



Belgium

ILO Cooperation

Belgium has been an ILO Member State since its creation in 1919 and is a key partner of the ILO in promoting the Decent Work Agenda. Belgium has ratified a considerable number of ILO Conventions, including the eight fundamental Conventions, the four priority Conventions, as well as 93 of the 177 technical Conventions. In 2015 Belgium ratified the ILO's Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Convention, 1983 (No. 159), and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), which will enter into force in 2016.

Belgium's contribution to ILO priorities

The Federal Government of Belgium has recently confirmed the ILO as one of its core multilateral partner organizations, recognising the complementarity between ILO's work and Belgium's development cooperation objectives of a rights-based approach to development and sustainable, inclusive economic growth.

With the ILO, the Federal Government of Belgium focuses on priorities in the field of social protection, social dialogue, fragile states, post-2015 development agenda and the work of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. The Federal Government of Belgium is also a co-founder of the

Group of Friends of Decent Work for Sustainable Development.

The Flemish Government has a Partnership Programme with the ILO. The Government of the French-Speaking Community of Belgium also cooperates with the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin and provides direct contributions to its activities.



BELGIUM'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION PRIORITIES

The Federal Government of Belgium allocated 0.45 per cent of its gross national income to Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2014, which amounted to USD 2.4 billion. Multilateral ODA, which also includes voluntary contributions to the ILO, amounted for 42 per cent of Belgian ODA in the same year.¹

The 2013 Law on Development Cooperation² explicitly commits to promoting an inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic growth through the adoption of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda. The Minister of Development Cooperation, Alexander De Croo, stated that Belgian development assistance's focus is on fragile states and post-conflict zones where dependence on development aid is particularly high, such as in **North and West Africa** and the **Great Lakes region**.³

The four thematic clusters through which the Federal Government of Belgium's development assistance is provided are: human and social development, including education, public health, promotion of equal opportunity and social mobility; the environment, climate and natural resources; social strengthening; and humanitarian aid and resilience.

The development cooperation of the Federal Government of Belgium focuses on the following partner countries:

Algeria, Benin, Bolivia, Burundi, DR Congo, Ecuador, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Peru, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Viet Nam.

The development cooperation of the Flemish Government focuses on three partner countries in **Southern Africa**, notably Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa.

¹ Source: OECD, Development Co-operation Report 2015

² Source: Law on Development Cooperation, 19 March 2013 (see articles 5 and 11)

³ Source: Policy Note on Development Cooperation, 14 November 2014

SOME FACTS AND FIGURES ON BELGIUM'S FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

The Federal Government of Belgium finances the ILO through:

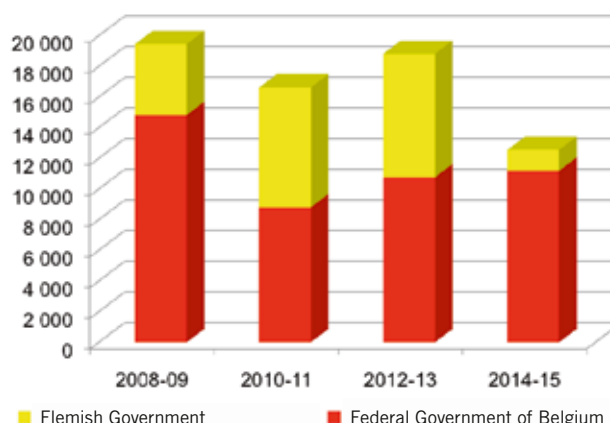
Assessed Contributions, which are paid by all ILO Member States by virtue of their membership. In 2008-2015, The Federal Government of Belgium contributed **US\$ 32.3 million**.

Voluntary Contributions, which include fully un-earmarked core funds from the Regular Budget Supplementary Account - RBSA (**US\$ 26.2 million** provided between 2008 and 2015) as well as funding to specific project-based interventions (**US\$ 19.4 million** in 2008-2015). As at November 2015, overall voluntary funding from the Federal Government of Belgium to the ILO since 2008 amounted to **US\$ 45.6 million**.

