



Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Newsletter



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Dear All,

My assignment in this region starts shortly before the end of the year, at a time when we look back on the past year and make plans for the future. This is an auspicious moment.

For my family and myself changes have been radical indeed because we arrived in Moscow af-

ter five years in Southeast Asia and the Pacific – a region with a different history, culture and climate. But the cold winter cannot hide the gracious friendliness and warm hospitality that we meet here. We were right away enchanted by the beauty of the city of Moscow, its many lights, its creative atmosphere and cultural wealth. We are still in the midst of an entirely positive "culture" shock.

For me this is a time to listen and to meet colleagues and constituents in the subregion. Even to a newcomer it is evident that the countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia have considerable potential for further significant economic and social progress, a potential still to be fully unlocked in most countries. One key to progress is certainly functioning tripartism, with independent and strong social partners at its core.

It is our responsibility to support our constituents in the subre-

gion to find their own path forward, based on their development priorities. There can be no one-size-fits-all approach. I very much look forward to visiting the countries of the subregion in the foreseeable future for in-depth discussions on outcomes to be achieved. Maybe there is one overarching concern, shared by people everywhere: to have a decent job, with decent conditions - jobs that are created by healthy and strong economies.

Season's greetings to everyone, everywhere!

Werner Konrad Blenk
Subregional Director
for Eastern Europe
and Central Asia

ILO Governing Body concludes 294th session Considers forced labour in Myanmar, and strategies to promote fair globalization

GENEVA (ILO News) - On November 11 the Governing Body of the International Labour Office (ILO) concluded its 294th session following discussions by tripartite delegates on issues ranging from respect of basic labour rights in Myanmar, Cambodia, Colombia and other countries to strategies for new partnerships to promote a fair globalization.

The Governing Body's Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization discussed the consequences of the current international financial system for enterprises and workers, and how improved policy coherence between different international organizations, including the international financial agencies, could enhance growth, investment and decent work.

The Working Party welcomed the endorsement of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda at the UN 2005 World Summit held in September. Building on this, it discussed the idea of a Globalization

Policy Forum to be held in 2007 to which the tripartite ILO could invite key partners in the multilateral system and others sharing a commitment to advancing policies for a fair globalization and decent work for all.

Detailed proposals for a forum will now be prepared by the Director-General in consultation with the Officers of the Governing Body for the next meeting of the Working Party in March.

The Governing Body meeting also considered ILO activities in the field of employment promotion and social protection. This included an interactive session with Mr. Augusto B. Santos, Secretary of Socio-economic Planning, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) of the Philippines, and Ms. Patricia Santo Tomas, Secretary of Labour and Employment of the Philippines on the impact of the ILO's work with its constituents on employment policies.

As a follow up to the Resolution

concerning youth employment adopted by the 93rd session of the International Labour Conference in June 2005, the Governing Body examined plans for ILO action on youth employment.

Myanmar

The Governing Body expressed grave concern about the degradation of the situation in Myanmar. It firmly rejected attempts to influence the ILO's position through various forms of pressures and intimidation, including threats against the Liaison Officer in Yangon as well as announcements that the country was preparing to withdraw from the ILO.

The members of the Governing Body were particularly concerned and critical about a series of death threats, received by the ILO Liaison Officer as well as the former Acting Liaison Officer and Informal Facilitator, Mr. Leon de Riedmatten.

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The threats followed official and semi-official mass rallies and a media campaign against the ILO involvement in Myanmar which resulted in paralyzing the Liaison Officer's capacity to discharge his responsibilities.

The Governing Body requested urgently the authorities of Myanmar to guarantee that the Liaison officer can fully exercise his functions. In response to the readiness to cooperate, which was expressed by the government representative at the meeting, the Governing Body said that the government should take advantage of the time before the March 2006 session to resume an effective dialogue with the ILO.

This dialogue should be based on the mandate provided by the 2005 International Labour Conference. To be meaningful, it should also address the issues and cases raised in the debate. The Governing Body expressed particular concern about recent cases where individuals had been charged and sentenced for seeking redress on behalf of victims of forced labour.

The Governing Body conclusions specifically underlined that the authorities should cease prosecuting victims of forced labour and instead take action against those who perpetrated it.

Freedom of association

The Governing Body also approved the 338th and 339th reports of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association. At its November meeting, the Committee examined 40 cases. Altogether there are currently 128 cases before the Committee.

The Committee drew special attention to the case of **Cambodia** concerning anti-union discrimination and employer interference in respect of union representatives at the two Raffles hotels in the country. The Committee urged the Government to ensure, in cooperation with the employer, that the workers dismissed as a result of their legitimate trade union activities were reinstated without loss of wages and without delay.

