

**FOR INFORMATION**

## FOURTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

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1. The Governing Body each year examines the most significant developments of the previous year in other agencies of the United Nations (UN) system and international forums. This paper is not exhaustive, and is supplemented by more detailed information on the ILO web site.<sup>1</sup> It does not cover events already reported to the Governing Body, such as the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) High-level Segment of 2006.<sup>2</sup> A separate paper is before the Governing Body on UN reform issues.<sup>3</sup>

## I. United Nations General Assembly

### 1. High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development

(New York, 14–15 September 2006)

2. The High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development held by the General Assembly in September 2006<sup>4</sup> discussed “the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development in order to identify appropriate ways and means to maximize its development benefits and minimize its negative impact”. The Director-General participated in a round table on the effects of international migration on economic and social development. Member States recognized the positive contribution of international migration and migrant workers to sustaining economic activity and development in both migrant host countries and countries of origin.
3. Participants drew attention to the value of the contributions by migrants to both their host and home economies. They also noted that about half of all international migrants were female, and expressed concern at the increase in irregular migration and the exploitation and abuse of irregular migrants. There was a consensus that trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, especially women and children, should be combated with urgency at the national, bilateral, regional and global levels.
4. There was widespread support for the proposal by the Secretary-General to create a global forum, either within or outside the UN but led by member States, as a venue for discussing issues related to international migration and development, which would work closely with the Global Migration Group (GMG) and would offer an international forum where international migration could be discussed without acrimony or mutual recrimination.<sup>5</sup> The Government of Belgium offered to host the first meeting of the global forum in 2007, an offer that was generally welcomed.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/exrel>.

<sup>2</sup> GB.297/WP/SDG/1: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/gb/docs/gb297/pdf/sdg-1.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> GB.298/4/2.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/population/hldmigration/>. See also UN document A/61/515: Summary of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development – Note by the President of the General Assembly.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/exrel/partners/gmg.htm>.

## **2. Mid-term comprehensive global review of the implementation of the programme of action for the least developed countries for the decade 2001–10 (New York, 19–20 September 2006)**

5. This meeting<sup>6</sup> was the first review of the effect given to the Brussels programme of action for the least developed countries (LDCs)<sup>7</sup> adopted in 2001. It adopted a Declaration<sup>8</sup> in which it restated the commitment to meeting the special needs of the LDCs by making progress towards the goals of poverty eradication, peace and development through the improvement of the quality of lives of people in the LDCs, as set out in the Brussels programme of action.
6. In particular, the Declaration draws attention to the need for substantial international support from governments and international organizations, civil society and the private sector; emphasizes that the overall socio-economic situation in the least developed countries continues to be precarious; stresses that, given current trends, many least developed countries are unlikely to achieve the goals and objectives set out in the programme of action; notes that many LDCs have, despite many difficulties, produced notable achievements through wide-ranging and far-reaching reforms; and acknowledges the significant efforts by development partners in the implementation of the programme of action, while stressing that more needs to be done to implement it, in particular in the area of poverty eradication.

## **3. 2006 High-level Meeting on AIDS – Uniting the World against AIDS (New York, 31 May–2 June 2006)**

7. The ILO participated in this meeting as the Chair of the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations (CCO) of UNAIDS for the year 2005–06.<sup>9</sup> The General Assembly's comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the targets set out in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS of 2001<sup>10</sup> considered developments made up to the end of 2005, the date for a number of the targets. The main focus was on constraints affecting full implementation and on opportunities; recommendations on how the targets set in the Declaration might be reached in the light of the new overarching goal of universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support; and renewed political commitment. The degree of participation by civil society was unprecedented.
8. The meeting adopted a Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS,<sup>11</sup> which noted both the emergency nature of the pandemic and the long-term challenge it presents. Deep concern

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/ldc/MTR/highlevel.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC III), Brussels, 2001: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/exrel/events/ldciii.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> UN document A/61/L.2 (not yet available).

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.unaids.org/en/Cosponsors/CCO/default.asp>.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/exrel/events/hiv-aids.htm>; Text of Declaration: <http://www.un.org/ga/aids/coverage/FinalDeclarationHIVAIDS.html>.

