Azerbaijan hosts Youth Employment Summit (photo report)

On September 24-27, Baku, capital of Azerbaijan, hosted YES Azerbaijan 2008, the 4th global youth employment summit. The summit was organized by Youth Employment Systems (YES) in close collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Azerbaijan.

The YES summit brought together six hundred delegates from 55 YES Network countries and other key partners who convened to share enterprise solutions to poverty eradication, understand challenges and develop country level strategies and programmes for youth enterprise development.

On September 8-9 Workers Activites Senior Specialist of the ILO Subregional Office Irina Melekh. The training was facilitated by Joyti Tuladhar, specialist of ILO’s Bureau for Gender Equality Geir Tomstol and gender focal point of the ILO Subregional Office Yerevan to conduct a brainstorming session with trade union leaders on their involvement in the Work Improvement in Small Enterprises WISE Project. The ILO plans to start a project targeted on the working conditions and productivity in small and medium enterprises in Armenia. Petersen gave an introduction to the WISE concept and explained the importance of trade union involvement. He also met with the leadership of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia to discuss ongoing and planned activities.

On September 23 Baku hosted an international conference HIV/AIDS and the World of Work devoted to the results of a joint project of the ILO and the Conf-ederation of Entrepreneurs of Azerbaijan. Taking part in the event were ILO experts, governmental officials, representatives of public organizations and entrepreneurs. The project that has been implemented in Azerbaijan since 2007 studied attitude of transport, hotel and agriculture businesses to this problem. The study-based report was prepared.

On September 6-8 Workers Activi-ties Senior Specialist of the ILO Subre-gional Office Sten Toth Petersen visited Yerevan to conduct a brainstorming session with trade union leaders on their involvement in the Work Improvement in Small Enterprises WISE Project. The ILO plans to start a project targeted on the working conditions and productivity in small and medium enterprises in Armenia. Petersen gave an introduction to the WISE concept and explained the importance of trade union involvement. He also met with the leadership of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia to discuss ongoing and planned activities.

In August the ILO organized two events in Yerevan — a gender audit at the Department of Economic and Social Policy of the Presidential Administration of the Kyrgyz Republic and a training of gender audit facilitators in the parlia-mentary committees. This was the first gender audit at such a high policy-making level and was conducted by ILO-trained national facilitators and ILO’s Global Gender Andris coordinator Joyti Tuladhar and specialist of the ILO Subregional Office.

On September 4-5 brought together the ILO SRO Moscow team, including project staff from Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, to discuss organizational policies and practices in evaluating ILO’s programmes and projects. The workshop was facilitated by Craig Rasson, Senior Evaluation Specialist from the Evaluation Department at the ILO Headquarters in Geneva. The participants addressed a number of critical issues in planning and implementing evaluations of various activities based on the need for change and results-based management approach.

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In Brief

The first pilot pre-migration training within the framework of the EU-funded ILO/UNICEF/CMPD project Development of Comprehensive Anti-Trafficking Response in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia took place in Tbilisi on 2 July. Taking part in the event were 14 participants from different private employ-ment agencies operating in Georgia. The ILO national project coordinator made a presentation of information guides. The IOM consultant and hotline operator provided pre-migration information usually provided by the IOM through the hotline and pre-migration trainings.

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Based on ILO experience of employ-ment creation for youth, and employment creation more generally, I would like to suggest four challenges to ensuring policy coherence in developing an integrated ap-proach to youth employment.

Ensuring a good match between the policies chosen to boost youth employment on the one hand and the skills, capacities and resources of those who will implement these policies on the other. Experience shows that youth employment policies work best if they combine and transform these into an integrated approach: education and training, labour market services, actual work experience, entrepreneurial develop-ment. However, this need to attack the problem from several angles simultane-ously work better in some environments, than other. In transition economies where human and financial resources are scarce, this may lead to a policy design that is too complex. It may be better to start out with a simple policy design: make it work well, then add complexities step by step.

A second challenge is to make a good initial judgment about what policy mea-sures can be achieved at micro level (local level) and which at the national level (macro level).

A third challenge is to avoid the temp-erature to over simplify the problem of boosting youth employment. Youth em-ployment is in the same boat with economy generally. Those concerned with youth employment must be concerned with how the national economy is managed generally and must insist on policies that favor job creation and share wealth equitably.

The final challenge is to avoid the over-simplification that deregulation of labour markets is the answer to boosting employ-ment levels. The ILO urges a balance be-tween labour market flexibility – needed by employers – and a certain level of eco-nomic security – needed by workers. This can be provided by social protection bene-fits in the event of unemployment that ease the transition from one job to another and in this way encourage labour mobility. Without labour mobility, the economy will not perform well and the result being sought by those who advocate flexibility will not be achieved.

