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VIOLENCE AT WORK



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Welcome

Spreading from Hollywood to politics, journalism and the tech industry, 2017 and 2018 saw a long series of accusations against powerful and predatory men harassing and assaulting women at work. It showed how common sexual harassment is, and how harmful it is to women's careers and lives. It also exemplified that perpetrators can no longer count on impunity for their acts. Dozens of men were sacked or stepped down.

The discussion also revealed that these prominent cases of sexual harassment at work are only the tip of the iceberg. It inspired millions of women to share their own experiences on the internet. But there are many others, and they affect women and men, as our main story from Madagascar shows.

They cause anxiety, harm and suffering, and can result, in extreme cases, in murder and suicide. Violence and harassment also cost enterprises billions in absenteeism, replacement costs and productivity. Although a number of recent ILO standards already refer to violence and harassment, none of them define it or give guidance on how to prevent it.

This is why the ILO has embarked on a standard setting process on "Violence and harassment against women and men in the world of work". This year's International Labour Conference (ILC) will therefore hold a first discussion on possible new standards to put an end to violence at work. Once there is a consensus among the ILO's members – governments, employers and workers – about what is wrong and how it should be addressed, a second discussion at a later ILC, most likely in June 2019, is expected to lead to the adoption of the agreed-upon instrument or instruments.

Three stories and an interview in this magazine show different aspects of violence at work and explore avenues to address it.

Another story from Madagascar focuses on hazardous forms of child labour, the theme of this year's World Day against Child Labour on 12 June.

Last but not least, we take a look into the future – the 100th birthday of the ILO in 2019 and the ILO's Future of Work Initiative: What happened so far and what's next?

Social dialogue between governments, employers' and workers' organizations will be key to shape the future of work we want: this is why the ILC will hold a further discussion on social dialogue and tripartism, under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization adopted in 2008. An example from Bangladesh illustrates how dialogue can be "trained" to improve industrial relations.

Hans von Rohland

Editor, *World of Work* magazine

Contents



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6

From Philadelphia to
Madagascar: Eliminating
violence at work



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14

Sexual Harassment
Prevention:
Better Work's training
sparks changes in attitudes
and behaviour



© Unifor

18

The Women's Advocate:
Preventing violence and
harassment in Canada



© ILO

23

An ILO expert answers
questions about violence
and harassment at work



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25

12 June: World Day against
Child Labour
Child domestic labourers working
in virtual slavery



© ILO Bangladesh

30

Social dialogue
Towards the universal ratification
of Convention No. 144
Bangladesh: A win-win result
through social dialogue



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34

ILC 2019 preview
The Future of Work Initiative:
What we are doing, what's next



37

MEDIASHELF

VIOLENCE AT WORK

6

This year's 107th International Labour Conference (ILC) will tackle violence and harassment against women and men in the world of work. While workplace violence can differ depending on a country's development level, the most common forms occur everywhere. In the poorest countries, unacceptable practices are often exacerbated by poverty. We looked at the situation in Madagascar.



Photos: Marcel Crozet

Texts: Jean-Luc Martinage (with Emma Raboanally)

ANTANANARIVO – In the 1944 Philadelphia Declaration, the ILO proclaimed that “all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity”. Over 70 years later, it is on the basis of that statement that the decision was made to add violence and harassment against women and men in the world of work to the agenda of ILC 2018.

From Philadelphia to Madagascar

Eliminating violence at work

7

WORLD of WORK magazine

Philadelphia was a long time ago and far away. But everyone we met in Antananarivo considered that Madagascar would do well to return to the principles enshrined in the Declaration, and step-up the fight against violence. Of course, Madagascar is far from being the only place where such violence occurs. The country is better known for its friendly people and welcoming atmosphere, as well as its economic and touristic assets. But the prevailing poverty makes it all the more prone to this kind of abuse.

In Tanjombato, a poor neighbourhood of Antananarivo, the destitution is obvious. We turn off a deeply rutted dirt road half-flooded by the rains, onto a narrow street bordered by shops housing all the informal trades. Popular Salegy beats played on the radio escape through the windows of people's homes. The cries of children at play mingle with those of the farm animals that many people raise to make ends meet.

PAYING TO WORK

Vololona Rasamoelison greets us in a courtyard. At 37, this mother of two is living precariously even though she

has 15 years of experience as a machine operator in the textile industry. She tells us her story.

For two years, Rasamoelison had back-to-back temporary contracts in an export processing zone (EPZ), and worked to her employer's satisfaction. To earn her monthly salary of 300,000 ariary (about US\$90), she would get up at 4.30 a.m. for a workday that ran from 6 a.m. to around 6.30 p.m. Because of the huge traffic jams that clog Antananarivo at rush hour, she was never home before 8. To make matters worse, her foreman – taking advantage of a labour glut resulting from the country's high unemployment rate – demanded a "toll" (in reality, a bribe) of 500 ariary a day.

"At first I accepted, but then I thought, this is unfair and I stopped paying," she says.

The consequences weren't long in coming. A few days later, when she arrived at the factory, she saw that her name had been added to the list of "nominees", i.e. those whose contracts would not be renewed.

"So I found myself without a job because I didn't want to pay to have a job. But why should I pay to have the right to work? It's unfair. We have to speak out about these practices," she says indignantly.



Vololona Rasamoelison.

When we asked her why she had not contacted the company's trade union representative, she replied that he was aware of the situation but he was afraid to take action.

Rasamoelison, who is separated from her alcoholic and abusive husband, found herself unemployed for several months. Fortunately, it was at that time that she met members of *Pastorale du Monde Ouvrier* (PMO), a charitable association working with the ILO as part of a project funded by France and aimed at integrating women victims of violence. Thanks to the partnership, about 100 women from the Antananarivo area received psychological support and three months of training in trades such as sewing, cooking, hairstyling and computer technology, enabling them to be more financially independent.

"Thanks to the ILO project, I've been able to open a small pastry business. People in the neighbourhood order

cakes and madeleines that I bake at home using the oven and kitchen equipment contributed by the project." Her training also enabled Rasamoelison to find work in an industrial bakery.

"MONEY CAN'T BUY EVERYTHING"

A few streets away, we meet with a woman we'll call Vola. She asked to remain anonymous, a sign that denouncing violence in the workplace is still a delicate business, especially when it is about sexual harassment.

Vola worked for seven years as a waitress in an Antananarivo hotel. Everything was going well until a well-known local resident, a good customer of the hotel, started making repeated and insistent passes at her every time he saw her. When she turned down his advances, he threatened to speak to her boss. One day, exasperated, the customer having just made another pass at her while



■ Vola worked for seven years as a waitress in an Antananarivo hotel.

seated at a table in the restaurant, she confided in tears to the head waiter. Instead of listening to her, the head waiter sent her back into the room to serve the customer's meal. The customer, furious, threw the plate to the floor and started to insult her in public.

The next day she was called into the director's office. "He listened to my story, but instead of going to talk to the man, he explained that this was an important customer. In order to avoid any other incidents, he told me to stop working as a waitress and instead go work in the bar – where I would be even more exposed to proposals of this kind," she recalls.

Vola has also benefitted from the ILO project, and has since turned the page (the incidents took place a few years ago), but she stresses that urgent action is needed. "These people who harass us and violate our basic rights at work have to be denounced. I was going to the hotel to work as

a waitress, not as a prostitute. Money shouldn't be able to buy everything."

LABOUR INSPECTORS: FEW RESOURCES, MANY THREATS

Hanitra Razakaboana has heard of many cases like that of "Vola". As President of the Malagasy union of labour inspectors, she struggles every day to ensure respect for the labour code. As she explains, it's a tough job because inspectors are themselves often subject to verbal intimidation and even death threats.

Razakaboana told us that harassment is not clearly defined in the labour code. She confirmed that it is a common practice for foremen to ask for bribes in exchange for jobs, and that the employers are not always aware that this is happening. One solution, she said, would be to give labour inspectors the material means of applying



■ Hanitra Razakaboana.

the law. Her services work on the basis of anonymous denunciations and, despite that, she acknowledged that in some cases, especially in the export-processing zones, union representatives themselves fear they'll lose their jobs.