<sup>11</sup> UN document A/RES/60/262, [http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2006/20060615\\_HLM\\_Political\\_Declaration\\_ARES60262\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2006/20060615_HLM_Political_Declaration_ARES60262_en.pdf).

was expressed at the generalized expansion and feminization of the disease and the fact that women now represent 50 per cent of people living with HIV worldwide (nearly 60 per cent in Africa): gender inequalities and all forms of violence against women and girls increase their vulnerability to HIV. Grave concern was also expressed that half of all new HIV infections occur among young people under the age of 25, and that there is a lack of information, skills and coordination to address HIV/AIDS among young people. The Political Declaration called for a renewed commitment to combat the pandemic. Further comprehensive reviews are planned for 2008 and 2011 of the progress achieved in realizing both the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration.

#### **4. International Forum on the Eradication of Poverty** (New York, 15–16 November 2006)

9. The forum<sup>12</sup> marked the conclusion of the first UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. It had two major objectives: to send a strong message on the importance of a continued and enhanced commitment to poverty eradication in the run-up to 2015; and to provide an opportunity for dialogue on the steps to be taken over the next decade towards realization of the universal goal of poverty eradication. It addressed the key developments in policy and practice of the last ten years.
10. The ILO participated in the forum, preparing a working paper and moderating a session on mainstreaming decent work into poverty reduction strategies,<sup>13</sup> which was addressed by Professor Martha Chen of Harvard University and Dr Ladis Columban Komba, Permanent Secretary of Labour, United Republic of Tanzania.

#### **5. Sixty-first Session of the General Assembly** (autumn 2006)

##### **(a) General**

11. The impetus towards realizing the commitments agreed in the Outcome document of the September 2005 Summit continued in the second half of 2006 and into the 61st Session of the General Assembly. In his report on the work of the Organization (A/61/1), Secretary-General Kofi Annan stressed that world leaders had agreed to several important targets at the 2005 World Summit, and recommended the incorporation of the commitments made at the Summit in the set of targets used to follow up on the Millennium Declaration. This includes a new target under Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1: “To make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of our relevant national and international policies and our national development strategies”.<sup>14</sup>
12. A resolution was adopted on follow-up on the development outcome of the 2005 World Summit, including the MDGs and the other internationally agreed development goals. A wide-ranging resolution was also adopted on “Investing in the United Nations for a stronger Organization worldwide”, in which a number of concrete measures on secretariat

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/poverty/PovertyForum/>.

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/poverty/PovertyForum/Documents/bg\\_5.html](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/poverty/PovertyForum/Documents/bg_5.html).

<sup>14</sup> A/61/1, para. 24.

and management reform were agreed, including the creation of an ethics office and systems for whistleblower protection and financial disclosure.<sup>15</sup>

13. The Second Committee (economic and financial) devoted considerable attention to international migration and development, adopting a resolution<sup>16</sup> welcoming the high-level dialogue and foreseeing follow-up at the General Assembly in 2008. The resolution calls on all UN bodies, agencies, funds and programmes to continue to address the issue of international migration and development with a view to integrating migration issues more coherently in pursuit of the internationally agreed development goals. The Second Committee also hosted a panel discussion on “social policy in an era of globalization”, in which it highlighted the pivotal role of the ILO in shifting the focus from protecting employment to protecting workers’ incomes in social security, as well as the importance of ILO Conventions in eradicating child labour.
14. The Third Committee (social, humanitarian and cultural) considered items on social development relating to the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. The ILO’s main achievements in social development, youth employment, ageing, workers with disabilities, work and family, and education were highlighted. ILO statements were delivered on items concerning the advancement of women and the promotion and protection of the rights of children. Many governments made reference to the importance of full and productive employment and decent work to progress in social development, and some made specific reference to the ILO.
15. Some of the resolutions<sup>17</sup> finalized by the committees of particular relevance to the ILO underscore the importance of employment in achieving the internationally agreed development goals and reaffirm the need to create an environment conducive to employment generation. These include resolutions on international trade and development;<sup>18</sup> globalization and interdependence;<sup>19</sup> industrial development cooperation;<sup>20</sup> humanitarian assistance and reconstruction of Liberia;<sup>21</sup> globalization and interdependence<sup>22</sup> (this resolution reaffirms strong support for fair globalization and the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, recalls the 2006 ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration, and requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its 62nd Session a report on globalization and interdependence on the theme of “the impact that, inter alia, international commitments, policies and processes can have on the scope and the implementation of national development strategies”); the protection of migrant workers;<sup>23</sup> the advancement of women, follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and

<sup>15</sup> For the full list of resolutions, see: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide/r61.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> Resolution concerning international migration and development A/RES/61/218.