For example, in Central Europe, ILO studies show that workers are highly inse-cure in the new competitive labour mar-kets. As evidence, we have found that they do not change jobs even in good economic times when they could get a better job. They are risk adverse. In such environ-ments, new job creation will take place only when labour market flexibility is cou-plied with some measure to give workers security needed for a system of adequate un-employment benefits.

Beyond these four general principles, there is a great need for experimentation to determine what policies work best in

Continued on Page 2
ILO considers new guidelines on ship inspection

“Russia’s adoption of a new law on ports and its preparation for the ratification of the ILO’s Maritime Labour Convention of 2006 is an important step for OSH management at maritime transport.”

During the first seminar participants studied ILO’s preventive approach. This approach lays the ground for all modern occupational safety and health systems and is currently seen in Russia. The seminars held the period of 12.0.230-2007 adopted by CIS member-states in 2007. The seminar focused on the principles of risk assessment, underlined practical examples of risk management and cited.

The second seminar conducted by ILO’s transport safety specialist, Maria Geciene considered safe handling of dangerous goods in ports.

“Among the seminars’ attendees were representatives of Russia’s ports, experts of Rosmorport and representatives of education and training centres.”

Port safety topped the agenda of the seminars held in Novorossisk from September 1 to September 5. The seminars were organized by the Russian federal ports agency (Rosmorport) and the Russian Central Marine Research and Design Institute.

The seminars were moderated by Marios Meletiou, ILO technical specialist (Ports and Transport) of the Maritime Activities.

New GOST in Kazakhstan

On July 14-15, a training workshop on the introduction of ILO-OHS 2001 and GOST 12.0.230-2007 – OSH Management System Common Requirements was held in Astana at the Kazakhstan Labour and Social Welfare Ministry’s occupational safety research institute.


Thus, Kazakhstan entered a common space in OSH management. This step will simplify the country’s access to the common economic space of the world.

The new standard is identical to the world’s only official international document that regulates occupational safety and health system – the ILO Guidelines on OSH Management Systems (ILO-OHS 2001).

OSEH on agenda of Almaty business forum

“Last year the nationality rate in the mining and construction industries made up 45 percent of the republic’s total occupational deaths,” Kazakh Labour and Social Welfare Minister Berdibek Saparbayev told the forum of the National Project Coordinator of the ILO/USDOL HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme, Regional Tripartite Commission.

The national partners adopted a new General Tripartite Agreement for 2008-2010, thus taking an obligation to contribute to the implementation of corporate social programs aimed at workers’ health, including prevention of socially significant diseases, i.e. those caused by the human immunodeficiency virus, and vaccination of workers, she said.

Participants in the workshop stressed that the introduction of the OSH manage ment system is a time- and effort-taking process. The introduction of GOST 12.0.230-2007 would help to protect workers from dangerous and harmful industrial factors and prevent accidents and occupational diseases.

Representatives of the Kazakhstan Labour and Social Welfare Ministry underlined that the new standard requirements will be reflected in the republic’s legislature.

“Taking part in the workshop were Deputy Labour and Social Welfare Minister Serik Abdenov, the head of the control and social protection committee, Baitaran Nurymbetov, regional OSH programmes coordinator of the ILO Subregional Office Roman Livyuykov, the director of the Perm OSH information centre of the ILO/CIS Network, Professor Grigory Fainburg, labour inspectors and representatives of big enterprises and training centres.”

Source: Kazakhstan Today news agency

At the ILO conference in Mexico

The ILO hosted a ‘Workplace advice centre’ in the networking zone of the Global Village which offered advice and materials on how to draft an AIDS/HIV policy or do effective prevention at the workplace.

“The Global Voice’, the official Conference newspaper, devoted a full page to the workplace in the world of work, most of it linked to the ILO, its Code of Practice, and the role of tripartite constituent in the fight against the epidemic. The ILO Subregional Office was represented at the conference by Irina Sinelin, National Project Coordinator ILO/USDOL HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme.

In her presentation on a breakthrough in the formation of the Russian National Policy on OSH and the Code of Practice, Irina Sinelin said from 2004 through 2008 a notable progress has been made in the conceptualization of a national approach to

“Workplaces are vitally important for HIV/AIDS information, prevention, non- discrimination and treatment,” said Dr. Sophia Kisting, Director of ILO/AIDS.

“Today, we are seeing increasing evidence that the workplace literally ‘works’ as a vital entry point for a whole range of responses to issues raised by the pandemic.”

The new standard would reinforce and extend the ILO’s existing Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work adopted in 2001. It would further support joint action on HIV/AIDS by the government, worker and employer constituents and other partners, and strengthen the work of ILO’s Universal Access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

The ILO hosted a ‘Workplace advice centre’ in the networking zone of the Global Village which offered advice and materials on how to draft an AIDS/HIV policy or do effective prevention at the workplace.

