

Questions and Answers on 10 Years of the ILO Programme on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the ILO's Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work (ILO/AIDS). On World AIDS Day 2011, ILO Online spoke to the new Director of the ILO/AIDS programme, Mrs. Alice Ouedraogo about progress made in the last 10 years and her hopes for the future.

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This is the ILO/AIDS programme's 10th anniversary. What have been the major achievements of the programme over the years?

Alice Ouedraogo: During these past ten years, more than 3 million workers have been reached by ILO/AIDS technical cooperation activities and the ILO has supported the establishment of workplace programmes in more than 70 countries. One of the major successes of the programme was the pioneering ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work adopted in 2001. The Code was the first international instrument to address the consequences of the epidemic in the workplace and provide guidelines on the response. It has proved to be an influential document and to date at least 10 national laws have been adopted based on its principles.

In 2010, the ILO International Labour Conference, which brings together representatives of governments and employers' and workers' groups, adopted the world's first international labour standard dedicated to the protection of human rights at work for persons living with and/or affected by HIV. The ILO Recommendation concerning HIV and AIDS and the World of Work (No. 200) has been translated in to 22 languages and calls for the development, adoption and effective implementation of national tripartite workplace policies and programmes on HIV and AIDS.

What sort of support has ILO/AIDS built since 2001 in order to implement some of its policies?

Alice Ouedraogo: Some 34,000 representatives of governments, workers and employers have received training in workplace responses to HIV and AIDS. More than 2,500 labour inspectors have been trained on HIV in the workplace issues and close to 23,000 peer educators were trained in partner workplaces in the formal and informal economy.

Over the last four years, the ILO has also helped mobilize over US\$ 170 million for the world of work/private sector in more than 20 countries through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Over time, ILO/AIDS has benefited from financial support from a variety of donors including the United States, Swedish, Norwegian, Italian and German governments, as well as multilateral partners such as the OPEC Fund.

What progress has been made since the adoption of Recommendation (No. 200)?

Alice Ouedraogo: The Recommendation has already informed one national law and three national policies and has been cited, in conjunction with ILO Convention No. 111 on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation, to uphold the rights of HIV-positive workers in three national court cases (in South Africa and Brazil) involving unfair dismissal. It has also been recognized by the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) with regard to the importance of the role of the world of work in the global response to HIV and AIDS.

What are the next steps for implementation and what is the next goal for ILO/AIDS?

Alice Ouedraogo: The International Labour Conference also adopted a Resolution for the promotion and implementation of Recommendation No. 200 in 2010 and invited the ILO Governing Body to periodically review progress made in implementing the Recommendation. In March 2011, the ILO Governing Body approved a five-year Global Action Plan to ensure the widespread promotion and effective implementation of Recommendation No. 200. ILO/AIDS is working actively with other departments and field offices to make it a reality. ILO member States have started to report back to the ILO on their Constitutional obligation on

measures taken to bring the Recommendation before their national competent authorities (in most cases the parliaments) and the measures decided to ensure the implementation of the Recommendation.