Asked whether she also received complaints from men, she explained that men were also victims of violence in the workplace, especially psychological harassment, which can be difficult to prove in the case of verbal attacks or gradual sidelining.

Sometimes, however, justice can be done, especially if several employees unite their efforts. Razakaboana told us about the surprise visit she had paid to a company in the capital a few days before our interview, after several employees alleged that they had been sexually harassed by a company executive. The allegations were backed up by audio recordings, and the executive was fired by the company head.

REKINDLING THE SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Employers, for their part, do not deny that the problem exists, and clearly state their willingness to fight violence in the workplace.

"It's also bad for our companies if an employee suffers violence or harassment in the workplace, not only from the point of view of morale, but because the employee will no longer perform well and ultimately it's the bottom line that's affected," says Hanitra Ratsirahonana, president

■ Lalao Rasoamananoro and Rémi Botoudi.





■ *“It’s also bad for our companies if an employee suffers violence or harassment in the workplace, not only from the point of view of morale, but because the employee will no longer perform well and ultimately it’s the bottom line that’s affected.”*

Hanitra Ratsirahonana, president of the Social Commission of the Madagascar Chamber of Commerce (Commission sociale du Groupement des Entreprises de Madagascar, or GEM).

of the Social Commission of the Madagascar Chamber of Commerce (*Commission sociale du Groupement des Entreprises de Madagascar, or GEM*).

Ratsirahonana also wanted to highlight an issue that is very real but draws little attention in developing countries: psychological violence and phenomena like “burn out”. A depressive state linked to the professional environment, “burn out” occurs often in Madagascar because there is pressure to align performance to the standards of multinationals, even though the local context does not necessarily allow this. This has many consequences, especially on strained labour relations, leading to psychological violence and constant stress.

She called for social security reform, notably to strengthen benefits for occupational accidents, and for labour inspectors to be given the resources they need to ensure compliance with the law.

We mentioned cases of sexual harassment. According to Ratsirahonana, these are particularly difficult to uncover because of the cultural context in Madagascar, where sexual matters are never talked about in public, much less at work.

Labour unions spoke of sexual and psychological harassment, as well as physical violence, notably against domestic workers, and admitted unions sometimes face constraints in export-processing zones. They also say that insufficient funds are allocated for labour inspections,

decrying corruption and getting a case heard in court – those cases that are received are often settled through informal arrangements.

Rémi Botoudi, coordinator of the Madagascar Labour Conference (*Conférence des Travailleurs de Madagascar, or CTM*), said that to address these issues more effectively, a mass campaign was needed to make workers aware of their rights. Corruption has to be fought with determination, while protecting the rights of trade union representatives. Drawing on his many years of trade union work, he reminded us of this local saying: “You can’t strike an egg against a rock.”

His colleague in the CTM, Lalao Rasoamananoro, said the issues are particularly difficult in the case of people with temporary contracts, citing the example of women who are told they’ll be out of a job if they become pregnant.

For these two trade unionists, the growing automation of Madagascar’s factories should also be considered a form of psychological violence at work. According to them, nothing is being done to introduce training activities enabling workers to learn another occupation and to help them find a job. Employers acknowledge the problem, but say the joint occupational training fund to be established in 2018 should soften the blow, as companies will be obliged to contribute to the fund.

VIOLENCE ON MANY FRONTS

One act of violence can mask another. Witness the story of Louise Fanjamalala, another beneficiary of the ILO project, whom we met in the modest home that she rents in Soavina, an industrial suburb of the capital.

At 42, abandoned by her boyfriend, Fanjamalala is raising her two children aged 18 and 13, as well as two orphans aged 13 and 12. She explained that for years she worked on six-month contracts in companies located in a nearby export-processing zone, often alternating with a period of unemployment of the same

duration. At one point she had to leave a job because the company refused to let her nurse her child during working hours. For some time, however, she has faced another form of violence at work: age discrimination. She is finding it harder and harder to find work, leading her to despair and fear for the future.

“No one wants to hire me anymore because, at 42, they think I’m too old,” she confided tearfully. “Often they won’t even interview me when I apply for a job. And yet I’m qualified, I have experience and I work

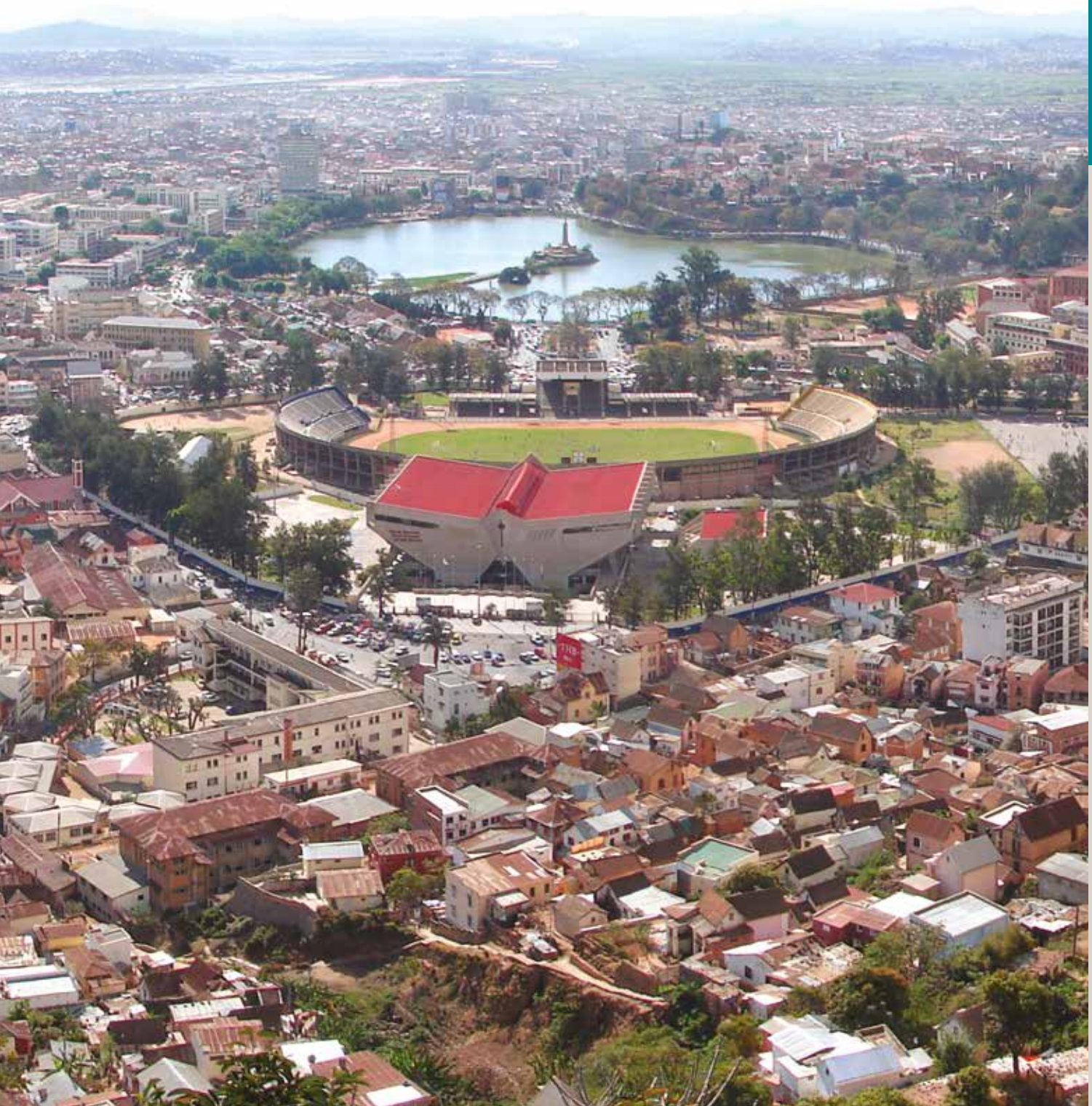


well. Why am I being discriminated against?”

