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“Trade union rights are human rights”

A regular newsletter from the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV)

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Meeting in Geneva (6-19 November) amid growing concern over the impact of economic turmoil on workers, employers and governments, the Governing Body of the International Labour Office (ILO) announced steps towards forging employment and social policy responses through social dialogue aimed at meeting the challenges of the deepening global economic crisis. The Governing Body decided to appoint a Commission of Inquiry to consider allegations of violation of trade union rights in Zimbabwe and expressed concern over the situation relating to freedom of association in Swaziland and the continued use of forced labour in Burma (Myanmar). The Committee on Freedom of Association drew attention to the cases of Cambodia, Chad, Djibouti, Guatemala, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Burma (Myanmar) and the Philippines. Juan Somavia was elected to a third term as Director-General of the International Labour Office, and pledged to work to ensure social justice amidst a growing series of challenges in the global economy.

An ILO plan to respond to the global economic crisis

World leaders see the ILO Decent Work Agenda as the appropriate policy framework to confront the crisis

A high-level tripartite meeting early next year on the crisis and effective responses thereto, regional and sectoral tripartite events, monthly information bulletins, and a new web site are among the emergency initiatives taken by the ILO in response to the unfolding economic crisis.

The moves were announced as an immediate follow-up to the 303rd Session of the ILO Governing Body which met in Geneva from 6 to 19 November 2008.

The meeting took place amid new reports that the global economic crisis was deepening with strong indications that economic growth in all regions will be substantially lower in the remainder of 2008 and much lower in 2009. ILO data

indicate that unemployment could increase worldwide by some 20 million, while the number of working poor living on less than \$2 per day was also expected to rise. According to ILO reports, the current crisis would hit such sectors as construction, automotive, tourism, finance, services and real estate the hardest.

The central conclusion of the discussion in the Governing Body “is that the Decent Work Agenda is an appropriate policy framework to confront the crisis”, said ILO Director-General Juan Somavia, who was elected to a third, five-year term as head of the agency on 18 November. “There is a powerful message that tripartite dialogue with employers’ and workers’ organizations should play a central role in addressing the economic crisis, and developing policy responses.”

The ILO Decent Work Agenda drew unprecedented support from José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, President of the Government of Spain, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development’s Secretary-General Angel Gurría who took part in ILO meetings during the Governing Body. In a message to the ILO, Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France, urged the ILO to make its voice heard to promote Decent Work at the heart of the rules that will lay the foundations for the building of a new global order in response to the global financial crisis.

Following an extensive exchange of views in the Governing Body’s Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization, the Officers of the Governing Body adopted a special statement identifying a number of measures that would be necessary to “address the impact of the crisis on the real economy to protect people, support productive enterprises and safeguard jobs”. These include:

- ensuring the flow of credit to consumption, trade and investment;
- protecting persons most exposed, including extending social protection and unemployment benefits, and promoting training, retraining and placement services; supporting productive, profitable and sustainable enterprises together with a strong social economy and a viable public sector, so as to maximize employment and decent work;
- ensuring that social progress is not undermined in the current crisis;
- developing strong cooperation between the ILO and its tripartite constituents with the multilateral system in order to assist countries in implementing measures aimed at addressing the crisis; and,
- maintaining development aid as a minimum at current levels and providing additional credit lines and support to enable low-income countries to cushion the crisis.

“We now have clear guidance on how to move forward” said Mr. Somavia. “We will do this by expanding the ILO’s work on responses to the labour and social consequences of the crisis; supporting ILO constituents as they forge responses; and engaging with the multilateral system, including the G20 process and international finance institutions.”

The OECD Secretary General, Mr. Gurría, called for increased collaboration between the OECD and the ILO on labour market and social policies, saying “success or failure in this area will affect not only the livelihood of millions of people around the world but it will also determine what the citizens of the world want the global financial and economic architecture to look like after the crisis”.

Mr Rodriguez Zapatero, President of Spain's Government, called social dialogue "a model for the reform process that started at the G-20 meeting in Washington", and reiterated his willingness to continue to work with the ILO to strengthen the organization's capacity to influence global governance.

Noting that the financial crisis has also become a "jobs crisis," UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, said that "we have to do more than just fix the current financial disorder. We have to improve governance so that globalization produces fairer results and promotes social justice. And we have to make sure that it is environmentally, economically, socially and politically sustainable." He added, "I am convinced the ILO has a major role to play."

