GENEVA (ILO News) – On June 16, the 95th Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO) concluded its work following extensive debates centred on the profoundly changing patterns in the world of work and promoting decent work in the 21st century.

Speaking at the conclusion of the Conference, ILO Director-General Juan Somavia said the meeting had "set standards for the 21st century which are relevant and applicable for countries all over the world and at all stages of development" and had provided "a strong mandate to engage fully in the process of renewing our multilateral system, confident in the recognition we have as 'the decent work agency'."

Mr. Somavia said the discussion at the Conference on the new ILO report "Changing Patterns in the World of Work" had produced “extremely thoughtful and interesting contributions” to help “inform and shape” the ILO’s future work.

The Conference also discussed forced labour in Myanmar and rights at work in other countries. The gathering of the ILO’s 178 member States described the situation in Myanmar as one of “unprecedented gravity” that was "unacceptable to the ILO”.

**New measures for the world of work**

Delegates adopted new standards and measures addressing health and safety issues. They gave overwhelming approval to a new Promotional Framework Convention on Occupational Safety and Health and an accompanying Recommendation addressing the development of a "preventative safety and health culture" through national occupational safety and health programmes. (For further details see ILO press release ILO/06/34.)

A majority of delegates also supported a new Recommendation on the Employment Relationship, proposing to member States the formulation and adoption, in consultation with workers and employers, of national policies on effectively establishing the existence of an employment relationship and on the distinction between employed and self-employed workers; combating disguised employment relationships and ensuring standards applicable to all forms of contractual arrangements.

**Standards issues**

In a discussion on the situation of forced labour in Myanmar, the Conference noted that progress could be made on the issue of forced labour only if there was a real commitment from the Government. The Conference set out two areas that required “tangible and verifiable” action from Myanmar. These were the release of any person who had been imprisoned following contacts with the ILO and stopping prosecutions that were currently underway, by the end of July, and agreement between Myanmar and the ILO by the end of October on a credible mechanism for dealing with complaints of forced labour with all necessary guarantees for the protection of complainants.

At its November 2006 session, the ILO Governing Body would examine whether this action had been taken and would have full authority to decide on the most appropriate course of action. During the Conference, Myanmar had expressed a willingness to cooperate with the ILO and had released Su Su Nwe from detention. Her release had been called for by the ILO since her imprisonment last year, a few months after she successfully prosecuted government officials for imposing forced labour.

The Committee on the Application of Standards held complex discussions on a wide variety of issues. The Committee again held a special sitting on the application by Myanmar of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), following up measures taken in the context of Article 33 of the ILO Constitution.

The Committee’s conclusions were taken into account by the plenary of the Conference in its considerations of what further action the ILO should take to secure compliance by the Government of Myanmar.

In addition to this special sitting, the Committee carried out the examination of 25 other individual cases covering freedom of association, forced labour, discrimination, child labour, employment policy, labour inspection, wages, etc. – the whole range of concerns addressed in ILO standards.

(Continued on page 2)
The Committee adopted special paragraphs to express concern about the situation of freedom of association in Bangladesh (Convention No. 98) and Belarus (Conventions Nos. 87 and 98). In the case of Belarus, the Committee noted with great concern that there had been continued failure to eliminate serious discrepancies in the application of the Conventions concerned. Further action would be considered by the Governing Body in November.

The Committee was also able to record a historic agreement reached in its framework between the government, employers and workers of Colombia. The tripartite partners agreed on a permanent presence of the ILO in the country which would be considered by the Governing Body in November.

The General Survey discussed by the Conference Committee this year was on labour inspection. The Committee highlighted the crucial importance of labour inspection for ensuring the protection of workers and compliance at national level of labour laws, and its key role for good governance in the world of work.

**Technical cooperation**

Delegates also reviewed the ILO’s technical cooperation programme taking account of significant changes that have taken place in the approach and modalities of ILO programmes and activities since the last time the issue was discussed at the Conference in 1999, including Decent Work Country Programmes and partnerships within the United Nations system and elsewhere. It emphasised the importance of strengthening the tripartite constituents of the ILO and their participation in technical cooperation.

Noting that “full and productive employment and decent work are a central driver of development and therefore a priority objective of international cooperation”, the Committee reviewed all aspects of technical cooperation extensively. The Committee’s work will usefully feed into the forthcoming High-Level Segment of ECOSOC, which will debate Decent Work and Sustainable Development as its special theme this year.

