



Independent Evaluation of the InFocus Programme on Socio-Economic Security

International Labour Office

Evaluation Unit

September 2005

Preface

This evaluation report provides the background documentation and analysis for the basis of the findings, conclusions and recommendations set out in the summary report GB.294/PFA/8/2, “Independent evaluation of the InFocus Programme on Socio-economic Security”, presented by the Office to the Governing Body at its 294th Session in November 2005.

This report was prepared by independent consultants with no previous involvement in the SES programme. The evaluation team was composed of Mr. Roger Maconick as senior external evaluator and team leader, and Ms. Carla Henry of the ILO Evaluation Unit. Responsibility for the content and presentation of findings and recommendations rests with the external evaluator. As such, the views and opinions expressed in the report do not necessarily correspond to the views of the ILO, its members, or implementing partners.

Table of Contents

1	Executive Summary.....	4
1.1	Introduction	4
1.2	Programme strategies and approach.....	4
1.3	Major programme outcomes and impact	5
1.4	Management issues.....	6
1.5	Recommendations	6
2	Introduction and Evaluation Methodology.....	8
2.1	Introduction	8
2.2	Evaluation scope and methodology.....	8
2.3	Evaluation methodology and limitations.....	9
2.4	Structure of the report.....	9
3	Context and Programme Response.....	10
3.1	Origins: socio-economic security and decent work.....	10
3.2	Programme scope.	10
3.3	Policy and strategic framework	11
3.4	Organizational arrangements.....	12
4	Implementation of major components of strategy.....	12
4.1	Survey and database development.....	13
4.2	Policy Work.....	15
4.3	Conferences, Symposia, Workshops and Seminars.....	16
4.4	Conclusion.....	16
5	Major Findings of Programme Results	17
5.1	The strategic choice of SES within the ILO's decent work policy framework.....	17
5.2	Contribution of SES to clarifying the concept of social security	18
5.3	Programme strategy and approach	19
5.4	Programme ambition and achievement	19
5.5	Relevance of policy prescriptions for many countries	19
5.6	Balance between knowledge production and application.....	20
5.7	Research and Publications	21
5.8	Media and public awareness initiatives	22
5.9	Tripartite partnership	22
5.10	SES's performance on gender	23
6	Organizational and Resource Arrangements.....	23
6.1	SES implementation and development as set forward by ILO governance processes.....	23
6.2	The core work of SES as cross-cutting and mainstreamed	26
6.3	Financing and Resource Allocation.....	28
7	Conclusions and Recommendations	29
7.1	Conclusions	29
7.2	Recommendations	31

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACT/EMP	Bureau of Employers Activities (ILO)
ACTRAV	Bureau of Workers Activities (ILO)
CODEV	Department of Development Cooperation (ILO)
Constituents	Members of the ILO (governments and the recognized workers' and employers' organizations of the member States)
DCOMM	Department of Communication (ILO)
ELFS	Enterprise Labour Flexibility Surveys
GB	Governing Body (ILO)
HQ	Headquarters
IAB	International Advisory Board
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICLS	International Conference of Labour Statisticians
IFP	ILO InFocus Programme
ILC	International Labour Conference (ILO)
ILO	International Labour Organisation/ International Labour Office
INTEGRATION	Department of Policy Integration
IOE	International Organization of Employers
P&B	Programme and Budget (ILO)
PSS	People's Security Surveys
RB	Regular Budget
RBTC	Regular Budget Technical Cooperation
SES	Socio-economic security
SEWA	Self-Employed Women's Association
SPF	Strategic Policy Framework (ILO)
STAT	Bureau of Statistics (ILO)
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WIEGO	Women in the Informal Economy; Globalizing and Organizing
XB	Extra-budgetary funds

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The evaluation of the InFocus Programme on the Socio-economic Security (SES) is in keeping with the ILO evaluation strategy examined by the Governing Body in November 2002 (GB285/PFA/10) to evaluate all ILO's eight InFocus programmes over two biennia.

This document presents findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation team. Some findings relate to general ILO programme and management issues requiring Governing Body Office-wide action. Thus, recommendations are addressed, as appropriate, to the Governing Body, the Director-General and the management of the SES programme.

1.2 Programme strategies and approach

It is appropriate that one of the early tasks for the newly recreated¹ evaluation function in ILO was to undertake an evaluation of the organization's Socio- Economic Security programme.² While relatively modest in terms of resources devoted to it (some \$13.7 million for 1999-2005, including regular and extra budgetary) compared to several other In Focus programmes, it is strategic in nature and its focus³ is close to the basic *raison d'être* of the ILO. The programme represents an effort to rethink and possibly realign the ILO's and the international community's stance *vis à vis* decent work. The programme has sought to re-examine ILO's relationship to personal security in the light of the changing environment in which the organization operates.⁴ The ILO and the SES programme are to be congratulated for having addressed this set of issues.

There is much to applaud, much to criticise in the evolution of this programme and in the way it has been managed by the ILO. But above all, there is much for the ILO to digest, absorb and put to good use. An important question has been raised and an interesting conceptual approach to its solution has been put forward. A dedicated and very hardworking team has been formed, data has been collected, using innovative ways, and analysed. That analysis has been shared with interested researchers in a number of countries and sometimes prepared with them. It has also been shared with some policy makers. Interesting policy prescriptions have emerged, which have aroused a response and prompted vigorous debate in some of the countries concerned and in some instances policies appear to have been influenced by the analysis emanating from the SES programme.

¹ March 2005

² The recently established IMF independent evaluation office undertook as its first evaluation an evaluation of the prolonged use of IMF resources by certain states. This was a comprehensive look at a major strategic issue of concern to both the organization and the world community that it serves.

³ Along with some related work supported by the ILO via the World Commission on Social Dimensions of Globalisation

⁴ The more dynamic changes in the external environment in which institutions operate, the greater are the challenges that existing organizations and institutions face. The implications of such dynamics, both for private firms and public organizations, can be summed up in the maxim "The rate of learning within an organization needs to be equal to or greater than the rate of change in the environment" See R. Revans, *Action Learning: New Techniques for Management* (London, Blond and Briggs, 1980).

1.3 Major programme outcomes and impact

There is little evidence, however, that much of the analytical work has been converted into actionable policy recommendations. There is less evidence that many of those recommendations have actually been implemented or that the programme had thought through the steps required putting those recommendations into effect and the capacities that the programme (and/or the ILO) would have needed to do so. The impact of this programme at this stage at national level therefore remains potential rather than actual. Furthermore, there seems to have been less than optimal communication and exchange between the relevant parts of the ILO concerning:- i) the basic concept, ii) the way data has been collected, analysed, used and made accessible to interested parties, iii) the policy alternatives put forward as a result of the research and their conversion into action.

On the one hand the SES programme has attempted to redefine the idea of social security in the context of a concern for decent work, while drawing its conceptual roots from each ILO department, with a “claim” on the topic. On the other hand the programme has in several instances worked at arms length with some of the departments concerned. There has been an imperfect meeting of minds within the ILO about which data to collect and the confidence to place in the SES analysis; on how to collect data and on the analysis and interpretation of that data.

Furthermore, an innovative⁵ programme, exploring issues of potentially great importance for the ILO, has been run without any visible monitoring system to show how the innovation was evolving in the light of experience, and to inform senior management about consequent developments. Access to the data, results and the processes of producing them by those outside the programme and sometimes by outside researchers who were directly involved in supporting the programme’s work appears to be uneven. Some parties inside and outside the ILO with a clear a priori “right” of access to the databases and research claimed they had not been able to do so. At present it is not clear who outside of the Office has right of access to what.

Interaction with the International Advisory Board, set up at the outset to help the programme appears to have flagged after several years⁶. This is significant as the programme has put out an impressive volume of publications. More active and more consistent interaction with and review by the IAB would have mitigated some the concerns expressed above about the lack of a monitoring mechanism, at least as far as quality and implications of the published output of the programme are concerned.

At this moment the programme appears to have lost momentum within the ILO and to be on the verge of dissolution. There is a risk that a considerable amount of dedicated work will be wasted and the intellectual capital in which the ILO has invested will be squandered. This would be a suboptimal outcome, particularly in those countries where the SES programme already appears to have had some impact on thinking about policy, including for example India, Ukraine and South Africa, as well as in those countries where the research stimulated via the SES programme is adding some yeast to national discussions of employment issues including Tanzania and possibly Ethiopia. Since the ILO, *inter alia* via the SES programme, has good outreach into the intellectual community

⁵ We would categorise it as experimental but the programme’s management disclaimed such a description.

⁶ We were advised that the Board only met twice and some members were invited only to an initial meeting in Geneva. Several members of the Board, who responded to our enquiries, remain strong supporters of the programme and its aims.

interested in its issues, such sub optimal use of resources has consequences that go well beyond the ILO itself.