Sir Roy Trotman, Worker Vice-Chairperson, called for "the deepening of the work of the ILO on the different dimensions and responses to the labour and social consequences of the crisis" as well as "engagement with multilateral systems including the G20 and the international financial institutions."

Speaking on behalf of the employers, Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja called on the ILO to act as the "Red Cross" of the international system, "helping to restore jobs and using its vast network to assist workers and enterprises , so that each of our countries can find new productive niches that will quickly allow us to overcome the crisis."

Looking towards the medium term, the ILO statement stressed that sustainable growth and development hinge on balanced economic, social and environmental policies. Adding that this will require strong coherence between financial, trade, employment and labour, development, social and environmental policies to support sustainable economic growth and development and ensure decent work outcomes.

Crisis will impact on income of workers, the ILO warns

The first ILO Global Wage Report also shows that collective bargaining is associated with both higher average wages and lower overall wage inequality.

The global economic crisis is expected to lead to painful cuts in the wages of millions of workers worldwide in the coming year, according to a new report published on 25 November by the ILO. The 100-page study analyses the trends in the level and the distribution of wages around the world in recent years and the role of minimum wages and collective bargaining. An updated analysis includes a new estimate of the impact of the financial crisis on wages in 2009 based on the latest IMF growth figures.

"For the world's 1.5 billion wage-earners, difficult times lie ahead", says ILO Director-General Juan Somavia. "Slow or negative economic growth, combined with highly volatile food and energy prices, will erode the real wages of many workers, particularly the low-wage and poorer households. The middle classes will also be seriously affected".

The report, entitled Global Wage Report 2008/09 was discussed before its release in the Committee on Employment and Social Policy of the ILO Governing Body, warns that tensions are likely to intensify over wages. Speaking on behalf of the workers' group, Ebrahim Patel (South Africa) welcomed the report. "It is timely that the ILO would be publishing a regular authoritative report on wages trends" he said.

Based on latest IMF growth figures, the ILO forecasts that the global growth in real wages will at best reach 1.1 per cent in 2009, compared to 1.7 per cent in 2008, but wages are expected to decline in a large number of countries, including major economies. Overall, wage growth in industrialized countries is expected to fall, from 0.8 per cent in 2008 to -0.5 per cent in 2009.

The ILO report shows that this bleak outlook follows a decade in which wages failed to advance in lockstep with economic growth. According to the report, between 1995 and 2007, each additional 1 per cent in the annual growth of GDP per capita led to on average only a 0.75 per cent increase in annual growth of wages. As a result, in almost three-quarters of countries worldwide the labour share in GDP has declined.

While inflation was low and the global economy grew at a 4.0 per cent annual rate between 2001 and 2007, growth in wages lagged behind, increasing by less than 2 per cent per year in half of the world's countries, the report says.

According to Mr Patel, "The paper shows that, in recent years, workers had not enjoyed their fair share of the wealth that had been created globally, earnings lagged behind productivity, income inequality was rising and workers often did not benefit fully from economic growth, although they were among the first to suffer during periods of economic crisis".

It does, however, show that minimum wages and collective bargaining made a difference.

Indeed some statistical analysis in the report show that collective bargaining is associated with both higher average wages and lower overall wage inequality, while minimum wages are associated with reduced wage inequality in the lower half of the labour market.

There were wide regional differences. The growth in real wages was about 1 per cent per year or less in most developed and Latin America countries, but reached 10 per cent or more in China, Russia and a number of other transition countries.

The report also evidences that the pay gap between women and men is still wide and closing only very slowly. Although about 80 per cent of the countries for which data are available have seen an increase in the ratio of female to male average wages, the change is small and in some cases negligible. This is disappointing in the light of women's recent educational achievements and the progressive closing of the gender gap in work experience. In a majority of countries, women's wages represent on average between 70 and 90 per cent of men's, but it is not uncommon to find much lower ratios in other parts of the world, particularly in Asia.

ILO Commission to inquire about serious rights abuses in Zimbabwe

It follows complaints tabled at the June 2008 International Labour Conference by workers and employers delegates.

The ILO Governing Body had decided to institute the procedure provided for in article 26 of the ILO Constitution and proceeded with the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry to consider allegations of violation by the Government of

Zimbabwe of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). This is the twelfth such commission established in the ILO history. The estimated cost of the commission will amount to some \$660,000.

