opportunities for more and better jobs.

Trade, financial policies and technological change affect labour markets, working conditions and incomes. The ILO works to promote policies that keep decent and productive employment, social protection and rights at the centre of development concerns.

**Fair globalization: Action to take**


- making decent work a national and global objective;
- creating fair rules for trade, investment, international finance and migration; better international policies (e.g. meeting aid needs and debt relief) and more accountable institutions;
- stressing national and international responsibilities for creating good governance and reforms to ensure fairness and sustainable global growth, with a move from donor conditionality to national ownership of policies;
- greater policy coherence between international economic, social and environmental policies in a reformed multilateral system.

While trade is not an end in itself, Goal 8 underlines the contribution that it can make to poverty reduction when accompanied by other policies. The export products of poor countries still face significant barriers to access markets, such as high tariffs and subsidies.

The Monterrey Consensus and the WCSDG report recommend broad-based national dialogue and international policy coherence to ensure more effective development. The Millennium Declaration, the Johannesburg Declaration (2002) and the Copenhagen Declaration (1995) all recognize the key role that productive, freely chosen employment plays.

**Decent and productive work for youth**

Providing opportunity to young people and tapping their great potential is key to achieving MDG 8 and the other Goals. In developing regions, young people (15 to 24) are three times more likely than adults to be unemployed. In many countries, unemployment rates are higher among young women than among young men. As the UN’s Millennium Development Goals Report for 2005 notes, young adults without jobs could create a scenario for crime, violence and social unrest.

The ILO is the lead organization of the Youth Employment Network (YEN) [13], a joint UN/World Bank/ILO initiative set up in the framework of the Millennium Declaration. YEN brings...
together policy makers and representatives of industry, youth and civil society to identify solutions to the challenge of youth unemployment in poor countries. Four global priorities, “the four Es”, have been identified –

- **Employment creation** is placed at the centre of macroeconomic policy.
- **Employability**: invest in education and vocational training for young people.
- **Equal opportunities**: give young women the same opportunities as young men.
- **Entrepreneurship**: make enterprise creation easier for young women and men.

The ILO Global Employment Agenda (GEA) outlines key priorities for youth employment [12]. Youth employment has links with the ILO’s work on equal opportunities, skills development and the elimination of child labour. The ILO –

- assists governments and social partners in identifying the main youth employment issues and designing and implementing integrated policy responses, including youth career counselling and vocational training;
- documents innovative ways to keep young people from dropping out of education, so they can enter the labour market with better training and skills, e.g. school-to-work transition surveys;
- undertakes research and compiles statistics on various aspects of youth employment.

In the UN system, the ILO is the reporting agency on Indicator 45: Unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 years, under Goal 8, Target 16. The ILO provides data analyses and reports [81] which feed into the Secretary-General’s report to the UN General Assembly on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration [82]. The ILO is advocating a change in this target and its associated indicator to include the general objective of decent and productive employment, but still with a focus on youth.

### Social justice and development

“Lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice. The attainment of conditions in which all human beings have the right to pursue their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity, is the central aim of national and international policy. All national and international policies and measures, especially those of an economic and financial character, should be judged in this light. They should be accepted only where they promote and do not hinder achievement of this objective.”

These provisions in the Declaration of Philadelphia (1944), part of the ILO Constitution, underpin the ILO’s role in examining all international economic and financial policies in the light of this fundamental aim.

### Poverty reduction and the ILO

The ILO assists developing countries in reaching the MDGs by –

- crafting Decent Work Country Programmes, in consultation with governments, workers’ and employers’ organizations, as a framework for ILO action [22];
- aligning ILO country programmes to developing countries’ national agendas and national poverty reduction strategies [9] (see MDG 1), investing in integrated approaches to local development [34];
- working with the Bretton Woods institutions towards greater policy coherence, supporting debt relief and working with other UN agencies for coordinated action on poverty reduction;
- developing the Global Social Trust to reduce poverty through a partnership in which richer countries sponsor sustainable social protection schemes for unprotected groups in poor countries, [27] and pursuing the Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All [26].

### Benefits of new technologies

Advances in information and communication technologies (ICTs) underlie the integration of financial markets and permit the division of production processes throughout the world. While ICTs have great potential to aid poverty reduction, they must be linked to social and economic development. One core element of the ILO Global Employment Agenda [12] is “the promotion of technological change for higher productivity and job creation and improved standards of living”.

The 2002 Monterrey Consensus [83] called for increased development assistance to achieve the MDGs. It stressed the need for enhanced coherence and coordination among development partners. The need for a partnership between rich and poor countries was reaffirmed in the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (see MDG 7).

The 2005 joint UN Millennium Project Report, Investing in Development – A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals, recommends MDG-based PRSPs; and other actions to achieve the MDGs [84].

The Helsinki Process, initiated by Finland and Tanzania, aims to promote new partnerships between North and South, and between civil society, governments and the private sector, in implementing globally agreed policies, such as the MDGs.