<sup>17</sup> UN press release on Second Committee resolutions: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/ga10564.doc.htm>; Third Committee: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/gashc3873.doc.htm>.

<sup>18</sup> A/C.2/61/L.14.

<sup>19</sup> A/C.2/61/L.69.

<sup>20</sup> A/C.2/61/L.65.

<sup>21</sup> A/C.2/61/L.9/Rev.1.

<sup>22</sup> A/RES/61/207.

<sup>23</sup> A/C.3/61/L.29/Rev.1.

Platform for Action and outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly; <sup>24</sup> trafficking in women and girls and violence against women; <sup>25</sup> and the promotion and protection of the rights of children. <sup>26</sup>

16. Moreover, some country-specific resolutions related to human rights situations also contain references to the ILO (resolutions on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, <sup>27</sup> and the situation of human rights in Myanmar). <sup>28</sup>

**(b) Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**

17. The General Assembly adopted a resolution on “Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council”, <sup>29</sup> giving effect to the request by the World Summit of 2005 to reform and reinforce the Council by enhancing its existing mandates and assigning it new key functions. <sup>30</sup> The Council will now respond more quickly to humanitarian emergencies and share its experience in helping post-conflict countries with the Peacebuilding Commission. As from 2007 the High-level Segments of its substantive sessions will each year see an Annual Ministerial Review, and in alternate years a regular Development Cooperation Forum. The resolution specifies the linkages between the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and that of the Council's advisory groups dealing with countries emerging from conflict. Consultations are now in progress on ways to implement the resolution as quickly as possible and to agree on themes for the major events to begin in 2007. The main points of the resolution are the following.

18. *Global dialogue.* The General Assembly decided to strengthen existing arrangements by providing for “a thematic discussion on a theme from economic, social and related fields to be decided by the Council and informed by a report by the Secretary-General”, to be held during the substantive session of ECOSOC, either annually or in alternate years.

19. *Development Cooperation Forum (DCF).* ECOSOC will hold a biennial High-level Development Cooperation Forum during the High-level Segment of ECOSOC:

- › to review trends and progress in international development cooperation, and give policy guidance and recommendations to promote more effective international development cooperation;
- › to identify gaps and obstacles with a view to making recommendations on practical measures and policy options to enhance coherence and effectiveness and to promote development cooperation for the realization of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs; and

<sup>24</sup> A/C.3/61/L.60.

<sup>25</sup> A/C.3/61/L.1/Rev.1.

<sup>26</sup> A/C.3/61/L.16/Rev.1.

<sup>27</sup> A/C.3/61/L.37.

<sup>28</sup> A/C.3/61/L.38/Rev.1.

<sup>29</sup> UN document A/RES/61/16 (not yet available); draft: A/61/L.24.

<sup>30</sup> World Summit Outcome, 2005, UN document A/RES/60/1, paras 155–156.

