



SIXTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Review of the activities of multidisciplinary teams in relation to standards

1. Traditionally, the Office submits a document describing the recent activities of the MDTs in relation to standards to the second annual session of the Committee on Legal Issues and International Labour Standards. This paper is based on the information regularly sent by International Labour Standards (ILS) specialists to the International Labour Standards Department (NORMES) and has been subject to consultations with the MDTs. A separate document on promotion and technical assistance regarding standards is submitted to the present session of the Governing Body, in the context of the systematic review of possible improvements in standards-related activities.¹ As far as technical assistance is concerned, the thrust of the present document will be on standards in general, as opposed to assistance relating to the promotion of the ratification of the fundamental Conventions, which is the subject of another annual paper.²
2. The ILS specialists play an essential role in the supervision of obligations deriving from international labour Conventions and Recommendations as well as in the promotion of these standards. Further, the ILS specialists assist governments in drafting domestic legislation in order to ensure its consistency with international labour standards. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the ILS specialists also have responsibilities for promoting the Declaration and labour legislation and that some of them also have other assignments in the MDTs (e.g. child labour, gender).
3. The ILS specialists serve in the MDTs located in the following cities: Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Beirut, Dakar (post to be filled), Harare, Lima, Manila, Moscow, New Delhi, Port-of-Spain, San José, Santiago (Chile) and Yaoundé. The MDT based in Abidjan also covers a range of standards-related activities through the focal point for the Declaration. The MDTs based in Budapest and Cairo do not have standards specialist posts; officials from NORMES supply any necessary technical back-up for the countries covered by these teams.

¹ See doc. GB.283/4.

² Nov. 1998: doc. GB.273/LILS/5; Nov. 1999: doc. GB.276/LILS/6; Mar. 2001: GB.280/LILS/6.

4. This year, special efforts have been made to strengthen the dialogue between NORMES and the ILS specialists. All the ILS specialists participated in the consultations with the Department (30-31 May 2002), in which the InFocus Programme on Child Labour (IPEC), the InFocus Programme on Social Dialogue, Labour Law and Labour Administration (IFP/DIALOGUE), the InFocus Programme on Promoting the Declaration (DECLARATION) and the International Training Centre based in Turin also took part. ILS specialists were invited to participate in the seminar organized by NORMES on “Future Challenges and Opportunities to Enhance the Relevance of International Labour Standards” (23-24 May 2002). ILS specialists made their customary contribution to the work of the Committee on the Application of Standards of the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference. NORMES continued to facilitate ILS specialists’ missions to headquarters for consultations on specific topics and to send headquarters officials on mission to support some of the ILS specialists’ activities.
5. In the wake of the 1999 Report of the Director-General,³ ILS specialists have contributed to the development of the concept of *decent work* through the implementation of various programmes with specific countries. During a subregional tripartite seminar in Antigua, Guatemala, organized by the San José team, emphasis was placed on the ratification of Conventions and the implementation of international labour standards with a view at bringing into operation the concept of *decent work*. In the Philippines – selected by the Governing Body as one of the pilot countries – a Decent Work Tripartite Advisory Committee was established with a view to supporting and monitoring the implementation of a framework for technical assistance. A decent work programme was launched in May 2002, as a result of thorough consultations with the social partners, identifying a number of areas in relation to international labour standards that called for actions to reduce decent work deficits. In Bangladesh, a decent work pilot programme will expand ongoing work in areas where concrete progress can be made as well as investigate new mechanisms and modalities in the field of labour standards, which could assist the country in hastening the pace of development. The Beirut team, in collaboration with the International Institute for Labour Studies, held a course to promote the concept of decent work, in particular in relation to standards.

I. Promotion of Conventions

6. ILS specialists continue to play a crucial role in raising awareness about both the fundamental and other Conventions, including the following activities.

