



TENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Developments in the United Nations**Contents**

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Introduction

1. Like previous papers submitted to the Governing Body since its 259th Session, this paper gives an overview of developments in the United Nations intergovernmental and inter-agency bodies, and of initiatives of particular interest to the ILO during the year 2002 and the beginning of 2003. It highlights the ILO's own participation and involvement, and shows the emphasis being given in intergovernmental dialogue to the issues and values underlying the ILO's mission and mandate.
2. The central issues underlying discussions at the United Nations during most of 2002 were related to terrorism and Iraqi compliance with Security Council resolutions. These questions so dominated the debates that issues relating to economic, social and environmental policy received less attention than usual. However, the major UN events on financing for development, ageing, children and sustainable development held in 2002 kept those issues alive and some progress was made in agreeing on commitments, articulating strategies and additional policy initiatives, and in allocating new resources to development. ILO active involvement had a significant impact on the outcomes of these events, ensuring better understanding by the international community of the relevance of decent work in achieving broad development goals. Issues of direct interest to the ILO also received significant attention in various UN bodies, including the United Nations Commission for Social Development, which addressed the integration of social and economic policy as the priority theme of its February 2002 Session;¹ the Commission on the Status of Women; and the Economic and Social Council. At the start of the 57th Session of the General Assembly, widespread support was also expressed for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Since September 2002, on all these issues, implementation has held the focus of attention in the Economic and Financial (Second) and the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural (Third) Committees of the General Assembly.
3. Another important issue for the ILO was the consideration of the labour and human rights situation in Myanmar. At its resumed substantive session for 2002, ECOSOC discussed the question of the observance by the Government of Myanmar of the ILO's Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), based in particular on updated information provided by the Office. The Third Committee also adopted a resolution on the human rights situation in Myanmar containing specific references to ILO instruments and activities.
4. The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have over a relatively short period of time gained tremendous currency, offering a response to the international development community's strong plea for coherent development policies at both national and international levels. The whole UN system has adopted the MDGs as a focus for activity, agreeing on an MDG Core Strategy to assist countries in meeting these goals. The ILO has been actively involved in the various aspects of this strategy. Another major feature for the ILO was its decision to join the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). In 2002 this grouping of UN programmes, funds and agencies involved in development cooperation activities has achieved an almost universal character, with the joining of other major actors, including the World Bank (as an observer). The Office's objective in joining has been to ensure that ILO concerns have a greater impact on, and are increasingly included in, all UN activities especially at the country level. In September 2002 the Secretary-General also introduced a second programme for further reform of the United Nations,

¹ GB.283/7.

focusing mainly on the UN secretariat, but with potential implications for the UN system as a whole.

5. The ILO presence in New York was upgraded and the number of addresses to UN forums made on behalf of the ILO was doubled. However, greater attention still needs to be given in UN debates to the fundamental issues of decent work – in particular the growth of employment opportunities and improvement in labour standards. An increase in staff at the ILO's New York Liaison Office in 2003 will enable a more multifaceted programme to be sustained with the aim of increasing member States' attention to these centrally important goals.

I. Major United Nations events

1. International Conference on Financing for Development

(Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002)

6. The International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) was held following an extensive preparatory process in which the ILO was actively involved. The Conference was attended by more than 50 Heads of State, over 200 finance, foreign, trade and development cooperation ministers, and some 6,000 other participants. The Conference adopted the "Monterrey Consensus".² In it Heads of State recognize the need for concerted and coordinated action on many of the critical FfD agenda items (debt relief, official development assistance (ODA), foreign direct investment, market access, trade, domestic resource mobilization and global economic governance). They explicitly support the ILO and encourage its ongoing work on the social dimensions of globalization. In so doing, they recognize the importance of integrating the social dimension into the formulation of economic and financial policies and hence highlight the need for an enhanced role for the ILO in the governance structure of the global economy. The document also contains many other elements of interest to the ILO, including references to employment creation, macroeconomic policy, financial stability, labour rights, social protection, active labour market policies and worker training, microfinance and credit for SMEs, pension schemes, migrant workers, social budget policies, the role of foreign direct investment in job creation and corporate social responsibility.
7. The Conference provided a forum for discussion of other issues such as global governance, international cooperation on domestic tax matters, and new and innovative sources of financing. One of the main features was the announcement by many donor countries of increases in ODA. Various high-level round tables focusing on partnerships in financing and coherence in development were also held. Representatives of the ILO spoke at the opening session, at round tables and at several side events, organized a discussion on social protection, and were active participants in other formal and informal events.