- › to provide a platform for member States to exchange lessons learned and share experiences.
20. The DCF will meet for the first time during the High-level Segment in Geneva in 2007, and thereafter in alternate years in New York, as from 2008. It will be open to participation by all stakeholders, including agencies of the UN system.
  21. *Annual Ministerial Review (AMR)*. Member States decided that “such reviews should be conducted by means of a cross-sectoral approach focusing on thematic issues common to the outcomes of the major UN conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, including the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals, and review progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the said conferences and summits and their follow-up processes, and assess its impact on the achievement of the goals and targets of the conferences and summits”.
  22. The AMR will provide an opportunity for countries to make presentations on thematic issues to be decided by ECOSOC. Functional commissions, other subsidiary bodies, regional commissions and all organizations of the UN system are invited to contribute to the consideration of these issues by ECOSOC within their respective mandates.
  23. *Humanitarian emergencies*. It was decided that in addition to the humanitarian segment at substantive sessions, ECOSOC should convene ad-hoc meetings on specific humanitarian emergencies, at the request of affected member States, to raise awareness and promote the engagement of all stakeholders in support of international relief efforts.
  24. *Operational activities*. The resolution reaffirmed “the Council’s role in providing overall coordination and guidance for operational development programmes and funds on a system-wide basis, including objectives, priorities and strategies in the implementation of the policies formulated by the General Assembly, as well as concentrating on cross-cutting and coordination issues related to operational activities, in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions”. According to its President,<sup>31</sup> this means that ECOSOC will provide coordination for operational activities of the UN, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and all other bodies that report to the Council or the General Assembly, and is entitled to coordinate all activities within that framework pertaining to the MDGs. ECOSOC will hence play a stronger role in guiding the work of the UN in the context of the internationally agreed development goals.
  25. *Peacebuilding Commission*. The resolution reiterates that “the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission will be based on, inter alia, requests for advice from the Economic and Social Council with the consent of a concerned member State in exceptional circumstances on the verge of lapsing or relapsing into conflict and with which the Security Council is not seized in accordance with article 12 of the Charter”.

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2006/061213\\_ECOSOC.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2006/061213_ECOSOC.doc.htm).

## II. Other United Nations bodies

### 1. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

26. ECOSOC adopted a resolution on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations,<sup>32</sup> and held a panel discussion on chronically underfunded emergencies in its humanitarian affairs segment on special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance. This resolution was followed by a further resolution on the same subject in the General Assembly.<sup>33</sup>
27. *Commission for Social Development*.<sup>34</sup> In February 2007 the Commission for Social Development took as its theme “Promoting full employment and decent work for all”.<sup>35</sup> The ILO made a substantial contribution to the preparations and to the meeting itself. An oral account of this event will be provided to the Governing Body.
28. The *Commission on the Status of Women*<sup>36</sup> (February 2007) discussed “the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child” as its priority theme. The ILO provided technical advice on girl child labour for a paper on violence against girls submitted to the Commission. The ILO was scheduled to take part in panel discussions on key policy initiatives to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child; and capacity building to mainstream a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child. A panel discussion on “Breaking the cycle of violence against the girl child: From child labour to education” was organized jointly by ILO–IPEC and the ILO Gender Bureau, and involved the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Professor Dr Yakin Erturk and the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Children, Professor Dr Paulo Sergio Pinheiro.

### 2. United Nations Security Council

29. The Security Council reiterated in November its commitment to address the widespread impact of armed conflict on children and its determination to ensure continued implementation of its resolution 1612 (2005) and all previous resolutions on children and armed conflict. National reports on several countries have been taken as a starting point for the activities of the Council’s working group, which had succeeded in defining a toolkit of possible Council actions. The Council also requested the Secretary-General to submit a further progress report on the implementation of resolution 1612 by February 2008. The ILO participates in the inter-agency taskforce set up to consider this issue, and is involved in the follow-up mechanism. In January 2007 the task force set up an eminent persons group to campaign against the involvement of children in armed conflict, and decided to focus its work on issues in the areas of justice, community support for combatant reintegration, gender-based violence, trafficking and HIV/AIDS.

<sup>32</sup> E/2006/L/13: <http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/jump2ods.asp?symbol=E/2006/L.13>.

<sup>33</sup> A/RES/61/134 (not yet available).

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/>.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csocd2007.htm>. For main subject, see UN document E/CN.5/2007/2; [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csocd2007/Documents/E-CN-5-2007-2\\_E.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csocd2007/Documents/E-CN-5-2007-2_E.pdf).

<sup>36</sup> 51st Session, 26 February–9 March 2007: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/>.