Fundamental Conventions

7. The Bangkok MDT organized a workshop in East Timor, focusing on the ratification of the eight fundamental Conventions by the newly independent state. The team also carried out a mission to Mongolia to hold a seminar on the forced labour Conventions, preparing the ground for a forced labour assessment study sponsored by DECLARATION. In Mongolia, Thailand and Viet Nam, the team provided technical advice in preparing for the ratification of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138). In Thailand, NORMES and the team conducted a roundtable with Government officials to clarify reporting obligations with respect to the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100). In Bhopal, India, the New Delhi MDT participated in a one-day seminar organized by the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, relating to the ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour

³ *Decent work*, ILC, 87th Session, 1999.

Convention, 1999 (No. 182). The meeting followed several other similar meetings with other partner organizations and is part of a consolidated effort to promote the ratification of the Convention by India. In Sri Lanka, two meetings resulted in concrete follow-up measures in relation to Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98) in respect of export processing zones, such as access of trade unions or the enhancement of collective bargaining. In Iran, a joint mission by NORMES and the team investigated how to improve the application of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), with special emphasis on equal opportunities for women in employment and occupations. In Kiribati, the ILS specialist of the Manila MDT served as a resource person in the high-level tripartite meeting of October 2001 that recommended the ratification of four fundamental Conventions.

8. The Moscow MDT held a tripartite training seminar in Armenia to prepare the field for possible future ratifications of the six fundamental Conventions not yet ratified by the country. The Harare MDT provided legal assistance and/or promotional services in a broad sense to Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe concerning the application of the fundamental Conventions. The team recently carried out a mission to Mozambique to promote the ratification of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) and Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 concerning child labour. A similar activity was also carried out in Swaziland in particular in respect of these two Conventions. The Abidjan team participated in a subregional workshop of the Democratic Organization of African Workers' Trade Unions on Conventions Nos. 138 and 182. The team also trained national experts in Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and Togo to help in the promotion of the fundamental Conventions. The Yaoundé team gave its support to action studies conducted by DECLARATION on pygmies and forced labour in the subregion. The team linked Convention No. 111 with the issue of discrimination against workers contaminated with HIV/AIDS, in a tripartite subregional seminar in Douala with which UNAIDS was involved.
9. The Port-of-Spain MDT featured the campaign to ratify the fundamental Conventions in subregional and national training seminars and meetings of labour ministers and other officials. It organized two national child labour workshops in Grenada to support a trade union study and promote ratification of Convention No. 182; supported activities of IPEC in the countries of the subregion; and gave assistance to a number of countries concerning the ratification process and the declarations required under Convention No. 138. Standards on freedom of association and discrimination have been promoted through the DECLARATION project on the Promotion of Labour-Management Cooperation (PROMALCO) and meetings of employers' and workers' organizations. The link between ILO standards and HIV/AIDS was explored through the participation of the team in several meetings resulting in the adoption by the Caribbean tripartite constituents of a platform for action for the subregion, consistent with ILO fundamental standards and the code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work. The Lima MDT made special efforts to obtain ratifications of the eight fundamental Conventions by the five countries under its jurisdiction. The Beirut team held, in collaboration with DECLARATION, a tripartite national seminar in the United Arab Emirates to raise awareness about the fundamental Conventions especially those related to freedom of association and collective bargaining. The same MDT provided technical assistance to Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen concerning the promotion of the principles of the fundamental Conventions and their ratification as well as the application of those already ratified. The team also organized, in collaboration with NORMES, the International Training Centre and the Executive Bureau of the Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States, a subregional seminar for the member states of GCC, with a view to promoting the fundamental Conventions. Particular emphasis was placed on the issue of child labour.

