

DECENT WORK IN ASIA
REPORTING ON RESULTS 2001-05

Decent work in Asia: Reporting on results 2001-05

Fourteenth Asian Regional Meeting
Busan, Republic of Korea, August-September 2006

Report of the Director-General

This Report may also be consulted on the ILO Internet site
www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/rgmeet/asia.htm

ISBN 978-92-2-118770-7

First published 2006

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ACFTU	All-China Federation of Trade Unions
ACWF	All-China Women's Federation
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AJK	Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan
ALI	Association of Lebanese Industrialists
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APINDO	Indonesia Employers' Association
APSDEP	Asia and Pacific Skills Development Programme
ARM	Asian Regional Meeting
ARMM	Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASIST AP	Advisory Support, Information Services and Training for Asia-Pacific
ATC	Agreement on Textiles and Clothing
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BAPPENAS	Planning Ministry of Indonesia
BDS	Business Development Services
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association
CCA	common country assessment
CEC	China Enterprise Confederation
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPP	country programme priorities
CSR	corporate social responsibility
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DCI	Development Cooperation Ireland
DFID	Department for International Development, United Kingdom
DME	design, monitoring and evaluation
DWAB	Decent Work Advisory Body
DWCP	decent work country programme
DWI	decent work indicators
DWPP	Decent Work Pilot Programme
EC	European Commission
ECOP	Employers' Confederation of the Philippines
ECOT	Employers' Confederation of Thailand
EEO	equal employment opportunity
EEOW	Expansion of Employment Opportunities for Women
EFA	Education for All
EFC	Employers' Federation of Ceylon
EIIP	Employment-Intensive Investment Programme
EPZ	export processing zone
ESPNAD	Employment Services for the People of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam

EU	European Union
FIP	Factory Improvement Programme
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
FTUB	Federation of Trade Unions of Burma
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GEMS	gender mainstreaming strategy
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
HIPC	heavily indebted poor countries
HRD	human resource development
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICFTU-APRO	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions Asian and Pacific Regional Organization
ICATU	International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions
IHRDPEP	Integrated Human Resources Development Programme for Employment Promotion, Fiji
ILO-IPEC	ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
ILO-STEP	ILO Programme on Strategies and Tools against Social Exclusion and Poverty
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMS	Information Management System
INDISCO	Interregional Programme to Support Self-Reliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples through Cooperatives and Self-Help Organizations
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IP	implementation planning
IRIS	Integrated Resources Information System
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
IYEAP	Indonesia Youth Employment Action Plan
IYENetwork	Indonesian Youth Employment Network
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit, United Nations
KAB	Know About Business
KSBSI	Confederation of Indonesia Prosperity Trade Unions
LMC	labour-management cooperation
LMIL	Labour Market Indicators Library
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFA	Multifibre Arrangement
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Viet Nam
MOLSS	Ministry of Labour and Social Security, China
MOMT	Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, Indonesia
MONEF	Mongolian Employers' Federation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSE	micro and small enterprise
MTUC	Malaysian Trade Union Congress
NCLP	National Child Labour Programme, India

NGO	non-governmental organization
NPADW	National Plan of Action for Decent Work
NWFP	North West Frontier Province, Pakistan
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSH	occupational safety and health
PAC	Project Advisory Committee
PEBLISA	Prevention and Elimination of Bonded Labour in South Asia
PRISED	Poverty Reduction through Small Enterprise Development
PRS	poverty reduction strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RBM	results-based management
RETA	regional technical assistance
RIRP	Rapid Income Recovery Programme
RISE	rapid income support through employment
RRG	Regional Readers' Group
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SAVPOT	South Asia and Viet Nam Project on Tripartism
SCREAM	Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media
SECO	Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
SKILLS-AP	Regional Skills and Employability Programme for Asia and the Pacific
SME	small and medium-sized enterprises
SPF	Strategic Policy Framework
SSO	Social Security Office, Thailand
TBP	Time-bound Programme
TICSA	Trafficking in Children in South Asia
TICW	Trafficking in Children and Women
TREE	Training for Rural Economic Empowerment
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
WEC-PK	Women's Employment Concerns and Working Conditions, Pakistan

VCCI	Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WEBCOP	Workers-Employers Bilateral Council of Pakistan
WFCL	worst forms of child labour
WHO	World Health Organization
WIND	Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Development
WISCON	Work Improvement in Small Construction Sites
WISH	Work Improvement for Safe Homes
WTO	World Trade Organization
YEN	Youth Employment Network
YKAI	Indonesian Child Welfare Foundation

1. Results-based management for decent work

Reporting on results

In the conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting in 2001, each member State in the region was urged “to establish, through tripartite discussion and consensus, a national plan of action for decent work, which should define, within the overall framework of the ILO Decent Work Agenda, national priorities, a timetable for implementation and a set of indicators for the purposes of regular tripartite monitoring and evaluation”. The delegates requested the Office “to provide such assistance to the tripartite constituents in the design of these national plans of action as they may consider necessary”, and “to give priority to assisting, where necessary and requested, the tripartite constituents to implement the national plan of action for decent work”. Concern was also expressed at “the lack of information on, and evaluation of, the follow-up to the conclusions of previous Regional Meetings” and the Office was called upon to provide an assessment of the results and impact of the implementation at the next Asian Regional Meeting.¹

This report for the Fourteenth Asian Regional Meeting, *Decent work in Asia: Reporting on results 2001-05*, is the response to those conclusions. It assesses the progress made in decent work at country level and highlights the results achieved.

“The results the ILO seeks are defined, in most cases, as changes in policies, programmes or conditions affecting working people in member States.”² In reporting on the key results achieved as a consequence of ILO activities, the following questions are addressed:

- What difference or change has been brought about as a consequence of ILO action?
- How was the impact or outcome judged as a success or failure?
- How did the result affect different population groups?
- What was the role of the Office in relation to the roles of the constituents, other organizations and donors?
- How was tripartite social dialogue promoted and to what extent was it instrumental in achieving results?
- Have ILO “know-how” and “show-how” shaped public or private policies and have the policies been implemented?
- What were the lessons learned and the good practices and messages disseminated?
- What are the outstanding challenges and constraints?

Structure of the report

The rest of this chapter sets the context by highlighting the international, regional and national developments since 2001 that have influenced the implementation of the conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting. It also explains the efforts of the Office to apply strategic budgeting and results-based management to the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

Chapter 2 describes how different countries, taking into account their specific contexts and concerns, have adopted different modalities or frameworks for promoting decent work. It explains the basic differences between national plans of action for decent work (NPADWs), which are essentially “owned” by the countries themselves and nationally driven, and decent work country programmes (DWCPs), which are the ILO’s time-bound and resourced programmes to assist countries in achieving clearly identified priority decent work outcomes. The chapter also describes how the ILO is working with the United Nations system at country level to promote decent work.

¹ See ILO: *Report and conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting*, Governing Body doc. GB.282/3 (appendix), 282nd Session, Geneva, 2001.

² ILO: *The Director-General’s Programme and Budget proposals for 2006-07*, GB.292/PFA/8(Rev.), para. 82.

The next four chapters report the key results achieved in implementing the conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting, according to the four strategic objectives of decent work – fundamental rights, employment, social protection and social dialogue – which define the core activities of the ILO. Although the results are reported separately for each of the strategic objectives, the integrated nature of the Decent Work Agenda is emphasized.

The key results described are illustrative, not exhaustive, and are not intended as any comparison of countries, constituents or Offices. The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, the Regional Office for the Arab States, the subregional and country offices, the technical specialists and project staff from the field and headquarters, and ILO constituents, all contributed write-ups of activities which they feel best illustrate results, impacts or outcomes, are truly innovative or illustrate good practices, failures or lessons learned.

In the concluding chapter, ILO constituents and donors comment on the results that have been achieved. Looking ahead to the Fourteenth Asian Regional Meeting and beyond, major opportunities and challenges present themselves. Given that Asia accounts for about 4 billion out of the world population of 6.5 billion and that it is a leading region in the global economy, achieving decent work in Asia will go some way towards achieving decent work as a global goal; this theme is highlighted in the accompanying report for the Fourteenth Asian Regional Meeting, *Realizing decent work in Asia*.

The context for implementation

Efforts to implement the conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting have been taking place in the midst of significant developments in the international, regional and national arenas – developments that have reaffirmed the importance of decent work and that have also had an impact on the ways in which the ILO operates to promote decent work.

The Millennium Development Goals

In the global context, the framework of the development agenda and development cooperation is set by the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000, the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development of 2002, and the 2005 World Summit Outcome document.³

The adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), drawn from the United Nations Millennium Declaration, was “a seminal event in the history of the United Nations. It constituted an unprecedented promise by world leaders to address, as a single package, peace, security, development, human rights and fundamental freedoms”.⁴ The international community has adopted the eight MDGs (box 1.1) as a focus of activity, agreeing on a core strategy to help countries to meet all these goals by the target date of 2015.

Box 1.1. Millennium Development Goals

- Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4. Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5. Improve maternal health
- Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development.

³ United Nations: *World Summit Outcome*, resolution adopted by the General Assembly, 60th session (New York, doc. A/RES/60/1, 24 Oct. 2005).

⁴ United Nations: *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2005* (New York, 2005), p. 3.

Five years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and ten years before the MDGs fall due, much progress has been achieved in some areas.⁵ Many Asian countries have made decent and productive employment central to their commitment to achieving the MDGs, and Asia has been leading the way in reducing poverty rates in the world. However, a major effort is still needed to meet the goals in other countries and, if current trends persist, there is a risk that many of the poorest countries will not be able to meet them. At the United Nations World Summit in September 2005, world leaders reviewed the progress made, and the 2005 World Summit Outcome document adopted by the United Nations General Assembly reiterated strong and unambiguous commitment to achieving the MDGs by 2015.

Paragraph 47 of the World Summit Outcome document referred explicitly to ILO employment goals, expressing strong support for fair globalization, full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people. These were identified as “a central objective of our relevant national and international policies as well as our national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies, as part of our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These measures should also encompass the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, as defined in International Labour Organization Convention No. 182, and forced labour. We also resolve to ensure full respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work.” The ILO mandate to make decent work a global goal is now stronger than ever.

Changes in the United Nations system and development cooperation

The Monterrey Consensus which emerged from the United Nations International Conference on Financing for Development in 2002⁶ was confirmed at the High-Level Conference on Aid Effectiveness held in Paris in early 2005. The Paris Declaration underlines the notion of a compact between developing countries and donors for an effective utilization of aid resources through the creation of an enabling environment with increased accountability and transparency. In this new paradigm, the emphasis is on donor harmonization, a stronger national focus, the leading role which governments must play in the coordination of aid, and the coherence and collaboration that is expected between the different United Nations agencies.

Within the United Nations system, a series of reforms initiated by the Secretary-General have aimed at increasing coherence and unity of operations especially at country level. This has been in response to criticisms and concerns expressed by both donor countries and recipients that United Nations system operational activities are often scattered over individual projects, managed by separate agencies, often competing and overlapping, poorly coordinated and with limited impact. The reforms have led, importantly, to the reinforcement of the Resident Coordinator system and the development of UN Country Teams (UNCTs) with the aim of bringing together the different United Nations agencies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities at the country level.

The United Nations General Assembly at its 59th session in 2004 adopted an important resolution,⁷ which calls for the activities of the United Nations system in individual countries to be more effectively and closely integrated with national plans and priorities, and undertaken with the full participation and under the leadership of national authorities. The resolution stresses the full mobilization of the contributions of all entities of the United Nations system within a unified and country-led coordination framework, the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which, in turn, should be aligned with national strategic plans and priorities, such as poverty reduction strategies (PRSs), where they exist.

The ILO is fully committed to the United Nations system efforts to enhance effectiveness and coordination and has been participating actively at country level in these efforts.

⁵ United Nations: *In larger freedom: Towards development, security and human rights for all*, Report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, 59th session (New York, doc. A/59/2005, 21 March 2005); and United Nations: *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2005*, op. cit.

⁶ United Nations: *Monterrey Consensus on financing for development*, available at <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd>.

⁷ United Nations: *Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system*, resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, 59th session (New York, doc. A/RES/59/250, 22 Dec. 2004).

Globalization in Asia

The report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization in February 2004 emphasized that:

The current process of globalization is generating unbalanced outcomes, both between and within countries. Wealth is being created, but too many countries and people are not sharing in its benefits. They also have little or no voice in shaping the process. Seen through the eyes of the vast majority of women and men, globalization has not met their simple and legitimate aspirations for decent jobs and a better future for their children. Many of them live in the limbo of the informal economy without formal rights [...] ⁸

Between September and December 2002, three national dialogues were held in the Philippines, China and India, and one regional dialogue was held in Bangkok, to consult decision-makers and social actors on people's opinions of globalization and their concerns and aspirations. In addition to addressing the traditional themes of finance, trade, migration, technology and global production, the dialogues in Asia also pointed to the regional specificities of the globalization debate: its implications for workers in the rural and informal sectors, issues of gender, the perceived threats to local traditions and cultural identities, and the difficult issue of the democratic control of markets. ⁹ An informal dialogue was also held in December 2005 in India on "The social dimension of globalization: What next?".

As part of the follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Millennium Summit, the United Nations General Assembly in December 2004 unanimously adopted a resolution taking note of the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization (WCSDG), inviting the organizations of the United Nations system to consider within their mandates the report of the World Commission and calling on the member States to consider the report. The resolution also invited them to provide information on their activities "to promote an inclusive and equitable globalization", which would be reflected in the high-level review in 2005 of the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit. ¹⁰

In Asia, perhaps more than in any other part of the world, the impact and implications of globalization have been starkly evident. The Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting was dominated by vivid memories and the lingering effects of the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98, leading delegates to "request the Director-General, as a matter of urgency, to prepare, in consultation with the tripartite constituents of the region, guidelines and proposed programmes aimed at preventing, or at least significantly attenuating, the negative impacts of the current economic slowdown, as well as programmes aimed to assist member States to participate successfully in the global economy to achieve sustainable economic growth". ¹¹

Asian countries are increasingly exposed to global competition but at the same time, integration and cooperation arrangements within the region are growing stronger. Trade, investment and financial flows are increasingly intra-Asian. Asian countries are being linked in regional production systems, driven by the operations of multinational enterprises. The regional labour market has been widening, with growing cross-border movements of Asian workers. How Asian countries, individually and together, address the challenges of globalization and achieve decent work will determine the future of Asia and its peoples.

Regional and national developments

Recent events in Asia, including the spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and avian flu, are driving home the realization that in today's interconnected and interdependent economies, national solutions alone are not enough. Subregional groupings such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Pacific

⁸ World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization: *A fair globalization: Creating opportunities for all* (Geneva, ILO, 2004), Synopsis.

⁹ World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization: *Dialogues in Asia* (Bangkok, ILO, 2004).

¹⁰ United Nations: *A fair globalization: Creating opportunities for all – Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization*, resolution adopted without a vote by the General Assembly, 59th session (New York, doc. A/RES/59/57, 2 Dec. 2004).

¹¹ ILO: *Report and conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting*, op. cit., appendix, para. 3.

Islands Forum, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) are going beyond trade and economic cooperation to address these and other regional concerns. The regional concerns include, notably, the spread of HIV/AIDS, labour migration and the prevention of trafficking and forced labour. The “ripple” effects of 11 September 2001, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and other civil conflicts, the growing threats of terrorism and extremist groups, and the devastation caused by major natural disasters, have all highlighted the importance of coordinated global and regional responses and solutions.

Trade and financial market liberalization, the termination of the World Trade Organization’s Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC) and the complete phase-out of the Multifibre Arrangement (MFA) as of January 2005, the entry of countries such as China and Cambodia into the World Trade Organization (WTO), the slower integration of the West Asian countries into the global economy as compared to other parts of Asia, escalating oil prices – all these factors have created opportunities for some and threats for others, resulted in both job creation and job losses, highlighted the unevenness of the playing field, divided “winners” and “losers”, and raised serious concerns about competitiveness, productivity and the prospects for sustained economic growth and social advancement.

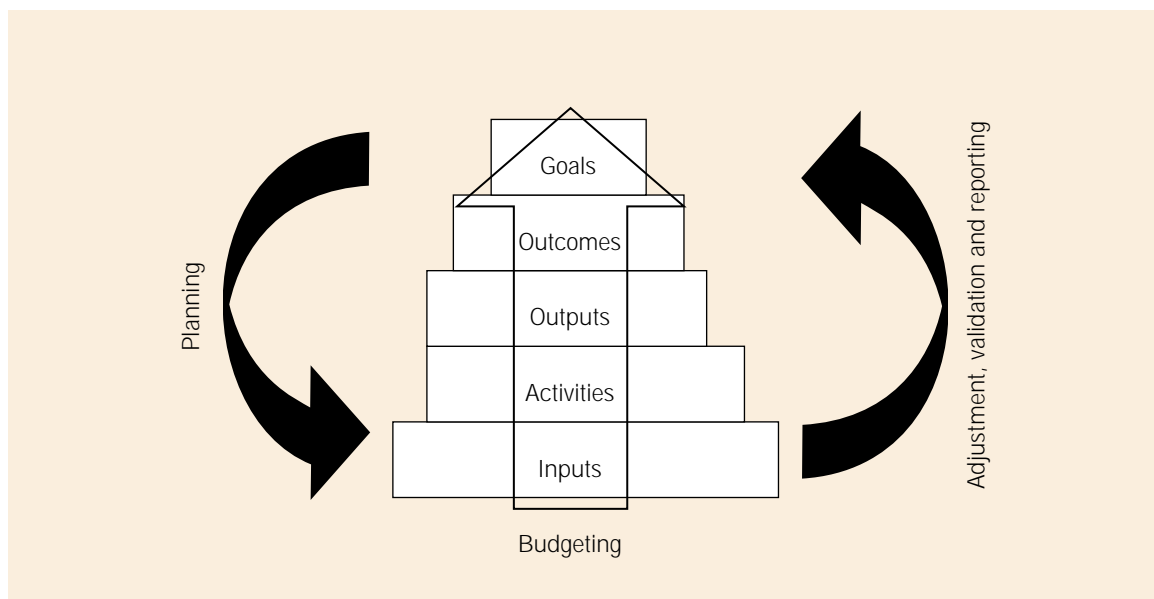
Since 2001, economic growth in this region has been by far the most rapid in the world. However, employment and labour market conditions remain major challenges. Unemployment has continued to climb, especially among young people, in almost all countries, and this has led to concerns about “jobless growth”. The share of the informal economy in total employment has been growing. Asia is still home to two-thirds of the world’s poor. People are working very long and hard hours but in low productivity jobs which do not pay them enough to support themselves and their families. Gender inequality in the labour market persists, and increasing exposure to the vagaries of the global economy has created many new vulnerable groups of workers. Ratification of the ILO’s eight fundamental Conventions has risen, but application in national law and practice is weak in many cases. Freedom of association is still a major problem in several countries.

ILO programmes in Asia have been very seriously affected by a number of natural disasters. Floods in countries such as Bangladesh and earthquakes in Gujarat (in India) and Bam (in the Islamic Republic of Iran) destroyed individual livelihoods and made countries more vulnerable to other forms of crisis. The United Nations Secretary-General, in a statement made at the Special ASEAN Leaders’ Meeting on 6 January 2005, described the earthquake and tsunami of 26 December 2004 as the largest natural disaster the Organization had had to respond to on behalf of the world community in the 60 years of its existence. The coastal regions of four countries in Asia – India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand – bore the brunt of the unprecedented devastation. The earthquake that hit the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) of Pakistan on 8 October 2005 resulted in horrific loss of life, homes and livelihoods. Even during the emergency relief and humanitarian assistance stages of the disasters, the affected countries emphasized the importance of early planning and action for socio-economic recovery towards employment and livelihood generation.

The institutional capacity for implementation

Results-based management for decent work

The task of implementing the conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting is the shared responsibility of all ILO constituents together with the Office. For its part, the Office since 2000 has adopted strategic budgeting and results-based management to contribute more effectively to the achievement of identifiable and measurable results (box 1.2).



“Results-based management systems emphasize the results or outcomes that are achieved, rather than the outputs that are produced or the activities that are carried out. In the case of the ILO, the dominant outcomes that are sought are more effective policies, better aligned with the ILO’s tripartite policy guidance.”¹² The ILO’s Strategic Policy Framework (SPF) for 2002-05 focused on promoting the Decent Work Agenda at country level; while the SPF for 2006-09 aims to make decent work not just an ILO goal, but a global goal.

¹² ILO: *The Director-General’s Programme and Budget proposals for 2006-07*, GB.292/PFA/8(Rev.), para. 145.

2. Decent work country programming

Decent work country programmes (DWCPs) were established formally as a tool for results-based management through an ILO circular issued in May 2004.¹ The circular specifies that DWCPs have two basic objectives. First, they promote decent work as a key component of development policies so that decent work becomes a national policy objective of governments and social partners as well as of other local actors and cooperating agencies. Second, DWCPs put the ILO's knowledge, instruments and advocacy at the service of our tripartite constituents to advance the Decent Work Agenda within the fields of competence of the Organization.²

The Director-General's Programme and Budget proposals for the biennium 2006-07 reaffirmed that "decent work country programmes will, over the biennium 2006-07, become the main framework for ILO work within countries, complemented by research and services at a regional and global level".³

National plans of action for decent work and decent work country programmes

Asia was, in fact, the first region to introduce the modality of national plans of action to promote decent work at the country level. The Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting in 2001 had urged "all member States in the region to define, through a tripartite process, a national plan of action for decent work" and had requested the Office "to give priority to assisting, where necessary and requested, the tripartite constituents to implement the national plan of action for decent work".⁴

Two meetings held in the South-East Asia and the Pacific subregion followed up on the formulation and implementation of national plans of action for decent work (NPADWs) (box 2.1). It is clear from the conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting and of these subregional meetings that the ILO tripartite constituents wish to decide upon and have national ownership of the NPADWs themselves, and that the role of the Office is to provide assistance where called upon to do so. From such a perspective, the NPADWs belong to the tripartite constituents and are driven and owned by them, taking into account national situations, development frameworks, priorities and concerns.

On the other hand, the DWCPs are the Office's time-bound and resourced programmes to contribute to the implementation of the NPADWs. Box 2.2 presents a very simplified illustration of these distinctions. Although different names are currently being used to label the efforts in different countries, the essential distinction is the role of the Office in relation to the larger national action, and the role of ILO constituents and other actors:

We will build our programme of cooperation in member States around a manageable number of priorities combining country requests and characteristics with overall ILO goals in an integrated package. This will enable us to put scarce resources to better use. It will strengthen our capacity to respond to issues and problems for which our constituents seek ILO assistance, in particular as regards integrated solutions to complex multidisciplinary problems in the world of work. We will distinguish our promotion of decent work as a goal for member States to adopt (around which their own major economic, social and environmental policies can converge) from decent work country programmes which constitute the ILO contribution to this national goal.⁵

¹ ILO Circular No. 599, Series 1, dated 20 May 2004, *Decent work country programmes*.

² ILO: *The Director-General's Programme and Budget proposals for the biennium 2006-07*, Governing Body, 292nd Session, Geneva, March 2005, GB.292/PFA/8(Rev.), para. 84.

³ *ibid.*, para. 85.

⁴ ILO: *Report and conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting*, Governing Body, 282nd Session, Geneva, November 2001, GB.282/3, Appendix: Conclusions, para. 19.

⁵ ILO: *The Director-General's Programme and Budget proposals for the biennium 2006-07*, op. cit., para. 35.

Box 2.1. South-East Asia and the Pacific Subregional Tripartite Forums on Decent Work

The First South-East Asia and the Pacific Subregional Tripartite Forum on Decent Work was hosted by the Government of New Zealand in Auckland from 6 to 8 October 2003, with tripartite participation from **Australia, Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and Vanuatu**. The aims were to:

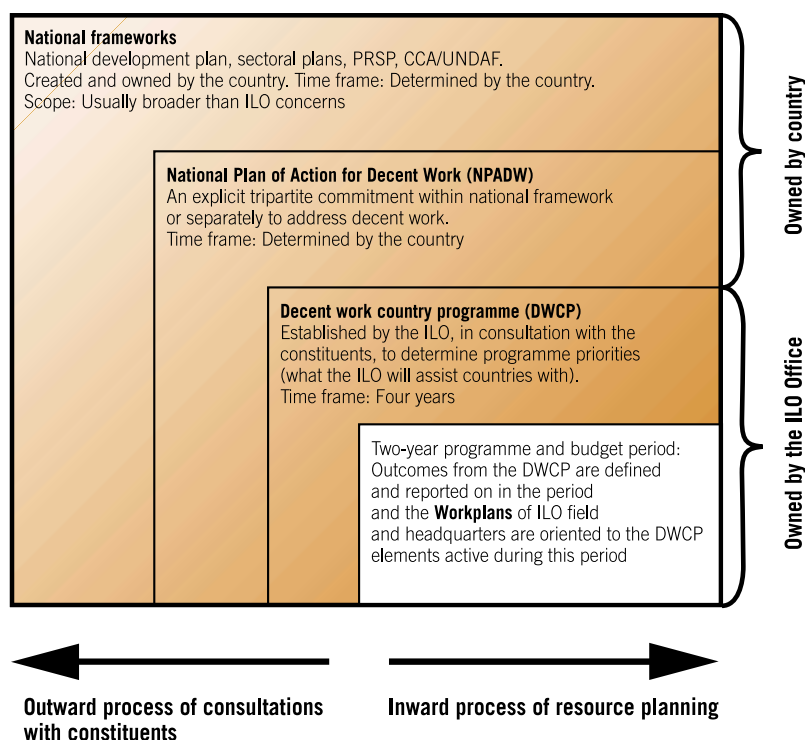
- consolidate the progress made in promoting the Decent Work Agenda across the subregion;
- share the lessons and best practices, and identify common issues and solutions, in developing and implementing NPADWs; and
- enable countries to take effective responsibility for developing and implementing their own plans.

In the Forum conclusions, the delegates called upon member States “to integrate, where possible, national plans of action for decent work with national development plans”.

The Second South-East Asia and the Pacific Subregional Tripartite Forum on Decent Work was held in Melbourne, Australia, from 5 to 8 April 2005 with tripartite participation from **Australia, Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and Vanuatu**.

The Forum showed that constituents in the subregion have firmly taken on board the idea that decent work is a suitable strategic framework for national policies in the labour and social fields. At the same time, they recognized the fact that, within each country, the Office needed a more focused and outcome-oriented tool for action. In their conclusions, the delegates “acknowledge the progress made in developing, updating and implementing” NPADWs and “encourage the ILO to deliver assistance to constituents within time-bound and resourced decent work country programmes that suit the specific needs and timelines of the countries concerned. They emphasize that the effective participation of the social partners is essential for the development and success of such programmes. They call upon members to give due regard to equality at the workplace.”

Box 2.2. National plan of action for decent work and decent work country programme



It is important to emphasize that a DWCP is not exclusively a country demand-driven programme. The DWCP also responds to ILO values and priorities: “The ILO constituents (Governing Body and International Labour Conference) define the overall orientation and priorities of the ILO which de facto apply to DWCP. ... A DWCP expresses the best possible intersection between country characteristics and policies, constituent priorities and ILO objectives. Each DWCP uniquely combines country characteristics, constituents’ priorities and ILO priorities.”⁶

The countries are at different stages of formulation and implementation and use different names or labels for their efforts to promote decent work. They take into account their specific contexts and concerns when adopting the different entry points and strategies for promoting the four strategic objectives of decent work, including for the mainstreaming of gender concerns. What is evident in all countries is the involvement of employers’ and workers’ organizations, together with ministries of labour, in decent work country programming.

The **Philippines** was the first country the ILO supported under the Decent Work Pilot Programme (DWPP).⁷ The DWPP, which was essentially ILO-driven to test the integrated approach to decent work, has since evolved into the National Plan of Action for Decent Work (NPADW), which was launched in 2002. The NPADW was based on the country’s Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2001-04, in which decent work is the overall framework for a chapter on promoting full, decent and productive employment. Since the start, the NPADW has been fully owned by the tripartite constituents. The NPADW sets the framework for the programming and prioritization of the Decent Work Agenda in the Philippines; it is an evolving document that is refined and updated through regular monitoring and consultation among the tripartite constituents. With the updating and revision of the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2004-10, the NPADW has evolved into “A Common Agenda” for the tripartite constituents. The Common Agenda sets the framework for initiatives to promote decent work for 2005-07 and spells out a special responsibility for supporting and encouraging collaboration among the ILO’s tripartite constituents. Furthermore, it provides a platform for mobilizing resources from donors and other international organizations. The DWCP is used by the ILO to operationalize its commitment to the Common Agenda and to provide assistance to the constituents in addressing their specific concerns and needs.

In 2001, the Government of **Bangladesh** asked to be included in the DWPP. The ILO responded by undertaking a series of technical missions and consultations with constituents and other national stakeholders. The theme of the DWPP evolved through a tripartite consultative process. A National Policy Dialogue held in April 2004 provided a forum for a broader based social dialogue that included national experts, key academic and research institutions and national NGOs engaged in development work. The recommendations of the National Policy Dialogue were considered by the Decent Work Advisory Body (DWAB) in a meeting held in August 2004, and a Decent Work Action Plan for Bangladesh evolved with a time frame of three to five years.

Indonesia can be cited as a country for which the model has worked well: an NPADW which is developed and owned by the constituents and an ILO DWCP in support of the larger national plan. The DWCP clarifies the responsibility of the ILO Office in terms of achieving realistic results with the resources available, while the more ambitious and longer term national aspirations around decent work are captured in the NPADW. While the NPADW identifies a broad range of decent work issues, the consensus was that the ILO would focus on: (i) industrial relations, including fundamental principles and rights at work and the implementation of new labour laws; (ii) child and forced labour; (iii) job opportunities, especially for youth; and (iv) social protection for vulnerable groups, particularly in the informal economy and for migrant workers. Resources for funding the NPADW come partly from the Government. The Indonesia Tripartite Action Plan on Decent Work 2002-05 has been incorporated into the national development plan, providing a basis for government programmes to contribute to the NPADW, including

⁶ ILO: *ILO decent work country programmes: A guidebook*, Version 1 (Geneva, 2005), p. 11.

⁷ Before the introduction of the DWCPs, the ILO had established in October 2000 the Decent Work Pilot Programme (DWPP). The aim of the DWPP is to strengthen national capacity in integrating decent work as a goal into policy agenda, demonstrate the utility of an integrated approach to decent work in different socio-economic contexts and develop methods for designing effective country programmes and policies that promote decent work. There have been seven operational DWPPs – Bahrain, Bangladesh, Denmark, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Panama and the Philippines. With DWCPs applying to all countries, there will be no more “pilots”.

through specific budgetary allocations. The Ministry of Manpower has incorporated elements of the NPADW into departmental workplans and budgets.

Pakistan is another country where decent work country programming has evolved through a tripartite process. Pakistan's DWCP was jointly prepared by the Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis and the ILO Office in Islamabad, in close consultation with the Employers' Federation of Pakistan and the Pakistan Workers' Federation. The DWCP, which was jointly approved and signed by all four parties in September 2005, identifies four priority areas: labour law reform; employment generation through human resources development, specifically, by way of skills training; expansion of social protection, including the informal economy; and promoting tripartism for social dialogue. To operationalize the DWCP, the document specifies that "a Decent Work Task Force (DWTF) should be constituted that would provide not just advice and support but will be a working group of a tripartite nature that will also design projects under the DWCP framework and be responsible for their implementation and monitoring" and also that "ILO technical cooperation projects especially the National Steering Committees of the IPEC programme, the bonded labour programme and the skills development programme would be used as entry points to carry the DWCP forward. Other national committees such as the PRSP Implementation Secretariat would be used as entry points. The PRSP secretariat has also pledged active support to the DWCP."

The Islamic **Republic of Iran** took the initiative of adopting a National Plan for Decent Work during the visit of the ILO Director-General to Teheran in May 2005. The NPADW, which is based on the Islamic Republic of Iran's Fourth Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan (2005-09), provides the basic framework for ILO work in the country. The main elements of the NPADW include the promotion of basic labour rights, productive employment, labour relations, social protection and social dialogue.

In 2003, **New Zealand** Department of Labour officials, in consultation with Business New Zealand and the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, agreed on a four-stage process to develop and finalize a Decent Work Action Plan for presentation at the Fourteenth Asian Regional Meeting. The Decent Work Action Plan is to be a dynamic planning tool. An initial stocktaking of policies, legislation and priorities served as the basis for assessing progress and identifying gaps in the country's achievement of decent work. The plan takes into account activities across levels of the Government, as well as activities in the private sector and community that contribute to decent work. It is expected to be a useful tool to guide government activities and inter-agency involvement and collaboration, as well as the allocation of resources to attain outcomes aligned with the ILO's decent work programme.

