When I arrived in the Pacific region over a year ago I was immediately impressed by the huge amount of good will that existed, to work with the ILO and to support our programmes. Many of you wrote to me expressing your interest in joining hands with us, in concrete and result-oriented collaboration.

I also noticed that there is an urgent need to improve communications. This newsletter is a first step in this direction. It should provide a shared platform for all interested in the ILO’s mandate and work. The newsletter will allow us to share information on our programmes, our developments and other related issues that might interest you. It should also serve as your platform. We would be happy to receive your contributions for possible inclusion in future issues of the newsletter. Subsequent editions of the newsletter will also have a special focus on one of our members in the Pacific.

Currently we are busy working on celebrations for the ILO’s 90th anniversary in April this year. The 90th anniversary provides a wonderful reason to celebrate the achievements of the ILO and its constituents in promoting decent work in Pacific Island Countries. The ILO will also use this milestone opportunity to further promote social justice through decent work, an objective that is just as relevant now in these times of global economic crisis as it was at the time of the ILO’s founding. But more about 90th anniversary events later in the newsletter.

An important challenge at present is to finalize formulation and progress implementation of Decent Work Country Programmes for each of our members in the Pacific. Decent Work Country Programmes are our main vehicle of cooperation. They flesh out what we want to achieve together, with timelines and a determined effort to attract sufficient programme resources. We plan to have all Decent Work Country Programmes concluded and signed by October this year.

One of our major objectives is to grow and expand our projects and programmes in response to the needs articulated by our constituents. We serve eight countries, including many small island states, at a difficult time when the economic crisis, globalisation and climate change confront us with huge challenges. We want to respond to the best of our abilities. We appreciate the interest in our work demonstrated by our development partners including Australia, New Zealand and the European Union.

I am happy to inform you that our youth employment project and the project to fight child labour through education are now well underway across the Pacific. More about these important projects in the newsletter itself. We don’t want to live in a society where children work and adults are unemployed!

We plan to produce 3 editions of our newsletter per year, with this being the inaugural first edition for 2009. It is your newsletter, so please do give us your feedback, suggestions and contributions for inclusion.

Finally, we welcome Tuvalu as the latest ILO member State in the Pacific region. Tuvalu’s membership became effective on 27 May 2008. We look forward to undertaking the ILO’s first official mission to Tuvalu this year, to consult with constituents on developing the country’s first Decent Work Country Programme.

Bula Vinaka!

Werner Blenk
Tuvalu has become the 182nd Member State of the ILO following receipt in Geneva of a letter from Mr Apisai Ielemia, Prime Minister and also Minister of Foreign Affairs and Labour, stating on behalf of the Government that Tuvalu had formally accepted the obligations of the ILO Constitution.

Tuvalu’s membership became effective on 27 May 2008. The country has been a member of the United Nations since 5 September 2000.

Tuvalu is a group of tiny islands in the South Pacific which won independence from the United Kingdom in 1978. With a gross land area of 26 square kilometers it is the fourth smallest country in the world, and its population of just over 10,000 makes it the second-smallest member by population of the United Nations.

The ILO’s first official mission to Tuvalu as a member state later this year, will initiate the development of Tuvalu’s first Decent Work Country Program. We will also use the opportunity of the mission to celebrate ILO’s 90 year anniversary in Tuvalu.

Tuvalu becomes 182nd ILO Member

90 YEARS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL!

This year the ILO will mark its 90th anniversary. As one of the oldest institutions in the United Nations system, this anniversary is a significant milestone for workers, employers and governments globally.

The ILO was created in 1919, as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to reflect the belief that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it is based on social justice. In the midst of the Second World War at the Philadelphia meeting of the International Labour Conference, delegates adopted the Declaration of Philadelphia reaffirming the fundamental principle on which the ILO is based that ‘poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere’. The Declaration is annexed to the ILO Constitution and continues to constitute the ILO’s Charter of aims and objectives.

