

Concept note

ILO Inter-regional Gender Learning Forum Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 12-15 April 2010

1.0 Background and justification

ILO's global Gender Network of Gender Specialists, Gender Coordinators and Focal Points spans the entire field structure as well as all headquarters sectors and units. Over the last decade, the Gender Network has met annually for an inter-regional strategic learning forum to take stock of achievements, exchange knowledge, strengthen capacities and agree on approaches and mechanisms to implement ILO's gender equality mandate. These fora are part of the *institutional mechanism* called for in the Director-General's circular of 1999 (no 564) which outlines ILO's Gender Equality Policy. In 2009, for the first time, the inter-regional learning forum took place in the field, in Bangkok, Thailand, as a joint endeavour between the Bureau for Gender Equality (GENDER), Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RO-Bangkok) and Subregional Office for East Asia (SRO-Bangkok). Moving the forum to the field represented an opportunity to expand the participation of Gender Focal Points from the region as well as relevant Technical Cooperation experts. Judging from participants' individual anonymous evaluations, the forum in Bangkok was deemed a success. Based on this experience, GENDER is encouraged by the possibility to host the 2010 inter-regional learning forum in Addis Ababa in collaboration with the Regional Office for Africa (ROAF).

The 2010 Forum will be particularly relevant for consolidating the Network's response to, and support for, the implementation of the conclusions from the 2009 ILC discussion on gender equality. A central tool in this effort will be ILO's Action Plan for Gender Equality 2010-15 and the forum will represent an opportunity to strengthen the Network's capacity to promote implementation of this Action Plan. In view of the Africa Region's strong emphasis on gender equality over the next biennium, Addis Ababa represents a fitting venue to bring the Gender Network together. It would also be a unique opportunity to gather all Gender Focal Points for the Africa Region in a year when we are commemorating the 15 year anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action on gender equality.

The overall objectives of the 2010 Learning Forum are to:

- Exchange experiences across the Gender Network on progress, good practices and challenges on implementing ILO's gender equality mandate over the last year;
- Through thematic sessions and discussion fora, strengthen the Gender Network's capacity to support implementation of the 2009 ILC Conclusions on gender equality as well as the Action Plan for Gender Equality 2010-15;

- Through knowledge sharing and team building, strengthen team work across the Gender Network and foster synergies between field-based and headquarters-based Network members.

2.0 Target group/Participants

The Learning Forum will bring together ILO's Global Network of Regional and Sub-regional Gender Specialists, Sector Gender Coordinators and GENDER staff. The Forum will also be open to Gender Focal Points and Technical Cooperation experts from the Africa Region. The total number of participants is expected to be between 45 and 50 women and men.

3.0 Methodology

The Learning Forum methodology aims to be flexible, interactive and participative. Thematic presentations will be combined with group work exercises, facilitated discussion fora and debates to engage participants and allow them to relate the various technical topics to their existing experience and practical professional needs. An external facilitator will be responsible for the methodological development of the programme.

4.0 Languages

The Learning Forum will be conducted in English and French (interpretation provided).

5.0 Management arrangements

The Learning Forum will be co-hosted by ROAF Addis Ababa and GENDER from the 12 to 15 April 2010 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

GENDER and ROAF will develop the technical programme for the Learning Forum.

GENDER will be responsible for the administrative and financial arrangements pertaining to the participation of field Gender Specialists, Sector Gender Coordinators and GENDER staff. The Human Resources Development Department (HRD) welcomed the 2009 Learning Forum as a strategic "group training" and supported the event through staff development funds. GENDER is hopeful that a similar arrangement can be sought for the 2010 Forum. In addition, there is an established practice of cost-sharing between the participants' respective offices and GENDER for mission costs.

ROAF, in consultation with relevant field offices, will be responsible for the administrative and financial arrangements pertaining to the participation of Gender Focal Points and Technical Cooperation experts from the Africa Region. ROAF will also be responsible for logistical arrangements related to hotel reservations for all participants and the Forum venue.