



International
Labour
Organization

ILO Century Project Ideas, policies and progress



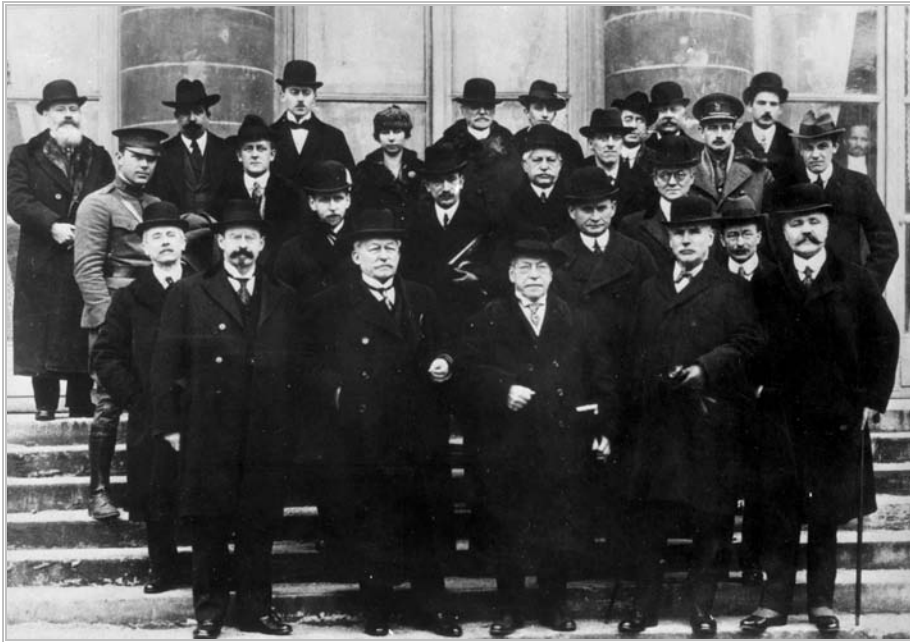
1919-2019



Seeking Peace by Cultivating Justice: A photographic history of the ILO

This photo essay was prepared by Jaci Eisenberg,
in consultation with the ILO Historical Archives.

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The Commission on International Labour Legislation meeting during the Paris Peace Conference, February – March 1919. This Commission was responsible for drafting of the ILO Constitution, later embedded in the Treaty of Versailles.

The International Labour Organisation was born in the aftermath of the First World War, as part of the Paris Peace Conference. In addition to the creation of the League of Nations, the Treaty of Versailles provides for a specific organisation to deal with Labour. The Commission on International Labour Legislation drafted the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation from February to March 1919, and it was later incorporated in the Treaty of Versailles. This Commission was composed of two representatives each from the five great powers (United States of America, British Empire, France, Italy, and Japan), with additional representatives from Belgium (2), Cuba (1), Poland (1) and Czechoslovakia (1).

The Commission began its task by expanding upon the British proposal for a Constitution. The Constitution addresses the principles and goals of the proposed labour organisation, conditions of membership, and the regulatory and oversight organs.

To the left, the majority of those involved in the creation of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation.

First Row, left to right: Emile Vandervelde (Belgium), Pierre Colliard (France), Samuel Gompers (United States of America), The Right Honorable G.N. Barnes (British Empire), Louis Loucheur (France).

Second Row, left to right: Ernest Mahaim (Belgium), Janusz Zoltowski (Poland), Edouard Beneš (Czechoslovakia), A.N. Hurley (United States of America), Sir Malcolm Delevigne (British Empire).

Third Row, left to right: Gordon L. Berry, Mr. Oyster (Secretary for the American delegation), Antonio de Bustamante (Cuba), Henry Mauris Robinson (United States of America), Harold Butler (British Empire).

Last Rows, left to right: Arthur Fontaine (France), Léon Jouhaux (France), Baron Capelle (Secretary of the Commission), Miss Jackson, Baron Mayor des Planches (Italy), Edward J. Phelan (British Empire), G.M. Hodgson, Mr. di Palma Castiglione (Secretary for the Italian delegation), Colonel Lister, Unknown.



International Labour Office Assistant Director Harold Butler and Director Albert Thomas enjoy a moment of rest in front of the first ILO building, La Châtelaine, in Pregny, Switzerland (currently the Headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross), 1920.

Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles, which concerns the International Labour Organisation, provided for this institution as a means to reach universal peace through social justice. This organization is composed of a general conference of member States, a governing body, and a permanent secretariat (the International Labour Office).

Article 392 of the Treaty of Versailles states "The International Labour Office shall be established at the seat of the League of Nations as part of the organisation of the League." Geneva, already selected as the seat of the League, was therefore the seat of the International Labour Office. To the left, the ILO's first Director, Albert Thomas, and first Assistant Director, Harold Butler, in front of the ILO Secretariat's first home, La Châtelaine, in Pregny, Switzerland.



Delegates in a plenary sitting of the First Session of the International Labour Conference (Washington, D.C., 1919).

The member States of the ILO (181 as of late 2007) each send two Government delegates, one Employers' delegate, and one Workers' delegate (in addition to technical advisers on specific issues) to the annual International Labour Conference, held for three weeks in late spring in Geneva (with a few historical exceptions of location). At this Conference, delegates discuss problems facing the world of work in both plenary sessions and committee meetings. The delegates can adopt Conventions and Recommendations on these issues, and elect the members of the Governing Body. To the left, delegates in plenary session at the First Session of International Labour Conference (Washington, D.C., 29 October – 29 November 1919). At this First Session of the Conference, 40 countries and territories were represented.



**The 12th Session of the Governing Body
(Rome, Italy, 4-7 April 1922).**

Equally as important as the annual session of the International Labour Conference is the Governing Body of the ILO, a tripartite council elected by the Conference. The Governing Body is charged with overseeing the work of the International Labour Office, which entails everything from commissioning special committees to examining the expenditures of the ILO. At its inception, the Governing Body was composed of 12 Government members, 6 Employer members, and 6 Worker members. Today the Governing Body has expanded to 28 Government members, 14 Employer members, and 14 Worker members, reflecting the increased membership of the ILO.

Since the inception of the ILO, States of Chief Industrial Importance are automatically included among the Government members of the Governing Body. To the left, the 12th Session of the Governing Body (Rome, 4-7 April 1922). In the foreground is Léon Jouhaux, French Worker member of the Governing Body for 35 years (1919-1954).



The three keys, representative of the tripartite nature of the ILO, used to inaugurate the building on the shores of Lake Geneva (later the headquarters of GATT and the WTO), 6 June 1926.