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**New ILO-Russia Programme of Cooperation defines priorities for 2006-2009**

On June 6, ILO Director-General Juan Somavia and the Russian tripartite delegation to the International Labour Conference signed here today a Programme of Cooperation between Russia and the ILO for 2006-2009.

A priority issue in the new programme, which is the result of a thorough analysis and consultations between government, employers and workers, is the reform of the pay system. The Russian Federation plans to improve its wage legislation, particularly with respect to workers whose salaries are paid from the state budget. According to the Russian Statistics Agency Goskomstat, 38.8 per cent of workers in health services, 41.4 per cent of workers in education and 51.2 per cent of workers in culture live on a salary equal to or below the subsistence level today.

The programme foresees the formulation of principles on wage policy for state and municipal enterprise employees in various sectors.

Another important issue is migration management. In the early 1990s, Russia became a major actor on the international labour migration scene as a receiving, sending and transit country. The Federal Migration Services estimate that there are now 500,000 regular migrants and between 5 and 14 million irregular migrants in Russia. The Programme of Co-operation stresses the need to further improve national legislation as well as international and bilateral mechanisms aimed at regularizing and preventing abuse of migrant workers.

The Programme also addresses internal migration in the Russian Federation to promote labour force mobility and create a more flexible labour market.

Other priorities of the Programme include modernizing labour legislation in accordance with international labour standards; promoting social partnership and improving social protection systems, including worker’s protection against HIV/AIDS, occupational safety and health and social security systems. It is also foreseen to implement decent work programmes in selected regions of the country.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Ms. Alexandra Levitskaya, Russian Deputy Minister of Health and Social Development said that “the Government of the Russian Federation highly appreciates the activity of the International Labour Organization and supports all the initiatives of the Organization that are part of the Decent Work Agenda”. The Minister called the Programme of Cooperation “another important step in strengthening cooperation between Russia and the ILO”.

The social partners – Mr. Oleg Ereemeev on behalf of the Russian employers and Mr. Mikhail Shmakov, on behalf of the Russian trade unions welcomed the new programme and expressed their satisfaction with the tripartite approach in the course of its preparation.

ILO Director-General Juan Somavia called the Programme of Cooperation “a quality and at the same time very practical, result-oriented product”, adding that it was very important that the Programme was a result of joint efforts by the tripartite partners. “I would like to reconfirm the commitment of the ILO to work together with all of you in its implementation”, Juan Somavia said.

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Newsletter №2 (25), page 2
Fizuli Alekperov: “ILO and Azerbaijan are strategic partners”

Stable macroeconomic development lays the basis for ensuring decent work.

According to the International Monetary Fund, Azerbaijan became leader in economic growth rates in 2005. Foreign experts forecast such GDP growth trend may be expected in several years to come. In 2005, population’s incomes went up by 27 percent, wages - by 22 percent, real incomes - by 17 percent. Over the past two years, 350,000 jobs were created.

The launch of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway route, implementation of other regional projects, effective use of natural resources for boosting non-oil sector create additional opportunities for social development and decent work promotion.

I would like to take this opportunity to express gratitude to the ILO for detailed analysis of the ongoing changes in the country’s social sector and for help in implementing a national employment strategy, improving the OSH system, counteracting the worst forms of child labour and for the increase social partners’ role in resolving social problems.

The ILO is Azerbaijan’s strategic partner in addressing social problems. Success of our cooperation puts much confidence in our future joint work on introducing new social development programmes.

Azerbaijan is a lead country in promoting Decent Work Agenda and we plan to sign a bilateral agreement with the ILO on decent work country programme in the near future.

- Azerbaijan is a lead country of the Youth Employment Network created by the UN, ILO and the World Bank. As a lead country Azerbaijan is committed to serve as a good pattern for other countries of the region to follow. What are the recent developments in the youth employment policy?