2. Second World Assembly on Ageing

(Madrid, Spain, 8-12 April 2002)

8. The Second World Assembly on Ageing was held on the twentieth anniversary of the First World Assembly on Ageing (Vienna, 1982) to respond to the opportunities and challenges

² A/AC.257/L.13: <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/0302finalMonterreyConsensus.pdf>.

of a rapidly ageing population and promote the development of a “society for all ages”. The ILO’s delegation was led by the Director-General. The ILO contributed a report to the Assembly³ and was actively involved in the preparatory process and in the Assembly itself.⁴ The Assembly adopted the International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 and a Political Declaration, both covering issues related to the ILO. A detailed report about the outcomes of the Assembly was submitted to the Committee on Employment and Social Policy in November 2002.⁵

3. United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children (New York, 8-10 May 2002)

9. The Special Session on Children⁶ was held to review implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action from the World Summit for Children (New York, 1990), to renew this commitment and to consider future action for children. The ILO was very active in the preparatory process, particularly in relation to the drafting of the outcome document: “A world fit for children” adopted by the Assembly and which carries significant wording in relation to issues of child labour and trafficking.⁷ The outcome document contains a Declaration and a plan of action. The plan of action views chronic poverty as the single biggest obstacle to meeting the needs of children. The Declaration urges countries to sign and ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child⁸ as well as ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182, and sets a number of goals and targets, including reducing mother and infant mortality and child malnutrition, providing primary school education and eliminating gender disparities, protecting children from sexual exploitation including trafficking and their recruitment in armed conflict, and combating child labour. The Declaration specifically calls for immediate measures to be taken to combat the worst forms of child labour as defined in Convention No. 182, to protect children from all forms of economic exploitation, and to promote international cooperation to help developing countries address the root causes of child labour.
10. The Director-General led the ILO delegation to the Special Session and participated actively in it. Apart from his statement to the plenary, he was also involved, together with other executive heads of agencies, in a panel discussion on child education and child labour, and later joined a march and spoke at a rally against child labour. The ILO participated in many other activities and used the opportunity offered by the Session to

³ <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/older/download/engage.pdf>. GB.283/ESP/5 and (Add.).

⁴ <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/exrel/events/swaa.htm>.

⁵ For further information, see GB.285/ESP/6/1.

⁶ <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/>.

⁷ <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/wffc/index.html>.

⁸ <http://www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm>.

launch its Global Report “A future without child labour”⁹ and its latest global estimates on child labour.¹⁰

4. World Food Summit: *Five years later* (Rome, Italy, 6-8 June, 2002)

11. The World Food Summit: *Five years later* was held to review progress made towards the target set at the 1996 World Food Summit of halving the number of undernourished people by 2015. The latest estimates by the FAO indicate that the number of undernourished is falling at the rate of 6 million per year – far below the rate of 22 million per year required to achieve the target. The Summit renewed pledges towards achieving a world free from hunger and malnutrition and adopted the *Declaration of the World Food Summit: Five years later*¹¹ in which recognition is also given to the importance of creating employment opportunities for the poor to reduce poverty and hunger.

5. World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 26 August-4 September 2002)

12. The World Summit on Sustainable Development reviewed progress made since the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and to accelerate the progress of implementation of Agenda 21 and other Rio outcomes. The ILO was represented by the Director-General, accompanied by a tripartite Governing Body delegation. The mandate of the Summit went beyond the environmental focus of Rio to focus on the concept of sustainable development and its three supporting pillars: economic development, environmental protection and social progress. At its conclusion, the Summit adopted a Plan of Implementation and a Declaration on Sustainable Development.¹² The Plan contains a number of references to the ILO and its work. It is also worth noting that the ILO is the only UN agency referred to in the Declaration. The social pillar provided the main focus of the ILO’s contribution to the Summit and the Office pursued a proactive policy both at the preparatory stage and at the conference itself.¹³

⁹ <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/decl/publ/reports/report3.htm>.

¹⁰ <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/simpoc/others/globalest.pdf>.

¹¹ <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/MEETING/005/Y7106E/Y7106E09.htm>.

¹² <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/>.

¹³ For further information, see GB.285/ESP/6/2 and GB.286/ESP/4.