Australia, too, has used a "bottom-up" approach to develop its Decent Work Action Plan. The country itself, rather than the ILO, has been developing the plan. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations has been consulting with various federal government agencies, as well as state and territory governments, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Australian Council of Trade Unions regarding preparation of an NPADW. The NPADW will outline relevant government/agency policies; describe current and proposed activities that relate to the ILO's strategic objectives; and specify where these objectives are being met and where they will continue to be pursued.

The ILO has been assisting the Pacific island countries to develop country programmes with different titles – "Framework for action" in **Fiji**, "Structural adjustment at minimum social cost" in **Papua New Guinea**, "Promoting change" in the **Solomon Islands** and "Partnership for development" in **Kiribati**. In all these countries, the DWCPs have been developed with the close involvement of the tripartite constituents. In **Vanuatu**, for example, the DWCP was prepared with broad consensus and submitted to Cabinet. **Samoa**, which only recently joined the ILO, is finalizing its country programme.

In some countries, the ILO and constituents have used the modality of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to promote decent work. For example, the MOU between the Government of **China** and the ILO provided a framework for ILO action and assistance, including for the China Employment Forum held in April 2004. However, since the MOU did not involve workers' and employers' organizations, the Office is working with constituents towards a DWCP that will contain agreed priority areas and objectives to be achieved based on the MOU strategic implementation framework, agreed objectives and activities with the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) and the China Enterprise Confederation (CEC) and cooperation with other partners.

The MOU modality has also been used for decent work country programming in several of the Arab States, including **Bahrain** and **Iraq**, as well as the **occupied Arab territories**. In September 2003, the

ILO signed a Plan of Joint Activities for 2004-05 with the Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States and its Executive Bureau. The Plan of Joint Activities is the basis for ILO technical assistance to **Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia** and the **United Arab Emirates**. In the **occupied Arab territories**, however, the special circumstances and the need for an enhanced programme for technical cooperation have led to a unique Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection.

Other countries, such as **Oman, Sri Lanka** and **Syrian Arab Republic**, have used the modality of a framework for cooperation to define the DWCP. In **Sri Lanka**, for example, the framework for cooperation for the Decent Work Country Programme 2004-08 “spells out how the tripartite partners of the ILO perceive the ILO’s best contribution to the implementation of ‘Creating our future: Building our nation’, the Economic Policy Framework of the Government of Sri Lanka, and the poverty reduction strategy. It is the strategic framework, within which the Government and the employers’ and workers’ organizations agree to work in partnership towards achieving the goal of decent work in Sri Lanka”. The framework also specifies that “this DWCP will be the basis for the ILO’s contribution to the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Sri Lanka and will contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals”.

In **Viet Nam**, the country programme takes the form of a National Cooperation Framework for the period 2006-10. The Framework “is based on the following four strategic themes agreed upon in the course of extensive consultations between the ILO and its constituents in Viet Nam. They are: (i) labour institutions; (ii) labour markets and employment; (iii) social security and occupational safety and health; and (iv) vulnerable groups.” The Framework “provides the terms of reference for policy development and action by the Government of Viet Nam, the employers’ and workers’ organizations and the ILO in the labour and social field and will be used for the purpose of programming, planning and fund mobilization”. The Framework is being reviewed by the Government and once it is finalized and signed, it will guide the ILO’s work over the next five years.

In **Mongolia**, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour worked with the Mongolian Employers’ Federation and the Confederation of Mongolian Trade Unions beginning in early 2004 to draft an NPADW and implement an action plan. A tripartite meeting in March 2005 confirmed the importance of tripartism and agreed on both the text of the NPADW and on its importance as a vehicle to promote decent work in Mongolia within the framework of the National Development Concept of Mongolia and the Economic Growth Support and Poverty Reduction Strategy. A DWCP is under development by the Office in consultation with constituents to prioritize ILO’s support to the NPADW.

Decent work country programming and implementation planning

Decent work country programming is still an evolving exercise, but a major step forward has been taken to link DWCP priorities to the ILO Strategic Policy Framework and Programme and Budget for 2006-07. For this new biennium, all field offices have been engaged in implementation planning to identify key country priority outcomes to be achieved and to link technical and financial resources available or likely to be available for achieving the intended outcomes or results. The implementation plan therefore represents an important tool for resource mobilization, including local resource mobilization. It is also very useful for achieving strategic focus and improving coordination and the allocation of resources between field offices and headquarters units towards clearly established and agreed priorities.

For the first time, information is transparently and conveniently available on country priority outcomes in the Implementation Planning (IP) Module of the ILO’s Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS). It is important to note, however, that the priorities and outcomes listed do not represent everything that the ILO does in a particular country; they indicate only the three or four main result areas that the ILO aims to deliver on over a defined period within a more visible and transparent strategy, to maximize the impact of the ILO’s work. Similarly, the implementation plan does not include 100 per cent of the resources available to any country. Field offices need to retain some flexibility to address unforeseen and unprogrammed requests; some leeway for contingencies, ad hoc response and short-term actions is necessary. It is also worth noting that the priorities and outcomes and the strategies for achieving them will be constantly reviewed and modified or refined as necessary in the light of changing conditions and resource availability.

Box 2.3 shows the country programme priorities (CPP) – the areas where the ILO, in consultation with the tripartite constituents, hopes to make a genuine contribution and aims to focus its limited resources. To address these CPPs, each country office identifies a number of intended outcomes or expected results based on ILO knowledge development, action and advocacy. Figure 2.1 shows the intended outcomes broken down according to the four strategic objectives of decent work for the Asia-Pacific region and the Arab States. The four strategic objectives and their operational outcomes as defined in the ILO Strategic Policy Framework and Programme and Budget for 2006-07 are highlighted in box 2.4.

**Box 2.3. Implementation planning: Country programme priorities for 2006-07
(as of 1 February 2006)**

Country or area	Priorities for ILO action
Asia-Pacific	<p>Promote competitiveness, productivity and jobs, importantly through skills training</p> <p>Regional initiatives on youth employment</p> <p>Regional plan of action for labour migration</p> <p>Enhanced capacity to respond to disasters, crises and conflicts</p>
Afghanistan	<p>Create decent and productive employment opportunities for all, with emphasis on women, persons with disabilities, youth, demobilized soldiers and returnees</p>
Bangladesh	<p>The country remains competitive post-MFA and promotes decent and productive employment for its workforce</p> <p>Promote fundamental principles and rights at work, including progressive elimination of the worst forms of child labour</p> <p>Other areas of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers' and workers' organizations improved their capacity to support their existing members and expand their services to new members Promote economic opportunities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Flood-affected weavers in selected areas able to restore their income and livelihoods
Cambodia	<p>Productive employment opportunities are more readily available for persons living in poverty, especially in rural areas</p> <p>National training and employment strategies are developed and institutional capacity for their implementation is improved, incorporating experience gained through demonstration projects</p> <p>Stronger labour institutions (including social partners) contribute to good governance, administration and enhanced understanding and respect for fundamental rights</p> <p>Social protection is enhanced for targeted groups</p> <p>Other areas of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better measures are taken by Government to improve respect for and protection of the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples and thereby improve opportunities for sustainable livelihood in their communities
China	<p>Promote employment and reduce inequality and poverty, with particular emphasis on facilitating, supporting and protecting surplus rural labour migration to urban areas</p>

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Country or area	Priorities for ILO action
	<p>Improve labour relations, dispute resolution, labour law enforcement and tripartite mechanisms</p> <p>Improve and link social protection with achievement of sustained quality development and productivity</p> <p>Other areas of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve knowledge and impact of international labour standards Global compact and corporate social responsibility (CSR) promoted to improve productivity and application of international labour standards contributing to fair globalization
Fiji	<p>Promote and realize fundamental principles and rights of decent work</p> <p>Child labour is progressively eliminated</p> <p>Decent employment created in the formal and informal economies for school leavers, unemployed youth and people living below the poverty line</p>
India	<p>Enhance labour market access for women and men and opportunities for decent and productive work, particularly for vulnerable groups</p> <p>Social protection for all, particularly in the context of informalization</p> <p>Hazardous forms of work, with a particular focus on the worst forms of child labour, progressively eliminated</p>
Indonesia	<p>Stop exploitation at work</p> <p>Employment creation for poverty reduction and livelihoods recovery, especially for youth</p> <p>Social dialogue for economic growth and principles and rights at work</p> <p>Other areas of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include the promotion of gender equality and fair treatment and effective information and prevention of HIV/AIDS in formal and informal workplaces
Islamic Republic of Iran	<p>Achieve elements of decent work through adoption of employment and human resource policies for women and men with participation of all stakeholders</p>
Kiribati	<p>Modernize labour legislation to respond to emerging social and economic needs</p> <p>Decent employment created in the formal and informal economies for school leavers and unemployed youth</p> <p>Contribute to better social and economic security for all members of society through improved coverage of social security system</p>
Lao People's Democratic Republic	<p>More job opportunities are created for rural poor, youth, people with disabilities and other targeted groups, resulting in poverty reduction</p> <p>Further progress is made to realize fundamental principles and rights at work</p> <p>National and local governments take steps to extend social protection to uncovered population</p>

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Country or area	Priorities for ILO action
Malaysia	<p>Fundamental principles and rights are increasingly recognized as important elements for addressing the social impact of globalization</p> <p>Tripartism and social dialogue are strengthened and employed effectively in labour and employment policy</p> <p>Social protection programmes are enhanced and their financial sustainability is improved</p>
Mongolia	<p>Formulate and implement employment promotion strategies to address issues of sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation in the formal and informal economy</p> <p>Improve capacity of the social partners to implement and enforce workers' rights</p> <p>Strengthen tripartism to support social and economic policy development and implementation</p> <p>Other areas of work: Global Compact and CSR initiatives supported</p>
Myanmar	<p>Enhanced prospects for observance of the forced labour Convention</p>
Nepal	<p>More and better jobs for women, youth and socially excluded groups</p> <p>Child bonded labour and trafficking in children progressively reduced</p> <p>Strengthened capacity of social partners to engage in socio-economic reforms</p> <p>Other areas of work: Youth Employment Policy Framework developed</p>
Pakistan	<p>Pakistan DWCP operationalized</p> <p>Post-earthquake reconstruction and recovery</p> <p>Other areas of work: Respect for fundamental principles and rights at work and application of labour standards improved Employment creation and skills development embedded in national policies</p>
Papua New Guinea	<p>Modernize labour legislation to respond to emerging social and economic needs</p> <p>Decent employment created in the formal and informal economies for school leavers and unemployed youth</p> <p>Prevent discrimination in employment with respect to HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Improve labour market information and analysis and formulate, implement and evaluate employment and labour market policies</p>
Philippines	<p>Employment promotion through local approaches</p> <p>Improved protection of vulnerable groups</p> <p>Other areas of work: Constituents are fully aware of the potential of CSR for achieving decent work and are better equipped to use ILO instruments in developing and implementing voluntary initiatives</p>

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Country or area	Priorities for ILO action
Republic of Korea	Improved social dialogue and industrial relations
Samoa	Modernize labour legislation to respond to emerging social and economic needs Improve labour market information and analysis and formulate, implement and evaluate employment and labour market policies Set standards in vocational training and skills development programmes
Solomon Islands	Modernize labour legislation to respond to emerging social and economic needs Decent employment created in the formal and informal economies for school leavers and unemployed youth Contribute to better social and economic security for all members of society through improved coverage of social security system
Sri Lanka	Improved access to decent employment, in particular for youth, crisis-affected groups and migrant workers Labour administration modernized Other areas of work: Combating child labour through integrated efforts National programme on promotion of the ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work
Thailand	Access to social services and protection is enhanced and disparities are reduced Discrimination is reduced and equality for all is promoted Improved institutional capacity to apply and act on fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards Other areas of work: Medium-term livelihood recovery in tsunami-affected communities is enhanced in the areas of new skills development, income-generating activities and local development
Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste	Employment creation for poverty reduction Tripartite progress in effective labour administration and social dialogue
Vanuatu	Modernize labour legislation to respond to emerging social and economic needs Decent employment created in the formal and informal economies for school leavers and unemployed youth Contribute to better social and economic security for all members of society through improved coverage of social security system
Viet Nam	Key labour institutions are reviewed and adapted in response to socio-economic developments Labour market and employment promotion Policies and strategies for social protection use ILO tools Rights and security advanced for selected groups

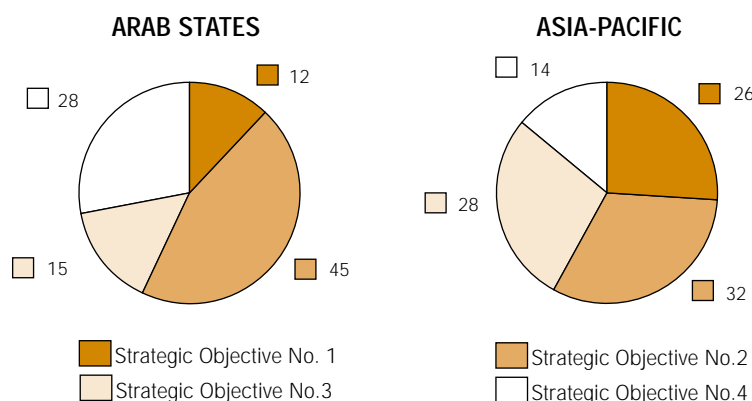
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Country or area	Priorities for ILO action
West Asia	<p>Other areas of work: Labour market information and analysis supports labour-intensive employment policies</p> <p>Post-crisis reconstruction in a number of countries in the region, including social and economic rehabilitation</p> <p>Promote fundamental principles and rights at work</p> <p>Promote employment and job creation</p> <p>Good governance and social protection</p> <p>Create an enabling environment for the promotion of social dialogue</p>
Bahrain	<p>Develop an unemployment insurance scheme in the overall context of labour market reform</p> <p>Reform the vocational training system</p> <p>Promote social dialogue by enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the labour relations system</p>
Iraq	<p>Employment creation in post-crisis reconstruction</p> <p>Reform vocational education policies and programmes</p> <p>Build the institutional capacities of the social partners for a more effective social dialogue mechanism</p> <p>Formulate enabling policies and strategies for small enterprise development as a means of employment creation</p>
Jordan	<p>Poverty alleviation and job creation through carefully designed employment schemes</p> <p>Poverty alleviation through the progressive elimination of child labour</p> <p>Improved governance through administrative reform</p> <p>Improved institutional framework for more effective social dialogue</p>
Kuwait	<p>Revision of the Labour Code, with the participation of the tripartite constituents</p> <p>Strengthen social protection through a comprehensive actuarial and financial review of the social security system</p> <p>Institutional capacity building of the social partners</p>
Lebanon	<p>Objectives of the Time-bound Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour are achieved</p> <p>Innovative employment opportunities are generated to fight the rising rate of unemployment, especially among youth</p> <p>Reform of the social protection system</p> <p>National policy on migrant domestic workers</p>
Oman	<p>Review employment and training policies</p> <p>Design effective policies on the social protection system, actuarial valuation of the social security system, with a view to reviewing the legislation</p> <p>Foster an entrepreneurship culture to encourage self-employment among youth</p> <p>Strengthen the capacities of the social partners</p>

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Country or area	Priorities for ILO action
Occupied Arab territories	<p>Emergency employment programme for the Palestinian people</p> <p>Institutional capacity building of the social partners to better influence social and economic policies at the national level</p> <p>Restructure the Ministry of Labour</p> <p>Promote social protection initiatives</p>
Qatar	<p>Nationalize the labour force and encourage Qatari nationals to enter the labour market</p> <p>Improved labour market information systems</p> <p>Enhance the impact of new Labour Code, particularly with regard to the establishment of trade unions</p>
Saudi Arabia	<p>Effective national employment and labour market policies, strategies and institutions</p> <p>Establish a conducive legal and regulatory environment for small and medium-sized enterprise development</p> <p>Strengthen the capacities of the social partners</p>
Syrian Arab Republic	<p>Develop sound labour market policies and programmes</p> <p>Institutional capacity building for improved and more effective governance</p> <p>Promote youth employment through the development and application of the Youth Employability Initiative</p> <p>Combat the worst forms of child labour</p> <p>Institutional capacity building of the social partners</p>
United Arab Emirates	<p>Promote international labour standards and workers' rights through progressive changes in labour legislation and policies</p> <p>Employers' organizations provide new or better services relevant to their members and potential members, including services which meet the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises and women entrepreneurs</p> <p>Nationalize the labour force and integrate workers into the labour market</p>
Yemen	<p>Promote the ILO Declaration and rights at work</p> <p>Time-bound Programme for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour</p> <p>Strengthen capacities of the tripartite constituents</p> <p>Poverty alleviation through employment promotion in line with the MDGs, PRSP and the National Employment Agenda, focusing on enhancing productivity and employability for youth and women</p> <p>Expand of social protection through the development of social protection strategies and policies, strengthening the social security schemes and improving the working environment</p>

Figure 2.1. Operational outcomes by strategic objectives: Implementation planning 2006-07, percentage



Box 2.4. ILO strategic framework

Strategic Objective No. 1: Promote and realize standards and fundamental principles and rights at work

- Improved implementation of fundamental principles and rights at work
- Targeted action against child labour
- Improving the impact of standards

Strategic Objective No. 2: Create opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income

- Employment as central to economic and social policies
- Skills and employability policies and programmes for decent work
- Youth employment
- Employment creation through enterprise development
- Employment creation through employment-intensive investment approaches
- Decent work through local development: Poverty reduction through local employment and empowerment

Strategic Objective No. 3: Enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all

- Improved policies and strategies to extend social protection to all
- Better instruments and tools for policy analysis and formulation and good governance in social protection
- Improved labour protection within the formal and informal economies
- Tripartite action on labour migration
- National plans for combating HIV/AIDS in the world of work

Strategic Objective No. 4: Strengthen tripartism and social dialogue

- Employers' and workers' organizations are more valuable to their membership and to potential members
- Social partners influence socio-economic and governance policies
- Strengthening the social dimension of regional integration
- Improving governance
- Improved labour and social outcomes in specific sectors

Decent work country programming and the multilateral frameworks

The ILO has been committed to the efforts within the United Nations system to enhance effectiveness and coordination at country level. It participates fully in the United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs). As a member of the UNCT involved in system-wide planning, the ILO has opportunities to introduce employment and labour-related issues into the broader national development policy debate and to foster synergies with other agencies' actions. Importantly, the ILO is also able to place the concerns of its constituents on the national agenda and associate its constituents with the larger United Nations programme. Previously, in many countries, ministries of labour and employers' and workers' organizations were often left out of such policy decision-making. The ILO has also been able to build partnerships and seek commitments from the United Nations agency partners for the Decent Work Agenda. This is particularly important as the ILO is formulating integrated DWCPs, which should be seen as "the ILO's contribution to system – wide planning in countries in the framework of the MDGs, PRSPs, UNDAF and CCA".⁸

Participation in the UNCTs, including various thematic working groups, and in the CCA/UNDAF exercises is increasingly a regular aspect of the work of ILO staff. Some ILO country directors chair the thematic working groups and have the opportunity to play a leading role in areas close to the ILO mandate. Initiatives at country level are also taken up by the ILO at the regional level through active involvement in the Regional Readers' Group (RRG) on CCA/UNDAF. The RRG is an inter-agency body at regional level to help assure quality in the preparation of CCA/UNDAFs. The ILO has also been able to use this regional platform to reinforce attention to critical decent work and rights issues raised by the ILO at the UNCT level.

DWCPs and the poverty reduction strategy (PRS) process

How the DWCPs address poverty reduction is critical, especially in the light of MDG 1, halving extreme poverty by 2015. The increasing centrality of the poverty reduction strategy (PRS) processes for defining policy priorities and resource allocations by governments and donors has made it crucial for the ILO to engage in and influence the processes in order to better promote decent work goals at the national level. The ILO has been contributing to national PRSPs and, in particular, to the World Bank/International Monetary Fund (IMF)-endorsed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).⁹

In Asia, the ILO has been substantively involved in the PRSP process in **Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam** and **Yemen**. ILO involvement has three specific goals:

- empowering the constituents by building their capacity to influence the drafting and implementation of national PRSPs;
- incorporating relevant dimensions of the Decent Work Agenda into PRSPs by identifying appropriate entry points and country-specific priorities; and
- influencing and developing partnerships with development organizations and government agencies involved in designing and implementing PRSPs to incorporate the relevant dimensions of decent work.

Box 2.5 gives a summary overview of the PRSP countries.¹⁰ The ILO engagement in the PRS processes in these countries has been based on two broad approaches: an integrated, longer-term and multidimensional approach or a more specific thematic, focused input. In general, the approach adopted depends on the stage of the particular country's PRSP cycle and the interest and capacity of constituents and the Office to participate in and add value to the process.

⁸ ILO: *The Director-General's Programme and Budget proposals for the biennium 2006-07*, op. cit., para. 86.

⁹ PRSPs are the World Bank/IMF-endorsed national poverty reduction strategies which are in place in most low-income countries. They are the basis for concessional lending programmes and also a trigger for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. PRSPs refer to the poverty reduction strategies which other non-low-income countries have chosen to implement, (GB.294/ESP/5) which follow similar principles but are not designed necessarily to access concessional finance and/or debt relief.

¹⁰ For more detailed information see ILO: *The impact of the ILO's engagement with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) process*, Governing Body, 294th Session, Geneva, Nov. 2005, GB.294/ESP/5; see also <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/integration/poverty>.

Box 2.5. Decent work and PRSP countries

Country	Official name of PRSP and status	National priorities for PRSP	Decent Work Agenda strategic entry points
Bangladesh	Unlocking the Potential – National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction PRSP completed in Oct. 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Employment ■ Nutrition ■ Quality education (particularly in primary, secondary and vocational levels with emphasis on girls' education) ■ Local governance ■ Maternal health ■ Sanitation and safe water ■ Criminal justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support to employment promotion and social protection programmes particularly for vulnerable groups, those in informal economy, women and indigenous population ■ Support to post-MFA ready-made garment industry through the tripartite plan of action ■ Promoting fundamental principles and rights at work ■ Support to national vocational training system
Cambodia	National Poverty Reduction Strategy Approved by World Bank/IMF in Feb. 2003; implementation started. To be implemented through the Government's "Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Macro stability ■ Livelihoods ■ Capabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increasing agricultural productivity, incomes, employment ■ Reducing vulnerability of the excluded
Indonesia	National Poverty Reduction Strategy Full PRS released in January 2005 and incorporated into the Five-Year Development Plan 2006-10 and Mid-Term Expenditure Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Broad rights-based approach ■ Stress on employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Macro policy to generate growth and employment ■ Youth employment ■ Enterprise development ■ Good governance in the labour market ■ Core labour standards
Lao People's Democratic Republic	National Growth and Poverty Eradication Programme Full PRSP completed January 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Broad rights-based approach ■ Stress on employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ National socio-economic development plans ■ Labour-based rural infrastructure ■ Child labour and anti-trafficking policy

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Country	Official name of PRSP and status	National priorities for PRSP	Decent Work Agenda strategic entry points
Mongolia	Economic Growth Support and Poverty Reduction Strategy Full PRSP approved September 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ MDG priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Decreasing unemployment ■ Jobs and employment creation for youth ■ Reduction of both income and non-income poverty (linking child labour to education) ■ Reducing vulnerabilities through pro-poor programmes – disabled, migrants, child labour
Nepal	Summary of the Tenth Five-Plan 2002-07 Full PRSP completed in April 2003. Evaluation ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Industrial competitiveness ■ Education and training ■ Infrastructure ■ Stress on employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Restoring competitiveness in agriculture swamped with subsidized imports ■ Increasing competitiveness in garments ■ Reduction of child labour and bonded labour
Pakistan	Accelerating Economic Growth and Reducing Poverty: The Road Ahead Full PRSP approved in 2004, incorporated into the Medium-term Development Framework 2006-10 Draft PRSP (II) being discussed nationally since Dec. 2005 for finalization in June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Macro stability ■ Revived investment ■ Targeted poverty programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Macro policy reversal from cyclical to counter-cyclical ■ Declining share of public goods in wage goods ■ Increased competitiveness in cotton sector ■ Role of the minimum wage in poverty reduction
Sri Lanka	Regaining Sri Lanka: Vision and Strategy for Accelerated Development Full PRSP approved by World Bank/IMF in Apr. 2003		

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Country	Official name of PRSP and status	National priorities for PRSP	Decent Work Agenda strategic entry points
Viet Nam	Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS). Full CPRGS approved in July 2002. Implementation incorporated into national, provincial and sectoral development plans for 2006-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improve the investment environment ■ Continue structural reforms ■ Growth opportunities for the poor ■ Expand social safety nets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Social security reform ■ Strengthening dialogue ■ Employment policies
Yemen	PRSP approved in 2002. Incorporated into the Third Plan for Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction 2006-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ High sustained economic growth ■ Enhancing human resource development ■ Improving access to basic infrastructure and services ■ Strengthening social safety nets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gender mainstreaming ■ Macro framework ■ Employment policy

In **Nepal**, the Decent Work Agenda has been very closely linked to the preparation of the PRSP. Following a request from the Government, the ILO commissioned eight national studies on different aspects of decent work and prepared a logical framework matrix and report entitled *Decent work for poverty reduction: An ILO contribution to the PRSP in Nepal*. The document was discussed and refined in a series of tripartite meetings with other development partners in 2001-02 and presented to the National Planning Commission in May 2002 with a set of ten recommendations for inclusion in Nepal's Tenth Five-Year Plan 2002-06 and Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. The first policy recommendation was to "make employment impact analysis an explicit criterion of macroeconomic policy decision-making" (including making employment-rich growth a criterion in public infrastructure expenditure; ethnic and gender-sensitive impact analysis; focus on women, youth and disadvantaged groups; and focus on the rural/agricultural sector).

The ILO has also provided substantial and well-received inputs into the long-running PRS process in **Indonesia**. ILO support centred on substantial technical contributions to the PRS drafting process and a comprehensive report entitled *Working out of poverty: An ILO submission for the Indonesia PRSP*, which provided specific policy recommendations for the Government. The ILO Office in Jakarta has been actively involved in awareness raising and promoting decent work as a component of poverty reduction via an active PRS communication strategy. Involvement in the PRS process has helped the ILO build up good working relationships within the UNCT and with the World Bank and, importantly, the Planning Ministry (BAPPENAS). The Office has also been building the technical capacity of the social partners and supporting their involvement in the process. Tangible evidence is the creation of a trade union network on PRS, which produced its own position paper and which counts on being actively involved in monitoring the implementation of the PRS. The final PRS adopted a rights-based approach and included a chapter on the right to employment. The PRS has been integrated into the new mid-term five-year national development plan. The ILO's close involvement in the PRS process also provided a significant foundation for the Office's contribution to the Government's Master Plan for Post-Tsunami Reconstruction, following the 26 December 2004 disaster.

In Pakistan, the ILO contribution to the PRSP has been based on three elements: technical support to the Government; technical capacity building; and measures to include constituents in the PRSP process to better articulate their concerns and priorities. The technical capacity-building project on policy formu-

lation for poverty reduction was executed by the ILO, funded by UNDP and sited at the Planning Division at the request of the Minister. This had an important impact on the formulation of the Medium-Term Development Plan 2005-10 and on the allocation of resources for employment generation. ILO participation in the Pakistan PRSP process successfully demonstrated its importance as a major player in the national development agenda. The ILO was invited to participate in the Prime Minister's Task Force on Poverty Alleviation and Income Generation in 2003 to draw up a concrete action plan to increase employment. In late 2005, the ILO was invited by the Government to contribute substantively to the PRSP II formulation and finalization process.

In the East Asian countries of Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia and Viet Nam, the PRSPs have informed later national development strategies, to which ILO action on decent work has been directly linked. In Cambodia, for example, the action policy matrix of the PRSP explicitly lists decent work policies, including promoting job and income-earning opportunities through employment-intensive infrastructure developments, such as improving road networks. The ILO has been working with constituents to understand the responsibilities and priorities of labour ministries and social partners to meet the employment and labour-related goals within the PRSP process and linked to the country's development plan. The next step was to identify the gaps in meeting these goals and to articulate how the ILO's DWCP could help close these gaps. The process helped explain how the activities carried out by the ILO could aid constituents in bringing about the changes in employment and labour issues to which they themselves were committed, framed in a DWCP.

Among the Arab States, Yemen is the only country where the PRSP process has taken place. Yemen is one of the eight pilot countries receiving technical support from the Millennium Project for the formulation and implementation of programmes to meet the MDGs. The ILO contribution to the PRSP was based on the National Employment Agenda that the ILO presented at a national tripartite-plus conference held in September 2004. Upon incorporation of the recommendations of the conference, the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs presented the National Employment Agenda for adoption as a national strategy for integration into the national development process, in particular the ongoing PRSP. Active participation of the ILO with the social partners in two PRSP thematic working groups (on economic growth and employment generation and on education and women's empowerment) helped prioritize employment and gender issues in the preparations for the Third Plan for Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction (2006-10).

3. Decent work key results: Strategic Objective No. 1

Promoting and realizing standards and fundamental principles and rights at work

Delegates at the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting underscored the importance of international labour standards and called on “all member States to bring their legislation into conformity with the principles of the fundamental Conventions and to take steps to ratify these Conventions, if they have not done so, and to apply them fully”.¹ The delegates noted the disparity between ratification and implementation of fundamental Conventions and urged that measures be taken to address this issue.

The ILO has been helping countries to establish the rule of law and rights at work in a number of ways. Firstly, ratification by member States of the ILO’s eight fundamental Conventions has risen significantly, as shown in Annex A.2. Fiji, Indonesia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen have ratified all eight core Conventions. China has declared all fundamental Conventions applicable to the Macau Special Administrative Region, China. The three States that have not so far ratified any of the eight fundamental Conventions are the most recent Members of the ILO – Samoa, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and Vanuatu.

Comparatively less progress is being made with the ratification of other ILO priority Conventions, notably the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) (and Protocol, 1995), the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129), and the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). Up to date standards that are pertinent to critical labour concerns in the region also remain slow to be ratified – such as the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143).

Also, and importantly, the ILO still faces major challenges to help countries to fully reflect the fundamental principles and rights in national laws and practice, actually implement their international commitments and give full effect to international labour standards. The application of international labour standards remains uneven and requires further institutional underpinning. Obviously, adopting or amending labour legislation in line with ratified Conventions is often a critical step in buttressing the rule of law and good governance. However, compliance with labour law is dependent on:

- the social partners being aware of and supporting the law (which is less likely if they have not been involved in tripartite consultation processes);
- labour inspection services being able to provide practical advice and ensure even-handed law enforcement; and
- labour law being able to facilitate market processes, so that employers and workers together determine the price of labour.

Secondly, the ILO has been providing technical assistance both prior to and following the ratification of Conventions, including the review of labour legislation. In the Arab States, progress has been made in the adoption of necessary changes in national legislation and in the application of ratified Conventions in **Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates** and **Yemen**. In **Bahrain**, the Constitution was amended and a new law adopted to allow the establishment of free trade unions. New legislation relating to freedom of association was adopted in **Bahrain, Saudi Arabia** and the **United Arab Emirates**. The Labour Code has been revised in **Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates** and **Yemen**. Women’s associations have been established in **Oman, the Syrian Arab Republic** and the **United Arab Emirates**.

In the Pacific, final reports have been prepared on areas where changes are needed in labour legislation in line with international commitments in **Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea** and **Vanuatu**. In **Fiji**, the Employment Relations Bill, which covers all labour legislation, has gone through its second parliamentary reading. In the other island States, the ILO assisted in the drafting of labour legislation and has ensured that the tripartite partners are closely involved and consulted.

¹ ILO: *Report and conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting, Governing Body, 282nd Session, Geneva, November 2001, GB. 282/3, Appendix: Conclusions, para. 4.*

In the **Philippines**, the ILO-IPEC Time-bound Programme has been instrumental in the enactment in 2004 of the new child labour law, which adopts the framework of Convention No. 182 (Republic Act 9231, an Act providing for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour and affording stronger protection for the working child), as well as in the promulgation of local ordinances aimed at eliminating the worst forms of child labour.

In **Cambodia**, the ILO provided assistance in a variety of subjects, including drafting *Prakas* (executive decrees) on hazardous child labour and on light work permitted to children below the legal minimum age and the application of labour law in export processing zones. More comprehensively, the ILO is currently helping the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training to conduct a tripartite process to revise the labour law adopted in 1997.