The process of establishing market economy relations is underway in Azerbai-

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Calendar of events of the ILO Subregional Office in Moscow

**JULY**

2 — International Day of Cooperatives

3-7 — Introduction and audit of OSH management systems in selected enterprises, Kastamuksa, Karelia, Russia

11 — World Population Day

**AUGUST**

12 — International Youth Day

23 — International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition

**SEPTEMBER**

— ILO Moscow Office director’s visit to Uzbekistan

— OSH seminar, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

13-15 — Annual meeting of ILO/CIS OSH information centres, Geneva, Switzerland

14-17 — Baltic Sea Network on Occupational Safety and Health, Annual Meeting, Tartu, Tallinn, Estonia

(Continued on page 4)
Corporative social responsibility — Integral part of business

On 5 and 6 June the Coordinating Council of Employers’ Unions of Russia and the Russian Managers’ Association held a joint seminar in Geneva for the Group of employers on the issue of “Business Climate and Corporate Social Responsibility in Russia”. The event was timed for the 95th session of the International Labour Conference and organized with active methodological and logistic support from the International Organisation of Employers and the International Labour Office. The seminar was attended by representatives of a dozen large Russian companies, including Norilsk Nickel, Renova and SUAL-Holding.

The issue of corporate social responsibility emerged about 30 years ago and since then it has gone far beyond the bounds of individual corporations to become an inalienable part of social and labour relations in the broadest sense. Against the background of a globalizing economy the social and environmental efficiency of corporations has been playing an ever increasing role in promoting their positive image and, therefore, contributing to their long-term success. In fact, the social activity of companies is an intangible asset of their businesses, including reputation, loyalty of consumers, reliability or intellectual capital.

The seminar proved that Russian businesses regarded corporate social responsibility as an integral part of their activities to an ever greater degree. The delegates pointed out that by developing social programmes Russian companies wished to contribute to the economic development of the country and individual regions, show their support for local communities and their own personnel, as well as promote charity. It should be born in mind that the spread of CSR practices is also due to the fact that in many instances the authorities are not in a position to settle many acute social problems effectively without assistance from the business community.

During a brainstorming session the participants discussed a draft Memorandum on Corporate Social Responsibility that will be brought to the attention of the Russian business community. The closing part of the seminar was held in a panel discussion format, which enabled the participants to exchange views on the issues in question in an informal setting.
On 15-17 May 2006 more than 1500 delegates from 50 countries attending the first Eastern European and Central Asian AIDS Conference (EECAAC) in Moscow discussed ways to strengthen the regional response to HIV/AIDS. Political and community leaders, international organizations, scientists and researchers, people living with HIV/AIDS and representatives of civil society from across the region took part in this important forum.

“We consider this conference as the start of a regional dialogue on addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic that has become a very serious problem in our countries”, said Mikhail Zurabov, Russian Health and Social Development Minister. According to Zurabov, the year 2005 marked a turning point in the formulation of a national policy on HIV/AIDS. He referred to the latest initiatives by President Putin, the State Council and the Russian Parliament, a series of new projects and programmes and the cooperation with the international community, including UN agencies.

While welcoming increased funding, political commitment, enhancement of multisectional interaction and country level cooperation in the region, the delegates expressed their deep concern with the continuing escalation of the HIV and AIDS situation in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. “In many parts of the world HIV prevention works”, Dr. Peter Piot, UNAIDS Executive Director said. “However, it is not seen in this region yet. Indeed the situation continues to worsen in many countries here”. According to ILO estimates, there were 1.6 million HIV-infected people at the end of 2005 in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Within a span of ten years, their number have increased almost 20 times. Eighty per cent of HIV infections in the region concern economically active workers.

Another alarming trend is increasing number of new HIV cases among women and the number of children at risk of HIV infection through vertical transmission. According to the Chief Sanitary Doctor of Russia, Gennady Onishchenko, in some regions of the Russian Federation women represent from 30 to 50 per cent of infected persons.

The ILO played an active role in the conference. It hosted a satellite meeting with the theme “HIV/AIDS and the World of Work: Partnerships with the private sector & NGOs”, and a skills building workshop on “Combating HIV/AIDS in the World of Work”. The workshop was aimed to promote a workplace policy based on the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and world of work to ensure a consistent and equitable approach to the prevention of HIV/AIDS among workers and their families, and to the management of the consequences of HIV/AIDS, including care and support for workers living with HIV/AIDS.