“In Madagascar, it is not uncommon for fundamental rights to be flouted, even though there is a legislative framework. The result is multiple forms of violence, including more stress and physical and psychological violence. The whole thing is exacerbated by a lack of social dialogue that all too often leads to a breakdown of trust between employers, workers and the government,” commented Christian Ntsay, Director of the ILO Country Office in Antananarivo.

Ntsay suggested several measures to help reduce violence in the workplace. “A country like Madagascar would benefit from ensuring respect for the fundamental conventions it has already signed, from managing the modernization of its companies to reasserting the place of social dialogue,” he concluded.

(see also interview on page 29 of this magazine)





Sexual Harassment Prevention

Better Work's training sparks changes in attitudes and behaviour

© M. Crozet / ILO



The Better Work Programme, an ILO flagship programme, jointly managed by the International Finance Corporation, a member of the World Bank Group, has engaged in Sexual Harassment Prevention Training with employers and workers in Bangladesh.

By Elisa Oddone, Better Work

M.* is a Bangladeshi supervisor, one of the 8,500 employees at a garment factory in the country's central city of Narayanganj. M's task, since he took up the role nine months ago, has been to make sure his team in the factory's 'Quality Check' section catches any clothing imperfections.

M's job requires continuous oversight of the colleagues he supervises, to ensure that they meet stringent production standards. Despite his best efforts, mistakes sometimes occur, patience wears thin and boundaries blur.

"I used to touch my female colleagues on their shoulders or back to encourage them to work harder or highlight a mistake. I also addressed them using inappropriate, vulgar language on multiple occasions," the 26-year-old said, looking away with embarrassment. "Now I am aware this is wrong; I stopped it completely and told the other supervisors to do the same. We all thought this was no big deal before."

** The worker's initials have been used instead of his full name to safeguard his privacy.*

#METOO IN THE GARMENT INDUSTRY

The #MeToo movement has echoes across the sector. About 80 per cent of the 60 million workers employed in the global garment industry are women. The majority are under the age of 30, and many are migrants hailing from rural areas. Bangladesh is no exception.

Female workers often occupy low-status positions, especially in relation to line supervisors charged with assessing their performance. Studies show that this power structure makes supervisors more likely to be the initiators of harassment, and that the problem is rife in the industry worldwide.

ENTER BETTER WORK

M. is now one of over 745 employees spanning factory managers, supervisors and workers who have received Better Work sexual harassment prevention training. In line with the programme's philosophy of creating a snowball effect of lasting improvements across its affiliated factories, more training participants are expected to follow.

"We started delivering sexual harassment prevention training in two pilot factories last year," said Better Work's Training Officer Shipra Chowdhury, who facilitated the workshops. "So far we've reached all the factories' managers, half of the supervisors and one-quarter of the workers. We are here to build capacity so that they can continue on their own, thereby making the training and its teachings sustainable."

A SHIFT IN UNDERSTANDING – AND BEHAVIOUR

According to United Nations standards and national laws, any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct, gesture of a sexual nature, or any other sexual behaviour that might reasonably be expected or perceived to cause someone offence or humiliation falls within the definition of sexual harassment – be it from a man or a woman.

In addition to the damaging psychological and physical effects sexual harassment can have on victims, Better Work's research has shown that it can also negatively affect workplace communication and overall factory productivity.

But M. said that people in Bangladesh generally thought of the term as signifying assault involving sexual intercourse and were unaware that unwelcomed behaviour of a sexual nature also fell under the same umbrella. This, he said, explained why the number of sexual harassment



cases reported has fallen since Better Work started their sexual harassment prevention training.

"Men have mostly stopped calling, texting, and touching on the [factory] premises. They have become more aware of the factory's zero-tolerance policy regulating the matter and understand their job might be at stake should they be found guilty of an offence," he explained.

Better Work Bangladesh Enterprise Advisor, Seema Robayeat, agreed. "People in the factory have now realized that certain things they used to say or do were wrong. When they see a colleague misbehaving, they are ready to correct or report his or her behaviour. People now take these violations seriously."

The Human Resources (HR) and Compliance General Manager at the company said they had always had a zero-tolerance policy concerning sexual harassment, but that Better Work's efforts were really helping to spread awareness of guidelines that many workers and management members were unaware of.

"Almost everyone in the factory now knows that sexual harassment includes actions like constant looking, obscene phone calls, pornographic messages, direct propositions

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR TACKLING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Currently active in seven countries reaching more than 4,500 factories and two million workers, Better Work has invested heavily in its research agenda since its inception, commissioning external academic institutions to complete rigorous studies of the garment industry – and the programme's own impact.

A five-year study by Tufts University drew on input from some 15,000 workers and 2,000 factory managers, providing a unique insight into the issue of sexual harassment in the sector – as well as what can be done about it.

Despite varying cultural perceptions of what constitutes sexual harassment, worker surveys revealed the problem was widespread before Better Work began providing its in-factory assessment, advisory and training services.

At least 30 per cent of workers in Haiti, Jordan and Nicaragua reported that sexual harassment was a concern in their factory. In Indonesia, where workers were more willing to voice concerns, some 80 per cent of respondents stated in surveys that sexual harassment was an issue where they worked.

In addition to the damaging psychological and physical effects sexual harassment can have on victims, Tufts' Better Work study demonstrates that it can negatively affect workplace communication and overall factory productivity. In Vietnam and Jordan, for example, a clear link was demonstrated between managers' average reported earnings and the average level of concern with sexual harassment in the workplace.

for sex at work and outside, or unwanted sexual attention, to name just a few of the common problems," he said.

CHALLENGING WORKPLACE AND SOCIETAL NORMS

Yet unwanted sexual attention is not confined to production lines. The manager explained that discussing widespread sexual harassment within the society at large was still extremely difficult due to the shame associated with the concept. He added that family members, friends and neighbours often discourage reporting abuses to police because often the victims are blamed rather than the perpetrators.

Factories can better tackle these issues using their administrative powers and by engaging workers in professional discussions, the manager said. He then recounted one of the factory's latest cases of harassment and the management's reaction.

In March last year, a female worker reported that a colleague had been harassing her with numerous phone calls. The victim told the manager that this had been getting her into trouble with her husband, who had started wondering what the calls were all about. The manager summoned the harasser, who confessed his love and said he would continue tormenting her and didn't care whether she had previously rejected him or was married.

"I fired him on the spot," he said. "We don't tolerate this on our premises."

Despite this encounter, the manager was optimistic and said he had started noticing significant improvements following Better Work's training. In the past few months,

only a few cases of harassment were reported instead of the previous five to six a month.

The factory also established a six-person committee for the prevention of sexual harassment in which management and worker representatives could discuss cases reported to them and consult with the HR department concerning disciplinary measures. In most instances, these meetings would end with the perpetrator losing their job. Only cases that included serious molestation needed to be taken to the authorities.

ECHOES OF EMPOWERMENT ON THE FACTORY FLOOR

Worker Joni A. was aware of the different forms of sexual harassment when asked about them on the factory floor, and was ready to take action if she became a recipient of unwanted attention.

The young mother said she joined the company four months ago and learnt about the topic during her orientation programme.

"If ever I became a victim of sexual harassment or see this happening to someone around me, I would immediately inform the HR department," she said, clenching her fists on her lap.

"When she grows up, I will teach my daughter about ways to defend herself from cases of abuse and be strong. If I had a son, I would teach him to always respect and defend women, no matter what."



THE WOMEN'S ADVOCATE:

Preventing violence and harassment IN CANADA

In Canada, workplace Women's Advocates help prevent violence and harassment, and provide assistance for its victims. A number of employers support the Unifor trade union programme, working closely with the Advocates to ensure a harassment-free workplace.

*By Patrick Moser
Photos: Unifor*

A spate of high-profile scandals in media and politics have brought the topic of workplace violence and harassment to the forefront. But the issue is far from limited to the movie industry and the corridors of power. It affects just about every sector around the globe.

At the same time, there is growing recognition that governments, employers and trade unions have a duty to combat any form of workplace violence and harassment.