“This has been a major shift in the ministry’s growing understanding that effective solutions to the HIV/AIDS problems lie not only in the medical sphere, but - not less importantly - in the sphere of social and labour relations,” she said.

Sinelin stressed that at present, HIV/AIDS has been included by the federal government into the draft Program on Safe Work pending approval by the Russian Regional Tripartite Commission.

The national partners adopted a new General Tripartite Agreement for 2008-2010, thus taking an obligation to contribute to the implementation of corporate social programs aimed at workers’ health, including prevention of socially significant diseases, i.e. those caused by the human immunodeficiency virus, and vaccination of workers, she said.

Intigam Babayev, Deputy Youth and Sports Minister (Interview on the eve of the YES summit)

It is a great honour for us to host such a global event, which will allow Azerbaijan to show to the world community its ideas and opportunities as well as to learn about new projects. In one word, this summit will give Azerbaijan an opportunity to see global efforts and to share its own experience. After Azerbaijan became a Lead Country in the YES movement the standards of the national project have been given to the youth. I am sure that this is a very exciting effort, just in its initial stages. At the next YES meeting, I hope to be able to share with you some fresh and informative results of this ILO project.

YES summit participants’ opinion in focus

Walter Verhoeven, chief technical adviser of the ILO’s Boosting Youth Employment Project

- This summit triggered an inspired movement of youth to make a difference and to present its own solutions to the challenges of poverty reduction, globalisation and climate change. However, more voice should have been given to the youth. I am sure that the YES movement needs assistance from all those interested in youth employment and promotion of Sustainable Young Enterprises. This movement should be strengthened and show an alternative way in creating a better future for many young men and women.

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Youth employment: challenges and solutions

encouraging jobs for young people. This is in line with our Dutch funded project – Boosting Youth Employment – with our partners, the Ministries of Labour and of Youth and Sports, Novorossisk Trade Union Confederation, and ASK. This is a very exciting effort, just in its initial stages. At the next YES meeting, I hope to be able to share with you some fresh and informative results of this ILO project. ■
Trade unions focus on social protection policies and gender equality

Summer school for trade unionists

From August 29 to September 1 the first summer school of the Pan European Trade Union Council in Budapest brought together 50 trade unionists from countries of the European region, including Belarus, Russia and Georgia.

The meeting focused on the interaction of fiscal policies and social protection policies.

The chairman of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia, Mikhail Semakov, and FNPR international policy secretary Veygenv Sidorov made an informative presentation on the Russian pension system, stressing the inadequacy of pension benefits and the need for the Russian Federation to spend more on pensions. They referred repeatedly to ILO Convention No. 102 concerning Minimum Standards of Social Security.

In her presentation ILO Subregional Director Elaine Fultz outlined a number of pension issues that require greater trade union attention: “damage control” reforms aimed at addressing problems with privatized pension systems; improvement of pension scheme governance through more participative involvement by trade unions; and gender inequalities resulting from a combination of pension privatization and continued the retirement age preference for women.

She also stressed the need to address the pension financing problems caused by demographic aging by increasing national employment levels, through longer work and higher workforce participation rates by groups such as older men, youth, and persons with disabilities.

The next meeting of the Pan European Trade Union Council is scheduled for October.

Summing up results of project on gender audit in Russia’s trade unions

On September 22-23 the Moscow region hosted a seminar to review the results of the first stage of the project Gender Audit in Trade Unions of Russia implemented by the ILO and the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia.

In her opening remarks the director of the ILO Subregional Office in Moscow, Elaine Fultz, noted that a gender audit is not only a scientific and organizational tool, but an art as well.

The pilot project was launched in March 2007 to study a trade union potential for protecting the rights of women.

The project helped to train seventeen specialists, and they have already conducted gender audits in affiliates of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions in Vologda, Kazan, Karelia and Yekaterinburg.

The Federation of Independent Trade Unions became the first big organization to conduct its own gender audits.

The seminar was attended by Joyti Tuladhar, ILO’s Global Gender Audits coordinator, and Verena Schmidt, specialist of the ACTRAV Department.

The participants stressed the need to track changes after the audits and also called for adjusting A Manual For Gender Audit Facilitators to the needs of trade unions.

The Netherlands shares social dialogue and youth employment experience

“It was a very interesting trip. We learnt a lot about the Dutch model of social dialogue and the way youth employment issues are dealt with in the country,” said Dzhamal Minbaeva, Deputy Labour and Social Development Minister, who took part in a study tour to the Netherlands early September 2008 organized by the ILO/Netherlands Project on Boosting Youth Employment.

