



FIFTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**A review of the ILO decent work
pilot programme****Introduction and background**

1. Following the adoption of the Decent Work Agenda as the framework for the ILO's work in 1999, and in order to explore how the concept can be practically used at the national level, the Director-General established a decent work pilot programme (DWPP) in October 2000. The programme's objective is therefore to test the relevance of an integrated approach, built around all four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda, to meet the goals and priorities of ILO constituents. The experience of the pilot programme provides the basis for developing methods, guidelines and examples, for wider application and for capacity building.
2. The DWPP consists of a series of country programmes developed in close consultation with constituents at the national level. Since January 2002, this programme has been managed by the National Policy Group of the Policy Integration Department (INTEGRATION).¹ The technical support to the development and implementation of country programmes is organized as a cross-Office effort, with a particular focus on the synergy and mutual reinforcement of actions on different dimensions of decent work. There is currently an accelerated development of country-level decent work programmes by ILO constituents around the world, in which the Office's services are called upon to provide technical support. Efforts are therefore under way to distil lessons from the pilot programme and to encourage discussion and confrontation of ideas around its outcomes, both at country level and across the Office.
3. To date, the DWPP includes eight countries: Bahrain, Bangladesh, Denmark, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Panama and the Philippines. They represent different regions and levels of economic development. The country programmes are in different stages of implementation, given the different starting date, pace and process of tripartite

¹ This work is being carried out in coordination with the pilot work on promoting decent work in selected PRSP countries, which was last reported to the Governing Body in November 2002 (GB.285/ESP/2). Notwithstanding the specific features of the PRSP processes, there are common elements in approach and modality across the DWPP and the ILO's involvement in PRSPs, for promoting a Decent Work Agenda at the national level.

consultations and endorsement of the programme and progress in the implementation of specific components. With the exception of Denmark and Panama, which were initiated in 2001, most country programmes were effectively launched in 2002. Kazakhstan is the latest addition in 2003. All country programmes operate within a timeframe of three to four years. The experience is still in progress in most of these countries, so it is too early for a full assessment of the outcomes. This initial review submitted at the request of the Committee on Employment and Social Policy provides the opportunity for discussion, feedback and guidance by the Committee on the approach and its future development.

4. This review begins with an introduction of the common features and conceptual underpinnings of the DWPP, followed by a short presentation of the specific focus and progress of work in each country programme, a discussion of key lessons and challenges and a brief outline of future directions of work.

The ILO decent work pilot programme: Policy integration in practice

5. It may be worth recalling the elements of the integrated approach underlying the DWPP. The programme was launched and is operating on the premises that:
 - (a) real life issues of the world of work today and policy priorities confronted at the national level require a coherent, consistent and integrated approach to economic and social policy-making;
 - (b) actions to promote the four strategic objectives of decent work, i.e. rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue are mutually reinforcing – these should be seen as interlinked components of a coherent whole; and
 - (c) integrated ILO support at the country level improves effectiveness and better use of existing resources.
6. The common objective of the DWPP is to develop a practical approach to integrating decent work goals into the high-level policy agenda at the country level. The major thrust is therefore policy development and reform on issues that are of prime concern to the tripartite constituents in the broader political and socio-economic contexts. While there is consensus amongst ILO constituents on decent work as a goal, the operationalization of the concept gives rise to different interpretations. The challenge was therefore to propose an approach that takes into account substantively different economic and social structures, political systems, development history and policy environments. Government representatives, employers' and workers' organizations were actively solicited in defining the Decent Work Agenda and focus at the country level and the practical process for moving it forward.
7. Typically, the operational approach developed included the following steps at the country level: advocacy and information sharing on the concept of decent work to build a common understanding; a policy and programme review exercise with national stakeholders to identify decent work challenges and policy priorities in the country; and extended tripartite consultations to agree on the entry points of the country programme. This integrated policy platform is then used as the basis for the preparation of specific action plans and for mobilizing resources for their implementation.
8. Promoting consistency and coordination of economic and social policy-making is at the heart of the Decent Work Agenda. Putting it into practice is a real challenge. The country programmes provide a window of opportunity for engaging policy-makers in the economic