The ILO delegation at the conference was headed by Dr. Sophia Kisting, Director of the ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work. Addressing the conference participants, she particularly stressed the role of workplaces that are “of central importance for each and every person.” “We need to make workplaces ‘centers of hope’, we must use workplaces to organize prevention, treatment and care, while ensuring confidentiality”, Dr. Kisting said.

The regional forum provided ILO the opportunity to show case the ILO tripartite approach to leverage the role of the world of work in expanding the national AIDS response. Thanks to the support of the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), ILO constituents – governments, employers’ and workers’ organizations - and resource persons from various countries in the region took part in the event.

“We are pleased to see high level commitment from the region, collaboration between the UN Agencies, government and civil society, Dr Kisting said. “What is most important is that the voice of people living with HIV/AIDS was heard. We see this conference as a major step forward in fighting the epidemics.”

“In advance of the High Level Review Meeting of the UN General Assembly in New York and the G8 Summit in Saint Petersburg, we reaffirm the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS on 27 June 2001 and commit to a massive scaling up of HIV prevention, treatment and care with the aim of coming as close as possible to the goal of universal access by 2010 for all those who need it”, says the Summary Statement of the Conference Organizing Committee.

The delegates called on the governments of Eastern Europe and Central Asia to “strengthen cooperation among ministries and government departments, and representatives of civil society, religious institutions, media, labour unions and the private sector, taking measures to ensure the full involvement of all parties concerned, especially people living with HIV/AIDS and communities most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the HIV/AIDS response.”

The next conference is planned to be organized in two years time to review progress that will have been made in the region.
Over the past few months, an ILO team has been actively working on the development of a new site. We hope that our readers and the site’s visitors will be interested to know about changes on www.ilo.ru.

- What is the Content Management System, on which a new site will be based?

First of all, I should mention that our new site will be built in compliance with the decision of the ILO headquarters in Geneva on centralizing ILO’s information resources in the field. This important decision was taken to unite all information and to make the search for necessary information easier for our users.

In other words, the sites of all our field offices will have a common style, common navigation and search systems. This will allow to find necessary information at the ILO sites all over the world easily and promptly. Meanwhile, this does not mean that new sites will be alike. We’ll have only a common navigation system and the ILO corporate style. Of course, the content and composition will be different on various sites.

Timely placing of information on the site is one of the major requirements of the day. The Content Management System that will allow to promptly make any changes to the site’s pages. As a result, the information on our site will be always updated and authentic.

- What changes should our visitors expect and in what respects will the site be better?

As far as the ILO Moscow Office’s site is concerned, our visitors will have an opportunity to get necessary data located both on our site and, if need be, at ILO’s other information resources. This will considerably ease the search. Common and more comprehensible navigation will allow to find the necessary section or information quickly. Navigation will be built both on thematic and territorial principles: visitors will be able to easily find detailed information about our work in each of the ten countries of the Subregion and at the same time this or that thematic areas.

The ILO Moscow Office site has an important feature. Most of our visitors are Russian-speaking. Therefore, we’ll pay much more attention to the placing of the Russian language information. This will be general information about the ILO and specialized information about all areas of our activities.

- What sections can be found at our new site?

It will contain basically the same information one can find there now, but the information will be presented in a different, easy-to-access form. One can find practically all information about the work of the ILO Moscow Office, news, events, projects being implemented by the ILO in the Subregion’s countries, all publications and press releases. Visitors may see how the Decent Work programmes are being translated into life in the Subregion. One will be able to get access to the Russian-language programmes, standards, conventions and recommendations.

- What obstacles did you encounter during your work?

Our new site will be located in Geneva as well as the sites of all regional offices. The site-building work has been on since March. Its structure and content have been already finalized, but there are certain technical and organizational difficulties at this stage. It is necessary to study and meet a wide range of technological requirements, study and agree upon a new system of data placing and upgrading. The information’s volume and structure that we plan to place is vast, indeed. Our key task is to make the site’s structure easier and more comprehensible, and to ensure prompt access to any necessary information. There should not be just a pile of files.

Another priority is to leave unchanged the website’s address www.ilo.ru, which our visitors have got used to and have been visiting for many years.

- And, finally, when should we expect the launch of the site?

We’ll not name a certain date, but we hope that you will be able to visit the site in several months from now. This work is very time- and effort-consuming. I can say, experts in the ILO Moscow Office and programmers in St. Petersburg are working hard on it.