In 1946 the ILO became a specialized agency of the newly formed United Nations and today more than ever looks to work with other UN agencies to achieve its objectives. In 1949 the ILO made a decision to first implement technical cooperation, which in the words of then Director-General David Morse, ‘proved to be the first steps in a really radical transformation.’ In expanding the implementation of that technical cooperation, in 1959 the ILO opened its first field office in Africa. On its 50th anniversary, in 1969, the significant global impact of the ILO was recognized when it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1998 the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work was adopted. Shortly after in 1999, the first Director-General of the ILO from the Southern Hemisphere, Juan Somavia, took office. The Director-General lost no time in outlining a ground-breaking vision for the ILO, the concept of ‘decent work.’ As the Decent Work Agenda is now well entrenched at the ILO and is increasingly recognized throughout the world, the ILO celebrates its 90th anniversary in the midst of a seismic shock to the world’s economies. At this time of profound global economic turbulence the social justice message and mandate of the ILO is as relevant today as it was at its founding.

The primary objective of our 90th anniversary is not however, to simply celebrate our past but to use this moment to focus on the pressing priorities of constituents globally. With these objectives in mind the ILO has planned a series of events across the Pacific member countries, an outline of which is set out below. The ILO wholeheartedly invites constituents, stakeholders and interested community members to come along to these events and help us to celebrate this significant occasion.

ILO 90 - Pacific Island Countries Calendar of Events

FIJI
17 April 2009
Symposium on Social Justice, Child Labour Workshop and ILO 90 Years Celebrations.

VANUATU
23 April 2009
Symposium on Social Justice, Youth Employment Workshop, Signing of the Vanuatu Decent Work Country Program and ILO 90 Years Celebrations.

SOLOMON ISLANDS
23 April 2009
Symposium on Social Justice, Men as Partners in Reproductive Health Workshop and ILO 90 Years Celebrations.

SAMOA
27 and 28 April 2009
Social Justice and Globalisation Seminar, Launching of Samoa Decent Work Country Programme and ILO 90 commemorative stamps and ILO 90 Years Celebrations.

Further information on ILO 90 celebration events in Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands will shortly be made available to all constituents, stakeholders and community groups.

Events will coincide with ILO Decent Work Country Programme activities in Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands scheduled during June and July this year.

For further information on any of these events please contact Peter Blumel on +679 3313866 or peterb@ilo.org .
WORLD DAY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH
HEALTH AND LIFE AT WORK: A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT

Every year more than 2 million people die from occupational accidents or work-related diseases and by conservative estimates there are 270 million occupational accidents and 160 million cases of occupational disease. Deaths and injuries take a particularly heavy toll in developing nations such as the Pacific Island Countries, where large numbers of people are engaged in hazardous activities such as agriculture, construction, logging, fishing and mining.

The ILO places special importance on developing and applying a preventative safety and health culture in workplaces worldwide. In 2003 the ILO began to observe World Day for Safety and Health stressing the prevention of illness and accidents at work every 28 April. On this day the world’s trade union movement also commemorates the victims of occupational accidents and disease. This year, as in previous years, tripartite events will be taking place world wide and you are invited to join us in promoting this important day in your country.

In observance of the day, on 28 April 2009 in Samoa the ILO in conjunction with its tripartite partners and the fire authority will be conducting a workshop with fire wardens and other staff of hotels and night clubs. The object of the workshop is to raise awareness on fire safety measures and to establish a network of fire wardens within workplaces. It is hoped that participants will return to their places of work and continue with the important fire safety demonstrations they have learnt and will continue sharing their knowledge about safety and health in a routine way.

For further information on the health and safety workshop being conducted in Samoa please contact Surkafa Katafono on +679 331 3866 surkafa@ilo.org. For information on other events being conducted for the World Day please contact your country’s department of labour, your union or employer organisation.

DECENT WORK FOR ALL IN THE PACIFIC

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 (DWCPs) are the operational framework for ILO activities in the ILO member countries including the eight Pacific member countries Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

DWCPs organize ILO cooperation in a coherent framework that effectively enables countries to make progress towards achieving decent work goals. DWCPs vary significantly from country to country, in both size and composition. Such variation is in tune with the needs and commitment of each country and the overall means and resources, national and international (including the ILO) available in a country for achieving decent work.