Representatives of the Kyrgyz government, trade unions and employers’ organizations got acquainted with the roles of all social partners and the national structure for social dialogue in the Netherlands embodied in the Social Economic Council as the national authority for the tripartite cooperation. During the first part of the study tour they discussed the issues of decentralization of social dialogue through collective labour agreements and regional and local levels. The Kyrgyz delegation visited the local governments in the province of Overijssel, Public-Private Employment Service (“Centre for Work and Income”), an innovative educational institute (“schoolingoulages”), the TenCate Company (300 year-long evolution from agriculture to high tech fibres) and the textile museum “Twentse Welle”. An effective decentralization was clearly illustrated with the cases of the two East-Netherlands cities of Almelo and Enschede. Having suffered extremely high unemployment rates in the eighties, these two cities benefited from developing a shared vision and a successful tripartite lobbying at the national and even European level. Many members of the delegation noted that the experience of these two cities clearly showed the need to avoid a narrow orientation on one industrial or agricultural sector and to join all forces to ensure regional development.

“We have seen that investment in the youth is a major reason for success. The Dutch model is very much focussed on either bringing young people back to school (even part time) or to find them a job within a “combined school and work” strategy. This is a remarkable feature of the country’s way of dealing with youth employment issues,” said Tanychevsky Talbaldyev, official of the State Committee for Migration and Employment.

All members of the Kyrgyz delegation said that upon return they would advocate for a more sound and concrete institutionalisation of social dialogue in Kyrgyzstan, particularly from the youth employment and textile sector perspective. In doing so, they would rely, as always, on the ILO assistance and support.

The International Labour Organization together with other UN agencies took part in the 21st Moscow International Book Fair for the fourth year running. This year Moscow hosted the exhibition from September 3 to September 8.

At present, the Moscow Book Fair is the most representative and the biggest forum in Russia for general public and expert community. Delegations from 80 countries took part in it this year. The exhibition organizers put on display more than 200,000 publications in dozens of languages in three main pavilions.

The United Nations in the Russian Federation stand brought together 10 agencies.

Over six days of the exhibition over 8,000 people, including students, schoolchildren and teachers of higher educational institutions visited it. Over 20,000 copies of 400 different publications were offered to visitors for free.

The ILO Subregional Office in Moscow presented over 2,500 publications and information booklets in the Russian and English languages, including those that are always popular among visitors as they cover topical issues – human rights, migration, HIV/AIDS, gender equality, international standards, youth employment, social dialogue, etc.

“I represented the ILO at the exhibition all four years,” said Ludmila Ouskova, information specialist of the ILO Subregional Office.

“At the book fair, I spoke with visitors and to know first hand their opinion about our publications. The ILO’s publications and research are really in great demand. This year we displayed a series of colorful decent work posters. They were in great demand. Next time we will take this into account and expand our display with posters and calendars,” she said.

On August 1, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin appointed Maxim Topolin as deputy minister of health and social development.

For many years Topolin has been in charge of labour issues.

From 2001 to 2004 he occupied the post of the deputy labour and social development minister (employment). From 1997 he worked in the Russian government’s social development department. In March 2004 Topolin was appointed as the head of the federal labour and employment service (Rostrud). In May 2005 Putin appointed as Russia’s chief labour inspector.

In his new capacity Topolin will be in charge of employment and labour migration and will supervise Rostrud’s activities.

The ILO’s Global Gender Audits project, which, in June 2008, was launched by the ILO’s Global Gender Audits Department.

The International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin, Italy. ILO Subregional Office was represented by Olga Bobgalanova, Communication Officer. This training activity on the international labour standards set by the UN labour agency targets media professionals from developing countries, often affected by the violation of basic human and information rights and where journalists are victims of intimidation and repression.

“The media have the opportunity to keep up the debate and put pressure on the civil society to favour the adoption of fundamental standards and rights at work,” said Alessandro Chiarchi, Programme Manager. “Our organization is a source of consistent information for those journalists to write up their stories or conduct thorough investigations into the world of work in their countries”.

The course that ran for the second time has also given rise to the international journalist prizes “Media for Labour Rights”, which, in June 2008, was awarded to the Japanese reporter Misako Hida. In her article, “The Land of Karoshi”, Ms Hida investigated the issue of hours and conditions of work in Japan, where, every year, thousands of workers die from overwork.

At Moscow International Book Fair

Appointments

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In his new capacity Topolin will be in charge of employment and labour migration and will supervise Rostrud’s activities.
Labour migration high on the agenda in Tajikistan and Armenia

Armenia and Tajikistan hosted national workshops on the Effective Governance of Labour Migration. The seminars were organized by the International Labour Organization within the framework of “Towards Sustainable Partnerships for the Effective Governance of Labour Migration” in the Russian Federation, the Caucasus, and Central Asia” project funded by the European Union.

The workshop that took place in Yerevan on July 17 presented two studies Migration and Development and Remittances and Development, commissioned by the ILO and prepared by international and national experts. The workshop in Dashunbe on August 6 focused on the results of one study – Migration and Development. The second study on Remittances and Development will be conducted this autumn.