1.4 Management issues

There is little evidence that the management system of the ILO provided the supervision necessary to monitor and give feedback on this largely exploratory research programme, or to attenuate the tensions that may arise between a unit that is potentially redefining organisational practice and the ways that existing programmes and units may be expected to work in the future. Similarly, the programme's director was not required to set up a method to monitor the usefulness of research innovations. External donors to the programme appear to not have been demanding in their monitoring expectations.

There are other areas of concern. For example a flagship publication⁷ put out in September 2004 was issued as a SES product rather than an ILO-endorsed set of policies, however, with little clarity as to why this distinction was being made. The publication posed challenges to the Office in handling how to distinguish between what was published work that was exploratory and innovative, but that did not represent ILO policy positions. Had it been reviewed with the latter more in mind, it could have converted what is basically an important report raising serious issues into one that the ILO could safely share with the inter-governmental process.

In a nutshell: ideas excellent, execution less so.

1.5 Recommendations

The evaluation offers the following recommendations:

- 1) The ILO is in possession of some important research and analysis generated by this programme. It needs to build on this and find a constructive and cost effective way to convert this work into the ILO's mainstream programmes and activities.
- 2) Issues related to sustaining SES areas of work need to be resolved within a broader rationalization scheme for consolidating functions and responsibilities for research, statistics and data collection, and national policy analysis and advisory support. Cost savings can likely be realized by consolidating functions and responsibilities for research, statistics and data collection, and national policy analysis and advisory support.
- 3) The ILO needs to ensure that any department following up these issues has not only the resources to pursue SES's analysis but also the capacity to convert any such analysis into policies that can be implemented.
- 4) The programme cannot continue its work with only its regular budget resources. If donor funding for SES declines, the ILO needs to develop a strategy to mainstream priority areas of work within the ILO's regular budget or an extra budgetary resource mobilization strategy integrated into an Office-level approach. To leave the programme intact but dependent on internal collaboration with other units where it has the mandate but not the authority or control over resources would not be wise.
- 5) The Social Security Department, STAT and other technical programmes should develop a new plan for more effective collaboration on decent work indicators,

⁷ [Economic Security for a Better World](#), ISBN 92-2-115611-7

which responds to lessons learned from work done so far by SES, with cost-effectiveness of the outcomes as a major driver of the work.

- 6) Advisory Boards established to guide programmes such as SES should be kept active in advising for the life of the programme concerned. ILO needs to supervise any such arrangements made for future programmes.
- 7) All programmes need monitoring. Innovative programmes need innovative monitoring. ILO and the Governing Body can clarify standards and expectations in this regard.
- 8) All programmes should be required to keep adequate and up to date documentation on their performance and internal audit should follow up this requirement
- 9) The procedures for access to the results of research ILO has been involved in and the data, on which those results are based, need to be clear and to be observed. At present it is not clear who has access to what, who decides and on what basis. Senior management may wish to ensure that no ambiguities occur in this regard in future.
- 10) Senior management may wish to consider how in future to manage programmes such as SES so as to maintain the originality and flexibility needed for experimental, exploratory work, while at the same time keeping them consistently productive of both analysis and actionable policy recommendations which further the Organisation's mandate. A frank annual presentation to the Governing Body on results achieved and pitfalls encountered by those in charge of promoting original, solution-oriented research may be one solution.

2 Introduction and Evaluation Methodology

2.1 Introduction

Created in 1999, SES is one of several technical programmes falling within the ILO's strategic objective of enhancing the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all. At its formation, the programme was intended to enhance, through data and analysis, knowledge of economic and social insecurity and better formulation of policies to combat the adverse effects of insecurity. Initial performance expectations were defined in terms of ILO data and research used by policymakers to form policies.

SES was proposed as an ILO response to mounting evidence of increased marginalization of the global work force through the spread of flexible and informal forms of labour, overstretched social protection systems, and growing inaccessibility to social security schemes. Underlying factors of insecurity are extreme poverty, structural unemployment and social exclusion.

Major aims of the programme were laid out in the 2000-01 programme and budget⁸:

- Policy and institutional support that leads to a growing proportion of the world's population with having social and economic security;
- Methodology development on how the poor and economically insecure can obtain minimal income security most effectively;
- Identification of cost-effective and equitable ways in which social protection can be extended to all groups;
- Support to policy-makers to promote social and economic security schemes, including analysis of policy choices;
- Promote the income and labour market security of the unemployed; and
- Reduce differences between groups with regard to socio-economic security.

At its outset, the strategy adopted was on knowledge development focus, through policy studies and advisory services, development of a worldwide statistical database, and technical support to extend social protection to a larger share of the population. The programme also helped to set up a network of institutions and individuals researching labour issues and promoting national strategies and policies. It was set up with four professional staff and two support staff using regular budget resources. An international advisory board (IAB) was established to guide it. The members of this board participated in this work on a voluntary basis, without compensation.

2.2 Evaluation scope and methodology

This evaluation looks at the programme's performance over the period 1999-2005. It examines the ILO's strategy to contribute to the social and economic security in a dynamic international context through the creation and development of the SES programme. It endeavours to identify what works well and where improvements can be made.

The evaluation has:

⁸ GB.276/PFA/9. Volume III The technical programme envelope.

- Reviewed evidence of the direct and indirect impact/effects of the programme's work at national and global levels;
- Assessed the continued relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme's design and strategies as defined at InFocus programme formation and through subsequent refinements;
- Assessed the particular management arrangements that characterize the programme and its interfaces with other parts in the ILO.

The evaluation has focused on three main programmatic areas:

- 1) Global priorities and agendas for social and economic security;
- 2) SES's implementation strategies; and
- 3) Achievement of intended results.

This work was complemented with a review of organizational issues related to programme operational effectiveness and efficiency within a results-based approach, and governance and management structures and practices.

2.3 Evaluation methodology and limitations

There are three basic areas that needed to be evaluated in this exercise; the conceptual work of the SES programme; the conversion of that conceptual work into actionable policy recommendation; the implementation and implementability of those policy recommendations.

This evaluation endeavours to do so based on a variety of sources of information that were available concerning the SES programme: - a review of the literature put out by the programme, on interactions with the International Advisory Board set up at the outset to guide the program; on interviews with a range of ILO headquarters staff in May 2005; on field visits to three countries in Africa in May/June 2005 and inputs from a national consultant, who examined the work of SES in the Ukraine. An independent and dispassionate examination of the work of the SES's work in India had been requested as an input to this report but was not completed in such a way as to be available to the evaluation.

As noted elsewhere in the body of the report no system was set up to monitor the progress of the innovations spawned by the programme and the usage of the ideas and policies they put forth. This has consequences for the data available to the evaluators not least regarding success in the conversion of the programme's conceptual work into actionable policy recommendation; and the actual implementation of those policy recommendations. As such there were minimal inputs in terms of the requirements for a fully rigorous evaluation of a programme with this scale of ambition. For the reasons adumbrated above, the report's findings and recommendations are somewhat tentative and should be treated with due caution.

2.4 Structure of the report

The report is organized into six chapters. Chapter II provides a short history of the ILO's work in socio-economic security and the rationale for the SES approach. Chapter III summarizes findings of strategy implementation at international level and national levels. Chapter IV summarizes findings related to SES results. Chapter V addresses organizational governance and management arrangements and associated issues. Chapter VI presents a summary of major conclusions and recommendations from the evaluation.

3 Context and Programme Response

3.1 Origins: socio-economic security and decent work

A premise of the ILO's rationale for creating the SES programme was that ensuring basic security associated with meeting basic needs could be taken further to explore work-related security in its different forms, with the intention of deepening the concept of decent work.

Since 1999, the ILO's work has been on decent work, expressed in its mission statement as "creating opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity and security and human dignity". This new approach has embedded within it the ILO's core approaches of employment, sustainable livelihoods, social exclusion and social justice. The concept of decent work is anchored in long-established concerns of the ILO, and takes expression through core strategies linked to employment, social protection, workers' rights and social dialogue.

Within the broad area of social protection the ILO's approach to social security has focused on effective means to meet people's urgent subsistence needs and to provide protection against contingencies. Traditionally, social security systems are designed to provide protection for workers against various contingencies, and cater more to the needs of wage employees in the formal economy. However, recognizing that a large share of the working population falls outside this sphere, social security arrangements must also meet the basic needs of vulnerable groups and protect the working poor against risk. This has prompted ILO approaches in meeting basic needs and managing covariate and non-covariate risks people invariably face.

Formation of the SES programme also followed on a major initiative to expand the range of indicators of labour market performance, and to assist member States in improving the collection of labour market information and widening the range of labour market indicators. This work has subsequently been taken forward under the Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM), which has focused on defining and measuring labour market dynamics.

