

DECENT WORK COUNTRY PROGRAMME ALBANIA 2006-2007

Introduction

The primary goal of the ILO is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Decent work country programmes promote decent work as a key component of development policies and at the same time as a national policy objective of governments and social partners. The present country programme is informed by international development agendas such as the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) based on the national development objectives. It also takes account of the priorities of the ILO constituents, as expressed in consultations held with them. The programme details the policies, strategies and results required to realise progress towards decent work for all. This document reflects the strategic planning of ILO cooperation activities with Albania for the biennium 2006-2007. Reflecting the constituents' as well as the ILO experts' assessment of past cooperation, the programme aims at ensuring greater synergies and stronger coherence of ILO activities in Albania and thus contribute to achieving sustainable impacts.

I. The current situation from a Decent Work perspective

In the course of the PRSP process, in November 2001 Albania has endorsed a National Strategy for Social and Economic Development that emphasises public investment in labour market, education, health and rural development. Albania remains one of the poorest transition economies in Europe. The per-capita GDP is lower than this of neighbour countries, including Serbia & Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Although the country has seen high economic growth rates of up to 6% in recent years, 25% of the population is poor, while 5% live in extreme poverty.

The elections of 2005 marked a change in the political scene. The coalition of "governing with clean hands", led by the Democratic Party, won the elections and made public a programme to fight corruption, organized crime and trafficking, reform the public institutions, increase the budget revenues through improvements in fiscal policy, increasing salaries (10% in 2006) and pensions (15%), etc. The structure of the Government changed and the number of Ministries was reduced from 17 to 14. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs took more responsibilities in the field of human rights, being re-denominated as Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

Albania has already applied for EU and NATO membership. The Stabilisation and Association Agreement with EU has been signed on 12 June 2006 in Luxembourg. Meanwhile the Albanian government will be still monitored on commitments to fight corruption, develop the economy of the country, play a stabilizing role in the Balkans region, respect the independent institutions, freedom of expression and independence of media. Albania's development is challenged by high rates of internal and external migration, a significant informal economy (from 25 to 40%, as per different sources),

shortage in electric power supplies, existence of monopolies in economy, widespread corruption and low Government revenue.

In order to assist Albania in reaching EU targets, improving the living standards of the population, fighting corruption and democratizing the entire society, the United Nations Country Team, in collaboration with the Albanian Government and civil society, prepared and launched the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the period 2006-2010, which sets the targets the UNDAF will contribute towards, together with its partners.

In the frame of UNDAF, the ILO has taken up responsibilities in conjunction with the Government and social partners aiming to preserve the social peace. The cooperation between Albania and the ILO is continuous since 1991, year of Albania's re-admission to the ILO. Programmes implemented since then cover the most important priorities and needs of the Government and social partners, in particular promotion of the fundamental principles and rights in the world of work (Albania has ratified 44 ILC, including the 8 fundamentals), labour law reform (the labour code was amended in 2003 with the assistance of the ILO), promote and increase decent employment (Albania's employment policy has been reviewed in 2004 and ILO assisted in the production of this important report, which has been unanimously approved in 2005 in a national conference by Government and social partners), capacity building for the Ministry of Labour and its dependent central institutions (Labour Inspectorate, State Social Services, National Employment Services, Social Insurance Institute), freedom of association and strengthening of the workers' and employers' organizations, elimination of the worst forms of child labour (IPEC programme), prevention of human trafficking, socio-economic security of workers (Albania ratified recently Conventions No. 102 (Social Security) and C.81 (Labour Inspection) and C.155 (OSH)), vocational training for redundant persons, HIV/AIDS at work, employment oriented use of remittances, protection of workers rights in the environment of globalization (Global Compact), etc. The ILO has defined the targets of cooperation with Albania for the next two years, taking into consideration the needs of the country and the priorities formulated by the government and the social partners.

II. Priority areas of cooperation

Considering the lessons learned during past cooperation, the ILO will aim at reinforcing the constituents' capacities and enlarging influence of the Office's Decent Work policy in line with the Albanian Development Goals and according to the government's action programme. The strategy will be to work with close involvement of the constituents and widespread promotion of the assistance provided by ongoing projects. In addition, more emphasis will be put on sharing experiences among neighbouring countries or countries with similar problems through technical cooperation.