The authors looked at skilled migration, return migration and diaspora initiatives, as well as savings and investment potential of remittances in Armenia and in Tajikistan. They also offered recommendations and policies that aim at enhancing the positive impact of migration in the two republics.

Seasonally Tajiks and Armenians migrate to Russia, thus making a considerable contribution to the economies of the host and origin countries.

Nilim Banah, ILO Chief Technical Advisor of the ILO Moscow Office noted that the amount of remittances sent home by Armenian migrants through official channels was over 1 billion US dollars or 19% of the country’s GDP in 2006.

Among the workshops’ attendees were representatives of migration agencies, employment departments, ministries of labour and social welfare, associations of employers and trade unions, researchers, scientists, experts of international organizations and embassy officials.

Participants in the workshops had an opportunity to provide their feedback and recommendations to the draft studies. The studies along with the recommendations will be forwarded to the governments of Armenia and Tajikistan.

ILO’s new report on “green” jobs

NEW YORK (ILO News) – A new, large-scale study on the impact of an emerging global “green economy” on the world of work says efforts to tackle climate change could result in the creation of millions of new “green jobs” in the coming decades.

The new report entitled Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World, says changing patterns of employment and investment resulting from efforts to reduce climate change and its effects are already generating new jobs in many sectors and economies, and could create millions more in both developed and developing countries.

However, the report also finds that the process of climate change, already underway, will continue to have negative effects on workers and their families, especially those whose livelihoods depend on agriculture and tourism. Action to tackle climate change as well as to cope with its effects is therefore urgent and should be designed to generate decent jobs.

“Green jobs” reduce the environmental impact of enterprises and economic sectors, ultimately to levels that are sustainable.

Azerbaijan calls for prolongation of Decent Work Country Programme

An ILO Subregional office delegation visited Baku on July 9-11 to discuss possible extension of the Decent Work Country Programme until 2015.

Azerbaijani Minister of Labour and Social Protection Fizuli Alakbarov stressed that all the outcomes in the DWCWP to be long-term goals that will not be achieved in full by the end of next year (the deadline is 2009).

He also pointed out that the Ministry had commenced an ambitious project to amend the labour code, strengthen occupational safety and health, adopt a new system of occupational injury and disease insurance, improve disability protection, and take action on a number of other ILO issues. To allow better coordination of the two projects, he suggested that it would make sense to have the DWCP extended until 2015.

The delegation supported the initiative. The director of the ILO Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Elaine Fultz, promised to discuss the idea of a longer DWCP with the ILO Subregional Office team and colleagues of the ILO Headquarters in Geneva.

An important part of every country mission is to meet with social partners. In Baku the delegation met with the Trade Union Confederation of Azerbaijan and the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs of Azerbaijan. The National Confederation of Entrepreneurs takes an active part in the ILO’s women entrepreneurship program as well as in anti-trafficking project.

The Confederation’s president, Alakbar Mammadov, stressed the need to develop regional social dialogue and improve dispute resolution mechanisms.

The chairman of the Trade Union Confederation, Sattar Mohbahlyev, underlined among other issues the importance of reforming the country’s wage system.

Aside from Baku the delegation also visited a carpet weaving factory in Azerbaijan’s ancient town of Lagich, 200 kilometers of the Azerbaijan capital.

The ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration (Russian edition)

The brochure aims to assist governments, social partners and stakeholders in their efforts to regulate labour migration and protect migrant workers. It provides a comprehensive set of rights-based guidelines and principles as well as a global compilation of good practices on labour migration developed by governments and social partners.

The ILO became the first country in the subregion to sign the Decent Work Country Programme. Among the priorities of the Programme signed in Geneva on November 16, 2006, are improving employment policies, creating decent jobs, strengthening social dialogue and implementing international standards.

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Our Publications

Safe work library (in Russian)

This CD has been issued and regularly updated since 2005. It contains several sections, including a full-text database of the ILO’s occupational safety and health documents translated into the Russian language. Among these documents are ILO’s conventions, recommendations, practical guidebooks, brochures and other information materials. The database has a search tool.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

The CD has been prepared within the framework of the ILO’s project on improving OSH system in the North-West of Russia financed by the Finnish government. It is aimed at raising employers’ awareness of the modern OSH economy.

It contains an electronic version of the same-name book that collects materials on economic aspects of the occupational safety and health system, methodologies to analyse economic efficiency of the OSH system improvement.

The CD includes an accident cost calculator that helps to assess direct and indirect costs of occupational accidents. It has both Russian and English versions.

Know Your Status (Russian edition)

The leaflet is a Russian edition of the information material by ILO/AIDS Programme in Geneva. It describes in a simple and intelligible manner the importance of HIV testing, its principles and next steps to be undertaken depending on the results of the test. The publication stresses a significant role of workplaces in fighting discrimination and stigma through workplace policies, programmes and education.