II. Regular United Nations events of particular interest to the ILO, 2002-03

1. Fifty-seventh Session of the United Nations General Assembly (Autumn 2002)

13. Special attention was given at the 57th Session to African development and UN support for the emerging NEPAD, including a one-day high-level event. Other discussions were devoted to the Secretary-General's second report on UN reform (see below); the need for coordinated and integrated follow-up to major UN conferences; the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization; and his first report on follow-up to the Millennium Summit and progress so far in implementing the Millennium Declaration.¹⁴
14. Agenda items of concern to the ILO were mostly to be found in the Second and Third Committees, which addressed, inter alia, macroeconomic and sectoral policies; globalization; poverty eradication; sustainable development; the advancement of women; racism and racial discrimination; the rights of the child, of migrant workers and of indigenous and tribal peoples; and the rights conferred under the international human rights treaties. Both Committees provided an opportunity for the ILO to highlight its work and programmes. References were made to the ILO's activities in reports of the Secretary-General, resolutions and statements by national delegations.¹⁵
15. Of the many resolutions put to the General Assembly by the Second and Third Committees, two are of particular significance to the ILO. The first is entitled "Promoting youth employment",¹⁶ in which the ILO is invited, in the context of the Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network,¹⁷ to assist governments in developing national reviews and action plans to tackle youth unemployment. The second resolution, on the "Situation of human rights in Myanmar",¹⁸ welcomes the recent appointment by the ILO of a Liaison Officer and calls upon the Government to implement fully the recommendations of the ILO Commission of Inquiry and to pursue its dialogue with the Organization.

2. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC): Substantive Session (New York, 1-25 July 2002)

16. The theme of the high-level segment at this year's substantive session was: "The contribution of human resources development, including in the areas of health and education, to the process of development". Key government ministers, heads of agencies and scholars joined with the Secretary-General to examine the outcome of major

¹⁴ <http://www.un.org/ga/57/document.htm>.

¹⁵ ILO statements: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/exrel/events/unga57/index.htm>.

¹⁶ A/57/545.

¹⁷ For further information about the Youth Employment Network, see GB.286/ESP/5.

¹⁸ A/RES/57/231, at <http://www.un.org/ga/57/document.htm>.

international conferences. The ILO participated in various high-level round tables and panel discussions held to examine the segment's theme.¹⁹ The Council adopted a Ministerial Declaration.²⁰ During the session the ILO also participated in many other activities and made various statements. Finally, an ILO letter of 17 July 2002 providing information on the ILO's activities in Myanmar, including the appointment of a Liaison Officer, was distributed.

**3. Commission for Social Development:
Forty-first Session
(10-21 February 2003)**

17. The priority theme of the Forty-first Session is "national and international cooperation for social development". The ILO contributed to the Secretary-General's report on the subject. In addressing this theme, the Commission plans to consider, among others, the social responsibility of the private sector and the impact of employment strategies on social development.

**4. Commission on the Status of Women:
Forty-seventh Session
(New York, 3-14 March 2003)**

18. The Commission plans to focus on two themes: the participation and access of women to the media and information and communication technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women; and women's human rights and the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls as defined in the Beijing Platform of Action and the outcome document of the Special Session "Beijing plus Five".

5. Commission on Human Rights and treaty bodies

19. The annual session of the Commission on Human Rights was held in Geneva from 18 March to 26 April 2002. The ILO made written and oral contributions on a number of issues, including discrimination, women's rights and the gender perspective, migrant workers, child labour, HIV/AIDS, and indigenous issues. Several of the resolutions adopted by the Commission recognize the ILO's work in these and other areas, such as the fight against trafficking or the right to work of persons with disabilities, and encourage the ILO to continue its efforts concerning these issues. The ILO also attended the sessions of the Commission's various subsidiary bodies.

20. The ILO also continued its cooperation with the various treaty bodies supervising the implementation of United Nations human rights treaties, through the submission of its periodic reports and providing advice on matters relating to ILO standards and technical cooperation activities. A new treaty body will be established under the UN's International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families of 1990, which will enter into force in 2003. The ILO will be invited to participate in its meetings in a consultative capacity.

¹⁹ For further information about the ILO contribution, see GB.285/TC/2.

²⁰ E/2002/L.13.

6. Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

- 21.** At all three sessions of the Committee (New York, June and August 2002 and January 2003) the ILO presented reports under Article 22 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and fielded questions about the reports posed by Committee members in their pre-sessional working groups. This included questions on the meaning of “pay equity” and explanations of why some reporting countries had not ratified international labour Conventions Nos. 100 and 111.

7. United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB)

- 22.** Executive heads of the UN system agencies (including the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO) gathered at the Chief Executives Board’s two regular sessions for 2002 (Rome, April, and New York, November). CEB members addressed the follow-up to the Millennium Summit, focusing on the two themes to be covered in the Secretary-General’s first annual report to the General Assembly on implementation of the Millennium Declaration. In April they focused on the theme of “treatment and prevention of disease, including HIV/AIDS and malaria”. The growing importance of the workplace in the treatment and prevention of diseases was duly acknowledged. It was also thought that the UN system should be a model of best practice in combating HIV/AIDS, and the Board called on its members to fully implement the system’s existing policies on HIV/AIDS in the workplace. In November the CEB focused on the theme “Preventing armed conflict”. They agreed that the central component of the UN system’s strategy on conflict prevention should be the promotion of development and eradication of poverty. It was observed that lack of decent work in particular created a sense of despair and hopelessness that contributes to increased criminality, social tension and violence. Education and training, as well as job creation, were thus crucial means of promoting social harmony and peace. In November the executive heads also had an opportunity for a first exchange of views on the Secretary-General’s reform initiative.
- 23.** At their retreat following the April session, CEB members focused their discussion on two related themes. The first concerned an assessment of the results of recent global conferences, in particular the WTO Ministerial Conference and the International Conference on Financing for Development. The second theme was to pursue the decision taken at the autumn 2001 retreat to launch an advocacy campaign on the MDGs. At the autumn 2002 retreat, they reviewed progress made regarding the campaign, identifying future directions for their collective work. They also reverted to the issue of African development, addressing the UN system’s relationship with the new African Union (AU) and focusing on defining a policy framework for the system’s support of the NEPAD. On both occasions, the Director-General took the opportunity of the retreat to inform CEB members about the latest developments related to the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization.

III. Forthcoming major United Nations events: Involvement in preparatory processes

1. World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva, 10-12 December 2003)

24. The decision to hold a Summit in two phases (Geneva in December 2003 and Tunis in 2005) was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in December 2001. Placed under the overall coordination of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee was held from 1 to 5 July 2002; the second was due to take place in February 2003. The ILO has been actively involved in the preparations for the Summit as a member of the High-Level Summit Organizing Committee (HLSOC), participating in preparatory meetings and providing technical contributions to the process. The Office has been stressing in particular the growing impact of the information and communication technologies (ICT) revolution on the employment situation as well as the need to address this issue and the challenges it poses at the Summit. The ILO has also emphasized the importance not only of ICT access and infrastructure, but also of training, as well as the need to involve real economic and social actors (employers and workers) in this process.

IV. New trends in the United Nations system

25. This section of the document is dedicated to some of the new trends that have recently emerged within the multilateral system, affecting or likely to affect the full spectrum of UN entities and activities. Most of them can be considered as a response to persistent demands for new, better and more coherent international frameworks, as well as greater unity of action within the UN system.

1. United Nations Development Group (UNDG)

26. A significant event in the ILO's collaboration with UN system partners involved in development activities was its decision in March 2002 to formally join the United Nations Development Group (UNDG).²¹ The UNDG comprises the UN funds and programmes (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP), other United Nations entities and the main departments of the UN secretariat involved in development cooperation activities, together with the five major specialized agencies (FAO, WHO, UNESCO, UNIDO and the ILO), as well as the World Bank, which enjoys observer status. The UNDG is the main inter-agency body for formulating common operational modalities for UN system development cooperation.

27. The UNDG was established as a result of the first round of comprehensive reform measures introduced by the Secretary-General in 1997. Among them was the decision to group all the UN departments, offices, funds and programmes concerned into four principal areas: (i) peace and security; (ii) economic and social affairs; (iii) humanitarian affairs; and (iv) development operations. Hence the creation of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG).

28. While the work of the UNDG and the Secretary-General's reform proposals were originally limited to the UN secretariat, funds and programmes, they also offered a

²¹ <http://www.undg.org>.

response to a broader call for reform of the entire UN system emanating from the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the governing bodies of individual agencies, which demanded that the entire system act in a more unified and better coordinated manner to achieve greater impact, avoiding dispersion of effort, duplication and competition.