arena in the policy dialogue on decent work. While the conveners and focal points for the DWPP country programme are the ministries of labour, the country platforms are usually designed in a way to reach out to and involve other ministries in the definition and implementation of the country programme. Tripartite committees are formed bringing together all partners around the DWPP, with broad membership from ministries, employers' and workers' organizations. The tripartite committees have put in place methods for consulting and involving women's organizations, academia and other significant development institutions at the country level. A case-by-case approach is adopted with respect to the institutional mechanism aiming at efficiency and avoiding duplication. In some instances, ad hoc steering committees or national advisory committees are set up, in other instances existing and functioning tripartite bodies take up the responsibility of DWPP. Opportunities are seized, whenever possible, to bring the debate on decent work within the work of other national institutions such as national commissions on poverty reduction or economic investment boards, cabinet meetings and parliaments, etc.

- 9.** Constituents' priorities and perceptions of national realities supported by research and informed discussion have determined, to a large extent, the focus and entry points of the DWPP. Poverty reduction, employment crisis, fighting underemployment and precarious jobs, promoting fundamental rights, and improving the competitiveness of the national economy in the global economy are overriding concerns that have resulted in setting specific goals for country programmes. An integrated technical programme built around the entry points supports the implementation of country programmes, covering all of the strategic action areas: promoting rights, employment, social protection and social dialogue. The emphasis laid on various components and the sequencing of action vary considerably from one country to another, in response to opportunities for policy reform and action. It should also be noted that country programmes are flexible frameworks that evolve over time and a snapshot of activities at any given moment may not give a complete picture. Most programmes started with a basic consensus of focused action that has expanded and branched out as consensus and dialogue progressed and as specific areas of action were defined and added to the implementation plan.
- 10.** Country programmes are also open agendas that invite cooperation and partnerships with a number of other international organizations of the United Nations system and donors at the country level. They facilitate the integration of decent work objectives into current national frameworks such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) or the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- 11.** The pilot programme permits testing of new modalities of work in the Office around an integrated and coherent framework, bringing together contributions from all relevant units, both in the regions and at headquarters. It works in coordination with other major Office initiatives such as the Global Employment Agenda, InFocus programmes and other initiatives in the technical sectors. Different units in the regions and at headquarters undertake a great deal of national-level policy advisory and research work in pursuance of each of the ILO's four strategic objectives. There was less experience however in putting these different elements together in a consistent and coherent way, so as to build a distinctive decent work approach. The DWPP supports the implementation of country programmes as defined at the field level, through a coordinated and collaborative mechanism. This collaborative scheme includes the field offices that are at the forefront of the initiative, it draws on technical expertise from all concerned technical units and

programmes and is facilitated by the Policy Integration Department (INTEGRATION).² Each country programme is served by a group of field/headquarters managerial and technical staff, the size and the composition of which varies according to needs identified and the specific focus of the country programme. The DWPP is undertaken in countries with very different ILO support structures. A pragmatic approach has been taken in defining respective roles of various units from field and headquarters ensuring that adequate support is provided to programmes. An ILO staff seminar held in Turin in July 2003 brought together some 55 managers and senior staff from the field in all regions, and from all technical sectors at headquarters, to analyse the experience and to draw lessons for future work.³