The general conference of members provided for in the Treaty of Versailles was to be tripartite in nature: Governments, Employers, and Workers would all be involved in creation of international labour legislation. Tripartism, originally an idea formulated by the British delegation to the Commission on International Labour Legislation, allowed the ILO to tackle issues “most real to most people the world over.”¹ As an integral founding principle of the ILO, it was natural that three keys representing the contributions of and collaboration between Governments, Employers, and Workers be used to symbolically open the gates of the new International Labour Office on 6 June 1926.

¹ As per James T. Shotwell’s introduction to Bernard Béguin’s pamphlet on “ILO and the tripartite system,” Issue Number 523 (May 1959) of *International Conciliation*, published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

In addition to the principle of tripartism, the High Contracting Parties of the Treaty of Versailles enumerated in Article 427 nine guiding principles directing the action of the organisation:

First. – The guiding principle... that labour should not be regarded merely as a commodity or article of commerce.

Second. – The right of association for all lawful purposes by the employed as well as by the employers.

Third. – The payment to the employed of a wage adequate to maintain a reasonable standard of life as this is understood in their time and country.

Fourth. – The adoption of an eight hours day or a forty-eight hours week as the standard to be aimed at where it has not already been attained.

Fifth. – The adoption of a weekly rest of at least twenty-four hours, which should include Sunday whenever practicable.

Sixth. – The abolition of child labour and the imposition of such limitations on the labour of young persons as shall permit the continuation of their education and assure their proper physical development.

Seventh. – The principle that men and women should receive equal remuneration for work of equal value.

Eighth. – The standard set by law in each country with respect to the conditions of labour should have due regard to the equitable economic treatment of all workers lawfully resident therein.

Ninth. – Each State should make provision for a system of inspection in which women should take part, in order to ensure the enforcement of the laws and regulations for the protection of the employed.



The first building specially constructed for the ILO, located Rue de Lausanne, Geneva, Switzerland; in use from 1926 to 1974 (view from the current-day Place Albert Thomas).

The International Labour Office is the permanent secretariat of the Organisation. Departments and branches handle questions of the creation and promotion of International Labour Standards; Employment; Social Protection (Conditions of Work, Migration, and Social Security); and relations within and between elements of the tripartite structure (Governments, Employers, and Workers).

These and other units regularly produce reports for use by member States and Social Partners (Employers, Workers) of the ILO, as well as researchers and the general public. These reports are often published in multiple languages, notably the three main working languages, English, French, and Spanish. The ILO also publishes a record of proceedings of the annual International Labour Conference and thrice-yearly Governing Body meetings, as well as a journal dedicated to issues faced in the world of work, the International Labour Review.

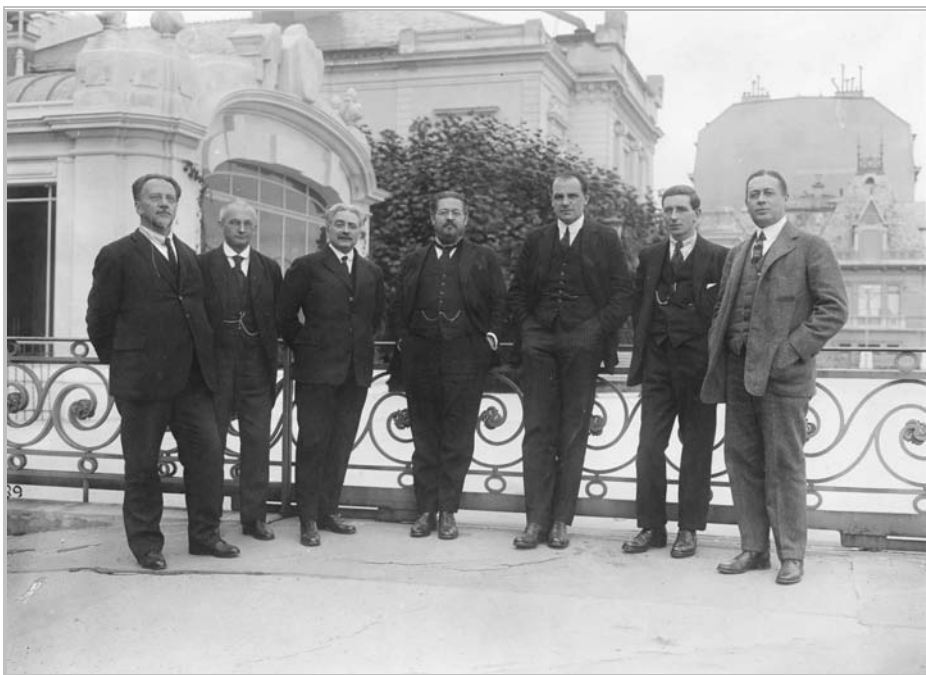
To the left, the first building constructed especially for the ILO, by architect George Epitoux of Lausanne, Switzerland. The International Labour Office was headquartered here from 1926 to 1974. Visible to the left of the main entrance is Luc Jaggi's Statue of the Peace, a gift of Switzerland in 1924. Obscured by the gate is Jaggi's complementary sculpture, the Statue of Justice. Jaggi sculpted the motif for the pillars encasing the main entrance. Epitoux and Jaggi aside, no fewer than 64 businesses and sculptors were hired to build and adorn the new Labour Office.



The ILO library, 13 March 1967.

In addition to publishing reports on labour, Article 396 of the Treaty of Versailles requires the International Labour Office, as part of its mandate, to collect and distribute "information on all subjects relating to the international adjustment of conditions of industrial life and labour, and particularly the examination of subjects which it is proposed to bring before the Conference with a view to the conclusion of international conventions, and the conduct of such special investigations as may be ordered by the Conference."

To the left, the library of the ILO (on the shores of Lake Geneva), and its publication collection, in 1967.



ILO Correspondents at the Fourth Session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva, Switzerland, 18 October – 3 November 1922). From left to right: Angiolo Cabrini (Rome), Alexander Schlicke (Berlin), Mario Roques (Paris), Director Albert Thomas, Assistant Director Harold Butler, Joseph Edward Herbert (London), and Ernest Greenwood (Washington, D.C.).

In order to facilitate operations worldwide, the ILO began to install a number of Correspondents in areas of high activity. The first Correspondent Office opened in Paris on 1 February 1920, and the first National Correspondent was installed in Budapest in 1922. The function of the Correspondents were to, in the ILO's early years, provide support in communicating with local Labour Ministries, Employers' organisations, and Workers' organisations; arrange visits of ILO officials to specific countries, as well as to arrange visits of national officials to the ILO; sell ILO publications and collect local publications relating to labour; answer local requests for information; and keep Geneva headquarters apprised of the current status of labour issues.

Nowadays, the scope of activity of Field Offices and National Correspondents has expanded. However, such offices, far from Geneva headquarters, have sometimes suffered hardship.