The Committee also requested the

Government to ensure that the protection of workers' trade union rights was accompanied by efficient and enforceable procedures and that all workers who are subjected to anti-union discrimination have access to procedures that lead to final and binding decisions. According to the government, whose representative spoke at the adoption of the report, the dismissed had already been reinstated. The Committee will continue to examine the details of the case.

The Committee also drew the attention of the Governing Body to the cases of Colombia and Georgia.

In the case of **Colombia**, the Committee examined several cases, including allegations in a case relating to the murder of four trade union officials, the denial of trade union leave and violation of collective agreements in a number of enterprises, as well as the dismissal of union leaders and members. Regretting that no new information had been provided relative to the investigation of the murders of the four trade union officials, the Committee strongly urged the Government to take the necessary steps without delay to ensure that those responsible would be identified and adequately punished in the near future.

On 29 October, a High-Level International Labour Organization Tripartite Visit completed its week-long information gathering on freedom of association and labour relations matters in the country. It made a number of recommendations based on its essential findings that impunity with respect to violence against trade unionists continues to exist and that trade unions face several obstacles in law and practice to the full exercise of freedom of association.

The recommendations ask for a full commitment to ongoing tripartite dialogue on fundamental human rights, clear and extensive political will and provision of the necessary resources to combat the prevalent impunity; the rapid reactivation of existing tripartite institutions; and the establishment of a permanent ILO presence within the country to ensure a more sustainable programme to combat impunity and to collect all relevant and up-to-date information.

In the case of **Georgia**, the Committee dealt with allegations of government interference in internal union affairs and, in particular, a series of measures taken to force the Georgian Trade Union Amalgamation (GTUA) into turning all of its trade union property over to the State. The Committee requested the Government to return all trade union documents that had been seized and condemned the anti-union tactics, pressure and intimidation by the Government. Regretting that the Government had so far refused all dialogue in this regard with the GTUA and the Committee, the latter invited the Government to settle this question through constructive dialogue.

The Committee also examined measures taken by the Government of **Belarus** to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry in its report to the November 2004 session of the Governing Body. Observing that virtually no concrete measures had been taken by the Government to give meaningful effect to these recommendations, the Committee once again urged the Government to take specific steps for the full implementation of all of the Commission's recommendations and to provide detailed information in this regard. As requested by the International Labour Conference in June 2005, an ILO mission will visit the country on 16-19 January 2006 to make an assessment of the situation. ■

The Governing Body is the executive body of the International Labour Office (the Office is the secretariat of the Organization). It meets three times a year, in March, June and November and takes decisions on ILO policy, the agenda of the International Labour Conference and the draft Programme and Budget of the Organization for submission to the Conference.

It is composed of 56 titular members (28 Governments, 14 Employers and 14 Workers) and 66 deputy members (28 Governments, 19 Employers and 19 Workers). Ten of the titular government seats are permanently held by States of chief industrial importance (Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States). The other Government members are elected by the Conference every three years.

Creating an enabling environment for enterprises

From 7 to 13 September 2005, ILO constituents from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Russia were invited to Turin for a workshop on Enabling Environment for Entrepreneurship Promotion and SME (Small and Medium Enterprises) Development. The workshop was organised in the framework of two projects that are currently being implemented by the ILO Office in Moscow on promoting youth employment and increasing employability through skills development.

The ILO sees gender issues at the core of discussions of entrepreneurship and SME development, both in terms of access to resources, access to economic opportunities, access to markets, and access to decision-making and control mechanisms. A full day was dedicated to discussions of gender mainstreaming strategies, sharing of good practices and lessons learnt on how to create an enabling environment for women and men on entrepreneurship development.

Gender issues were also raised during the other technical sessions, especially when discussing how the specific concerns of both women and men should be taken into account by institutions providing business development services and entrepreneurial training.

“Many people still have stereotypical notions of what women and men should do and are able to do. Starting a business for example has traditionally been seen as a male domain, and few people have stopped to ask why. It is important to question such notions and to share experiences of how both women and men can successfully start and run a business” says Ms. Irina Melekh, Project Coordinator for an employability project in the ILO Office in Moscow. She also argues that “It is important to assist ILO constituents and partner institutions offering SME support to develop gendersensitive policies and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that women and men benefit equally from the new economic opportunities.” ■



Tver hosts forum on role of business in social sphere

On October 11-12 Tver hosted a seminar entitled *Development of Social Partnership in Russian Regions*. The role of business in social reforms was the focal theme on the agenda. The International Labour Organization and the Coordinating Council of Employers' Unions of Russia were the seminar's organizers.