In Canada, for example some employers are supporting Unifor – the country's largest trade union – in providing assistance to women who have faced harassment, violence or abuse.

The Women's Advocate programme has been hailed as a successful example of a joint union-management initiative aimed at creating a safe and healthy workplace.

Employers pay for 40 hours of training, and pay the Advocates to perform their roles during working hours.

Women's Advocates are workplace representatives who assist victims of violence or abuse. They are not counsellors but need to be good listeners, as they refer victims to the appropriate workplace or community services. Through their experience, they can develop an understanding of issues such as pregnancy discrimination and accommodation, breastfeeding policies, sexual harassment, and employment equity, according to Unifor Women's Department Director Lisa Kelly.

The Advocates need to be able to recognize signs of abuse, and work with the employer to consider safety planning for the workplace if necessary. To do this, the social partners have agreed on joint investigation procedures to address workplace harassment. According to Kelly, "this joint programme can be particularly effective in connection with sexual harassment."

PROMOTING A CLIMATE OF TRUST AND RESPECT

Lynette James, Human Resources and Labour Relations Specialist at Jazz Aviation, says that "the Women's Advocate fosters a climate of trust and respect in the workplace, and may be an employee's first point of contact before seeking assistance from the Company and/or other resources. In conjunction with Human Resources, the Women's Advocate begins a course of action to remedy and prevent re-occurrence if deemed necessary."

Unifor, which has close to 3,000 bargaining units in almost every sector of the economy, admits that despite the success of the programme, there is still a long way to go. There are currently just over 350 Women's Advocates in Canada.



■ Lisa Kelly
Unifor Women's
Department Director

The hard part, says Kelly, is convincing companies that it is in everyone's interest to have a Women's Advocate at the workplace.

"Employers often resist the Women's Advocate programme when we first raise it," she says, pointing out that costs are usually the issue. But, once the programme is arranged and the Women's Advocate is trained and in place, "the employer realizes the benefits the Advocate brings to the workplace," Kelly adds.

Women's Advocate Eva Guta says employers in the auto industry, where she works as an assembler at a seat manufacturing plant, have been very receptive to having Advocates at their facilities. "The more informed, the more educated we are, the more we put out fires in the workplace. The employers benefit, they benefit financially, they benefit when it comes to morale in the workplace."

Workplace violence and harassment affects workers' physical and mental health, and as a result, it often impacts productivity and morale, and can lead to absenteeism, increased sick leave and resignations. This in turn clearly hurts employers' bottom line.

"In one case in particular that I recall, two workers were harassing this female worker, to the point where they put sugar in her gas tank, they used acid to kill the grass in front of her house, they were sending nasty things in the mail, they were putting things in her locker at work. Really, really disturbing things."

Tammy Moore,
former Women's Advocate



“Disrespectful workplace behaviors such as workplace violence, harassment/ bullying or domestic violence left unmanaged can decrease employee engagement and increase turnover, but also contribute to a hostile workplace environment.”

Lynette James,

Human Resources and Labour Relations Specialist at
Jazz Aviation

Canada’s Centre for Occupational Health and Safety lists rumours, swearing, verbal abuse, pranks, arguments, property damage, vandalism, sabotage, pushing, theft, physical assaults, psychological trauma, anger-related incidents, rape, arson and murder as examples of workplace violence. And it points out that workplace violence is not limited to incidents that occur within a traditional workplace, but can occur at off-site events such as conferences or trade shows, work-related social events, and in clients’ homes through a threatening phone call from a company client for example.

While reliable and up-to-date figures are hard to find, a Statistics Canada survey showed that in 2004 there were more than 350,000 violent workplace incidents.

Women’s Advocates have assisted with such issues as bullying, stalking, mental health, elder care, depression, stress, money issues, harassment, work/life balance, daycare issues, abuse and grief, in addition to domestic violence, according to Kelly.

“One case I worked on involved a 15-year-old female who worked in the fast food sector. Her boss had a crush on her and would text her, call her and follow her around work saying he liked to watch her. He said he would buy her things and even brought her gifts which she would not accept. She never answered his texts, which were very inappropriate. He parked outside her house and would text her that he missed seeing her. She was too embarrassed to tell her parents as this was her first job, and she became very depressed to a point she would not go to work. She finally broke down and told her mother. She thought it was her fault. She ended up going to a youth counselling programme.”

Cheryl W.,

Women’s Advocate at an aerospace corporation



HUGE COST OF VIOLENCE

The costs to employers are huge, particularly if one factors in the impact of domestic violence, which can lead to absences from work, lower output and loss in productivity, as well as an increased risk of physical and psychological violence at the workplace.

A Canadian Justice Department study estimated that domestic violence cost employers about 78 million Canadian dollars (US\$ 69 million) in 2009.

“Domestic violence impacts on the world of work when third parties (or co-workers who are also family members) commit violent acts against former or current partners or other family members at, or through, the workplace, by physically assaulting them or by stalking or harassing them by telephone or email,” the ILO says in a document prepared for the 2018 International Labour Conference.

A 2014 study showed that one third of workers in Canada have experienced domestic violence. Of those, half said violence followed them to work, and almost 82 per cent said it negatively affected their performance at work. Another study showed that 71 per cent of employers reported experiencing a situation where it was necessary to protect a victim of domestic abuse.

“There can be a wide overlap of issues between work and domestic violence. In many of our workplaces, we have couples who work in the same workplace, or people who are in dating relationships,” says Kelly. “Many of our Women’s Advocates deal with stalking behaviour at the workplace, particularly when the relationship has broken down.”

Tammy Moore, who works for a major airline, says one of her first cases in 2009, involved an employee

whose ex-common law partner “could be classified as a sociopath.” During an argument at their home, he kicked her down the stairs, and continued kicking her until she was unconscious, causing her lasting injuries. She left him, but he has been stalking her ever since, to the point where the woman changed her residence 22 times within one year just to get away from him. “She works at an airport location, so we worked with the company to figure out a workplace safety accommodation,” says Moore.

In some cases, both the perpetrator and the victim of domestic violence work for the same company, sometimes in close proximity. Sandra Dominata, a Women’s Advocate at a major auto assembly plant, says she’s dealt with instances where a victim of violence obtains a restraining order that might say her co-worker may not be within 50 feet of her, or may not have eye contact, or in some cases may not be at the same workplace. “Often the restraining order is sent to me, so I’ll take it to my employer and we’ll set up a plan how we’re going to follow the law ... We have to meet with the parties ... we’ll tell the guy it’s his responsibility to follow the restraining order.”

KEY ROLE OF THE WORKPLACE

An increasing number of countries acknowledge that the workplace can play an important role in addressing domestic violence “for example, by requiring or allowing workers (and workers’ organizations) and employers to assume a positive role in identifying and protecting victims,” the ILO says in the document prepared for the 2018 ILC.

“In a recent case, I had a member reach out to me about domestic violence ... She was stressed at work because of the home situation, as well as being overworked because other workers were on sick leave. She had an underlying chronic health issue that had flared up, exacerbated by the home and work situation. She was on probation at work, still had 2.5 weeks to go in a 6 month probation, so had no sick leave. I worked with our VP and we were able to contact the HR person for that area, who contacted the member’s manager, and got the department to agree that her probation period was over. She was able to take sick days, then worked from home, and then took an unpaid leave of absence (we can take up to a 12 month unpaid leave), so she could remove herself from the home situation. She was very happy with the solution.”

Karen S.,
Unifor Women’s Advocate, Canadian University

The report points out that a small number of countries require employers to take steps to protect and support victims, because of the demonstrated impact of domestic violence, in human and financial terms, on the world of work. At the same time, “an increasing, though still modest” number of laws and collective agreements address the consequences of domestic violence through work-related measures, including leave.

Kelly mentions several examples of employers responding to cases of domestic violence by supporting flexible scheduling, allowing time off for meetings and phone calls, moving parking spots close to the building where the member works, having the member escorted to and from her car, and barring the abuser from the property.