### 3. Developments in other areas of interest to the ILO

- 30.** *Peacebuilding – Post-conflict economic and social reconstruction.* UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has designated the ILO as joint lead agency, together with the UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), of a working group to draft a UN system-wide policy paper on post-conflict employment creation, income generation and reintegration. The working group is open to all agencies active in post-conflict activities, and at present includes: the UNDP; United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA); Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); International Monetary Fund (IMF); World Bank; UN Department of Political Affairs; Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA); and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The paper will be finalized in April 2007 and will form the basis of an operational guidance note to promote implementation at country level, to be issued in July. The UNDP and ILO are both requested by the Secretary-General to develop internal capacity to support implementation of the Decent Work Programme in post-conflict settings.
- 31.** According to its terms of reference, the paper will address the conceptualization gap in "employment creation, income generation and reintegration in post-conflict settings", and will serve as a joint UN instrument for shared policies, tools and good practices, specifically on how to link employment with reintegration". An internal working group has been set up within the Office to develop the paper, which offers an excellent opportunity to articulate the role of decent work and employment generation in consolidating peace and to develop the decent work concept in new areas at country level.
- 32.** *Human Rights Council.* The UN Human Rights Council which replaced the Commission on Human Rights began meeting in May 2006. It has held three regular sessions and four special sessions as at the end of 2006. The Council is still reviewing all aspects of its work and has taken few decisions as yet. It has concentrated on considering its procedures, especially on the universal periodic review of countries' human rights that it is mandated to carry out.
- 33.** *Indigenous and tribal peoples.* The ILO continued to provide major input to the ECOSOC Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, a coalition of some 30 intergovernmental organizations including the ILO, has been asked by the UN Development Group to draft guidelines on taking indigenous issues into account in drafting country programmes under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) mechanism for coordinated programming on a country basis. The new Human Rights Council adopted the Draft Declaration on Indigenous Rights at its May 2006 session after 12 years of consideration in the Commission on Human Rights, but consideration of the Draft Declaration's adoption by the General Assembly has been delayed to allow further consultations.
- 34.** *Disability.* A UN inter-agency mechanism will be established in the coming months to coordinate collaboration between agencies in implementation of the new international Comprehensive and Integral Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, which was reported to the Governing Body in November 2006.<sup>37</sup> The new body will also coordinate the development of a system-wide

<sup>37</sup> GB.297/ESP/6, paras 8–9; <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/gb/docs/gb297/pdf/esp-6.pdf>.

integrated strategy for mainstreaming a disability perspective in all aspects of the human rights and development agenda.

- 35. *Microcredit.*** The ILO participated actively in follow-up to the UN International Year of Microcredit throughout 2006, focusing on the link between microfinance and decent work. This involved work on a joint initiative on inclusive financial sector development with UNDESA, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the World Bank and IMF, launched at a high-level meeting hosted by the ILO in May 2005. Other activities included a workshop at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Social Development Conference (Buenos Aires, February 2006) on microfinance and how it has improved access to education; participation in the Microcredit Summit (Halifax, Canada, November 2006), where the ILO presented a paper on microfinance and its impact on employment; and in activities by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), European Union (EU) and the World Bank.
- 36. *Education and child labour.*** In recent years the ILO has strengthened dialogue with key international partners on the related objectives of eliminating child labour and providing education for all. This culminated in the Education For All High-level Group meeting in Beijing during November 2005, endorsing the establishment of a Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education For All (GTF). The founding members of the GTF are the ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, UNDP, Education International and the Global March against Child Labour. The ILO is providing the secretariat for the GTF. Two meetings of the GTF were held during 2006, in Geneva and Cairo. A work plan for the GTF has been agreed and a number of joint agency initiatives will be developed during 2007.

### III. Regional and other groupings

#### 1. **Thirty-ninth Session of the UNECA/Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development** (Ouagadougou, May 2006)

- 37.** In their ministerial statement, ministers attending this meeting<sup>38</sup> reaffirmed the centrality of employment for poverty reduction and development, noting the commitments made at the 2004 Extraordinary Summit of the African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa in the Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action.<sup>39</sup>
- 38.** The meeting reviewed a report on implementation of the Plan of Action, and adopted strong recommendations for the mainstreaming of employment in national development strategies and policies and to create decent jobs in Africa, drawing attention to the special needs of post-conflict countries. It also pledged to take measures to improve the operations of the private sector, and emphasized the need for further regional integration.
- 39.** The meeting took note of the AU Migration Policy Framework and Common African Position on International Migration, and agreed to participate actively in the shaping of the

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.uneca.org/conferenceofministers/2006/index.htm>.