In addition, recognizing the role of statistical work in supporting ILO's knowledge strategy, the Director-General established an advisory group on statistics. The themes to be addressed by the group included development of national statistical indicators which measure and monitor decent work. The group was also tasked to rationalize the ILO's 46 plus multi-country statistical and textual databases. Several professionals from SES were active in this group.

3.2 Programme scope.

The SES programme took as its nucleus seven forms of security that had been defined in recent work:

Labour market security - Adequate employment and work opportunities, through high levels of employment ensured by macro-economic policy.

Employment security - Protection against arbitrary dismissal, and employment stability compatible with economic dynamism.

Work security (Occupational health and safety) - Protection against accidents and illness at work, through safety and health regulations, regulated limits on working time, unsociable hours, and a reduction in stress at work.

Job security - A niche designated as an occupation or "career", the opportunity to develop a sense of occupation.

Skill reproduction security - Widespread opportunities to gain and retain skills, through innovative means as well as apprenticeships and employment training.

Income security - Provision of adequate incomes.

Representation security - Protection of collective voice in the labour market, through independent trade unions and employer associations and other bodies able to represent the interests of workers and working communities.

SES's programme approach was based on the conviction that over the past decade the ILO faced a new challenge linked with growing globalization-- to understand and confront the growing problem of economic and social insecurity at national levels.

Documenting and combating various forms of economic and social insecurity would first take the form of information gathering and research. However, as described in the P & B 2000-01 document⁹, the creation of SES was linked to ILO's wider operational goals to help:

- develop policies and institutions that provide a growing proportion of the world's population with social and economic security, so that they can obtain and retain decent work, develop their skills and competencies, and have an opportunity to live in economic stability;
- identify ways in which the poor and economically insecure can obtain minimal income security most effectively;
- identify cost-effective and equitable ways in which social protection can be extended to all groups currently excluded from mainstream statutory social security schemes, including the extension of such schemes, the development of new approaches, and stronger linkages between statutory and other means of social protection;
- ensure that policy makers are assisted in introducing schemes to promote social and economic security, and are advised on the advantages and disadvantages of alternative policy options;
- promote the income and labour market security of the unemployed, consistent with the encouragement of job seeking and assurance of support to engage in socially useful activities;
- reduce differences between groups with regard to socio-economic security, notably gender differences, and to promote policies to deal with forms of insecurity affecting particular groups, such as workers with disabilities.

3.3 Policy and strategic framework

Operationally, the programme was committed to taking forward in an integrated manner the various dimensions of socio-economic security: income, employment, job, labour market, work place, skills development and representation. From the start, emphasis was placed on building a strong knowledge base, including a worldwide statistical database, to be developed in collaboration with other ILO statistical activities. Surveys were to identify

⁹ GB.276/PFA/9, November 1999.

patterns of security and insecurity at individual and workplace levels. With the introduction of strategic budgeting for the biennium 2000-01 that sets out the ILO's programme around the organizing principle of Decent Work, IFP SES established a strategy and accountability framework oriented around the results shown in Box 1.

Over the past five years SES has focused its operational strategies and means of action on addressing a series of key issues.

- What constitutes socio-economic insecurity?
- What are the sources of such insecurity? What economic, labour and social policies could improve socio-economic security while promoting sustainable economic dynamism?
- What forms of security are required to lay the foundations for "decent work", or occupational security?

Box 1. SES results-based framework, including reported results

2000-03: The number of member States where data are generated and used to develop strategies and policies to combat economic and social insecurity.

2001 target 12: actual 16.

2003 target 12: actual 27.

2000-01 ILO's research is widely cited and used by policy makers. (No target set and no subsequent reporting.)

2004-05: Indicator revised to focus on member States in which improved data are generated and social policies developed as a result of tripartite consultations that take into account ILO policy recommendations. Target 20.

3.4 Organizational arrangements

At its outset, the programme was to build up collaboration with other ILO programmes, to avoid administrative barriers and ensure the integration of socio-economic security themes and issues into ILO work across the world. Likewise, recognizing that women experience greater insecurity, the programme was designed with a strong gender dimension, including initiatives that primarily concern women.

In addition to a regular budget allocation, funds were raised from the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Government of Italy, the Government of the Netherlands, the UNDP, and the Canton of Geneva. According to SES management, the total resources allocated to the programme were \$13.72 million. Of this total the Dutch government has provided \$8.287 million, or roughly 60%.

4 Implementation of major components of strategy

SES programme implementation has centred around survey and database development, policy work and publications, and networking through participation in conferences, workshops and seminars. The following sections summarize work completed in these areas.

4.1 Survey and database development

According to SES' own reporting to the evaluators the Programme has developed a global database system with six components:

- 1) The SES Primary database – national data collected via national correspondents.
- 2) The SES Secondary database – national data collated from ILO and other international agencies.
- 3) The Social Security database – numerical information on social security policies converted from legislative text data. This covers over 120 countries as of May 2005.
- 4) The Labour Standards database – a system of information on ratification and application of ILO Conventions dealing with relevant aspects of socio-economic security.
- 5) The Enterprise Labour Flexibility and Security Surveys – 13 countries, see below.
- 6) The People's Security Surveys – 19 countries, see below.

The Primary Database has data for 130 ILO countries, with about 870 variables for each country. The Social Security database has about 176 variables for 124 countries. Building the software and entering the millions of digits of information into the system have been huge tasks. Approximate resources needed for each annual round: \$500,000 (SES estimate)

The Enterprise Labour Flexibility and Security Surveys (ELFS) are conducted via personal interviews with employers and managers actually running industrial enterprises and involve lengthy visits to factories. Through the ELFS, detailed primary data have been collected from about 15,000 industrial enterprises. It is considered by SES to be the most comprehensive statistical exercise of this kind undertaken by the ILO (Table 1). The amount of data collected from each enterprise is extensive.

Table 1: Enterprise labour flexibility and security surveys (ELFS), 1998–2005

Country	Reference period	Number of firms	Sectors	Coverage
Ukraine	1998–2000	1684	Manufacturing	26 regions
Russia	1998–2000	400	Manufacturing	3 regions
Philippines	1998–2000	1300	Manufacturing + services	3 regions
Indonesia	1998–2000	2000	Manufacturing + services	5 regions
Pakistan	1998–2000	650	Manufacturing	3 regions
Brazil	1998–2000	500	Manufacturing	3 regions
Chile	1998–2000	300	Manufacturing	3 regions
Moldova	1999–2001	300	Manufacturing	National
Azerbaijan	1999–2001	300	Manufacturing	National
Tanzania	1999–2001	380	Manufacturing + services	National

China	1999–2001	1000	Manufacturing	3 cities
Russia	1999–2001	300	Manufacturing	3 regions
Ukraine	2001–2002	1800	Manufacturing	26 regions
Ukraine	2003–2004	1840	All Sectors	
Ukraine	2004–2005	1900		
Russia	2001–2002	300	Manufacturing	3 regions
Sri Lanka	2003–2005	300	Manufacturing	3 regions

The programme has used data to support technical papers and reports, including work done by national and international collaborators. The programme has also used the data to generate the ***Decent Workplace Index***, identifying firms operating decent work practices in terms of the six forms of relevant security for workers. Approximate cost of a case study: \$90,000 (SES estimate).

The People's Security Surveys (PSS), which are household surveys, have been conducted in all major regions and have covered diverse set of socio-economic contexts, as shown in Table 2. The PSS have supported numerous technical papers and several books, including the book on the African surveys, Confronting Economic Insecurity in Africa.

In December 2001, the Programme organised a two-day tripartite conference in Geneva on the first round of People's Security Surveys, which was opened by the Director General. There were over 100 participants, with over 20 technical papers. There was also a two-day inter-Sector workshop on the Latin American surveys. There have also been international conferences based on papers on national surveys in Dar es Salaam and Kiev.

The Programme has produced a training manual to enable national statistical offices and Ministries of Labour to operationalize the PSS in other countries. Approximate cost of a PSS initiative: \$110,000

Table 2: People's Security Surveys (PSS), 1998–2005

Country	Rural (R) Urban (U)	Areas covered	Age groups	Number of households
Argentina	U	3 metro. Areas	15–64	2800
Bangladesh	R + U	Dhaka City	15–59	3200
Brazil	U	3 metro. Areas	15–64	4000
Chile	U	3 metro. Areas	15–64	1180
China	R + U	3 regions	18+	3000
Ethiopia	R + U	2 regions	16+	1520
Ghana	R + U	3 regions	15–64	3000
Hungary	R + U	National	18–59	1000
India	R + U	Gujarat	15–60	1236
Indonesia	R + U	4 provinces	15+	3000

Pakistan	U	Karachi City	15–64	750
Russia	U + R	3 regions	15–72	2316
South Africa	U	2 metro. Areas	15–64	1600
Tanzania	R + U	3 regions	14–65	1950
Ukraine 2000	R & U	National	18+	8200
Ukraine 2001	R & U	National	18+	9400
Ukraine 2002	R & U	National	18+	9400
Ukraine 2003	R & U	National	18+	9400
Ukraine 2004	R & U	National	18+	9400
Sri Lanka 2005	R & U	Seven districts	16+	3000
*Namibia 2005	R & U	Five regions	16+	2000
* Mozambique 2005	R & U	Five regions	16+	1200
* Morocco 2005	R & U	To be decided	16+	?