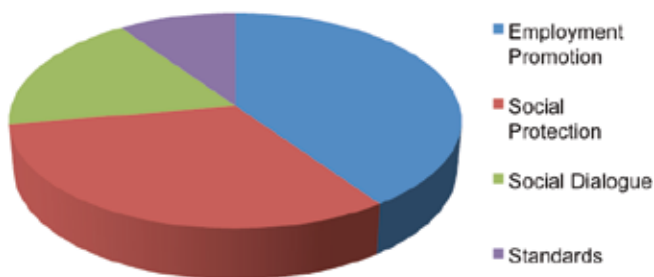
In addition, in the period 2008-2015 the Flemish Government has provided **US\$ 21.8 million** to the ILO in voluntary contributions, which were mainly used to fund specific project-based interventions at country level in Southern Africa.

Voluntary contributions by the Federal Government of Belgium and the Flemish Government to the ILO, 2008–2015*

* US\$ '000 - As at November 2015



RBSA allocations in 2014–15 Distribution by ILO strategic objective



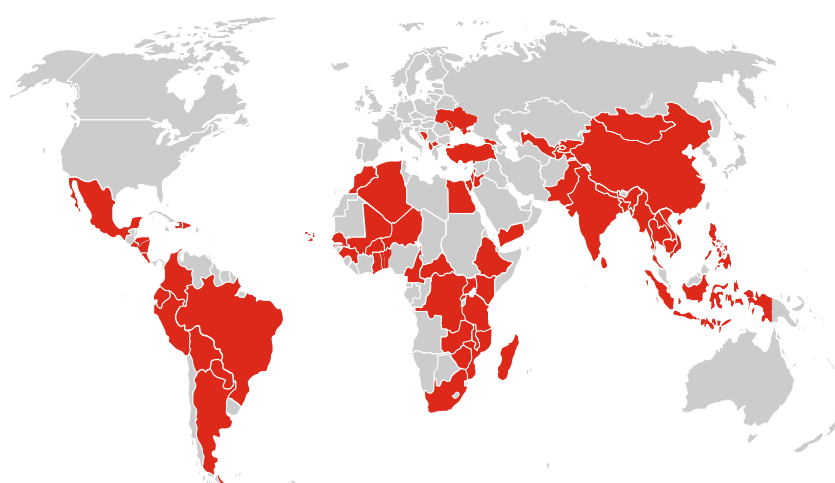
Contributions to ILO core voluntary funding (RBSA)

In recent years, the Federal Government of Belgium has been among the top contributors to RBSA. In addition to Belgium, seven other development partners provided funds to this un-earmarked core voluntary modality in 2014-15.

The ILO allocates RBSA resources to deliver on its Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) in a variety of ways.

In particular, RBSA funds allow the ILO to:

- **Launch** innovative initiatives;
- **Rapidly address** emerging needs;
- **Expand** the scope and/or scale of existing programmes;
- **Mainstream** cross-cutting issues in labour policies and programmes;
- **Leverage** greater funding from other sources;
- **Increase** sustainability of ILO assistance through partnerships with UN agencies.



Overview of 2014-15 country level allocations to date

Extending social protection

The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals recognized that quality growth and jobs, with a focus on social protection, should be central to a new development framework beyond 2015. The Group proposed 17 SDGs, which also include targets 5.4 and 10.4, which call for recognition and adoption of social protection policies, and target 1.3, which calls for expansion of social protection, citing social protection floors (SPFs) specifically.

The United Nations summit successfully adopted the post-2015 development agenda in September 2015.

In **Rwanda** the ILO conducted a feasibility study to **expand maternity protection** through the introduction of a new compulsory social insurance scheme to provide benefits for at least 12 weeks, financed by contributions from employers and both female and male employees. The government is now moving towards implementation of the new scheme.

In **Mozambique** the ILO has worked with WFP and UNICEF to establish a legal framework and strategy to **increase basic social protection coverage** to eligible households, which rose from 167,000 receiving benefits in 2008 to **439,144** in 2014. An overhaul of existing basic social security programmes and a complete review of the administrative and management tools were carried out with financial and technical assistance from the ILO and its UN partners.

Assistance to Syrian refugees and host communities

As part of the wider United Nations response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis, the ILO works in both Lebanon and Jordan to provide enhanced access to employment opportunities and livelihoods in host communities, supported through **US\$ 2 million** of core voluntary resources, including from the Federal Government of Belgium.

The influx of large numbers of refugees affects the resilience of host

communities and generates the need for increased income generating opportunities. The ILO is working with local communities to upgrade value chains, for instance for the tomato and olive growing sectors, and is training Jordanian women on how to start up a business through its Get-Ahead programme.