Kelly stresses that while Women’s Advocates are there to assist all workers in the workplace, “we keep the gender-specific name to underscore that, in Canada, the overwhelming number of victims and survivors of domestic violence are women. Men facing domestic violence are most often slapped, punched or have things thrown at them. Women are the ones hospitalized and murdered.”

While men do at times approach Women’s Advocates, they mostly do so on behalf of women in their lives, such as spouses or daughters.

The Advocates also raise awareness at the workplace about violence and harassment issues. “Our main objective is to give our members all the tools they need to be better people, to be better workers, to be better union members,” says Guta. “You don’t want to have members lose their jobs, but at the same time, you are not tolerating behaviour that is in violation of either human rights, or of occupational safety and health. I do believe that the awareness we have raised has made a difference.”

“WOMEN’S ADVOCATE WOULD BENEFIT OTHER INDUSTRIES”

Unifor believes the programme can be replicated elsewhere, and a number of unions have expressed interest, including the International Transport Federation (ITF).

“Unfortunately, gender-based violence and harassment is a common thread for women around the world,” concludes Kelly.

Asked about the recent spate of scandals that rocked the movie world, Kelly said it is clear that “having a Women’s Advocate would benefit other industries, such as the entertainment industry, that see high rates of gender-based harassment.”



An ILO expert

answers questions about **VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT at work**

This year's International Labour Conference (ILC) will hold a first discussion on possible new standards to fight violence and harassment at work. Once there is a consensus among the ILO's members – governments, employers and workers – about what is wrong and how it should be addressed, a second discussion at a later ILC is expected to lead to the adoption of the instruments agreed on. Manuela Tomei, Director of the ILO's Conditions of Work and Employment Department, discussed the issue with the World of Work magazine.

There has been a lot of debate among experts as to the definition of violence and harassment at the workplace. Has this been narrowed down? And why is such a definition needed?

There is no internationally agreed definition of violence and harassment in the world of work. Different countries have adopted different laws that define violence and harassment in different ways. In the review that we conducted in over 80 countries to see how their laws deal with violence and harassment in the world of work, we found that a number of countries were using the same terms to refer to different instances. In some cases, we had countries using different words to refer to the same phenomena.

There is a variety of behaviours that create different types of harm, but each and every one of them has the effect of undermining the dignity, security and health of the person subjected to violence and harassment. So, clearly, there is a need to come up with an international standard, which helps clarify what is the scope of violence and harassment in the world of work, and which behaviours and practices are acceptable or not.

So defining these terms will be an important part of the discussions at the June 2018 International Labour Conference?

Definitely. The ILO and its constituents have decided that the time is ripe for moving towards the adoption

of a new international instrument – a Convention, or a Recommendation or both – on this issue.

We obviously can't predict the outcome of the discussions that will take place at the Conference, but we are very encouraged by the high number of responses to a questionnaire the Office distributed to constituents. There is very strong support for providing adequate protection to the victims of violence and harassment – respecting the privacy of complainants and alleged victims, providing adequate support to allow a victim to recover, including psychological support and leave if needed. There is also consensus on the need to prevent violence and harassment at work. This means we're working very closely with all the institutions and legislation that deal with occupational health and safety.

One of the hottest issues to be discussed is the scope of the instrument. Does the world of work extend beyond the physical workplace, such as when a worker is following an off-site training course? Does it include cyberbullying, which may reach the worker when commuting, at home, or during non-work hours? Overall, there is a realisation that focusing exclusively on the physical workplace would not be sufficient to ensure adequate protection; but there are variations of how wide the net can be cast.

One thing is clear: We will never be able to achieve a more equal world if we are not going to seriously deal with this issue with very bold actions.

There are already laws that cover domestic violence, why the need for laws on violence at work?

Domestic violence legislation does not deal with violence and harassment that may arise in the world of work, which may be perpetrated by supervisors, co-workers, customers or patients. This leads to not addressing the discrimination that women may face in terms of access to employment, education and training, career progression, pay and other working conditions. In addition, domestic violence laws do not cover the health consequences of work-related violence and harassment from an occupational safety and health perspective.

It seems that no day goes by without headlines about violence and harassment at work – particularly in the movie industry and in politics – does that reflect a trend?

It's very difficult to talk about trends. The type of empirical evidence at our disposal is very patchy in the absence of an internationally agreed definition of violence and harassment. We are not comparing the same things, and we are not measuring them in a consistent manner. Therefore, we can neither quantify the different types of violence nor conclude that violence and harassment at work has increased or decreased, and in which sectors.

But we are definitely seeing a growing awareness that certain practices and behaviours are very damaging not only for the person targeted but also for the working environment, for productivity, and the reputation of an enterprise. It is becoming an issue that is increasingly considered to be unacceptable and requiring bold action.

The fact that there is growing media attention on the issue is extremely important because it is encouraging people to come forward, to even denounce facts and events that happened many years ago. Victims feel empowered. They do not fear retaliation or to be demonized as somehow deserving this harassment.

For a very long time, sexist jokes, catcalling, putting up calendars with photos of naked women at the workplace, were accepted as normal. There is still a long way to go, but we are seeing more and more acknowledgement that this type of behaviour can indeed be insulting towards women. This behaviour is inconsistent with a productive workplace that wants to attract and retain staff, including women.

What has the ILO done to address the issue?

The proposed international instrument that will be debated at the June 2018 International Labour Conference

will be a first. But the ILO has dealt with the issue in instruments that focus on specific groups of workers. This is the case with the Convention on domestic workers, which establishes workers' right to be protected at the workplace – their employer's home. We also address the issue in the Better Work programme, which we run together with the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

The main objective of the programme – which is operational in over 10 countries and covers some 1,500 factories – is to improve compliance with labour laws and respect for the fundamental principles and rights of work. As such, preventing violence and harassment is an important part of the programme. Harassment against women workers has been found to be pervasive in factories, where women are at the bottom of the hierarchy and 93 per cent of line supervisors are men. So, a number of measures and training programs were introduced to increase the access of women workers to line supervisor or line manager positions.

Awareness needs to be raised. For example, supervisors need to be sensitized to the fact that some practices – demanding sexual favours, pinching, sharing off-colour jokes – must not be tolerated under any circumstance.

Are there particular sectors or regions where workers are more vulnerable?

There is no sector, occupation or type of enterprise which is intrinsically violent. But there are a number of circumstances and factors that may increase the risk of violence and harassment. People who have a lot of interaction with third parties – such as clients, students or patients – might face a risk of violent behaviour from these third parties.

Working in remote, isolated areas or at night and weekends, may also entail a higher risk of violence and harassment. And technological innovation is providing new opportunities to perpetrators to attack and humiliate another person. This is the case with cyberbullying, where a co-worker, a subordinate or a manager can be the target of threatening or insulting messages sent electronically. This may create a lot of discomfort and stress in the person who is the target of these messages.



12 June | **WORLD DAY** AGAINST **CHILD LABOUR**

Child domestic labourers working in virtual slavery

World Day against Child Labour will focus this year on hazardous child labour and safe work for youth of legal working age. Almost half of the 152 million victims of child labour – 73 million – toil in hazardous work. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal Target 8.7, will not be achieved unless efforts to fight modern slavery and child labour are dramatically increased. Jean-Luc Martinage reports on an ILO project in Madagascar.

Madagascar

SYLVIE, AGE 10: “I’D RATHER GO TO SCHOOL”

The brickyard didn’t seem to be worth a second glance, except perhaps for the breathtaking location. It is located on the outskirts of Antsirabe, off the N7, one of the main roads linking the south of the island to Madagascar’s capital city. While returning to Antananarivo, we noticed some tiny figures carrying bricks on their heads. As we drew closer, we realized they were children.

Our attention was drawn to a 10-year-old girl called Sylvie. Together with her mother and her older sister, she works five days a week from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m., carrying an average load of eight bricks. We weighed one of the bricks: 2.6 kg. In other words, Sylvie’s neck was supporting a weight of over 20 kg in all. Her mother explained that children transport 200 bricks a day, whereas adults carry 500. They are paid 9 ariary (\$0.0028) per brick.