DWCPs constitute a programming tool to deliver on a limited number of priorities over a defined period within a visible and transparent strategy. DWCPs are comparatively short documents, starting with mapping the country’s situation and identifying priorities and partners, defining outcomes and determining an implementation plan. There is ample flexibility to build on current activities and to accommodate changing circumstances. Progressively, all ILO involvement and action in the eight Pacific member countries will be part of a DWCP.

DWCPs respond to a small number of key priorities which are identified in a thorough manner by the ILO constituents (governments, employers and workers) with the help of ILO specialists. In country consultations are held with the constituents individually and in a tripartite setting in order to identify and agree on this limited number of priorities. The formulation process is equally informed by ILO’s strategic objectives and the programmes of other development partners and institutions, with a view to identifying where the ILO’s comparative advantage can best be put to use in furthering the goal of decent work. The priorities in the Pacific region take due account of the outcomes of the regional Tripartite Technical Meeting on Decent Work held in Nadi, Fiji from 26 to 28 November 2007.

In each of its member states the ILO’s contribution is integrated with the national development strategy and regional and international efforts supporting it. DWCPs are the specific ILO contribution to international development frameworks such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), national Millennium Development Goal strategies and other integrated development plans. Full involvement of ILO constituents and partnerships with national and international actors and institutions are essential to DWCPs and indispensable to their success. In addition to international development strategies, DWCPs in Pacific member states are aligned with the major regional development framework, most notably the Pacific Plan.

DWCPs apply results-based management which focuses on achieving defined results in order to improve programme and management effectiveness, efficiency and accountability. DWCPs are implemented by the governments, employers’ organisations and trade unions of member states in close cooperation and with the assistance of the ILO. After signing the DWCP an implementation plan is developed by the ILO. The progress of implementation is regularly monitored on the basis of relevant performance indicators.

At present DWCPs have been formulated for PNG, Vanuatu, Samoa and the Solomon Islands. The process is also underway for Kiribati, Fiji, Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands. By October 2009 we aim to have signed DWCPs and implementation plans for each of the Pacific member states for the period 2008/2009 to 2012. As a next step, a high level Ministerial Meeting for Pacific member states is planned. A central purpose of the Ministerial Meeting will be to examine the DWCPs and obtain further high level guidance on their implementation.
POVERTY BREEDS CHILD LABOUR AND SEX TOURISM IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

By Shailendra Singh, University of the South Pacific

Beyond the fabulous palm-fringed beaches and cascading waterfalls of the islands of the Pacific is a sordid reality, child labour and commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Lack of reliable data makes it difficult to assess the magnitude of the problem, but rough estimates by the ILO suggest that with growing poverty child workers make up an estimated 19 percent of the labour force in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and 14 percent in the Solomon Islands.

A recent Asian Development Bank (ADB) report predicted that an additional 5 percent of people in the Pacific, or some 50,000 people, would slip into poverty because of high oil and food prices. According to economist and former Fiji government minister, Ganesh Chand, the prevalence of child labour has increased in the region because of social problems triggered by poverty.

With education not free in Fiji, rising costs were forcing children out of school and into the ranks of the workforce in order to supplement family incomes, Chand told participants at a seminar to mark the International Day Against Child Labour in Suva. Chand appealed to schools to “cut costs and increase efficiency”.

Sex tourists in the South Pacific are also preying upon children. A report by the U.N. Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Pacific, based on studies in 2004 and 2005 in Fiji, Kiribati, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, found that in each country child prostitution, child pornography, and child sex tourism and trafficking occurred. The report said that children in the South Pacific were at “high risk” of being traded for sex by family members and friends because of poverty.

A Pacific regional workshop on poverty recently discussed that in Port Moresby and Lae child prostitution was increasing as social and economic problems increased in PNG. Research findings tabled at the workshop indicated that one third of the sex workers in some areas were children aged between 13 and 19, although children as young as 11 were also found to be working in the sex industry.