4.2 Policy Work

Basic Income

SES has given attention to initiatives that appeared to it to hold out the prospect of moving towards universal basic economic security. This has covered evaluations of the *renda minima* and *bolsa escola* schemes in Brazil, assessments of the social pension and old-age income grant in South Africa and Namibia respectively, including a book on the feasibility of a basic income grant in South Africa. Minimum Income Schemes in Western Europe, a compendium, was published in 2003, and a comprehensive set of papers in the book, Promoting Income Security as a Right, published in 2005¹⁰, as well as articles, including one done at the request of the ICFTU. SES indicated that it has been assisting national coalitions to promote policies for a basic income security grant.

Unemployment Benefits

Surmising that they are failing and shrivelling all over the world, SES has worked on the applicability and impact of unemployment insurance benefits, producing a global assessment of trends in unemployment benefit systems. Analyses of unemployment schemes were completed in China, the Republic of Korea, Argentina, the Russian Federation, South Africa and Ukraine. It also produced several analyses of “workfare” schemes that have evolved in some countries in the face of the failure of traditional unemployment schemes.

Pensions and Pension Systems

Work on pensions has been carried out by several parts of the Social Protection Sector, with the programme mainly cantering on the global database and the social security database. Through the global database, the programme has collected pension data from

¹⁰ A book on income security as a development right is close to completion. See Appendix for details.

over 120 countries, from which an old-age income security index was generated and included in Economic Security for a Better World.

Care Work Policy

Policy options for care work were analysed at an international workshop of experts and a book, Care Work: The Quest for Security, was published in 2002, and followed by several other publications on how to fund and legitimize care work. The aim was to clarify how care work can be integrated into a perspective that treats all forms of work equally.

Income Security and HIV/AIDS

SES has begun work to understand the links between economic insecurity and the impact of HIV/AIDS, particularly in African countries, to learn how policies can improve the situation.

Liberalisation of Social Services

Because it considered the issues central to the development of the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), the SES Programme focused on social protection issues associated with what it described as the Washington Consensus, i.e. policies of economic liberalization. SES has commissioned 13 reviews of specific spheres of social services – pensions, education, higher education, employment services, healthcare, etc.). The evaluation did not examine these reviews.

4.3 Conferences, Symposia, Workshops and Seminars

SES organised four international conferences – two in Geneva (one in December 2001 on the People's Security Surveys, the other in September 2003 focusing on income security), one in Addis Ababa, one in Tanzania (May 2003, focusing on the survey work in African countries) – and co-organised four others – one in Berlin in 2000, one in Dubrovnik in 2003, one in Barcelona in 2004, and one in Istanbul in October 2004. A conference on decentralization of social protection in Kerala and the impact on women was organised in 2002. This attracted a great deal of publicity, especially as over 32,000 women turned up for the opening ceremony. This was co-organised with the Joint Committee of Eight Panchayats and the Kerala Health Studies and Research Centre.

SES organised five *international technical workshops* (two or three day events in which technical papers by Programme members and outside social scientists at the forefront of thinking on the issues). At the outset, a two-day technical workshop was organised on developing statistical instruments for the Programme. Later, one was organised with WIEGO and SEWA, the women's groups specialising in work on the informal economy, on "reconceptualising work with an emphasis on security".

In Ukraine SES, in collaboration with the Government's Statistical Committee, organised four tripartite conferences funded by government and UNDP, each generating media coverage.

The Programme organised two three-day workshops attended by the International Advisory Board and held in the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Centre, in 2000 and 2001. These involved considerable preparatory work and were pivotal in sharpening the analytical and empirical work of the Programme.

4.4 Conclusion

It is apparent that SES has done a great deal of work. Most of this work was directly related to socio-economic security issues. Most of this work involved collecting data,

analyzing and diffusing the results in workshops and meetings and by numerous publications. At the global level, the contribution to the literature was recognized by various researchers and practitioners. Some, who did not agree with SES policy positions, asserted that their analysis was designed to support pre established conclusions and policy positions. Some others, including several members of the IAB, were fervent admirers of the ideas which the SES programme supports and the analysis it has been pursuing, and were concerned about any lessening of ILO support or concern for these issues.

In drawing these conclusions the evaluation has tried to consider evidence of the outcome of SES's work at national and global levels. But there is little to go on. The effort was hampered by poor documentation and the absence of a system to monitor the effects or effectiveness of their work and so any conclusions must be tentative.

In reviewing implementation practices at the country level SES does not have predetermined indicative planning figures or specific criteria for geographical distribution. Selection of regions/countries takes into account the interests of donors, national context and specific requests and programmatic approaches. The process has not regularly involved the ILO field offices, and in some cases little information linked to these initial planning decisions appears to have filtered down to them, nor is there consistent evidence that their views were listened to or even sought.

5 Major Findings of Programme Results

The programme had the following goals¹¹:

- Help develop policies and institutions that provide a growing proportion of the world's population with social and economic security, so that they can obtain and retain decent work, develop their skills and competencies, and have an opportunity to live in economic stability;
- Identify ways in which the poor and economically insecure can obtain minimal income security most effectively;
- Identify cost-effective and equitable ways in which social protection can be extended to all groups currently excluded from mainstream statutory social security schemes, including the extension of such schemes, the development of new approaches, and stronger linkages between statutory and other means of social protection.

5.1 The strategic choice of SES within the ILO's decent work policy framework

Many multilateral organisations have transformed themselves, are transforming themselves, still need to be transformed¹² in order to retain their relevance and appeal to the constituencies they represent. The ILO, as an organization with its tripartite governance structure of employers, labour unions and governments faces particular challenges in obtaining consensus in this regard. The decision of the new Director General and his transition team to pursue re-thinking the concept and practice of socio-economic security was an integral part of an effort to rethink ILO's role in a rapidly changing environment,

¹¹ GB.276/PFA/9, pages 34-42

¹² e.g. UNESCO, UNDP and UNIDO

and to re-orient the focus from one on *labour* to one on *work*. It was in the same vein as a subsequent larger effort which supported a World Commission on Social Dimensions of globalisation.

Was it a good strategic choice for the SES to raise this issue in this way, at this time? The Secretary General of the United Nations, in his first reform report, commented on the gap between aspiration and reality as one of the major problems facing the UN.¹³ The problems are so daunting and the resources allocated by the world to solving them are so scarce, that choosing the right problems for an agency to attack is an important strategic choice.

Was a redefinition of socio-economic security uniquely central to a repositioning of the ILO? Apparently not, in that the organization subsequently devoted considerable effort and political capital into supporting the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation, which issued its report in 2004¹⁴. It addresses on a wider canvas at least some of the ground traversed by the SES programme. But was the issue an important one? It appears to be so. As they noted in *Economic Security for a Better World*, “It is not too much of an exaggeration to state that the major divide in thinking about social and economic policy in the first decade of the 21st century is between those who regard the riskiness of modern existence as something to be welcomed and those who see it as something that must be curbed”¹⁵. In its efforts to identify a proper balance between these two extremes the SES programme has seized upon a significant issue. By urging a move towards basic security for all they are advancing a plausible overarching goal. They have yet to come up with the necessary strategy to advance that goal for a next phase, and have misallocated part of the considerable energy and ingenuity which they brought to the task.

5.2 Contribution of SES to clarifying the concept of social security

In terms of increasing conceptual clarity about the issues there are two potential pitfalls. As the programme’s direction sees it, ILO is focusing on social security and working conditions as the pillars of social protection, while it would urge consideration of a wider range of vulnerabilities. The programme’s direction plausibly differentiates between systemic risk and idiosyncratic risk and urges a greater concern for the former. But in doing so they open themselves to comment from two vantage points at a time when they have stated they differ from the central thrust of what ILO is doing.