Priority and other Conventions

- 10.** The Bangkok MDT presented the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), at the Asia-Pacific Conference of the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action co-sponsored by UNICEF and WHO, and at a regional workshop of Education International. In Thailand, the team held consultations with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare preparing the ground for the ratification of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155). In Viet Nam, similar preparatory work was carried out for the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). In a comprehensive effort to promote in India the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), the New Delhi MDT organized a tripartite information session on the Convention as well as a thorough training session for post-graduate human rights students. The promotional activities were supplemented this year in a meeting during which the participants discussed the World Bank guidelines on meaningful consultation, in line with the Convention, regarding the Bank's projects affecting indigenous peoples. Two workshops on international labour standards were organized by the Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE) and the ILO in India, bringing into the limelight Conventions of direct interest to the employers, such as those on minimum wages, vocational training and workers in need of protection. Under the Decent Work Action Programme for the Philippines, the Manila MDT supported a systematic review by the constituents of existing commitments under ILO Conventions by making available its expertise to the Tripartite Industrial Peace Council.
- 11.** The Abidjan MDT carried out promotional activity in Togo on labour standards related to safety and health at work. The same team carried out a mission to Niger which included a training and awareness-raising workshop on ILS in general. In Abidjan, technical consultations between headquarters and all the MDTs of the African region were held on social protection and standards. In Zimbabwe, the Harare team promoted the ratification of the main occupational safety and health Conventions as well as Convention No. 183. The Yaoundé MDT co-organized one-month training sessions on standards and the Declaration in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The team also organized several workshops on occupational safety and health.
- 12.** The San José MDT organized a set of promotional activities on relevant Conventions concerning equal opportunities at work, indigenous peoples, women workers and disabled workers, in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Mexico and Nicaragua. The Port-of-Spain MDT promoted the priority Conventions and the recommendations of the Governing Body based on the review of existing standards in the ILO subregional Caribbean Training Seminar on International Labour Standards and Procedures for ILO Desk Officers and in ILO subregional meetings of labour ministers and labour officials. This resulted in commitments to seek ratification of the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), and the Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150) as well as Conventions Nos. 144 and 155, on a priority basis. In addition, the MDT promoted Convention No. 155 in a subregional seminar for trade unions on sustainable tourism that emphasized safety and health and in several national meetings on safety and health. Saint Lucia and Guyana were assisted with drafting safety and health laws and regulations to be consistent with Convention No. 155. The MDT also featured the new maternity protection Convention in subregional and national seminars on standards and gave technical assistance and advice concerning the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159) in Trinidad and Tobago. The Moscow MDT organized a training programme in Minsk and a subregional technical consultation meeting in Tashkent, both focusing on the identification of problems in the application of ratified, or soon-to-be-ratified Conventions. The Beirut MDT held two training and awareness-raising workshops in Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic focusing respectively on the promotion of ratification of the Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No 150)

and Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159). The same MDT also held two regional seminars for Arab States in Jordan and Lebanon with view to promoting the ratification, respectively, of Convention No. 159 and Conventions relating to occupational safety and health.

13. Assistance to magistrates and labour law practitioners as well as parliamentarians and other representatives of civil society is another promotional activity of MDTs. In Peru, in November 2001, a seminar took place with the participation of more than 40 magistrates in the labour judiciary (constitutional court, supreme and superior tribunals, judiciary national council, etc.). This activity will be pursued and further developed by the Lima team. A seminar for judges, lawyers and law professors was held by the San José team in the Dominican Republic, in collaboration with the Turin Training Centre. A similar activity took place in Santiago (Chile), in Cotonou (Benin) and in Zimbabwe. “Training for the trainers” was also carried out by the Abidjan team in Cotonou, Lome, Niamey, and Ouagadougou. An awareness-raising workshop, especially for magistrates, was held in Ouagadougou by the same team in May 2002. A two-day discussion session with the African Development Bank was held in order to improve the integration of international labour standards in the Bank’s drafting of country strategy papers. Finally, mention should be made of the technical consultation meeting between representatives of the Yaoundé and Abidjan MDTs with the Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union aiming at defining a cooperation programme as well as determining collaboration axes between the Union and the ILO. In Bangladesh, a training course was organized by the New Delhi MDT and 120 lawyers were trained on all ILO fundamental Conventions and the occupational safety and health Conventions. The Manila team contributed to a training series for labour officers in Indonesia.