During the Second World War in particular, many offices were reduced to one or two persons working out of their apartments. The London Branch Office suffered quite a shock: in early September 1940, the premises at 12 Victoria Street were bombed in an air raid. However the London Office Director, M.R.K. Burge, refused to let this obstacle hinder operations, and promptly moved essential staff to his country house in Sussex, from where work was continued.



ILO Director Albert Thomas visits a children's home run by socialists and trade unionists in Ogre, Latvia, in August 1927, as part of a two-month official mission to the Scandinavian and Baltic States.

The Director (later Director-General), head of the International Labour Office, frequently visits member States to discuss labour policy at the highest levels: with Heads of State and government representatives, with Employers' organisations, and with trade union leaders. In July 1927, Director Albert Thomas started a two-month mission to the Scandinavian and Baltic States. By August he had made his way to Latvia, where, on the first morning of his visit, he met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the President of Parliament, the mayor of Riga, the Minister of Social Security, and then visited the children's home in Ogre run by socialists and trade unionists. This home was intended to be a month-long escape for the children of Riga's workers, and it was clear the children were enjoying their stay. As Thomas reflected after his visit, "A class which takes care of its children is already a class conscious of its destiny."



Maurice Denis' *La Dignité du Travail* (The Dignity of Labour), a mural given to the ILO by the International Confederation of Christian Trade Unions in May 1931, for its building on the shores of Lake Geneva.

The ILO's early years were fruitful. From the beginning Conventions and Recommendations of great importance were passed by the International Labour Conference. In appreciation of the work performed by the International Labour Office and the International Labour Organisation, a number of gifts have been bestowed on the organisation. One such gift is Maurice Denis' *La Dignité du Travail* (*The Dignity of Work*), a mural for the ILO building from the International Confederation of Christian Trade Unions in May 1931. In this mural, Christ speaks to modern-day workers at the Nazareth workshop.

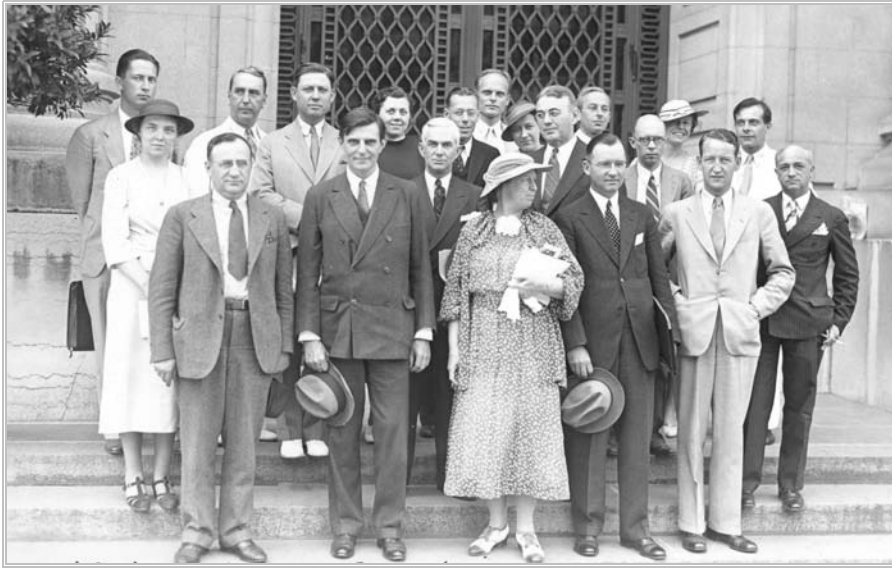
The First Labour Conference of American States opened in Santiago, Chile, on 2 January 1936, after the Chilean Government extended the offer of hosting a regional conference to ILO Director Harold Butler. Continuing through January 14th, this conference dealt with the ratification and application of labour Conventions relating to Social Insurance, and the regulation of women's and children's labour. In attendance were 21 American member States of the ILO, as well as Costa Rica (represented by observers). An overwhelming success, the Regional Conference passed resolutions relating to the founding principles of social insurance, issues of employment and unemployment, and requested research be undertaken by the International Labour Office on immigration and the problems of American Indians.

Front Row, left to right: Moises Poblete-Troncoso (Latin American Group), Stephen Lawford Childs (Cabinet of the Director), Harold Butler (Director of the ILO), George A. Johnston (Chief of the Labour Conditions Section), Osvald Stein (Social Insurance Section), Robert Lafrance (Head of the Official Relations Section), Enrique Siewers (Unemployment and Migration Section), C. Wilfred Jenks (Legal Service).

Back Row, left to right: Maurice Thudichum (Assistant to the Chief of the Administrative Section), David Belloch (Application of Conventions and Labour Inspection), Kenneth G. McKinlay (Chief Accountant), Lewis Lorwin (Economic Adviser to the Social Economics Service), Winifred Duncan (Cabinet of the Director), Geneviève Laverrière (Head of Shorthand-typing, Multigraph and Roneo Service).



ILO Staff at the opening session of the First Labour Conference of American States (Santiago, Chile, 2 January 1936).



The United States of America's delegation to the 20th Session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva, Switzerland, 4-24 June 1936). First row, 2nd from the left: Unknown, John G. Winant (Government delegate), who became Director of the ILO in 1939, Frieda S. Miller (Government delegate), Marion B. Folsom (Employers' delegate), Llewellyn E. Thomson (Government adviser).

The Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles were born out of US President Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points" speech, where he called for the formation of "[a] general association of nations", whose aim was "affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike."

However, the US Senate's failure to ratify the Treaty of Versailles meant the United States was not a member of the League of Nations, and consequently, not of the ILO. Yet within the ILO, the United States was widely viewed as an admirable example of a society where employers and workers were able to successfully cooperate. With this in mind, the ILO took proactive measures to encourage the United States to join. A Correspondent's Office was opened in Washington D.C. in May 1920. Director Albert Thomas and Assistant Director Harold Butler frequently visited the US. Invitations to Conferences and Committees were extended to the United States government, though not accepted. A position among the States of Chief Industrial Importance in the Governing Body was provisionally reserved for the United States.

The onset of the Great Depression created increased interest in the United States about public works and social programmes. The ILO continued to reiterate its desire for the United States to participate in its activities, and slowly but surely, the United States began to seek technical expertise from the ILO, and participate in their meetings and Conferences. The appointment of Frances Perkins as

Secretary of Labor brought the United States closer to membership in the ILO. She, and President Roosevelt's other advisers, were quite fond of the ILO, and some were even in personal contact with Butler (who was Director at this point). The United States, despite not being a Member of the League of Nations, opted to join the ILO by virtue of Congressional Resolution SJ 131 of 19 June 1934, ultimately signed by Roosevelt.