The move follows complaints lodged by workers and employers delegates at the June 2008 International Labour Conference. According to the complaint by workers delegates, trade union leaders and members have been systematically arrested, detained, harassed and intimidated in the last few months for the exercise of legitimate trade union activity. Teachers have been targeted, physically assaulted and threatened. The Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act of 2006 have been systematically used to repress basic civil liberties and trade union rights. Both the employers' and workers' complaints denounced the Government's persistent obstructionist attitude and the contempt shown to the Committee on Application of Standards as well as the gravity of the violations observed.

A Commission of Inquiry is the ILO's highest-level investigative procedure. It is generally set up when a Member State is accused of committing persistent and serious violation and has repeatedly refused to address them.

The Commission will be chaired by Judge Raymond Ranjeva – Senior Judge at the International Court of Justice and will be composed also of Mr Evance Rabban Kalula, Deputy Dean of Faculty of Law (Postgraduate Studies) and the Director of the Institute of Development and Labour Law of University of Cape Town and Dr Bertrand Ramcharan – Member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration and former Acting High Commissioner for Human Rights and Assistant Secretary-General; former Commissioner of the International Commission of Jurists

Third term for ILO Director-General

Juan Somavia was elected to a third term as Director-General of the International Labour Office on 18 November, and pledged to work to ensure social justice amidst a growing series of challenges in the global economy.

Mr. Somavia, a Chilean who became the first representative of the Southern Hemisphere to head the ILO when first elected to the post a decade ago, received 43 of the 56 available votes of the titular members of the ILO's Governing Body with 13 abstentions. The vote was conducted by secret ballot, and there was no other candidate for the position. The Workers' Group, which holds 14 votes, had earlier expressed its full support for Mr Somavia, and the Workers' Group chairperson, Sir Roy Trotman, congratulated him indicating that "we feel that he has done well in enhancing the profile and projecting the profile of the organization. "We are pleased with the result because there has been greater respect for the organisation internationally".

Mr. Somavia is the ninth Director-General to hold the office in the Organization's 89-year history and formally begins his new five-year term in March 2009.

During the past decade, Mr. Somavia has led the organization on a new course through the promotion of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, which has received support at the highest political level in all regions of the world as well as across the

multilateral system. Mr. Somavia has also overseen the implementation of the Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work adopted in 1998, as well as a massive increase in the number of ratifications of ILO labour standards.

In June 2008, the ILO also adopted a landmark Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization designed to strengthen the tripartite Organization's capacity to address the challenges of the 21st century and to promote its Decent Work Agenda to forge an effective response to globalization.

Born on 21 April 1941, Mr. Somavia is an attorney by profession and has had a long career in civil and international affairs. He has served as both the President of the UN Security Council and the UN Economic and Social Council. He also was Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the 1995 World Summit on Social Development.

Concerns over Swaziland

The members of the ILO Governing Body have expressed concern over the situation relating to freedom of association in Swaziland, and in particular over the security of Jan Sithole, Secretary General of the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions.

Mr Sithole has been attending the ILO GB as a substitute worker member.

The Governing Body took note of the situation today and pledged their support for Mr. Sithole.

Sir Roy Trotman, Chairperson of the Workers' Group of the Governing Body of the ILO, alerted ILO Director-General Juan Somavia to the situation in a letter dated 20 November, and expressed deep concerns over "violations of freedom of association and trade union rights" in Swaziland, and in particular Mr. Sithole who he wrote was "under threat of being arrested upon his return on Saturday, November 22."

Jan Sithole, who has been subjected to intense harassment by the authorities for several years, was most recently arrested on 18 August by following a recent march organized by trade unions and other civil society groups against the participation of Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and King Mswati III of Swaziland in a meeting of Southern African Development Community (SADC), which took place in Johannesburg on the 16th August 2008 .

In a letter to the King of Swaziland, His Majesty King Mswati III, Mr. Somavia appealed to the monarch to "guarantee the physical integrity and protection of Mr. Sithole and to ensure that the recent Suppression of Terrorism Act is not used to infringe upon the principles of freedom of association, basic civil liberties and trade union rights."

In a separate letter, Mr. Somavia also asked the UN Resident Coordinator in Swaziland to follow up on the allegations and keep him informed of developments. Mr. Somavia called upon government delegates to use their influence to ensure the protection of trade union leaders in general and, in this particular case, Governing Body members who return to their countries.

Serious and urgent cases raised by the Committee on Freedom of Association

The Committee has drawn special attention to cases concerning Burma, Cambodia, Chad, Djibouti, Guatemala, Iran, and the Philippines.