Employers’ organizations taking the lead on gender equality (Russian edition)

The case studies presented in this publication provide insights into the efforts that are being made in promoting gender equality by employers and their organizations in countries across the world. The gender equality issues that employers’ organizations seek to address evidently vary considerably from country to country. There is, however, a common thread which emerges from analysis of the case studies – namely that, when employers act together through their representative organizations, they can influence reform in a way that is beneficial both to themselves and to society as a whole, rather than having it imposed upon them.
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However, the report also finds that the process of climate change, already underway, will continue to have negative effects on workers and their families, especially those whose livelihoods depend on agriculture and tourism. Action to tackle climate change as well as to cope with its effects is therefore urgent and should be designed to generate decent jobs.

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Azerbaijan calls for prolongation of Decent Work Country Programme

An ILO Subregional office delegation visited Baku on July 9-11 to discuss possible extension of the Decent Work Country Programme until 2015.

Azerbaijani Minister of Labour and Social Protection Fizuli Alakbarov stressed that all the outcomes in the DWCP to be long-term goals that will not be achieved in full by the end of next year (the deadline is 2009).

He also pointed out that the Ministry had commenced an ambitious project to amend the labour code, strengthen occupational safety and health, adopt a new system of occupational injury and disease insurance, improve disability protection, amend certain laws on a number of other ILO issues. To allow better coordination of the two projects, he suggested that it would make sense to have the DWCP extended until 2015.

The delegation supported the initiative. The director of the ILO Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Elaine Fultz, promised to discuss the idea of a longer DWCP with the ILO Subregional Office team and colleagues of the ILO Headquarters in Geneva.

Azerbaijan became the first country in the subregion to sign the Decent Work Country Programme. Among the priorities of the Programme signed in Geneva on November 16, 2006, are improving employment policies, creating decent jobs, strengthening social dialogue and advancing implementation of international labour standards.

The ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration (Russian edition)

The ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration was signed in Geneva on November 16, 2006, and is improving employment policies, creating decent jobs, strengthening social dialogue and advancing implementation of international labour standards.

The brochure aims to assist governments, social partners and stakeholders in their efforts to regulate labour migration and protect migrant workers. It provides a comprehensive set of rights-based guidelines and principles so as to achieve a global compendium of good practices on labour migration developed by governments and social partners.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH AND BUSINESS (IN RUSSIAN, ENGLISH)

The CD has been prepared within the framework of the ILO’s project on improving OSH system in the North-West of Russia financed by the Finnish government. It is aimed at raising employers’ awareness of the modern OSH economy.

It contains an electronic version of the same-name book that collects materials on economic aspects of the occupational safety and health system. It has both Russian and English versions.

Employers’ organizations taking the lead on gender equality (Russian edition)

The case studies presented in this publication provide insights into the efforts that are being made in promoting gender equality by employers and their organizations in countries across the world. The gender equality issues that employers’ organizations seek to address evidently vary considerably from country to country. There is, however, a common thread which emerges from analysis of the case studies – namely that, when employers act together through their representative organizations, they can influence reform in a way that is beneficial both to themselves and to society as a whole, rather than having it imposed upon them.
Trade unions focus on social protection policies and gender equality

Summer school for trade unionists

From August 29 to September 1 the first summer school of the Pan European Trade Union Council in Budapest brought together 50 trade unionists from countries of the European region, including Belarus, Russia and Georgia.

The meeting focused on the interaction of fiscal policies and social protection policies.

The chairman of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia, Mikhail Shmakov, and FNPR international policy secretary Yevgeny Sidorov made an informative presentation on the Russian pension system, stressing the inadequacy of pension benefits and the need for the Russian Federation to spend more on pensions. They referred repeatedly to ILO Convention No. 102 concerning Minimum Standards of Social Security.

In her presentation ILO Subregional Director Elaine Fultz outlined a number of pension issues that require greater trade union attention: “damage control” reforms aimed at addressing problems with privatized pension systems; improvement of pension scheme governance through more public participation by trade unions; gender inequalities resulting from a combination of pension privatization and continuing the retirement age preference for women.

She also stressed the need to address the pension financing problems caused by demographic aging by increasing national employment levels, through longer work and higher workforce participation rates by groups as women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

The next meeting of the Pan European Trade Union Council is scheduled for October.

Summing up results of project on gender audit in Russia’s trade unions

On September 22-23 the Moscow region hosted a seminar to review the results of the first stage of the project Gender Audit in Trade Unions of Russia implemented by the ILO and the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia.

In her opening remarks the director of the ILO Subregional Office in Moscow, Elaine Fultz, noted that a gender audit is not only a scientific and organizational tool, but an art as well.

The pilot project was launched in March 2007 to study a trade union potential for protecting the rights of women.