Similarly, the Solomon Islands conference on child protection heard that the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the country was beyond dispute. Furthermore, there were increasing numbers of street children and sex workers in Honiara, with over 100 girls under the age of 15 involved in the sex industry. Researchers and social workers had also been in contact with 30 boys under the age of 15 involved in prostitution in Honiara.

The European Union announced 2 million dollars in funding assistance for Fiji, focused on education. This is under a partnership protocol for TACKLE, the acronym for Tackling Child Labour through Education. The project is being implemented over a 48 month period by the ILO (see further articles on TACKLE in this edition).

At the seminar in Suva Gabriela Koheler Raue, Head of the Social Section with the European Commission, asserted that “Child labour is today still a real and pressing issue to be tackled by many countries globally in co-operation and partnership.” “Many children still miss out on school because they have to support their families and contribute to the household income by offering their labour on the market, often under harsh conditions.” The Netherlands, meanwhile, has allocated 2.5 million dollars for the elimination of child labour in PNG. The funding is part of a 36-month programme that also covers Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Also speaking at the seminar Werner Blenk, the ILO’s director for the Pacific, explained that “campaigning against child labour is really a campaign for proper education. We need a situation where children go to school, get proper qualifications, join the job market and lead healthy lives. We cannot have generation after generation of children working.”

The ILO estimates that 246 million children worldwide aged between 5 and 17 years are engaged in labour. More than two-thirds of these children, a figure that corresponds to 180 million, are exploited in the worst forms of child labour.

Blenk describes it as a vicious cycle. “Poverty breeds child labour but it’s also the other way around: children in child labour are not well trained, and they become physically and psychologically exhausted before they are mature. So how can they contribute to national wealth and productivity?” He added that breaking this vicious cycle is the foremost challenge for the ILO to turn a vicious cycle of child labour into a virtuous cycle of education and prosperity.

CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BEAR THE BRUNT OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the adoption of ILO Convention No.182 on the worst forms of child labour. Now confronted with a global economic crisis of proportions not seen since the Great Depression, we are more than ever sensitive to the urgency of action required by that Convention.

There is a real danger that achievements made in eliminating child labour thus far will be eroded. A number of countries in the developing world that are most highly exposed to setbacks from the crisis are precisely those where the ILO and its partners have made important strides in the fight against child labour over the past decade. We must do our utmost so that the important progress made is not undermined.

We are more than ever convinced that it is time to redouble our efforts to ensure that the most vulnerable, our children, do not bear the brunt of the crisis. In this 10th anniversary year the ILO is committed more than ever to providing technical assistance to assist those Pacific Island States who have not yet ratified Convention No. 182 to do so. Similarly technical assistance is available to those states that have already ratified the Convention, to assist in its implementation. Constituents seeking further information or assistance on Convention No. 182 should contact our office.

Complacency is not an option. It is time to scale up the response by whatever means we have and to ensure that resources for education and social protection are spent in a way that benefits the families, communities and children suffering from or at risk of child labour.
FIJI EQUIPPED TO CARRY OUT CHILD LABOUR SURVEYS

As part of the TACKLE project, the ILO recently conducted a research training program aimed at strengthening the capacity of institutions in Fiji involved in child labour regulation. The 45 participants drawn from government departments, unions, employer organizations, civil society, NGOs, international organizations, academia and the media participated in the course from 29 March to 2 April in Sigatoka.

The course clarified the terms and issues for child labour research, including the accepted definitions of “child”, “children in employment” and “child labour” in accordance with ILO Conventions 138 and 182 and Recommendations 146 and 190. Participants learnt how to use child labour research methods and tools, including rapid assessments. Techniques to strengthen systems and procedures for data collection measurement and analysis were also examined.

SYMPOSIUM ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CHILD LABOUR

As part of the ILO 90 celebrations, on 17 April 2009 a symposium on Social Justice and Child Labour will be held in Suva. The symposium aims to create an awareness of the efforts of the ILO and partners in working for social justice and its impact on child labour.