In **Viet Nam**, the ILO is helping the Government to examine ways and means of revising the legal framework for labour dispute settlement, and to complement it with institutions that can help prevent labour disputes. In Andhra Pradesh, **India**, the Office helped the state government draft child labour legislation. In **China**, the Government and the ILO organized a tripartite conference to discuss the draft Employment Promotion Act, a law that will codify employment policy, incorporating ILO standards and placing employment at the centre of national development. ILO technical assistance was reflected in new amendments adopted to strengthen the protection of women's rights. In **Mongolia**, the Labour Law of 1999 was amended following technical advice by the ILO. In Mongolia and Thailand, labour inspection audits have been conducted and have led or will lead to multi-year projects for strengthening labour inspection services.

Thirdly, the ILO has been conducting research, awareness raising and advocacy to promote a better understanding and implementation of core labour standards. For example, at the **ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting** held in Indonesia in May 2003, the ILO was requested to provide "an assessment of ASEAN countries' ratification of core Conventions, for ASEAN's reference to identify and build on areas of strength". An Information Note² was prepared in response to this request and served as a discussion opener at the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting in Brunei in May 2004 and as a basis for further consideration by ASEAN countries of the ratification of fundamental Conventions. The ILO offered to provide, at the request of ASEAN member countries, technical assistance in relation to the ratification and implementation of Conventions.

Awareness-raising, advocacy and legal literacy campaigns have promoted the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work as the basis for decent work. Such activities in **India** provided an excellent opportunity for a frank interaction among the constituents and other stakeholders and helped to develop a strategy and action plan for more effective implementation of the Declaration.

Cooperation between the ILO and other organizations of the multilateral system has widened appreciation of the relationships and synergies between trade and investment liberalization, observance of labour standards, development and poverty, and the respective roles of international organizations in addressing those issues. The **Asian Development Bank** (ADB) has worked with the ILO in this context, recognizing labour standards as an integral part of its development mission and its social protection strategy. A joint ILO/ADB Regional Technical Assistance (RETA) Project on Strengthening the Role of Labour Standards relating to gender discrimination, child labour and safety and health carried out studies in **Bangladesh, Nepal, Philippines** and **Thailand**. The studies confirmed that ignoring labour standards involved a measurable cost to development. This was endorsed at a meeting in Manila in September 2002 with the participation of finance ministries as well as labour ministries, workers and employers and the ADB. A draft handbook on incorporating labour standards in ADB programmes has now been prepared.

The ILO has also been working with employers' organizations in **China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Thailand** and **Viet Nam** to raise awareness among their members of the importance of observing core labour standards in order to gain access to expanding international markets, along with strategies such as adopting the principles of the Global Compact and other corporate social responsibility measures that promote good corporate citizenship and also give effect to existing national legislation.

² ILO: *Information Note on ASEAN member States and international labour standards* (Bangkok, ILO, revised, Nov. 2004).

Box 3.1. Strengthening labour administration in India

ILO assistance to central and state governments in India has helped to strengthen labour administration and promote good governance in a number of ways.

- The labour inspection system has been modernized through training programmes for labour inspectors and measures to extend the system to the informal economy.
- The skills of conciliation officers have been improved through experience sharing, training and international inputs on industrial relations issues, so that they are better able to address the new challenges brought about by India's economic liberalization.
- The labour courts have been strengthened through training of labour court judges and officials of industrial tribunals, so that they are better able to deliver efficient and effective justice in labour disputes.
- Alternative labour dispute settlement systems have been established, including Lok Adalats (people's courts), so that there is speedier disposal of cases and reduction of pending periods.
- Labour court judges and other practitioners of labour justice have been equipped with a "bench manual", so that they have access to a reference manual of procedure and practice.

Through support under the ILO/Japan Multi-bilateral Programme, a Launch Labour Law Project was initiated in late 2003 to promote research and education on international labour standards and fundamental ILO principles among professional groups in Asia such as academics, judges, lawyers and parliamentarians. The first phase of the project concluded in December 2003 with the establishment of a labour law network. In the second phase in 2004, the network has been strengthened through a series of national seminars in participating countries: **China, Hong Kong (China), Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam**. The network helped to organize a study tour of Thai labour court judges to Singapore, Malaysia and Japan, to introduce ILO standards in university courses in China and to establish links with the International Society for Labour and Social Security Law.

Fourthly, and importantly, to promote the rule of law and good governance, the ILO has been assisting trade unions and employers' organizations in developing their structures and providing relevant services to members – although freedom of association and the right to organize and collective bargaining are still problematic in some countries. Equally important has been ILO assistance to public institutions to build up labour inspection, labour courts and advisory, conciliation and arbitration services. For example, the ILO has been helping **India** to strengthen labour administration and industrial relations (box 3.1). In **Pakistan**, the ILO has assisted in the finalization of a new labour protection policy and a new labour inspection policy. The labour protection policy seeks to extend its purview to the informal economy and all types of work arrangements, while the labour inspection policy is intended to rationalize existing inspection practices through integrated inspection and greater reliance on self-assessment. In **Cambodia**, the ILO helped establish an independent tripartite Labour Arbitration Council although, in the light of the recent arrests and crackdowns on human right activists, the work of the Council may be in jeopardy.

Fifthly, the ILO has been helping to strengthen labour-management relations at the workplace and, in so doing, helping to improve the observance of core labour standards and working conditions. While boxes 3.2 and 3.3 may also illustrate how private organizations have joined sovereign States in the quest for fundamental principles and rights at work, what needs to be emphasized is that, in these specific examples, with ILO assistance, there has been a tripartite reflection and democratic adoption process and the initiatives are based on national labour law. They should be distinguished from those corporate social

Box 3.2. Better Factories Cambodia

In **Cambodia**, the ILO project Better Factories Cambodia has successfully tested an innovative approach to improving working conditions and dialogue through a combination of factory monitoring, direct remedial assistance and capacity building. The United States Department of Labor (USDOL), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and a number of local donor representations in Cambodia have provided funding. The ILO hired and trained a team of independent monitors to make unannounced visits to garment factories, using a checklist of over 500 items. The checklist, based on Cambodian law and international labour standards, covers the fundamental labour standards, as well as wages, working hours, sanitary facilities, machine safety and noise control. The Government, unions and employers in Cambodia regard the monitoring process as credible, transparent and independent. It has also gained the attention of a number of international buyers. The project also provides direct remedial assistance to factories and a range of training opportunities covering workplace cooperation, dispute resolution, occupational safety and health (OSH), working conditions, globalization and change processes.

At an International Buyers' Forum Meeting held in Cambodia in December 2005, the Senior Minister for Commerce of Cambodia estimated that the jobs created and wages earned in the garment sector had helped to improve the livelihoods of more than 2 million Cambodian women and men and emphasized that the technical assistance that the ILO had provided was as valuable as large-scale bilateral aid or loans by international financial institutions to reduce poverty.

The tripartite members of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) and 18 international buyers whose brands account for more than half of the US\$1.2 billion in Cambodian garment exports last year, expressed their strong support for the project and commended the achievements of the ILO. However, the international buyers, including Nike, GAP, Sears, Disney, Adidas and Hennes & Mauritz, also expressed concern that the reputation of the factories' compliance with labour law and international standards was not enough. The country's reputation overall for respecting human rights also matters to the buyers. The international buyers have asked whether the ILO could implement similar projects in other countries to improve working conditions and observance of core labour standards.

Box 3.3. Partnership to improve labour relations and working conditions

Since 2002, the ILO and the **Bangladesh** Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) have been jointly implementing a project on "A partnership approach to improving labour relations and working conditions in the Bangladesh garment industry" funded by USDOL and the BGMEA. The BGMEA member factory owners and managers/supervisors, garment industry workers and the Ministry of Labour and Employment are regularly informed of the links between improvements in occupational safety and health (OSH) and workers' rights and increases in productivity and competitiveness, at the individual factory, industry and national levels. The intervention strategy includes the development of workplace improvement plans (WIPs) and a factory monitoring system to ensure that the plans are followed. More than 300 factories have been covered under the WIPs. The positive impact on working conditions and productivity has been achieved through:

- training of project staff of all stakeholders, who then actively help the participating factories to better apply relevant labour laws and regulations in WIPs;
- training and education given by the trained staff to front-line supervisors and workers at the factory level, so that workers are more aware of their rights and how to claim them;
- regular and constant education, motivation and training of the factory management, resulting in improved workplace conditions, labour-management cooperation and OSH, and increased productivity through development and implementation of the WIPs;
- to date, more than 8,700 WIPs have been developed, of which 8,496 have been agreed to by the respective factory management. Of these, about 4,000 have been successfully executed. A growing number of non-participating factories are also requesting to be included in the project.

responsibility (CSR) schemes that are purely voluntary rather than pursued to observe existing national legislation.³

Eliminating child labour

As of 1 February 2006, 16 countries in Asia and the Pacific had ratified Convention No. 138, six of them since the beginning of 2001; eight of the Arab States had also done so, three of them since 2001. Convention No. 182 has been ratified by 19 countries in Asia and the Pacific, 14 since 2001; and by 11 Arab States, seven since 2001 (see Annex A.2).

The ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) has been working with governments, social partners and civil society to mainstream child labour into the planning, implementation and monitoring of national strategies growing out of national priorities and international commitments, including the PRSPs and the MDGs.⁴ In a number of countries, Time-bound Programmes (TBPs) for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour have been developed (box 3.4).

The National Child Labour Programme (NCLP) in **India** is a good example of growing political will and administrative commitment to eliminate child labour. Launched in 1988 in 12 districts, the NCLP has been expanding and will cover 250 districts or nearly half the country by 2007. ILO-IPEC has been working closely with the Government of India to strengthen the NCLP and has developed strategies for providing a comprehensive child labour elimination model in India. For example, the ILO executes the US\$40 million INDUS Child Labour Project, which is jointly and equally funded by the Government of India and USDOL. The project works with the NCLP system and national and state governments, with the active participation of the district government administration and employers' and workers' organizations and NGOs. It directly targets 80,000 children in ten hazardous sectors.

Several countries have identified child labour as a priority in their decent work country programming (see box 2.3 in Chapter 2). **Pakistan's** DWCP, for example, highlights the slow implementation of the National Policy and Action Plan to Combat Child Labour (which was developed in 2000) and specifies four areas for priority action: set up a tripartite committee to examine bottlenecks in implementation and recommend remedial measures; improve child labour laws to include worst forms of child labour concerns; rehabilitate child labourers through education and training; and prevent further entry into child labour. **Viet Nam's** Decent Work Country Framework identifies as a priority area for action "the formulation and implementation of the National Plan of Action on the Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour through support to legislation, research, training, advocacy and direct intervention".

In those countries where the ILO has been substantively involved in the PRSP process, child labour issues have been mainstreamed. In **Cambodia**, for example, the ILO report, *Generating decent work for poverty reduction in Cambodia*, was a valuable input for the PRSP in 2002. Among the priorities identified in the PRSP was child labour. These priorities have since been included in the 2004 strategic plan for social and economic development, underlining the links between child labour and other development imperatives. In the **Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic**, the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy identifies child labour and trafficking as a priority in the PRS.

Efforts to combat child labour have been given additional impetus by MDG 2, which sets the goal of achieving primary education for all by 2015. The ILO has been contributing to the Education for All (EFA) not only in the context of child labour but also as part of its life-cycle approach to promoting decent work and fighting poverty. ILO action is based on the belief that from childhood to old age, every

³ In recent years, enterprises and international supply chains, sometimes under pressure from civil society organizations, have developed a wide range of economic, social and environmental initiatives. Many of these corporate social responsibility (CSR) schemes – which include corporate codes of conduct, accreditation and certification schemes such as SA 8000 and framework agreements between international trade unions and multinational corporations – are voluntary rather than being pursued to observe existing national legislation. While CSR initiatives have the potential to make a much-needed contribution to improve workplace practices in developing countries and to raise rights awareness among workers, they can only complement and should never replace labour law.

⁴ For a detailed description of ILO work to mainstream child labour into country, subregional and regional frameworks and programmes, see ILO: *Combating child labour in Asia and the Pacific: Progress and challenges* (Bangkok, 2005).

Box 3.4. Time-bound Programmes for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour

Country	Targets	Priority sectors	Time frame
Cambodia	Withdraw 7,270 children from worst forms of child labour (WFCL) Prevent 8,660 children at risk	Child domestic labour Fishing Brick making Salt production Rubber plantations Work as porters	Sep. 2004-Dec. 2008
Indonesia	Withdraw 5,100 children from WFCL Prevent 31,500 children at risk	Offshore fishing Trafficking into commercial sexual exploitation of children Mining Footwear industry Production and trafficking of drugs	Sep. 2003-Sep. 2007
Mongolia	Withdraw 2,700 children from WFCL Prevent 3,300 children at risk	Informal mining Urban informal sector Sexual exploitation of children Herding and domestic work	Sep. 2005-Dec. 2009
Nepal	Withdraw 15,300 children from WFCL Prevent 9,000 children at risk	Bonded child labour Child domestic labour Child rag pickers, porters Mining Carpet industry Child trafficking	Sep. 2001-Aug. 2006
Pakistan	11,000 children	Mines and quarries Rag pickers/street children Surgical instruments Glass bangles Deep-sea fishing Tanneries and leather	Sep. 2003-Aug. 2007
Philippines	Withdraw 22,000 children from WFCL Prevent 22,500 children at risk	Sugar cane plantations Mining and quarrying Pyrotechnics Deep-sea fishing Child domestic labour Prostitution	Sep. 2002-Dec. 2006

Source: ILO: *Combating child labour in Asia and the Pacific: Progress and challenges* (Bangkok, 2005), p. 28

individual should have a fair chance to fully develop and utilize his/her potential and be able to make smooth transitions from one stage of life to the next. It is especially important to give children a proper start in life and to invest in the human resources of the future. In the **Philippines**, ILO-IPEC contributed significantly to a successful advocacy campaign by the Government and civil society groups for the inclusion of child labourers as target beneficiaries of formal education under the EFA National Plan of Action. The ILO has also been working with regional organizations on the critical links between EFA and child labour (box 3.5).

Box 3.5. Collaboration with Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) on Education for All (EFA) and child labour

The **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)** Human Resources Development Working Group has consistently recognized the crucial connection between education and economic growth and that the region will not be able to sustain growth and economic development if its young people are not able to achieve their full potential. As a result of demand within APEC to address the problem of the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) and the lack of educational opportunities for the poorest children in the relevant member economies, an interregional initiative was launched in 2001 covering Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. The ILO has been collaborating closely with the APEC Human Resources Development Working Group on this innovative initiative to use education to combat the WFCL as part of an overall growth and development strategy. The key country-level achievements have been:

- **Indonesia:** Supporting integration of child labour concerns into nine-year compulsory basic education and the PRS;
- **Viet Nam:** Key stakeholders have been sensitized to the risks of the WFCL and the importance of basic education and skills development through the media, forums and information campaigns;
- **Philippines:** Efforts have been made to reach local communities and affected districts, building on previous work in bringing together relevant ministries, teachers' unions and civil society to use education to combat child labour at the national level;
- **Thailand:** There has been improved tripartite involvement in promoting youth training and employment to lead to decent work.

Based on these positive experiences, activities are now focusing on strengthening the regional alliance and encouraging local and national authorities to take an integrated approach to combating the WFCL, promoting basic education and skills development and alleviating poverty.

These different mainstreaming and collaboration efforts, as well as the continued expansion of technical cooperation on child labour, have yielded notable results; these are summarized in box 3.6. More detailed results and lessons learned are reported in a dedicated publication for the Fourteenth Asian Regional Meeting.⁵

⁵ *ibid.*

Box 3.6. Action by all to combat child labour

Action	Examples of results achieved
Implementation of national policy on child labour, setting national priorities on worst forms of child labour and integration of ILO technical support into national programmes and budgets and bilateral/subregional collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Time-bound Programmes are now operational in Bangladesh, Nepal, Philippines, Indonesia and Pakistan; one is starting in Cambodia and one has been approved for Lebanon. ■ Philippines, Yemen and Lebanon have passed national legislation on the worst forms of child labour. ■ National legislation has been revised to bring it into conformity with international labour standards in Sri Lanka, Lebanon and Yemen. ■ Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand are among the countries that have prepared national plans of action or national strategies to deal specifically with the worst forms of child labour, trafficking, bonded labour and/or the commercial sexual exploitation of children. ■ The Government of India allocates approximately US\$200 million to combat child labour. ■ The Government of Thailand allocates approximately 100 million baht to combat trafficking in women and children. ■ Bilateral Memoranda of Understanding (between Thailand and Cambodia and Thailand and Lao People's Democratic Republic) and a sub-regional plan of action have been adopted to combat trafficking. ■ Specific legislation for working girls (domestic workers) has been drafted for approval by the Lebanese Parliament. ■ Yemen is now the first country in the Arab region with a national education strategy for universal basic education that includes a special component devoted to children at risk as well as working children. ■ In Lebanon and Yemen, national legislation has been amended concerning compulsory education and the minimum age of working children.
Addressing child labour issues in the multilateral frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The PRSPs of both Pakistan and Nepal make specific mention of the elimination of bonded labour and child labour. ■ Targeting of working children in EFA in India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Philippines. ■ The IPEC Programme complements the national education strategy in Yemen aiming at universal education by 2015. ■ Bangladesh's I-PRSP mentions elimination of the worst forms of child labour in line with Convention No. 182.

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Action	Examples of results achieved
Combating child labour as part of decent work country programming, and integrating child labour with other ILO activities for promoting decent work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Child labour issues have been coherently integrated into and specifically addressed as part of programmes on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ small enterprise development in the Lao People's Democratic Republic; ■ women's employment in rural and informal economies in India and Bangladesh; ■ workplace improvement programmes in a number of sectors in the urban informal economy in Bangladesh; ■ safe work for informal gold miners in Mongolia; ■ bonded labour in Nepal and Pakistan; ■ occupational safety and health in Cambodia; ■ poverty alleviation in Lebanon and Yemen; ■ women's employment in Yemen; ■ safe work for children trapped in the informal economy in Lebanon.
Practical interventions, including social mobilizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In India, under the Andhra Pradesh project which targets child labour in hazardous sectors, six trade unions and 24 employers' organizations have been mobilized to support child labour action. The project is cost-shared on an equal basis with the state government and has impacted on government strategies for sustaining child labour action in the long term. ■ The experiences gained in the Trafficking in Children and Women (TICW) action in Yunnan have been replicated in five other provinces in China. ■ Policies and institutions to combat worst forms of child labour have been strengthened in Lao People's Democratic Republic and Thailand. ■ The multidisciplinary approach developed by the Centre for the Protection of Children's Rights in Thailand for supporting victims of trafficking is being documented for sharing with other countries. ■ Trade unions and employers' organizations in India, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand have enhanced capacity and have implemented their own activities to combat child labour. ■ The Association of Indonesian Domestic Workers' Suppliers adopted an association policy to not recruit or place children below the age of 15 to work as domestic workers. ■ In the southern Governorate of Nabatiyeh in Lebanon, the social partners, local NGOs, municipalities, concerned ministries and working

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Action	Examples of results achieved
	<p>children have formed a committee for the elimination and prevention of child labour, chaired by the Governor himself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In Lebanon and Yemen, new skills development services have been introduced for girls and boys aged between 14 and 17 years. ■ A regional programme was implemented with the Arab Regional Scout Organization (based in Cairo) to implement the project on Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media (SCREAM Stop Child Labour) in Arab countries. ■ A working street children's centre was established in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, where all the social partners and NGOs assist in providing a number of services to such children. ■ Trade unions and employers' organizations in Yemen and Lebanon have enhanced capacity, established child labour units and implemented their own activities to combat child labour. ■ The first vocational training package for working children has been introduced in the Arab region and is to be piloted in Lebanon, Jordan and Yemen.
Private sector initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The soccer ball sector in Pakistan and the garment sector in Bangladesh are now able to sustain action to combat child labour on their own without direct IPEC support. The carpet and surgical instruments sectors in Pakistan and the footwear sector in Indonesia are in the process of achieving such sustainability. ■ The Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers Association has adopted low-cost improvements developed by the ILO to eliminate child labour. ■ The International Garment Training Centre based in Bogor, Indonesia, partners with the ILO to provide vocational training opportunities to IPEC-supported project beneficiaries. ■ A campaign on the role of the private sector in combating child labour was launched by the Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI).
Partnerships with other international organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Trafficking in Children and Women (TICW) project and Save the Children Fund (United Kingdom) successfully collaborated to organize the Mekong Children's Forum. ■ In Bangladesh, the ILO worked closely with UNICEF and the Asian Development Bank in the preparation of the TBPs. ■ The ILO is working closely with World Education in Nepal and with World Vision in the Philippines in the preparation of the TBPs.

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Action	Examples of results achieved
Mainstreaming gender in action to combat child labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In Yemen, the ILO worked closely with the World Bank in a study on education and child labour. ■ The ILO succeeded in adding the issue of combating child labour to the Arab Strategy for Children adopted by the Arab League. ■ Specific tools have been developed and used to enhance capacity. ■ Sector-specific responses include a focus on vulnerable girls in child domestic work and recognition of the different vulnerability of boys and girls to trafficking and different forms of hazardous work.
Knowledge management and statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tools have been developed and used to enhance the capacity of ILO partner agencies and staff to: (i) mainstream gender concerns in project design, monitoring and evaluation, and institutional mechanisms; and (ii) deliver quality services for the economic and social empowerment of children, youth and adults in communities of poverty. ■ Results of the national child labour survey provided the basis for setting child labour reduction goals in the Cambodia MDG and PRSP. ■ Results of the 2004 survey on child domestic labour have been used to set priorities in the Cambodia TBP. ■ The second national child labour survey 2001-02 in the Philippines provided the bases for identifying priorities for the Philippines TBP. ■ The national child labour survey in Bangladesh provided relevant and timely data for the PRSP, National Action Plan on Children 2003-07 and preparatory phase of the TBP. ■ A subregional child labour web site has been developed for South Asia. ■ Results of studies targeting different sectors and regions which were conducted in Lebanon have been used for setting child labour reduction goals in the country. ■ A new information base on child labour is being used to support a range of interventions in Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen. ■ Research results have improved understanding of the demand side of trafficking, the relationship between education and child labour, effects of harsh work on the health and growth of children, etc., and prompted appropriate responses.

In the **Arab States**, significant steps have been taken to implement Convention No. 182. Technical cooperation and other forms of assistance from the ILO have paved the way for a government-endorsed National Policy and Programme Framework to combat child labour in Lebanon and Yemen. In 2005, **Lebanon** and **Yemen** started implementation of the Time-bound Programme for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. Yemen is now the first country in the Arab region with a national education strategy for universal basic education that includes a special component devoted to children at risk, as well as working children. In **Jordan**, Lebanon and Yemen, a new information base on child labour is being used to support a range of interventions. A child labour monitoring system has been developed. National legislation has been amended concerning compulsory education and the minimum age for working children. New skills development services are being provided for girls and boys aged between 14 and 17. **Oman** and the **United Arab Emirates** are taking the necessary steps to address cases of child exploitation, particularly the trafficking of children as camel jockeys. The **Syrian Arab Republic** is currently preparing for the formulation of a programme on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

Abolishing forced labour

The level of ratification of the forced labour Conventions is lower in Asia and the Pacific and the Arab States than elsewhere in the world.⁶ Thirteen of the 15 countries worldwide that have not ratified the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), are in Asia and the Pacific, and one is an Arab State (Qatar). Since 2001, however, forced labour issues have gained greater visibility, especially in light of the growing global concern over human trafficking. To address these issues, the ILO has adopted an integrated approach encompassing:⁷

- surveys, studies and applied research to understand the nature and extent of forced labour and the characteristics of vulnerable and victim populations;
- sharing knowledge, achieving consensus and advocacy to raise public awareness of forced labour and to build political commitment to eradicate it;
- offering advice on appropriate laws, legal processes and sanctions for forced labour, and on a supportive policy framework;
- strengthening the institutional capacity of governments, employers' and workers' organizations and other key stakeholders to combat forced labour; and
- field-based projects of direct action – for prevention, identification, release and rehabilitation/victim support, as well as to develop, test and document tools and good practice for wider replication.

The focus has been on trafficking both within and across national borders and on those groups of women and children who tend to be most vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation and various other forms of forced or exploitative labour. In **China**, a series of advisory services, seminars and study tours is building capacity to combat trafficking of persons for sexual and labour exploitation in preparation for ratification of the ILO forced labour Conventions.

In terms of action to combat trafficking, the emphasis of the ILO-IPEC Mekong Subregional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women (TICW) on prevention is gaining policy acceptance and increased national ownership in a subregion where the campaign against human trafficking is largely centred on law enforcement and legal frameworks (box 3.7).

⁶ ILO: *A global alliance against forced labour*, Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Report I(B), International Labour Conference, 92nd Session, Geneva, 2005, para. 330.

⁷ *ibid.*, para. 313.

Box 3.7. Preventing trafficking in the Mekong subregion

The ILO-IPEC Mekong Subregional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women (TICW), funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, has been operating since 2000 in **Cambodia, China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam**. The project focuses on prevention as the crux of the approach to the problem of trafficking. It encourages and supports at-risk children, families and communities as the primary stakeholders, to take local self-help action through a range of awareness-raising activities, microfinance schemes, savings and credit groups, skills training, education and gender equality promotion. This preventive work "on the ground" is guided by macro-level policy and supported by capacity-building initiatives at the district, provincial and national levels.

A project evaluation of local-level initiatives cites significant changes in community relationships resulting from the stakeholders' involvement in the project.

- Children are more aware of their rights to parental care and protection, and are asking and receiving better family care, including the right to education. They are more confident they know how to spot traffickers and to protect themselves. Girls are being given greater value by parents, including sending them to and keeping them in school. Teachers are soliciting children's views more often. In the community, children are gaining the ear and trust of adults. They are also seen as more effective communicators when it comes to reaching other young people.
- Communities have begun to assume responsibility for the welfare of their members whereas, before, incidents of trafficking, child abuse or domestic violence were seen as strictly personal or family affairs. Communities are keeping track of families and their movements, reporting to and working closely with security forces in cases of trafficking or setting up their own protection networks. They have organized self-help groups, credit and savings groups for women and families deemed at risk and provide counsel and practical advice for potential migrants.
- Groups of young advocates have been organized and trained in drama, drawing, story telling, song and dance, and video production to broadcast the situation of trafficking. Some youth groups are also designing interventions or community messages.
- Women are finding strength in organization. Through leadership roles in village development committees and organization into self-help, savings and credit groups, women are now more confident about their own abilities to make decisions, to speak up and assert themselves and take control of their lives. They have developed strong support systems among themselves.
- Communities receive direct and continuing training and technical support from provincial and district offices and other civil society organizations. Some provincial and district programmes and budget allocations have been increased or reoriented to respond to the needs indicated by local plans of action. Provincial and district bodies provide valuable links between higher policy-making and decision-making levels and the community.
- In all countries national steering committees have expressed readiness to step up poverty alleviation and trafficking prevention efforts, including through financial (topping up village development funds) and technical (improving data collection) support.

In the **China** component of the project covering four townships in Yunnan province, follow-up evidence showed that:

- unplanned migration dropped by 17 per cent in the four townships and by 8 per cent in Yunnan;
- more than 1,000 girls under the age of 17 returned to school;
- female school enrolment rates increased;
- parents were increasingly likely to call the police if they learned about trafficking attempts;
- training in trafficking prevention and relevant laws is now a compulsory subject in local primary and secondary schools.

Among the key lessons learned is the importance of linking efforts to combat trafficking of ethnic minority girls with efforts to achieve nine years' compulsory basic education. These successful impacts have led to a new National Project to Prevent Trafficking in Girls and Young Women for Labour Exploitation within China, covering other sending and receiving provinces.

A project to combat trafficking in children in South Asia (TICSA), which covered **Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka** during 2000-02, was extended into a regional project (2003-06) to include **Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand**. TICSA has reported several policy-level achievements, including the formulation and implementation of national plans of action to combat child trafficking, and also close collaboration with employers' and workers' organizations. For example, in Sri Lanka, the Ceylon Workers' Congress, working with TICSA, set up units of social mobilizers in plantation communities to help prevent child trafficking and facilitate reintegration of child survivors. In **Bangladesh**, representatives of workers' organizations in the transportation sector have been active in rescuing child victims. In **Nepal**, the Nepal Restaurant and Small Hotel Workers' Union and the Restaurant and Bar Association of Nepal collaborated to ensure safe working conditions for female workers.

Special attention has focused on migrant domestic workers, who tend to be among the most vulnerable and who also represent one of the most important categories of migrant workers in the region (box 3.8).

Box 3.8. Protecting domestic workers from forced labour and trafficking

A project on Mobilizing Action for the Protection of Domestic Workers from Forced Labour and Trafficking in South-East, Asia funded by DFID, which started in 2004, is making important contributions to law and policy reform in the sending countries of Indonesia and the Philippines and is also supporting outreach activities, especially those of domestic worker organizations in the receiving countries of Hong Kong, China, Malaysia and Singapore.

In the **Philippines**, the project embarked on legislative and policy advocacy involving the promotion of national laws and local ordinances regarding domestic workers. Technical advice was provided to promote ratification of the relevant ILO Conventions, culminating in the ratification of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), on 15 July 2005. Technical support for a range of advocacy activities has also resulted in a special law on domestic work, the Kasambahay Bill, being declared a priority Bill by the Philippine Senate Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resource Development; it will go through the legislative procedure in 2005-06. At the local level, consultations with the League of Barangays and homeowners' associations cemented support for registration, rescue or crisis response systems have been established, and skills training and domestic worker education/orientation programme have been conducted. A model local ordinance and model employment contract have been completed for testing in selected communities.

In **Indonesia**, concrete action in target districts through community awareness raising, radio programmes and skills upgrading for alternative livelihoods has prevented trafficking of young women. At the national level, a group of committed stakeholders (legislators, trade unions, domestic workers' organizations, Muslim women's mass organizations, NGOs and academics) has been drafting a bill on the protection of domestic workers, as well as a possible revision of the Employment Act to include domestic workers under general labour law.

In **Hong Kong, China**, the project supports foreign domestic workers' trade unions in reaching out to predominantly Indonesian and Filipino domestic workers, providing services for them and organizing them. In Malaysia, this is done through the Malaysian Trade Union Congress. In both **Malaysia and Singapore**, training is provided to activists in informal networks of migrant workers in order to make them more effective in reaching out and organizing migrant workers.

Progress has also been made on wider forced labour issues. Importantly, the ILO has been able to collaborate with the multilateral development banks on the issue. For example, the ADB, building on its earlier work with the ILO on incorporating selected labour standards in its lending strategies, has now begun to address forced labour. The World Bank's Environment and Social Development Department for South Asia has also taken steps since 2003 on an operational strategy against bonded labour.

Action at country level has yielded results on a previously very sensitive subject. For example, at the request of the Government, the ILO has provided assistance to **Mongolia** to ratify both forced labour Conventions. Initial consultations suggested that forms of forced labour prevailing during the central command economy, despite being outlawed, might not have disappeared entirely and that market forces might have unleashed new forms of forced labour. The ILO, together with the National Human Rights

Commission of Mongolia and a team of national researchers, conducted studies covering issues such as forced labour of prisoners, obligatory community service and forced overtime in manufacturing. In April 2005, Mongolia ratified Conventions Nos. 29 and 105.

A similar process involving studies, workshops and meetings has been under way in **Viet Nam**, paving the way for ratification of the forced labour Conventions. The process has succeeded in mobilizing a wide range of government departments under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), creating widespread acceptance of the relevance to the country of the abolition of forced labour, building consensus on what forced labour means in the Vietnamese context and laying the groundwork for amendments to the law in areas such as public works and prison administration.

It is in South Asia that the ILO's work on bonded labour has been most significant (box 3.9).

Box 3.9. Tackling bonded labour in South Asia

The project for the Prevention and Elimination of Bonded Labour in South Asia (PEBLISA) seeks to develop financial and non-financial interventions for both the prevention of bonded labour and the rehabilitation of released bonded labourers. The project works with concerned partners to: regulate employment contracts; experiment with innovative forms of microfinance to reach the poorest of the poor; provide emergency funding to counteract life cycle events that drive people into debt; organize self-help groups, including women's savings and credit groups; improve literacy and numeracy among client groups; provide education to children of vulnerable families; and provide vocational training for upgrading of skills and life skills training on health, nutrition, gender, dowry, alcoholism, etc., that drive people into debt. Many of these components are common to all project sites but adapted to local circumstances.

In **India**, PEBLISA has strengthened the implementation of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act. District vigilance committees help to identify cases of bonded labour and defend former bonded labourers in the event of unjustified lawsuits. In Andhra Pradesh, women's savings and credit groups have been federated into cooperatives that function as microfinance institutions and have disbursed over 2,500 loans. The state Government has prepared an action plan for the elimination of bonded labour from rural Andhra Pradesh by 2007. In Tamil Nadu, the project has assisted over 2,200 of the poorest families (of which 12 per cent are headed by women), the vast majority belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, all at risk of bondage or currently with bonded family members. A project-sponsored meeting in late 2003 with around 100 employers' association representatives from the brick kiln, power loom and rice mill sectors resulted in a series of resolutions, including regulating the system of advance wage payments. Trade unions have helped to organize women's self-help groups (SHGs) in Tamil Nadu and to collectively push for improvements in pay and conditions from employers and contractors.