Within the overarching theme of "Decent Work for All" the ILO will concentrate on three country programme priorities in Albania in this biennium, which should be seen as long-term goals:

- I. Improved conditions to enforce legislation, more effective social dialogue and stronger social partners
- II. National employment policy implemented that meet EU and international standards

- III. More effective social protection policies are adopted, in particular for vulnerable groups

Priority 1: Improved conditions to enforce legislation, more effective social dialogue and stronger social partners

Outcome 1: Tripartite constituents formulate a workplan to better enforce the labour code.

The user' guide on the labour code is finalised and disseminated through two regional workshops.

Albania takes measures to properly implement ratified conventions Nos. 95, 131 and 173 while taking into consideration the observations of the Committee of Experts (CEACR).

Outcome 2: The Ministry of Labour takes into consideration the ILS, in particular those regarding child labour and non discrimination, in their draft legislation to be adopted in the next two years.

The Officials of the Ministry of Labour and the social partners in charge of the labour legislation (members for the Labour Law Network of the ILO) will be trained on how to draft provisions of labour legislation.

The recommendations of the study on the current Albanian legislation regarding child labour and the necessary amendments for its harmonization with the international standards will be incorporated and mainstreamed in the labour code. Record keeping requirements will be in place using the methodology recommended by the ILO.

Outcome 3: The National Labour Council meets more regularly and discusses priority issues such as employment and pension reform.

ILO will provide training and advice to the members of the National Labour Council on how to address economic and social policy issues.

Priority 2: National employment policy implemented that meet EU and international standards

Outcome 1: The Ministry of Labour and the National Employment Service will adopt a plan and start implementing at least 2 priority recommendations of the CREP review.

The ILO will provide assistance to the Ministry of Labour and National Employment Service to define priority measures taking into account the recommendations of the CREP review. The trade unions develop proposals and participate actively in this process.

Within the framework of the project "Promoting Gender Equality in the Country Reviews of Employment Policy" women's labour market positions will be assessed in the country, and recommendations to mainstream gender into local employment policies will be built into the CREP reviews. The ILO will organize seminars to facilitate national level discussion on equal opportunity issues and will provide technical

assistance on specific areas which are of particular importance from the point of view of gender equality, such as work/life balance, job evaluation schemes, etc.

Outcome 2: As a follow up to the CREP, trade unions adopt an action plan for improvement of the active labour market policies.

The activity is the follow-up of a national roundtable held on 29-30 September 2005 on the PRSP process in Albania. The seminar has reached its objective by raising awareness of KSSH and BSPSH leadership and trade union experts on IFIs policies and PRSP process, and facilitating the development of a consolidated trade union position on PRSPs and on a national plan of actions.

The current activity aims at strengthening expertise of Albanian unions in the area of employment with specific importance paid to the CREP recommendations with linkages to PRSP. The trade unions will be enabled to make concrete policy proposals in the areas of active and passive labour market policies, vocational training, youth employment and women in the labour markets. The confederations are committed to adopt a national action plan in this regard.

Outcome 3: A core group of national stakeholders is established to fully assume administration of a national system of contract training.

The ILO will assist the National Employment Service in the establishment and functioning of a NES Contract Training Unit. This unit will work on contract training policies and strategies determined to support training of the unemployed. An evaluation system will be supported to readjust training policies and strategies as appropriate.

Outcome 4: A local economic development (LED) forum is launched in Shkodër to target women employment and their livelihood.

A gender focused LED project is being implemented in the municipality of Shkodër. The traditional handicraft sector is revitalised and marketed to access the international demand. The ILO will also explore the possibility for expanding business development services and use of migrant remittances for income generating activities in the region.

Outcome 5: A conducive environment fostering the use of migrant remittances for productive investment leading to poverty reduction is created.

The ILO will intensively seek for funding for the following activities:

- Policy measures on the opportunities to maximize social returns of Albanian Migrant Workers remittances are formulated, with an action plan in line with the National Strategy for Migration.
- Pilot activities are carried out to test the recommendations made and to fine-tune the policy measures.
- Necessary steps are undertaken in order to replicate and implement on a larger basis the revised recommendations.

