



Government of Belgium ILO Cooperation



Belgium has been an ILO Member State since its creation in 1919 and a key partner of the ILO in promoting the Decent Work Agenda. Belgium has ratified a considerable number of ILO Conventions, including the eight fundamental conventions, the four priority conventions, as well as 90 of the 177 technical conventions. In 2013, Belgium has ratified the Maritime Labour Convention (2006), which will enter into force in August 2014.

Belgium's Contribution to ILO Priorities



The ILO recognises the Government of Belgium's high-level political engagement and commitment in giving strategic importance to the ILO's mandate.

Belgium currently focuses on the ILO's priorities in the field of social protection, social dialogue, post-2015 development agenda and the work of committee on the application of standards. Belgium contributes to the regular budget of the ILO and the ILO's technical cooperation programme.

BELGIUM'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION PRIORITIES

Belgium allocated 0.47 per cent of its gross national income (GNI) to official development assistance (ODA) in 2012, which amounted to USD 2.30 billion. Multilateral ODA accounted for 38 per cent of Belgian official development assistance.¹

The 2013 Law on Development Cooperation² explicitly commits to promoting an inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic growth through the adoption of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.

Belgium focuses development assistance in the following 18 partner countries: Algeria, Benin, Bolivia, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, occupied Palestinian territory, Peru, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Vietnam.

The main thematic priorities of Belgium's development assistance include the promotion of human rights, including children's rights, the support to decent and sustainable employment and capacity building.

1. Source: Development Co-operation Report 2013 (DCR), OECD

2. Source: Law on Development Cooperation, 19 March 2013 – (see articles 5 and 11)



SOME FACTS AND FIGURES ON BELGIUM'S FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

The Government of Belgium finances the ILO through the Regular Budget (RB), the Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) and the Extra-budgetary Technical Cooperation (XBTC):

- The Regular Budget (RB) is composed of assessed contributions by member States. Belgium provided a total assessed contribution of USD 24,3 million between 2008 and 2013. Belgium contributed with USD 4,635,515 to the ILO's regular budget in 2013.

- The Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) contributes to Decent Work Agenda priorities through strategic funding to the technical cooperation programme. It is based on voluntary contributions and provides flexible resources, which are allocated to priority areas by the ILO. Belgium contributed to RBSA with USD 15 million between 2008 and 2013. For the period 2013-15, Belgium committed to provide EUR 13,3 million to RBSA.

- Extra-budgetary Technical Cooperation (XBTC) contributions support specific global and national projects and programmes with a clear timeline and a pre-defined geographic and thematic focus. The overall funding from Belgium to ILO development cooperation between 2008 and 2013 amounted to USD 19,4 million. The ILO benefits from USD 5,2 million in funding for the project on youth employability in Katanga, DRC for the period 2012-15.

Belgium: Total Extra-Budgetary Technical Cooperation (XBTC) and Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA), 2008 - 2013



RBSA Allocations in 2012-13 Distribution by Region



Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) – An ILO Priority

The continued support of Belgium to RBSA has been a critical element in allowing the ILO to deliver results to member States.

The ILO established RBSA to provide donors with a modality to contribute un-earmarked funding to the ILO while ensuring that such contributions would be fully in line with OECD/DAC guidelines on ODA-eligibility. RBSA allows the Office to allocate funds strategically when and where they are most needed in an independent, flexible and fast manner, complementing other ILO resources.

The Office will be using most available RBSA resources to pilot the areas of critical importance (ACIs) identified in the Programme and Budget proposals 2014-2015. The eight ACIs are: promoting more and better jobs for inclusive growth; jobs and skills for youth; creating and extending social protection floors; productivity and working conditions in SMEs; decent work in the rural economy; formalization of the informal economy; strengthening workplace compliance through labour inspection and the protection of workers from unacceptable forms of work.



Extending Social Protection

The unanimous adoption of the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) by governments and workers' and employers' organizations of the 185 member States of the ILO at the 2012 International Labour Conference was the result of a decade of research, tripartite consultations, technical cooperation projects and collaboration with development partners and the UN system including through the UN CEB SPF Initiative. The Conference also adopted the resolution concerning efforts to make social protection floors a national reality worldwide.

This was followed by proposals for the implementation of the resolution as laid out the Social Security Plan of Action for 2011-2019. The priority areas of intervention are: policy development and standards-related activities, knowledge development and sharing, technical and legal advisory services, capacity building, and building and strengthening partnerships.

During 2012-13, the Office provided advisory support to over 50 countries. Empirical diagnostic studies, financial cost assessments and facilitation of

social dialogue in Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Armenia, Burkina Faso, Honduras, Togo, Viet Nam, Jordan, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Mozambique, resulted in the development of national strategies, legislation, capacity building, and implementation of elements of national social protection floors.

Advocacy efforts by the Office lead to global commitments on the implementation of social protection floors being included in the high-level ministerial declarations (ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration (2012), G20 Leaders' Declaration Los Cabos (2012) and G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' Declaration (2013).

Partnerships were strengthened and built with UN agencies in the context of the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation-Board (SPIAC-B) and the MDG Accelerated Framework in Niger. The ILO also worked with the World Bank on the rationalization of social protection expenditure in Ghana and Zambia, and with the UNDP Special Unit for South-South Cooperation on the design and implementation of Social Protection Floors in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Benin, Burkina Faso and Togo.

The Office is committed to providing support to member States and social partners in their efforts to extend coverage and ensure that social protection for all.