In **Pakistan**, the Bonded Labour Research Forum, convened by the Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis and the ILO, conducted rapid assessment studies of the nature and significance of bonded labour in ten sectors. These assessments represent probably the most complete picture of bonded labour and other informal labour arrangements ever produced in South Asia. The ILO has also supported an Advisor on Bonded Labour since December 2003 to help the Government implement its National Policy and Action Plan for the Abolition of Bonded Labour and Rehabilitation of Freed Bonded Labourers. The National Bonded Labour Fund has been operationalized and several projects approved for implementation through the Fund. Progress at policy level has been made on many fronts, including enhancing the capacity of the district vigilance committees and establishing *panchayat* (village) level committees for monitoring bonded labour. A permanent legal aid service has been set up for bonded labourers. There is also an initiative whereby landless freed labourers are provided with land for housing on very easy instalments.

In **Nepal**, following the legal abolition of the *kamaiya* system, an ILO project is assisting some 14,000 former *kamaiya* families in building new secure and stable livelihoods based mainly on wage labour or tenant agriculture and supplemented by earnings from micro-enterprise. Established trade unions have helped organize the workers and educate them on their rights. Community-based vigilance committees have also been set up to guard against relapse into bonded labour, child labour and other forms of labour exploitation. Special efforts have focused on

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reintegrating the *kamalharis* (girls bonded into domestic service) back into their families and communities. Despite the unstable political situation in the country, the project reported that 45 per cent of adult former *kamaiyas* are now registered trade union members; 80 per cent of agricultural labourers (both women and men in the project districts) are paid at least the minimum wage; the literacy rate has increased from 38 to 55 per cent; nearly 11,000 children, half of them girls, have been mainstreamed into formal schools; and over 1,200 people, 21 per cent of them women, have benefited from skills training.

In **Bangladesh**, there is as yet no official recognition of bonded labour. The project has therefore focused on over-indebtedness in selected sectors.

Promoting gender equality

Responding to the conclusion of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting that “gender mainstreaming should be a priority item on the employment agenda and should be monitored regularly to determine whether concrete progress has been made”,⁸ an ILO gender mainstreaming strategy (GEMS) has been formulated for **Asia and the Pacific**. The GEMS clearly sets out targets for achieving gender equality, covering all key areas of ILO activities (see Annex A.3). To assist GEMS, a tool kit has also been prepared, which includes guidelines and checklists for mainstreaming gender concerns. At a regional meeting of ILO field structure staff in 2003, it was agreed that GEMS should be fully operational by 2007.⁹ In addition, gender audits have been conducted (box 3.10).

Box 3.10. Gender audits

As part of the efforts to promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming strategies, gender audits have been conducted in ILO Kathmandu (October 2001), ILO Bangkok (December 2001), ILO Beirut (April 2002), ILO Colombo (July 2004) and ILO Jakarta (October-November 2004).

The objective of the “audits” is to ensure that gender considerations are present in all ILO activities and at all levels. The audits have been unprecedented within the United Nations system because they rely on a participatory method, using workshops and interviews to actively involve those taking part and to provide them with feedback on the exercise – this is in contrast to the more traditional model where an expert reviews a workplace and submits conclusions to the management. There is also an element of objective review, with the products (project documents, databases, publications and mission reports), advocacy and advisory services and technical cooperation of each area office or subregional office being examined. The audits covered a wide range of issues: information and knowledge management, staffing and human resources, perceptions of achievement on gender equality, gender expertise and capacity building. They were organized not only for ILO staff but also for constituents. In Sri Lanka, for instance, audits were organized for the Ministry of Employment and Labour, the Employers’ Federation of Ceylon (EFC); and two workers’ organizations – the Ceylon Workers’ Congress and Sri Lanka Nidahas Sevaka Sangamaya. Each organization received a detailed report with recommendations from the facilitation team on good practices in gender mainstreaming as well as on areas to improve.

At country level, the ILO has also been assisting countries in promoting gender equality. In **Indonesia**, the ILO has promoted the adoption of a gender mainstreaming strategy within the ILO Jakarta Office, among the constituents and in technical cooperation projects.¹⁰ Gender is a cross-cutting theme in the Indonesia Tripartite Action Plan on Decent Work 2002-05. In addition, the ILO has been working closely

⁸ ILO: *Report and conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting*, op. cit., Appendix: Conclusions, para. 9.

⁹ See ILO: *Promoting gender equality at work: ILO gender mainstreaming strategy (GEMS) in Asia and the Pacific, 2004 to 2007* (Bangkok, Feb. 2004).

¹⁰ See ILO: *Gender mainstreaming strategy: ILO Jakarta 2003-2005* (Jakarta, 2003).

with the tripartite partners to incorporate the principles of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), into national legislation. Key articles on non-discrimination and equal opportunity are included in the new Law on Manpower No. 13/2003. Guidelines were established on equal employment opportunity (EEO) to underpin implementation of the Law. The Indonesian Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration (MOMT) set up an EEO task force to coordinate the Ministry's technical agencies to prepare programmes and activities for the application of EEO in the workplace. The MOMT also allocated resources from its own budget to translate law into practice, reflecting a real commitment to the application of the fundamental principle of non-discrimination in Indonesia. An ILO project has been helping to build the capacity of the MOMT to develop its strategic thinking on non-discrimination and EEO, including how to bring other relevant Conventions (Nos. 100, 156 and 183) into practice. On 8 December 2005, the Minister of Manpower and Transmigration and senior social partner representatives formally endorsed the Equal employment opportunity in Indonesia: Guidelines. The challenge ahead is to ensure effective implementation of the guidelines.

In **Pakistan**, the ILO has launched a national Women's Employment Concerns and Working Conditions (WEC-PK) project that works at both upstream and downstream levels. It seeks to create a conducive policy and institutional environment, and to provide direct support to women for enterprise development and for more effective participation in employers' and workers' organizations. The project is intrinsically embedded in the national economic policies and plans, sectoral plans and programmes and Pakistan's international commitments for promoting gender equality.

In **China**, assistance provided over the years to the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) to raise nationwide awareness of sexual harassment at work is starting to bear fruit. In June 2005, China amended its Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women to specifically outlaw sexual harassment and make it easier for women to raise complaints and have them addressed. In another significant development, the State Council issued a White Paper entitled *Gender equality and women's development in China*. The White Paper came at a time when China was finalizing the ratification of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), a process which the ILO had been actively supporting for more than six years.

In **Sri Lanka**, the ILO and the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) have jointly developed a set of company policy guidelines on gender equity and equality. The guidelines convey the EFC's strong commitment to gender equality by formally promoting a gender policy to form part of the human resource policies of its members. The EFC vision of the guidelines is to establish "a community of business organizations that is mindful of our broad corporate and social responsibilities; that is efficient and globally competitive; that can provide leadership in national development by achieving optimum benefits for shareholders and customers in an environment where all our workers are treated with equity, equality, dignity and respect, by adhering to international norms of gender justice".

The ILO is addressing the political, economic and social role of women in the **Arab States**, where training targeting women workers has been extensively undertaken. During the period under review, several Arab countries have elected women into parliament and governments. Human rights and women's empowerment have dominated the political agenda of most countries, which, to a great extent, is seen as a response to the opportunities and challenges of globalization through equality and voice in the world of work. The ILO has developed a compendium of gender statistics in response to the requests it has been receiving from the Arab States for updated data and sources on employment, poverty and participation indicators. The statistics, available in English and Arabic, have assisted policy-makers and planners in better targeting policies and programmes. In **Yemen**, the ILO worked with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour and the National Advisory Group consisting of the social partners in developing a ten-year National Women's Employment Strategy (box 3.11).

Box 3.11. Yemen National Women's Employment Strategy

The Yemen National Women's Employment Strategy 2001-11, which was developed with ILO assistance and approved by the Cabinet, has four strategic objectives:

- increase women's employment opportunities in the labour market in line with economic changes in the country;
- enhance women's competitiveness in the labour market through rehabilitation and training;
- improve terms and conditions of women's employment through legal coverage that secures economic and social protection for women; and
- raise awareness of women's work in Yemen.

To help implement the Strategy, an ILO project was developed for strengthening the national machinery for the advancement of women's employment. To date, the project reports the following achievements:

- establishment of a network between the National Women's Committee and women's directorates in 16 relevant ministries;
- development of a media strategy advocating women workers' rights;
- improved coordination of work related to women workers and their rights in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, with increased visibility for the role of the Directorate General for Working Women in general;
- development of a training programme on decent work and gender equality; and
- development of women workers' profiles and research documents which have been presented, discussed and utilized by government and donor agencies.

The project has identified a continued need for capacity building and sensitization of the national agenda related to women workers' rights.

In addition to the efforts to mainstream gender concerns into all programmes and projects, the ILO has also been promoting activities that specifically target women, especially poor, marginalized groups of women workers. For example, the ILO/Japan Asian Regional Programme for the Expansion of Employment Opportunities for Women (EEOW) has been operating since 1997 to contribute to national efforts in poverty alleviation and to promote gender equality through the socio-economic empowerment of women. The EEOW was first implemented in **Indonesia** and **Nepal** in 1997, followed by **Thailand** in 2000, **Cambodia** in 2001 and **Viet Nam** in 2002. A mid-term evaluation of the EEOW in Cambodia carried out in February 2005 found that the project had contributed to raising awareness on gender issues; strengthened skills and knowledge for income-generating activities; increased income levels; improved gender relations within families and strengthened networking in communities among the women beneficiaries. Furthermore, the implementing partners had enhanced their capacity to provide training in gender equality promotion, small enterprise development and mainstreaming gender concerns in project activities.

Addressing discrimination and vulnerabilities

The conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting also emphasized "the importance of providing appropriate training and productive employment opportunities for members of vulnerable groups, including disabled persons, indigenous people, women, older workers and unemployed youth".¹¹

With funding provided by Development Cooperation Ireland (DCI), a global initiative to enhance the capacity of national governments to implement effective legislation for the employment of people with disabilities was launched in 2001. The project, entitled "Employment of people with disabilities: The impact of legislation", covering seven countries in East Africa and ten countries in the Asia-Pacific region, was successfully completed in mid-2004 (box 3.12) and, based on its achievements and positive

¹¹ ILO: *Report and conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting*, op. cit., Appendix: Conclusions, para. 12.

evaluation, has been extended to 2007. The second phase of the project focuses particularly on China, Mongolia, Thailand and Viet Nam, and responds to the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, which sets targets for the second Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities.

Box 3.12. Legislation to promote employment of people with disabilities

Under the project “Employment of people with disabilities: The impact of legislation”, the ILO has been providing technical assistance to constituents and disabled persons’ organizations in the Asia-Pacific region. In the first phase of the project, between 2001 and 2004, outputs included:

- a knowledge base on laws and policies in selected countries of Asia and the Pacific, on measures introduced to give effect to these laws and policies and on available evidence of their impact in practice;
- a review of legislation and implementation mechanisms based on desk research and country studies for **Australia, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Japan, Mongolia, Sri Lanka** and **Thailand**;
- a technical consultation held in Bangkok in January 2003 involving representatives of governments, employers’ and workers’ organizations, disabled persons’ organizations and parliamentarians examined the strengths and weaknesses of employment-related laws in selected countries and their implementation mechanisms, identified required revisions and discussed follow-up technical support at national level for drafting or revising these laws and their implementation mechanisms;
- inclusion of the results of the technical consultation in the GLADNET information base and also on a CD-ROM Infobase on the ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), for widespread dissemination;
- guidelines on disability law developed, published, disseminated and translated into national languages;
- guidelines for labour statisticians on the compilation of national statistics concerning the employment situation of persons with disabilities;
- support to the **China** Disabled Persons’ Federation to develop regulations for the implementation of the law concerning the employment of persons with disabilities, including the organization of a tripartite meeting to involve the social partners in finalizing these regulations; and
- support to the Review Group established in **Thailand** to revise the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act of 1991, including arrangements for specialist commentary on the draft bill.

Advocacy efforts are important to draw attention to disability issues. For example, the ILO collaborated with the **Pacific Islands** Forum secretariat to organize a regional seminar for 14 Forum member States to help build a common platform for mainstreaming disability issues. An ILO/Japan Technical Consultation on Vocational Training and Employment of People with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific held in January 2003 for tripartite representatives from 14 countries, as well as representatives of disabled persons’ organizations, yielded successful results. For example, following the meeting, **Thailand** held a national follow-up meeting and introduced an on-the-job training programme with the Employers’ Confederation of Thailand (ECOT). The Thai Government authorized the use of funds and launched an on-the-job training programme for people with disabilities. **Mongolian** employers started a disability initiative and held a national meeting that resulted in a major policy statement. The **Australian** Chamber of Commerce and Industry drafted a disability policy, which was adopted in November 2003. Australian trade unions also developed a policy initiative.

Mainstream projects, such as Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) and decent employment for workers in the informal economy, are carrying out specific interventions to include people with disabilities. Projects also specifically target those with disabilities. For example, a Finnish-funded project entitled “Alleviating poverty through peer training” has assisted many people with disabilities in rural communities in **Cambodia** in escaping poverty by increasing their skills and helping them to start micro-enterprises. The quantitative results have exceeded the project’s targets: in three years, more than 300 disabled persons of both sexes and all ages have completed training and started businesses. Out of these, more

than two-thirds have managed to sustain their businesses. Women account for half the beneficiaries. The staff have enhanced capacity to cater to disabled persons in the field of training and employment and also to network with other projects and programmes to adopt a holistic approach and to mainstream disability issues. The project has received considerable publicity for its activities and achievements, including a national award.

In the Arab States, positive results have been achieved in efforts to promote non-discrimination and integrate people with disabilities into the labour market. **Jordan** has ratified the ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159). Community-based rehabilitation strategies for training and employment of disabled persons and other vulnerable groups have been adopted in **Iraq, Jordan, occupied Arab territories, Oman** and **Syrian Arab Republic**. Initiatives to mainstream disability concerns into vocational training and employment services have been carried out in **Iraq, Jordan** and **Lebanon**. Several ILO publications, including the ILO code of practice on managing disability in the workplace, have been translated into and published in Arabic. National capacities have been enhanced in the region, including a pool of trained professionals and practitioners in the rehabilitation field.

The ILO has also been promoting the ratification and implementation of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169). In the **Philippines**, where it is estimated that indigenous peoples make up 20 per cent of the total population, the ILO Interregional Programme to Support Self-Reliance of Indigenous and Tribal Communities through Cooperatives and Self-Help Organizations (INDISCO) has achieved significant results in mainstreaming the spirit and intent of Convention No. 169, most importantly in the strategic Medium-Term Philippines Development Plan for Indigenous Peoples 2004-08 and in the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997 (box 3.13).

Box 3.13. Promoting rights and opportunities for indigenous peoples

The ILO Interregional Programme to Support Self-Reliance of Indigenous and Tribal Communities through Cooperatives and Self-Help Organizations (INDISCO) reported the following key achievements in the **Philippines** for 2001-05.

- Demonstration pilot projects for testing innovative approaches have influenced the mainstreaming of a community-driven participatory approach in programmes and projects concerning the development of indigenous peoples by the Government and NGO partners, as well as by the indigenous communities themselves.
- Empowering skills, knowledge and capacities acquired by partner communities have contributed significantly to the processes that culminated in the issuance of the first official Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title in the country, which was issued to the Kankanaey-Bago people in Bakun, Benguet Province.
- Technical support services extended by the programme, including multisectoral consultative processes, have contributed to the formulation of the strategic Medium-Term Philippines Development Plan for Indigenous Peoples 2004-08 by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).
- Grass-roots experiences, best practices and lessons learned, which have been shared with policy-makers, have contributed to the issuance by the NCIP of key policy guidelines to ensure the effective implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act.
- Support to small community development initiatives has helped to improve the quality of life in a number of indigenous communities.
- A joint INDISCO-IPEC pilot project has helped to develop an indigenous community-driven basic education-cum-livelihood approach against child labour which integrates the culture of the community.

The most important evidence of the success of the programme is the capacity of the partner communities, government agencies and NGOs to sustain the results achieved. This success can be attributed mainly to the effective use of the community-driven participatory approach. The approach, which is primarily anchored in sustainable indigenous or traditional knowledge systems and practices, enables communities to take the lead in their own development processes and limits development agencies only to the provision of facilitative support services.

In 2005, the ILO introduced in **Cambodia** a project contributing towards the development of legislation and policies that integrate rights, needs and priorities of indigenous people and which builds capacity to implement these mechanisms. Working with indigenous peoples' representative institutions, community-based organizations, NGOs and government at local, provincial and national levels, the project, which is funded by the Danish development assistance agency DANIDA, promotes the principles of consultation and participation embedded in Convention No. 169.

In the State of Orissa, **India**, another ILO INDISCO programme has generated a process of community-owned and community-driven initiatives to provide sustainable decent and productive employment opportunities for poor tribal groups in some 40 villages and covering over 2,216 households. The project has generated interest at local, state and national levels, through a process of social dialogue, allowing grass-roots experiences to influence the policy environment. In **Nepal**, ILO Convention No. 169 has provided a framework for peace building (box 3.14).

Box 3.14. Convention No. 169 and peace building in Nepal

ILO work has highlighted the special vulnerability of indigenous and tribal peoples within the context of poverty, discrimination, unemployment and continuing political instability in **Nepal**. In a climate of growing instability and escalating violence, there is increasing recognition of the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural character of Nepali society and the need to address the issues of exclusion and marginalization posed by Nepal's 59 indigenous nationalities and the ethnic dimensions of the Maoist conflict. The ILO has consistently promoted dialogue between the Government and representative indigenous organizations, and has offered and explored the possibility of using ILO Convention No. 169 as a framework for peace talks (as was the case in Guatemala in 1996).

In January 2005, the ILO, together with the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities and the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities, held a national dialogue conference on the promotion of Convention No. 169 and peace building in Nepal. Over 150 participants attended, including a broad representation of indigenous peoples from all five development regions, government, social partners, civil society, the donor and development community, the United Nations, academics and journalists. It was the first event of its kind to be held in Nepal where the link between social exclusion, conflict and the issues raised by Nepalese indigenous peoples were publicly spotlighted by a United Nations agency. The conference provided a constructive platform for dialogue and exchange of views and culminated in a draft Declaration on Convention No. 169 and Peace Building in Nepal. There was consensus that the Convention could provide a clear framework for promoting national priorities as reflected in the Tenth Development Plan and PRSP.

Despite the deteriorating political situation, the conference succeeded in initiating a very positive first step towards stakeholder negotiations and conflict resolution. The success of the initiative can be judged from the following:

- His Majesty's Government of Nepal agreed to ratify Convention No. 169;
- adoption of the Kathmandu Adivasi-Janjati Declaration, which provides concrete guidelines for the concerned parties to promote the rights of indigenous peoples and to facilitate social justice and participatory peace building within the framework of Convention No. 169;
- provision of a strong platform for exchange of views and dialogue among all stakeholders;
- acknowledgment and discussion of social exclusion as a root cause of conflict;
- increased awareness among all stakeholders, particularly the Government, of Convention No. 169 and the benefits of using it as a development framework to address the needs of indigenous nationalities, by providing a set of standards on which to base future policies and programmes for these groups; and
- increased awareness among all stakeholders, particularly the Government, of the potential of Convention No. 169 as a peace-building tool.

4. Decent work key results: Strategic Objective No. 2

Creating greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income

Delegates at the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting strongly agreed on “the need to focus on employment creation and promotion for generating growth with equity, and as the only sustainable solution to reducing poverty”. A number of delegates emphasized “the crucial link between increasing productivity and competitiveness, given the impact of globalization in the region”. There was also widespread recognition of “the problems of an expanding informal sector in many parts of the region, accounting for much of the employed labour force, especially in South Asia”.¹

Putting employment at the heart of economic and social policies

At the regional level, the ILO has been promoting the Global Employment Agenda. At the national level, Asian countries are increasingly making decent and productive employment a central, rather than residual, objective of macroeconomic and social policies (see, for example, box 4.1 concerning the experience of China), and a number of countries have requested ILO assistance for the formulation and implementation of national employment strategies and for embedding decent work as a central concern in PRSPs and UNDAFs. At the local level, ILO actions focus on area-based development that promotes enterprise development, employment-intensive programmes, skills training and business support services including microfinancing, while mainstreaming gender concerns, giving attention to especially vulnerable groups and integrating rights, social protection and social dialogue. ILO programmes place the highest priority on the active involvement of the tripartite constituents through social dialogue and other means.

Box 4.1. China National Employment Law

An important component of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between **China** and the ILO in 2001 relates to collaboration in the area of employment, and it was on this basis that the China Employment Forum was implemented in April 2004. The Forum, which was attended by more than 700 participants and observers from the host country, the ILO, some 25 other countries and international agencies, concluded with the adoption of the Beijing Common Understanding which underlined the promotion of full employment through social dialogue as the priority for economic and social policies.

Among the important follow-ups has been the formulation of an Employment Promotion Law in China. The proposed law aims at providing a comprehensive response to the employment challenges facing China. It combines measures for increased employment growth and improved labour market performance while protecting disadvantaged groups. As part of the process of formulating the new law, the Chinese Government invited the ILO to jointly organize a technical tripartite seminar in September 2005. The ILO provided a detailed set of comments on the legal and technical aspects of the draft law and a comparative report on similar instruments introduced elsewhere in the world. The seminar discussed specific sections of the proposed law, including international labour standards and labour law, labour market policies and programmes, employment services, gender issues and discrimination, disability and rehabilitation, enterprise promotion and job creation, skills upgrading and employability and legal issues. The ILO also facilitated the participation of international experts including those from Thailand and the Republic of Korea who brought comparative experiences from their countries. Following the seminar, the draft law on employment promotion has been submitted to the State Council for consideration and approval.

¹ ILO: *Report and conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting*, Governing Body doc. GB.282/3, 282nd Session, Geneva, 2001, paras. 20-21.

The President of **India**, speaking to the nation on the eve of the 56th Republic Day in January 2005, devoted his entire customary address to the theme of employment. Unveiling an action plan for employment generation, the President called for “finding gainful employment for around 76 million people... which is an essential need for India to become a developed country before 2020”.² The ILO has been offering support to the Government of India in connection with the implementation of the National Common Minimum Programme, in particular the Employment Guarantee Act. The Act provides a legal guarantee of at least 100 days of employment every year, at minimum wages, for at least one able-bodied person in every household.

In **Pakistan**, the Prime Minister in a major policy speech given in early 2005, placed priority on employment creation and gave a commitment to training 300,000 people by June 2006 for wage or self-employment. The ILO was requested to provide technical assistance for the Prime Minister’s Skills Development for Employment Programme based on the ILO Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) methodology. The programme was disrupted by the devastation of the earthquake on 8 October 2005 and is being reprogrammed to assist those affected by the earthquake. But employment remains central in the Prime Minister’s 12-Point Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Plan, and the ILO’s Rapid Income Support through Employment (RISE) programme involving cash-for-work and labour-intensive approaches has garnered strong support.

The emphasis is on both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of employment. In **Sri Lanka**, an integrated action plan to address the possible loss of over 150,000 jobs as a result of the expiry of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA) on 1 January 2005 includes interventions not only for job placement, retraining, competitiveness and productivity, but also for promoting the rule of law (freedom of association, collective bargaining and statutory compensation), revision of labour law and industrial law, and promotion of social dialogue. The development of the action plan brought together various government ministries, employers’ associations, trade unions and labour-related NGOs. The ILO is acting as the secretariat for a tripartite task force for the action plan.

In the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, the ILO submitted a report on employment strategy to the Government. The report was based on national background papers and several rounds of consultations, including a national workshop, with the Government, employers’ and workers’ organizations, academics and NGOs. It provides a number of recommendations in the areas of macroeconomic policy, employability, job creation, social protection and social dialogue. A national tripartite conference on women’s employment, held in March 2004 in Tehran underscored the importance of paying attention to the problems women face in gaining access to decent work. The conference resulted in a set of recommendations put forward as the “National strategy for promoting women’s employment, empowerment and equality”. The Government has stated its intention to integrate these recommendations into its Fourth Development Plan, and to follow up with concrete action.

In the **Arab States**, national tripartite-plus conferences on employment organized in 2004 culminated in nationally owned, concrete policy recommendations and strategies for improving the quantity and quality of employment. Policy recommendations proposed by a series of ILO multidisciplinary missions to **Oman** were well received by the national authorities. On the basis of requests made by the Omani Government, the ILO provided further assistance in drawing up concrete proposals on technical cooperation projects in relation to employment and skills development policies to be implemented with the full participation of the national counterparts. In **Yemen**, an action plan for the implementation of the National Employment Agenda was extensively discussed with high-level government officials and international organizations during the workshop on integrating employment strategy for poverty reduction in development planning held in Sana’a in November 2005.

The International Employment Conference on **Iraq**, organized by the ILO in Amman, Jordan, in December 2004, with financing from United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Trust Funds, brought together more than 170 high-level participants representing major line ministries, social partners and international stakeholders in Iraq. The Conference participants exchanged views on employment challenges and placed the ILO at the centre of employment and decent work policy decisions, within the Iraqi national debate and at the international level. A Declaration and Action Plan, subsequently adopted by

² See “Create jobs for 76 million: Kalam”, in *The Hindu*, 26 Jan. 2005.

the Council of Ministers, recognized the centrality of employment creation in the reconstruction and development process in Iraq. The Plan provided the framework for employment creation and the promotion of other decent work concerns in the country.

Labour market information and employment services

A reliable and up-to-date labour market information system is a critical element for employment planning. The ILO has therefore been making concerted efforts to improve labour statistics and labour market information for the region (box 4.2).

Box 4.2. Improving data on decent work

A Task Force on Decent Work Indicators (DWIs) was set up in the **Asia-Pacific** region to: (i) assess the availability of basic information for the construction of DWI for the countries in the region; (ii) establish a regional DWI database; and (iii) provide technical advice and support to countries to develop national data compilation capacity. The Task Force had representation from the regional and subregional offices and headquarters, and functioned in a truly collaborative manner. The Task Force noted that available labour force statistics in the Asia-Pacific countries currently yield limited information on DWIs. It defined and agreed on an initial core set of 23 DWIs that will be developed for the region, and also identified an initial list of countries for technical assistance to develop and compile DWI; the list includes **Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Thailand** and **Viet Nam**. The initial list of DWI includes:

I. Rights at work

1. Child school non-enrolment rate, 5-14 years
2. Female share of employment in ISCO 1 (International Standard Classification of Occupations)
3. Complaints/cases brought before labour courts or the ILO

II. Employment

4. Labour force participation rate
5. Employment-population ratio
6. Informal employment
7. Number and wages of casual/daily workers (labourers)
8. Youth unemployment rate
9. Youth non-activity rate
10. Unemployment rate
11. Employment by status of employment and branch of economic activity
12. Share of female wage employment in agriculture, industry and services sector
13. Labour productivity
14. Real per capita earnings (from national accounts)

III. Social protection

15. Social security coverage (for wage and salary earners)
16. Public social security expenditure (as per cent of GDP)
17. Indicator of occupational injury (fatal/non-fatal)
18. Excessive hours of work (> 49 hours per week)
19. Low hourly pay rate

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IV. Social dialogue

20. Trade union membership
21. Number of enterprises belonging to employer organizations
22. Collective bargaining coverage rate
23. Strikes and lockouts

The ILO continues to provide technical assistance to countries to improve labour force surveys and also to conduct and analyse specialized surveys. A subregional project under the ILO Labour Market Indicators Library (LMIL) Network compiled new tables and key indicators using retrospective data from household surveys and administrative records. The indicators and analyses produced in collaboration with national statistical offices and labour ministries have been disseminated through publications for **Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand** and **Viet Nam**. The ILO also provided support to the General Statistical Office and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) in **Viet Nam** to improve the sample design of the labour force survey, and to the National Bureau of Statistics in **China** to launch a labour force survey that will cover urban and rural areas and provide quarterly estimates at the provincial level. **Pakistan** has established a labour market information and analysis unit at the Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis with technical assistance from the ILO with a view to building national capacity to improve labour force related data collection and analysis. The Government of **Afghanistan** also requested assistance from the ILO to establish a Labour Market Information and Analysis Unit at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The Unit, which is to be funded by the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, is expected to begin operations in June 2006. The ILO collaborated with the **Bangladesh** Bureau of Statistics to carry out a national child labour survey in 2003, a survey of selected decent work indicators in 2005 and a survey of hazardous child labour sectors in early 2006; these surveys were conducted under the guidance of tripartite technical committees.

In the **Philippines**, the ILO provided technical assistance to the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) to develop and institutionalize labour market information services. ECOP has been able to strengthen its organizational research capacity to conduct corporate remuneration surveys and surveys on collective bargaining. Providing information from these annual surveys is a new service which ECOP is now able to offer its members. ECOP has also been able to utilize the information collected through an ILO-supported SME survey to establish the ECOP Productivity and Competitiveness Institute, which develops and implements enterprise productivity enhancement schemes.

In the **Arab States**, a pilot project to strengthen labour market information and establish a labour market indicators database has been launched. The project envisages the institution of an annual publication, *Labour and Decent Work Trends in the Arab States*, the first edition of which is scheduled for publication in February 2006. In **Yemen**, a Labour Demand Survey, the first of its kind, was undertaken with ILO technical assistance and UNDP support.³ A study on the labour market situation in Iraq was released in January 2006, with a view to disseminating a wider understanding of the Iraqi labour market and the key challenges it is facing.

Results achieved in employment services are important because of the role they play in matching labour supply and demand and implementing active labour market policies. While progress can be reported for public employment services (box 4.3), there is no denying that much still needs to be done. For example, ILO work on protecting migrant workers, in particular women migrants going into domestic service in other countries, has emphasized the importance of proper guidelines for and monitoring of the operations of private recruitment agencies.

³ F. Mehran: *An analysis of the results of the Labour Demand Survey of Establishments in Yemen, 2002-2003* (Geneva, ILO, 2004).

Box 4.3. Strengthening employment services

In **Afghanistan**, an ILO project has strengthened the capacity of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and improved access to labour market services (placement, vocational guidance, counselling and labour market information) particularly for demobilized soldiers, vocational training graduates, women and the disabled. In a pilot phase in 2002-03, a small model employment office was established. Building upon the pilot, a new project has been implemented since May 2004 to establish employment services in Kabul and other provinces. Training was provided to staff of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs on the operation of employment services. Within the first two months of operation in Kabul, more than 750 jobseekers were referred to non-government employers and more than 250 vacancies were notified to the employment services.

In **India**, the National Employment Service (NES, which was established some four decades ago) has been subject to significant changes, including some in response to the needs of the large informal economy. The ILO responded to the Government's request for assistance by carrying out a detailed study of the NES and brought together the relevant actors from central and state levels to ensure "buy-in" for the reform of the NES. The key results to date include:

- commitment on the part of the Ministry of Labour and Employment and state governments to bring about the required changes in the NES;
- commitment by the Planning Commission to make efforts to ensure allocation of adequate resources;
- strengthened social dialogue processes.

In **Sri Lanka**, with the support of Norway and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), a network of modern sourcing and delivery of jobs has been successfully set up as a public-private partnership. JobsNet is an ongoing three-year project of the Ministry of Labour Relations and Foreign Employment, managed by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and with the technical assistance of the ILO. JobsNet delivers a comprehensive employment service through a transparent and merit-based system driven by information and communications technology. The existing network covers the entire country with 17 centres.

In **Indonesia**, after the tsunami of 26 December 2004, the ILO together with the government provincial and district manpower offices set up a network of Employment Services for the People of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (ESPNAD) with centres in the main towns. ESPNAD began operating in March 2005 and by the end of August, the ILO had registered 40,000 jobseekers, including more than 10,000 women. Some 2,000 had already found jobs but the large number still unemployed indicated that there was still a big gap between available jobs and placement, due mainly to the lack of skills in the construction sector. Therefore, a range of training initiatives targeting jobseekers has been provided by the employment centres. Some 1,700 people have already benefited and made use of the training facilities, ranging from automotive mechanics, welding, carpentry and concrete mixing, to training in English, basic computer skills, sewing and tile making for women.

In **Iraq**, a technical cooperation project is helping to strengthen the institutional capacities of eight employment service centres and develop training and retraining delivery systems. Several modular training packages on employment have been produced.

