

BRICS and the ILO

An overview

During the past few years, development cooperation between both governments and private industry from the BRICS countries and the ILO has been very active. In 2009, **Brazil** signed an overarching framework agreement on Technical Cooperation with Latin American and African countries for the implementation of the ILO-Brazil Partnership Programme for the Promotion of South-South Cooperation. In 2012, three key agreements were signed with the **Russian Federation** at the International High-level Conference on Decent Work in Moscow. Since then, Russia has contributed US\$8 million for the implementation of the ILO-G20 training strategy. During the same year, the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute of **India** signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Training Centre of the ILO to collaborate in research and training programmes in the field of labour including implementation of collaborative training programmes and research into training methodologies and techniques, development of training modules, exchange of faculty members for skills upgrading, etc. In addition, **China** committed in 2012 US\$1 million (over three years) by signing the Partnership Agreement for Promoting Technical Cooperation with a Focus on South-South Initiatives, which is being implemented in Cambodia and Lao PDR to expand Employment Services and enhance Labour Market Information. As of June 2014, there are three ILO Programmes financed by **South Africa** with a total budget of US\$14,7 million; in the field of Public Infrastructure and Employment Policy Planning.



Noticeably, the BRICS have increasingly demonstrated development impacts. Their large, fast-growing economies have let them serve as a major platform for dialogue and cooperation, strengthening the concept of partnership for common development and advancing coopera-

tion under the principles of openness, inclusiveness, solidarity and mutual assistance. They are increasingly providing overseas development aid and building other forms of cooperation with low-income countries through technical and financial support; in addition, in the

2011 Sanya Declaration the BRICS have stated to be open to increasing engagement and cooperation with relevant international and regional organizations, in the fields of decent work, in particular: social protection, gender equality, youth, and public health.

BRICS and ILO's Development Cooperation

BRAZIL

- ▶ In 1987 the ILO signed an agreement with the Government of Brazil to undertake technical cooperation with other countries in Latin America and Africa.
- ▶ In June 2009 Brazil and ILO signed the "Complementary Agreement on Technical Cooperation with Latin American and African countries for the Implementation of the ILO-Brazil Partnership Programme for the Promotion of South-South Cooperation". As a follow up of this agreement, Brazil prioritized the elaboration of cooperation programmes regarding fundamental principles and rights at work, with a strong focus on child labour, social protection, and extending social security.
- ▶ In 2010, new programme agreements were signed in order to extend cooperation to the fields of forced labour and green jobs, the expansion of Brazilian models of social security (Support of Brazilian experts to the development of social security in Timor-Leste), as well as horizontal cooperation between labour unions of the Americas and Africa.
- ▶ During the same year, a triangular (South-South-North) cooperation agreement was finalized between the governments of the United States, Brazil and Haiti to prevent and eliminate child labour in the construction sector.
- ▶ In 2010, Brazil and the International Training Centre of the ILO, in Turin, also embarked on an agreement concerning capacity building in the field of humanitarian crises and natural disasters.
- ▶ Since 2005 the Brazilian contribution to the ILO has been over USD\$ 13 million, mainly through the South-South and Triangular Cooperation modality, but also Direct Trust funds for projects in Brazil. The Brazilian cooperation has promoted the sharing of expertise with Portuguese Speaking Countries in Africa, MERCOSUR,

South America, Timor-Leste, Tanzania, Palestine and Haiti among others.

- ▶ In October 2013, in cooperation with the ILO, Brazil hosted the III Global Conference on Child Labour. The event measured progress in implementing The Hague Roadmap and towards the goal of 2016. It represented an opportunity for reflection and joint dialogue between governments, social partners, civil society, regional and international organizations on the progress made in the process towards the elimination of child labour, especially its worst forms. It also encouraged the exchange of lessons learned and good practices, in that sense, the efforts made by several countries may allow the construction of more consistent policies and integrated strategies for addressing child labour.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Russian Federation contributed US\$8 million for the implementation of the ILO-G20 training strategy. In 2012, Russia and the ILO launched a new and strategic era of cooperation with the signing of three key agreements to further promote decent work, helping developing countries improve delivery of skills for employment, and promote youth employment through a partnership agreement with Russian oil company OAO LUKOIL.

1. The main objective of the Programme of Cooperation 2013-2016 is to promote the further development of labour relations in the Russian Federation with a view to achieving decent work.