The United States soon began to take an active role in the ILO. In May 1935, Butler appointed John G. Winant, a former Governor of New Hampshire, to the post of Assistant Director. While Winant initially held the post of Assistant Director for four months (he soon left to become Chairman of the Social Security Board), he returned to this position in August 1937, and was chosen to replace Butler as Director in 1939. Winant remained in this position until 1941, at which time he left to become the American Ambassador to Great Britain.



A group of ILO Officials and their spouses waiting to board ship, Lisbon, Portugal, September 1940 [From the private collection of Carol Riegelman Lubin]

With cessation of operations out of the question, and having recognized in 1938 that the ILO's location might prove problematic, an Emergency Committee was formed to make arrangements for the ILO to transfer elsewhere in case a European war should occur. This was a prudent measure, for the Swiss Federal Council, fearful the growing German power would disapprove of Swiss reception of the League of Nations and affiliated organisations, soon introduced a measure whereby international organisations would only be afforded 24 hours to vacate Switzerland in case of armed conflict. Given the severe time limitation, a transfer to France in case of emergency seemed quite rational. Plans were soon formed for an emergency transfer to Vichy, a spa town a few hundred kilometres west of Geneva.

Despite the invasion of France in May 1940, the decision was taken to move, and parts of the ILO archives were transferred to the Pavillon Sévigné in Vichy. However these plans were soon rescinded, and the archives returned to Geneva: a new plan was needed. A solution appeared when the Canadian government agreed to host the ILO at McGill University in Montreal. A severely reduced number of staff – those deemed essential for the chief activities of the ILO – were given orders to prepare for an international transfer. In early August 1940 these officials and staff completed a five-day car-and-train voyage through France to Lisbon, Portugal, where they waited one month before being able to sail for their new working centre in Montreal.



Osvald Stein (third from the right) and other ILO officials on mission in Chile, where they helped reorganize the Chilean Social Insurance scheme, July 1942.

The International Labour Office's move to Montreal from Geneva, a reflection of the political inability to carry out much work in Europe, gave the ILO the opportunity to focus its work in another region: Latin America. A mission of officials to Chile to review social insurance policies in mid-1942 increased the scope of Technical Cooperation programmes in Latin America. These programmes soon grew to be an integral part of the ILO's operations.

To the left, Alexandre Flores-Zorilla (second from the left), Osvald Stein (third from the right) and other ILO officials on mission in Chile in July 1942, where they helped reorganize the Chilean Social Insurance scheme and prepare for the American Conference on Social Security, to be held in Santiago in September 1942. On this same trip Flores-Zorilla, Stein and the other officials also visited Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Uruguay in an endeavour to improve labour statistics.



ILO Director Edward J. Phelan speaking at the Meeting of Social Security Experts and Social Security Plan authors (Montreal, 9-12 July 1943).

Despite the International Labour Office's move to Montreal and subsequent limitations (staffing and budget-related), it managed to perform its normal duties. In certain instances, it was even able to innovate: a four-day consultation in July 1943 at the ILO's working centre in Montreal convened social security experts with the goal of creating an international social security charter, specifically with regards to income maintenance and health care.

Head table, left to right:

Maurice Stack, with back to camera (Member of ILO Social Insurance Section)

Carter Goodrich (Chairman of the ILO Governing Body)

Honorable Ian A. Mackenzie (Canadian Minister of Pensions and National Health, Chairman of the consultations)

Edward J. Phelan (Director par interim of the ILO)

Lindsay Rogers (Assistant-Director of the ILO)

Sir William Beveridge (Author of the British Social Security Plan)

Other table, clockwise:

Dr. George Perrott (United States National Institute of Public Health)

I.S. Falk (United States Social Security Board)

A.D. Watson (Department of Insurance, Ottawa)

Dr. Edgarde Rebagliati (Director of the National Insurance Fund of Peru)

Dr. Jose E. de Sandoval (Ministry of Labor, Cuba)

Dr. F.A. Lopez Arteta (Chairman, National Insurance Fund of Ecuador)

Dr. Leonard C. Marsh (Author of the Canadian Social Security Report)

Dr. J.J. Heagerty (Director of Canadian Public Health Services)

Dr. Eduardo Grove Vallejos (Chilean Minister to Canada)

Dr. Miguel Etchebarne (former Chilean Minister of Public Health and Social Insurance)



ILO Director Edward J. Phelan signing the Declaration of Philadelphia at the White House, in Washington D.C. on 17 May 1944. Seated, left to right: US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Walter Nash, E.J. Phelan. Standing, left to right: US Secretary of State Cordell Hull, US Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, ILO Assistant Director Lindsay Rogers.

During the Second World War, the International Labour Organisation suffered from a number of limitations, but was mostly successful in overcoming them. Part of the Organisation's duty, as per the Treaty of Versailles, was to hold general Conferences of its member States, a task proved difficult under the spectre of a generalized European (and later Pacific) war. Despite these restrictions, the ILO still managed to hold two wartime Conferences, the first, a special Conference with no normal powers, held in New York and Washington, D.C. in 1941, and the second, the 26th Session of the International Labour Conference, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the spring of 1944.

The Philadelphia Conference had on its agenda workers' compensation and social policies in colonial territories, in addition to the pressing issue of postwar reconstruction. The ILO embraced this new challenge by reaffirming its founding principles in the Declaration of Philadelphia, adopted unanimously by the Conference. The Declaration of Philadelphia highlights that labour is not a commodity, freedom of association is necessary for sustained progress, and poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere. These measures were to be ensured concretely through full employment, vocational training, just wages, collective bargaining, social security, measures ensuring occupational health, and maternity protection. The concepts contained in the Declaration of Philadelphia were extraordinarily progressive in that they were to be applied to free and dependent peoples alike; they were "a matter of concern to the whole civilized world."



Delegates of various Egyptian Trade Unions carry signs while waiting for the arrival of Raghunath Rao, Assistant Director-General of the ILO, at Farouk Airfield, near Cairo, early December 1951.

The International Labour Organisation takes allegations of non-respect of Conventions seriously. Once the Governing Body approves an inquiry into such allegations, action is swift.

Allegations concerning British use of forced Egyptian labour in the Suez Canal area were noted in a report presented to the Governing Body, which, at the suggestion of Sir Guildhaume Myrddin-Evans, representative of the Government of the United Kingdom, voted for an inquiry mission on 22 November 1951. Assistant Director-General Raghunath Rao was chosen to lead the inquiry, arriving in Egypt on 9 December 1951 to a particularly warm welcome from local trade unions. Rao remained in Egypt for one month, during which time he conducted interviews with both British and Egyptian actors, and ultimately concluded the accusations of forced labour were untrue. The 118th Session of the Governing Body (March 1952) examined Rao's report, but in light of his findings, decided to take no further action at that time.