We hope that our goal – the ILO Moscow Office’s new site - will mark a qualitatively new step in information distribution and after this painstaking work is completed, our visitors will get access to a convenient and content-rich information resource that will meet all modern requirements.
**ILO’s mission to Kyrgyzstan**

Late May in Kyrgyzstan was marked by a series of important ILO-related events:

On May 22, the ILO delegation led by the ILO Regional Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Friedrich Buttler, and the director of the Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Werner Blenk, arrived in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on an official visit.

“The current visit of the ILO delegation is aimed at making ILO-Kyrgyzstan cooperation even more fruitful,” Mr. Buttler said.

During the visit the ILO and the Kyrgyz Labour and Social Protection Ministry, the State Migration and Employment Committee, the Trade Unions Federation and the Confederation of Employers signed a memorandum of understanding that was worked out by tripartite partners and coordinated with the ILO.

Friedrich Buttler, Werner Blenk, Labour and Social Protection Minister Yevgeny Semenenko, the head of the State Migration and Employment Committee, Aigul Ryskulova, the chairman of the Trade Unions Federation, Sagyn Bozuganbayev, and the head of the Employers’ Confederation, Alybek Kadyrov, put their signatures to the document.

Under the memorandum, the parties shall step up and expand cooperation in forming and upgrading the regulatory and legal bases in social and labour sectors, in adapting national norms and practices to international labour standards in line with the interests of Kyrgyzstan’s social groups. They shall also cooperate in drafting a national Decent Work programme, which defines the priorities of cooperation with the ILO.

Employment and perfection of labour force qualification, gender equality and labor safety as well as incentives for businesses to break off with shadow economy practices were chosen as the priorities of the Decent Work programme.

“I believe that the very title of the programme reflects its goals. Although some say that any work is decent, people want not only to work, but to work in decent and legal conditions,” Kyrgyz Prime Minister Felix Kulov said.

He expressed gratitude to the ILO for assistance it provides to Kyrgyzstan in professional training and drafting legislation, mainly national employment policy.

Within the framework of the visit, on May 25 Bishkek hosted a seminar on Work Improvement in Neighborhood Development (WIND). Taking part in the event were Friedrich Buttler, Werner Blenk, senior OSH specialist from the ILO Moscow Office Wiking Husberg, Kyrgyz Labour and Social Protection Minister Yevgeny Semenenko, chief labour inspectors from Central Asian republics and farmers.

“In 2000-2004, there were 570 occupational accidents and 22 fatalities in agriculture,” Kyrgyz chief labour inspector Ogan Karabalayev said.

One of the reasons for the high accident rate is aging equipment. The life cycle of 80 percent of industrial equipment expired long ago, he said.

The ILO pledged to lend a helping hand in bettering OSH conditions.

Farmers who had undergone WIND trainings told about successes they reached with the help of knowledge they gained during seminars and shared practical experience and ideas of upgrading workplaces in agriculture.

The WIND programme being implemented in the CIS is aimed at improving work in local communities in Central Asia, mainly, traditional ethnic communities of the Fergana Valley (i.e. Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan). The WIND guide-book has been actively used in Kyrgyzstan for 2.5 years and was published both in the Russian and Kyrgyz languages. It offers easy and non-costly solutions to better working conditions.

On May 29-June 2 in Issyk-Kul the ILO conducted for the first time the Subregional Workshop on Youth Employment for the Countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Taking part in the seminar were representatives of government, trade unions, employers’ associations from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Russia, non-governmental organizations, international experts and ILO’s specialists.

Participants in the seminar discussed stronger education activities, upgrading of technical and occupational education in the CIS and studied opportunities for cooperation with social partners in drafting and translating into life a national employment programme.

Azerbaijan’s experience as the subregional leader in the Youth Employment Network was studied as exemplary at the seminar. At present, Azerbaijan’s priority is to work out the National Action Plan on Employment and the National Action Plan on Youth Employment. Last October the Azerbaijani president approved a national employment strategy.

ILO experts focused on ILO’s youth employment policies and recent initiatives in this area.