The ILO, in collaboration with UN-WOMEN, is also conducting a basic business training programme

tailored to the needs of Syrian women in the Zaatari refugee camp, focusing on ways to start and manage income-generating activities. Employment and career guidance services target young people. Special attention is given to strengthening the capacity of local labour inspectorates to detect and address cases of child labour and to extend referral processes to working Syrian children.



STRENGTHENING SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN TUNISIA

Shortly after the start of the Arab Spring, the Federal Government of Belgium, with the support of its social partners and the ILO, launched a two-year project called "Partnership with Maghreb countries for the promotion of social dialogue". The activities, which involve Belgian experts in industrial relations from both the government and social partners, provide technical support to Tunisian tripartite constituents in the area of social dialogue, including the organisation of seminars on capacity building in Tunis and study visits to Belgium.

The project culminated with the signing of a landmark social contract between the Government of Tunisia and the employers' and workers' organisations in the country. Since 2013 the ILO and the Federal Government of Belgium have been assisting Tunisian constituents with the implementation of the social contract. In signing the document, both the government and social partners have demonstrated their commitment to the ILO's fundamental goals of social justice, freedom of association, social dialogue and Decent Work.

Promoting youth employment in Katanga, DR Congo

The Federal Government of Belgium contributes **US\$ 5.4 million** to support an ILO project on youth employability in Katanga, Democratic Republic of Congo. The project promotes a multi-stakeholder approach based on national ownership of the development initiative, which ensures the sustainability of its activities.

As at July 2015, some of the main achievements include:

- **99 trainers (35 women)** trained in entrepreneurship and financial literacy programmes;
- **6,900 young entrepreneurs** trained in entrepreneurship and financial

literacy programmes (**2,460** of whom are **women**);

- **71 entrepreneurs**, of which **30** were **women**, won business plan competitions, enhanced existing opportunities and **created 58 jobs for young people** in enterprises;
- **300 computers** granted to 24 schools, 40 trainers and 4,000 young people (roughly 60 per cent young women) trained in computer skills;
- **Seven microfinance institutions reinforced** and **one guarantee fund set up** to offer financial products adapted to youth needs;

- **970 young people** trained in new curricula that match the labour market needs.



Official ceremony to award young training's participants.

Contribution of the Flemish Government to Decent Work in Southern Africa



The Flemish Government supports ILO's activities at country level by funding projects that promote Decent Work in Southern Africa.

Some of the ongoing projects include:

- **Sustainable Enterprise Development Facility for Job Creation - SEDF (US\$ 4.5 million)**, which creates more than 2,500 decent jobs for men and women in two South African provinces through entrepreneurship promotion and development of micro, small and medium enterprises in sectors and value chains with employment potential.
- **Private and Public Procurement and the Social Economy - PPSE (US\$ 2.4 million)**, which promotes Decent Work through social enterprise development. The project focuses on social economy businesses operating in the KwaZulu-Natal and Free State Provinces (South Africa) and develops partnerships with a range of local actors such as procurement and CSR officers

in governments and businesses, and trainers and training coordinators in social business development's organisations.

- **Promotion of Decent Work in Southern African Ports (US\$ 590,000)**, which builds upon the previous phase of the project and continues to boost the competitiveness of key ports in South Africa and Mozambique.
- **Job creation through SME development - A knowledge sharing project (US\$ 730,000)**, which establishes a knowledge sharing network around the common goal of job creation through SME development within and between South Africa, Malawi and Mozambique. This results in an improved environment for SMEs, which will facilitate their formalization and development.

THE SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FRENCH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY OF BELGIUM TO GENDER EQUALITY

The Government of the French-Speaking Community of Belgium cooperates with the International Training Centre (ITC) of the ILO in Turin since 1996. In the period 2009-14, this partner has provided around **EUR 500,000** to fund ITC's capacity building activities targeting partners in francophone African countries, with a focus on the promotion of international labour standards, social dialogue and gender equality in the world of work.

In **Burundi** in 2013-14 the ITC delivered trainings on gender-responsive budgeting and planning, which not only strengthened the participants' knowledge on gender equality, but also reinforced their IT and communications skills. More than **90 people** took part in the online courses, **70 participants** attended the two workshops organised in Bujumbura, **30 facilitators** participated in the Gender Academy in Turin and a series of trainers were trained to deliver additional gender-responsive activities.

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