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inf/event/ouagadougou/index.htm>.

UN Secretary-General's initiative on international migration, calling on the ILO, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other regional entities to assist member States in this regard.

40. To increase employment opportunities, particularly for women, youth, people with disabilities, internally displaced persons, refugees and returnees, ministers recognized the need to embed their special needs in employment creation and development policies, including the provision of micro-credit, micro-insurance, and the promotion of informal sector development and training.

## 2. Organization of American States

41. Cooperation with the Organization of American States (OAS) continues in the framework of the Inter-American Conference of Labor Ministries and as part of follow-up to the Declaration of Mar del Plata<sup>40</sup> and Action Plan. A workshop entitled: "Migrant workers: Protection of labour rights and labour market programmes" (Ottawa, Canada, 28–29 November 2006) adopted a summary and guidelines for future work in this field, referring to the ILO and to international agreements on this issue and addressing the issues of management of labour migration and the promotion and respect of the labour rights of migrant workers.<sup>41</sup>

## 3. ASEAN+3 Labour Ministers Meeting (May 2006)

42. In May 2006, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Labour Ministers' Meeting (ALMM)<sup>42</sup> adopted a joint statement signalling a strong commitment to occupational safety and health (OSH) by including in their work programme an additional priority area on "Strengthening of OSH capacities and standards in ASEAN". In order to inform efforts to prepare ASEAN's workforce for regional economic integration, the meeting also established an Ad Hoc Working Group on progressive labour practices to enhance the competitiveness of ASEAN.
43. The ILO has been working closely with the ASEAN secretariat and made technical presentations to the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials' Meeting on several labour and employment issues, including OSH. The ALMM noted the progress of ASEAN–ILO cooperation to date and the potential for longer-term activities in future years. In particular, ministers acknowledged the ILO's global OSH strategy and its new instruments as providing a useful basis for national policies and programmes and urged the ILO to provide more resources to help raise OSH standards in ASEAN countries.

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<sup>40</sup> See GB.295/6, para. 31 [<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/gb/docs/gb295/pdf/gb-6.pdf>]. For the Declaration, see [http://www.summit-americas.org/NextSummit\\_eng.htm](http://www.summit-americas.org/NextSummit_eng.htm).

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.sedi.oas.org/ddse/english/cpo\\_trab\\_migrantes.asp](http://www.sedi.oas.org/ddse/english/cpo_trab_migrantes.asp).

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.aseansec.org/18404.pdf#ggviewer-offsite-nav-4012072>.

## 4. European Union

### (a) *Communication of 24 May 2006*

44. The European Commission (EC) <sup>43</sup> launched a major drive for more action, more coherent policies and better implementation of decent work through its Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on “Promoting decent work for all – The EU contribution to the implementation of the decent work agenda in the world”. The Communication acknowledges that decent work, meaning more and better jobs with welfare protection, equal opportunities and social dialogue, can help developing countries fight poverty, and that it can also help developed countries improve working and living conditions and pursue appropriate policies on globalization, technological advances and population trends. The aim of the Communication is to strengthen EU policies and programmes and help spread decent work both inside the EU and elsewhere.
45. The Communication goes beyond minimum labour rights and indicates various paths to decent work. This includes promoting job creation, improved governance and social dialogue, identifying and addressing decent work deficits, better cooperation between the main stakeholders and reducing corruption. It also makes a business case for improving decent work as a means of improving economic performance. Concrete activities will include developing means of measuring and addressing decent work, gauging the effect of trade on decent work, strengthening the contribution of decent work in EU development policy and external aid and reinforcing cooperation with regional and international organizations, the social partners and civil society. The Commission will emphasize the need for decent work for all in its agreements and cooperation with countries outside the EU, including candidate, neighbouring, developing and developed countries. Strengthening decent work in an open trade regime will be important in EU trade policies, since workers in the informal economy in developed countries can lack the elements needed for decent work. The Commission will also encourage each country to formulate a road map towards establishing decent work for all, taking into account the needs and specific situations of partner countries.
46. These issues were discussed further at the annual high-level meeting between the EC and the ILO (Geneva, 13 October 2006), where both sides noted the increasing convergence between the strategic objectives and main policy objectives of the ILO and the EC, in particular with regard to promoting decent work, and to policy on changing patterns in the world of work, including the flexicurity debate.
47. On 1 December the EU Council of Ministers (Employment and Social Affairs) included in their conclusions <sup>44</sup> a comprehensive statement on the importance of promoting decent work. The Commission will publish an outline of progress achieved in this area by summer 2008.
48. On 4 and 5 December, the European Commission organized, at the ILO’s suggestion, a high-level multi-stakeholder conference in Brussels to discuss the practical implementation of the Communication, which was attended by Commissioners Spidla and Mandelson, a considerable number of EC Directors, the Finnish Presidency, other ministers,