29. In joining the UNDG, the ILO, together with the other major specialized agencies, is responding to the broader call for reform of the operational activities for development of the UN system, and demonstrates its commitment to work closely with its partners to align its own operations as effectively as possible with those of other agencies of the system.
30. Even if it is too early to make a preliminary assessment, participation in the UNDG should bring several advantages –
 - In participating in the development cooperation debate and making its views heard, the ILO can expect to influence and sensitize UN system partners, including the Bretton Woods institutions, to its particular concerns, experience and competence.
 - The ILO can work to ensure that the identification of priorities and development strategies, especially at the national level, involves dialogue with its tripartite constituency, and active participation of all concerned parties.
 - The ILO should be in a better position, through its participation in the work of the UNDG, to formulate common programming frameworks and coordination arrangements (CCA/UNDAF, PRSPs, MDGs) to ensure that they take social aspects into account, and provide a basis for better informing the ILO's field structure of the implications for coordination and cooperation with UN system partners at the country level.
 - The ILO can seek to promote the Decent Work Agenda in the formulation and implementation of programmes carried out by other UN entities, especially at the country level.

2. United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

31. At the United Nations Millennium Summit (New York, September 2000), member States agreed to a set of time-bound and measurable goals and targets contained in the Declaration adopted on this occasion.²² The Millennium Declaration²³ sets out within a single framework some of the key challenges facing humanity, outlines values and principles, as well as goals, in the key priority areas of peace, security, development, poverty eradication, the environment, human rights, protecting the vulnerable, the special needs of Africa, and strengthening the United Nations.
32. In order to help focus national and international priority setting, it was later agreed that the development goals and targets of the overall international community had to be limited in number, to be stable over time, and easy to communicate to a broad audience. A concise set of eight MDGs,²⁴ 18 numerical targets and more than 40 quantifiable indicators were

²² GB.280/8.

²³ <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>.

²⁴ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/index.html>.

therefore identified to assess progress in meeting the development goals set in the Millennium Declaration.²⁵ These goals are to be achieved by 2015 and are centred on the following objectives: (1) eradicate poverty and hunger; (2) achieve universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) develop a global partnership for development. It is important to stress that this list of MDGs does not undercut in any way agreements on other goals and targets reached at the global conferences of the last 15 years.

33. So far, progress towards achieving the MDGs has been mixed. To accelerate the process, an MDG Core Strategy has been recently elaborated by the UN system to help countries to meet the MDGs. This strategy is composed of four distinct but complementary elements: (1) operational activities at the country level; (2) the Millennium Campaign/mobilization; (3) the Millennium Project; and (4) monitoring of progress made towards the MDGs (global and country levels).

1. Operational activities at the country level

34. There is general agreement that the achievement of the MDGs is ultimately the responsibility of member States. The UN system will help countries in this endeavour. United Nations agencies are expected to realign and focus their operational activities at the country level to achieve development outcomes contributing directly to the MDGs. Existing instruments and mechanisms such as UN country teams, CCA and UNDAF will be used, and nationally agreed MDGs are expected to form the central objectives of national poverty reduction strategies, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

2. The Millennium Campaign

35. Launched at the end of 2002, the Millennium Campaign aims to increase support for development assistance, trade opportunities, debt relief and other support needed to achieve the MDGs, and in the process encourage the emergence of broad coalitions of partners for action on the MDGs. The Secretary-General has recently appointed Ms. Eveline Herfkens, former Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation, as Executive Coordinator for the Campaign. The Campaign is structured to continue right up to 2015. Intermediate peaks will be established every five years to demonstrate tangible progress and maintain momentum.

3. The Millennium Project

36. The third pillar of the MDG Core Strategy is the Millennium Project,²⁶ a three-year initiative launched in mid-2002. The overall purpose of the project (directed by Professor Jeffrey Sachs) is to propose the best strategies for meeting the MDGs. The project's main analytical work is to be performed by ten thematic task forces, each assigned to a specific group of targets. The project includes two key advisory groups: the UN experts group which oversees United Nations participation, comprised of a senior representative from each of the participating UN agencies; and an international advisory panel that brings together internationally recognized experts in the relevant fields to provide independent

²⁵ <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/56/a56326.pdf>.