There are currently 136 cases before the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association. At its November meeting, the Committee examined 38 cases on their merits and reached final conclusions in 23 cases, and interim conclusions in 15 cases. The Committee considered it necessary to draw the special attention of the Governing Body to cases concerning Burma, Cambodia, Chad, Djibouti, Guatemala, Iran, and the Philippines. The first serious and urgent case is that against **Cambodia** concerning the murder of three trade union leaders, allegations of violence and harassment of trade unionists, and an emerging situation of impunity. The Committee noted that the judiciary was subject to political interference and has been unable to exercise its functions in an independent and impartial manner. It therefore urged the Government to take steps to ensure the independence of the judicial system and to reopen the investigations into the murders of Chea Vichea, Ros Sovannareth and Hy Vuthy. Chea Vichea and Ros Sovannareth were killed in 2004. Hy Vuthy, President of the Free Trade Union of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC) at the Suntex garment factory, was killed on 24 February 2007 by two helmeted men on motorbikes who shot him down whilst he was on his way home from work. In April 2007, the Court of Appeal held a hearing on the murder of Chea Vichea, the former president of the FTUWKC, assassinated on 22 January 2004, and confirmed an earlier ruling condemning two persons to 25 years in prison, despite evidence that suggests they have been used as scapegoats. The police investigations and the judicial proceedings were marked by numerous irregularities. The Committee on Freedom of Association therefore called on the Cambodian Government to ensure that those who had been charged with the first two of these murders in trials void of basic guarantees of due process be assured the right to a full appeal before an impartial and independent judicial authority and urged to take measures to ensure that trade unionists are able to exercise their activities in a climate free of intimidation and risk to their personal security and their lives. Speaking on the case of Cambodia, Ulf Edström (Sweden), worker member on the Committee on Freedom of Association, noted “It is not surprising that we have no response by the Government and, as could be seen in the case, the absence of any independent judiciary makes it impossible to have any possibility to safeguard trade union rights, which is illustrated by the fact that innocent persons may have been made scapegoats by the Government for the murders of the trade unions leaders”.

The second serious and urgent case is one against **Djibouti** where despite commitments made to an ILO mission, the Government has so far failed to reinstate and pay compensation to trade union members unfairly dismissed for strike action. The Committee also considered new allegations concerning intervention by the Government in strikes and trade union elections, the arrests and detention of trade union members and officials and the barring from entry of an international trade union solidarity mission.

There were two cases against **Guatemala**. Both cases concern murders, threats and acts of violence against trade unionists. The Committee recalled that the absence of judgements against the guilty parties creates, in practice, a situation of impunity

which reinforces the climate of violence and insecurity which is extremely damaging to the exercise of trade union rights. “Guatemala is a matter of major and growing concern to the Workers’ Group”, Mr. Edström stated.

In the case against the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, the Committee was once again compelled to express its deep concern with the seriousness of the trade union climate prevailing in the country. The case concerns the arrest and detention of teachers who participated in protests in Spring 2007. The Committee called for charges against them to be immediately dropped and for their sentences to be annulled. It further urged the Government to stay the execution of Farzad Kamangar, annul his conviction and secure his release. On 25 February 2008, Farzad Kamangar was sentenced to death on charges of “endangering national security” because of his alleged affiliation to the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, PKK. The death penalty was confirmed by the Supreme Court on 11 July 2008. Aged 33, Farzad Kamangar was arrested in July 2006. He worked for 12 years as a teacher in the rural areas of Kamyaran, in the Kurdistan Province of Iran. He was also member of the Kurdish branch of the teachers’ union and was in charge of its public relations until it was outlawed.

In examining two cases against Myanmar (**Burma**) the Committee referred to long-standing allegations relating to a total lack of a legislative framework to ensure freedom of association in the country and the systematic practice of repression by the public authorities of any form of labour organization. The Committee deplored the Government’s refusal to consider the release of Myo Aung Thant and strongly urged it to take measures for his immediate release. Thant was arrested in June 1997. He was sentenced to 20 years’ imprisonment for “high treason” for maintaining contacts with the Federation of Trade Unions - Burma (which has been forced to operate clandestinely since its inception in 1991). The Committee once again requested the Government to ensure the release of Thurein Aung, Wai Lin, Nyi Nyi Zaw, Kyaw Kyaw, Kyaw Win and Myo Min without delay. The six were arrested in May 2007 in connection with their participation in a 2007 May Day event at the “American Center”. They were convicted of sedition under the penal code and sentenced to 20 years in jail. Thurein Aung, Wai Lin, Kyaw Win, and Myo Min were also convicted of association with the FTUB under Section 17(1) of the Unlawful Associations Act for which they received an additional five years’ sentence, and for illegally crossing a border, for which their jail time was increased by another three years, making 28 years in total. Mr. Edström denounced the military regime which, he said: “is informing us in the Governing Body that we have got it all wrong”. “Absurd as it may be, he added, this Burmese military junta seems to have no hesitation in teaching us all about the real content of the UN Charter.”