The ‘conjunctural’ issue is that it is difficult for any entity to discuss or elaborate global standards for personal and or social security without addressing the effect of a change in the perceived level of individual security in previously “secure” countries over the last four years. This does not appear to have been reflected in any of the work done by SES. Yet decision and policy makers have a given amount of time and policy space to devote to any

¹³ “The smooth flow of international transactions is made possible by rules of the road devised by the United Nations and its agencies. The world’s peoples are healthier and lead longer and more productive lives thanks to the eradication of diseases, improvement of nutritional standards, the promotion of agricultural development, the campaigns for literacy and the advocacy of the rights of women and children in which United Nations organizations have featured prominently----- **At the same time there remains a sizeable gap between aspiration and reality.** Despite the unprecedented prosperity that technological advances and the globalization of production and finance have brought to many countries neither Governments nor the United Nations, nor the private sector have found the key to eradicating the persistent poverty that grips the majority of mankind”. Report of the Secretary-General: “Renewing the United Nations: a programme for Reform”, A/51/950 paras 3-4

¹⁴ A Fair Globalisation: Creating Opportunities for All. ILO. 2004

¹⁵ *Economic Security for a Better World*, p. 388.

issue. If either or both are pre-empted by a concern for pressing issues of physical security for their own countries or for countries that are of concern for them, then concern for the issues of socio-economic security as defined by SES may be seen as relatively less relevant and may languish both in their thinking and even more in their actions.

On the other hand raising the issues of socio economic security prompts a further exploration of what are the limits of the concept of security. Is it possible to ignore other aspects of security in which risk plays a part, initiative, challenges, opportunities etc? At a more mundane level, there are issues of food, health and environmental security, which in addition to personal security, seem to have no less plausibility as part of a consideration of redefining security. So, perhaps any such re-consideration of the meaning of socio-economic security needs to be placed in a larger context which includes the variables (and others) just alluded to. It is this larger context which SES seems not have considered and they do not provide a rationale for why they have defined the limits in the way that they did. From ILO's efforts via the World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalisation, it is apparent the organisation felt differently.

5.3 Programme strategy and approach

The evaluation has examined the ILO's programme on socio-economic security as an organizational priority, and has focused on the programme portion that is managed from the SES unit, but situates this work in the broader context of the ILO's social protection programme and structures, as well as ILO's cross-cutting work to measure and monitor decent work.

The SES programme's scope embraces many aspects of ILO's technical work and has had potential synergies with a range of ILO initiatives. Its strategy, as described in its medium term work plan is embedded in the ILO's broader work on social dimensions of globalization. The strategy was reasonable and appropriate. Do research, derive policies and apply them. The first part has been done, the second somewhat and the third very little, if at all.

5.4 Programme ambition and achievement

Some might accuse the SES programme of being overly ambitious, but given the mandate they received at the outset to help rethink ILO's role in, that would appear to be unfair and inappropriate. What is more telling is the "failure" of the world outside ILO to adopt the policies espoused by SES or to adapt theirs under the influence of SES's analysis and advocacy and the greater "failure" of the world to put such policies into action. Similarly, the ILO as an organisation has not adopted SES prescriptions as a basis for its advocacy or for the technical co-operation it offers in most countries.

One of the originators of the Human Development Index has described it as a "vulgar" measure; an instrument that has imperfections but which acts a magnet for the attention of thinkers eager for analysis and guidance that helps them understand complex development issues. The HDI has been reasonably successful in setting in motion the processes that were intended. So far the ILO's work on the SES has yet to come up with either the magnetism or the measure needed to galvanize the organization or the international community to rethink its stance on socio-economic security.

5.5 Relevance of policy prescriptions for many countries

It is not entirely clear what has been the policy impact of SES work or that SES has a clear idea of what it has been. This is discussed later, but the difficulty lies in a largely absent

documentation showing how SES' work has shifted national dialogue, research, data collection and analysis, and evidence of policy-level influence.

Core policy prescriptions are evident in SES publications. Most prominently, the programme has actively and at times successfully supported the Basic Income Grant concept. But the leader of the SES programme was doing that while working for ILO prior to the inception of the SES programme, so the programme's actual additionality is hard to judge. This is particularly true for specific countries where policy prescriptions need to address national constraints.

5.6 Balance between knowledge production and application

The direction of the Socio-Economic Security Programme indicated, in a self evaluation performed in June, during, and perhaps prompted by, this evaluation exercise that the programme was set up with the objective of promoting a rights-based approach to social protection, which was coherent, so that the ILO could promote a basic economic security, while promoting new forms of social solidarity. To give credence to that perspective, it seemed to them essential that they generate new ways of looking at people's insecurities and at the relevance of traditional social security policies and institutions for addressing those insecurities, particularly in developing countries but also in any flexible labour market in which informal labour and work were spreading.

So, the Programme began with a Medium-Term Work plan, and set out with three general objectives: i) to establish philosophical *principles* to justify policies and strategies to achieve social and economic security; ii) To develop and create a global database on the various dimensions of social and economic security, and iii) To identify policies appropriate for enhancing basic economic security.

The SES flagship report concludes "Basic security for all is an equitable principle on which to build a society and to enable everybody to live a life in which decent work is a meaningful proposition. To promote that governments and international organizations must promote income security and voice security for all legitimate interests. It is surely not too much to hope that many more countries will move in that direction in the next few years"¹⁶

These are plausible goals and methods. However, an issue that was raised consistently during the country missions in Africa concerned the applicability of the SES work in countries with small formal labour markets and low levels of formal employment¹⁷. In such circumstances the number of people in employment is relatively small and the numbers of people depending on those earnings is relatively large. A number of observers questioned whether the SES research had come up with actionable policies that would move either to

¹⁶ Economic Security for a Better World, p 389.

¹⁷ NB there is a distinction to be made between employment and labor utilization "Gunnar Myrdal and the team working on "Asian Drama" tried to replace the concept of "employment" by the concept of "labour utilisation." It has numerous dimensions when applied to self-employed subsistence farmers, landless labourers, artisans, traders, educated young people, saffron-clad monks, beggars, caste-conscious Brahmins, or women, in societies without organised labour markets. "Employment" as interpreted in industrial countries was found not to be the appropriate concept. To afford to be unemployed, a worker has to be fairly well off. To survive, an unemployed person must have an income from another source. The root problem, it was found, is frequently poverty, or low-productivity employment, not unemployment. Many of the moderately poor are not unemployed but work very hard and long hours in unremunerative, unproductive forms of activity. True, among the poorest of the poor, unemployment can be a common form of suffering, but even then its roots are quite different from those of unemployment in industrial countries." Paul Streeten, personal communication.

greater income security let alone voice security. Those concerned appeared to be saying that there was no way that SES research could lead to any policy prescription that would be applicable to such countries. If so, that would make it a less than global programme in its application, unless this is substantively addressed in a next phase of work.

5.7 Research and Publications

In all, SES has published eleven books, over 50 technical SES papers, over 30 refereed articles in professional journals, and a quarterly Newsletter. A further three books are close to completion – one on social protection in China, one on income security as a development right, and one on the liberalisation of social services. It has produced a website in three languages (English, French and Spanish). It has also produced a manual for workers and trades unionists on *work security*, which has been translated into several languages. And it has produced two training manuals for its national surveys.¹⁸ In addition, SES has published a number of papers, books and its director and several staff have published articles in non-ILO publications. A handful of major publications are also for sale, but otherwise distribution is primarily through the SES web site.

The volume, breadth and quality of much of the published material are impressive. Its publication strategy was set by the programme's director, who has largely directed the choice, content, and composition of core publications. The strategy is not written out, and there was little clarity on who were envisioned as target users, why, and how this was to link to effective use of resources for deciding on publications. Procedures, including monitoring of sales and dissemination to key client groups, though started, have not been maintained inside the programme.

There are other areas of concern. For example a flagship publication¹⁹ put out in September 2004 was, we were told, put out as a SES product rather than an ILO endorsed policy position because of some controversial work contained in the text, which prevented a formal ILO imprimatur being given. Had it been subjected to more formal review and received some needed polishing, it could have converted into what is an important report that can swim successfully in intergovernmental waters.

Equally surprisingly, it appears that there is no regular practice to check usage of the material the SES programme put on its website, not even to the unsatisfactory extent of checking "hits". A more serious indicator, used in other parts of the UN system as a first indicator of satisfaction or at least curiosity by users is to record downloads of materials, as well as checking on citations in appropriate on-line data bases. It is difficult to see how SES can discern response to its electronic publishing of material or for the ILO to estimate the cost effectiveness of that use of resources if there is no system that permits them to do so.

In addition to these issues, there is a problem of access to the data and analysis residing in SES. Some researchers claim difficulty in accessing the database and its results. Others indicate the opposite. ILO needs to sort out this situation in a transparent fashion and make it clear who can access data and analysis prepared with public money, how they can do so, and under what conditions. There is a further issue regarding diffusion of results. The

¹⁸ The Programme has produced over 100 technical publications, and over 160 different authors have published professional work through the Programme, the vast majority of whom have not had English as a mother tongue. Many papers have had to be translated and edited. For a small Programme, this has posed a considerable editing challenge.

¹⁹ [Economic Security for a Better World](#), ISBN 92-2-115611-7

evaluators were concerned to discover that certain researchers encountered during their field missions, who had contributed to an SES book published by ILO in September 2004 had not yet received a copy as of May 2005. This is a situation that should be addressed by regularly notifying authors of progress being made towards finalizing, producing and disseminating a publication. National research partners can also participate in promotion, and should be encouraged to do so.