One goal: Different focus and entry points

12. The Decent Work Agenda provides a comprehensive and flexible policy platform that can be defined nationally and can operate in very different socio-economic and political contexts. The focus and entry points of the programme in each country are reviewed below, each represents a unique combination of policy issues. Each programme also shows the value of a policy agenda that can relate to national economic and social priorities and engage a broad range of stakeholders and partnerships.
13. The *Philippines* was amongst the first countries to adopt “decent and productive employment” as an explicit objective of its development plan and as a central instrument of poverty reduction. Poverty incidence is high at 30 per cent, and three-quarters of the poor live in the rural areas. The present job-creation rate cannot match the fast growth of the labour force at 2.8 per cent annually and even this is threatened by uncertainties in domestic and global markets. Most employment opportunities are found in low-productive and poor-quality work in the informal economy. While national and sectoral policies provide a framework for boosting employment and fighting poverty, most operational initiatives focus on strengthening local capacity to respond to social and economic needs.
14. The Philippines’ decent work action plan was launched in May 2002, to support the national priorities of reducing poverty and promoting decent and productive employment. The wide-ranging action plan includes, in particular, three “integrated responses” (IR) focused on decent work. These integrated responses, which have a timeframe of up to 2005, aim at the following:
 - (i) development of a policy framework on employment and competitiveness, and its testing in the tropical fruit-processing sector;
 - (ii) poverty reduction through a local economic and social development approach, tested in two localities; and
 - (iii) a programme of action to improve incomes and productivity of the urban informal economy.

These components reinforce ongoing initiatives by national and local institutions while adding value by developing country-specific approaches and practical tools that link basic rights at work, gender equality and social protection with local development, job creation

² <http://mirror/public/english/bureau/integration/> .

³ Promoting Policy Integration at the National Level – Country Strategies on Decent Work, an ILO staff seminar, Turin, 9-11 July 2003. <http://training.itcilo.it/decentwork> .

and poverty reduction (IR 2); quality of jobs with competitiveness of enterprise or industry (IR 1); and business regulation, upgrading of informal enterprises with occupational health and safety schemes, social insurance, access to productive resources, voice and representation (IR 3).

15. A high-level Decent Work Tripartite Advisory Committee, assisted by a technical working group, monitors and facilitates the implementation of the programme. In April 2003, the Advisory Committee reviewed progress with satisfaction and indicated new complementary directions of work.
16. *Denmark* was selected as a demonstration case study for the DWPP. It exemplifies how policies can achieve both economic and social efficiency. Flexibility, equality, security and broad social participation were explicit policy goals. Their combination allowed the national economy to remain open to world markets by strengthening the capacity to adjust rapidly to the changing global situation and cushioning the negative effects of external economic shocks.
17. By examining a series of policy issues, the Denmark study⁴ shows that, what are often stated as incompatible trade-offs can be managed through an appropriate policy mix. For example, it demonstrates that large income transfers and, in particular, a high level of unemployment benefits need not act as a disincentive to gainful employment, when combined with an extensive labour market policy that promotes rights and obligations. It also shows that flexibility need not be at the expense of security, rather the two can go hand in hand. Finally, it demonstrates that there are ways of making the labour market flexible without dismantling social security.
18. In sum, a positive interaction has been secured in Denmark between a controlled and well-timed macroeconomic policy and active labour market policies to ensure flexibility and employability. The policy mix included a combination of employment promotion with income security for those unable to work or to find work, extensive social protection and access to low-cost social services enabling men and women to take up employment, and a policy of wage restraint based on the coordination of a decentralized wage bargaining system. Strong employers' and workers' organizations and continuous dialogue with the Government at both national and local levels sustain this policy mix.
19. *Panama* was one of the first countries in the DWPP. The pilot programme in Panama seeks to demonstrate that inclusive growth can be realized by including employment, poverty reduction and equality goals into broader economic and social policies and investment strategies. It addresses the growing problem of open unemployment and persistently high levels of poverty by combining a medium- to longer-term vision and strategy with concrete proposals for immediate action. Obstacles for growth in Panama include insufficient investment, but also falling labour productivity and hence declining competitiveness in almost all sectors. Informality has been spreading rapidly during the last decade. Four out of every ten new jobs created are in the informal economy. Poverty in Panama is intimately linked to unemployment and informality as well as to structural inequalities affecting women and indigenous peoples.

⁴ Egger, P. and Sengenberger, W. (eds.): *Decent work in Denmark: Employment, social efficiency and economic security*, Geneva (2003), International Labour Office.