In the case against **the Philippines** which concerns the summary killings, abductions and enforced disappearances of trade unions, the Committee drew its conclusions and recommendations. The case relates to the summary killings of 39 trade unionists between 2001 and 2006, nine incidents of abduction and enforced disappearance, threat and intimidation all involving the military and police. The Committee requested the Government to take all measures to require police and military forces and other Government officials to maintain a strict chain of command responsibility with respect to the extrajudicial killings and other offences committed by personnel under their command and to ensure that the armed forces receive adequate instructions, orientation and training conducive to promoting a social climate where respect of law reigns. (The Governing Body also discussed the reports submitted by the Office concerning the application by Myanmar of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930. It

stressed once again the urgency of giving full effect to the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. It expressed its concern that an authoritative statement has not yet been made at the highest level that forced labour, including under-age recruitment, is prohibited. The Governing Body further noted that a framework in which the aims of the Supplementary Understanding can be guaranteed efficiently in the future has to be negotiated before the next Governing Body session. It requested the Government and the ILO to take necessary steps towards that end).

The next case was against **Chad**. It concerned the storming of the Labour Exchange by the security forces, the occupation of union premises, confiscation of the passport of the Secretary-General of the Union of Trade Unions of Chad (UST) and the adoption of restrictive strike legislation. In May 2007, UST's Djibrine Assali was prevented from attending the International Labour Conference when his passport was confiscated. The Committee requested the Government to take all necessary measures to ensure that he is able to exercise full freedom of movement in carrying out his mandate as a trade union official. It further requested the Government to carry out an investigation, without delay, into the intervention of the security forces and the occupation of the union premises.

In addition to the above urgent cases, the Committee once again examined the measures taken by the Government of the **Republic of Belarus** to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry which examined the complaint concerning observance of freedom of association and the right to organize, in 2004. The Committee, while noting some positive steps taken by the Government, regretted that the current situation in Belarus still remained far from ensuring full respect for freedom of association and that several recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry had yet to be implemented. The Committee, therefore, called upon the Government to implement all the outstanding recommendations and to ensure that any legislative changes conformed to this objective

Beyond those urgent cases the Committee also dealt with other matters concerning Freedom of Association and Mr. Edström drew the attention of the Governing Body to other cases of special concerns to the workers group, namely those related to **Bahrain** (prohibition of public workers' to organize in trade unions); **Romania** (obstacle to collective bargaining for public employees); **Greece** (obstacle to collective bargaining on supplementary pension schemes); **Malta** (obstacle to collective bargaining); **Republic of Korea** (restriction on freedom of association for teachers); **El Salvador** (physical threat against workers attempting to organize), and **Costa Rica** (denial of justice and restriction to freedom of association).

Model trade union agreement on labour migration adopted

Senior representatives from trade unions from countries of origin of migrant workers in Asia, and their counterparts in the Arab countries of destination met in Amman under the aegis of the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities to discuss cooperation and migrant workers' rights.

As a follow-up to the general discussion on migrant workers and the resolution adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2004, the ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities is implementing a plan of action with its main purpose the

strengthening of trade union capacities in their efforts to ensure the wider ratification of relevant ILO Conventions (No. 97 and No. 143), the promotion the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, the enhancement of cooperation between trade unions in countries of origin of the migrant workers and the countries of destination, the fight against discrimination, racism and xenophobia and the inclusion of labour migration as a topic for social dialogue at national, regional and global levels.

Particular concern has recently been expressed with regard to Asian migrants working in Arab countries on the basis of reports suggesting that their conditions and rights do not conform to international standards. While a number of governments in the countries of destination have announced measures to address this situation, trade union organisations have a special role to play both in pre-departure and return in the countries of origin of the migrant workers, and in the actual situation of migrant workers in countries of destination.

