

# Decent Work and Crisis



# Decent Work - Defined

*ILO defines “Decent Work” as work that:*

- ) meets people’s basic aspirations, not only for income, but also for...
- ) security for themselves and their families,
- ) without discrimination or harassment and providing equal treatment for women and men.

# Content of Decent Work

*Decent Work is the synthesis of ILO's four strategic objectives*

- ) Work and employment
- ) Fundamental rights at work
- ) Security and social protection
- ) Representation and social dialogue

# Work and Employment

- ) Adequate opportunities for productive and meaningful work, in decent conditions
- ) Quantity and quality of employment
- ) Income and personal development
- ) Formal and informal
- ) Much work by women, especially in the home, is undervalued or invisible
- ) Decent Work may also mean not working too much or the possibility of retirement

## Basic Rights at Work: ILO's core Labour Standards

- ) Freedom of association, right to organize and bargain collectively
- ) Freedom from discrimination in employment
- ) Freedom from forced labour
- ) Freedom from child labour

*These are basic enabling rights.*

*As far as possible, the rights might be extended to cover other domains: a living wage, for instance, or a safe workplace (but no consensus).*

## Social Protection and Security

- ) Employment and job security
- ) Protection against accident and disease
- ) Income security in unemployment and old age

**Achieved through formal and informal systems of insurance or solidarity, or labour market institutions**

## Representation and Dialogue

- ) Formal organizations of workers and employers
- ) For work beyond wage labour, other forms of organization are important
- ) The institutional framework for collective bargaining or consensus building
- ) Social dialogue as a goal but also as a means to achieve progress in the other three dimensions of Decent Work

## Three Key Issues

- ) Is Decent Work a universal goal?
- ) Is it affordable?
- ) How to achieve a coherent approach

# Universality of Decent Work

- ) There is a floor, but no ceiling
- ) DW is a policy framework for continuous progress on the basis of common principles
- ) DW serves as a platform for dialogue with ILO partners
- ) Poor people need all the dimensions of decent work
- ) Informal economy is a challenge: progress is possible but needs new instruments

## Affordability of Decent Work

*The speed of progress depends to some extent on economic resources, but decent work is not a luxury because:*

- ) DW is a productive factor for enterprises
- ) Where there are trade-offs, DW helps guide priorities
- ) Growth dividend too at the macro level (gender, democracy, etc.)

# Coherence

## ***Reasons for moving forward on all DW dimensions:***

- ) They contribute jointly to societal goals such as social integration, poverty eradication and personal fulfillment
- ) Progress in any one dimension of DW reinforces progress in other dimensions
- ) Coalitions of different actors concerned with different dimensions of DW are a powerful political force for setting development goals
- ) Maintain policymakers' awareness of the need to consider both economic and social goals, e.g. in macroeconomic policy
- ) Integrated approach needed - entirely consistent with crisis response

# DW and Crisis: Sierra Leone - Conflict

## *Threats to DW in Sierra Leone:*

- ) Massive displacement of populations and destruction of villages and rural towns;
- ) 70% unemployment; 80% of population living below the poverty line
- ) Vulnerable groups hardest hit: disabled, widows with children; displaced elderly; separated and orphaned children
- ) Collapse of social protection mechanisms
- ) Child labour, child soldiers and child prostitution
- ) Situation of ex-combatants capable of undermining peace process

# DW and Crisis: Gujarat - Earthquake

## *Threats to DW in Gujarat*

- ) 16 million people affected
- ) 30,000 deaths; 165,000 injured
- ) 330,000 houses destroyed; 750,000 damaged
- ) Social and productive infrastructure destroyed
- ) Property loss at US \$4.6 billion
- ) Many women in informal sector/cottage hard hit
- ) Industries have suffered job loss (embroidery and handicrafts)
- ) Factories have shut down

## ILO Decent Work Response

### *How might ILO respond to the Sierra Leone context?*

- ) Advocate for a labour market that maximizes labour absorption, reintegration and social inclusion
- ) Promote development of private sector, especially small and micro-entreprises
- ) Advise on policies to improve the information base of the labour market
- ) Advocate for employment-intensive infrastructure reconstruction
- ) Support training and retraining, and vocational rehabilitation of the disabled

## ILO Decent Work Response

### *How might ILO respond to the Gujarat context?*

- ) Advocate for labour-intensive reconstruction projects
- ) Create consultative committee between ILO, Labour Department of Gujarat, Federal Unions and Labour Movements
- ) Support co-operatives and village groups through capacity building, vocational training
- ) Advise on micro-entreprise development