The mother pointed to her two other young children perched on a rock under the sun in the middle of the brickyard. She is not happy about the situation, but the family is so poor, she has no choice. Officially, her children go to school. In reality, we are talking to them on a weekday during school hours.

We expected to be kicked out at any moment by a foreman. But no one showed up, as though the situation was normal for everyone. We even met other children as young as 6 years old in public view, subjected to the worst and most dangerous forms of child labour.

Sylvie eventually confided to us. Pointing to her neck, she told the interpreter that “all these bricks, sometimes they hurt”.

She also added a few more words that said it all: “You know, I’d rather go to school.”



■ Nivo

ANTSIRABE, Madagascar – Her name is Nivo. She is 16 years old. She was very young when she left her poverty-stricken family to work as a domestic worker in a home in Antsirabe, a town of about 200,000 inhabitants located in Hautes Terres, 170 km south of the Malagasy capital.

From dawn till dusk, Nivo does all the housework (dishes, laundry, cooking, cleaning) and looks after the livestock. She earns a paltry 40,000 ariary (\$12) per month, but keeps only 5,000 (\$1.50), sending the rest to the family she has not seen since her arrival in Antsirabe. She tells us that she has never been to school.

When we speak about her future, Nivo seems sceptical. “Who knows what will happen to me. There are no opportunities for me because I can’t read or write,” she explains sadly. She says she’s treated well, but it would



Sylvie (to the left)

be hard for her to say anything else with her employers listening to our conversation just a few metres away.

To prevent situations like Nivo's, the ILO set up a programme in Antsirabe to allow child domestic workers to change status and have access to vocational training. Lalaina Razanapera, the head of the "Sarobidy" NGO (which means "precious" in Malagasy) in charge of implementing the project, has provided vocational training to 190 children, sensitized 2,000 others and removed 2,500 from the worst form of child labour.

The project brings together the local authorities and labour inspectors. According to a study carried out by the Labour Inspectorate in 2015 and 2016, 500 children were working in the Antsirabe area, including 250 as domestic workers.

"There are many reasons for this," says Dera Randrianarivony, labour inspector in charge of child labour, citing poverty, the local mentality and above all, local customs which often obliges the region's families to hold costly ceremonies that they can't always pay for, prompting them to send their children to work for others. "It often becomes a form of bonded labour," he adds.

Randrianarivony seems to be armed with nothing more than goodwill, having almost no means allocated for his mission. He has no vehicle and has to call on the police to get around – and the police demand that he pay for the gas. In the specific case of domestic work, he also faces legal obstacles. For example, he is not authorized to enter private homes because he does not have the status of an investigating police officer.

We follow him on a search of a *gargote*, a small fast-food shop located near the train station, where he has been told that a child is working. On his arrival, the child flees to the back of the shop, crying in a panic. Her name is Simone. She is 12 years old. Her story is unfortunately all too common in the region. Her parents live in the country, and are so poor that they sent her to work in town for her sister-in-law. Simone swears that she goes to school and is just "helping out" in the shop. But her story is belied by the fact that she doesn't answer when asked for the name of her teacher, and that her feet are far too dirty for a schoolchild.

There's not much that the inspector can do except remind the shopkeepers of the law. Imprisoning her employers or her parents might make Simone's situation



Hortensia



even worse; she may find herself homeless given that there is no public centre able to take in minors in difficulty.

The story of Hortensia, on the other hand, has a happier ending. Now 17 years of age, Hortensia tells us that she went through hell in a house where she had been placed as a domestic worker. For two years, she did all the household work. From 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., she cleaned, cooked, went to the market, did the laundry, and was always the last to go to bed. When she fell ill, she received no medication, and her meagre monthly wages of 20,000 ariary (\$7) were docked for every little mistake. She was rescued by the occupational training supported by the ILO. She learned basic animal husbandry and farming techniques, and she now rents a small plot of land where she grows potatoes, carrots, garlic, leak, cabbage, corn and beans. She is also raising a piglet that she was given

by the project at the end of her training. Her family is very proud of her.

For Lauréat Rasolofoniainarison, national project administrator at the ILO Office in Antananarivo, it is crucial to talk to the child's family. "Parents often tell us that they send their children out to work instead of to school because they're poor. But the message we want to get through is that, in reality, it is because they send their children out to work that they're poor. They're perpetuating a cycle that leaves no space for education or bettering one's position."



INTERVIEW

Christian Ntsay:

“Poverty reduction remains a priority for Madagascar”

Christian Ntsay, you are the director of the ILO Country Office in Madagascar, which also covers the Comoros, Mauritius and the Seychelles. What’s your view of Madagascar’s social and economic situation?

There is no denying that poverty reduction remains a priority for Madagascar. Just consider two figures: 92 per cent of the country’s population lives in poverty, and one in two young people are unemployed. There is too little investment. All of this perpetuates the cycle of poverty.



■ Christian Ntsay
Director of the ILO Country
Office in Madagascar

How can the employment outlook for young people be changed?

Ninety-three per cent of the population works in the informal sector. Only 6 to 7 per cent of all jobs can be defined as “decent work”. Reaching 10 to 15 per cent in the next ten years is imperative. Creating jobs requires a dynamic economic fabric and major investments, notably in strategic sectors such as the agri-food industry, mining, tourism and construction. Young people need access to training, and employment policy governance has to be improved in order to establish active labour market policies.

In this context of poverty, child labour persists in the worst form – sexual exploitation of children. What can be done to keep Madagascar from becoming a magnet for child sex tourism?

Madagascar has ratified Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 on the worst forms of child labour. There is a national action plan. Unfortunately, laws are rarely applied and no any public funds are allocated to the fight against child labour. The first action is to apply existing legislation to make the fight against the worst forms of child labour a national priority. The ILO helped the Government develop the national action plan, and has provided training to the main public stakeholders, social partners and civil society. For over ten years, the ILO has been running cooperation projects in various fields that serve as models in several parts of the country such as commercial sexual exploitation of children, child domestic labour, child labour in the mines and in the vanilla supply chain. But the ILO cannot be a substitute for action by national and local authorities or the courts.

Is child labour seen as acceptable in a country like Madagascar?

No. Let’s be frank. Behind child labour there are interests, money, people and groups who grow rich. There are over two million child labourers in Madagascar. Many of them are working at jobs that are dangerous for their age. This is unacceptable. The cultural explanation doesn’t stand up to scrutiny. It’s just an excuse. The battle has to continue with a stronger signal from the government, and more structured and diversified activities at local level.

Towards the universal ratification of **Convention No. 144**

Yucef Ghellab ■
Head of the ILO's Social
Dialogue and Tripartism Unit



Social dialogue between governments, employers and workers will be the key to shape a future of work that benefits everyone: this is why the ILC will hold further discussions on social dialogue and tripartism, under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization adopted in 2008.

To promote social dialogue, the ILO has launched a campaign to boost universal ratification of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No.144). World of Work magazine spoke with Yucef Ghellab, head of the ILO's Social Dialogue and Tripartism Unit, about the campaign.

Why campaign for the universal ratification of Convention No. 144?

The Convention on Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards), 1976 (No.144), promotes the application of a founding principle of the ILO: bringing together governments, employers and workers through tripartite social dialogue to develop, implement and promote international labour standards governing all aspects of the world of work.

The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, adopted unanimously at the International Labour Conference in 2008, identified Convention No. 144 as a “priority” Convention, one of the four most significant ILO instruments from the viewpoint of governance.

What are the benefits of ratifying and implementing Convention No. 144?

The ratification and implementation of Convention No. 144 offer governments, and employer and worker

organizations a platform for consultation about international labour standards and ILO matters in general. As such, the Convention promotes a culture of dialogue between the tripartite actors and builds trust amongst them. Social and labour policies based on effective tripartite consultation with representatives of government, employer and worker organizations help ensure informed decision making and increased commitment and ownership by all stakeholders. ILO research has shown that countries with well-established institutions holding effective national social dialogues fare better in times of economic, social and political crises. Such institutions also facilitate tripartite discussions that shape the future of work.

How does Convention No. 144 relate to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda?