Delegates to the 4th meeting of the Building, Civil Engineering and Public Works Committee (26 October – 6 November 1953) visit the construction site of the Grand Dixence Hydroelectric Dam in Valais (Switzerland).

Industrial Committees, outlets where Employers and Workers can come together to discuss problems and advances in certain fields, are a notion dating from the 91st Session of the Governing Body (December 1943). However it was not until January 1945 that they were finally approved in the following domains: Inland Transport, Coal Mines, Iron and Steel, Metal Trades, Textiles, Petroleum, and Building Trades (including Public Works). Later on committees were added for the Chemical industry, Plantations, and Salaried Employees. Tripartite in nature, the Industrial Committees quickly became part of the integral fabric of the ILO's activities.

Resolutions passed by these Committees typically travel through the ILO's Governing Body, and from there are transmitted to the relevant Employers' and Workers' organisations. Industrial Committee meetings often provide the opportunity for delegates to examine new challenges in their respective fields. To the left, delegates to the 4th meeting of the Building, Civil Engineering and Public Works Committee visit the construction site of the Grand Dixence Hydroelectric Dam in Valais (Switzerland), in late 1953.

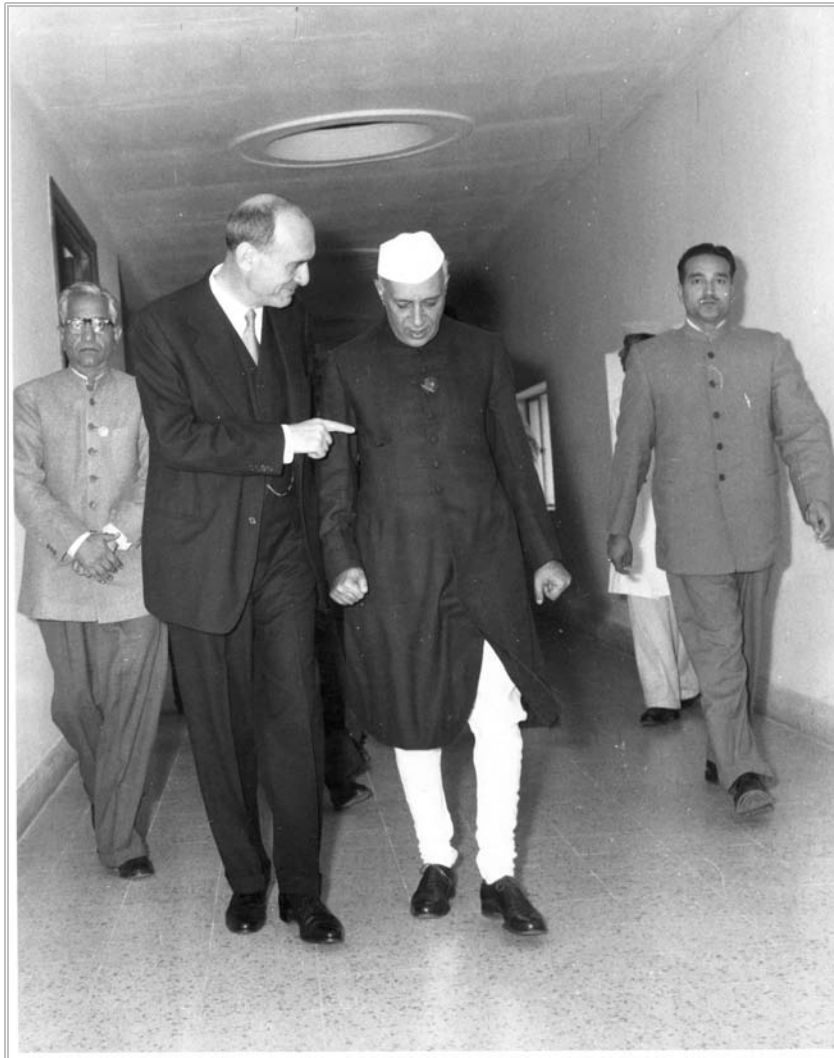


A.S. Tchistayakov, permanent representative of the USSR to the European Office of the United Nations, deposits instruments of ratification for 18 ILO Conventions - 15 for the USSR and 3 for the Ukraine - on 10 August 1956. In attendance, ILO Director-General David A. Morse.

While the International Labour Conference undertakes the central task of formulating International Labour Standards, in the form of Conventions and Recommendations, work does not end there. Each member State is then invited to ratify the Conventions and to incorporate them into national legislation, a process that can occur quickly or slowly.

In some instances, multiple Conventions are ratified at the same time as a result of new membership, or a withdrawal from and subsequent readmission to the ILO. This was the case in regards to the USSR: having acceded to the ILO on 18 September 1934, it withdrew on 5 February 1940 due to World War II. The USSR was readmitted to the ILO on 26 April 1954.

To the left, A.S. Tchistayakov (with eyeglasses), permanent representative of the USSR to the European Office of the United Nations, signs the certificate of deposit of the instruments of ratification for 18 ILO Conventions: 15 for the USSR, and 3 for the Ukraine. In attendance at this small ceremony, held in Geneva on 10 August 1956, was ILO Director-General David A. Morse (with pen in midair).



ILO Director-General David A. Morse accompanies Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru at the Fourth Asian Labour Conference, 13 November 1957, in New Delhi, India.

The success of the First Labour Conference of American States in 1936 encouraged the ILO to gradually introduce Regional Conferences. In 1947, the first Regional Conference in Asia was held at New Delhi, in 1955, the first Regional Conference in Europe was held at Geneva, and in 1960, the first Regional Conference in Africa was held at Lagos. The advantages of regional conferences are clear: focused on one area of the world, they permit intensive examination of questions of interest relative to one particular region.

To the left, ILO Director-General David A. Morse accompanies Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru at the Fourth Asian Labour Conference, 13-25 November 1957, in New Delhi, India. Nehru gave the opening speech of the Conference, in which he remarked: "... in a true world everybody should be labour and everybody should be a producer and a consumer. However, as things are, you have tried to deal with them in a co-operative manner and I do not think there is any other satisfactory way of dealing with them."

Issues of importance in the early Asian Regional Conferences have included social security, employment programmes, and vocational training. Specific questions treated at the Fourth Asian Labour Conference included social problems in handicraft industries, and the conditions of life and work of sharecroppers.



The Chimborazo Project of the Andean Indian Programme in Riobamba, Ecuador, 1957.