The project helped to train seventeen specialists, and they have already conducted gender audits in affiliates of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions in Volgograd, Kazan, Karelia and Yekaterinburg.

The Federation of Independent Trade Unions became the first big organization to conduct its own gender audits.

The seminar was attended by Joyti Taludhar, ILO’s Global Gender Audits Coordinator, and Verena Schmidt, specialist of the ACTRAV Department.

The participants stressed the need to track changes after the audits and also called for adjusting A Manual For Gender Audit Facilitators to the needs of trade unions.

The Netherlands shares social dialogue and youth employment experience

“It was a very interesting trip. We learnt a lot about the Dutch model of social dialogue and the way youth employment issues are dealt with in the country,” said Dzhambul Mbaubua, Deputy Labour and Social Development Minister, who took part in a study tour to the Netherlands early September 2008 organized by the ILO/Netherlands Project on Boosting Youth Employment.

Representatives of the Kyrgyz government, trade unions and employers’ organizations got acquainted with the roles of all social partners and the national structure for social dialogue in the Netherlands embodied in the Social Economic Council as the national authority for the tripartite cooperation. During the first part of the study tour they discussed the issues of decentralization of social dialogue through collective labour agreements and regional and local levels. The Kyrgyz delegation visited the local governments in the province of Overijssel, Public-Private Employment Service (“Centre for Work and Income”), an innovative educational institute (“schoolings boulevard”), the TenCate Company (300 year-long evolution from agriculture to high tech fibres) and the textile museum “Twentse Welle”. An effective decentralization was clearly illustrated with the cases of the two East-Netherlands cities of Almelo and Enschede. Having suffered extremely high unemployment rates in the eighties, these two cities benefited from developing a shared vision and a successful tripartite lobbying at the national and even European level. Many members of the delegation noted that the experience of these two cities clearly showed the need to avoid a narrow orientation on one industrial or agricultural sector and to join all forces to ensure regional development.

“We have seen that investment in the youth is a major reason for success. The Dutch model is very much focussed on either bringing young people back to school (even part time) or to find them a job within a ‘combined school and work’ strategy. This is a remarkable feature of the country’s way of dealing with youth employment issues,” said Tanychevich Taldybaliev, deputy of the State Committee for Migration and Employment.

All members of the Kyrgyz delegation said that upon return they would advocate for a more sound and concrete institutionalisation of social dialogue in Kyrgyzstan, particularly from the youth employment and textile sector perspective. In doing so, they would rely, as always, on the ILO assistance and support.
ILO at International AIDS Conference in Mexico

The ILO hosted a series of events at the 17th International AIDS Conference in Mexico City on August 3-8. The ILO events were designed to illustrate the growing importance of the workplace in responding to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

HIV/AIDS is having a devastating effect on the world of work. Of the estimated 33 million people now living with HIV, over 30 million are of working age. Working people in their productive prime are the age group most at risk of HIV and most affected by its impact. The ILO’s Programme on HIV/AIDS in the World of Work (ILO/AIDS) organized its own well-attended satellite meeting to discuss the development of a new international labour standard on HIV/AIDS.

“Workplaces are vitally important for HIV/AIDS information, prevention, non-discrimination and treatment,” said Dr. Sophia Kisting, Director of ILO/AIDS. “At the same time, we are seeing increasing evidence that the workplace literally ‘works’ as a vital entry point for a wide range of responses to issues raised by the pandemic.”

The new standard would reinforce and extend the ILO’s existing Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work adopted in 2001. It would further support joint action on HIV/AIDS by the estimated 26 million government, worker and employer constituents and other partners, and strengthen the workplace contribution to the ILO’s Universal Access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

The ILO hosted a ‘Workplace advice centre’ in the networking zone of the Global Village which offered advice and materials on how to draft an HIV/AIDS policy or do effective prevention at the workplace.

The ‘Global Voice’, the official Conference newspaper, devoted a full page to action in the world of work, most of it linked to the ILO, its Code of Practice, and the role of tripartite constituents in the fight against the epidemic.

The ILO Subregional Office was represented at the conference by Irina Sinelina, National Project Coordinator ILO/USDOL HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Program. “No challenge to humanity is more global than HIV/AIDS,” said Utehak Khudyakova, Focal Point for HIV/AIDS and the World of Work.

In her presentation on a breakthrough in the formation of the Russian National Policy on HIV/AIDS and the Code of Practice, Irina Sinelina said from 2004 through 2008 a notable progress has been made in the conceptualization of a national approach to HIV/AIDS workplace issues. The progress is partly due to the ILO and its constituents: the Ministry of Health and Social Development, Employers and Workers’ organizations.

“There has been a major shift in the message: understanding that effective solutions to the HIV/AIDS problems lie not only in the medical sphere, but - not less importantly – in the sphere of social and labour relations,” she said.