2. The agreement with the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation which applies the G20 Training Strategy in three countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), Jordan and Viet Nam; aims at improving the quality and relevance of vocational training and entrepreneurship in order to better meet labour market needs.

3. The Global partnership agreement between the ILO and LUKOIL will allow the two partners work in the areas of youth employment, staff exchange programme, and training. The technical cooperation project "Partnership for youth employment in the CIS" is funded by the LUKOIL and implemented by the

ILO with a total budget of US \$6 million. The ITCILO is engaged with the delivery of capacity building for employers' and workers' organisations, and with strengthening youth employment under the above mentioned projects.



INDIA

In October 2012, Dr. Mrutyunjay Sarangi, Labour and Employment Secretary of the Indian Ministry of Labour and Employment, and Mr. V.P. Yajurvedi, Director General of V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, signed a new "Memorandum of Understanding with

the International Training Centre of the ILO to collaborate for 5 years on research, training, education, publication and consultancy on labour related issues. Areas included in the agreement are: **a)** implementation of collaborative training programmes and research into

training methodologies and techniques; **b)** development of training modules; **c)** exchange of faculty members for skills upgrading, knowledge and information-sharing; and **d)** implementation of joint courses on labour studies.

CHINA

In June 2012, the ILO and China signed a «Partnership Agreement for Promoting Technical Cooperation with a Focus on South-South Initiatives». Aimed at assisting developing countries in Asia promote full employment and the decent work Agenda, through innovative technical south-south cooperation projects that facilitate the dissemination of good practices. For this purpose, the country has committed US\$1 million over three years.

Within the framework of this agreement in 2013, the ILO and China started the implementation of the “South-South Cooperation Project to Expand

Employment Services and Enhance Labour Market Information in Cambodia and Lao PDR.” Its main purpose is to improve labour market efficiency and participation, reducing unemployment, and enhancing linkages and information flows between job seekers and employers, which will in turn contribute to the reduction of poverty in Cambodia and Lao PDR.

In addition, the ITCILO in close collaboration with the All China Federation of Trade Unions has established a regular technical cooperation on strengthening the capacity building of trade unions in the areas of labour relations, collective

bargaining, labour movements. Regular cooperation with Nanjing University of Finance & Economics in China allows its graduates to deepen their knowledge about Promoting youth employment and employability by providing entrepreneurship education such as ILO modular training on «Start and Improve Your Business Programme» (SIYB) and «Know About Business» (KAB).



SOUTH AFRICA

In the framework of a three year TC project supported by the Government of Flanders and implemented by the ITCILO, the training on strengthening social dialogue in the Southern African Development Community was successfully completed in 2010.

In July 2011, the ILO and the South African government held a seven-day

international workshop aimed at sharing knowledge and experiences on innovations in PEPs, and addressing information and capacity building needs of its Community Work Programme. More than 70 participants exchanged information about the design and delivery of Public Employment Programmes and their own experiences with Community Work Programmes. They also

carried out a work-design exercise covering work-identification, work-planning and other management-related issues.

As of March 2014, there are three ILO Programmes financed by South Africa (Direct Trust Fund) with a total budget of US\$14,784,911 in the field of Public Infrastructure and Employment Policy Planning.