Enhancing skills and employability

The conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting noted that:

"Multiskilling, skills training and upgrading are crucial to enhancing access to employment and improving productivity and competitiveness in the global economy. The rapidly increasing reliance on information and communication technology and a general trend towards knowledge-based economies require a more educated, skilled and adaptable workforce. The delegates note that education systems and skills training should be linked to market demand through improved labour market information and labour market analysis."⁴

⁴ ILO: *Report and conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting*, op. cit., appendix, para. 10.

The ILO has been helping constituents to improve training and skills development in two main ways.⁵ First, it launched a major drive to help constituents rethink human resource development (HRD) policies. In partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the ILO is seeking ways to ensure that expansion and reform of school systems are linked to a strategy for improving the skills needed for a productive working life. However, major challenges remain. One is to promote lifelong learning to ensure that skills are constantly renewed and adapted and workers have core work skills that equip them for a wide variety of potential jobs. Another challenge is to reorient education and training policies to focus on the needs of working people, especially the poor and excluded. An important milestone was the adoption of a new instrument, the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), that calls on governments, employers and workers to renew their commitment to lifelong learning and sets out guidelines for human resource development, education and training policies that facilitate lifelong learning and employability.

Secondly, the ILO has been working on the ground in a number of countries to develop new techniques for delivering skills training, especially to those in the informal economy, the poor and the socially excluded. In **India**, an ILO/USDOL project extended vocational training services to poor women in urban slums through the institutionalization of non-formal training in government programmes, institutes and community structures. The project prepared and tested training modules for different skills and improved the capacity of selected NGOs and training institutes to deliver training to women in the informal economy using these modules. The modules combine skills training with advocacy on gender issues, health and nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention, and so on.

In **Afghanistan**, the Government decided to contract the ILO to manage the National Skills Development and Market Linkage Programme, one of six national priority programmes. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been designated the lead ministry for this programme, which is scheduled to run over a period of 15 years at an overall cost of US\$200 million. The overall goal of the programme is to contribute to the country's socio-economic recovery through the provision of a national skills development and vocational education and training system that is responsive to labour market needs and provides Afghan women and men with the knowledge and skills for decent work.

In **Pakistan** and **Philippines** (box 4.4), community-based training has been effective in promoting employment. In the **Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste**, a skills training programme is an important foundation for promoting economic growth and income generation (box 4.5). In the **Arab States**, the ILO has helped to progressively reform the vocational education and training (VET) systems with a view to a more demand-driven approach and greater flexibility in training programme design and delivery (box 4.6).

Box 4.4. Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE)

The ILO has developed the TREE (Training for Rural Economic Empowerment) methodology for income generation and employment creation for marginalized groups. In Pakistan and Philippines, the target groups include the rural poor, specifically women, disenfranchised male youth, and persons with disabilities from those areas where the rural populations have been subjected to conflict and security problems for a long time. In Pakistan, the project areas are Mardan District in the North-West Frontier Province and Attock District in the Punjab Province. In the Philippines, the project covers five provinces and one city in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

The TREE methodology offers a comprehensive training package that identifies and assesses local economic opportunities, designs and delivers community-based skills training, and provides post-training services including support for self-employment and enterprise development. The project builds the capacity of government and private sector partners to implement the TREE methodology. The implementation arrangements in the two countries were adapted to the unique socio-cultural characteristics and prevailing local conditions.

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⁵ See ILO: *Working out of poverty*, Report of the Director-General, International Labour Conference, 91st Session, Geneva, 2003, pp. 38-42.

TREE is proving to be very effective in developing skills and generating employment opportunities. In **Pakistan**, the project had trained 2,059 beneficiaries, including 1,202 young people and 857 women, as of June 2005. The Prime Minister has given special recognition to the TREE methodology by making it the basis of his Skills Development for Employment Programme and, since the earthquake, of his reconstruction and rehabilitation plan, and has asked the ILO to provide assistance.

In the **Philippines**, as of the end of September 2005, a total of 1,236 persons from poor target groups had undertaken skills and entrepreneurial training courses in trades identified by the project partners in ARMM. Project tracer studies revealed that 94 per cent of those interviewed attributed their present economic activities to their training under the TREE project. The studies also showed that the groups had increased their monthly incomes by as much as 80 per cent. The project has also served as an entry point for the convergence and integration of similar ongoing ILO activities in ARMM. It spearheaded coordination with the ILO project on Community Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Development (Government of the Philippines-UN Multi-Donor Programme Phase 3), the ILO-IPEC Inter-regional Project on Prevention and Reintegration of Children Involved in Armed Conflict and the Time-bound Programme on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

Box 4.5. Skills Training for Gainful Employment (STAGE)

Development in the **Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste** is intimately connected with the creation of gainful employment for its people. Skills training is critical in that respect, but often the quality of training is poor and not sufficiently relevant for the economic opportunities that exist for communities. To address this problem, the ILO, in collaboration with the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has developed a Skills Training for Gainful Employment (STAGE) Programme.

The STAGE Programme, which will operate for five years from 2004, is providing the Ministry of Labour and Community Reinsertion with the capacity to boost the delivery by partner organizations of market-driven vocational and enterprise skills, while at the same time providing effective employment services. STAGE is strengthening the capacity of the Ministry's district employment centres, supporting existing rural and urban training providers and also empowering local communities through the provision of skills and micro-enterprise start-up support. Gender is mainstreamed in all the procedures and tools used for the registration of job demand and job offers, job mediation skills, support services for skills training, business training and enterprise creation.

As part of STAGE, a tripartite "Employment and Vocational Training Fund" has been set up to provide a durable, financially self-sufficient delivery mechanism for support to training providers and microfinance institutions.

Box 4.6. Enhancing skills and employability in the Arab States

In the Arab States, technical cooperation projects have applied the ILO's Modules of Employable Skills (MES) and a large number of trainers have been trained in MES methodologies. The MES have been used in the reform of vocational education and training (VET) systems. Some of the main achievements are as follows:

- Extensive advisory and training services provided during the last two years have contributed to the enhancement of national VET reforms and qualification frameworks in **Bahrain, Jordan, Iraq, occupied Arab territories and Oman**.
- Initiatives to mainstream training and retraining for youth, the unemployed and other most vulnerable groups were adopted in **Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, occupied Arab territories, Oman and Yemen**.

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- Various training manuals, concept papers and modular training packages for priority occupations were developed and several translated into Arabic. These have contributed to ongoing technical cooperation projects in **Iraq**, **Jordan** and **occupied Arab territories**, as well as to the establishment of a knowledge base at the ILO Regional Office in Beirut and in several other countries in the region.
- A new modified concept of the MES was developed in close collaboration with international strategic partners for introduction and application in the Arab region.
- Several “training for trainers” workshops on the introduction and application of advanced MES were conducted in close collaboration with the ILO Turin Centre. These workshops were key components in technical cooperation activities in **Iraq** and **Jordan**.
- A comprehensive vocational education and training scheme was developed in close collaboration with ILO IPEC, which includes training methodologies, tools and guidelines that support pre-employment training activities for 14-17 year-old boys and girls through pilot programmes under ongoing IPEC projects in the Arab region.
- A web-based platform with an information database for networking of Arab vocational training providers and experts was designed to: (a) exchange information and experience in VET design and delivery; (b) promote the concept of employment-oriented modular training; (c) provide a knowledge and resource base for employment-oriented modular training programmes and didactic materials; and (d) provide advisory services to countries and institutions advocating and introducing competency-based modular training.

A significant recent development is the creation of a new ILO Regional Skills and Employability Programme for Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP) to provide more effective services to member States on skills issues. All relevant units in the ILO at the Regional Office, in the three subregional offices, at headquarters and the Turin Centre will now be coherently integrating their programmes and activities for skills development in the region into a single workplan under the Strategic Framework for Skills and Employability in Asia and the Pacific.

SKILLS-AP builds upon the invaluable work, experience gained, tools and products developed, lessons learned and relationships and networks established by the Asia and Pacific Skills Development Programme (APSDEP). The Government of **Japan** has very generously supported APSDEP since its inception in 1978. SKILLS-AP aims to bring forward APSDEP’s long experience of technical services to a new phase of ILO cooperation and partnership.

Among the most valuable contributions of APSDEP was the creation of a Regional Skills Network in Asia and the Pacific to promote inter-country cooperation through partnerships between key vocational training and human resource development institutions in different member States. APSDEP made possible the enduring links which the ILO has with many skills development and HRD institutions in the region. To revitalize the network and develop a more effective basis for cooperation in the light of the changing needs for skills development in the region, two regional meetings of partner institutions were organized in 2005. These meetings of the network represent important milestones in the newly created SKILLS-AP programme.

The First Technical Meeting of the Regional Skills Network Partner Institutions, which was held in November 2005 in Incheon, **Republic of Korea**, and attended by all the Asia-Pacific member States,⁶ adopted a Statement of Common Understanding in which it was agreed “that ILO constituents across the region will share their knowledge and experience in order to optimize human resources development processes and promote decent work”. The partner institutions also agreed on a Framework for Cooperation on Skills Development for Asia and the Pacific (see Annex A.4), based on a vision which “comes out of a commitment to cooperation rather than competition, recognizing that all constituents in the region have information and experiences to share which will be valuable to others”.⁷

⁶ Except the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, which was not able to attend.

⁷ ILO: *Final report*, First Technical Meeting of the Regional Skills Network Partner Institutions, Incheon, Korea, 22-23 Nov. 2005, pp. 25 and 27.

Creating more and better jobs

Examples of ILO technical cooperation to assist countries in improving the quantity and quality of employment are very many, diverse and innovative – including advisory services intended to help formulate employment strategies and improve the policy and regulatory environment for enterprise development, knowledge management (including the development, translation and dissemination of a wide range of ILO tools and methodologies), and action/demonstration projects.

Reviews of the policy and regulatory environment for micro and small enterprises (MSEs) have been conducted in **India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nepal and Pakistan**, and a subregional meeting of representatives from the four countries was organized in Bangalore, India in 2003. Policy inputs have been provided to these countries to help ensure that MSEs are not disadvantaged or hampered in their efforts to create quality jobs. The reviews underscored the point that complex sets of rules and regulations do not help MSEs to comply with legal requirements. Constituents were consulted on how labour laws are affecting the informality and growth of MSEs. Findings from some of these countries indicate that the laws themselves are not perceived to be responsible for non-compliance as much as the complex and time-consuming administration of the laws. Reviews of the policy and regulatory environment for MSEs have also been conducted in **Lebanon and Saudi Arabia**. The ILO also took the lead in the formulation and implementation of a project, financed from the ILO cash surplus, on employment creation and income generation through the development of micro and small agro-industries in south Lebanon. The project has contributed to the creation of jobs in the agricultural sector in underserved villages in south Lebanon by helping small-scale honey and thyme producers to improve their productivity and competitiveness.

In **Viet Nam**, the ILO has been contributing to the development of the private MSE sector, including household enterprises, as well as micro enterprises and the self-employed in the informal economy through a project entitled “Poverty Reduction through Integrated Small Enterprise Development” (PRISED). The ultimate aim of the project, which is funded by SIDA and began in 2005, is to stimulate economic growth, generate decent employment and reduce poverty in the framework of the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy and the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda.

Many of the action/demonstration programmes have been replicated or adapted in several countries and have had notable impacts on the quantity and quality of employment. Box 4.7 highlights the linkages between good management and labour practices and the improvement of productivity, quality and competitiveness. Box 4.8 describes the ILO’s Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP), which has demonstrated the benefits of labour-based technology, especially for the poor.

Box 4.7. Worker-Manager Factory Improvement Programme

The Factory Improvement Programme (FIP) began in **Sri Lanka** in May 2002 with funding from USDOL. The FIP approach combines short classroom training courses followed by in-factory consultancy on areas covered in each module. It links good management practices to good labour practices, covering bottom line topics such as productivity and quality together with labour-related topics. The focus has been on the important garments sector, with eight factories participating in the first phase, another 12 in the second phase and nine more in the third phase. These 29 factories employ over 26,000 workers. The key results have been:

- an improvement in worker-management relations at the factory level and genuine worker-management dialogue on a number of issues relating to OSH and working conditions;
- improved working conditions, OSH and human resources management systems;
- reduction in quality defects (both in-line and end-of-line defects were reduced by over 25 per cent) and reduction of average costs/minute. Quality control systems were introduced if they did not previously exist;
- better employee relations have reduced average labour turnover and absenteeism by 26 per cent and 34 per cent, respectively;
- increased output per worker resulted in the reduction of actual cost/minute of production from an average of US\$0.1255 to \$0.0708/min.

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In the first phase of the programme, the social partners were consulted and supported implementation by the ILO. In the second and third phases, the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) became the implementing agency with guidance from a steering committee that included both employer and trade union representatives as well as the ILO.

The Worker-Manager Factory Improvement Programme was extended to **Viet Nam** in 2004-05, in partnership with the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the USDOL and the US Department of State. The programme comprises training and change management assistance that targets compliance with international labour standards and Vietnamese labour law, better quality and increased productivity to meet global market demands. Six training modules combine two-day training seminars with hands-on, in-factory change management assistance on social dialogue and worker-manager relations, productivity, quality, OSH, human resources management, organizational culture and discrimination and cleaner production and continuous improvement.

Box 4.8. Employment-intensive and pro-poor investments

The ILO, through its Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP), has long supported employment-intensive and pro-poor growth strategies and considered how these can be applied in public investment, particularly in the infrastructure sectors. The ILO has helped to demonstrate that significant benefits can be gained from the use of local resource-based strategies in the construction and maintenance of infrastructure. These local resource-based strategies optimize the use of labour, local materials and local skills and capacity, and enhance participation in project selection and implementation. The methods are technically and financially competitive, create quality infrastructure and generate three times as much employment as conventional methods. Development of infrastructure such as rural roads, classrooms, health clinics, irrigation schemes and water supplies can be effectively carried out by local contractors. The use of local contractors also means that it is more likely that local resource-based strategies will be used and that labour will be recruited locally. Clauses on labour standards, including minimum wages, non-discrimination, elimination of child and forced labour, safety and health and work injury insurance can be introduced into contract documentation for small-scale contracting.

ILO ASIST AP (Advisory Support, Information Services and Training for Asia-Pacific) is the operational arm of EIIP. It is concerned with mainstreaming poverty alleviation strategies through local resource-based infrastructure development. At the upstream policy level, ASIST AP has been assisting governments in their efforts to institutionalize and mainstream employment and local resource-based strategies in **Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Philippines** and **Viet Nam**. This work has included the establishment of policy units at national level and integration of the EIIP principles into national policies, programmes and strategies such as the PRSPs. At the project level, ASIST AP has been developing and implementing projects that introduce, demonstrate and scale up the local resource-based approach in **Afghanistan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Thailand** and the **Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste**. EIIP principles have also been integrated into tsunami response programmes in Indonesia and Sri Lanka. ASIST AP has developed a strong collaboration with the World Bank and Asian Development Bank and is providing technical inputs to integrate the approach into several loan projects.

See web site: www.ilo.org/asist.

Box 4.9 focuses on the achievements of the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) programme in **China**, but it is not only in China but also in many other countries that the SIYB programme has become institutionally, technically and financially sustainable and nationally operated. Among the Arab States, for example, national organizations in **Jordan** have taken over responsibility from the ILO to run the SIYB programme. The SIYB package is now available in Arabic with certified Arabic-speaking trainers. At the request of **Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic** and the **United Arab**

Emirates, SIYB training has been conducted by Jordanian trainers with monitoring by the ILO. In Qatar, the ILO and the Social Development Centre have established a Small Enterprise Support Unit to develop business management training materials, as well as to train a number of men and women to become SIYP trainers.

Box 4.9. Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) in China

The national SIYB China Programme is facilitated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MOLSS) with technical support from the ILO and financial inputs from the United Kingdom's DFID and the Japanese Ministry of Health, Welfare and Labour. The overall programme objective is to contribute to poverty alleviation and employment creation. The immediate programme objective is to enable the urban unemployed to start and run their own businesses and to create quality jobs for others in the process. The first phase of the programme was launched in July 2004 and targeted 50,000 laid-off workers in state-owned enterprises in 16 cities. The Government is extending this to 100 cities. From 2005 onwards, the programme activities are targeted at internal migrant workers moving from rural to urban areas. The project is rapidly approaching the goal of being country-wide and sustainable in three years. MOLSS has set up a National Programme Management Office (NPO) that draws on ILO technical expertise to facilitate institutional capacity-building support to both public and private sector training institutes targeting the unemployed with business start-up and management training services. The NPO also actively seeks to link up training and credit providers at the local level and overall to facilitate a more conducive political and legal environment for small enterprises. In addition, the NPO provides brand support and assists in the design and implementation of service marketing strategies. With technical support from the ILO project, the NPO has developed a unified brand identity for the SIYB training programme and has also designed a wide range of collateral to promote the brand throughout the country. The NPO has also established a national quality control system to ensure that the training services for entrepreneurs meet the international standards of the global SIYB programme. Some SIYB training graduates have organized themselves into "Business Starters' Associations", which are helping to give voice to these small entrepreneurs. Such associations are being replicated in many cities.

See web site: www.siyb.com.cn.

In **Sri Lanka**, an ILO project helped to make the SIYB training programmes self-sustaining and established SIYB Sri Lanka as a non-profit organization of business development services (BDS) providers and master trainers. In **Viet Nam**, the ILO SIYB project was taken over by the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) in May 2004 as a national programme. The VCCI receives an annual grant from the Ministry of Finance to support the national network of training providers and to develop the market for SIYB training. A government decision issued by the Prime Minister in 2004 on training support to small and medium-sized enterprises reflects the SIYB methodology and lists 1,400 SIYB workshops as an output in the period 2006-08.

Decent employment in the informal economy

Since the bulk of Asia's working poor are concentrated in the rural and urban informal economy, it is important to review results related to the strategies for decent and productive employment in the informal economy. The general discussion and resolution adopted at the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference in 2002⁸ boosted both technical understanding of the integrated strategies for promoting decent work in the informal economy and practical implementation of those strategies. The emphasis is on a comprehensive and integrated approach to reducing decent work deficits in the informal economy and promoting the recognition, protection and incorporation of informal workers and economic units into the mainstream economy.

⁸ See ILO: *Decent work and the informal economy*, Report VI, International Labour Conference, 90th Session, Geneva, 2002.

Such an integrated approach has been adopted in **Mongolia**; one important outcome is that the informal economy initiatives are incorporated into Mongolia's National Plan of Action for Decent Work (box 4.10). In **Cambodia**, the informal economy, poverty and employment project is linking all four elements of the Decent Work Agenda for poor people. In the **Philippines**, ILO support at the policy and institutional levels has resulted in enhanced capacity of local government units to directly address informal economy concerns (box 4.11). In **India**, where the bulk of the workforce is in the informal economy, efforts to improve job quality and productivity are important (box 4.12). In the **Pacific** island countries, support to micro and small enterprise development is critical (box 4.13).

Box 4.10. Integrated approach to decent work in the informal economy

The ILO has been helping stakeholders in Mongolia to: (i) better understand the growing informal economy; (ii) build capacity at various institutional levels for providing services and programmes to the informal economy and for engaging in direct actions which can inform policies; and (iii) identify mechanisms and strategies required to enhance the contribution of the informal economy to local and national economies. The ILO conducted policy research, followed by a National Employment Conference in 2001 and a National Seminar on the Informal Economy in 2002 where guidelines for action were proposed. This prompted the Government to draft a policy and an action plan on the informal economy in 2003. Policy development included employment strategies for the rural sector.

Good feedback, collaboration, participation and initiative from the Mongolian stakeholders have been very encouraging in terms of national ownership and the potential for sustained results. The Government is passing legislation, formulating policies and strategies. The employers' organization is spearheading the informal gold mining initiative, as well as the training of trainers from various institutions on business development. The workers' organization has proposed an action plan including research on labour legislation, as well as organization in the informal economy.

The informal economy initiative is part of the National Plan of Action for Decent Work in Mongolia. The integrated approach is evident in the way in which the initiative works with other ILO activities in the country, including the child labour project, the gender and enterprise development project and the Office-wide knowledge sharing project on the informal economy.

Box 4.11. Achieving policy and institutional changes in the informal economy

An ILO/UNDP project in the **Philippines** in 2002-03 reported successful results in promoting policy and institutional support in the informal economy. The project built on good practices that were already in place and thus took an incremental approach towards instituting policy, legislative and institutional reforms. It was implemented in a highly participatory manner, with more than 30 public meetings involving women and men informal economy workers, including market vendors, transport workers, small construction workers, street hawkers and homeworkers. Often, more than 200 people attended each of these meetings. The project advisory committee was chaired by the Department of Labor and Employment and included wide representation from government agencies, informal economy representative organizations, community unions, employers' organizations and local government units.

The main outputs included the adoption of a Philippine definition of the "informal sector" by the National Statistical and Coordination Board and a gender-mainstreamed national framework for the promotion and protection of the informal sector by the Social Development Committee of the National Economic and Development Authority. The national framework benefited from an ILO analytical review of the responsiveness of the legal and policy environment to informal sector issues. Another important outcome is the enhanced capacity of line government agencies and local government units to address the needs of the informal sector. In Metro Manila, task forces were formed within the local government units for this purpose. A number of local government units (i.e. the municipality of Angono, Rizal) have implemented an informal sector programme in their area. Informal sector associations have also been able to participate more effectively in dialogue with relevant agencies.

Box 4.12. Improving job quality and productivity in production clusters

The ILO has been conducting a programme to improve job quality and productivity in the Moradabad brassware industry in **India**, where the results achieved have been encouraging in terms of awareness and efforts in improving the working environment and business practices. Also encouraging have been the involvement of the local government agencies, larger enterprises, the trade association, the labour union, local training institutions and other NGOs in working with the brassware workshop owners and women and men workers.

Since most of the workers in India are engaged in the informal economy, improving the working environment and business practices in the hundreds of economic clusters scattered across the country has been an important measure in advancing the concept of decent work in the informal economy. The challenges posed by globalization can also be more effectively met by enhancing productivity and competitiveness in the local clusters, which have been providing employment to millions of workers. The ILO has accordingly been examining several other clusters in India to determine how improvements can be made. The Government has proposed to adapt, reproduce and make widely available the audiovisual training materials prepared on the Moradabad Brassware experience to assist other informal economy operators.

Box 4.13. Micro and small enterprise development in the informal economy

Most new jobs in the **Pacific island countries** have been created by the private sector, especially micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in the informal economy. However, in most of these countries, the necessary conditions to enable the private sector to act as the engine of economic growth do not exist. Existing legislation, policies and procedures are often an obstacle to the efficient functioning of the market, and the potential entrepreneurs face many constraints in terms of starting their own business, getting access to credit, markets, technology, training and information.

The ILO country programme attempts to address these issues by advocating the creation of “one-stop shops” where prospective entrepreneurs would get all possible support to set up their own businesses. The creation of the National Centre for Small and Micro Enterprise Development in **Fiji** under the Integrated Human Resources Development Programme for Employment Promotion (IHRDPEP) aims to do this. In **Papua New Guinea**, the Assistance to Small Business Development Corporation supports existing and future entrepreneurs by empowering them with SIYB training with financial support from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).

An important aspect of ILO activities on the informal economy is the improvement of statistics. The general discussion at the International Labour Conference in 2002 extended the enterprise-based informal sector concept to a broader, job-based concept of employment in the informal economy. The Seventeenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 2003 developed guidelines concerning this broadened definition – adding the concept of “informal employment” to that of the “informal sector”. The Office is assisting countries in improving the measurement of informal employment based on this new definition.

Youth employment

Delegates to the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting expressed particular concern at the high and rising level of youth unemployment and underemployment. This problem is also highlighted in the Millennium Declaration, which resolved “to develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work” (paragraph 20). The United Nations system placed this commitment in the framework of the MDG (Target 16) on global partnerships for development, to be implemented through partnerships between governments, employers, workers and civil society, the business community and young women and men themselves. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, together with the Director-General of the ILO and the President of the World Bank, initiated the Youth Employment Network (YEN).

The ILO has taken the lead in organizing the work of YEN and hosting its secretariat. The ILO's lead role in the YEN has provided it with the opportunity to build international consensus on decent work for young people and to influence the international agenda with a comprehensive strategy on employment. A YEN Office was officially opened in May 2005 in **China**, with the cooperation of the All China Youth Federation. The ILO collaboration with this office has resulted in the pilot introduction of the Know About Business (KAB) curriculum at six Chinese universities.

The ILO Governing Body has also given strong endorsement to the work on youth employment. It approved the Tripartite Meeting on Youth Employment: The Way Forward in October 2004 in Geneva, and a general discussion based on an integrated approach to youth employment at the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2005.

In December 2002, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on promoting youth employment, which calls upon member States to prepare national reviews and action plans on youth employment and to involve youth organizations and young people. The YEN lead countries in the region in this effort are **Indonesia**, the **Islamic Republic of Iran** and **Sri Lanka**. The ILO has been assisting these countries in developing their national plans of action on youth employment (see, for example, box 4.14). The ILO has also been active in addressing the very high levels of youth unemployment in the **Arab States** (box 4.15).

Also worthy of mention are the ILO-designed surveys on school-to-work transition and youth employment.⁹ The results of the special surveys conducted in **China**, **Indonesia**, **Jordan**, **Sri Lanka** and **Viet Nam** have provided a sounder basis for understanding the problems faced by young people in making the transition from education and training to the labour market, and their aspirations and attitudes toward work and adulthood, and therefore also for designing appropriate youth employment programmes. In the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, **Mongolia** and **Nepal**, school-to-work transition surveys were conducted in 2005; the results will provide inputs for a larger project on youth employment in 2006-07 to be funded under the ILO/Korea Partnership Programme.

Box 4.14. Indonesian Youth Employment Action Plan (IYEAP)

In 2002, **Indonesia** volunteered to be a lead country in the global Youth Employment Network (YEN). The Indonesian Youth Employment Network (IYENetwork) was inaugurated on International Youth Day 2003. A year later, on International Youth Day 2004, IYENetwork unveiled a national plan of action for youth employment (IYEAP), developed with ILO support. To ensure that young people's views were included in the IYEAP, a series of "youth for youth" consultations were held in three regions. The action plan focuses on preparing youth for work, creating quality jobs for young women and men, fostering entrepreneurship and ensuring equal opportunities. Its theme – unlocking the potential of youth – neatly sums up these aims. The key policy recommendations include making education both affordable and high quality, developing a national skills qualification framework and strengthening the network of vocational education and training centres, building bridges between educational institutions and business, and improving the readiness of school leavers for the labour market.

The ILO has also supported a range of direct concrete initiatives in Indonesia, under a project funded by the Government of the Netherlands on Youth Employment in Indonesia: Policy and Action. This project is part of a larger regional support programme that also provides technical assistance to **Viet Nam** and **Sri Lanka**.

In East Java province, for instance, the national plan of action has been the basis for extensive consultations on how to take forward recommendations at the local level. More than 900 participants were involved from the Government, workers', employers' and youth organizations. An IYEAP implementation manual and tool kit has been developed to provide generic guidelines for other provinces interested in taking forward similar work.

Another example is the introduction of *Know Your Business* in some 60 vocational high schools and vocational training centres in order to provide young people with entrepreneurial awareness. This is now expected to become part of the curriculum throughout Indonesia.

Box 4.15. Regional Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Youth Employment in the Arab States

This meeting, which took place in April 2004 in Amman, Jordan, brought together tripartite delegations from 16 **Arab States**, representatives of international organizations (including the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the International Organisation of Employers), representatives of regional and Jordanian organizations, a group of young people from Jordan, local academics and ILO specialists and constituents.

The two working groups of the meeting generated a set of recommendations on policies for promoting youth employment, including:

- establishment of an Arab labour market database;
- preparation of an action manual for decision-makers;
- focus on country-level initiatives, such as convening national youth employment meetings that would bring together young people with policy makers, employers' and workers' organizations to agree upon effective youth employment measures. The conclusions and recommendations could be used by decision-makers in preparing national action plans on youth employment in cooperation with the social partners and youth organizations. An Arab fund could be established to finance implementation of these plans;
- eventually bringing together such initiatives to forge a Youth Employment Network for the Arab region.

Work has begun in several countries to operationalize the recommendations. For example, an ILO pilot project was launched to establish a labour market indicators database for the Arab States; and a Youth Employment Conference is scheduled to be held in Lebanon in 2006 in collaboration with the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Youth in Lebanon.

An ILO/Japan Regional Project on Youth Employment in Asia and the Pacific, which began in 2001, has served to catalyse interest and action in the region. Country studies on youth employment were conducted in **Australia, Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Japan, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Thailand** and **Viet Nam**. National workshops were also held in Hong Kong (China), Viet Nam, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. These culminated in an ILO/Japan Tripartite Regional Meeting on Youth Employment in Asia and the Pacific, which was held in February-March 2002, and a published report.¹⁰

In **India**, an important component of promotional work on youth employment was the High-level Asian Summit on Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment in October 2003 with international participation. Although India is not one of the lead countries for the YEN, the event, which was organized by Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust, an Indian youth business NGO, the Government of India, the Confederation of Indian Industry and the Youth Employment Network, brought together national and international actors, including the Prime Minister of India and representatives of the YEN high-level panel. The Summit discussed, among other things, partnership between business, government and civil society, youth entrepreneurship and the importance of the YEN in meeting the MDGs.

In **Viet Nam**, the ILO, together with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), drafted a discussion paper on *Challenges to Youth Employment in Viet Nam*. ILO inputs on youth employment were acknowledged in the National MDG report entitled *Viet Nam: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals* (August 2005) and also in the common country assessment (CCA). The ILO has also been collaborating with the UNCT on a project entitled "Young Viet Nam". In the context of this project, the ILO was able to support the formulation of the country's first Youth Law and helped ensure the inclusion of a component on the creation of employment for young people. The Youth Law, which was adopted by the National

⁹ See: ILO: *School-to-work transition survey questionnaire modules* (Geneva, ILO Gender Promotion Programme, 2003); and G. Sziraczki and A. Reerink: *Report of survey on the school-to-work transition in Indonesia* (Geneva, ILO Gender Promotion Programme, 2004).

¹⁰ ILO: *ILO/Japan Tripartite Regional Meeting on Youth Employment in Asia and the Pacific*, Bangkok, 27 February-1 March 2002 (Bangkok, ILO ROAP, 2002).

Assembly on 28 November 2005, creates a solid legal enabling environment in support of youth employment. A tripartite-plus committee has identified the elements of an Action Plan on Youth Employment that is intended to contribute to the Viet Nam Youth Strategy to 2010. The ILO's Know About Business (KAB) module has been adapted and is ready for pilot testing with a view to its inclusion in the secondary school curriculum. Youth employment issues have also been highlighted through a publicity campaign including television chat shows, newspaper articles, videos on non-traditional jobs and a new web site.

In the **Philippines**, a new technical cooperation project, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), on "Promoting Youth Employment in the Philippines: Policy and Action", was launched in 2005. The project aims to create employment opportunities for young women and men in the formal economy and reduce decent work deficits for young workers in the informal economy. The focus is on effecting changes in government policies at national and local levels, using social and multi-stakeholder dialogue, and on implementing local demonstration programmes aimed at key youth target groups.

Getting people back to work after disasters, crises and conflicts

During the period under review, several countries faced major natural disasters and crises, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), avian flu, tsunamis and earthquakes, and conflict situations, including the war in Iraq. The ILO has been proactive in its responses, emphasizing that employment creation should be an explicit and central objective of economic and social reconstruction efforts. The ILO approach is two-pronged: advocating that employment-intensive strategies be integrated into the humanitarian and reconstruction response, so that livelihoods can be restored quickly; and providing policy advice and initiating direct support in selected technical areas in which the ILO has extensive and proven expertise and tools.

The SARS epidemic that hit the region at the end of 2002 and the first half of 2003 caused sudden job losses and business closures, new occupational hazards in the health-care sector, medical screening procedures in the travel industry and the urgent need to protect workers in all kinds of workplaces. In July 2003, senior labour officials from ASEAN countries met in Manila to share their experiences of coping with the labour market impacts of SARS. One of the recommendations of the meeting was that the ILO publish a set of informal guidelines on coping with the threat of SARS at the workplace, drawing from internationally agreed standards on occupational safety and health, fundamental rights of workers, WHO guidance on SARS and the lessons learned from dealing with other new diseases at the workplace, such as HIV/AIDS. In response to that recommendation, the ILO report on SARS¹¹ emphasizes the importance of preparation at all levels to contain such epidemics, and provides practical information and good practices for coping with the emergencies caused by infectious diseases, such as avian flu.