20. The programme, officially launched in late 2000, carried out a series of policy studies,⁵ the findings of which were debated by constituents throughout 2001. Policy dialogue resulted in the first concrete outcomes. These included the initiation of a US\$200 million employment-intensive infrastructure investment programme. An agreement was also reached on the basket of goods to be used as the basis for the minimum wage determination. A series of other policy areas are still being discussed. These include the extension of social protection to the informal economy; measures to increase productivity at enterprise and sectoral levels; programmes to promote gender equality; and equity among peasant and indigenous communities. The programme will continue to assist the constituents in the coming years with reaching consensus on these subjects and implementing the corresponding policies and programmes.
21. The programme has been successful in fostering national ownership across the political spectrum at the highest level, including among employers' and workers' organizations, and also at the local level. For the first time, it has been possible to sustain a process of constructive social dialogue around a common agenda taking into account the interrelatedness of employment, wage policies, social security, equality and the complementary role of public and private investment in addressing them.
22. The DWPP in *Morocco* is a special programme in a number of ways. It has adopted a sectoral approach and the challenging goal of integrating a decent work dimension into the restructuring efforts of the textile and garments sector. The sector has been at the forefront of the export-led industrial growth in Morocco and generates 42 per cent of total industrial employment. It consists of a heterogeneous chain of highly structured establishments and informal economy units, employing over 200,000 workers of which 71 per cent are women. The textile sector has been facing serious challenges on the internal front, with growing social conflicts and on the external front, to preserve its competitive edge in global competition. The DWPP seeks to demonstrate that promoting decent work is not only a social goal but can be a productive factor for growth and development in the prevailing global and competitive environment.
23. The country programme was launched in June 2002, following intensive consultations at the country level and the signing of a Memorandum Of Understanding between the Government and the ILO. Starting from a rather confrontational environment, the programme has succeeded in initiating a constructive dialogue amongst major partners in the textile and garment sector. The Government and social partners have agreed on the main elements of a new industrial strategy that integrates both the economic and the social dimensions of the sector's restructuring. The democratization context in Morocco developed in recent years and the priority accorded by the Government to promote the social dialogue agenda facilitated this process at the sectoral level. The pilot programme is further supporting these commitments by organizing informed tripartite discussions on issues such as the links between productivity and working conditions; enterprise restructuring, adjustment and access to markets; employment policies and the social partners' role in the design and implementation of skills development programmes, and the increasing attention paid to the respect of workers' rights and working conditions in the global market.
24. At the last steering committee meeting in May 2002, the tripartite partners reviewed the main conclusions of a study that examined the social determinants of the competitiveness

⁵ Brú, E. and Del Cid, M. (eds.): *Panamá: políticas de empleo y trabajo decente para la década del 2000*, San José, Costa Rica, ILO, 2002. Egger, P.: *Globalization and decent work: Options for Panama*, Working Paper No. 3, Policy Integration Department, Geneva, 2002.

of the Moroccan textile and garment industry. They reached consensus on the main components of a national plan of action combining economic and social objectives in the restructuring strategies. They agreed to develop detailed workplans with technical support from the ILO. The national plan of action, including an implementation and resource mobilization strategy, will be adopted at a high-level tripartite seminar in December 2003. Extra-budgetary funding from donors and technical support from several ILO units are mobilized to support the implementation of this national plan of action.