²⁶ <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org>.

advice to the Millennium Project. A Millennium Project report will be submitted to the Secretary-General and UNDP Administrator by the end of June 2005.

4. Monitoring of progress

- 37.** Systematic and sustained tracking and reviews of progress towards the MDGs in terms of achievements, trends and shortfalls are to be undertaken at both global and country levels. At the global level, monitoring is based on: (i) the data and annual technical assessments of overall progress, produced under the leadership of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA); and (ii) the Secretary-General's Annual Report on Implementing the Millennium Declaration, mandated by the General Assembly and focusing on a selected number of goals/objectives only. Every five years, the Secretary-General is also expected to submit a comprehensive progress report.
- 38.** Monitoring at the country level is expected to focus on periodic (every two to three years) MDG country progress reports, known as Millennium Reports (MDGRs). The MDGRs are designed for use as a tool for awareness raising, advocacy, alliance building and the renewal of political commitments at the country level, as well as to build national capacity for monitoring and reporting on goals and targets. As countries have been encouraged to adapt the MDGs to their national context and priorities, not all countries are focusing on all eight goals, or the same ones. Under the overall supervision of the UNDG, UN country teams are assisting countries in the preparation of these reports. Some 17 countries have so far completed MDGRs and nearly 50 others are at various stages of preparation.²⁷ The UN system expects to have helped prepare at least one Millennium Report in every developing and transition economy country by the end of 2004.

ILO contribution

- 39.** The ILO is taking an active part in the efforts of the international community towards the achievement of the MDGs. The Goals provide a context in which the ILO can raise international awareness of the relevance of fundamental principles and rights at work, employment promotion, social protection and social dialogue to reducing poverty and social exclusion. The MDGs also create opportunities for highlighting the role of the ILO's tripartite constituency in a broad development perspective, giving the opportunity to communicate clearly the added value that the Decent Work Agenda brings to the development process, and to have this Agenda adequately integrated into strategies to achieve these goals and to mobilize support for this through various means, including the PRSPs. Decent work provides a means by which the MDGs can be attained. It should be made clear that where it is absent, these goals do not have a chance of being met or the results sustained.
- 40.** The country ownership being sought in the MDG Core Strategy simply cannot be achieved without the close involvement of those who, through work, generate the wealth that is so essential for poverty reduction. Work undertaken between the ILO and the World Bank in pilot countries involved in developing PRSPs demonstrates this clearly. Working with the ILO will therefore help include employers' and workers' organizations as key elements in national consultations on poverty reduction and attainment of the MDGs.
- 41.** The MDGs provide a number of valid entry points to promote decent work, the most obvious ones being poverty reduction and youth employment. Much of the ILO's work

²⁷ MDGR country reports can be found online at <http://www.undp.org/mdg/countryreports.html>.

around the Decent Work Agenda is contributing directly or indirectly to attaining the central goal of eradicating extreme poverty (Goal 1). In this regard, the Office is paying particular attention to its participation in Millennium Project Task Force 1 (Poverty and economic development). Youth employment is specifically mentioned in both the Millennium Declaration as well as in the MDGs.²⁸ Apart from the ILO's regular activities on youth employment, the Youth Employment Network, launched by the Secretary-General together with the ILO Director-General and World Bank President, in which the ILO plays a lead role, provides a very good example of partnership in this area. Many other potential entry points also exist for the ILO: for example, a closer look at the intersection of Goals 2 (universal primary education), 3 (gender equality and empowerment of women) and 6 (HIV/AIDS and other diseases) illustrates how decent work will be an essential element in attaining these goals.

42. The ILO is also collaborating with the UN secretariat in collating the latest available statistics on the targets and indicators for the MDGs, and the Office's technical assistance has been required regarding two specific indicators (related to youth employment and to the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector). In this regard, work under way in the ILO on indicators and statistics in relation to decent work provides another avenue for continuing to share expertise in relation to improving targets and indicators under the MDGs.
43. All ILO field offices have been briefed about the MDGs and asked to actively participate in the UN system's work of assisting countries in drafting the Millennium Reports. As regards monitoring at the global level, the Office has provided input to the Secretary-General's First Annual Report on Implementing the Millennium Declaration. A core group on MDGs has also been established within the Office to ensure a consistent, well-planned and sustainable response to the overall MDG Core Strategy. This group, chaired by the Counsellor to the Director-General, meets regularly and is composed of the units leading ILO activities in one or more spheres of the Strategy. It has already gathered on various occasions and had an opportunity to brief the regional directors and benefit from an exchange of views with them during the 285th Session of the Governing Body.