5.8 Media and public awareness initiatives

According to its own records, in terms of *media coverage*, the Programme has generated over 600 newspaper articles. Members of the Programme have been interviewed on television programmes and on radio in many parts of the world. Its work has also featured in prominent academic journals. It also produced a video on the insecurities faced by women workers in Gujarat, India, and CNN produced a featured documentary on our work on the healthcare crisis in Eastern Europe.

SES sponsored several media/public awareness initiatives to launch major publications. Media coverage of the ILO/SES's work at national level on socio-economic security has been documented in electronic and print form. A brief review of DCOMM's records of media coverage indicate that coverage relates to a range of topics including publications, statistical information, interviews with the SES director, and other coverage. No data were available to ascertain the effect of this coverage, nor was there a visible system that would permit a reasonable prudent manager to acquire that knowledge.

5.9 Tripartite partnership

The tripartite constitutional structure is the foundation of ILO's partnership approach, and one of its comparative advantages in the international system. Its longstanding experience in bringing together governments and social partners in constructive dialogue well situates the ILO in the current global environment for partnerships and alliances for social and economic development, and increasing outreach to non-governmental partners.

The means in which tripartism has been addressed by SES has been indirect, without a clear strategy in place. In its medium term work plan from 1999 no mention is made of tripartism and the role of the social partners in its work. It was also difficult for the evaluation team to discern the expectations and actions of the social partners in collaborating with and making use of SES research and information. A review of strategic plans from ACTRAV and ACT/EMP activities with regard to social protection did not specifically reference the topic or programme. Feedback during interviews suggested that SES strategies and approaches were not well understood nor was the work regarded as a priority when weighed against other ILO initiatives.

With the International Organization of Employers (IOE) some frustration was expressed over what was perceived as limited opportunities for involvement in the strategy and activity levels. The evaluation team did not find many examples of activities of the social partners at global level linked to SES work, except for participation in a few SES global events. In half the case study countries—Ukraine and South Africa, nationally, representatives of workers' and employers' organizations were aware of SES activities taking place nationally, and participated in most of workshops and conferences linked to presentation of findings and policy discussions. Overall it appears that SES could have played a more enterprising and facilitating role to make its analysis, approaches and policy prescriptions better understood and discussed.

The tripartite base for ILO's work in socio-economic security has considerable untapped potential for influencing global and national agendas. For ILO to realize this potential there is need to build consensus on the policy mix and messages linked to socio-economic insecurity. If resources for field research decline, as is expected, past policy research work at national level will need to be the basis for development of policy and outreach strategy among social partners. Social partners can consider how this fits into their own priorities and available resources.

5.10 SES's performance on gender

The programme has made good progress in mainstreaming gender into its technical programme work. The strong emphasis on issues focused on women and of particular concern to women has been admirable. Likewise, research and methodologies regularly apply gender and other socio-economic factors when analysing data and drawing policy conclusions and prescriptions.

Based on feedback, relations with the parts of ILO dealing with the gender issue also are reported to have been cordial and collaborative. Had more work been done in converting analysis to action then this may well be an area where SES would have shown notable impact.

6 Organizational and Resource Arrangements

This section reviews the effectiveness and efficiency of organizational arrangements in the context of results-based programming and in relation to functions such as policy direction, programme monitoring, resource allocation, oversight and accountability, and fostering internal and external collaboration.

6.1 SES implementation and development as set forward by ILO governance processes

The SES programme as presented in the P&B, in terms of strategy, indicators and form of results has remained largely unchanged over the past five years, though one indicator was dropped in 2002-03 (see box 1 in section 2.3). This suggests that only in the level of targets has the programme altered its course and here for each biennium by raising its target in response to surpassing the previous target level planned. However, it is the finding of this evaluation that the programme has not stayed on the course it laid out at the outset, which foresaw not only improving the knowledge base, but also assessing the effectiveness of existing ways and means to extend social protection, and developing new ways of improving coverage as well as developing and disseminating elements for new policy options to extend social protection, and to promote their implementation. It appears to have drifted too far in the direction of globally targeted research publications and information systems, to the detriment of national policy advisory support, as originally envisioned. An analysis of the reasons why this has happened raises questions within the area of programme governance and oversight.

6.1.1 P & B Indicators and Targets

From 2000-2005 SES strategies and results were translated into a single indicator which was presented and reported in the P&B. In reviewing this through the evaluation exercise, it was noted that the strategies put forward in the programme and budget have emphasized research and analysis as a means to better advise and assist constituents to introduce broad socio-economic security policies and practices. The indicator, *'Member States where data*

are generated and used to develop strategies and policies to combat economic insecurity', is consistent with this strategy but lacks specificity as to what will constitute strategy and policy development. In the original presentation the performance indicator was "Results of the ILO's original research are widely cited and used by policy-makers" and the target was stated "To be defined after development of baseline data". This vagueness at the outset should have flagged to an observant management and oversight system the need to keep close if supportive watch on the evolution of the programme and to come up with specific targets that would permit the programme to continue down a desirable path of experiment, but also ensure that they did not stray too far from their strategic objective of developing effective strategies and policies to combat economic insecurity.

The evaluators also compared the reporting of results in the ILO's annual Implementation Reports²⁰ against the major work evidenced by the project. Discussions with the programme staff and a review of activities confirmed that results reported in Implementation Reports mapped consistently to where survey and research work had taken place.

However, for those countries mentioned, the evaluators did not find an explicit set of definitions or criteria established upon which to determine with consistency what outcome had been achieved in each country. Instead, survey work, publications and outreach activities (workshops, conferences, news coverage, etc.) are the principal evidence available of SES' support at national level. As reported in the 2001 Implementation Report, data collection and other knowledge-generating work were seen as a first phase to designing nationally appropriate strategies and policies to combat social and economic insecurity. The programme appears never to have outgrown this initial phase.

Because the means of action and level of effort made by SES differed widely across those countries that were 'counted' as having significant results, the information did not shed much light on where and how SES was being most or least effective. For a programme aiming at policy influence, this seems an unfortunate lapse. In reply to a query whether *some mechanism was set up to monitor the experimental aspects of the programme*, management noted that "a medium term (5 years) work programme was presented. It was made clear that in this period we would work towards generating information which would guide subsequent policy work. The success and failure of the approaches would depend upon the extent to which they were a) incorporated/recognized in policy discussions in various countries; and b) adopted explicitly."

Explicit adoption appears to have been quite rare. This may suggest the programme was not monitoring its success adequately otherwise it would have paid more attention to this aspect of expected achievement or else that it had been too optimistic in predicting its potential for influencing policy change at national levels. SES management also noted that "all ILO management asked of SES in this regard was that they report on meeting the targets stated in the Programme and Budget for the 2000-2001, 2002-2003 and 2004-2005". We conclude therefore that neither the programme nor the Office has in place an adequate means for tracking SES' effects at the output, outcome and impact levels.

This is an issue for the Office to consider when considering reasonable performance for a small programme such as SES, and one that is not likely to produce policy-level results on the ground for several years. SES was exploring new concepts and methods of converting them into action. Such innovative activities do not normally evolve in a simple,

²⁰ ILO programme implementation reports for 2000-01 and 2002-03.

straightforward fashion. They may follow paths that are initially interesting but lead nowhere and may need to be rethought, adapted or scrapped entirely as the programme learns. But both programme management and their oversight mechanism do need to have a broad understanding of what are reasonable expectations for such an endeavour. Neither party appears to have met this requirement in the case of SES.

It is also noteworthy that many ILO field offices have not included in their monitoring feedback on the effectiveness of SES national initiatives. This shortcoming should be overcome for any future work in this area.

6.1.2 Internal planning, monitoring and reporting

SES has supposed to plan its work around key strategy components and budgeted resources to conduct specific activities with specified outputs. Unfortunately for the evaluators, this work has not been summarized through a set of resourced work plans with budget breakdown of activities indicated. Without this component, we cannot assess in a detailed manner how efficiently resources have been used, or whether they have been selected for best use among alternatives, and must limit ourselves to the qualifications elaborated earlier. Additionally, delivery against a specified plan with actual costs of activities documented has not been recorded. Other than its annual submission to the Implementation Report, which does not review outputs and more detailed use of funds, no additional reporting has been required by the Office or Sector since programme inception in 2000.

The evaluators were told that staff did not have regular opportunities to exchange information and review their work collectively, nor to join in work planning. Yet such behaviour is an important mechanism for ensuring adequate learning and reflection. It would also have supported transparency within the programme and with other parts of the ILO including higher levels of line management. Most decisions related to determination of survey locations and types, decisions related to major publications, selection of external collaborators, and even topics for individual research, were taken primarily by the Programme's director.