25. The *Ghana* DWPP focuses on the contribution decent work can make to poverty reduction, particularly in the informal economy. Four out of ten Ghanaians are classified as poor, according to the Ghana Living Standards Survey. Poverty reduction has thus been declared the top national development priority. Between 25 and 30 per cent of the poor depend on the informal economy for their livelihood. Decent work deficits abound there, including the denial of fundamental rights.
26. The objective of the DWPP is to build the capacity of national constituents to advocate for the Decent Work Agenda to be incorporated into the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS). The GPRS is the key national policy framework and resource allocation mechanism. The implementation of the GPRS is to be carried out at the district level, by the 110 districts in the country. The formulation of relevant policies and programmes under the DWPP is therefore supported by practical work on the informal economy in two pilot districts.
27. Extensive consultation processes with tripartite partners and also involving other ministries, academia and institutions throughout 2002 preceded the official adoption of the country programme in January 2003. A national steering group, composed of the representatives of the tripartite constituents, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the ILO endorse all strategic decisions. Policy proposals are currently being formulated on public procurement, employment creation and labour standards; enhancement of productivity; wages and income policies; employable skills and entrepreneurship; and the integration of disabled people. These draft proposals will be discussed in a tripartite forum in December 2003 and also submitted to the Ghana Job Summit to be organized later, as an initiative of the Global Employment Agenda.⁶ At the close of a recent capacity-building workshop, the Deputy Minister of Employment observed that the DWPP is helping the Ministry of Labour to occupy its rightful place at the heart of the Government's efforts to reduce poverty.
28. In *Bahrain*, one of the six Gulf Cooperation Council States, the Decent Work Agenda is closely linked to the country's democratization process set in motion since 2001 and to labour market reforms that would facilitate the transition from an oil-based economy to a diversified economic and financial centre. The components of the integrated programme were identified following multidisciplinary missions and extensive consultations with national partners throughout 2002. These include the consolidation of the right to freedom of association formally recognized in September 2002; a multicomponent programme focusing on youth employment, the number one priority and concern; the generation of labour market data and statistics; and a social protection strategy to support labour market reforms. The DWPP in Bahrain provides an opportunity, for the first time in the subregion, to facilitate nascent tripartite social dialogue on structural reforms that involve strategic choices, and to bring the views of social partners closer through informed and documented policy debate.

⁶ GB.288/ESP/1: Implementation of the Global Employment Agenda: An update.

- 29.** A Memorandum of Understanding signed in October 2002 provides a four-year framework for the implementation of the DWPP in Bahrain. The internal political processes following legislative elections and the military conflict in the region to some extent affected the pace of implementation in 2003. In spite of the circumstances, under the social protection component funded by UNDP, a series of studies on various aspects of the current protection system and options for reform have been completed. The studies were undertaken in tandem with the national report on MDGs and have been discussed in various forums with national stakeholders. The proposal to promote a coherent social protection strategy will be finalized by the end of 2003. Two capacity-building activities each with employers' and workers' organizations are also planned for December 2003, focusing on a wide range of policy issues and options for reform of interest to social partners.
- 30.** In *Bangladesh*, the DWPP addresses current national concerns – low employment growth, persistent poverty and global threats to the country's economy and foreign exchange earnings. The national poverty reduction strategy has underscored “managing the risks and uncertainties posed by the changing global economic environment” and “confronting the new tensions in the wake of multi-fibre arrangement withdrawal” as among its major challenges. Facing up to challenges of globalization is the overall focus of the country programme. In a series of consultative meetings held in 2003, representatives of workers' and employers' organizations, and government ministries selected four priority areas:
- (i) improving employment, competitiveness and decent work in global markets;
 - (ii) spreading the benefits of globalization to the poor;
 - (iii) overseas employment; and
 - (iv) measuring decent work in the Bangladesh context.

These topics pull together issues from across the Decent Work Agenda, for example: competing pressures on standards and basic rights at work, trade and investment; job quality and enterprise productivity; vulnerability and insecurity in labour markets, social protection and labour market policies; and gender equality. Social partners and other national stakeholders will get together in the broader forum of a high-level meeting in December 2003 to elaborate on these issues, enlarge common perspectives, and identify courses of action that could be the basis of a workplan for the next phase.