The Labour Conferences of American States and the first meeting of the Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour (1951) showed the desire to improve the lot of Andean Indians, essentially reliant on a subsistence economy. Soon thereafter, a project with participation from the United Nations, the ILO, UNESCO, the FAO, and the WHO, was launched. Specific goals of this project, in the areas of labour and work, included: diversification of the economy; implementation of a seasonal rotation of labour between the *altiplano* and sub-tropical regions; and development of cooperatives for production and consumption. The Andean Indian initiative began in Bolivia in 1954, and soon spread to Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Chile, Argentina, and Venezuela.

To the left, Miguel Ximenez, an engineer agronomist, at the Andean Programme's "Chimborazo project" in Riobamba, Ecuador, with the village leader of Nitiluisa, Pedro Celestino Paucar. Here they are discussing a poor crop of barley, and options for improvement.



A Turin Centre Training Course, February 1969. A multi-lingual instructor explains the operation of a modern automatic lathe, run on an electro-pneumatic system, of the type used in making components for the automobile industry.

The ILO's Vocational Training Centre has its origins in the centenary of the unification of Italy. In 1961, the ILO cooperated in the planning of an International Labour Exhibition in Turin which had, as a theme, "human labour as a determining factor in economic and social progress." After the exhibition was over, the Italian Government suggested using the buildings housing the exhibition for a large technical assistance project, and the ILO was immediately interested.

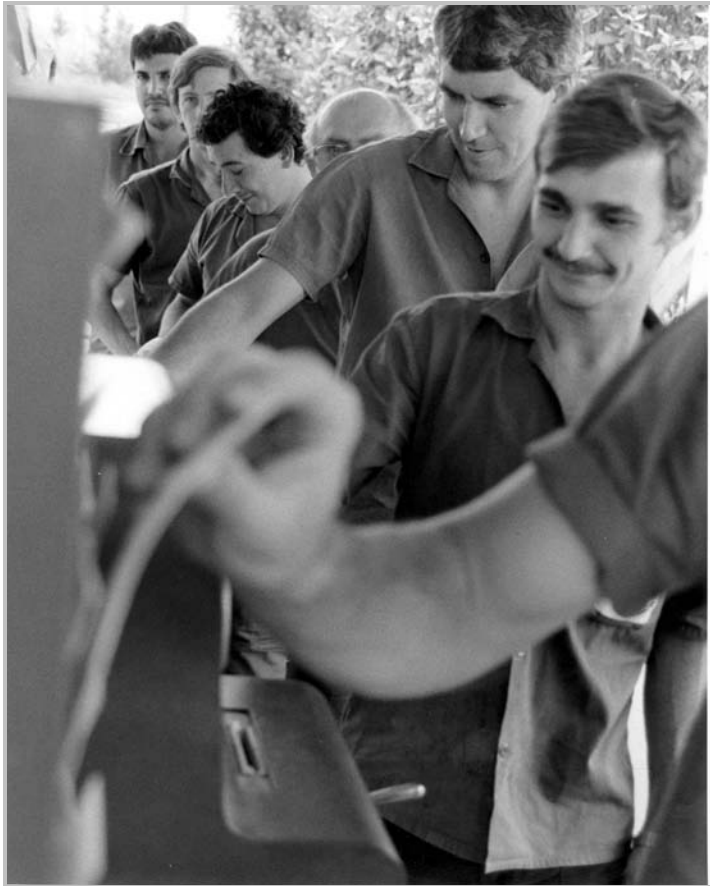
Reports were commissioned and examined by the Governing Body, the result of which was the conversion of the main pavilion of the labour exhibition into an international centre for advanced technical training, destined for those who did not have such training available in their home countries. In addition to technical training for men and women of (primarily) developing countries, the Turin Centre, as it is informally known, was mandated to provide advanced training for those involved with small-scale industry and instruction in teaching methods for technical co-operation experts.

The composition of the Board of the International Training Centre reflects its ties to the ILO: seats are reserved for the Director-General of the ILO, 12 members of the Governing Body, 9 experts, UN and UNESCO representatives, as well as the Italian Government and the City of Turin. After all preparatory arrangements were finalized, the Turin Centre welcomed its first group of 41 fellows on 16 October 1965.



ILO Director-General David A. Morse receives the 1969 Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the International Labour Organisation from Aase Lionaes, Chairman of the Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Parliament, in the Aula of the University of Oslo, on 10 December 1969.

In 1969, on the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation, the ILO received the Nobel Peace Prize for its promotion of social justice and peace among nations, a quality exemplified even in a document contained in the cornerstone of the ILO building: "Si vis pacem, cole justitiam" – If you seek peace, cultivate justice. To the left, ILO Director-General David A. Morse receives the 1969 Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the International Labour Organisation from Aase Lionaes, Chairman of the Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Parliament.



Workers in Brazil.

Employment has always been a major ILO concern and it clearly had to be a central goal of the development strategy being promoted by the UN system from the 1960s on. In 1969 David Morse launched the World Employment Programme, which became a major ILO effort to make employment goals a reality. In the 1970s the WEP built a substantial programme of research and action aimed at increasing employment, especially in developing countries.



ILO Director-General C. Wilfred Jenks and the President of Cameroon, El Hadj Ahmadou Ahidjo, lay the cornerstone of the African Regional Centre for Labour Administration, seat of an ILO area office, 28 July 1971, in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

As ILO Director-General David A. Morse noted *in The I.L.O. and Africa*, when the ILO was founded in 1919, there were only three independent states on the African continent: Ethiopia, Liberia, and the Union of South Africa. With the post-World War II wave of decolonisation, the ILO needed to “recognize the new responsibilities which these changes have placed upon it and should evolve new machinery and techniques appropriate to the present and developing constitutional situation and the social and economic problems posed by them.” The evolution Morse desired included the foundation of offices in Africa. The opening of the first African Field Office at Lagos, Nigeria in January 1959 was one such step, later followed by other offices, such as that in Yaoundé, Cameroon, which opened in July 1971.



The jurists of the 42nd Session of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Geneva, 16-29 March 1972.

In addition to formulating International Labour Standards, the ILO needed to be able to verify that this legislation, once ratified by member States, was appropriately applied. A system was instituted in 1926 whereby, every year, Governments of member States would submit reports to the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions (later the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations) enumerating the steps they have taken, in law and in practice, to implement these Conventions as well as oversee their success. The Committee, a group of eminent jurists appointed by the Governing Body, then reviews these reports.

The result of the Committee's work is a list of observations and direct requests based on the contents of the reports. The observations are included in the Committee's yearly report, whereas the direct requests are communicated to the governments concerned. Today twenty jurists sit on the Committee.