The symposium will also launch the 2009 World Day Against Child Labour Campaign, which will be celebrated this year on 12 June. The focus of this year’s World Day is on the exploitation of girls in child labour and is themed, ‘Give girls a chance: end child labour.’ See www.ilo.org for more information on this global campaign.

All constituents, stakeholders and other interested community members are invited to attend the symposium, which will commence at 8.30 a.m. on 17 April 2009 at the Holiday Inn in Suva. For further information on the symposium please contact Surkafa Katafono on +679 331 3866 surkafa@ilo.org.
Youth unemployment and underemployment are major labour issues in Pacific Island Countries. The “youth bulge” is one of the profound challenges facing Pacific governments today and unemployment rates among school leavers are invariably higher than for other population groups. Key youth employment challenges in the Pacific include: the general lack of economic growth, weak tertiary education systems, skills mismatch, lack of labour market information and job placement services, constraints on self employment and entrepreneurship and a lack of representation of the voices of youth workers.

The ILO recognizes the urgent need to address these issues. In April 2008 the ILO initiated its ‘Youth Employment Programme’ (YEP), which works with constituents, the private sector and other stakeholders to improve employment opportunities for youth across the Pacific. To implement the YEP programme, over the last year the ILO, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies, regional agencies and ILO specialist departments, has carried out an extensive capacity building program with ILO constituents, partners and youth leaders.

In August 2008 forty participants from ILO constituents and partners in the Pacific region undertook ‘Community Based Training on Rural Economic Empowerment’ (CBTREE) in Vanuatu. The workshop familiarized participants in CBTREE methodology and pilot tested and adapted CBTREE methodology for implementation in Pacific Island Countries in 2008 and 2009.

Samoa hosted a group of 20 young trade union and youth leaders from across the Pacific, including Australia and New Zealand, in September 2008 for a workshop on Decent Work for Youth. The workshop was conducted by the ILO for the Pacific Region in collaboration with the specialist ILO body on workers rights ACTRAV and the ILO International Training Centre in Turin.

Participants were trained in: ILO’s policies and programmes for decent work for young people; International Labour Standards and Fundamental Rights of Workers; ILO’s Global Employment Agenda; trade union policies on employment promotion and youth organizing and social protection policies for migrant workers. The workshop successfully mobilized the young leaders for greater participation and involvement in policy and programmes on youth employment, by initiating national activities in their home countries in 2009.

In October 2008 thirty-five trainers and youth workers from across the Pacific were provided with the necessary skills and knowledge to obtain a Trainers’ Certification in the ‘Starting and Improving Your Business’ (SIYB) programme. Having attended the sub-regional workshop, participants were qualified to themselves conduct training sessions for youth in their own countries in 2009. The 2 week workshop in Fiji was a collaborative effort of the ILO and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

The ILO then provided a forum for the sharing of information and best practices on youth employment policies and programmes at the ‘Sub Regional Workshop on Paving the Way for a National Action Plan for Youth Employment’. The workshop, conducted in November 2008 in Fiji, was attended by high level officials of the ILO Tripartite, including government officials of National Planning, Community Development, Youth and Women. Youth delegates from Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu also attended and contributed productively to the debate.

The workshop provided participants with a guide and the necessary skills to draft their own National Action Plan on Youth Employment in 2009. The resulting National Action Plans provide a framework to steer the actions of policy makers, employers’ organizations, trade unions and development actors towards the goal of productive employment and decent work for young people. The workshop was a collaborative effort of the ILO office for the Pacific Region, the ILO’s International Training Centre in Turin, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Commonwealth Youth Programme.

As a result of recent ILO activities in the Pacific, including those discussed above, Pacific Island governments, constituents and partners are better equipped to address the critical issues associated with youth employment in the region. There is still a lot of work to be done though, so look out for further details about local YEP activities in future editions of this newsletter or contact us directly on the details set out below.

For further information on the ILO’s Youth Employment Programme please contact Ofelia Eugenio +679 3313866 or eugenio@ilo.org or Edward Bernard on +679 3313866 or Bernard@ilo.org.