- 31.** The tripartite partners have also set up an advisory body, with equal representation from Government, employers' and workers' organizations, to review workplans and progress of the pilot programme. Ministries concerned with finance, commerce, social welfare and planning have been involved in joint consultations and will be represented in the advisory body. Based on tripartite consensus, the technical contribution of non-governmental development organizations and experts, who play a prominent role in Bangladesh, is sought.
- 32.** *Kazakhstan* is the last country to have joined the pilot programme. In this country in transition, the Government adopted in 2001 the “Concept of social protection of the population” as the integrated agenda for combating poverty and unemployment. Policies to manage effectively the structural reforms and to reduce their negative impact on the population are the development challenges. Consultations with the Government, social partners and a broad range of stakeholders have laid down an initial platform for the DWPP in Kazakhstan. This platform adopts an integrated approach to social protection by linking social assistance strategies, employment promotion and socially responsible enterprise restructuring. Tripartite dialogue and operational programmes focusing on local

economic development support policy action. The programme also includes a decent work statistical indicators survey aimed at providing a common baseline for activities to be initiated under the DWPP framework.

Key lessons on selected issues

33. Practical experience in integrating a coherent Decent Work Agenda into policy frameworks in different political and socio-economic contexts is rich in lessons. These lessons, still unfolding, relate to substantive policy issues as well as to the processes needed to sustain such a goal. Some of the key issues and challenges that have come up in the pilot programme are reviewed below.

Embedding decent work in policy priorities

34. Generally, the experience has been very positive in capturing key priorities at the country level at a given point in time. The approach adopted has proven to be flexible enough to adapt to different contexts, and relevant to a wide range of policy priorities such as the poverty reduction strategy in Ghana, the industrial restructuring agenda in Morocco and in the Philippines, or the democratization process in Bahrain, to name but a few. The multicomponent action plans respond to specific needs of constituents, while the integrated feature reinforces synergies and complementarities amongst various components. Country programmes also proved to be forceful mechanisms for revealing and discussing competing objectives. In some cases, it has brought out potential contradictions and inconsistencies of action that in turn have generated further policy debate.

Raising the profile of ministries of labour and social partners

35. The country programmes have gained significant levels of acceptance, visibility and support, usually at the highest levels of the political spectrum. They provide the ministries of labour with an opportunity and a platform to engage in policy debate of high-level economic and social goals, beyond their specific functional mandates. The proactive role of ministries of labour and of social partners has been key to launching integrated and interdisciplinary programmes cutting across sectoral demands. Sustaining this level of commitment in the medium to longer term, irrespective of government changes, is a key challenge. Without exception, a supportive policy environment has been crucial for the launch and for progress in the implementation of programmes.

Identifying opportunities for policy integration

36. Country experiences also bring out a number of policy issues that can only be addressed effectively and constructively from an integrated perspective. Productivity and its relationship to employment, incomes and global competition is a key theme that is understood in many different ways by national partners and in specific contexts. Dialogue and practical approaches are promoted in some country programmes to explore and demonstrate the positive linkages between respect for rights, improved conditions of work, increased productivity at the enterprise level, on the one hand, and employment and access to global markets, on the other. In other country programmes, advocating for inclusive growth strategies within frameworks of new poverty reduction strategies, such as PRSPs, includes an integrated Decent Work Agenda on employment, rights and social protection, especially for youth, women, rural and informal economy workers and disadvantaged

communities. Other issues that are placed at the top of the policy agendas at the country level are reform of social protection systems and of labour codes. Taken together, these provide opportunities for an integrated analysis of labour market policies that can reconcile the objectives of economic flexibility, employability and security. Effective measures to promote gender equality across the country programmes remains a key challenge. Lessons point to the need for context-specific responses and continuous monitoring of outcomes. These substantive policy issues and others are the subject of studies, discussion and action programmes at the country level. Good practices arising from country programmes are being documented for wider dissemination. However, the experience also revealed the need for undertaking further research and analytical work at the global level to focus on some specific policy clusters and cross-cutting.