BRICS Summits and ILO issues

<p>First BRIC Summit <i>Yekaterinburg, Russia, June 2009</i></p>	<p>BRIC states expressed their strong commitment to multilateral diplomacy, highlighting the central role of the United Nations in dealing with global challenges and threats. They expressed their support to the status of India and Brazil in international affairs particularly in regards to their aspirations to play a greater role in the United Nations.</p>
<p>Second BRIC Summit <i>Brasilia, April 2010</i></p>	<p>BRIC countries agreed for the first time on supporting technical and financial cooperation as means to contribute to the achievement of sustainable social development, with social protection, full employment, and decent work policies and programmes, giving special attention to the most vulnerable groups, such as the poor, women, youth, migrants and persons with disabilities.</p>
<p>Third BRICS Summit <i>Sanya, China, April 2011</i></p>	<p>BRICS underscored their commitment to strengthen dialogue and cooperation in the fields of social protection, decent work, gender equality, youth, and public health.</p>
<p>Fourth BRICS Summit <i>India, March 2012</i></p>	<p>BRICS states emphasized the relevance of their available storehouse of knowledge, know-how, capacities and best practices; recognizing that sharing them would let them build meaningful cooperation. For that purpose, an Action Plan for 2013 was endorsed.</p> <p>Additionally, two new agreements were adopted: 1) The BRICS Multilateral Infrastructure Co-Financing Agreement for Africa that paves the way for the establishment of co-financing arrangements for infrastructure projects across the African continent; 2) The BRICS Multilateral Cooperation and Co-Financing Agreement for Sustainable Development; set out to explore the establishment of bilateral agreements aimed at establishing cooperation and co-financing arrangements.</p>
<p>Fifth BRICS Summit <i>Durban, South Africa, March 2013</i></p>	<p>The 5 countries agreed on the text of the BRICS Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation and it was proposed to be signed on the occasion of the Sixth BRICS Summit in Brazil in 2014. In the framework of the aforementioned declaration, the BRICS reaffirmed their will to establish mechanisms to enhance technology and knowledge transfer among member countries, and to support the establishment of a dedicated BRICS training programme on this field to address human capital challenges within the BRICS states.</p>

BRICS AND SOCIAL SECURITY

During the International Labour Conference in 2013, the International Social Security Association ISSA launched a publication entitled "Social security coverage extension in the BRICS: A comparative study on the extension of coverage in Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa" (<http://www.hse.ru/data/2013/02/07/1308005977/2-BRICS-report.pdf>). The study presents the diverse approaches of the BRICS for the extension of social security coverage.

UPDATES

In March 2014, the BRICS states and the ILO held an informal meeting with the purpose of giving continuity to the cooperation that has been carried out on a bilateral basis, and to consider proposing potential areas of cooperation that could be addressed as a group (BRICS-ILO). They emphasised the relevance of creating a solid platform with a joint working group to allow for a conceptualization of a specific focus of cooperation, particularly in social protection and skills training, to overcome collective challenges. The group agreed on the following:

- 1) Informal discussions will be held during the ILO GB sessions (March and November).
- 2) The ILO Partnerships and Field Support Department will continue to follow up on the cooperation with BRICS countries, in close collaboration with ITC-ILO (ILO Turin Centre) regarding the training components of all activities.

BRICS and ILO: Opportunities

► BRICS and Social Security Schemes

Although the BRICS share a number of common characteristics, social security extension efforts deal with very different environments in the five countries, responding to their own cultural, institutional and demographic characteristics. Challenges remain in all countries, but there is great potential of cooperation between the BRICS to scale up the impact of existing social security programmes. The Brazilian conditional cash-transfer programme *Bolsa Familia*, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) from India; the rights-based approach to social security in South Africa are good examples of practices that can be adapted to other contexts.

► Knowledge Sharing

The experience of the ILO in facilitating sharing of knowledge and information

on skills development, social protection floors and the promotion of labour standards could be beneficial for BRICS to address national current challenges, and to bolster the knowledge sharing with other countries.

► BRICS Summits and Decent Work

The integration of the Decent Work Agenda (DWA) as one of the items of BRICS Summits would allow the exchange of knowledge and experiences in this topic. It would also pave the way to further mainstream the efforts related to the DWA in the existing BRICS platforms and structures.

► Capacity-Building

Take advantage of the ILO's technical knowledge and the experience of the BRICS to organise capacity-building activities that benefit ILO's constituents from the Global South.

► South-South and Triangular Cooperation and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

SSTC and PPPs can support the achievement of fundamental goals of BRICS countries in the advancement of social and economic development.

► Expanding the IBSA and ILO Platform

The close collaboration between IBSA and the ILO in the promotion of the Decent Work Agenda has shown positive results, particularly in the framework of South-South Cooperation. These results can be scaled up through greater cooperation in the framework of BRICS. The latter could include bringing joint positions on different items during the ILO Governing Body and the International Labour Conference.

6TH BRICS SUMMIT

The 6th BRICS summit will be hosted in Fortaleza, Brazil on 15 – 17 of July, 2014. At this occasion, the group will continue efforts on development cooperation and will follow up to the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation.

Other important issues to follow upon are those agreed last year at the Durban Summit, where the five countries' leaders announced the creation of a new Development Bank that will focus on infrastructure investment in developing countries.

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