The ILO would like to hear your success stories with respect to youth employment and entrepreneurship, which have arisen as a result of the above programmes. Please provide your news to Peter Blumel on +679 3313866 or peterb@ilo.org for inclusion in the next edition.
Working in a ‘man’s world’: women in the Fiji police force

There are higher proportions of women in public services worldwide, and an increasing number of equal opportunities policies exist globally. Nevertheless the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111) adopted in 1958 remains as relevant today as it was in the late 1950s… in the Pacific region and elsewhere. An interview with Kasanita Seruvatu, former Director of Training in the Fijian Police and now Training Advisor to the Samoa Police, who was spearheading initiatives in the two countries to create a stronger ethnic and gender balance and empower women to take up challenging roles in the police force over the last 10 years.

Q&A

ILO online: In your opinion, which are the major obstacles to removing discrimination against women at work?

Kasanita Seruvatu:

Major obstacles are the deeply entrenched beliefs and stereotyped attitudes towards women in the workplace. Culture, socialisation processes and religion play a role in this. Precolonial taboos and norms of the Pacific cultures draw a clear demarcation line between dominant men and subordinate women. The colonial and Christian value systems later reinforced traditional gender roles. These traditional gender roles have lost importance but still continue to influence modern societies in the Pacific region.

Another major obstacle to gender equality are women themselves. Sometimes we live up to the expectations of society - especially our male counterparts - by appearing helpless and non assertive, even when holding positions of authority and responsibility. Moreover, by accepting certain kinds of jobs women reinforce deeply entrenched beliefs that they are weaker than men and cannot perform the same duties as men.

ILO Online: What key measures were put in place in order to ensure a more balanced representation of women and ethnic minorities in the Fijian police force?

Kasanita Seruvatu: Appropriate measures were put in place in 2003 including the decision to widen the pool of recruits and to remove certain compulsory selection criteria concerning height, weight, age and chest size of the candidates that discriminated against ethnic Indians and Chinese. The same year, a policy was put into place that gave 35% of places in the police to women and 65% to men. The new human resources policies also promoted a more transparent and fair selection procedure, gave women front line operational roles, including elite units, established networks, and promoted zero tolerance of sexual harassment and positive media coverage of women in the police force.

A balanced recruitment is ensured in the Fiji Police by giving a certain percentage to all the ethnic groups that are in Fiji. The Executives and the Human Resources Department will decide how many new recruits are required for the intake. The number is then divided into percentages taking into account the percentage of the population that the group is a part of. For example, there can be 50% Fijians; 40% ethnic Indians and 10% from other minorities. Of course, these percentages must also take into account the quota for women.

What about women who want to join the higher ranks of the police force?

Kasanita Seruvatu: Joining the higher ranks of the Fiji Police Force is not easy due to the entrenched attitudes and beliefs regarding women in general in policing not only in Fiji but in the Pacific region as a whole. Prior to Commissioner Hughes’ appointment into the Fiji Police, there was only one woman holding the rank of an Assistant Superintendent while the next highest ranking woman was a sergeant. There was no woman at the inspectorate level. It’s a man’s world. A significant change came about in 2003 when Commissioner Hughes appointed two women to significant operational positions. However, their work was made harder on the ground when they dealt with male counterparts who had deeply ingrained ideas about gender roles in society.

Kasanita Seruvatu: There is a patriarchal attitude towards women in the world of work and sometimes women are given token positions to pacify the strong advocates in women issues and to more or less ‘keep their mouths shut’. Management should not only talk about gender equality but also follow up with action. Where policies exist in this area, managers should make sure that every attempt is made to facilitate the access of women police officers to upper management levels. They should ‘walk the talk’ instead of paying lip service. Women should be encouraged to take up front line operational duties and to move away from performing ‘administrative duties’. Promotion opportunities and key positions vacancies should be advertised and everyone encouraged to apply and the selection to be done in a fair and transparent way. Women should stop being ‘mute’, be assertive in their communication with men and dare to question the decisions of superiors especially if it is a man.