Outcome 6: Structural links are built for the correlation between the employment policy and the Strategic Framework against Child Labour /National Plan of Action against Child Labour.

Policy-related upstream interventions will be combined to create a conducive environment (mainstreaming child labour into national strategies; capacity building;

enforcement of legislation; awareness raising; knowledge base) with downstream service-oriented activities at the community level (direct services provided to children and their families).

Specifically, IPEC will develop the following activities:

- Pilot the Child Labour Monitoring System (identification of children, assessment of their risks, referral of children in order to provide them with viable alternatives) in three cities of Albania, Tirana, Korca and Berati through the establishment of three Local Action Committees and four Multi-Disciplinary Groups.
- Prepare a National Report on Child Labour in Albania including the National Plan of Action against child labour.
- Pilot multi-disciplinary approaches on direct services to working children and children at risk through the provision of non-formal education; formal education, recreational activities; vocational training, nutrition.
- Conduct activities with peer educators in three youth centers based on the Life Skills Manual and SCREAM package (Supporting children's rights through Education, Arts and Media).

Outcome 7: The institutional capacities of both government officials and social partners on labour migration management will be increased.

In the framework of the ILO/MIGRANT Project, the ILO has provided comments on the Albanian newly drafted law on emigration which are being observed. A country-specific training manual on labour immigration policy and management will be produced and related training workshops for government officials and social partners will be organized.

A direct action consisting in providing victims of trafficking with vocational training and employment opportunities and micro-credits will be implemented.

Priority 3: More effective social protection policies are adopted, in particular for vulnerable groups

Outcome 1: The labour inspection services have put in place mechanisms to effectively assess the working environment, in order to help prevent occupational accidents and work-related diseases and to identify child labourers.

An outcome focused, technically-competent, integrated, prevention-oriented inspection system will be implemented and an information and data management system will be developed for targeting and carrying out efficient and effective inspection visits. The ILO is seeking for funding for this component.

The *ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work* will be translated into Albanian and will serve as a tool to help labour inspectors integrate HIV/AIDS concerns in the principles and practice of labour inspection.

In the framework of the IPEC project the ILO will develop the capacity of the labour inspectors from three selected areas of Albania to identify child labourers, assess OSH hazards and risks, and refer them to social services is enhanced as a result of piloting the child labour monitoring system.

Outcome 2: Social partners participate actively in the governing boards of tripartite social security institutions, including the Social Insurance Institute.

The ILO will provide training for social partners using the new ILO Budapest Handbook for Social Security Governance, translated into Albanian.

Outcome 3: A core group of trade union OSH trainers is set up and a training programme is elaborated to improve working conditions at the workplace level.

A joint group of 25 trade union experts from KSSH and BSPSH will participate in a training of trainers workshop to prepare for a program to improve working conditions at the work place.

The participants will be able to train members of the OSH committees at the enterprise level in evaluating risks and defining solutions to improve OSH conditions at the work place.

III. Management and implementation

The cooperation programme will be managed through a network among SRO Budapest, the National Correspondent in Tirana, EUROPE and technical units at headquarters in Geneva. The National Correspondent will play a coordination role together with SRO Budapest. The ILO will continue its cooperation with other stakeholders in the country such as the UNDP, the World Bank and EC Delegation.

The objectives of the programme will be pursued through technical cooperation projects, advisory missions, and seminars for information dissemination and capacity building. Extra-budgetary resources and the ILO's regular budget resources will be used to finance the implementation of this Country Programme. The ILO network mentioned will continue to seek further funding for the follow-up to the results achieved, bearing in mind priority concerns of the constituents. The government and the social partners will facilitate their respective expert staff and premises and provide logistic support, as appropriate. They are committed to implementing the follow-up steps necessary to achieve the expected results.

IV. Performance monitoring and evaluation arrangements

The implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme will be reviewed on a regular basis with the constituents using interactive methods. The missions of the ILO experts and their internal reports will be used as part of the monitoring process. The SRO Director will assess the programme achievements with the constituents in Albania at least once per biennium. On a six-monthly basis, the Decent Work Country Programme implementation plan will be reviewed in the country with the National Correspondent and adjustments will be made to adapt to the changes, if necessary, in order to improve the implementation strategy, and eventually redefine some of the country programme activities.