II. Technical assistance and constitutional obligations

14. The ILS specialists provide appropriate individual assistance to the constituents in order to help them meet their constitutional obligations with regard to reporting on international labour standards. The following activities can be highlighted.
15. At its 282nd Session (November 2001), the Governing Body approved the principle of country-by-country assistance. The purpose of this assistance is to undertake, with selected countries initially totalling a number of four or five member States, a concentrated attempt to resolve as many of the standards-related problems raised by the supervisory bodies as possible.⁴ The ILS specialists will play an important role in the selection of countries, the identification of the problems and in developing solutions to these problems, and consultations are under way in this regard.
16. The Moscow MDT held a two-day training consultation workshop for officials from ministries from Trans-Caucasus countries in Tbilisi, based on assistance in the reporting process. The Port-of-Spain team organized in particular a training session on standards and reporting obligations that involved the preparation of country papers and individual country assessments. It also gave attention to reporting obligations and the report of the Committee of Experts with specific attention paid to the new reporting procedures to enter into force in 2003,⁵ with the Ministries of Labour of the Caribbean subregion. The team

⁴ GB. 282/LILS/5.

⁵ GB. 282/LILS/5, *Examination of standards-related reporting arrangements*.

also undertook an exercise to promote better integration of ILO reports into national policy and planning and will carry out a pilot exercise in Trinidad and Tobago. To enhance knowledge about the standards-setting process and promote wider Caribbean participation, the team produced a video entitled, *The International Labour Conference: Caribbean voices touching the world*. The San José team participated in a seminar in Guatemala, where the need for technical assistance from the MDT in preparing reports was stressed by various participants. Another mission to Guatemala by the team focused, through a series of consultations with government officials and other stakeholders, on capacity building for legal defence of indigenous peoples in Central America.

17. In Teheran, a tripartite group was trained under the guidance of the New Delhi MDT on standards-related reporting. The Bangkok MDT conducted a workshop on reporting obligations for government officials from China, including the Hong Kong and Macau special administrative regions. The opportunity was taken to introduce the changes to the reporting system adopted by the Governing Body at its 283rd Session (March 2002), and to promote the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95).
18. The Yaoundé team focused its assistance on Labour Ministry officials in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with regard to the country's obligations in relation to standards. The team responded in particular to a request for support on several standards-related items from the Government of Gabon in conducting a mission to Libreville in November 2001. Finally, training was also provided in Cameroon aimed at improving the drafting of late reports. At the request of the Nigerian Government, the Addis Ababa MDT conducted a mission with the threefold objective of assisting the Government in solving outstanding issues on submission of ILO instruments to competent authorities, in reporting on ratified Conventions and in reporting under the Declaration's follow-up mechanism. A similar series of missions by the team was carried out at the request of the Government of Ghana at the end of 2001, and in Seychelles. The Harare team is organizing a course on constitutional reporting obligations for the tripartite constituents, which should take place before the end of this year. The Beirut MDT provided technical assistance to Jordan, Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic in respect of their reporting obligations in relation to ILS.
19. Standards specialists also followed up on questions raised by the supervisory bodies. Thus, the Abidjan team provided technical assistance to the Government of Benin to revise the national legislation on freedom of association following comments made by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR). A tripartite subregional meeting on promoting social dialogue and freedom of association in export processing zones held in Chennai, India, also focused on application of the relevant Conventions in export processing zones in the participating countries (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka), in light of the comments made by the ILO supervisory bodies. The Beirut MDT provided technical advice to Jordan, Qatar, the Syrian Arab Republic and Saudi Arabia on questions raised by the CEACR; similar advice was given in collaboration with DECLARATION regarding Convention No. 138, during a seminar organized in the United Arab Emirates. The Port-of-Spain MDT focused on the comments of the Committee of Experts in particular in the subregional standards training seminar it carried out and in meetings with labour ministries and labour officials and in individual consultations with countries of the subregion.

III. Social dialogue and activities with the social partners

20. ILS specialists continued to organize a wide range of activities with the social partners to promote the application of international labour standards and to stimulate social dialogue.