Integration and diversity in the police force also have a positive impact on society?

Kasanita Seruvatu: A gender and ethnically balanced police force reinforces the principle that all law enforcement agencies should be representative of and responsive and accountable to the community it serves. It also reinforces the fact that a police force should recognize and reflect the identity and concerns of every section of the population. When a police force can show the visible presence of members of the minorities and women in prominent positions, it can be a clear indication of its acceptance in the population.

What role can the ILO play in achieving gender equality and combating discrimination in the Pacific region?

Kasanita Seruvatu: ILO could and should play a major role in the region and help achieving gender equality in the workplace. This means breaking down the barriers of discrimination both at the organizational level as well as at the governmental level. The ILO could help through strengthening labour ministries in the region, facilitating dialogue among the interested parties and providing technical assistance in identified improvement areas. Here are some concrete ideas for policies promoting gender equality: giving scholarships specifically to young women and girls in traditional male jobs like engineering; reserving places for young women and girls on training courses; and ensuring that all girls and young women have open access to education.

The ILO vision of gender equality recognizes this goal not only as a basic human right, but intrinsic to the global aim of Decent Work for All Women and Men. The ILO Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming supports a two pronged approach to gender mainstreaming: systematically analysing and addressing in all initiatives the specific needs of both women and men, and targeted interventions to enable women and men to participate in – and benefit equally from – development efforts. Conventions 100 on Equal Remuneration and 111 on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation are fundamental ILO Conventions.
NEW ILO STAFF

In February this year the ILO welcomed Valentina Barcucci to the ILO Office for the Pacific Region. Valentina is an enterprise and knowledge management consultant. She will be working under the guidance of Ofelia Eugenio, Chief Technical Adviser, on the enterprise component of the Youth Employment Programme for six months.

Valentina comes to Suva from the ILO’s regional office in Bangkok where she also worked on enterprise and private sector development. Prior to working for the ILO, Valentina’s professional background was in corporate finance and budgeting. She then completed her Masters in Development Management at the London School of Economics and has been working in the development field ever since.

In March this year Caroline Scott also joined the ILO Office for the Pacific Region. Caroline is an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development who will be working with the ILO for 12 months as a Technical Officer in labour law, International Labour Standards and industrial relations. During this period Caroline will primarily be working on the development and implementation of Decent Work Country Programmes for Pacific Island Countries and will act as a liaison between the ILO, other United Nations agencies and development partners in the Pacific.

Prior to taking up this position with the ILO Caroline was an industrial relations and human rights lawyer in Australia. In this role she advised on and represented clients in litigation in all areas of employment and industrial relations law, including equal opportunity, occupational health and safety and human rights charter compliance. She has also worked as a legal associate to a Presidential Member of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.

ILO RESOURCES

 Constituents may be aware that the ILO library has been closed for sometime now pending renovations to the Suva office. We will advise constituents as soon as the library is operational again. However, in the interim we would like to remind you of a variety of online resources that may be freely accessed.

ILO online

http://www.ilo.org

Gender equality at the heart of decent work, Campaign 2008-2009

http://www.ilo.org/gender

ILOLEX is a trilingual database containing ILO Conventions and Recommendations, ratification information, comments of the Committee of Experts and the Committee on Freedom of Association, representations, complaints, interpretations, General Surveys, and numerous related documents.

http://www.ilo.org/ilolex

In 2009 the ILO celebrates its 90th Anniversary, against a backdrop of financial crisis and critical levels of unemployment around the world. Looking to the future means understanding the past, and as such the ILO’s 90th anniversary celebrations worldwide focus on the theme of “90 years working for social justice” with a strong forward looking element, asking how the ILO’s experience working through crisis can add a unique voice to the present day response to economic crisis.

http://www.ilo.org/90

SUBMISSIONS

This is your newsletter, so please do give us your feedback, suggestions and contributions for inclusion. Please provide any material you may have for the next edition of the newsletter to Peter Blumel on +679 3313866 or peterb@ilo.org