In order to address this issue and develop a trade union response, the ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities organized a workshop in Amman from 3-5 December 2008 involving trade unions from Arab countries and their counterparts from Asia.

The workshop immediately followed a mission by ACTRAV's Director to countries in the Gulf (Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates). It was organized in conjunction with the ILO workers' programme of the ILO's International Training Centre in Turin and supported by MIGRANT, ROAP and ROAS. The workshop was hosted by the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GJFTU) which played a key role in the preparations and in ensuring logistical support for the meeting. The meeting was opened by the Secretary General of the Jordanian Ministry of Labour.

In addition to reviewing the situation of migrant workers on the basis of reports by trade unions from both countries of destination and countries of origin, the workshop discussed existing experiences with regard to the adoption of bilateral agreements between trade unions at both ends of the migration process. A model trade union agreement was adopted in this respect.

The meeting benefited from inputs by MIGRANT, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the ITUC-AP. The participation of the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions had to be cancelled at the last minute because of a sudden health problem facing the ICATU General Secretary. The AFL-CIO Solidarity Centre, the FES, and the Jordan Commission on Human Rights were also represented at sessions of the workshop.

Pointers

- **Brazil, first donor from the South:** The Government of the Federal Republic of Brazil will contribute US\$ 300,000 to the ILO's Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA), becoming the first donor country from the South to do so. Brazil's contribution will support field programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean promoting fundamental principles and rights at work. In line with its growing international prominence Brazil is supporting international development efforts through South-South cooperation.

- **Support for social dialogue in Africa:** On 9 December 2008, the Minister of Development Cooperation of Belgium, Mr. Charles Michel, signed an agreement with the International Labour Office (ILO) for a new grant of €6 million and €2.4 million respectively to extend social security to vulnerable populations and promote social dialogue in French-speaking Africa. The Belgian government will continue promoting two major ILO technical cooperation programmes, including the third phases of the STEP (Stratégies et techniques de lutte contre la pauvreté) and PRODIAF (Programme de promotion du dialogue social en Afrique francophone) programmes from 2009 to 2012.
- **Human rights are workers' rights...:** “The ILO’s mandate is inseparably linked to the Universal Declaration”, the ILO said on Human Rights Day, 10 December. The Statement is a reminder that the UN Declaration draws from many of the principles of the ILO Constitution including the right to just and favourable conditions of work, protection against unemployment, equal pay, and the right to form and join trade unions. The Statement adds: “The ILO’s international labour standards – together with the human rights’ instruments adopted by the General Assembly – form a solid, coherent and mutually reinforcing body of international law aimed at ensuring the fundamental rights and freedoms in the world of work set out in the Universal Declaration”. It noted that the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights also reflects the 60th anniversary of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the 50th anniversary of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), two of the ILO’s fundamental Conventions. “As we work towards universal ratification of the ILO’s fundamental Conventions, particular efforts are needed to achieve progress with regard to freedom of association and collective bargaining, the protection of which is not yet enjoyed by much of the world’s workforce”, the ILO statement concluded.
- **...And workers’ rights are migrants’ rights:** In another statement on International Migrants’ Day (18 December) the ILO stressed that the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are also well reflected in the two ILO Conventions on migrant workers – Migration for Employment Convention, 1949 (No. 97), and the Migrant Workers Convention, 1975 (No. 143) – as well as in the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Their Families (1990), all landmarks in the international protection of migrant workers. “Equality of treatment and non-discrimination are universal principles enshrined in these instruments which provide the foundation for a rights-based approach to labour migration in a globalizing world”, the ILO emphasized. It is encouraging, it said, that 80 countries have ratified one or more of these instruments.
- **A guide for business:** “The Labour Principles of the United Nations Global Compact. A Guide for Business” was launched in New York at a meeting of

the Labour Working Group of the UN Global Compact, in the presence of leading representatives of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and business leaders. In a question and answer format, the Guide provides a brief description of each of the four Global Compact labour principles: freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour; the effective abolition of child labour; and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. It also contains an inventory of key ILO resources concerning these principles. The Guide is the first publication produced by the UN Global Compact Labour Working Group, with the assistance of the ILO. The Labour Working Group was established earlier this year at the initiative of the IOE and ITUC to give more visibility to the labour principles, promote a common understanding and help ensure a consistent approach to their implementation.

<p>The Staff of ACTRAV wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year</p>
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