Social dialogue is an essential tool for advancing the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, whose

implementation requires active engagement of the tripartite actors in the world of work: governments, employer and worker organizations.

It is particularly relevant to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Goal 8 “Decent work and economic growth” and Goal 16 “Peace, justice and strong institutions”. Targets 16.6 and 16.7 call for the development of effective, accountable and transparent institutions to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

Social dialogue is also relevant to other SDGs, including Goal 1 on “Ending poverty”, Goal 5 on “Achieving gender equality” and Goal 10 on “Reducing inequalities.”

What is required from countries that ratify Convention No. 144?

Convention No. 144 does not entail significant additional costs or legislative reforms to implement its provisions, and its requirements are within the reach of all ILO member States.

Convention No. 144 and its accompanying Recommendation No. 152 offer countries guidance on how to organize effective tripartite consultations. The Convention offers flexibility, enabling countries to establish procedures in accordance with their national circumstances. However, at a minimum, tripartite consultations on international labour standards and ILO-related activities

should be undertaken at least once a year and through written communications, if they are found appropriate and sufficient by those involved in the consultative procedures. To be considered “effective”, consultations must take place prior to taking a final decision.

A promotional brochure provides information on Convention No. 144 and its current ratifications. As of March 2018, Convention No. 144 has been ratified by 139 countries, representing 75 per cent of the ILO’s member States.

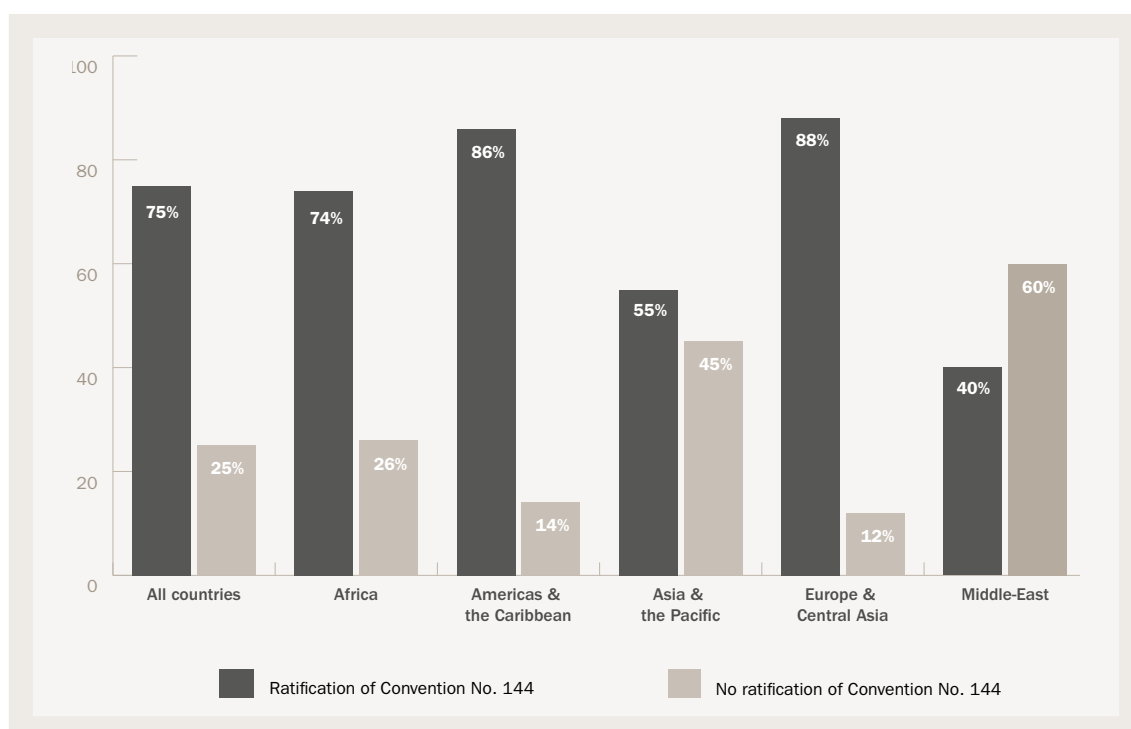
Since the launch of the campaign in November 2017, eight countries have initiated or advanced the ratification process (Cameroon, Georgia, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mauritania, Niger, Papua New Guinea, and Samoa).

From the **regional perspective** (Graph below), the percentage of countries which have already ratified Convention No. 144 reads as follows:

- Europe and Central Asia - 88 per cent;
- Americas and the Caribbean - 86 per cent;
- Africa - 74 per cent;
- Asia and the Pacific - 55 per cent; and
- Middle-East - 40 per cent.

Let’s aim to celebrate universal ratification of Convention No. 144 by the ILO Centenary in 2019!

RATIFICATION OF CONVENTION NO. 144
(AS A PERCENTAGE OF ILO MEMBER STATES IN THE REGION)





Bangladesh: A win-win result through **social dialogue**

Social dialogue is something you can learn. An ILO training programme which took place in Savar, Bangladesh, from 28 November to 7 December 2017 shows the way by creating empathy between employers and workers. The training was part of a project which promotes dialogue between the social partners, workplace rights and industrial relations in the country's ready-made garment (RMG) sector.

By Onchida Shadman, ILO Bangladesh



© ILO Bangladesh

DHAKA – On the word go, battle commences between employers and workers. Amid grunts and giggles, 30 women and men engage in arm-wrestling matches in a spacious room scattered with tables, papers, pens and water bottles. Nazneen Nahar, a trade union activist curls her wrist tightly to swiftly bring down her opponent who is impersonating an employer. Yet neither of them looks elated when the match is over.

Simulating the negotiation process between employers and workers, the game forms part of a Training of Trainers course on Collective Bargaining and Grievance Handling, organized by ILO's Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations project in Bangladesh, provided by the International Training Centre of the ILO. The project, which is funded by Sweden and Denmark, works to facilitate dialogue between employers and workers, aiming

to enhance workplace rights and industrial relations in the ready-made garment (RMG) sector.

Trained as a lawyer, Nahar provides legal advice to union members. "The game taught us that applying force results in only one winner. But if we can negotiate strategically, a win-win solution for both parties can be reached. I have learnt different negotiation techniques during this course, which will help me to mediate disputes in the workplace," she says.

Twenty-two members from employer organizations and 44 from worker organizations took part in the training. A representative from the *Bangladesh Employers Federation* (BEF) Md Kamruzzaman remarked that bringing workers and employers in one forum helped exchange new ideas. "We became more open-minded when we understood each other's viewpoints. This will improve our day-to-day interaction in the workplace."

His views were echoed by Urmila Barua, who works at Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA). She said: "When we sit down and discuss with workers, we realize the justification in their demand. We don't see them as opponents anymore. This type of training helps to change the mindset of both parties."