In the aftermath of ethnic tensions in the **Solomon Islands**, an ILO project introduced labour-based and employment-intensive approaches for community infrastructure rehabilitation. The project succeeded not only in reconstructing and rehabilitating economic infrastructure, including roads and buildings, but also in creating both direct and indirect employment opportunities for the local Solomon Islanders. In **Sri Lanka**, post-conflict intervention by the ILO has focused on vocational training and skills development for children affected by the war, including child soldiers. The ILO is also involved in joint programme implementation with UNHCR, UNICEF and UNDP through the "4R" programme for internally displaced persons in the north and east of the country. The ILO has also been spearheading employment creation efforts in the reconstruction of **Afghanistan** (box 4.16) and **Iraq** (box 4.17). In the **occupied Arab territories**, the ILO helped establish the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection to coordinate all financial and technical assistance for employment creation aimed at addressing the escalating problems of unemployment and poverty.

¹¹ ILO: SARS: *Practical and administrative responses to an infectious disease in the workplace*, Working Paper produced by SafeWork and the ILO Subregional Office for East Asia (Geneva and Bangkok, 2004).

Box 4.16. Rehabilitation and reconstruction in Afghanistan

On returning to **Afghanistan** in 2002, the ILO, in consultation with the interim Government of Afghanistan, formulated a strategy to: (a) contribute to the international efforts to reduce poverty; and (b) assist in the re-establishment of tripartism and capacity building of the constituents. The interim Government's employment-led development strategy is very much in line with ILO approaches. The ILO has accordingly promoted interventions in employment generation through labour-based infrastructure development; vocational training and skills development; employment services and labour market development; re-entry of Afghan women into the labour market; and local economic development and self-reliance.

Currently, the ILO Programme in Afghanistan based on this strategy includes support and technical assistance to: (a) restructure and reorganize the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and promote tripartism; (b) assess vocational training needs and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities; (c) provide business development services to micro and small enterprises; (d) strengthen the organization and capacity of workers' and employers' organizations; and (e) implement various programmes for the establishment of employment service centres, national emergency employment and microfinance support.

Box 4.17. Post-war reconstruction in Iraq

In January 2004, the ILO signed a Technical Cooperation Framework Programme with the Iraqi authorities. In May 2004, the ILO established a temporary physical presence in Amman to coordinate the ILO's overall technical assistance programme for post-war reconstruction in **Iraq** within the framework of the United Nations Strategic Plan, the UNCT and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. The Programme Framework was reviewed in October 2004, with the focus on employment. A key strategic response was the International Employment Conference on Jobs for the Future of Iraq held in Amman in December 2004 by the Government of Iraq and the United Nations Development Group for Iraq (UNDG-Iraq), for which the ILO was the lead technical agency. The Conference brought together representatives of the national authority, employers' and workers' organizations, civil society, United Nations agencies, the World Bank and the donor community. The Conference adopted the Amman Declaration, which recognized the centrality of employment in the reconstruction and development of Iraq. A Plan of Action adopted by the Conference identified three major areas for action, including "maximizing the employment impact of reconstruction efforts, supporting the private sector and strengthening the institutional capacities of the concerned government agencies and the social partners".

The ILO helped review the draft Labour Code. The draft was translated into Arabic and presented to the Iraqi authorities, which established a tripartite committee to review it. Once enacted, the Labour Code will be the first produced in the Arab region with the full participation of the social partners in the process. The ILO has also provided advisory services, round-table discussions and training workshops to build the capacity of the workers' and employers' organizations. It is paving the way for the restructuring of a new Iraqi Federation of Industries and for building a genuinely democratic trade union movement.

The ILO has also produced, in English and Arabic, technical guidelines on maximizing employment creation in infrastructure, reconstruction, rehabilitation and development programmes. The guidelines were adopted by the Government and the High Committee as the core strategy for infrastructural reconstruction and development programmes, under the government budget, as well as for investments by the donor and financing agencies, and the United Nations family working in Iraq. A high-level workshop in Geneva in December 2005 discussed a social security reform strategy for Iraq.

Responding to the devastation and loss of lives and livelihoods caused by the earthquake and tsunami of 26 December 2004, the Director-General of the ILO emphasized: “We need to get people back to work quickly to avoid exacerbating already existing and chronic poverty in many of the affected areas. In addition, we are also concerned over the prospect of prolonged unemployment leading to a serious long-term setback to development.”¹²

The ILO very quickly set up a task force at the regional office and at headquarters to provide immediate support to the work of ILO offices in the four affected countries – **India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand**. Efforts were initially concentrated in the two most seriously affected countries, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, where the ILO quickly reinforced the technical staff capacity and support facilities of its offices to provide the immediate responses required, including participation in needs assessment missions, undertaking dialogue and partnership with government agencies and workers’ and employers’ organizations, and initiating rapid action programmes. The ILO worked closely with the UNCTs and strengthened partnership with other United Nations agencies, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the donor community, in the early stages on needs assessments and in the later stages on reconstruction and livelihood. The ILO also redirected some of its regular budget resources to support immediate action and redirected relevant ongoing technical cooperation projects to focus on the affected areas and groups. In Indonesia, for example, ILO-IPEC has refocused some of its work on children and youth in Aceh and Nias, including training programmes for unemployed 15-17 year olds, as well as activities aimed at preventing children from dropping out of school. Box 4.18 illustrates some of the key features of the ILO response strategy; however, it is important to note that there is still a long way to go before full recovery is achieved, especially in the worst affected areas.

Box 4.18. Building back better after the earthquake and tsunami

The ILO has a specific role and a comparative advantage in disaster response in promoting employment-intensive recovery, giving special attention to the needs of the most vulnerable groups and the (re)establishment of social protection mechanisms. Very importantly, the ILO approach combines standards and development. It emphasizes the human rights aspects in post-disaster reconstruction – from protecting the many orphaned children from trafficking and the worst forms of child labour, to promoting gender equality and protecting the vulnerable, including the disabled and the elderly, to ensuring decent working conditions.

Indonesia: The ILO has developed a catalogue of projects revolving around the central issue of jobs, with three main pillars: employment centres; vocational and skills training; and enterprise. The ILO has been working closely with the Government on all three pillars. Box 4.3 above shows the achievements made in registering and placing jobseekers. The ILO has also been working with the Confederation of Indonesia Prosperity Trade Unions (KSBSI) to train its members in new skills that would enable them to find jobs. It also collaborated with the Indonesia Employers’ Association (APINDO) in conducting a survey to assess the impact of the tsunami on enterprises and to support employers in their efforts to restart businesses and create jobs.

Sri Lanka: At the request of the Government, the ILO developed the concept of a Rapid Income Recovery Programme (RIRP) aiming to bring sustainable jobs rapidly to those who can work and social protection for those who cannot. RIRP is now one of the cornerstones of the programme of the Task Force to Rebuild the Nation. It encompasses three broad types of instruments to provide a timed and phased approach to income protection and access to livelihood: temporary income transfers; an immediate income-generation mechanism (cash-for-work programmes); and financial and other services to revive and develop economic activities and restore livelihoods. The ILO is also running a child protection programme in partnership with a Sri Lankan trade union.

India: The Government of India did not request international support. As many people, especially young people, are no longer interested in working as fishers, the ILO worked with four trade unions to set up projects for them, including switching to activities such as auto mechanics and scooter repair. The ILO has also provided skills training for the women in fishing communities and helped them to organize for new production activities. Employers’ federations have also joined the ILO in order to initiate a variety of programmes, including SIYB activities.

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¹² ILO: Working out of disaster: Improving employment and livelihood in countries affected by the tsunami (Bangkok, 2005).

Thailand: To address post-tsunami livelihood recovery in the tourism sector in Phuket and Phang Nga, the ILO has been operating a small project together with the UNDP and the Thai Ministry of Labour. The project has four components: capacity building for workers and employers in the formal tourism sector; technical assistance to the ever growing informal economy; technical assistance for small business access to small loans; and HIV prevention in the tourism sector. The project has resulted in several income-generating activities for redundant workers. The Employers' Confederation of Thailand (ECOT) delivered emergency response training to the hospitality sector, and such was the interest among employers that ECOT gained sufficient new members to open a branch office in Phuket. The ILO is also engaged in a project run by the Federation of Trade Unions of Burma (FTUB) funded by the Irish Government and in partnership with the OCHA and IOM to assist undocumented migrant workers from neighbouring Myanmar affected by the tsunami – notably in re-registering for work permits.

The experience gained, strategies and tools tested and lessons learned in the tsunami response have proved very valuable in the ILO response to the major earthquake of 8 October 2005 in the north-east of **Pakistan**. The ILO was the first international organization to establish a cash-for-work programme for people affected by the earthquake, which has been given recognition by the Prime Minister of Pakistan and by other partner agencies (box 4.19).

Box 4.19. Rapid Income Support through Employment (RISE) in Pakistan

Quickly responding to the 8 October 2005 earthquake in north-east Pakistan, the ILO initiated a Rapid Income Support through Employment (RISE) programme in Balakot. By 22 October, the programme was operational and by mid-November, it had been replicated in Muzaffarabad, Bagh, Alai and Batagram with the ILO's own resources. RISE is based on cash-for-work for debris clearance and rehabilitation of essential small infrastructure, emergency employment services to register workers and, to a lesser extent, skills training. As of early January 2006, over 63,000 work-days had been generated and more than 30 per cent of the beneficiaries were women. The ILO was the first to initiate income support projects in the worst affected areas, thereby giving effect to one of the key recommendations of the Prime Minister's 12-point Reconstruction and Recovery Plan.

In addition, the ILO immediately carried out an assessment of the impact of the earthquake to ensure early attention to the employment and livelihood dimensions of the disaster. The ILO estimate of some 1.1 million jobs lost has been widely used by the Government of Pakistan including at donor conferences. The ILO also led a joint assessment on the ground of early recovery, employment and livelihoods for the United Nations system and liaised with the World Bank and Asian Development Bank assessment efforts.

The ILO has been working closely with its tripartite partners. It briefed the Ministry of Labour and employers' and workers' organizations on its response strategies and took their recommendations and suggestions into account while developing the programmes. In partnership with the Pakistan Workers' Federation, the ILO has begun cash-for-work activities in several rural communities in Balakot for debris removal.

5. Decent work key results: Strategic Objective No. 3

Extending social protection

Delegates to the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting emphasized that “social protection must complement national employment policies”. They noted with concern that “limited social protection is one of the greatest decent work deficits in the region. Of particular concern is the widespread absence of social protection for workers in informal employment – both rural and urban.”¹

At the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2001, the tripartite constituents reached a new consensus on social security. They agreed that the highest priority should be given to “policies and initiatives which can bring social security to those who are not covered by existing systems”. The Conference therefore proposed that “a major campaign should be launched in order to promote the extension of coverage of social security”.²

Especially after the Asian financial crisis, the issue for many countries is not whether they can afford a social security system: they simply cannot afford *not* to have one. The **Republic of Korea** decided that for the country to recover from the impact of a sudden increase in unemployment and at the same time prepare for the risk of future sharp economic contractions, it needed to invest in more extensive social protection. **China**, faced with the challenge of massive restructuring, has also given priority to social security. In December 2005, the State Council of China declared a reform of the pension scheme to widen coverage from 173 million people in 2005 to more than 220 million in 2010. This announcement followed ILO technical assistance over several years on pension reform. In May 2005, **Malaysia**, in line with an ILO recommendation, raised the monthly salary ceiling for social security coverage from the previous level of RM2,000 to RM3,000, thus extending the coverage. The ILO has also been assisting the Government and social partners in **Viet Nam** in drafting a new social security law, which includes new benefit provisions, such as unemployment benefits.

In the **Lao People’s Democratic Republic**, the ILO since 2002 has been supporting the Government in its efforts to reform social security provision for civil servants and extend coverage to workers in smaller enterprises and the informal economy. The private sector social security scheme, which initially covered private sector workers in Vientiane municipality, has been extended to Vientiane and Savannakhet provinces. With the assistance of the ILO social security project, a social health insurance scheme for civil servants and their families has been implemented in accordance with a new social security decree for the public sector.

In **Thailand**, since the entry into force of the Social Security Act 1990, the ILO has been working closely with the Social Security Office (SSO) on a wide range of issues, from legal framework and financial design to administration and implementation. Financial resources from the SSO itself, as well as ILO regular and extra-budgetary resources, support this partnership and technical assistance. Following ILO guidance, the SSO extended the statutory pension scheme to cover even the smallest enterprises. In January 2004, the SSO inaugurated the first unemployment insurance scheme. ILO research also helped to lay out a sound basis for sustaining the future financing of the “health care for all” system. In addition, the ILO is working to connect livelihood promotion with the extension of social security provisions to the informal economy. The SSO has requested ILO technical support for implementing the new law on extending social security provisions to homeworkers.

In **Cambodia**, the main focus of ILO technical advice and support to the Social Security Department in the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training is on developing employment injury insurance, which provides both short-term and long-term benefits including health care, permanent invalidity pensions, temporary invalidity benefits and survivor’s pensions for dependent workers in the formal economy. With funding from the Rockefeller Foundation, the ILO is also exploring and promoting the extension of community-based health insurance to populations belonging to HIV-vulnerable and HIV-positive households.

¹ ILO: *Report and conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting*, Governing Body, 282nd Session, Geneva, November 2001, GB.282/3, appendix, conclusions, para. 13.

² Resolution and conclusions concerning social security, adopted at the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference, in ILO: *Social security: A new consensus* (Geneva, 2001).

In **Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands** and **Vanuatu**, an ILO project, funded by the Netherlands, has developed baseline studies with the aim of determining the areas of productivity improvement of provident fund institutions, as well as possible extension of coverage. In **Fiji**, the ILO has been helping the Government to expand coverage and benefits under the Fiji National Provident Fund and also to review the Workmen's Compensation Act. In **Tonga**, another project is helping to promote a pension scheme for private sector employees.

ILO technical assistance programmes have helped to improve social security in **Bahrain, Iraq, the occupied Arab territories** and **Yemen**. In partnership with the World Bank, programmes are also being developed and implemented in **Jordan, Lebanon** and the **Syrian Arab Republic**. In **Bahrain**, the ILO assisted the authorities in developing an unemployment insurance scheme. This initiative falls within the context of labour market reform, including legislative reform, as well as the Government's efforts to promote the nationalization of the labour force. In **Yemen**, a workshop was organized in November 2005 on building the statistical base for a stronger social security system. The workshop discussed the results of the social security inquiry and the ILO emphasized the importance of performance indicators for the more effective functioning of social security schemes.

Extending social protection to the informal economy

The general discussion at the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference in 2002, and the resolution on decent work and the informal economy adopted at that session, reinforced the idea that social protection in the informal economy is a priority decent work deficit that must be addressed. There has been increased awareness of the role of community-based micro-insurance initiatives or other social insurance mechanisms that can supplement the existing formal schemes. The ILO's global programme on Strategies and Tools against Social Exclusion and Poverty (ILO-STEP) has contributed to the promotion of such initiatives for informal economy workers and other disadvantaged groups in several Asian countries (box 5.1).

Box 5.1. ILO-STEP interventions in Asia

The ILO global programme on Strategies and Tools against Social Exclusion and Poverty (ILO-STEP) supports the design and dissemination of innovative schemes intended to extend social protection to excluded populations, particularly in the informal economy. It focuses in particular on systems based on the participation and organization of the excluded; and also contributes to strengthening the links between these systems and other social protection mechanisms. Over the last few years, ILO-STEP has conducted situational analysis to determine the extent of social exclusion affecting informal economy workers, including the most disadvantaged groups in **Bangladesh, Nepal** and **Sri Lanka**. Nationwide inventories of micro-insurance initiatives have also been conducted in eight countries, supplemented by numerous case studies documenting the best practices.

In order to build additional practical knowledge, technical cooperation projects have been implemented in **Bangladesh, Nepal** and the **Philippines**, while active partnerships have been developed with the major schemes operating in the region. ILO-STEP is currently supporting two of the biggest health micro-insurance schemes in the world, SEWA and Yeshasvini. Together with the ILO Turin Training Centre, ILO-STEP organized the very first Asian regional workshop on micro-insurance in **Nepal** in May 2002, followed by a similar event in India in October 2003.

Using a multi-partnership approach, ILO-STEP is also very active at the advocacy level, developing broad awareness-raising activities for policy-makers and supporting the initiatives of excluded groups to influence the policy and legislative context of social protection. With this goal in view, ILO-STEP recently joined with WHO and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) in signing a letter of agreement on social health insurance that should find its first practical effects in countries like **Cambodia, India** and **Indonesia**. ILO-STEP, together with other main actors, is also setting up the first regional network of micro-insurance practitioners that will allow for the regular exchange of information and experiences, while contributing to the further development of the necessary linkages with the national social protection programmes and systems.

In **Nepal**, in line with the recommendations of the PRSP and with the active collaboration of its constituents, the ILO has been promoting health micro-insurance schemes in the informal economy in various districts. Beneficiaries include unionized informal economy workers, *kamaiyas* (bonded labourers) and agricultural workers. In the wake of the Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All launched in Geneva in 2003, Nepal, with ILO support, launched a week-long national campaign in March 2004. The campaign – a first for Asia – placed strong emphasis on the Government’s pivotal role in creating a policy environment allowing for the gradual extension of social protection to all informal economy workers.

In **Viet Nam**, an ILO project (2003-05), carried out in collaboration with MOLISA between 2003 and 2005 and financed by the Government of France, helped to develop innovative social protection mechanisms that could reduce the vulnerability of poor women in the informal economy. In its first phase, the project carried out a number of research studies that identified the risk-management needs and strategies of poor women and the services currently available in Viet Nam. The second phase has attempted to fill the gap between available services and perceived needs by developing and testing risk-management financial services in partnership with microfinance institutions. The ILO has also been supporting the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour in efforts to train trade unionists on social security.

In the absence of an effective social security scheme in **Bangladesh**, an ILO-USDOL project has been helping to provide basic social protection in the area of health services for poor rural women and their families (box 5.2).

Box 5.2. Health micro-insurance in the informal economy

An ILO-USDOL project on Women’s Empowerment through Employment and Health in **Bangladesh**, which operated from 2001 to 2004, has helped empower poor women by enhancing their access to decent employment and income opportunities and to viable community health insurance systems and quality health-care services. The project supported two health micro-insurance and service provision schemes. One larger scheme implemented through 23 health centres in seven districts by Grameen Kalyan (set up under the Grameen Bank), and one pilot scheme operated through two health centres by BRAC, are providing preventive and curative health services to the targeted women and their families at an affordable cost. The strategy recognizes that enabling poor rural women to access affordable and quality health services, in particular reproductive health services, is a means of empowerment and of raising their awareness and ability to demand better health services.

Grameen Kalyan and BRAC, through the ILO-supported health micro-insurance schemes, had registered some 70,000 policy holders (as of December 2004) and rendered curative health-care services to their family members, 80 per cent of whom were women and children. Health-care assistants and community health workers provided home services on primary/preventive health, family planning and nutrition to a very large number of people. Three more NGOs working with the project had also replicated the health micro-insurance concept and had extended health care services to about 10,000 poor women (as of January 2005).

Several development organizations have shown great interest in introducing/replicating the health micro-insurance concept in their own programmes as a means of extending health services to the poor. The Government is also interested in incorporating the health micro-insurance concept into national health policy.

Tackling work-related safety and health hazards

At the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference in 2003, a new ILO Global Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) was adopted. The strategy has two pillars: (i) creation and maintenance of a national preventative safety and health culture; and (ii) introduction of a systems approach to OSH management. At the national level, the strategy encompasses national OSH programmes, while, at the enterprise level, the *ILO Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems (ILO-OSH 2001)* provide guidance for the strategy.

Thailand launched an OSH master plan for 2002-06, in which national OSH action areas were prioritized and targets set. Extension of OSH protection to informal economy workplaces was clearly integrated into the national plan. In **China**, an inter-ministerial tripartite task force was established and the national OSH profile developed. In **Malaysia**, an ILO advisory report was submitted and a draft national OSH plan developed. **Mongolia** launched the national OSH programme in 2005. The **Lao People's Democratic Republic** and **Viet Nam** drafted their national OSH programmes. In Viet Nam, the formal observance of National Safety Day helps to focus the attention of the Government, employers and workers on OSH improvements in the workplace. In the **Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste**, legislation governing occupational safety and health is being drawn up. In **Sri Lanka**, the ILO offered extensive technical assistance in 2005 to set up the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, including a business plan. Moreover, a new OSH Act expanding the coverage of legal protection has been drafted through a consultative process and will be presented to Parliament in 2006. A similar legislative initiative is under way in **Pakistan**, and **India** is developing a national policy with a similar goal. Results can also be reported for the **Arab States** (box 5.3). In all these countries, workers' and employers' organizations have been active members of the task forces to develop national OSH programmes and legislation.

Box 5.3. Occupational safety and health in the Arab States

ILO guidelines, codes of practice and tools have been instrumental in the revision and development of national OSH legislation and programmes in the **Arab States**.

- **Saudi Arabia** ratified the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174); **Lebanon** ratified the Occupational Safety and Health (Dock Work) Convention, 1979 (No. 152); **Bahrain** has started the process of ratifying Convention No. 174; and **Syrian Arab Republic** is in the process of ratifying the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184).
- An agreement signed with the **Gulf Cooperation Council** resulted in assistance from the ILO for revising and updating the Council of Ministers' legislative decrees in the field of OSH and for preparing OSH guides in the oil and petrochemical industries.
- OSH monitoring units have been established at the governorate level in north and south **Lebanon**. Under the IPEC national project framework, a programme was initiated to improve safety and health measures in small industrial establishments and to raise children's and parents' awareness of occupational safety and health hazards and risks.
- The capacities of OSH training institutions have been developed, including through the production of OSH educational materials in Arabic, publication of a chemical safety book for secondary schools, publication of text books in Arabic, and revision of the OSH training curriculum in the **Syrian Arab Republic**, and design of a two-year diploma course in OSH at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of **Saudi Arabia**.
- A study was conducted on restructuring the OSH Unit at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the **United Arab Emirates**.
- An occupational safety and health profile for **Kuwait** was published and a situational analysis of OSH in Lebanon was completed.
- The International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centres (CIS) in **Jordan** and the **Syrian Arab Republic** have been strengthened. Joint OSH activities with the Arab Labour Organization's Institute of Occupational Health and Safety culminated in its designation as a Regional CIS Centre.
- A study on OSH in the informal economy in Lebanon has been completed.

In the **Pacific island countries**, the ILO has been providing assistance in improving OSH policy, often in conjunction with labour law review. For example, the Employment Relations Bill of **Fiji** includes improved OSH provisions. The ILO has also assisted Fiji in the development of its Chemical Safety Code. **Papua New Guinea** and the **Solomon Islands** are both reviewing their OSH policy as part of labour law review. The ILO is in the process of commenting on the existing OSH Act in **Kiribati** to make it compliant with international labour standards.

At the workplace level, the *ILO Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems (ILO-OSH 2001)* have been playing an increasingly important role in helping workplaces to establish sustainable OSH systems. **China**, in keeping with the spirit of *ILO-OSH 2001*, has developed its own national guidelines on OSH management systems. As of August 2004, more than 4,000 Chinese enterprises received certification for their effective OSH management systems. In parallel, national support mechanisms have been strengthened; 43 certification agencies were registered and more than 47,000 external and internal auditors have been trained to provide continuing support to the implementation of OSH management systems at the workplace. **Malaysia**, through the Standards and Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia (SIRIM), has also adopted its own standard based on *ILO-OSH 2001*. **Indonesia** has adopted new legislation requiring every enterprise to apply an OSH management system which must be integrated into the enterprise's management system. In addition, countries such as **India**, the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, **Japan** and the **Republic of Korea** have translated *ILO-OSH 2001* into their national languages.

Action programmes and projects have been promoting OSH in agriculture (box 5.4), the informal economy (box 5.5) and hazardous industries such as ship recycling (box 5.6).

Box 5.4. OSH in agriculture

In **Viet Nam**, the ILO has been supporting the Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Development (WIND) programme for farmers since 2001. From 2001 to 2003, some 3,402 farmers participated in WIND training courses and over 169,000 self-made OSH improvements were reported in one province. An equal number of women and men (wives and husbands) participated. The Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture jointly developed new ministerial decrees and set up a national task force in 2004 to formulate a national action plan on OSH. Such a national OSH action plan has been elaborated and is being reviewed by the Prime Minister.

An ILO/MOLISA project funded by the ILO/Japan Multi-bilateral Programme for 2004-07 has two main objectives. At the national level, it is strengthening OSH policies and legislative frameworks and developing a medium-term national OSH programme. At the local level, it is working in six provinces to introduce grass-roots level training in OSH in agriculture using the WIND package and based on locally designed action checklists and locally available materials. Small incremental changes in working and living conditions are improving the productivity and quality of life of farming families, and the trained farmers are disseminating information and training in their neighbourhoods.

The WIND programme has now been extended to **Cambodia**, **Mongolia**, **Philippines** and **Thailand**.

Box 5.5. OSH in the informal economy

Action-oriented programmes to reach informal economy workers have been implemented in East Asia. The target groups have been homeworkers in **Cambodia** and **Thailand**, small construction sites in **Cambodia**, **Lao People's Democratic Republic**, **Mongolia**, **Thailand** and **Viet Nam** and child workers in **Cambodia**. Around 1,000 homeworkers (many of them women) and around 1,000 workers and owners of small construction sites have been trained under the Work Improvement for Safe Homes (WISH) and Work Improvement in Small Construction Sites (WISCON) programmes. Practical OSH methods to reach the target informal economy workplaces were developed and actively implemented by trained local trainers. These included easier handling of heavy materials, safer handling methods for hazardous substances and better work-related welfare facilities. The results achieved have been possible because of the focus on simple, hands-on, low-cost actions by workers, managers and the self-employed themselves. Many informal economy workplaces were involved in improvement actions at their own initiative and in strengthening local people's networks. For example, more than 200 homeworkers in Cambodia were trained by local trainers within two months after the initial WISH training for trainers workshop.

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Employers' and workers' organizations have been actively involved in the OSH programmes. Their representatives have become OSH trainers and have carried out OSH training for the target groups. In **Mongolia**, for example, the Confederation of Mongolian Trade Unions took the initiative to strengthen the OSH training for small construction sites and for market vendors.

Box 5.6. OSH in the ship recycling industry

Shipbreaking is part of the worldwide system for waste disposal and recycling. Currently, some 92 per cent of the world's ship recycling industry is located in just four countries – **Bangladesh, China, India** and **Pakistan**. In 2000, the Governing Body agreed that the ILO should draw up a compendium of best practices adapted to local conditions leading to the preparation of a comprehensive code on OSH in shipbreaking. As a follow-up, guidelines have been developed. A meeting of experts held in Bangkok in October 2003 and the Governing Body at its 289th Session in March 2004 endorsed for publication, *Safety and health in shipbreaking: Guidelines for Asian countries and Turkey*.

To follow up on these developments, the ILO is implementing a project on safe and environmentally friendly ship recycling in **Bangladesh**. The UNDP-funded project, with a time frame of three years, aims to address upstream policy issues and establish frameworks for participatory local planning and development of the ship recycling industry in the country. This includes issues related to pre-beaching, beaching and recycling formalities, minimizing environmental pollution and addressing OSH issues in the ship recycling industry. The project also envisages training for government inspectors, employers, supervisors and workers engaged in the industry. Training materials and modules for different stakeholder groups are under preparation in **Bangladesh** and **India**.

Protecting migrant workers

Delegates to the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting expressed the concern that:

Migration, as a manifestation of the globalizing world, cannot in most cases be conceived as favouring the sending country alone, but as benefiting also many receiving countries by providing much needed workers. Migrant workers are often the least protected. Irregular migration and trafficking expose workers to the worst forms of abuse and exploitation. Even legally admitted workers do not enjoy the same rights and level of social protection as the national workforce in most countries. Recognizing that bilateral and multilateral approaches are prerequisite for safeguarding the least protected, the delegates request the Office to take a lead in developing and facilitating appropriate policy measures for migrant workers within the framework of decent work.³

At its 92nd Session in June 2004, the International Labour Conference adopted an ILO plan of action for migrant workers which includes “development of a non-binding multilateral framework for a rights-based approach to labour migration which takes account of labour market needs, proposing guidelines and principles for policies based on best practices and international standards”.⁴

In response to the conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting and those of the International Labour Conference, and also to the strong demand for technical assistance from the constituents, the Office has undertaken a range of activities. They include policy advice, knowledge sharing, capacity building and targeted action programmes, and encompass all the dimensions of decent work – the human and labour rights of migrant workers, the employment and labour market aspects for both sending and receiving countries, the protection of migrant workers from discrimination, exploitation and forced labour including the prevention of trafficking, and the role and capacity of the tripartite constituents in

³ ILO: *Report and conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting*, op. cit., para. 11.

⁴ Resolution concerning a fair deal for migrant workers in a global economy, adopted at the International Labour Conference, 92nd Session, Geneva, 2004.

managing labour migration. ILO action to protect vulnerable migrant workers, especially female migrant workers, from forced labour and to prevent trafficking was described in Chapter 3 of this report.

A project under the ILO/Korea Partnership Programme, has helped to enhance national migration management capacity in **Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia and Thailand**. The project has promoted regular forms of labour migration through employment cooperation, migration policies and legal frameworks. The project builds on existing initiatives and established links with ongoing projects such as the ILO-IPEC Mekong Subregional Project on Trafficking in Children and Women (see box 3.7). The work on effective labour migration policy is part of ILO support for the implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the employment of migrants that has been signed by **Cambodia and Thailand**. One key output of the project has been a training manual on international labour migration that is being translated into Khmer, Lao, Mongolian and Thai for the purpose of labour migration management training to develop overseas employment administration capacity.

The ILO has also been supporting trade unions and employers' organizations in their efforts to address the problems of migrant workers. For example, in March 2003, the ICFTU-APRO held a Regional Consultation on Developing a Cooperating Mechanism for Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Migrant Workers, Jakarta; the Federation of Trade Unions of Burma produced a video depicting the challenges facing Burmese migrant workers in Thailand; and trade unions organized a technical meeting on studies of out-migration in **Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka** in December 2003.

With the support of the ILO and the ICFTU-APRO, Asian trade unions have organized a number of meetings to address the problems of migrant workers. In August 2005, a workshop for trade union leaders in Phuket, **Thailand**, resulted in the Phuket Declaration, which is a commitment on the part of the Thai trade unions to improve protection for migrant workers and extend worker solidarity and representation to workers from neighbouring countries. The ILO is providing technical support to the Thai trade unions to act on this commitment. In **Malaysia**, too, the ILO, in collaboration with the Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC), organized a regional meeting with representation from both sending and receiving countries. The meeting endorsed a number of recommendations for action to be spearheaded by the MTUC to promote respect for the basic human and labour rights of migrant workers.

Many economic sectors in southern **Thailand** rely primarily on migrant labour, mainly from Myanmar. The tsunami in December 2004 struck six months into the implementation of a new migrant labour registration policy. The tsunami response efforts revealed that there were many areas of incomplete and ineffective implementation of this new policy and that the most adversely affected were Burmese migrant workers and their families, who were in the vulnerable position of being unable to confirm their legal status, had lost their work permits and were being discriminated against with regard to official assistance – quite apart from the loss of lives, livelihoods and homes. The ILO joined with the IOM to provide support for the registration of Burmese migrant workers.

The Employers' Confederation of **Thailand** (ECOT) organized two seminars on migrant workers and the registration process in January 2005, followed by a survey of Thai employers in the construction, seafood processing, garment manufacturing and tannery industries on issues, challenges and best practice examples in relation to the employment of migrant workers.

In the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in March 2004 between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the IOM and the ILO with a view to facilitating the development of policies on labour migration. Under the MOU, a conference was scheduled in 2005 for training of policy-makers.

In the **Arab States**, studies documenting the situation of migrant domestic workers and a publication in Arabic and English⁵ have contributed to awareness raising and specific legal and institutional responses, as well as promoting collaboration between the ILO and other international organizations, including UNHCR and UNIFEM, to address the vulnerability of these workers. To assist the Lebanese Government in alleviating the difficulties faced by migrant domestic workers, the ILO conducted an awareness-raising workshop on their situation in **Lebanon** in November 2005. The workshop was the first step towards a national forum for discussion among key national stakeholders on how to respond to the needs of migrant domestic workers. A steering committee will be established with a view to developing a

⁵ S. Esim and M. Smith (eds.): *Gender and migration in Arab States: The case of domestic workers* (Beirut, ILO, 2004).

concrete plan of action. Other governments in the region, in particular in the **Syrian Arab Republic** and **Yemen**, have requested that this initiative and legal assistance be replicated to include migrant domestic workers in their national labour laws.

An ILO Plan of Action on Labour Migration in **Asia and the Pacific** has been developed. The drafts have been widely circulated and discussed, including at a meeting of ILO staff in August 2005 and at a subsequent meeting in December 2005 with tripartite representatives from sending and receiving countries. The Plan aims to improve labour migration policies and governance and help member States, whether receiving or sending migrant workers, to address migration challenges more effectively. The proposed Plan has four basic elements: research to assist countries in developing a long-term outlook for their human resource needs and potentials, including strengthening the information base that could help guide migration policy; promotion of the ILO's non-binding multilateral framework for a rights-based approach to the management of labour migration; promotion of fair and efficient systems of recruitment; and social protection for migrant workers. The Plan will be discussed at the Fourteenth Asian Regional Meeting with a view to subsequent implementation.