Linking with local development

37. Another key lesson of the DWPP is the significance of local level action, as a necessary and complementary dimension to the decent work policy agenda. Local economic and social development frameworks, and decentralization processes, provide an opportunity to bring the fruits of the Decent Work Agenda to its beneficiaries on the ground. Action at this level can be more specific and, hence, effective. This approach is adopted by the DWPP in Ghana, the Philippines and Kazakhstan. One concrete outcome of the pilot programme is a resource kit on decent work and local economic and social development for use by local decision-makers. The resource kit to be completed by the end of 2003 will take the form of a searchable ILO-wide Internet database on decent work approaches and tools relevant to poverty reduction in local economic and social development efforts. This spin-off from the programme in the Philippines will be a useful resource for constituents and ILO staff, and pioneers new modalities for knowledge management within the ILO.

Connecting national and international agendas

38. Linking up national policies with international development agendas is a recurring theme of tripartite discussions on the DWPP. It is repeatedly taken up whether in exchanges on the PRSP in Ghana, on policies to face up to globalization in Bangladesh or on the restructuring of export industries in Morocco and the Philippines. The DWPP experience clearly shows that integrating the Decent Work Agenda in regional and international policy debate is another side of the same coin, closely linked to the national policy discussions. Opportunities should be seized to introduce decent work issues in the policy agendas of the subregional economic groupings and regional organizations.

Value of tripartism and social dialogue

39. Social dialogue is at the core of the DWPP approach to policy integration and of the elaboration of country programmes. It is an integral part of their evolution too. Identifying the focus of each pilot programme, spelling out themes and workplans were the results of bilateral and multilateral, formal and less-formal consultations and planning sessions that have involved the government, social partners and other relevant institutional actors in each country. These processes are strengthened through policy workshops, research, advocacy and capacity building. Stronger ownership and national commitment are key outcomes of these interactive processes of consultations.
40. There are other significant lessons on how discussions and debate around a multicomponent and integrated country programme can facilitate the initiation of social dialogue, for example in Bahrain. In other instances, social dialogue promoted common

understanding and consensus on key policy themes. Morocco is a case in point. Organizing informed discussions on the social determinants of competitiveness of the Moroccan textile and garment industry was a key factor in bringing the views of social partners closer together. Through this process, not only did the social partners re-establish dialogue, but also they agreed on the main components of a national decent work action plan for restructuring the industry. Interest has been expressed in introducing a similar approach in other sectors of the economy.

41. The importance of tripartite consultations and active dialogue for achieving improved policy coherence and coordination cannot be overemphasized. The lessons of the DWPP also point to the practical implications of extensive advocacy and capacity-building efforts needed to promote policy integration at the country level. Developing approaches tailor-made to specific national conditions and sectoral priorities places important demands on the Office, especially the field structure and the Bureaux for Employers' and Workers' Activities. The engagement of ILO constituents in all stages of work has, in some cases, also given rise to difficulties related to their absorptive capacity. The pace of implementation and the timeframe of operations had to be adjusted accordingly. The positive outcomes and lessons of the pilot programme on social dialogue are built into the follow-up action intended to give effect to the resolution concerning tripartism and social dialogue adopted by the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2002.

Improving indicators

42. Measuring and monitoring progress towards decent work require information and suitable indicators. The Office is currently developing a set of statistical indicators, for which data exist in many countries, to be used as guides to identifying decent work priorities.⁷ These indicators can also be assessed in different national contexts and used as a basis for formulating more accurate and/or country-specific indicators of decent work. The ILO is currently extending technical assistance to countries in reviewing existing statistical systems (e.g. labour force surveys) and identifying ways, if necessary, by which these could generate sufficient data for measuring decent work. The Office also plans to test, in a few countries, modalities for gathering decent work data within the scope of labour force surveys.
43. Within the above framework, country programmes have adopted three approaches to the development of decent work indicators:
 - (i) Fact-finding and review of existing statistical databases (completed in Ghana and the Philippines; to be started in Bangladesh) – This approach aims at assessing the availability of data for the proposed indicators and the possibility of collecting additional data in order to improve on existing statistical instruments. It also seeks to identify possible alternative indicators appropriate to the national statistical and development context.
 - (ii) Design of country-specific decent work indicators: constituents have emphasized that indicators for measuring progress or setting benchmarks should be those that are appropriate to their respective national contexts and priorities. This will form part of the Bangladesh country programme. In the Philippines, the programme is assisting the Department of Labor and Employment to set up a Philippine labour index, based on decent work, and to convert its employment annual report into a decent work report.

