



Additional agenda item

Further information: Policy of other international organizations

1. This report is intended to assist the International Labour Conference in its review of the measures previously adopted by the Conference to secure compliance by Myanmar with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry that had been established to examine the observance by Myanmar of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29).
2. On 26 April 2012, the Director-General sent a request to several international organizations for information on their current policies towards Myanmar, including measures that may treat Myanmar differently from any other State. The replies that have been received are summarized below.

United Nations (UN)

3. The United Nations Secretary-General visited Myanmar from 29 April to 1 May 2012 to express the confidence of the United Nations in the commitment of all parties to build on the reforms undertaken thus far in a way that strengthens national unity for advancing democracy, national reconciliation and respect for human rights. The Secretary-General urged the international community to go even further in lifting, suspending or easing trade restrictions and other sanctions. Notwithstanding positive developments, the reform process remains fragile, and the six priority areas for UN engagement at this stage are as follows: (1) support to the conduct of the census in 2014; (2) the launch of the Global Compact network in Myanmar to help local entrepreneurs connect with international business through socially responsible economic relationships; (3) support to national drug eradication efforts; (4) greater engagement by the UN system, with particular reference to a normalized United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country programme; (5) support to peace-building in areas where ceasefires have been agreed; and (6) the possibility of Myanmar tapping into UN expertise and best practices in the area of human rights, including supporting national initiatives to strengthen the independence of the National Human Rights Commission, and the possibility of electoral assistance for the 2015 general elections.
4. The Secretary-General has no doubt that Myanmar can regain its place as a respected and responsible member of the international community, and he will continue to use the UN General Assembly mandated good offices as a means for providing UN support to help consolidate ongoing reforms. In the UN's view, "the UN system, and ILO, can contribute to strengthening and advancing Myanmar's reform process. In this context, we are pleased

to hear that last March the ILO signed a new Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Myanmar to address forced labour.”

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

5. The UNDP has had a restricted mandate in Myanmar since 1993, as set forth by UNDP Governing Council (now Executive Board) decision 93/21. Since then, the UNDP has consistently avoided any significant policy dialogue and support activities to the development of national programmes, or capacity-building activities for government entities. Furthermore, the UNDP has not sponsored any government representatives’ participation in events organized by the UNDP, and all assistance has been implemented either directly by the UNDP or through UN agencies and independent non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Although it may be expected that the UNDP will engage in the future more directly with the Government with respect to the provision of policy advice and capacity-building support, such assistance will continue to be implemented either directly or through UN agencies or NGOs.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

6. The ESCAP has been assisting Myanmar as a priority country with special needs in formulating a development framework for a longer term inclusive and sustainable economic and social development process. The ESCAP has been continuously strengthening its engagement and cooperation with the Government of Myanmar and development partners to address enormous development challenges in making progress in the achievement of various internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Recent engagements include promotion of a policy dialogue called “Economic policies for growth and poverty reduction: Lessons from the region and beyond” and building institutional capacity under the project entitled “Regional development and partnership assistance to Myanmar”, aimed at strengthening national capacities to address various development challenges and facilitate Myanmar’s engagement in regional cooperation, as well as drawing lessons from the region. The ESCAP considers that the international community should help move the development agenda forward while minimizing the adverse effects of rapid growth, including the practice of forced labour. The process of economic reform should be based on social inclusivity, environmental sustainability and human dignity. To this end, the ESCAP will continue to provide technical assistance and advisory services. A particular initiative being formulated is a development framework aligning economic growth with poverty alleviation and social justice. Some of the areas covered include small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) and private sector development, trade and transport facilitation and sustainable urban development.

World Bank

7. The World Bank, which had not approved any lending to Myanmar since 1987, has begun the process of re-engaging with the Government to support efforts that would benefit all the people of Myanmar, including the poor and vulnerable. The Bank’s re-engagement at this point consists of an assessment to gain a better understanding of the country’s development needs. To resume any programme with the Government, the Bank needs the support of its stakeholders, and new financing can only be extended once the country’s arrears with the Bank (since 1998) have been cleared. The Bank is committed to working

with all stakeholders in Myanmar to encourage social accountability, transparency and open communications in that country.

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

8. The IMF's Executive Board concluded the consultation with Myanmar under Article IV of its Articles of Agreement on 19 March 2012, and the authorities agreed for the first time to publish the staff report for the consultation.¹ The IMF plans to support the ongoing reform efforts primarily through technical assistance, in particular in the areas of exchange rate unification, public financial management, monetary and financial sector issues, and statistics.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

9. The OECD stated that it did not have any country-specific activity in Myanmar and that that country had a very limited participation in strategically important South-East Asian regional activities.

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

10. The IMO confirmed that it did not have any form of cooperation agreement with Myanmar. Technical cooperation activities from which Myanmar has benefited and which are related to the IMO's mandate (i.e. to regulate international shipping) have no bearing on the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry.

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

11. WIPO cooperates with the Government of Myanmar in the field of intellectual property, but is not aware of any activity in the framework of that cooperation that could have the effect of directly or indirectly abetting the practice of forced or compulsory labour.

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

12. IFAD adopted in 2010 a general country allocation for Myanmar of US\$18.4 million for the period 2010–12, which would enable Myanmar to receive, upon approval of the Executive Board, concessional loans from IFAD for individual projects. Since then, preliminary efforts have been made by IFAD's staff in identifying potential investment opportunities to promote agricultural development in the country. In these efforts, due attention has been paid to the requirements of international law applicable to Myanmar and the potential impact of IFAD's future investment thereon, including in the field of international labour rules in general and those on forced and compulsory labour in particular.

¹ Available at <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2012/cr12104.pdf>.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

13. Myanmar is an original WTO member since 1995 and has the status of a least developed country. As such, it benefits from access to technical assistance activities organized by the WTO secretariat.

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

14. The OIC pays particular attention to the humanitarian plight of the Rohingya minorities in Arakan State. They are allegedly subject to various forms of human rights violations, including forced labour, and, in that respect, the OIC wishes to seek an appropriate platform for collaboration with the ILO.

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European Union (EU)

15. The EU press service reported that the Council of the European Union adopted on 14 May 2012 Council Regulation (EU) No. 409/2012, which, together with Council Decision 2012/225/CFSP of 26 April 2012, gave full legal effect to the suspension of EU sanctions against Myanmar. This suspension had already been agreed by the Council on 23 April 2012 (Council Conclusions on Burma/Myanmar – 9008/12). The EU restrictive measures against Myanmar are being suspended for one year, with the exception of the embargo on arms and equipment that can be used for internal repression. The suspension of the sanctions is stated to be part of the EU's policy to welcome and encourage the ongoing reform process in Myanmar. Paragraph 8 of the Council Conclusions of 23 April 2012 refers specifically to the ILO and reads as follows: "The Council supports reinstating the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) for Myanmar/Burma as soon as possible once the required conditions are fulfilled, following the assessment of the International Labour Organisation."

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