To support implementation of this Plan, two regional projects on migration have been approved. One project, funded by the ILO/Japan Multi-bilateral Programme on Managing Cross-Border Movement of Labour in South-East Asia for implementation over the next five years, covers mainly **Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic** and **Thailand**. Another ILO/UNIFEM programme, funded by the European Commission, on the governance of labour migration has a wider coverage of sending and receiving countries in Asia.

Combating HIV/AIDS in the world of work

What the ILO brings to the global and regional response to HIV/AIDS is a focus on the workplace and on the economic and social impact of the disease. The ILO focuses on HIV/AIDS as a workplace issue because at least two-thirds of those living with the virus are workers, in either the formal or informal economies. The key components of the ILO approach are:

- to ensure that rights at work are respected and action is taken to address stigma and discrimination. The ILO has developed a code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work which covers the protection of rights, non-discrimination in employment, gender equality, social dialogue, prevention, care and support. The ILO code of practice has been launched in the region in local languages;
- to assist ministries of labour in mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in their programmes. Governments need to provide a legal and policy framework that ensures that HIV/AIDS concerns are integrated into broader development plans and processes;
- to mobilize the social partners and give them the capacity to address the epidemic in their own activities. Workers' and employers' organizations are playing a prominent role in addressing HIV/AIDS as a workplace issue;
- to develop partnerships and work closely with other co-sponsors of UNAIDS so as to create a more coherent approach at national level and to ensure cost-effective use of available resources.

The Asia-Pacific group in the Governing Body during the March 2005 session expressed its concern about the rising evidence of HIV in the region and encouraged the Office to give attention to the issue in its work. In keeping with this request, ILO/AIDS has been contributing to national and enterprise-level initiatives through several current USDOL-funded technical cooperation projects in **Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal** and **Sri Lanka**. In **India**, for example, the programme has been successful in initiating action on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support in the world of work (box 5.7).

Box 5.7. HIV/AIDS: Action in India

The ILO, in consultation with its tripartite constituents and the National AIDS Control Organization, has been implementing a programme in **India** aimed at establishing sustainable national action on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support in the world of work since 2001. The immediate objectives are to better equip the ILO's constituents to adopt and implement effective workplace policies and programmes to prevent the spread of HIV, to fight discrimination and stigmatization, and to enhance tripartite action against HIV/AIDS in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and West Bengal covering both formal and informal economy workers. Over a one-year period, 2003-04, key results were:

- As a result of policy advocacy efforts, the National AIDS Control Organization endorsed the ILO code of practice for use in workplace settings in India. The Government's AIDS policy stresses that " ... the organized and unorganized sector of industry needs to be mobilized for taking care of the health of the productive sections of their workforce".
- The ILO helped the Ministry of Labour and Employment to mainstream HIV/AIDS in the activities of its key institutions, the Central Board for Workers' Education (CBWE) and the National Labour Institute. The programme trained 246 education officers of the CBWE who integrated HIV/AIDS into their regular programmes and reached a labour force of 313,226, of which 92,859 were in the organized sector, 128,682 in the unorganized sector and 91,685 in the rural areas; 120,970 were male workers and 192,256 female workers.
- Through a unique approach based on enterprise-level initiatives, the programme also reached 55 enterprises in the three states covering a labour force of 168,565. A total of 1,225 trainers were trained in these enterprises to conduct in-house training of workers.
- Some enterprises have been persuaded to formulate an enterprise policy on HIV/AIDS.
- Through the capacity-building efforts of trade unions to deal with the issue of HIV/AIDS and mainstream it in their workplans, one of the five main trade union centres – Hind Mazdoor Sabha – has formulated a draft policy for adoption and implementation by its affiliates.
- Some of the major enterprises have extended the HIV/AIDS programme to reach the unorganized sector, particularly those engaged in the supply chain, ancillary units and neighbouring communities. Another unique approach is working with informal economy women's associations and unions to reach out to their members in order to sensitize them on the issue of HIV/AIDS.
- A statement of commitment to fight HIV/AIDS at the workplace was formulated through consultations with national-level employers' organizations and disseminated by them for adoption by their affiliates.

In **Nepal**, the project has contributed significantly to national and enterprise-level policy on HIV/AIDS at the workplace, addressing issues such as non-discrimination, non-screening, prevention and care and support. The project steering committee under the chairmanship of the Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Transport Management has forwarded the National Policy on HIV/AIDS at the Workplace to various ministries for their inputs and comments, before its eventual submission to the Cabinet for endorsement. A Memorandum of Cooperation has also been signed between the ILO and the respective workplace managements of ten collaborating enterprises. Eight of these enterprises have established a written policy on HIV/AIDS. Workplace HIV/AIDS committees have been formed with representation from employers and workers.

In **Cambodia**, trade unionists conduct peer education for workers, while the key employers' organization has mobilized enterprises in the garment, hotel and tourism sectors. A tool kit for workers in the informal economy has been developed and is currently being implemented in Cambodia. It uses interactive exercises for awareness raising on specific HIV issues, for understanding rights and responsibilities, stigma and discrimination, and provides information on different HIV and AIDS-related services. The tool kit targets primarily members of associations of informal economy workers and operators.

The ILO's continuous advocacy work and technical advisory services to its tripartite constituents in **China** have led to the successful mobilization of non-health sector institutions in the fight against HIV/AIDS at a relatively early stage of the epidemic. Advocacy started in 2001, followed by strategic

planning and capacity building in 2003 and implementation of a comprehensive programme as of early 2005. Key activities included awareness raising and capacity building among employers, workers' representatives and officials of MOLSS, development of education and training materials, research on the impact of HIV/AIDS on labour and social security, and advice with a view to national policy reform, for example on HIV/AIDS testing. The ILO's constituents have started to take the lead in the fight against HIV/AIDS at the workplace. One example of this is the launch of a Red Ribbon Health Campaign for Employees by the Chinese Vice-Premier, Vice-Minister for Labour and Social Security and Vice-Presidents of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) and China Enterprise Confederation (CEC) in November 2004. An ILO/USDOL Workplace Education Programme is due to begin in early 2006.

To scale up the initial work with the constituents in **Indonesia**, the ILO Office in Jakarta has developed a project funded by USDOL to improve the capacity of ILO tripartite constituents and other implementing partners at national, provincial and district levels to design and implement workplace HIV/AIDS policies, as well as prevention and education programmes. A second joint initiative has been a large-scale proposal to the Global Fund to Combat AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis. Very substantial funding was approved in 2004, the first time worldwide that a workplace initiative had been supported by the Global Fund. This programme gives each of the constituents access to resources for the purpose of rolling out workplace programme on prevention in different provinces. The activities are part of the national HIV/AIDS strategy.

An ILO project in **Thailand** has developed technical guides and training materials for workplace education on HIV/AIDS and strengthened the role of the Ministry of Labour in support of HIV/AIDS workplace education programmes. Between January 2002 and December 2004, workplace education was conducted at the enterprise level for over 6,000 workers and about 100 employers in the pilot province of Rayong. Some 100 workers were trained as peer educators and more than 40 companies were certified as having adopted HIV/AIDS policies in line with international standards. At the provincial level, representatives of workers' and employers' organizations, labour protection officers and NGO service providers have enhanced capacity to implement the workplace education programmes. A national code of practice on HIV/AIDS at the workplace was issued by the Ministry of Labour in January 2005. At the subregional level, some of the tools, such as a Thai employers' guide on managing HIV/AIDS, have been adapted and published in **China, Cambodia and Indonesia**.

In **Viet Nam**, the ILO supported the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour in adapting the ILO code of practice as a guidebook for trade unionists and distributing it for national use. The ILO has also provided technical advice for the ongoing formulation of the HIV/AIDS law, which is expected to be approved by the National Assembly in 2006.

In the **Pacific island countries**, the ILO is participating in a United Nations Interagency Initiative to combat HIV/AIDS. An ILO/UNDP project in **Papua New Guinea** has developed tool kits and is promoting workplace policies. **Fiji** has incorporated HIV/AIDS workplace policies in its Employment Relations Bill. **Kiribati** and **Vanuatu** are also considering developing workplace policies.

In **Sri Lanka**, a tripartite project advisory board steers an HIV/AIDS workplace education project funded by USDOL. The project, which started in 2005, works directly with enterprises to focus on reducing employment-related discrimination against persons living with HIV/AIDS and reducing risk behaviours among targeted workers.

In the **Arab States**, a regional Arab strategy on HIV/AIDS and the world of work has been developed but there are still constraints which limit the effective adoption and implementation of the strategy and any moves by individual States to "break the silence" (box 5.8).

Box 5.8. Regional Arab strategy on HIV/AIDS and the world of work

Based on the ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS, the first regional Arab strategy on HIV/AIDS and the world of work was developed for adoption by the countries of the region. The components of the strategy cover advocacy and sensitization, capacity building, protection of human rights, awareness and prevention, care and support, extension to the informal economy, improved data on HIV/AIDS, resource mobilization and reinforcement of HIV/AIDS activities. As a response to the strategy and to Goal 6 of the MDGs related to HIV/AIDS, the following results have been achieved:

- recognition of HIV/AIDS as a world of work issue, and the application of ILO principles and policies as set out in the code of practice;
- the education and training manual of the ILO code of practice was translated into Arabic;
- **Jordan, Lebanon** and the **Syrian Arab Republic** have launched initiatives to incorporate this strategy into their workplace policies. In Lebanon, for example, a number of employers have promoted a workplace policy on HIV/AIDS;
- in **Lebanon** and the **Syrian Arab Republic**, labour inspectors have been fully trained on the subject. Some labour inspectors have also been trained as peer educators;
- coordination has been established between ministries of labour and health and national AIDS programmes in **Jordan** and **Lebanon**;
- the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU) has stated its commitment to HIV/AIDS policy at the workplace.

However, there are still a number of constraints that limit or delay the adoption of the strategy at country level, including: insufficient political commitment (a number of decision-makers still do not perceive the seriousness of the epidemic, or even deny its very existence); shortage of data; and prevailing social, cultural and religious norms.

6. Decent work key results: Strategic Objective No. 4

Strengthening tripartism and social dialogue

At the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting, the delegates reiterated that “the most effective way to define and implement a national policy to reduce the decent work deficit is through tripartite social dialogue and that such dialogue is only possible when the participants are equal partners”. They also stressed “the importance of the right of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining as the foundations for social dialogue”.¹ At its 90th Session in June 2002, the International Labour Conference also adopted a resolution concerning tripartism and social dialogue, which reaffirmed their importance.

Despite highlights in a few countries, the situation with regard to freedom of association is unfortunately a matter of concern – stagnant, if not worsening. As of 1 January 2006, out of 29 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, only 13 had ratified the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and 16 had ratified the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). Of the 11 Arab States, three had ratified Convention No. 87 and five had ratified Convention No. 98. Fifteen countries in Asia and the Pacific and five Arab States have ratified the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). As of 1 January 2006, there were 14 active cases from Asia and one from the Arab States pending before the Committee on Freedom of Association.

A growing number of cases of arrest and/or detention of trade union leaders and other human rights activists in several countries reflects serious threats to freedom of association and freedom of expression and points to the absence of a climate in which people can exercise their basic rights without intimidation or fear.

Strengthening the influence of the social partners in socio-economic and governance policies

On a more positive note, as emphasized throughout this report, the tripartite partners have been closely involved in the development, implementation and monitoring of national efforts and plans of action for decent work. The ILO has also been instrumental in ensuring that ministries of labour and the social partners participate and have a voice in CCA/UNDAF and PRSP processes. An important outcome is the growing recognition by the United Nations system and the international financial institutions that the social partners have a key role to play in creating a genuine sense of national ownership and commitment to effective implementation. Some examples are cited below.

Bangladesh: The Ministry of Labour and Employment constituted a Decent Work Advisory Body with the participation of key government ministries and agencies and representatives of workers’ and employers’ organizations. The role of the Advisory Body is to identify and review the progress and implementation of the Decent Work Action Plan for Bangladesh.

China: A national tripartite committee headed by the Minister of Labour and Social Security reviews labour and social policy implementation issues in relation to promoting the Decent Work Agenda.

Fiji: After the coup in 2000, the introduction by the ILO of informal decent work consultative monthly meetings paved the way for bringing the social partners to the discussion table with the new Government. The setting up of the Tripartite Peak Body consisting of eight cabinet ministers and employers’ and workers’ representatives has helped to enhance the role of the tripartite partners in national socio-economic decision-making.

Indonesia: One of the results of ILO efforts to build the capacity of the social partners and support their involvement in socio-economic decision-making has been the creation of a trade union network on PRS. The network has produced a position paper and counts on being actively involved in the monitoring and implementation of the PRS.

¹ ILO: *Report and conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting*, Governing Body, 282nd Session, Geneva, Nov. 2001, GB.282/3, Appendix: Conclusions, paras. 16 and 17.

Islamic Republic of Iran: The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and employers' and workers' organizations were closely involved in the preparation of an employment strategy for the country and also in a national conference on women's employment, empowerment and equality. The tripartite constituents signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in October 2004 regarding the need to revise the country's labour laws in line with international labour standards, including in regard to freedom of association.

Mongolia: A national tripartite committee meets regularly to enable the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour, along with the social partners, to discuss, review and propose national action to promote the NPADW.

Nepal: Through the PRSP process, with the support of the ILO, the social partners were given a role in the design of the national development agenda. Their concerns were heard by a broader group to whom they had earlier had only limited access. Trade unions were invited to all open meetings of the Nepal Development Forum.

Pakistan: The ILO helped ensure that the priorities of both employers' and workers' organizations, as well as those of the Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, were adequately reflected in the PRSP. The DWCP was jointly approved and signed by the Ministry of Labour, the Employers' Federation of Pakistan and the Pakistan Workers' Federation in September 2005.

Philippines: Under the Tripartite Industrial Peace Council, the highest-level body in the country, a tripartite technical committee has been set up to design, review and monitor the implementation of the Philippine Decent Work National Plan of Action.

ILO efforts to promote and strengthen tripartism and social dialogue have resulted in some notable achievements (boxes 6.1 to 6.3).

Box 6.1. Promoting social responsibility through dialogue in EPZs

Export processing zones (EPZs) are a major feature of the labour market in **Sri Lanka**. They are an important source of employment, especially for women. However, working conditions, labour relations and human resource development are issues requiring improvements.

The ILO has been providing advisory services and technical cooperation activities to address these issues through tripartism and social dialogue. Two tripartite workshops in 2001 and 2002 and subsequent meetings between the tripartite constituents paved the way for the tripartite partners to agree on corrective action required to enhance application of ILO Conventions Nos. 87 and 98. As a consequence of these deliberations, the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka amended its guidelines and operation manuals to accommodate provisions of the Conventions. Collaboration among the constituents has now extended to issues beyond the ratified Conventions. For example, a tripartite task force was established to develop an action plan to address the phase out of the Multifibre Arrangement in 2005.

Box 6.2. Promoting industrial relations in Indonesia

The ILO/USDOL Declaration project in **Indonesia** is designed to realize freedom of association and collective bargaining and to help the Government and employers' and workers' organizations, as well as bipartite and tripartite institutions, to strengthen their institutional capacity in implementing their mandates under the relevant labour laws and legislations and in building sound and harmonious labour relations. Operating since 2001, the project increasingly involves a mix of activities organized and financed mainly by the project and those by the constituents requiring only project technical support.

The project has been contributing to the promotion and realization of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, strengthening the capacities of the constituents, assisting in the labour law reform programme, and establishing sound industrial relations. A specific outcome of

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the project was the close tripartite involvement in drafting the Manpower Act and Dispute Settlement Act under the labour law reform programme of the Government. These Acts were promulgated in 2003 and 2004 respectively by Parliament, followed by the drafting and adoption of the implementing regulations.

Another innovative component of the project has been the training of police on industrial relations issues. From 2003 to August 2005, the project had trained a total of 824 persons, of whom 97 were women, on fundamental principles and rights at work and the role of the police in handling workers' strikes/demonstrations and company lockouts. In April 2005, the national police and the ILO jointly launched new *Guidelines on the conduct of Indonesian national police in handling law and order in industrial disputes*. The first of its kind in the country, the Guidelines were developed through a series of consultative processes with representatives of the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, trade unions, the Indonesian Employers' Association (APINDO) and other civil groups. The *Guidelines* stipulate that police officers may not interfere in negotiations relating to industrial relations disputes. They also provide for coordination between the police and manpower offices, as well as trade unions and employers, in order to maintain public order and peace in industrial relations.

Box 6.3. Workers-employers bilateral partnership

The Workers-Employers Bilateral Council of **Pakistan** (WEBCOP) was established in 2000 as a bilateral social dialogue mechanism at the national and provincial level. The establishment of WEBCOP was initiated by 54 members representing all major labour federations and employers of Pakistan. WEBCOP is operational throughout the country with the setting up of 12 chapters in various provinces of Pakistan. The ILO provided considerable support during the inception and subsequent organizational expansion of WEBCOP, including technical backstopping and training for leaders of workers' and employers' organizations, as well as government officials, on the principles and value of social dialogue. WEBCOP contributed to the development of a "Code of Conduct for Gender Justice at the Workplace" and also initiated an effort in support of the Alliance against Sexual Harassment for the voluntary adoption of the Code. WEBCOP collaboration with the National Skill Development Council resulted in the provision of free technical and vocational training for workers and their children. WEBCOP's first annual convention on 29 December 2004 in the ILO auditorium in Islamabad was inaugurated by the President of Pakistan, who pledged government support to WEBCOP objectives. WEBCOP is now acknowledged as a legitimate vehicle for bipartite partnership to promote social and labour policies and especially for speedily resolving problems in labour relations in workplaces.

In **Nepal**, ILO efforts to promote social dialogue and tripartism resulted in provisions in the Labour Act relating to tripartism – such as the establishment of the Labour Relations Committee at the enterprise level, the Minimum Remuneration Fixation Committee and the Central Labour Advisory Board. Furthermore, with ILO technical support, workers' and employers' organizations agreed on a new minimum wage through bipartite dialogue and jointly made a recommendation to the Government for implementation. Employers and workers were also actively engaged in ongoing social dialogue to reform the labour law, in which they agreed to a seven-point agenda for discussion, including on social security and labour flexibility.

In the **Philippines**, tripartite social dialogue resulted in a Social Accord signed on 4 October 2004 by the Government, major business organizations and prominent trade unions. The Social Accord seeks to address the current economic and financial problems facing the country. The main elements of the Social Accord are that the workers will resort to strike only as a measure of last resort and employers will not have recourse to lock out, closure or retrenchments and lay offs except in extreme circumstances.

A cooperation agreement has been signed between the ILO and the **Gulf Cooperation Council** (GCC) Executive Bureau relating to the promotion of tripartism and social dialogue and the realization of fundamental principles and rights at work. As part of the Decent Work Pilot Programme in **Bahrain**, efforts

were exerted to promote social dialogue on critical national issues related to labour market reform, the new labour law, wage policy, employment policies, the social security system and VET policies. In **Iraq**, social dialogue helped in the elaboration of the Labour Code and in identifying priorities for job creation and employment generation. In the **occupied Arab territories**, social dialogue enhanced the effective participation of the social partners in the establishment and management of the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection and in the elaboration of the new Labour Code. In **Yemen**, social dialogue opened the path for the social partners to participate in the elaboration of the Labour Code, in promoting gender mainstreaming and in implementing a project on combating child labour. In **Jordan**, an ILO/USDOL project helped improve the legal framework for social dialogue and strengthened the capacities and negotiating skills of the labour administration staff of the Ministry of Labour and representatives of the employers' and workers' organizations. The **Saudi Arabia** Council of Ministers approved a decree concerning rules for the establishment of labour committees at the enterprise level and held discussions with the ILO on future regulatory conditions for establishing a workers' committee and adopting new legislation relating to freedom of association.

At the enterprise level, social dialogue has helped achieve improvements in the working environment, reduce labour disputes, develop trust and enhance productivity (box 6.4).

Box 6.4. The SAVPOT experience

The South Asia and Viet Nam Project on Tripartism (SAVPOT), funded by the Norwegian Government and covering **Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka** and **Viet Nam**, focused on four main lines of action:

- develop and profile innovative initiatives and dialogue at the enterprise level;
- develop and support social dialogue at the national level, identifying where policy interventions could assist enterprise growth and workplace improvement;
- disseminate best practices; and
- involve women in social dialogue.

SAVPOT has reported a number of successful examples of social dialogue at the enterprise level in each country. Strengthened social dialogue in Nepal helped in mainstreaming gender issues. In Sri Lanka, the case of privatization in a multi-union situation was tackled. In India, the workers visited customers to understand problems in the products produced. In India and Pakistan, the process of social dialogue has resulted in resolving disputes through alternative dispute settlement mechanisms rather than through litigation. In **Nepal**, as well as **Pakistan**, the outcome of social dialogue can be seen at the national level, where bipartism is being used as an approach to determine the minimum wage which is being accepted by the Government.

In Viet Nam, a decree on tripartism, which was drafted in the context of SAVPOT with technical advice from the ILO, was issued by the Prime Minister on 14 July 2004. The decree has formalized tripartite consultation in all legislative and technical discussions, as well as implementing and reporting on ILO Conventions. It is expected that the decree will pave the way for ratification of Convention No. 144. Action was also taken in eight enterprises to build cooperative labour-management relations and the process was documented in a workbook for employers. The outcome of the SAVPOT project in Viet Nam has inspired and informed a USDOL-funded project on industrial relations covering seven provinces and 70 enterprises. The project has set up tripartite provincial task forces with a capacity for training and consultancy services intended to help enterprises to build cooperative labour-management relations, resolve conflicts and improve working conditions.

Enhancing the capacity of the social partners

Despite the successful results reported, most countries indicated that there are still a number of factors hindering effective tripartism and social dialogue. Perhaps the most significant constraint is the limited capacity of employers' and workers' organizations. Especially for some specific technical areas, the constituents may not necessarily have the qualified staff to take part in discussions on policy formulation, programme strategies, etc. In the **Philippines**, workers' organizations identified the need for capacity building of women trade union leaders, while the Government requested assistance for capacity building of labour administration to serve the social partners more efficiently. In the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, employers' and workers' organizations have needed to build their capacity to understand and work with labour market institutions.

This is why throughout this report ILO efforts to help build the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations have been highlighted. These efforts have focused not only on general capacity building for the constituents but also on specific services and programmes to assist constituents in playing their role in a given technical area, such as child labour (box 6.5), youth employment, HIV/AIDS, minimum wage setting, etc. In the **Arab States**, capacity building of the employers' and workers' organizations has enabled them to improve their services to their current and potential members (box 6.6). In **India**, workers' education activities have helped to empower and organize rural women workers in trade unions (box 6.7).

Box 6.5. Trade union policy on child domestic labour in Cambodia

Awareness raising by the ILO stimulated the interest of the Union Committee for Child Labour (UCCL), the Joint Committee of the Cambodian Confederation of Trade Unions (CCTU) and the Confederation of Free and Democratic Trade Unions of Cambodia (CFDTUC) in taking up the issue of child domestic labour in relation to young workers in the manufacturing sector. Most young workers in the sector are migrants from the provinces. Those who do not succeed in finding a job in the garment factories become domestic workers or are engaged in other forms of child labour, including the worst forms. The UCCL took the first step to support the elimination of child domestic labour by conducting a survey to understand the prevalence of child domestic labour among union members and their knowledge of the issue. The results of the survey sparked the union members' interest and suggested that the UCCL could provide a platform for taking action on the issue and at the same time raise awareness to contribute to preventing and eliminating child domestic labour.

To this end, a trade union policy on the prevention and elimination of child domestic labour was developed and adopted in December 2005. The policy is unusual in that, in addition to general statements of intent that no union members employ child domestic workers below the age of 15, it contains detailed information about what union members should do in practice. In particular, a minimum wage is specified, as well as a commitment by all union members to take action to assist individual child domestic workers in numerous ways. It will be interesting to see if this results in more practical action being taken by the unions to assist child domestic workers directly.

The initiative is a direct response to the Framework for Follow-Up Action in the Asia-Pacific region unanimously adopted by representatives from 16 countries, including Cambodia, at a regional-level tripartite meeting on action to combat child domestic labour in Thailand in 2002.

Box 6.6. Capacity building of employers' and workers' organizations in the Arab States

The Executive Bureau of the Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs in the **Gulf Cooperation Council** expressed its commitment to cooperating with the ILO on incorporating institutional capacity building for effective social dialogue into their policy agenda, with full recognition of the need to support the roles of employers' and workers' organizations.

In **Jordan** and **Yemen**, a permanent employer and worker committee with a balanced representation of the social partners was established to ensure continued social dialogue on national development policies and programmes.

In **Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia** and the **United Arab Emirates**, the employers' organizations have taken progressive steps to create new support service units to improve and diversify existing training centres or facilities to provide advisory and training services to small and medium-sized enterprises. The employers' organizations have also expanded representation to businesswomen in **Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia**, the **Syrian Arab Republic** and **Yemen**. A small business advocacy, training and demand-driven services unit has been established in the Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, which is intended to help create an entrepreneurship culture and contribute to reducing the soaring rate of unemployment in the **occupied Arab territories**. In Iraq, the Iraqi Federation of Industries has adopted a strategy for reorganization and development.

New women's committees have been established in trade union organizations in **Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia**, the **Syrian Arab Republic** and **Yemen**. In addition, progress has been made in amending labour laws to enable the establishment of workers' organizations in **Bahrain, Oman, Qatar** and **Saudi Arabia**.

Box 6.7. Promoting rural women's organizations

In **India**, in partnership with six rural workers' organizations in selected districts in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, a project on workers' education activities raised awareness of women workers' rights, labour laws, prevention and elimination of child labour, HIV/AIDS, various government schemes and social security funds available for the rural poor, etc. Female rural workers were organized in large numbers as paid members of trade unions and also into self-help groups (around 177 groups have been formed since mid-2003). The self-help groups have gone into income-generating activities in charcoal making, dairy products, goat rearing and hand-loom weaving, and have assisted women in obtaining a dignified and decent livelihood. The real results of this project are seen in the women's collective actions to demand their rights. Since the ILO intervention, these women workers can now defend their rights and interests collectively. The income-generating project activities have set an example whereby the banks and other financial institutions have been able to see the impact and have subsequently supported such activities – so that there has been a multiplier effect.

Enhancing the capacity and skills of trade unionists in negotiations and collective bargaining, particularly on the issue of wages, has been a focus of ILO work with labour unions in **Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia** and **Viet Nam**. The ILO has also emphasized education and training on improving labour laws and promoting ratification of core Conventions. Activities have included assistance to the **Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC)** to campaign for bringing labour laws into conformity with the core Conventions. Support has been provided to trade unions in **Thailand**, which have been advocating revision of labour laws and the ratification of Conventions Nos. 87 and 98. Research studies and education seminars have been conducted with the trade unions in the **Republic of Korea** in their campaign to revise labour laws, promote collective bargaining and boost the development of tripartism. Social dialogue and tripartism have been promoted in Mongolia and China through sustained education and training programmes. In China, worker education also focused on wage negotiations. In Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Thailand and Viet Nam, education and training have focused on building awareness and response capacity of trade unions in the fight

against child labour practices. Enabling trade unions to play a large role in promoting social protection has been a priority with Malaysian and Vietnamese trade unions; and gender equality, OSH, rights of migrant workers and youth employment have featured prominently in training and education efforts.

Activities have also been carried out to build the capacity of employers' organizations, for example in **China** and **Mongolia**, in the areas of safety and health, international labour standards and competitiveness, improving services to members, etc. In **Viet Nam**, with the ILO's support, the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, one of the two official employers' organizations in the country, conducted an assessment of capacity among 100 business associations with the aim of setting up a network of employers' representatives at the grass-roots level. The network is intended to serve as an effective tool for workplace cooperation and the prevention of labour disputes. The ILO has also supported the role of employers in society through national awards for the top ten employers in job creation. In addition, it has helped to build the capacity of employers' organizations to contribute inputs to the gender equality law and to promote job creation for youth.

7. Achievements, opportunities and challenges

Achievements

Since 2001, much has been achieved in terms of implementing the conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting, promoting the Decent Work Agenda and applying strategic budgeting and results-based management.

The national economic and social development plans of several countries in the region have made decent and productive employment a central rather than residual objective of macroeconomic and social policies. The central role of employment promotion in disaster and crisis response has been increasingly recognized by national and international actors. The ILO responded quickly in the countries affected by the tsunami and earthquakes.

The processes at country level to follow up on the Millennium Declaration, and in particular to achieve the MDG of poverty reduction, recognize productive employment as the sustainable route out of poverty. ILO support and technical assistance to actively involve employers' and workers' organizations and ministries of labour in these processes have helped to raise the profile and influence of ILO constituents; other government agencies, the international financial institutions and the donor community are increasingly acknowledging the role they can play. The ILO's active participation in the UNCTs and in the PRSP process and the CCA/UNDAFs have helped to enhance other agencies' awareness and appreciation of ILO expertise and knowledge tools in its areas of competence and experience.

The Asia-Pacific region was the first to introduce the modality of NPADWs. These plans have been developed and nationally owned by the tripartite constituents, and they are closely aligned to the country's national development frameworks and identify key priorities and strategies for achieving decent work. The ILO's DWCPs support the constituents in achieving the decent work priorities. The results of ILO activities have been evident in the following areas.

- *At the policy level:* In terms of the focus on productive employment in key policy documents, the increased ratification of core Conventions and legal and institutional reforms to bring national law and practice into line with international standards, the adoption of equal employment opportunity legislation and the specific attention given to the promotion of gender equality and protection of workers vulnerable to forced labour and/or discrimination.
- *At the programmatic level:* In terms of the development and implementation of strategic national programmes for skills and employability, SIYB, social security, occupational safety and health, elimination of the worst forms of child labour and education for all, fighting HIV/AIDS, etc.
- *From the perspective of capacity building:* In terms of the enhanced capacity of employers' and workers' organizations and ministries of labour to participate more effectively in social dialogue and decision-making at the highest levels; and labour market reforms and strengthened institutions to implement decent work.
- *From the perspective of impact on target groups:* In terms of specific indicators of decent work for informal economy operators, unemployed and underemployed young women and men, migrant workers and women and children vulnerable to trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation, workers with disabilities, indigenous populations and those affected by crises, disasters or conflicts.
- *From the perspective of knowledge development:* In terms of the knowledge tools and quantitative and qualitative databases that have been developed, tested, translated and shared among countries in the region, the adoption of these tools and strategies by other international organizations, and the leveraging of experiences from local to national levels and between countries.

ILO constituents have expressed their appreciation of these inputs and the results achieved.

Awards to the ILO

1. The ILO received a gold medal for the Cause of Women's Emancipation from the **Viet Nam** Women's Union in early 2005. The award was given to the ILO for its support for the promotion of equality of opportunity and treatment, for fostering women's access to employment and income, and for advancing women's status in families and communities and, thereby, their participation in the country's development.
2. **Viet Nam's** Minister of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs also presented the ILO's Country Director with a gold medal award for the ILO's contribution to labour and social affairs in Viet Nam.
3. A Certificate of Merit award was accorded to the ILO by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs in **Viet Nam** in early 2004 for its excellent contributions to increasing OSH among men and women farmers.
4. The Chief Technical Adviser of the IPEC Mekong Subregional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women and the Senior Child Labour Specialist received **Cambodia's** Nation Building Gold Medal and Certificate for their "outstanding contribution and commitment for combating child labour and child trafficking in Cambodia".
5. In 2003, the ILO was awarded a Gold Medal of National Construction from the Government of **Cambodia** through the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation for the achievements and contributions of the project "Alleviating poverty through peer training for people with disabilities".
6. An ILO project to prevent and eliminate bonded labour in **Pakistan** was awarded the Innovation Award by the Consultative Group against Poverty of the World Bank in 2002.
7. The ILO received an award from the **Mongolian** Human Rights Commission for its contribution to promoting human rights in the country.

We appreciate that the ILO is helping to establish tripartism in China. It gives employers more voice in the policy-making process and strengthens social dialogue among the three parties. Nowadays, the three parties think social dialogue played a very strong economic and socially stabilizing role in China.

President, **China** Enterprise Confederation

The Government of Fiji greatly appreciates the assistance of the ILO in promoting the social and economic well-being of the people. The ILO's assistance is notable in the preparation of the Employment Relations Bill, promoting industrial relations, social dialogue.

Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Productivity, **Fiji**

Since we became a member in February 2000, our ties with the Government and trade unions have been improved. We notice that Kiribati has benefited from ILO membership in capacity building of the Labour Department, Chamber of Commerce and trade unions.

Vice-President of the **Kiribati** Chamber of Commerce

We used to stand in lines and get pushed around. Our self-respect would be affected, we felt uncomfortable, but now by earning this money we can go and buy what we need ... We are grateful for all the help we've received but we are used to working for our keep.

Participant in ILO cash-for-work programme after the earthquake in Balakot,
Pakistan

... acknowledge ILO efforts in strengthening SME development in the private sector and in sustaining the TC activities for the development of a conducive legal environment which is necessary for the promotion of entrepreneurial spirit.

Secretary-General of the Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry,
Saudi Arabia

We consider the ILO our closest ally in achieving labour market and social security reform.

Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, **Syrian Arab Republic**

I appreciate as well the excellent work undertaken by the ILO programme here in the state (Andhra Pradesh, India) and elsewhere in the world, bringing innovative approaches to addressing the issue of child labour.

Secretary of State for International Development,
Government of the **United Kingdom**

... valuable assistance was given to the Vanuatu Trade Union Congress to improve its capacity. The ILO helped us to promote workers' rights in an environment of globalization. The ILO is a very important organization for us.

General Secretary of the **Vanuatu** Council of Trade Unions

... thanks the ILO for its assistance in helping to create jobs in his city, and for ILO attention to rural migrants.

Mayor of Chengdu City, **China**, in a front-page newspaper report, October 2004

Opportunities and challenges ahead

Much has been achieved, but the tasks and challenges ahead are enormous – especially given the growing relevance of the ILO mandate in today's world. At the United Nations World Summit in September 2005, world leaders made explicit reference to ILO employment goals and strongly endorsed fair globalization, full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people as “a central objective of our relevant national and international policies as well as our national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies, as part of our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals”.¹ The influential World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2006 also devoted an agenda item to the creation of jobs for the future, in acknowledgement of the challenge of a worsening global jobs situation.

However, much remains to be addressed to realize decent work in Asia, including placing decent and productive employment at the heart of national development agendas, promoting jobs and social inclusion as the basis of poverty reduction, and respect for core principles and rights at work.

¹ United Nations General Assembly: *2005 World Summit Outcome*, A/RES/60/1, 24 Oct. 2005, para. 47.

Improving governance

Fundamental to realizing decent work is improving governance. National efforts to promote decent work are all too often constrained by weak labour market institutions, outdated or inadequate labour legislation and poor enforcement, low technical capacity of the tripartite partners, limited social dialogue and a lack of policy coherence between economic and social goals. Across Asia, growing attention is being given to efficient, transparent and accountable institutions in both the public and private sectors and to the importance of eradicating corruption.

Many countries have been requesting ILO assistance to bring labour legislation in line with ratified Conventions. However, in spite of a process of labour law reform, the institutional underpinnings still need to be considerably strengthened for countries to truly comply with their international commitments under the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its related Conventions. Much more seriously, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining remain constrained, if not further curtailed, in some countries, especially where there have been arrests or detention of workers' rights activists. Although there have been some encouraging improvements in laws concerning freedom of association, for example in the GCC States, there are still countries that allow exceptions to legal protection of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining – workers in the informal economy, agriculture and EPZs and migrant and domestic workers often face difficulties in exercising their right to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

The second main reason for labour market reform relates to the real or perceived effects of intensified global competition. Countries have been increasingly seeking ILO assistance, on the one hand, to respond to employers' concerns that, without greater flexibility to hire and fire, they will lose out to competitors and, on the other, to accommodate the increasing diversity of working arrangements and employment relationships. At the same time, the capacity of workers to react flexibly is based on confidence that, if the employment relationship has to end, it can be terminated fairly and with a good chance of finding a replacement job quickly. Many employers also realize that having a committed and skilled labour force is essential for productivity and success, and that this requires a certain degree of stability in the employment relationship.

The challenge is to find an effective balance between flexibility, stability and security – a balance conditioned by respect for rights and negotiated solutions in dynamic labour markets. The balance must be right, and the way to get it right is through social dialogue and tripartism. For competitiveness in a global context, it is crucial to have a system with the right mix of employment protection legislation, collective bargaining, social security and training and retraining of workers.

However, it remains a major challenge to ensure the enabling environment and institutions to promote and enhance social dialogue and tripartism. Strong employers' and workers' organizations are obviously essential, as are strong ministries of labour – strengthening their organizational and technical capacities remains high on the ILO's agenda. The ILO is increasingly called upon to help review and reform labour administration, including assistance to public institutions to build up and modernize labour inspection, labour courts and advisory, conciliation and arbitration services. In the Asian context, given the importance of the informal economy, strengthening representation and voice of informal economy workers and operators is clearly a priority. Furthermore, in the context of growing regional integration arrangements, it is important to encourage and support regional groupings to integrate social concerns and to use social dialogue and tripartism to achieve results.

Implementing results-based management

The Office itself also needs to have its capacity enhanced. It has been attempting to meet the growing challenges and demands in a context of increasing financial and human resource constraints. Progress has been made in results-based management, especially in terms of decent work country programming. Implementation planning for the 2006-07 biennium using the IRIS system is enabling ILO field offices to set DWCP priorities more strategically, specify expected outcomes or results and more effectively allocate financial and technical resources from all parts of the Office to achieving these results.

At the request of the ILO Governing Body, the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) conducted an external review of the ILO's implementation of strategic budgeting within a results-based management (RBM) framework and found that: "The implementation of RBM within ILO, as in all United Nations system organizations, is still a work in progress, with room for improvement, as many of the components and elements necessary for the development of a comprehensive RBM approach need further refinement."² The review pointed out the complexity and long-term nature of a shift to a strategic budgeting process and the difficulties of full implementation of RBM; some of these are worth highlighting and elaborating.

- "The broad nature of the strategic objectives of the ILO makes it difficult to determine if any impact achieved is the consequence of the exclusive action of the Organization". Results can be the consequence of different types of action: action taken by the Office to assist constituents either separately or as tripartite partners, or action taken by the tripartite partners themselves, individually or together. Results are also influenced by the actions of a whole range of other actors, including other United Nations organizations, the donor community and civil service organizations and, of course, the intended target beneficiaries themselves. Therefore, how the ILO works within the changing context of development assistance at country level is increasingly important.
- "The most important barrier to overcome in the implementation of an RBM approach within any organization is the development of a results-oriented organizational culture". The Office has been undertaking a number of measures to enhance its own technical capacities and the capacities of ILO constituents and to promote change management. Ministries of labour and employers' and workers' organizations also all strongly emphasize their need for enhanced capacity to participate effectively on a tripartite basis in the change management.
- "Activities funded through extra-budgetary resources, in general, are more in line with the application of RBM principles than those funded through regular resources. This is mainly due to donors' reporting requirements and to the temporal, short-term nature of specific programmes/projects, which facilitates the establishment of realistic indicators, associated targets and results to be achieved." Reliable, comprehensive and accessible statistical data disaggregated by sex and age, which reflect the key dimensions of decent work, are vital for measuring progress towards achieving goals. Often, however, the paucity of baseline information means that the results cannot be measured quantitatively and it is not possible to have a realistic sense of the scale of the impact.

Working within the United Nations system

The ILO is committed to the United Nations reform process set in motion by the Secretary-General, and one dimension of this is the increased integration of ILO operations at the country level within a broader United Nations programmatic framework. The Decent Work Agenda and the DWCPs provide a powerful platform for ILO engagement at country level with the United Nations system, both from a policy standpoint and also as a basis for operational ILO programmes in a wider United Nations framework. This is strongly supported by host governments and donors.

The experience of the ILO country offices shows that integration within the United Nations is a source of opportunities for the ILO to reach a larger audience for the Decent Work Agenda and to broaden the partnerships with other development actors. The United Nations speaking with one voice is able to have greater political influence and wider entry points into national agendas than the ILO alone could achieve. Common programming exercises have resulted in increased attention to social and employment issues in larger, integrated United Nations system programmes and/or have led to distinct and visible roles for the ILO in the implementation of major components of the programmes. Although joint United Nations programmes pose challenges in terms of aligning the ILO internal financial and administrative systems with those of other partners within the system, such joint programmes do provide access to new

² United Nations Joint Inspection Unit: *External review of the implementation of strategic budgeting within a results-based management framework in the International Labour Organization (ILO)*, doc. JIU/REP/2005/6 (Geneva, 2005), paras. 18, 39, 8 and 19.

resources. The ILO also contributes a real advantage to multi-agency efforts by bringing in workers and employers. For the social partners themselves, there is the potential of access to non-traditional partners and wider influence in national agendas.

Although it is still too early to fully gauge the implications of the ILO's engagement within the United Nations system, some challenges have emerged. Firstly, the investments required in terms of resources and time are sometimes beyond what field offices can deliver, especially taking into account that these are upstream, policy-level investments of which the benefits in terms of accessing increased programme resources cannot be guaranteed. Secondly, the delineation of mandates and areas of expertise between the ILO and other partners within the system, in particular UNDP, is unclear, leading to unclear decisions about resource allocations from joint funding and de facto competition for such resources.

Overall, the Office needs to do a much more effective job of raising its own profile and visibility to the wider political, civil and international donor communities. The ILO needs to clearly send its message, demonstrate its comparative advantage, and show its relevance to the key challenges and concerns of the region. The clear articulation of the Decent Work Agenda with the MDGs and the Millennium Declaration at the global level and the linkages between the DWCP and UNDAF at country level provide the starting point. The constituents need to be involved in these efforts as major allies and powerful national advocates for the ILO.

These opportunities and challenges and how the ILO can play a more effective role in addressing them are highlighted in the accompanying report to the Fourteenth Asian Regional Meeting, *Realizing decent work in Asia*.

Annex

A.1. Conclusions of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting (Bangkok, 28-31 August 2001)

1. The delegates at the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting of the ILO endorse the general purport of the Report of the Director-General, *Decent work in Asia*.
2. The delegates urge all member States in the region to define, through a tripartite process, a national plan of action for decent work, that integrates fundamental rights at work, greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent work, social protection, including occupational safety and health standards, for the greatest possible number of workers, as well as increased social dialogue.
3. The delegates call attention to the fact that globalization can have positive as well as negative impacts. In light of the current global economic downturn, which is already causing lower economic growth in many countries of the region, the delegates request the Director-General, as a matter of urgency, to prepare, in consultation with the tripartite constituents of the region, guidelines and proposed programmes aimed at preventing, or at least significantly attenuating, the negative impacts of the current economic slowdown, as well as programmes aimed to assist member States to participate successfully in the global economy to achieve sustainable economic growth.
4. The delegates recall that respect for international labour standards is fundamentally important for reduction of the decent work deficit in their countries. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work will provide a positive framework within which to fashion more adequate responses to social problems and structural changes which may result from economic fluctuation and globalization. The delegates call on all member States to bring their legislation into conformity with the principles of the fundamental Conventions and to take steps to ratify these Conventions, if they have not done so, and to apply them fully. The delegates note the disparity between ratification and implementation of fundamental Conventions and urge that measures be taken to address this issue.
5. The delegates welcome the ongoing review of standards policy. In order to facilitate the process it would be useful to follow a more systematic approach focusing on the revisions of existing standards, as well as the development of relevant new standards. Delegates also call on the Office to provide assistance to constituents both in preparing for ratification and in applying ratified standards.
6. The delegates take note of the significant expansion of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) in the region and of the remarkable results achieved in some countries. They express the hope that IPEC will extend its activities to appropriate countries in the region in the course of the next biennium. While urging IPEC to deploy every possible effort to eliminate child labour, in particular in its worst forms, the delegates encourage it to devote particular attention to combating trafficking of children and to bonded labour.
7. The delegates wish to stress the importance of employment generation as the central element in the Decent Work Agenda and as the principal means to reduce poverty. They call on the Director-General to give priority to this issue in the ILO programme in both the Asia-Pacific region and the Arab States. The delegates urge the Office to work with constituents to enable member States to establish development plans and training programmes to alleviate the problem of unemployment. They call on the ILO to assist countries to identify their needs, undertake research and develop, in consultation with them, an employment framework in accordance with the Decent Work Agenda. Delegates note the significant increase in flexible work arrangements - subcontracting, casual, fixed-term, part-time, temporary and home-based work. The delegates stress the need both for the creation of decent work and the establishment and maintenance of a policy framework favourable to economic growth and to the development and expansion of both large and small enterprises and to provide appropriate training, credit and other support services, especially to small enterprises. The delegates note the importance of raising productivity, increasing competitiveness of enterprises and establishing a conducive environment for investment, job creation and improved quality of life.
8. The delegates consider that it is important to promote policy integration for employment through better cooperation among government agencies as well as with social partners. By giving high priority to employment issues in the overall policy agenda, it is hoped that forward-looking strategies may be developed to avert and mitigate the social repercussions of economic downturns on employment and income in the region. In order to promote employment, the delegates stress the importance of partnerships among the ILO, relevant international agencies and international and regional financial institutions.

9. The delegates note that there are still many countries in the region where equality between women and men in employment, education and training, remuneration, social security entitlements, facilities to establish their own enterprises and other aspects of work, has not yet been achieved. Delegates also note that women account for a disproportionately large group of the working poor. They stress that gender issues should not be marginalized. Gender mainstreaming should be a priority item on the employment agenda and should be monitored regularly to determine whether concrete progress has been made. The ILO, in consultation with constituents, should also assist member States to introduce time-bound programmes for gender equality.
10. Multiskilling, skills training and upgrading are crucial to enhancing access to employment and improving productivity and competitiveness in the global economy. The rapidly increasing reliance on information and communication technology and a general trend towards knowledge-based economies require a more-educated, skilled and adaptable workforce. The delegates note that education systems and skills training should be linked to market demand through improved labour market information and labour market analysis.
11. The delegates note that migration, as a manifestation of the globalizing world, cannot in most cases be conceived as favouring the sending country alone, but as benefiting also many receiving countries by providing much needed workers. Migrant workers are often the least protected. Irregular migration and trafficking expose workers to the worst forms of abuse and exploitation. Even legally admitted workers do not enjoy the same rights and level of social protection as the national workforce in most countries. Recognizing that bilateral and multilateral approaches are a prerequisite for safeguarding the least protected, the delegates request the Office to take a lead in developing and facilitating appropriate policy measures for migrant workers within the framework of decent work. It is suggested that the respective ILO regional offices carry out activities on labour migration and provide a forum to discuss migration issues. The delegates note that the ratification and full implementation of the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), constitute a positive step towards ensuring decent work for migrant workers.
12. The delegates note the importance of providing appropriate training and productive employment opportunities for members of vulnerable groups, including disabled persons, indigenous people, women, older workers and unemployed youth. Of particular concern is the high level of youth unemployment.
13. The delegates note that social protection must complement national employment policies. They note with concern that limited social protection is one of the greatest decent work deficits in the region. Of particular concern is the widespread absence of social protection for workers in informal employment - both rural and urban. Recognizing the high social cost of the Asian crisis of 1997 and relatively low public spending on social protection in the region, the delegates call upon the ILO to support the development of comprehensive, inclusive and sustainable social protection programmes. The delegates note that social protection is the responsibility of the State in order to achieve effective redistribution of national resources through both contribution-based social insurance and public-financed social assistance programmes.
14. Considering the conclusions of the general discussion on social security at the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference, the delegates stress the importance of building the ILO research and knowledge base about the extension of social security benefits to more workers. In this regard, the delegates urge the Office to allocate adequate resources to assist constituents in the region to address these issues.
15. Delegates note that although governments need to play a major role in implementing and improving the framework for occupational safety and health, it is also the role of the social partners to ensure that occupational safety and health is addressed as a priority in the workplace. In this regard, the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), the *ILO Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems*, as well as the newly adopted code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work should be promoted.
16. Recognizing the importance of the right of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining as the foundations for social dialogue, the delegates urge all member States to implement fully the rights set out in the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), throughout their national territory. The delegates acknowledge that social dialogue has been instrumental in attenuating negative social impacts during the Asian financial crisis. In the light of looming global economic downturn, the delegates urge the ILO to provide timely technical assistance to member States for strengthening the capacity of social partners to engage in dialogue and improve social dialogue

mechanisms at all levels. The delegates further call upon all member States to take steps to ratify the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). While taking note of the great diversity of institutional arrangements for social dialogue at all levels in member States, the delegates request the Office to make the provision of assistance to strengthen dialogue at the level of the workplace a priority.

17. The delegates reiterate that the most effective way to define and implement a national policy to reduce the decent work deficit is through tripartite social dialogue and that such dialogue is only possible when the participants are equal partners. The delegates call upon the ILO to play a more effective role in strengthening the social partners through research and training.
18. While expressing concern at the lack of information on, and evaluation of, the follow-up to the conclusions of previous Regional Meetings, the delegates urge each member State of the Asia-Pacific region to establish, through tripartite discussion and consensus, a national plan of action for decent work, which should define, within the overall framework of the ILO Decent Work Agenda, national priorities, a timetable for implementation and a set of indicators for the purposes of regular tripartite monitoring and evaluation. The delegates request the Office to provide such assistance to the tripartite constituents in the design of these national plans of action as they may consider necessary.
19. The delegates request the Office to give priority to assisting, where necessary and requested, the tripartite constituents to implement the national plan of action for decent work. In this regard, ILO capacity in the region should be strengthened. Further, the delegates express the hope that other member States in the region will respond positively to requests for technical assistance and advice to replicate or adapt their own best practices for the benefit of less advanced countries.
20. To facilitate the design, implementation and monitoring of national plans of action for decent work, the delegates request the Office to establish a regularly updated web site which reflects actions and activities undertaken in each country in pursuit of the Decent Work Agenda, both by the Office and the constituents. In this connection, the delegates call upon the Office to design, as soon as possible, appropriate measures for collecting information annually and disseminating this to all constituents, including qualitative assessment of the effectiveness of ILO activities in the region.
21. As regards elements of the Decent Work Agenda which are most appropriately dealt with at the sub-regional and regional levels, the delegates invite the tripartite constituents to consider the establishment of corresponding subregional or regional forums to design and implement appropriate programmes. The Office should include information on such programmes in the web site mentioned above.

A.2. Ratifications of fundamental ILO Conventions (as at 1 February 2006)

Countries	Freedom of association and collective bargaining		Elimination of forced and compulsory labour		Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation		Abolition of child labour	
	C.87	C.98	C.29	C.105	C.100	C.111	C.138	C.182
ASIA-PACIFIC								
Afghanistan				■	■	■		
Australia	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Bangladesh	■	■	■	■	■	■		■
Cambodia	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
China					■	■	■	■
Fiji	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
India			■	■	■	■		
Indonesia	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Islamic Republic of Iran			■	■	■	■		■
Japan	■	■	■		■		■	■
Kiribati	■	■	■	■				
Korea, Republic of					■	■	■	■
Lao People's Democratic Republic			■				■	■
Malaysia		■	■		■		■	■
Mongolia	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Myanmar	■		■					
Nepal		■	■		■	■	■	■
New Zealand		■	■	■	■	■		■
Pakistan	■	■	■	■	■	■		■
Papua New Guinea	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Philippines	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Samoa								
Singapore		■	■		■		■	■
Solomon Islands			■					
Sri Lanka	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Thailand			■	■	■		■	■
Timor-Leste, Democratic Republic of								
Vanuatu								
Viet Nam					■	■	■	■
TOTAL RATIFICATIONS	13	16	22	16	22	18	16	19

Countries	Freedom of association and collective bargaining		Elimination of forced and compulsory labour		Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation		Abolition of child labour	
	C.87	C.98	C.29	C.105	C.100	C.111	C.138	C.182
ARAB STATES								
Bahrain			■	■		■		■
Iraq		■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Jordan		■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Kuwait	■		■	■		■	■	■
Lebanon		■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Oman			■	■			■	■
Qatar			■			■		■
Saudi Arabia			■	■	■	■		■
Syrian Arab Republic	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
United Arab Emirates			■	■	■	■	■	■
Yemen	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
TOTAL RATIFICATIONS	3	5	11	10	7	10	8	11

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

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

No. 29 Forced Labour Convention, 1930

No. 105 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957

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

No. 138 Minimum Age Convention, 1973

No. 182 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999

No. 100 Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951

A.3. ILO gender mainstreaming strategy (GEMS) in Asia and the Pacific, 2004-07

GEMS summary

1. Background and rationale

Delegates at the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting indicated that “Gender mainstreaming should be a priority item on the employment agenda and should be monitored regularly to determine whether progress has been made”.

2. Objective

ILO constituents take positive action to increase gender equality in the world of work.

3. Main responsibilities and time table

3.1. Institutional arrangements

3.1.1. All ILO staff, irrespective of source of funding:

- Managers: Active leadership and guidance to all.
- Technical specialists: Gender analysis and planning in design, monitoring and evaluation (DME) in their technical fields.
- Programme officers: Ensure gender analysis and action is included in planning, procedures and budgets.
- Support staff: Gender-sensitive language and images.
- Gender specialists and focal points: Catalyst and expertise.

3.1.2. The Informal GEMS Working Group (cross-section of professional staff at all levels with gender expertise in the region) will assist the Regional Director in GEMS implementation and monitoring.

3.1.3. Reporting on GEMS will take place as part of the overall reporting procedures (no separate reporting obligations).

3.2. Timetable

- 2004: Start and preparation.
- 2005-07: GEMS 100 per cent operational by 2007.

4. Outputs, indicators and targets

4.1. Policy

4.1.1. GEMS for ILO Asia and Pacific region disseminated to the field by February 2004.

4.1.2. ILO constituents promote gender equality in policy and practice.

4.1.3. Targets for gender equality objective and indicators in the ILO’s Programme and Budget for 2004-05:

- GEMS 100 per cent operational from 2005 onwards.
- Member States ratify at least one of the key equality Conventions (Nos. 100, 111, 156 and 183).
- Member States ratify all four Conventions listed above.
- Positive changes introduced in member States.
- Increased representation of women among delegations to ILO meetings (see 4.8).

4.2. Planning, programming and budgeting

4.2.1. Explicit gender mainstreaming strategies included in decent work and poverty reduction initiatives in member States:

- In programme and budget proposals from 2006 onwards.
- In workplans and reports from 2004 onwards.

- 4.2.2. Gender-specific action in each sector per country every biennium to redress inequalities. Progressive target for countries with substantial ILO programmes:
 - In programme and budget proposals from 2006 onwards.
 - In workplans and reports from 2004 onwards.
- 4.2.3. Gender equality promotion included in (regional) ILO management meetings and task forces.
- 4.2.4. GEMS will become operational in existing procedures and staff will be trained in their use. A GEMS checklist for the monitoring of the extent of gender mainstreaming in ILO products, services and institutional mechanisms will be provided in the GEMS tool kit: Target: To be identified during 2004 and used for a gender review by the end of 2004 and early 2005 (modest resource allocation needed).
- 4.3. Technical cooperation (TC)
 - 4.3.1. All TC projects: Gender analysis and planning, unless evidence is given that gender inequalities do not exist or are not relevant:
 - TC management, technical and programme officers: Design, monitoring and evaluation (DME).
 - Field office programme units: Check contents and matching budget allocation.
 - Gender specialists and focal points: catalyst and assistance.
 - 4.3.2. Targets: The above are reflected in technical cooperation project documents and evaluation reports:
 - 25 per cent by end of 2004.
 - 50 per cent by end of 2005.
 - 75 per cent by end of 2006.
 - 100 per cent by end of 2007.
- 4.4. Technical advisory missions
 - 4.4.1. All general missions will:
 - Seek data disaggregation by sex.
 - Raise gender issues with constituents.
 - Report and follow-up on gender concerns as relevant.
 - 4.4.2. All missions with possible GEMS relevance:
 - As above and obligatory: Seek the views of gender experts.
 - 4.4.3. All missions with specific GEMS mandate:
 - As above and obligatory: Include at least one member with gender expertise in the mission.
 - Seek the views of women direct recipients and beneficiaries wherever possible.
 - 4.4.4. Targets: The above reflected in mission reports:
 - 25 per cent by end of 2004.
 - 50 per cent by end of 2005.
 - 75 per cent by end of 2006.
 - 100 per cent by end of 2007.
- 4.5. Research and data collection
 - 4.5.1. Seek data disaggregation by sex (own work, outsourcing of ILO work).
 - 4.5.2. Include gender analysis as part of regular research unless evidence is given that gender inequalities do not exist or are not relevant.
 - 4.5.3. Encourage research on gender inequalities wherever possible.
 - 4.5.4. Data collection methods are gender-sensitive.

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- 4.5.5. Targets: The above are reflected in research outcomes:
- 25 per cent by end of 2004.
 - 50 per cent by end of 2005.
 - 75 per cent by end of 2006.
 - 100 per cent by end of 2007.
- 4.5.6. Progressive target for 4.3 above: One gender-specific output per technical field per country per biennium.
- 4.6. Publications, reports and web sites
- All relevant ILO publications will include:
- 4.6.1. Gender analysis and data disaggregation by sex
- 4.6.2. Gender advocacy
- 4.6.3. Gender-sensitive language and images
- 4.6.4. Targets: The above reflected in publications, reports and web sites:
- 25 per cent by end of 2004.
 - 50 per cent by end of 2005.
 - 75 per cent by end of 2006.
 - 100 per cent by end of 2007.
- 4.7. ILO staff and consultants: Gender-sensitive human resource practices
- 4.7.1. Recruitment
- Gender composition of staff: Consideration to redress imbalances at all levels, and regular review and dissemination of report on staff composition, based on information from ROAP field offices.
 - Gender-sensitive language (no generic “he”) in all vacancy announcements, job descriptions and terms of reference (TORs).
 - Gender mainstreaming clause in all vacancy announcements, job descriptions and TORs for professional staff and external collaborators: 50 per cent by end of 2004, 100 per cent from 2005 onwards.
 - Gender expertise: Added advantage among selection criteria in all new professional recruitments (i.e. included in written and verbal exams).
 - Obligatory: Gender expertise in vacancy announcements, job descriptions and TOR on gender-relevant subjects.
 - GEMS information package for new officials: 50 per cent by end of 2004, 100 per cent from 2005 onwards.
 - Gender focal point (GFP) duties included in job descriptions, time allocation, capacity building, job recognition and evaluation in performance appraisals of concerned officials.
 - Sex-disaggregated data by grade and type of contract of ILO staff (regular budget [RB] and TC) will be disseminated at the Field Structure Meeting from 2004 onwards.
- 4.7.2. Performance on GEMS included in appraisals of managers and technical specialists and programme officers (both RB and TC). Target:
- 25 per cent by end of 2004.
 - 50 per cent by end of 2005.
 - 75 per cent by end of 2006.
 - 100 per cent by end of 2007.
- 4.7.3. Working conditions:
- Maternity and paternity leave for all.
 - No excessive weekend travel and work.
 - Family-friendly workplaces to be encouraged.
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4.8. ILO-supported events

4.8.1. General practice: Gender equality promotion included as a cross-cutting theme and/or as a specific topic in all events (unless evidence is given that gender inequalities do not exist or are not relevant), in the public relations for and the programme and report of the event, as well as in letters of agreements with implementing agencies. Target:

- 25 per cent by end of 2004;
- 50 per cent by end of 2005;
- 75 per cent by end of 2006;
- 100 per cent by end of 2007.

4.8.2. Invitations – Call for gender-balanced representation:

- progressive aim: 50-50 male-female representation in the future.
- 40 per cent of either sex in general events.
- 40 per cent of either sex in gender events
- database by status and sex.

4.8.3. Reporting on participants by age and status (junior, middle and senior) to ILO-supported events will take place from 2004 onwards.

4.9. Capacity building within the ILO

4.9.1. All staff are responsible for updating their knowledge on gender equality concerns in their field of expertise. Gender specialists and focal points will channel relevant information to the colleagues concerned.

4.9.2. Recognition and support to the GFPs: Inclusion of GFP duties in job descriptions, time allocation, capacity building, job recognition and evaluation in performance appraisals.

- Target: System in place by end of 2004.

4.9.3. A GEMS information package and training opportunities will be provided to all existing staff regularly and upon request.

4.9.4. Provision of resources for gender training from human resources training allocation, including a planning and training meeting of gender specialists and focal points every biennium.

4.9.5. GEMS tool kit available:

- Definitions, concepts and strategies.
- Gender in DME.
- Gender clauses in TORs and invitation letters.
- Checklist for the measurement of gender mainstreaming in ILO documents.

4.9.6. Targets: ILO activities will reflect effective GEMS in action:

- 25 per cent by end of 2004.
- 50 per cent by end of 2005.
- 75 per cent by end of 2006.
- 100 per cent by end of 2007.

4.10. Capacity building of constituents

4.10.1. Gender training, advocacy and technical assistance are needed in:

- Gender mainstreaming strategies among ILO tripartite agencies.
- Carrying out gender analysis.
- Redressing gender inequalities and discrimination.
- Gender mainstreaming and women's representation in tripartite mechanisms.
- Establishing equal employment opportunity policies and programmes.

4.10.2. Gender work in country programming:

- As specified under 4.2.
- Request gender expertise if needed.

4.10.3. Targets: To be decided for each country.

A.4. Framework for Cooperation on Skills Development for Asia and the Pacific

1. The need

Many countries in Asia and the Pacific face similar challenges in terms of skills development: ensuring training matches labour market needs; finding effective means to recognize individuals' skills; ensuring that the costs of training are not unfairly distributed; and ensuring that there is fair and equitable access to training and skills development so that the overall level of productivity in the country is improved, along with the employability of workers. Equally, across the region there is a wealth of examples of how different countries have addressed these challenges over time and in response to changing circumstances. Effective means of understanding, documenting and sharing these experiences can help ensure that decision-makers and implementers minimize risk and maximize the value of investments which are inevitably limited.

2. The vision

That constituents across the region share their knowledge and experience, to optimize the human resource development processes across the region, thus improving the skills and well-being of people and increasing the economic development of the region as a whole.

This vision comes out of a commitment to cooperation rather than competition, recognizing that all constituents in the region have information and experiences to share which will be valuable to others and that each can benefit from the experiences of others in making their own decisions. It also recognizes the interdependent nature of the economies of the region and specifically the role that skills and human resource development have on those economies.

3. Policy framework

The ILO's Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), provides the policy framework for the ILO's work on skills development. It points the way by emphasizing, in its Part X, the qualities that international and technical cooperation in human resource development should emphasize. These suggest the benefits that arise from regionally focused collaboration, for example, the potential to address issues of migration, links to regional economic integration policies and strategies and the relevance of national examples.

Information exchange and collaboration, however valuable, does not happen without facilitation. Evaluations of the Asia and Pacific Skill Development Programme (APSDEP) and subsequent consultations confirm that there is a need for a dedicated programme whose task is precisely to identify needs and match this with available knowledge in the most effective way possible. Consequently, a new ILO Regional Skills and Employability Programme (SKILLS-AP), building on the earlier work of APSDEP, will be established with the task of facilitating the identification of information needs, collaboration opportunities and other practical ways to realize the vision.

4. Practical action

A range of practical activities and programmes will be developed by SKILLS-AP with and for network members, which would include:

- workshops, seminars, technical meetings on specific activities related to skills development;
- research on key skills issues in the region;
- pilot projects at regional, subregional and country level;
- training courses on specific skills topics;
- exchange of knowledge, information and training resources between and among member States with common interest;
- activities to solve common problems;
- fellowships or exchange of staff between network members to improve the level of skills of instructors, administrators, web and computer technicians, etc.;
- opportunities for country-to-country technical assistance and advice.

5. Participation

All constituents, as well as technical and research institutes and related organizations within the Asia-Pacific region, will have the opportunity to become partner institutions in the network, responsible for participating to the extent and in the manner most valuable to them. To ensure effective in-country coordination, governments will act as focal points, ensuring national presence in the network and within the country, ensuring that current and potential members of the network are aware of it.

6. Information and knowledge sharing

SKILLS-AP would also ensure that all participants in the network have access to information from a wide variety of sources, including network members, on:

- relevant events;
- comparative data;
- new research and publications on skills;
- international best practices on skills;
- case studies;
- skill development policies and strategies;
- training packages and material;
- competency standards, skill recognition and certification;
- technical resources, including experts and consultants.

7. Means and tools

There will be a range of ways and means in which information and assistance can be exchanged. A partial listing of selected skills issues, means of action and potential partners was developed in the ILO/Korea First Technical Meeting of the Regional Skills Network Partner Institutions, Incheon, Republic of Korea, 22-25 November, 2005.

Effective means of ensuring network members have access to information and can participate in events and dialogues will be developed by SKILLS-AP in consultation with the network. A new web site will be one important means. SKILLS-AP will ensure, however, that ways to ensure full participation of network members who have limited Internet access will also be developed as a priority.