⁷ Anker R. et al: *Measuring decent work with statistical indicators*, Working Paper No. 2, Policy Integration Department, ILO, Geneva, 2002.

A pilot survey on qualitative aspects of employment within the framework of the labour force survey is planned in the Philippines in 2004.

- (iii) Design of local level indicators: the statistical indicators, used for decent work purposes, are developed at the national level. They need to be adapted for use and decision-making at local levels. The Ghana and the Philippines programmes, which include actions at district or municipal levels, intend to formulate additional indicators and methodologies at the subnational levels. More specifically, in Ghana, indicators to assess the impact of decent work actions on the informal economy in two districts, and in the Philippines, indicators of the decent work baseline and for monitoring progress in local development planning will be developed.

Challenges for the Office: Integrating actions, mobilizing resources

- 44. With respect to new modalities of work promoted within the Office to ensure integrated and timely support to the country programmes, cooperation and coordination have generally worked well. More than a dozen units in the field and at headquarters contribute to and support each country programme. In mobilizing the needed support, account is taken of the availability of required expertise and resources in concerned field and headquarters units; and, to the extent possible, action is built upon existing programmes and projects at the country level. Lessons of the pilot programme are mainstreamed and opportunities are explored to improve upon internal modalities of work. The following priorities are identified:
 - (a) better planning of resources to support the integrated frameworks on decent work, inter alia, through the introduction of country programming within the ILO's strategic budgeting framework;
 - (b) linking up country programmes from the outset with planned sectors' initiatives such as the Global Employment Agenda or other global programmes;
 - (c) practical policy-oriented research to support policy issues and options at the national level discussed above; better flow of information and knowledge; and elaboration of policy briefs, guidelines and tools on cross-cutting issues;
 - (d) building capacities and exchange of experience across the Office, headquarters and regions in support of policy integration at the national level.

Follow-up action and future directions: Beyond the pilot phase

- 45. The implementation of the DWPP will be carried out in the next biennium and completed in line with the agreed timeframe for each country. Emphasis will be laid on deepening action areas in country programmes that are in a more advanced stage and consolidating policy dialogue in the more recent initiatives. Lessons of experiences and good practices on practical approaches to policy integration will be documented and widely disseminated.
- 46. During the current biennium, new initiatives by ILO constituents at the regional and national levels underscored the importance of developing coherent and integrated Decent Work Agendas at the country level. At the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting, held in Bangkok in August 2001, constituents committed to develop national action plans on decent work. New Zealand is hosting a tripartite forum on decent work in October 2003, to

assess progress in the East Asia and Pacific subregion.⁸ Regional and country initiatives have been taken in other regions too.⁹ Generating and sharing knowledge and experience across country initiatives, irrespective of modalities and frameworks, mainstreaming lessons learnt and supporting new initiatives are key outcomes of the pilot programme. These lessons will form the basis for engaging constituents in discussing policies and strategies for the promotion of decent work at the national level as well as for encouraging exchange of experience across countries and regions.

47. Beyond the pilot phase, Office-wide efforts to develop “an integrated approach to decent work” at the country level will be followed up within the framework of the shared policy objectives in the 2004-05 programme and budget proposals.¹⁰
48. The Committee is invited to review and comment on this progress report with a view to assisting the Office in the continued development of the approach.

Geneva, 6 October 2003.

Submitted for discussion.

⁸ Asian Subregional Tripartite Forum on Decent Work, Auckland (New Zealand), 6-8 October 2003.

⁹ Tripartite constituents from 18 Latin American countries recently exchanged views on key policy issues at the country level at the Regional Workshop on Decent Work and Development Policies, Lima (Peru), 25-29 August 2003.

¹⁰ Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee: *The Director-General's Programme and Budget Proposals for 2004-05*, GB.286/PFA/9, Geneva, March 2003.