Members of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations at its 42nd Session, Geneva, 16-29 March 1972:

1. Edilbert Razafindralambo (Madagascar), Rapporteur of the Committee
2. C. Wilfred Jenks, ILO Director-General
3. Enrique García Sayán (Peru), President of the Committee
4. Bégum Raàna Liaquat Ali Khan (Pakistan)
5. Kisaburo Yokota (Japan)
6. Isidoro Ruiz Moreno (Argentina)
7. Jean Morellet (France)
8. Lazare A. Lunz (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
9. Arnaldo Lopes Sussekind (Brasil)
10. Sir Adetokunbo Ademola (Nigeria)
11. Harold Stewart Kirkaldy (United Kingdom)
12. Earl Warren (United States)
13. Günther Beitzke (Federal Republic of Germany)
14. Pralhad Balacharya Gajendragadkar (India)
15. Joža Vilfan (Yugoslavia)
16. Arnold Gubinski (Poland)
17. Paul Ruegger (Switzerland)
18. Nicolas Valticos, Head of the Department of International Labour Standards
19. Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Egypt)
20. Joseph J.M. van der Ven (The Netherlands)



Lech Wałęsa (Workers' delegate, Poland) of Solidarity at a plenary sitting of the 67th Session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva, Switzerland, 3-24 June 1981).

Despite extensive oversight and grievance machinery, sometimes the issue of non-compliance with ILO Conventions can arise in very prominent ways during the proceedings of the International Labour Conference. At its 67th Session, the appearance of Polish delegate Lech Wałęsa (of the trade union Solidarity) caused quite a stir, given Solidarity's strikes in the Gdańsk shipyard in 1980.

In his speech, Wałęsa championed workers' self-management, social justice, and trade union independence. Only 6 months later, Wałęsa was imprisoned for just under a year. At the same time, the Polish Government pledged to propose a new trade union law, at the behest of the ILO. Upon receiving a draft of the law, deemed too restrictive by the ILO, the Head of the International Labour Standards department was sent to Poland. There he was able to visit Wałęsa, and found him keen to continue his fight. In June 1983, the 69th Session of the International Labour Conference requested a Commission of Inquiry to examine the situation of Solidarity in Poland.

The Polish Government did not welcome the news of the proposed Commission of Inquiry, and informed the ILO by letter on 24 June 1983 it was limiting its relations with the Organisation. Despite this enormous obstacle, the Commission of Inquiry was convened, and it began its investigation the only way possible under such circumstances: with hearings at the ILO headquarters. The end of the Commission's investigation led to its report being placed on the agenda of the Governing Body (November 1984). The Commission's report found Poland

in violation of certain conventions, notably regarding freedom of association, which the country had ratified. The Commission suggested the Polish government and trade unions work together to immediately ensure these principles. Poland gave official notice of its withdrawal from the ILO, a measure that would take effect two years later. Nevertheless the political situation evolved, and in the end Poland revoked its intention to withdraw in 1987. Wałęsa's dream for an independent, self-governing trade union was realised when the Polish Government and Solidarity met in 1989 to negotiate the legalization of Solidarity.



On 15 June 1982, Pope John Paul II visited the 68th Session of the International Labour Conference, accompanied by ILO Director-General Francis Blanchard. Behind them is the Director of Cabinet, Jean-François Treméaud.

Dignitaries and heads of state are invited to address the annual International Labour Conference, where they speak about recent developments in the world of work in their countries and in the world. In 1982, the 68th Session of the International Labour Conference was graced with the presence of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, a particularly appropriate speaker given his former life as a manual worker, and his desire to promote the dignity of labour, as noted in his encyclical, *Laborem exercens*. His address at the Conference emphasized the value of human work, and praised the ILO's consistent efforts to promote the humanization of work.



Participants and staff of the 1983 International Institute for Labour Studies International Internship Course on the theme of the Development of an Active Labour Policy (Geneva, Switzerland, 19 April – 19 June 1983).

In 1960, the International Labour Organisation launched the International Institute for Labour Studies (IILS), a think-tank for advanced research in labour issues. The work of the IILS is achieved through several outlets including research, debates, policy forums, and publications. One unique aspect of the IILS's work is its yearly internship program, held in Geneva just before the annual International Labour Conference.

Aimed towards mid-level professionals in Labour Ministries, as well as members of Employers' and Workers' organisations, the internship course aims to aid the participants in promoting active labour policy in their respective countries. The Internship Course is held in English, French, or Spanish, rotated on a three-year cycle. To the left, participants and staff of the 1983 Internship Course on the Development of an Active Labour Policy. The 22 participants in this course, predominantly from Latin America, partook of, among other activities, a Conference-Debate on Collective Bargaining in Latin America, and discussions on National Planning of Employment and the Labour Market.

Pictured in the background is the current headquarters of the ILO. The cornerstone of the building was laid on 28 May 1970, and the inauguration took place on 12 November 1974. Three architects (Eugène Beaudoin, Alberto Camenzind, and Pier Luigi Nervi) participated in the conceptualisation of the building.



Michel Hansenne, Director-General of the ILO, and Nelson Mandela, Deputy President of the African National Congress, in discussion during the 77th Session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva, Switzerland, 6-27 June 1990).

In addition to the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, there are additional forms of monitoring for International Labour Standards: Fact-Finding and Conciliation Commissions on Freedom of Association, and Commissions of Inquiry, of which the members are appointed by the Governing Body.

In 1988, the Congress of South African Trade Unions submitted a complaint against the Government of the Republic of South Africa to the ILO, which was not a member at that time, having withdrawn in 1966. The complaint charged that certain amendments the Government wished to make to the Labour Relations Act No. 28 of 1956 would promote racially constituted trade unions, and inhibit the right of unions to strike. Three years later, in 1991, the South African Government gave its consent for this complaint to be referred to a Fact-Finding and Conciliation Commission. The Commission held sessions in both Geneva and South Africa, during which time it visited relevant locations, held hearings about the allegations, and interviewed those involved on both sides of the complaint. The Commission's conclusion, delivered on 8 May 1992, notably recommended that legislation limiting the full freedom of trade unions should be reformed, and "[n]o trade union or employers' organisation should be entitled by law to limit its membership by reference to race."

In recognition of the ILO's long-standing opposition to and action against apartheid, Nelson Mandela, Deputy President of the African National Congress, addressed the 77th Session of the International Labour Conference on 8 June 1990, not long after his liberation from prison. "We would like to thank the ILO for its enormous contribution to our common struggle. The actions you took... are important elements in the common efforts of all humanity to isolate and by this means destroy the system of apartheid."



A plenary sitting of the 86th Session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva, Switzerland, 2-18 June 1998) welcomes Global Marchers against Child Labour.