Sinelina stressed that at present, HIV/AIDS has been included by the federal government into the draft Program on Safe Work pending approval by the Russian Tripartite Commission.

The national partners adopted a new General Tripartite Agreement for 2008-2010, thus taking an obligation to contribute to the implementation of corporate social programs aimed at workers’ health, including prevention of socially significant diseases, i.e. those caused by the human immunodeficiency virus, and vaccination of workers, she said.

New GOST in Kazakhstan


In Kazakhstan this standard entered into force on July 1, 2008.

Thus, Kazakhstan entered a common legal space on OSH management. This step will simplify the country’s access to the common economic space of the world.


Port safety topped the agenda of the seminars held in Novorossiisk from September 1 to September 5. The seminars were organized by the Russian federal ports agency (Rosmorport) and the Russian Central Marine Research and Design Institute.

The seminars were moderated by Marios Meletiou, ILO technical specialist (Ports and Transport) of the Maritime Activities Department.

“ILO’s adoption of a new law on ports and its preparation for the ratification of the ILO’s Maritime Labour Convention of 2006 is the most important measure of OSH management at maritime transport.”

During the first seminar participants studied ILO’s preventive approach. This approach lays the ground for all modern occupational safety and health systems and is adopted in all OSH codes of practice.

The new standard would reinforce and extend the ILO’s existing Code of Practice on flag-state and port-state inspection on board of ships under the Maritime Labour Convention (MCL) adopted by the International Labour Organization in 2006.

The MLC, 2006 consolidates nearly 70 years of international instruments adopted by the ILO since 1920.

The MLC, 2006 will come into force by September 28, 2008, after ratification by at least 30 member States with a total share of at least 33 percent of the world’s gross tonnage of ships. So far, Liberia, the Marshall Islands and the Bahamas have ratified it.

Participants in the workshop stressed that the introduction of the OSH management system is a time- and effort-consuming process. The introduction of GOST 12.0.230-2007 would help to protect workers from dangerous and harmful industrial factors and prevent accidents and occupational diseases.

Representatives of the Kazakhstan Labour and Social Welfare Ministry underlined that the new standard requirements will be reflected in the republic’s legislation.

Taking part in the workshop were Deputy Labour and Social Welfare Minister Serik Abdenov, the head of the control and social protection committee, Byrzhан Nuryymbetov, regional OSH programmes coordinator of the ILO Subregional Office Roman Litvyakov, the director of the Perm OSH information centre of the ILO CIS Network, Professor Grigory Fainburg, labour inspectors and representatives of big enterprises and training centres.

OSH on agenda of Almaty business forum

“Last year the fatality rate in the mining and construction industries made up 45 percent of the republic’s total occupational death toll,” said Kazakhstan Labour and Social Welfare Minister Berdibek Saparbayev.

“Statistics show that 12.6 percent of the working population refuses to sign up,” Saparbayev said.

He underlined that in April his ministry with the ILO held an international conference focusing on the improvement of working conditions as a means to promote demographic stability. As a follow-up to the conference Kazakhstan is making preparations to introduce new interstate GOST 12.0.230-2007.

Source: Kazakhstan Today news agency

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Azerbaijan hosts Youth Employment Summit

On September 24-27, Baku, capital of Azerbaijan, hosted YES Azerbaijan 2008, the 4th global youth employment summit. The summit was organized by Youth Employment Systems (YES) in close collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Azerbaijan.

The YES summit brought together six hundred delegates from 55 YES Network countries and other key partners who convened to share enterprise solutions to poverty eradication, understand challenges and develop country level strategies and programmes for youth enterprise development.

On September 23 Baku hosted an international conference HIV/AIDS and the World of Work devoted to the results of a joint project of the ILO and the Confederation of Entrepreneurs of Azerbaijan. Taking part in the event were ILO experts, governmental officials, representatives of public organizations and entreprenuers. The project that has been implemented in Azerbaijan since 2007 studied attitude of transport, hotel and agriculture businesses to the problem. The study-based report was prepared.

On September 8-9 Workers Activists and specialists of the ILO Subregional Office Irina Melekh. The training was facilitated by Joyti Tuladhar, specialist of ILO’s Gender Unit (Ulaanbaatar). The workshop was conducted in two parts: the first part focused on the ILO programmes and projects, and the second part addressed a critical issues in planning and implementing evaluations of various activities based on the theory of change and results-based management approach.

Craig Russon, Senior Evaluation Specialist from the Evaluation Department at the ILO Headquarters in Geneva. The participants addressed a number of critical issues in evaluating ILO’s programmes and projects. The workshop was facilitated by Craig Russon, Senior Evaluation Specialist from the Evaluation Department at the ILO Headquarters in Geneva. The participants addressed a number of critical issues in planning and implementing evaluations of various activities based on the theory of change and results-based management approach.

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