Good governance embraces the rule of law, participation and consensus building, transparency and accountability, equity and effectiveness. The 2003 UN Convention Against Corruption is a milestone [85].

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**MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development**

These pages are available at [http://www.ilo.org/mdg](http://www.ilo.org/mdg)
Decent Work and the Millennium Development Goals – MDG 8

For the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the ILO has highlighted its research on the impact of ICTs on the world of work and on solutions to ensure benefits for workers [80], the strengthening of education and skills to widen the benefits of globalization [38], and the promotion of social dialogue in the process of globalization [39].

Good governance and development

The ILO furthers this aspect of MDG 8 by –

- promoting a global reform process based on social dialogue, embracing negotiation, consultation and information exchange at various levels between governments and employers’ and workers’ organizations on economic and social issues;
- ensuring that rights at work are respected in the context of reforms: good governance of the labour market applies the rule of law to work, and involves those most affected;
- fostering the role of labour market institutions that underpin development: sound labour legislation, social dialogue bodies and collective bargaining, equality commissions, dispute resolution mechanisms, labour inspectorates, and an informed and effective judiciary - such institutions create the enabling conditions for macroeconomic stability, productivity and competitiveness.

ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work [7]

A key link between social progress and economic growth is respect for fundamental principles and rights at work. They enable people to “claim freely and on the basis of equality of opportunity their fair share of the wealth they have helped to generate”. All ILO member States are to respect, promote and realize these principles that relate to eight ILO fundamental Conventions -

- freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining (Conventions 87 and 98);
- the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour (Conventions 29 and 105);
- the effective abolition of child labour (Conventions 138 and 182);
- the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation (Conventions 100 and 111).

With its pillars of employment, rights, social protection and social dialogue, the Decent Work Agenda goes hand in hand with the attainment of MDG 8 as well as Goals 1 to 7.

ILO publications relevant to MDG 8

- Youth: Pathways to decent work. ILO, 2005.
- The ILO and the follow-up to the World Summit on Social Development. ILO, 2005.

The UN target for Official Development Assistance (ODA) is set at 0.7 per cent of donors’ national income. Full delivery of the Monterrey commitments requires 0.29 per cent by 2006. But still ODA will be $25 billion short of the extra $50 billion estimated to be needed to meet the MDGs.

UNDG reports positive UN coordination efforts, including increased support to national strategies and plans; more harmonization of UN programming cycles; and better linkages between UN instruments and national processes [86].

The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative is the main international effort to improve developing countries’ debt sustainability.

The UN General Assembly’s Resolution on Promoting Youth Employment (2003) encourages UN member States to develop national action plans on youth employment. Youth unemployment rates exceed adult rates in all regions and have skyrocketed worldwide over the past decade by 26.8 per cent. This accounts for nearly half of the world’s jobless.

Blue text and numbers in brackets [...] are linked to websites. See attached list of reference materials.

MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development

These pages are available at http://www.ilo.org/mdg
**Reference materials**

### General


7. ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: [http://www.ilo.org/declaration](http://www.ilo.org/declaration)


13. Secretary-General’s Youth Employment Network: [http://www.ilo.org/yen](http://www.ilo.org/yen)


### ILO Programmes


34. Local Economic Development Programme: [http://www.ilo.org/led](http://www.ilo.org/led)
38. Skills, Knowledge and Employability: http://www.ilo.org/skills
42. Social Protection Programme: http://www.ilo.org/protection

MDG 2 – Achieve universal primary education

44. UNESCO Education For All: http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/index.shtml
47. ILO action programme on teacher shortages and EFA [forthcoming]
48. Education International: http://www.ei-ie.org/
49. Global Campaign for Education site: http://www.campaignforeducation.org/
51. UN Girl’s Education Initiative: http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/know_sharing/flagship_initiatives/girls.shtml

MDG 3 – Promote gender equality and empower women

55. ILO Gender HelpDesk: http://www.ilo.org/gender
58. GenderNet: http://www.mdgender.net/

MDG 4 – Reduce child mortality


MDG 5 – Improve maternal health

MDG 6 – Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

64. UNAIDS: http://www.unaids.org/en/default.asp
69. The “3 by 5 Initiative”: http://www.who.int/3by5/en/

MDG 7 – Ensure environmental sustainability

71. ILO Bureau for Workers’ Activities (ACTRAV): http://www.ilo.org/actrav/
72. National Cleaner Production Centres: http://www.unep.org/pc/pc/tools/pdfs/npcbkgnr.PDF
73. UN Global Compact: http://www.unglobalcompact.org/
74. Multilateral Enterprises: http://www.ilo.org/multi/
76. ILO Sectoral Activities: http://www.ilo.org/sector/
77. ILO Portal of Living Cultures of Latin America (REDTURS): http://www.redturs.org/

MDG 8 – Develop a global partnership for development

84. UN Millennium Project: http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/index.htm

All URLs are linked: click to open.

ILO, 4 route des Morillons, 1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland – http://www.ilo.org