As most of the programme's regular budget (roughly 90%) covers staff costs, it became reliant on extra budgetary resources for delivering its programme of work. A major source of SES resources came through extra-budgetary resources provided through the Netherlands Partnership Programme (NPP). It is therefore appropriate to consider monitoring of this extra budgetary technical cooperation work through the quality of regular work planning and progress reporting. A review of annual project work plans and progress reports showed that, though completed, none detailed activities undertaken and associated resources used for each. Moreover, with a lack of specific plans, progress against specific aims and achievement targets was not, nor could not be appropriately reported.

A review of the most recent project document (2004) showed that specific outputs for most of the project strategy had been specified (i.e. 20 eligible countries where social security data is unavailable were targeted for inclusion in a social security database). However, of the six indicators listed, no target levels were mentioned. Also, of the six, only three indicators could be considered at the outcome level—Use of databases by constituents and ILO projects, use of data for policy design and policy evaluation, and number of countries adopting the several methodologies for national policy information purposes. No documentation was found of how these were being put in use.

There is an absence of designated methodologies and practices for measuring and /or documenting changes at national level in institutional environments, capacities, content of policy dialogue, etc. related to SES' data generation. Practices for monitoring efficiency and cost-effectiveness at the activity level are non-existent at the programme and sector level both for regular-budget and extra budgetary-financed activities.

6.1.3 Evaluation

One of the prerequisites for results-based programming at the strategic level is the need for independent evaluation. It is also a useful tool for sensible managers. Although this evaluation has fulfilled the requirements for an independent programme evaluation, it is the first that has been conducted of any of SES's centrally administered extra budgetary funded activities; these stretched over six years and totalled roughly \$9 million. A review of project budgets confirmed, however, that resources had been reserved for this purpose.

6.2 The core work of SES as cross-cutting and mainstreamed

Collaboration between SES and other units in the ILO has been uneven as often occurs in large rather traditional bureaucracies in which units may be struggling to bring forth new concepts and methods that threaten the established way of approaching issues. SES has recognized the need for collaboration and in recent months has taken some steps to increase outreach and better working arrangements with other ILO units, however the level of collaboration needed has not been achieved.

6.2.1 Headquarters

Initial work on developing and implementing surveys as well as enhancing capacity in ILO member States to collect, process, disseminate and analyse data on SES was envisioned as a joint initiative between SES, the Bureau of Statistics (STAT) and the field. As the methodology has now advanced, this collaboration has not emerged, partly because there has been little pressure from any side to do so. It is, unfortunately, a detriment to all. Collaboration between SES and the Bureau of Statistics is required to institutionalise more centrally the priority work for establishing international standards for decent work indicators. It should include more directly involvement of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS). Decisions for better collaboration in this area have become more pressing with the likely extra budgetary reductions.

The Office will need to strengthen collaboration among ILO units in order to leverage fragmented funds and technical expertise for research activities where funding is usually scarce. In particular, joint research initiatives can aim for better knowledge sharing within the Office and beyond to national constituents and partners on the implications of SES work for policy change. The programme is just emerging from the more experimental phase of development of programme approaches, models and tools. A more technically focused review is needed of how SES models and tools can feed into and support priority ILO policy research for the future and how such research can be converted into better action.

6.2.2 Field Networks

The case studies show unevenness in the collaboration between SES and the ILO field offices with few field offices knowing the history of how SES chose to conduct surveys and other activities in specific countries. In South Africa, where SES has been particularly active, there appeared to be little understanding of, or engagement with, the issues involved or any visible influence of SES on the weekly work of the ILO field office. This was all the

more so in Tanzania and Ethiopia. This being said the representatives involved had a quite sophisticated understanding of the issues involved but an insufficiency of practical guidance on how to adapt SES thinking to the particular needs of the country they were assigned to. The review has also shown that the field specialists do not have a sense of how to use SES research as an entry point for social policy dialogue.

The need for better alignment of SES with the ILO field structure is recognised by ILO field officials. As noted in the case studies, the roles and responsibilities and links to technical specialists have not been clear, leading to a strong suspicion of missed opportunities. An initial step could be to enhance placement of SES work in an integrated ILO strategy of support to national constituents.

Roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined and communicated to all. A technical focal point in sub regional offices would provide a sense of purpose and place for socio-economic security policies and issues within national ILO strategies. Some ILO units, notably EMPSTRAT, are beginning to systematically mainstream national policy review into their plans and programmes. Collaboration around policy analysis and support can focus on developing greater outreach to enable research, survey work and data analysis to be better customized to address policy issues more broadly within a specific national context.

6.2.3 Internal collaboration within Social Protection

The establishment in 1999 of SES as an In-Focus programme did not combine all work on decent work indicators and addressing socio-economic insecurity into an integrated structure, but it did bring together a technical core into the operational unit of the Programme. However, at a higher level, the administrative division of the social security section into three separate units did not clearly address the cross-cutting nature of the SES programme within the larger programming level or at Sector level.

Conceptually the IFP was to collaborate on work within the Sector but operational arrangements to achieve this were unclear. Particularly unclear was the divide between what functions should be under the direct authority and control of the unit, and what functions should remain in other units within the Sector, but supported by SES technical expertise, in coordinated collaboration.

Many SES management issues have been related to the ongoing ambiguity over this larger organizational context. The administrative division between the Social Security units has not been supported by effective transparency and joint strategy and action plans to ensure cohesiveness. As early as 2002, there were high level discussions over the need to better bridge the divide between the units. In mid-2005, action was taken to disband the current structure and merge the various capacities and initiatives within a single social security department structure.

Through its re-organization, the newly formed Social Security Department has potential to improve internal cohesion to support policy interventions and more efficient technical backstopping. There can likewise be additional improvements in Social Protection's organizational structure through a reconfiguration of functions and reduction in duplication of staff roles.

Under this new approach, at the new department level:

- the roles and responsibilities of SES staff in relation to major programme components can be clearly defined to eliminate overlapping functions and to improve consistency in approaches and policy messages;

- the feasibility, including the potential advantages and disadvantages, of integrating SES staff into the mainstream ILO (Social Protection, Integration, etc) structure, can be investigated;
- means of how to monitor this on an ongoing basis can be established.

SES is clustered within the broad strategy to promote social protection, but it also supports a shared policy effort to develop means of monitoring and measuring decent work. Office-wide changes to rationalize functions such as national policy review and institutional support, statistics and data collection, have implications for SES and the newly established Social Security Department. The programme's regular budget allocation currently accounts for roughly 23% of total regular budget resources for social security, the budget for which has declined during recent biennia. Therefore, efforts to rationalize functions should not have negative repercussions on the capacities of the new department to maintain a solid programme of work that integrates and sustains major components of the socio-economic security work.

The nature of SES work is complex and demands high-level technical and managerial skills. Organizationally, the policy research and advisory emphasis has meant more customization of approaches based on national situations. Some of the skills demanded for successful national policy research and advocacy work have not been within the current pool of ILO field specialists and also not adequately developed in the SES programme. A great deal of the work has fallen upon and centred on the Programme Director. Additional technical staff in HQ and field will need to invest in learning to share responsibility to carry forward the work technically.

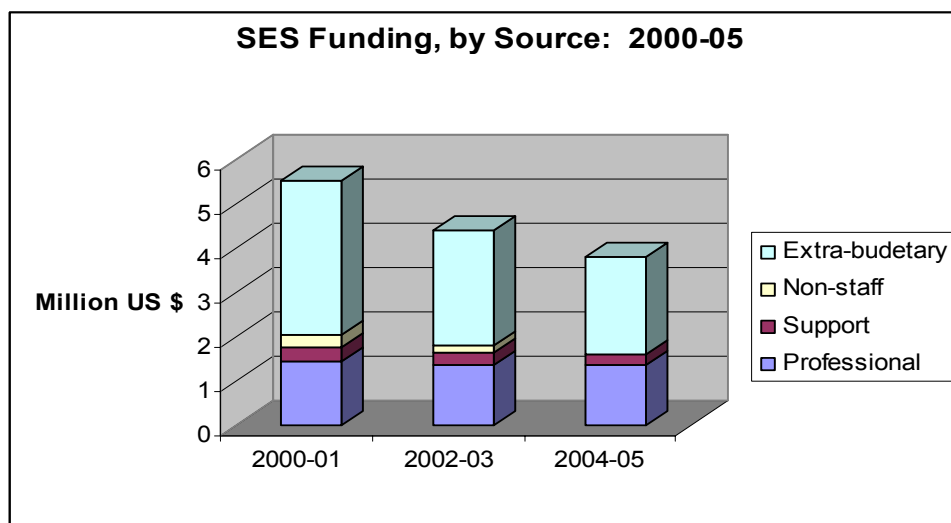
6.3 Financing and Resource Allocation

Financing and resource allocation issues for SES include the high ratio of extra budgetary to regular budget funding over the past three biennia. The reliance on extra budgetary funds has raised the issue of sustainability of the work if donor funding is reduced. Figure 1 below summarizes SES funding by source over the past three biennia. As indicated, the overall share of extra budgetary resources has accounted for roughly 60 percent of SES' total budget. Over the six year period, resource levels have fallen roughly 30 percent, with reductions realized in non-staff costs, and in work months for support and professional staff. In addition, of the ILO professional staff time allocated to the programme, at least 20 percent of work months were not realized during the 2003 and 2004, in part due to the freezing of a position.