3. United Nations reform

44. The United Nations Secretary-General unveiled a plan to further strengthen the United Nations in September 2002. His report, submitted to the General Assembly and entitled "Strengthening the United Nations: An Agenda for Further Change",²⁹ is the second stage of reform proposals the Secretary-General has initiated since taking office in 1997.³⁰ This new plan, containing a set of 36 concrete actions, is focused primarily on the UN secretariat, and aims at aligning the work of the Organization with the outcomes of the major international conferences and the MDGs, and streamlining processes and providing better services to member States. The Deputy Secretary-General will oversee the implementation of the approved reforms.
45. Notwithstanding the focus on the UN secretariat, some aspects of the reform programme are of broader interest to most of the UN system. These include, in particular, proposals on

²⁸ Goal 8, Target 16: "Develop a Global Partnership for Development – In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth".

²⁹ A/57/387.

³⁰ GB.271/8/2.

the following: (1) strengthening coordination at the country level; (2) delineating responsibilities for the delivery of technical cooperation; and (3) facilitating the mobility of staff across the UN system. The objective of (4) – strengthening human rights-related United Nations actions – also deserves particular attention. Finally, although it mainly concerns the United Nations as a forum, the proposal to (5) – review the relationship with civil society could also be of interest to the ILO. With regard to those aspects of the initiative that are of direct relevance to the broader UN system, executive heads of the system already stressed at the CEB session in November 2002 the need to have an opportunity to provide inputs and exchange views, prior to the finalization of further proposals for consideration by the General Assembly.

1. *Coordination at country level*

46. The Secretary-General proposes to develop a set of practical measures, ranging from joint programming to integrated resource mobilization, in order to enhance further the effectiveness of the UN system. In the longer term, he also proposes to explore different forms of United Nations presence at the national level. This ranges from the establishment of a joint office in countries in which United Nations financial and human resources are small, to clusters around thematic issues with different “host agencies” in medium-sized and larger countries. The Secretary-General proposes, as a concrete action (Action 14), that the UNDG develop, by September 2003, an implementation plan to strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations presence in developing countries.

2. *Delivery of technical cooperation*

47. The report stresses the need to clarify responsibility within the UN system for the delivery of technical cooperation to developing countries. In doing so, the Secretary-General invokes four principles: (1) lead responsibility for a given issue should rest with the entity best equipped substantively to assume it; (2) lead entities should work closely with the rest of the United Nations to avoid duplication of expertise; (3) more systematic efforts should be made to draw on knowledge and expertise existing outside the UN system; and (4) technical cooperation should be delivered by the entities that have an established field presence and experience. The Secretary-General proposes, as a concrete action (Action 15), that a document clarifying roles and responsibilities in the area of technical cooperation also be prepared by September 2003.

3. *Mobility of staff across the United Nations system*

48. The report proposes to take additional steps to encourage staff mobility across the entire UN system. It suggests a review of the agreements between the UN secretariat and the funds, programmes and specialized agencies in order to reduce current barriers to mobility between common-system organizations (Action 25b). It is also proposed to investigate further the possibilities for spouses of UN officials to be given easier access to working in the respective duty station.

4. *Strengthening of human rights-related United Nations action*

49. Referring to the Millennium Declaration, in which member States resolved to promote respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as strengthen their capacity at the country level, the report stresses that a principal objective of the United Nations should be the emplacement or enhancement of a national

protection system in each country, reflecting human rights norms. It is therefore proposed that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights develop and implement a plan, in cooperation with the UNDG, to strengthen human rights-related UN actions at the country level (Action 2).

5. Relationship with civil society

50. In his report, the Secretary-General emphasizes the recent growth in the participation of civil society actors in the intergovernmental processes and announces his intention to establish in the near future a panel of eminent persons to review the relationship between the United Nations and civil society and offer practical recommendations for improved modalities of interaction (Action 19).

51. *The Governing Body may wish:*

(a) To take note of the information provided above concerning developments in the United Nations system.

(b) To provide its views on the ILO's overall approach to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and on the reform of the United Nations.

Geneva, 31 January 2003.

Point for decision: Paragraph 51.