To settle youth employment problems the ILO Moscow Office in cooperation with the ILO headquarters in Geneva and the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin implement a number of programmes and youth employment projects within the framework of a common initiative For Decent Work. The ILO implements many youth employment projects with the financial support of the UK Department for International Development and the Dutch government. Within the framework of these projects and in technical cooperation with the ILO Moscow Office national employment strategies were developed and then approved by the governments of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan.

As for instruction in business skills, the ILO is implementing Know About Business and Start and Improve Your Business programmes in the Caucasus and continues them in Central Asian countries.
Red Card to child labour
June 12 — World Day Against Child Labour

With World Cup fever in full swing, the International Labour Organization (ILO) symbolically waved a “Red Card” against child work as part of a series of global events to mark the World Day Against Child Labour.

World Cup football legend Roger Milla of Cameroon and leaders of the sports, scouting and labour worlds spoke at ceremonies in Geneva on 12 June, the World Day. Mr. Milla and others appealed for an end to child labour at the event, designed to highlight the ILO’s global “Red Card to child labour” campaign which, through the partnership with FIFA, has reached millions of people around the world since its launch in 2002.

At the same time, activities ranging from television specials to nationwide discussions, marches and public awareness raising events were held in some 100 countries under the theme, “The End Of Child Labour: Together We Can Do It!”, according to the ILO’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

“We see the progress, but still much more has to be done. If all of us – government, employers, workers, our sister organizations and mass media pool efforts, we’ll be able to eliminate this phenomenon. All of us have responsibility and are involved in a global march of eradicating child labour,” he said.

In May, the ILO presented its new report entitled “The End of Child Labour: Within Reach”. Moscow also hosted the presentation. On May 11 it was held at the UN Information Centre in Moscow. Taking part in the event were representatives of the Health and Social Development Ministry, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia, Coordinating Council of Employers Unions of Russia, UNICEF, EU, the Office of Children’s Rights Commissioner for Moscow, non-governmental organizations, child labour experts, mass media.

“At the current rate of decline, we'll be able to reduce child labour to zero by 2025,” said Mr. Milla. “We'll be able to eliminate this phenomenon. The only real child labour is that which occurs in the streets, because children cannot work as children. There are many children in the streets who do not want to be there, but are forced to work to survive.

In Russia, the number of child labourers has fallen by 11 percent or by 28 million. More encouraging is that the number of children trapped in hazardous work decreased by 28 percent,” the director of the Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Werner Blank, said in his opening remarks.

According to the report, Latin America and the Caribbean have seen the most rapid decline in child labour over the four-year period. The number of children at work in the region has fallen by two-thirds during that time, with just 5 per cent of children now engaged in work. With 26 per cent of the child population, or almost 50 million working children, the sub-Saharan African region has the highest proportion of children engaged in economic activities of any region in the world.

“Many have said child labour will always be with us,” said Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO. “But the global movement against child labour is proving wrong. That is the meaning of the symbolic waving of the Red Card against child labour – it’s not just a gesture, it’s a way to highlight our struggle for the right of every child to a real childhood.”

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“New ILO report shows marked reduction in child labour worldwide. According to the report, over the past four years the number of child labourers across the globe fell by 11 percent or by 28 million. More encouraging is that the number of children trapped in hazardous work decreased by 28 percent,” the director of the Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Werner Blank, said in his opening remarks.

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Russia ratified ILO’s two fundamental Conventions on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (182) and on Minimum Age (138).

Project Coordinator of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) Alexei Bukharov reported on child labour in Russia, mainly in St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region, where IPEC launched its projects back in 2000.

Alexei Bukharov pointed out that mainly homeless children and migrant children began to work at early age in Russia. Among the widespread worst forms of child labour in Russia he mentioned forced labour, prostitution, pornography, criminal activities as well as hazardous work. Pan-handling, utility waste collection, car-washing rank first in Moscow, while prostitution – seventh.

In the Volgograd region, a 2004 UN study found there were 7,000 child laborers working in the peak summer months. As many as 1,000 of those were engaged in prostitution. Bukharov showed a video that had been filmed last month of an IPEC center in St. Petersburg that helps children caught up in street life readjust to society. He said five such centers were operating in St. Petersburg and that more would open in the surrounding Leningrad region. IPEC opened a social service for street children and a rehabilitation centre for street girls in Vsevolozhsk and Prozersk.

“IPEC helped 1,000 street boys and girls in St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region return back to schools. The active work is now underway and the accumulated experience is being used in Russia’s other regions,” he said.