Likewise, extra-budgetary resources have declined over the period, however, most importantly, these have nearly all come from only one major source: NPP. Dutch-sourced extra-budgetary funding has been used to increase staff size and finance core technical capacity, with approximately 30 percent of project funds used for these purposes. In addition, these extra-budgetary funds were used to cover nearly the programme's non-staff costs for the past two biennia.

The scope of extra budgetary funds use also focused resources most on survey work in lower income countries, and database development. In 2004, through Dutch funding, the programme placed at the centre of its strategy the development of SES indicators database, and PSS and ELFS. These in turn would promote different forms of social and economic security, with emphasis on providing basic security for the poor and disadvantaged. These are areas where no clear end point or transition to alternatives has been developed.

This evaluation report has highlighted the need for better integration of SES into regular ILO programmes and budgeting for the sustainability of the programme.



SES has been successful in mobilizing extra-budgetary resources as needed to conduct survey activities and systems development. These funds have permitted them to maintain a number of staff who would otherwise have been lost. Dependence on extra-budgetary funds for a large part of technical programming has had implications for the efficient management of the programme. Uncertainties in availability and delivery of funds has resulted in some last-minute staff recruitment, uncertainties in terms and conditions for contracting, and lags and jerks in contract renewals. This has contributed to stress among programme staff, and translated into uncertainties in planning and implementing key project components.

SES staff has expressed feeling high levels of stress related to work place uncertainties, pressures and unexpected events in their work context, which many see as having a negative effect on the quality of the programme. There is evidence of some delays and inefficiencies in programme delivery. These are attributable to a number of factors, including ambitious and unrealistic planning horizons for activities, delays and bottle necks in administrative processes within a reportedly internal top down planning and decision-making approach.

The programme believed it had an ambitious mandate to deliver at global and country level, but the uncertainty of its resources, even for its basic core work, put it at risk.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

The SES programme represented an effort to rethink and realign both the ILO's and the international community's stance *vis à vis* decent work. It sought to re-examine ILO's relationship to personal security. In doing so, it tried to take account of the changes in the global economy and the thinking about economic policy evolving within the international community. The ambition was large as was the objective. Both were appropriate and it was worthwhile strategic challenge for the ILO to address the problem.

The programme has produced a lot of material, in terms of approaches, analysis and data. The product appears to have been more, much more than SES could digest if it was ever to

convert it into actionable policy, which could be advocated by the ILO and supported by ILO's technical co-operation.

Indeed the output and conclusions of this small unit seems to have been more even than the ILO as a whole could handle. This may well have been partly due to the tensions that can often arise between an innovative unit and other well established programmes. It is however also due to some infelicities in the way the SES programme appears to have viewed itself and the consequent degree of collaboration that it achieved with some other parts of the ILO, both at headquarters and in the field.

The SES's research analysis has been innovative both in direction and in method. Its results were shared with interested researchers in a number of countries. The local researchers were not always involved in the process of designing and completing the research perhaps as they could have been, if it was intended that they serve as a means of advocating policies, spearheading follow up research and proposing solutions to their societies. Time and resources were constraints.

The research work has contributed to interesting policy prescriptions, which have aroused a response and prompted vigorous debate in some of the countries concerned; in some instances national policies appear to have been influenced by the analysis emanating from the SES programme.

The programme was intended to be innovative. It was expected to explore issues of potentially great importance for the ILO. It would be reasonable to expect that management, both of the programme and of the ILO would be curious to see how this process of exploration and innovation was proceeding. Yet SES has been run without any visible monitoring system to show how the innovation was evolving in the light of experience and to inform senior management about consequent developments²¹.

Access to the results and the processes of producing them by those outside the programme and sometimes by outside researchers who were directly involved in supporting the programmes work appears to be uneven. Some parties inside and outside the ILO with a clear a priori "right" of access to the data and research claimed they had not been able to do so. At present it is not clear who has access to what; nor who decides on that access and according to what criteria.

Wisely an International Advisory Board (IAB) was set up to guide the work of the programme. It contained recognised academics with expertise and interest in the issue. Perhaps less wisely, there appear to have been little attention to including senior policy or decision makers. Interaction with the IAB appears to have flagged soon after the programme began²². More active and more consistent interaction with, and review by, the IAB may well have mitigated some the concerns expressed above about the lack of a monitoring mechanism, at least as far as quality and implications of the published output of the programme are concerned. Had the experience of the membership been wider, some of the pitfalls encountered in converting SES policy ideas into action might have been avoided.

²¹ The SES programme has produced a significant amount of published material, which has therefore been available for the academic community to comment on. However, no mechanism to examine how innovative use of data and analysis were converted into policy options and to see whether those policy options were put into effect has been discerned.

²² We were advised that the Board only met twice and some members were invited only to an initial meeting in Geneva. Several members of the Board, who responded to our enquiries, remain strong supporters of the programme and its aims.

There is no evidence that the management system of the ILO provided the supervision necessary to reap the best performance from such a programme and to attenuate the tensions that inevitably arise between a unit that is potentially redefining organisational practice and the ways that existing programmes and units may be expected to work in the future. Similarly the programme's management were not required to set up a method to monitor the success or failure of their innovations. External donors to the programme appear to have been no more demanding in their expectations than the management of the ILO.

There was thus a failure of those overseeing the programme directly and an equivalent failure of their managers. The consequence has been a waste of talent and a misdirection of resources, which may otherwise have been able to convert an interesting set of ideas and some hard acquired knowledge into possible actionable solutions to address some significant social issues.

There are other, lesser areas of concern. A flagship publication,²³ put out in September 2004, was issued as a SES product rather than an ILO product because of some infelicities in the text and allegedly because it contained indices unwelcome to one of the ILO's constituent groups, all of which prevented a formal ILO imprimatur being given. Had it been subjected to review by an in house readers group, normal practice for such products in other international agencies, it would probably have received some policy guidance and needed polishing and could have converted what is basically an important report raising serious issues into one that the ILO could safely share with the inter-governmental process.

In a nutshell: ideas excellent, execution less so.

7.2 Recommendations

The evaluation offers the following recommendations:

1. The ILO is in possession of some important research and analysis generated by this programme. It needs to build on this and find a constructive and cost effective way to convert this work into the ILO's mainstream programmes and activities.
2. Issues related to sustaining SES areas of work need to be resolved within a broader rationalization scheme for consolidating functions and responsibilities for research, statistics and data collection, and national policy analysis and advisory support. Cost savings can likely be realized by consolidating functions and responsibilities for research, statistics and data collection, and national policy analysis and advisory support.
3. The ILO needs to ensure that any department following up these issues has not only the resources to pursue SES's analysis but also the capacity to convert any such analysis into policies that can be implemented.
4. The programme cannot continue its work with only its regular budget resources. If donor funding for SES declines, the ILO needs to develop a strategy to mainstream priority areas of work within the ILO's regular budget or an extra budgetary resource mobilization strategy integrated into an Office-level approach. To leave the programme intact but dependent on internal collaboration with other units where it has the mandate but not the authority or control over resources would not be wise.

²³ [Economic Security for a Better World](#), ISBN 92-2-115611-7

5. The Social Security Department, STAT and other technical programmes should develop a new plan for more effective collaboration on decent work indicators, which responds to lessons learned from work done so far by SES, with cost-effectiveness of the outcomes as a major driver of the work.
6. Advisory Boards established to guide programmes such as SES should be kept active in advising for the life of the programme concerned. ILO needs to supervise any such arrangements made for future programmes.
7. All programmes need monitoring. Innovative programmes need innovative monitoring. ILO and the Governing Body can clarify standards and expectations in this regard.
8. All programmes should be required to keep adequate and up to date documentation on their performance and internal audit should follow up this requirement
9. The procedures for access to the results of research ILO has been involved in and the data, on which those results are based, need to be clear and to be observed. At present it is not clear who has access to what, who decides and on what basis. Senior management may wish to ensure that no ambiguities occur in this regard in future.
10. Senior management may wish to consider how in future to manage programmes such as SES so as to maintain the originality and flexibility needed for experimental, exploratory work, while at the same time keeping them consistently productive of both analysis and actionable policy recommendations which further the Organisation's mandate. A frank annual presentation to the Governing Body on results achieved and pitfalls encountered by those in charge of promoting original, solution-oriented research may be one solution.