<sup>43</sup> EU document SEC(2006) 643, [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/news/2006/may/com\\_2006\\_249\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/news/2006/may/com_2006_249_en.pdf); and annexes at [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/news/2006/may/sec\\_2006\\_643\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/news/2006/may/sec_2006_643_en.pdf).

<sup>44</sup> <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st15/st15496.en06.pdf>.

representatives of the European Parliament and European Economic and Social Council (EESC), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the IOE. The ILO was represented by a senior delegation.

49. From 6 to 8 December, the EC and the ILO co-organized a workshop with the EC national delegations in Asian countries concerning the practical incorporation of decent work programmes into the EC national action plans and strategies in the countries concerned. Both the European Parliament and the EESC are now working on their own reports and proposals regarding the implementation of the Communication, which should be adopted early in 2007.

**(b) European Development Days:  
Focus on “Africa on the move”  
(Brussels, 13–17 November 2006)**

50. Africa was the focus of the first ever European Development Days (EDD),<sup>45</sup> which saw a discussion of the main challenges for Africans and Europeans through a series of events organized by the Directorate General for Development of the European Commission, under the responsibility of Commissioner Louis Michel. Governance issues were at the fore. The EDD also hosted an EU–Africa Business Forum. Participants included 16 African Heads of State or Government; the President of the World Bank, Paul Wolfowitz; the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, Mark Malloch Brown; several heads of UN funds and agencies; senior officials of the African Union, the African Development Bank, the OECD, and the ILO Regional Director for Africa. The EDD is intended to become an annual event, aiming to enhance public awareness with regard to development cooperation issues and to help strengthen the effectiveness of EU development assistance in view of the implementation of the MDGs.

**5. Meeting of G8 Labour and Employment Ministers  
(Moscow, 9–10 October 2006)**

51. This meeting, on the theme of “Improving synergies between labour market and social policy: Growth and decent work,” discussed productive employment as a factor in economic growth and social cohesion. The programme included ministerial consultations with the social partners. Presentations were made by Russian and international employers’ and workers’ organizations, heads of G8 delegations, the European Commission and the OECD, as well as an ILO delegation led by the Director-General.<sup>46</sup> In the Chair’s conclusions,<sup>47</sup> ministers emphasized the need to achieve widespread prosperity and to promote social equity, fairness, and justice in developing labour markets that combine flexibility with security, to respond to the challenges of globalization and demographic change, acknowledging that this requires the active coordination of sound macroeconomic policies with adequate and effective social protection. They also acknowledged that globalization, more intense economic competition, demographic change and rapid technological, institutional and managerial innovation had had significant effects on labour markets throughout the world. Ministers agreed on the need for a strategic approach in order to meet these challenges, as they also provide opportunities to create more and better

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.eudevdays.eu/>.

<sup>46</sup> For his statement, see <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/dgo/speeches/somavia/2006/moscowg8.pdf>.

<sup>47</sup> <http://en.g8russia.ru/docs/27.html>.

jobs, greater inclusion and sustainable economic growth. They agreed on the need to share good practices in the development of industrial relations and labour and social policies and a continuous exchange of knowledge and experience in this field.

Geneva, 8 February 2007.

*Submitted for information.*