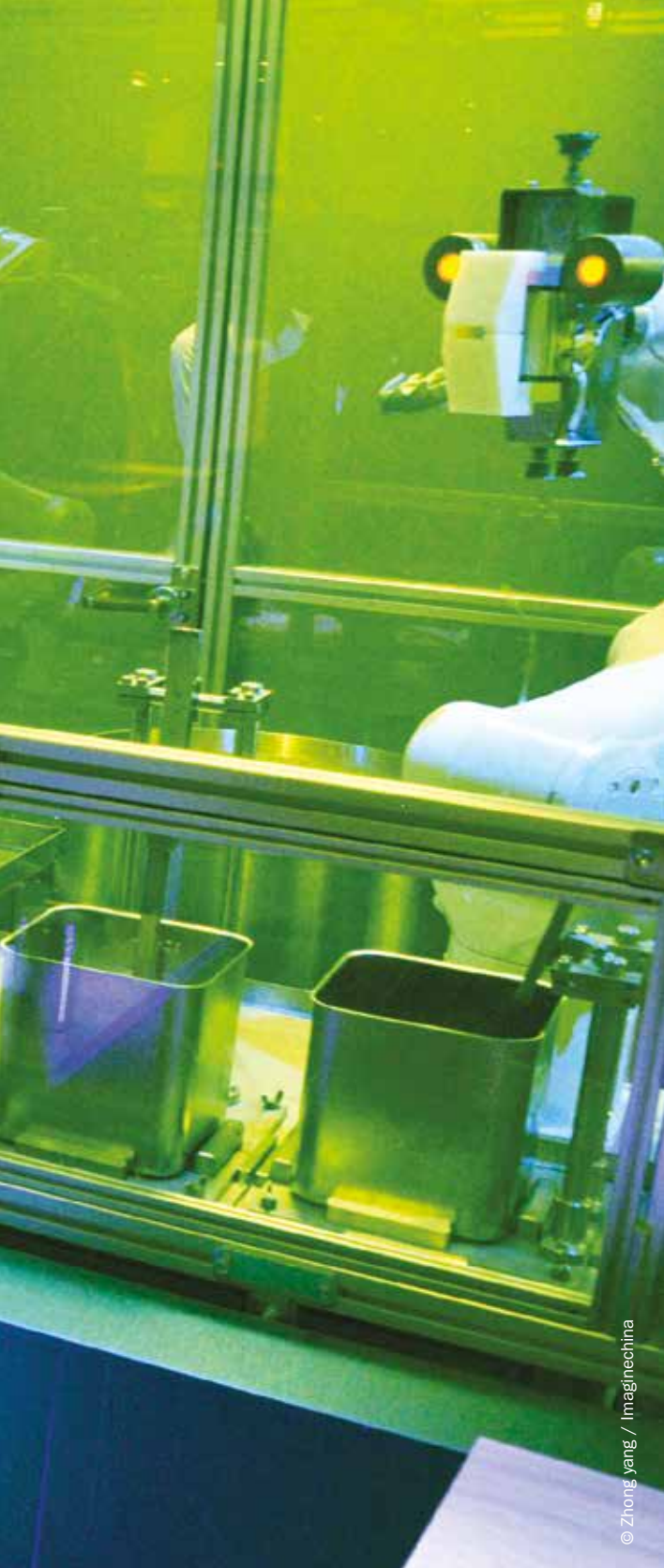
Under its SDIR project, ILO Bangladesh has conducted a series of similar workshops for employers, workers and government officials on collective bargaining, grievance handling and trade union registration. The workshop participants have been developed as master trainers. They will provide further training to workers through the Workers Resource Centre (WRC), and to employers through the Centre of Excellence for Bangladesh Apparel Industries (CEBAI). In addition, they will assist the establishment of grievance handling procedures in 500 RMG factories.

Mahandra Naidoo, the Chief Technical Advisor of the SDIR project, highlighted the important role the trainers will play. "These trainers will work on behalf of the employers and workers organizations to support wider outreach and capacity building in the ready-made garment sector. They will play a vital role in facilitating negotiations and mediating disputes at the enterprise level, which will benefit workers and businesses alike."



34

The Future of Work Initiative:
**What we are doing,
what's next**



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ILC 2019 *preview*

Following the first meetings of the Global Commission, Deborah Greenfield, ILO Deputy Director-General for Policy, shares the latest news on the ILO's Future of Work Initiative.

As the ILO approaches its centenary in 2019, we pause to reflect on progress made and draw lessons from our unique history. We have much to celebrate. Yet, as we look around us, we see that there is still much to be done.

How do we equip the ILO and its constituents to take advantage of the opportunities that digitalization and automation create for the greater inclusion of enterprises and workers in the economy? How do we harness their potential to expand the choices available to balance work and private life and reduce working hours? How do we address the challenges that processes of technological, demographic and climate change present for our workplaces and our labour markets? How can we shape a future we want?

The Director-General raised these questions when he launched the Future of Work Initiative, one of a number of Centenary Initiatives to guide the ILO's work as the organization enters its second century in pursuit of its mandate for social justice.

THE FIRST STAGE OF THE FUTURE OF WORK INITIATIVE

The first stage of the Future of Work Initiative, carried out between 2016 and 2017, involved national dialogues between governments, employer and worker organizations. In some countries, this included the participation of youth and other groups. These dialogues took place in over 110 member States, in both developed and developing countries.

In addition, the ILO held a symposium at the ILO in April 2017 on “The Future of Work We Want”, which brought together 700 participants, including leading academics and representatives of the ILO tripartite constituents, to discuss the changes sweeping through the world of work and the possible policy responses.

THE LAUNCH OF AN INDEPENDENT GLOBAL COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF WORK

The second stage of the ILO’s Future of Work Initiative began with the launch of an independent Global Commission on the Future of Work in August 2017. The Commission brings together a diverse group of experts from around the globe.

It undertakes an in-depth examination of the transformative changes occurring in the world of work in order to provide recommendations – to the ILO and to policy makers in general – for a future that provides decent and sustainable work opportunities for all.

To prepare the Global Commission for its first meeting on 20-22 October, the ILO Secretariat provided a Synthesis Report of the national dialogues to members, as well as an Inception Report that discusses major trends for the future of work.

At its second meeting on 15-17 February, the Commission considered some of the thematic issues in more depth.

SECOND MEETING OF THE GLOBAL COMMISSION AND NEXT STEPS

The Global Commission on the Future of Work focused its second meeting on a continuing discussion of the main themes that are shaping the future of the world of work.

The discussions covered issues such as the platform economy, skills policies and systems, the informal economy, global value chains, universal social protection, migration, and the situation and aspirations of youth, examining both developing and developed country perspectives.

Looking forward, the Commissioners agreed to organize a series of technical outreach meetings to explore issues requiring further analysis. The ILO will also seek interaction with other international organizations working on the future of work. An information meeting was held with ILO member States on 21 March during the Governing Body. It provided an important opportunity for ILO constituents to meet five members of the Commission, and ask them questions about the work of the Global Commission.

The Global Commission is expected to meet again in 2018 before submitting a report in early 2019, the year of the ILO centenary. The Commissioners stressed their commitment to come up with a report that is strategic, political and action-oriented in nature.

The ILO will continue to produce research and other policy-oriented knowledge products on issues related to the future of work. These will assist the Commission as well as ILO constituents to deepen the understanding of complex issues.

On the basis of the Commission’s Final Report, the 2019 International Labour Conference is expected to focus primarily on the Future of Work, in global tripartite discussions, with the aim of securing social justice for all in the years to come.



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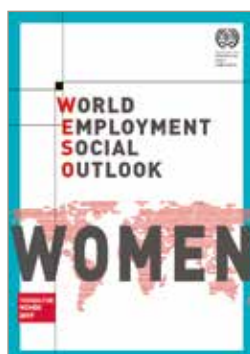
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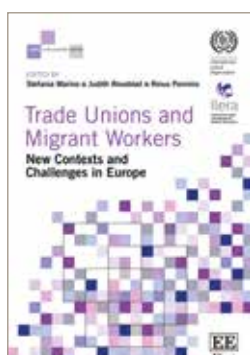
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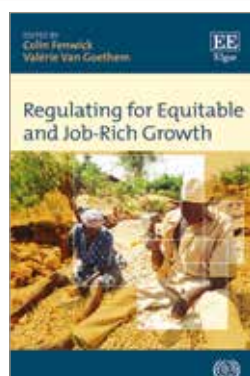
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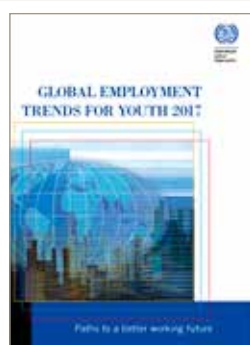
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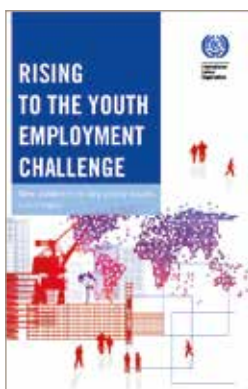
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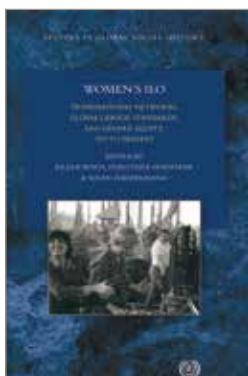
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