IPEC also launched new projects in the Volgograd region, the Republic of Udmurtia and in Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

All participants in the seminar were unanimous in the opinion that it is necessary to make joint efforts to eradicate child labour by adjusting the effective legislation and perfecting educational programmes to reach the goal set by the ILO – to abolish the worst forms of child labour by 2016.

Labour Ministry reestablished in Karelia

The 2004 administrative reform in Russia changed the structure of republican social ministries and departments. Karelia’s Health, Social Development and Sports Ministry has replaced the Labour and Social Development Ministry and the State Committee for Physical Culture and Sports.

Two years later the regional authorities decided to re-establish the Labour and Employment Ministry. At present, Karelia has two separate ministries – Health and Social Development Ministry and Labour and Employment Ministry in charge of OSH activities as well as the State Committee for sports and youth affairs.

The newly-established ministry began its work on June 1, 2006. Alexander Mukhin was appointed the republic’s Labour and Employment Minister.

The ILO is successfully implementing the OSH project in Karelia. There is much hope that the administrative reform will create a good basis for promoting the Decent Work Programme in Karelia and the republic itself will be a good pattern for other regions in Russia’s North-West to follow.
On April 28, Russia and countries of the Subregion marked for the four year running the World Day for Safety and Health at Work at the initiative of the International Labour Organization. This year’s theme is Decent Work, Safe Work, HIV/AIDS at work. The campaign began with a presentation of the ILO’s Report for the World Day for Safety and Health at Work. The Russian Ministry of Health and Social Development hosted the presentation. The report says that the global HIV epidemic threatens every aspect of the Decent Work Agenda and its capacity to help achieve sustainable development and poverty reduction. It reduces the supply of labour and undermines the livelihood of millions of workers and those who depend on them. Nine out of ten people living with HIV and AIDS are of working age.

The events conducted all over Russia during April were various and once again proved that regional administrations, employers and trade unions actively support ILO’s initiatives. The president of Udmurtia announced 2006 the Year of Safe Work in the republic to attract attention to OSH problems and reduce occupational accidents in the republic. The Sverdlovsk region opened exhibitions of individual protection clothes and footwear (the Tekhnoavia Spetsodezhda joint stock company) and of special electronic legal bases on OSH and environment (Tekhexpert), of equipment for improving microclimate of a workplace, of specialized literature and OSH legal acts. The Altai, Primorsky (Maritime) territories, the Kaliningrad, Samara, Kurgan, Tyumen, Arkhangelsk, Ivanovo, Novgorod, Krasnodar, Belgorod regions, the Republics of Tatarstan, Yakutia, Khakasia and Chuvashia conducted one-month OSH promoting activities. They organized OSH trainings, exhibitions of individual protection clothes and footwear, quizzes, roundtable meetings, contests for the best OSH enterprise, for the best workplace and summed up the results of programmes for improving OSH systems.

The OSH Day campaign was also very active in other countries of the subregion.

Armenia and the ILO sealed an agreement on creating a new OSH centre at the newly established Labour Inspection in Yerevan (Labor Inspection was set up 1.5 years ago). During his visit to Georgia the director of the ILO Moscow Office, Werner Blenk, took part in tree planting ceremony to commemorate those who died at work. Uzbekistan convened a parliamentary meeting devoted to the OSH Day with participation of tripartite partners. A local newspaper published comments of different OSH experts on the OSH situation in the republic. Kyrgyzstan within the framework of the ILO mission in May hosted a WIND seminar. Azerbaijan held multiple seminars and roundtable meetings with representatives of government, trade unions and employers that were covered by leading newspapers and TV channels. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Belarus also conducted different OSH activities with participation of tripartite partners.

It is worth noting that this year’s OSH activities were more large-scale and diverse than previous ones and we hope that this tradition will be maintained next year too.