SPOTLIGHT ON THE MDG ACCELERATION FRAMEWORK (MAF)

With the purpose of reducing poverty and in line with the Convention 202 on national floors for social protection, the ILO allocated RBSA contributions to support the MDG Acceleration Frameworks (MAF) in Ghana and Niger.

In Ghana, building on on-going work to enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all, the ILO stepped up efforts to contribute to the reduction of maternal mortality through supporting a social protection floor for pregnant women and nursing mothers that includes better livelihood opportunities. These actions are intended to fast-track efforts to eliminate a number of challenges inhibiting the attainment of MDG 5 on maternal health. This effort will constitute part of the ILO's contribution to the MAF in Ghana and will be aligned with the implementation of the draft Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for 2013-2016.

In Niger, since 2012, the ILO's contribution focuses on providing special support to help the country achieve the MDGs, with a specific focus on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1). Further to the work done by the ILO in 2013 on the formulation and creation of social protection floors, the Niger country strategy 2014-15 will focus on integrated policies for social protection, employment development and occupational safety and health. This work is aligned with the on-going implementation of the DWCP for 2012-2015.

The Inclusion of Social Protection in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

The recognition that decent jobs should feature prominently in any future framework of global development goals – as a main instrument to transform economies and eradicate poverty – is important to the post-2015 development agenda.

In November 2012, the ILO Governing Body proposed the adoption of full and productive employment and decent work as an explicit goal of the global development agenda beyond 2015, including a reference to the need for social protection floors. This call went well beyond the ILO. Job creation has also emerged as a pressing need in nearly all the countries in which the UN held post-2015 national consultations.

Influential reports on the post-2015 agenda underlined that transforming economies for inclusive growth and employment generation should be one of the main pillars of the future agenda. The report by the UN High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda explicitly proposed a goal on «creating

jobs, sustainable livelihoods and equitable growth» and it recommended a target on social protection under the goal of «ending poverty».

The ILO and its tripartite constituents have actively contributed to the post-2015 debate. The Office prepared two concept notes to position ILO issues in the debate, spelling out the rationale for a possible stand-alone goal on jobs and livelihoods and reviewing options for relevant goals, targets and indicators.

The process to decide on the future framework is still in its early stages. The final outcome of intergovernmental negotiations starting in September 2014, should deliver a text for adoption by the UN General Assembly in September 2015. A concerted effort by all ILO constituents will be needed in order to succeed in setting full and productive employment and decent work as a key development goal for the post-2015 development framework.

Promoting Social Dialogue

Social dialogue plays a critical role in achieving the ILO's objective of advancing opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equality, security and human dignity. Social dialogue includes all types of negotiation, consultation and exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers on issues of common interest.

The ILO encourages tripartism within member States by promoting social dialogue to help design and implement national policies. Fair terms of employment, decent working conditions, and development for the benefit of all cannot be achieved without the active involvement of government and social partners in policy-making. Social dialogue helps to establish sound labour relations, adapt labour laws to meet changing economic and social needs and improve labour administration.

Effective social dialogue depends on respect for the fundamental rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining, strong, independent workers' and employers' organizations, political will and commitment to engage in social dialogue and appropriate institutional support.



RBSA SUPPORT TO SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN BURUNDI

Since the Arusha Peace Agreement and the subsequent reconciliation arrangements of August 2000, which brought an end to two decades of conflict and civil strife, Burundi has been making modest progress towards political stability, good governance and inclusive economic growth. Within this process of stabilisation, social partners have played a crucial role in promoting the reinforcement of social dialogue institutions as a priority in areas such as health and public education. This has set the scene for the organisation of the first National Forum on Social Dialogue in 2009.

The ILO has provided support to strengthen the negotiation capacities of Burundian social partners. RBSA funding was allocated and instrumental in making the National Council of Social Dialogue fully operational and ensuring wide awareness of the National Charter of Social Dialogue at the provincial level and in a variety of economic sectors.

Belgian Contribution to Supporting Youth Employability in Katanga, DRC

The Government of Belgium supports the project on youth employability in Katanga, DRC, for the period 2012-15.

In the aftermath of the global financial crisis, the mining region of Katanga was marked by widespread poverty, economic vulnerability and a low level of decent jobs and employability for youth. The project strengthens employability and entrepreneurial spirit through entrepreneurship and

IT training, facilitates the access of young people to financial services and provides capacity building of vocational training institutions and social partners.

The high-level engagement provided by the Government of Belgium through the visit of the Minister for Development Cooperation, Mr Jean-Pascal Labille for the official launch was most appreciated.



HIGH-LEVEL ENGAGEMENT: SUPPORT TO SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN TUNISIA

In December 2011, soon after the start of the Arab Spring, the Government of Belgium with the support of its social partners and the ILO launched a two-year project called "Partnership with Maghreb countries for the promotion of social dialogue".

The activities involved Belgian experts in industrial relations from both the government and the social partners. Technical support was provided to Tunisian tripartite constituents in the area of social dialogue, which included seminars on capacity building in Tunis and study visits to Belgium.

The project culminated in 2013 with the signing of a landmark social contract between the Government of Tunisia, the Employers' Organisation (UTICA) and the Workers' Organisation (UGTT). The ILO Director General, Mr Guy Ryder, and the Minister of Employment, Ms Monica De Coninck attended the ceremony.

In signing the document, the government and social partners have demonstrated their commitment to the ILO's fundamental goals of social justice, freedom of association, social dialogue and decent work.

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