At the time of the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, questions were raised as to whether labour standards should be promoted through “social clauses” inserted in the economic agreements of the WTO. But, as Director-General Michel Hansenne pointed out in a press conference after the WTO’s 1996 Singapore Ministerial Meeting, the majority of states considered that labour standards continued to be the responsibility of the ILO. The WTO’s Declaration of Singapore attests to this: “We renew our commitment to the observance of internationally recognized core labour standards. The International Labour Organisation is the competent body to set and deal with these standards, and we affirm our support for its work in promoting them.”

With this reaffirmed expression of support for its work, the ILO moved forward by adopting the Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in June 1998. This Declaration requires member States to seek and promote: freedom of association and collective bargaining, the elimination of forced labour, the abolition of child labour, and the elimination of discrimination regarding employment and occupation. In doing so it established a social floor for the global economy.

The Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work is anchored by Eight Fundamental Conventions:

No. 29: Forced Labour Convention, 1930

No. 87: Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948

No. 98: Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949

No. 100: Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951

No. 105: Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957

No. 111: Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958

No. 138: Minimum Age Convention, 1973

No. 182: Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999

Member States not having ratified some or all of these Eight Fundamental Conventions are nevertheless expected to respect and embrace the principles promoted therein.



Mechanics performing tests in the cockpit of a plane belonging to Ethiopian Airlines, October 2003.

From its foundation, the ILO has consistently rallied for International Labour Standards to protect women workers, and to promote gender equality. As early as the First Session of the International Labour Conference in Washington, D.C. in 1919, two conventions were adopted which specifically concerned women: No. 3, on Maternity Protection, and No. 4, on Women's Night Work. In fact, since early on, the ILO has championed equal standards for women and men; apart from Conventions concerned specifically with women, there is no distinction by sex made in the text of Conventions.

Gender equality is now a central element of the ILO's decent work agenda. Decent work involves simultaneous progress on the four key areas of ILO's work: rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue.



Children in a school destined for former sewers of soccer balls. This school is part of an ILO Field Project in Sialkot, Pakistan (October 2005).

The ILO launched the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) in 1992, to intensively target this widespread scourge through education, monitoring, labour inspection, and time-bound measures to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. IPEC aside, the ILO has been involved since its inception in formulating International Labour Standards to protect the children and young adults of the world. Note the following Conventions, which span the existence of the ILO:

- No. 5: Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919
- No. 6: Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1919
- No. 7: Minimum Age (Sea) Convention, 1920
- No. 10: Minimum Age (Agriculture) Convention, 1921
- No. 16: Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea) Convention, 1921
- No. 33: Minimum Age (Non-Industrial Employment) Convention, 1932
- No. 58: Minimum Age (Sea) Convention (Revised), 1936
- No. 59: Minimum Age (Industry) Convention (Revised), 1937
- No. 60: Minimum Age (Non-Industrial Employment) Convention (Revised), 1937
- No. 77: Medical Examination of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1946
- No. 78: Medical Examination of Young Persons (Non-Industrial Occupations) Convention, 1946
- No. 79: Night Work of Young Persons (Non-Industrial Occupations) Convention, 1946
- No. 90: Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention (Revised), 1948
- No. 112: Minimum Age (Fishermen) Convention, 1959
- No. 123: Minimum Age (Underground Work) Convention, 1965
- No. 124: Medical Examination of Young Persons (Underground Work) Convention, 1965
- No. 138: Minimum Age Convention, 1973
- No. 182: Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999



Presentation of the Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, London, 24 February 2004. From left to right: Benjamin William Mkapa (President of Tanzania), Tarja Halonen (President of Finland) and Juan Somavia (ILO Director-General).

The Decent Work agenda, which sums up the ILO's goals and guides its action, received important support from the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. This independent Commission, established in 2002 by the ILO to examine how to increase access to the benefits of globalization and to ensure that globalization contributes in achieving social goals, was chaired by two sitting Presidents: President Benjamin William Mkapa of Tanzania and President Tarja Halonen of Finland. Its report, released in 2004, identified 57 measures to promote a fair globalization, and argued that Decent Work should be a global goal, integrated into both national and international action. The report was widely circulated, and was influential both in national policy formulation and in global debates, highlighted by the UN General Assembly's adoption of Resolution 59/57, which endorsed the conclusions contained in the report.



Closing sitting of the 94th Session (Maritime) of the International Labour Conference, Geneva, Switzerland, 23 February 2006. From left to right: Ian Newton (Clerk of the Conference); Jean-Marc Schindler (Government delegate - France, President of the Conference); ILO Director-General Juan Somavia; and Brian Orrell (Seafarers' delegate from the United Kingdom).

In 1919, the First Session of the International Labour Conference, as well as the Governing Body, took into account a French request to institute an International Labour Conference with maritime issues at its core. This led to the convocation of the Second Session of the International Labour Conference in Genoa on 15 June 1920, with maritime issues exclusively comprising the order of the day. Maritime Sessions of the International Labour Conference were not held regularly until 1976; rather the Governing Body called them as the need arose. Since 1976 a Maritime Session has been convened approximately once every ten years.

Early Conventions regarding maritime issues have dealt with conditions of contract, ship inspection, and minimum age for employment. In 1946, the 28th Session (Maritime) of the International Labour Conference was held in Seattle. There, Conventions regulating almost all aspects of maritime life were adopted: sleeping conditions, medical examinations, paid vacation, social security clauses, salaries, and duration of work.

The 94th (Maritime) Session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva, 7-23 February 2006) took as its aim the unprecedented task of adopting a comprehensive International Labour Convention to consolidate almost all ILO maritime labour Conventions and Recommendations currently in force - over 60 texts - and set out the conditions for decent work in the increasingly globalized maritime sector. This Convention, the result of intense tripartite negotiation, was designed to secure the widest possible acceptability among governments, shipowners and seafarers committed to the principles of decent work. It will come into force 12 months after the date on which there have been registered ratifications by at least 30 Members with a total share in the world gross tonnage of ships of 33 per cent.



ILO Staff commemorates World AIDS Day in 2006.

With the appearance of HIV/AIDS in the early 1980s, worldwide workplaces were faced with a new challenge. Accordingly, in 1988 the ILO and the WHO held a joint consultation on AIDS in the workplace. A tripartite reunion of ILO constituents in Namibia in 1999 led to the formation of a platform on action against AIDS in Africa; this soon expanded to the acceptance of a resolution on the broader topic of HIV/AIDS in the workplace by the International Labour Conference at its 88th Session (June 2000). Following this resolution, the ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work debuted in November 2000.

The ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work promptly developed a Code of Practice with strong key principles, chief among them prevention, education, non-discrimination of workers on the basis of their real or perceived HIV status, and the rule stipulating that a job applicant or employee's HIV/AIDS status is confidential and will not engender prejudice. After the acceptance of the Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS at work by the ILO Governing Body in June 2001, the ILO joined the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), in order to reinforce a strong, cohesive response to HIV/AIDS throughout the United Nations system.