21. The Bangkok MDT and IFP/DIALOGUE supported a high-level tripartite consultation in the Republic of Korea aimed at reinvigorating social dialogue and easing labour relations tensions. In the Philippines, activities of the Manila MDT for employers included a training seminar on labour and human rights standards in the globalized workplace. The CORALS programme (Consolidating rights at work and labour relations in Seychelles) was launched by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment of this country, and resulted in a project document to be completed by the input of ILO assistance. The standards specialist of the Addis Ababa MDT reported on the conclusion of a reintegration agreement between the Government of Djibouti and dismissed trade union leaders, following the recommendations of the Committee for Freedom of Association. The Yaoundé team trained trade unions in Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda on collective bargaining. A mission to Sao Tome and Principe, co-organized by the Yaoundé team, included a workshop on tripartism and social dialogue, for the two workers' central organizations of the country. A mid-term evaluation of the PRODIAF (*Programme régional de promotion du dialogue social en Afrique francophone*) programme was held with the support of the Yaoundé ILS specialist. The ILS specialist of the Harare team regularly participated in activities organized by the MDT specialists dealing with workers' and employers' activities. The MDT in Port-of-Spain participated in several meetings for the Employers' Consultative Association of Trinidad and Tobago on fundamental labour standards on freedom of association and collective bargaining and discrimination; participated in regional and national meetings organized by the specialist for workers' activities and met with the social partners on standards issues in a number of national tripartite committees.
22. MDTs have also focused on specific topics: on *child labour*, the second series of subregional ILO/UNICEF consultations in Libreville was held and the working framework of the regional project dealing especially with the fight against child trafficking has been reaffirmed. The San José team took part in a national seminar in Managua about *gender, rural work* and *social dialogue*, as well as in a seminar in Cuba about ILO gender-related activities, including a review of the application of the Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952 (No. 103).

IV. Labour legislation

23. ILS specialists continued to assist governments in drafting domestic legislation so as to ensure its consistency with international labour standards. The respective responsibilities of NORMES and IFP/DIALOGUE in this respect have been clarified and guidance sent out to MDTs by NORMES and IFP/DIALOGUE.
24. Under the guidance of NORMES, the ILS specialist in the Lima MDT has advised the Peruvian National Congress about modifying the National Constitution and the Labour Code, to ensure consistency between the national legislation and the Conventions ratified by the country. The San José MDT has indicated that social partners in Guatemala had stressed the need for tripartite dialogue on the draft Labour Procedure Code which is currently being discussed in Parliament. The Port-of-Spain team provided ongoing assistance to Saint Lucia in the drafting of a new labour code and was requested to convey information to the social partners in Grenada on the compliance of proposed legislative revisions with Convention No. 87. The team also carried out other activities such as commenting on new legislation on child labour in Jamaica and assisting Guyana with safety and health regulations. The New Delhi team assisted the Pakistani Government in drafting a code of conduct on sexual harassment and a bill on equal remuneration. In Cambodia, the Bangkok MDT assisted the Government on drafting executive decrees on hazardous child labour and light work, both to facilitate the application of Convention No. 138 and to prepare the ratification of Convention No. 182. In Malaysia, the team

reviewed draft legislation on sexual harassment in the light of international labour standards and ILO policy, sponsored by the Joint Action Group Against Violence Against Women, which includes the Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC). In Thailand, the team presented Conventions Nos. 87 and 98 at a public hearing in the course of the consultation process on a draft labour relations bill. In Indonesia, the Manila MDT provided support to the labour law reform in close coordination with IFP/DIALOGUE through advisory missions during the course of deliberations on the Bills by the Parliament. The same MDT advised on labour law reforms contemplated or under way in Fiji and Papua New Guinea. The Abidjan team, through the PAMODEC (*Projet d'appui à la mise en œuvre de la Déclaration*) programme, engaged in a legislation clean-up workshop, in order to have national legislation in Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and Togo conform with the comments of the Committee of Experts. The Yaoundé MDT organized the participation of the ILO in a meeting of the council of ministers of the treaty dealing with the harmonization of commercial law in Africa, which discussed the draft harmonized labour code prepared by the ILO. The Beirut team provided technical assistance to Bahrain, Lebanon and Yemen, in relation to the review of their national labour codes as well as to Saudi Arabia, in collaboration with NORMES and DECLARATION.

25. The Committee may wish to take note of the activities undertaken by the multidisciplinary teams in relation to standards.

Geneva, 25 September 2002.

Point for decision: Paragraph 25.