Our new publications

We are pleased to present to our readers new publications of the ILO Moscow Office: a booklet based on materials of the technical experts’ meeting “Sharing good practices on targeting HIV/AIDS in the world of work in the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia” (Kiev, Ukraine, October 2005); a manual for transport sector on “HIV/AIDS in the world of work”; a Russian edition of the ILO’s information brochure “What is ILO and what it does”; and an English edition of the brochure “Start and Improve Your Business”. All the publications are available at www.ilo.ru or at the ILO Moscow Office.
In Brief

- The director of the Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Werner Blenk, took part in the fourth annual summit Business Against AIDS in Moscow on April 19. Over 100 Russian and foreign entrepreneurs, statesmen and representatives of international organizations discussed how the business community may help fight the HIV/AIDS and upgrade health system. They also focused on protection of employees and their economic interests as well as on prevention HIV/AIDS in business communities.

- The director of the Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia visited Azerbaijan from 23 April to 25 April 2006. The main objective of his mission was to discuss the possibility of signing a Decent Work Country Programme between the ILO and its national partners and implementation of one of the Programme’s priorities – youth employment.

- On May 1 around 2.5 million trade unionists took to the streets all over Russia demanding decent work and decent wages. Rallies and marches embraced 75 republics and regions and 850 cities and town in demand for higher wages, scholarships and pensions, for paying off wage arrears and reestablishing workers’ compulsory social insurance. After the May 1 rallies the chairman of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia, Mikhail Shmakov, briefed President Vladimir Putin on results of the campaign.

- On May 5-9, the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin, Italy, hosted a practical workshop for trade unionists on stronger governance of social security, mainly pension reform in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS.

- On May 17, experts representing workers, employers and governments, meeting at the International Labour Organization (ILO), adopted a new Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Underground Coalmines designed to improve the safety and health of those who are involved in one of the world’s highest risk activities. The new Code was adopted by 23 government, employer and worker experts. Following a six-day meeting here, the Code is to be submitted to the ILO’s Governing Body in November 2006 for endorsement. The Code takes into account organisations - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (C87), Minimum Age Convention (C138) and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (C182) – are not yet ratified.

- On June 12-14, Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan hosted the seminar entitled Trade Unions and Child Labour organized by the ILO, ACTRAV and IPEC. Taking part in the seminar were senior specialist on workers’ activities of the ILO Moscow Office Sten Toff Petersen, the director of the IPEC programme in Central Asia Lars Johansen and representatives of trade unions and employers’ associations. The seminar’s goal was to coordinate trade unions’ activities to eliminate child labour and its worst forms and expand cooperation with employers and the government.

- On June 9, the Russian State Duma and on June 23 the Federation Council ratified the ILO’s Seafarers’ Welfare Convention (C163). This Convention is very up-to-date taking into account specifics of seafarers’ five or eight-month-long tense labour on board sea-going ship. Its ratification will allow to adjust seafarers’ welfare services and facilities to common standards and improve seamen’s welfare at sea and in port.

Countries of the subregion: Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan occupies a vast area in the middle of Central Asia in the interfluve of Amudarya and Syrdarya Rivers. Uzbekistan is the country of ancient culture and architecture.

Travelers and tradesmen going by what was earlier known as the Great Silk Road were astounded by magnificent and beautiful works by architects of the East. Such cities as Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva deserve to be called the pearls of the East. There are over 4,000 historical monuments throughout the republic.

The Republic of Uzbekistan as other Central Asian countries is characterized by relatively young population and high share of economically active population (54 percent).

Uzbekistan’s agriculture, mainly cotton-growing, employs 34 percent of the labour force. Unemployment and underemployment are still very high, including in agriculture.

Largest foreign investments are injected in car-making industry (South Korea’s Daewoo) and aircraft-making (Russian and Ukrainian enterprises).

According to the State Statistics Committee, last year’s inflation in Uzbekistan made up 7.8 percent as against 3.7 percent year-on-year and the GDP growth rate – 7.9 percent.

In 2005, the number of small businesses grew by 31,500 to reach 310,000. The share of small enterprises in the GDP made up 38.2 percent. Small businesses employ 65 percent of all people of workable age. Small businesses account for 85 percent of newly created jobs.

Uzbekistan joined the ILO in 1992 and has ratified 11 Conventions since, including five fundamental ones since. Three remaining Conventions - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (C87), Minimum Age Convention (C138) and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (C182) – are not yet ratified.

In Uzbekistan the ILO implements in cooperation with the National Association of Business women the project on increasing competitiveness of employers’ organizations. It also translates into life the IPEC’s project on elimination of the worst forms of child labour and on combating human trafficking in Central Asia and the Russian Federation.