The seminar brought together Tver region governor Dmitry Zelenin, Chairman of the Tver Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs Sergei Potapov, Tver region chief federal inspector Yuri Tseberganov, Chairman of the Coordinating Council of Employers' Unions of Russia Oleg Eremeyev, Chairman of the Federation of Trade Unions of Russia Mikhail Shmakov, the director of the Russian Social Development and Health Ministry's labour department, Alexander Safonov, the head of the Russian Economic Development and Trade Ministry's department on economic and social reforms' strategy, Said Batkibekov and representatives of employers' and trade unions' associations and the authorities from 20 Russian regions.

“We highly appreciate it that the Coordinating Council of Employers' Union of Russia chose Tver as the venue of this very important seminar,” Governor Dmitry Zelenin said in his opening remarks at a news conference on the eve of the seminar. “Social partnership is a topical issue both for Russia in general and for our region in particular. It implies an effective dialogue between employers, workers and authorities, which will help tackle all the issues that are high on the agenda, such as labour resources, economic growth, remuneration of labour, the fight with unemployment and migration processes.”

“In 28 Russian regions it is representatives of regional administrations that

sign tripartite agreements regulating socio-labour relations on behalf of the employers, which shows that both social partnership and regional employers' associations are still in the embryonic stage,” Oleg Yermeyev said.

“Fortunately, this is not the case in our region,” Zelenin said. “We have set up a tripartite commission on the regulation of socio-labour relations between the administration, employers' associations and trade unions, and this solution has proved successful.”

“The government will be unable to cope with such issues as the pension reform, social insurance, labour migration and education reform on their own,” Eremeyev said. “We already boast operational mechanisms of social partnership. This is a product of joint efforts by the government, employers and trade unions to draft a coordinated version of the Labour Code. Practice shows that social partnership can be effective only if all participants bear equal responsibility. Therefore, the General Agreement between the employers' associations, trade unions and the government was supplemented with a special protocol in 2005. It specifies obligations each of the parties takes on,” he said.

Participants in the seminar also discussed international experience in building effective social policies and effective socio-labour relations. For this purpose ILO expert Christian Hess (ILO Headquarters in Geneva) and director-general of Employers' Association of Cologne (Germany) Wolfgang Röss were invited. ■

By information of the Tver region administration's press-centre



Appointments

On September 30, 2005 Yevgeny Semenenko was appointed by President's Decree Labour and Social Protection Minister of Kyrgyzstan.

Mr. Semenenko started his career as an electrician at a service centre. Then he worked as a fitter at the Cholpon footwear factory. During the Soviet times he held senior posts in the Young Communist League (Komsomol), including the position of second secretary of the Kyrgyz YCL's Central Committee. From

1992 he worked at the republic's council of trade unions' voluntary sports association. In 1994, Mr. Semenenko was appointed head of the Kyrgyz Foreign Ministry's diplomatic service, which was renamed into the state-run enterprise of diplomatic service in 2000. In 2005, he worked for the private construction firm “MBM-Stroi”.

Mr. Semenenko graduated from the history department of the Kyrgyz State University, the economics department of Kyrgyzstan's Skryabin Agricultural Institute and the Academy of Public Sciences.

He was awarded the Order of Honour and the medal For Distinguished Labour

Merits. He has a good command of English. Married with two children.

Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia Friedrich Buttler congratulated Yevgeny Semenenko on his appointment and wished him every success in discharging his new duties. ■



World AIDS Day—2005

On December 1 the world commemorated the World AIDS Day. Different events had been organized on this Day. They range from a series of public events designed to mobilize support for workplace activities against HIV/AIDS, to the launch of a number of new products aimed at providing the best examples of ways to prevent or manage the disease and its impact.

“The workplace must play a strategic role in the fight against HIV/AIDS”, said ILO Director-General Juan Somavia, in a statement on HIV/AIDS in the world of work issued for the World AIDS Day. “It is a fight not only against the ravages of a disease but also against discrimination, intolerance, misconceptions and fear.” He

pointed out that the workplace is a vital platform for reaching communities attempting to deal with the epidemic.

“Through the workplace we can protect people’s lives and livelihoods by providing information and education, care and support”, Mr. Somavia said.

“The workplace is also key in protecting the rights of those infected or affected. And equally importantly, through workplace action we can send a strong message of hope: that women and men with HIV/AIDS can continue to live actively and work productively for many years, especially with care, support and treatment.”

The ILO has played a significant role in the global campaign against HIV/AIDS

through its expertise on issues in the world of work.

The ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS in the World of Work, adopted in 2001, has become the global standard for dealing with HIV/AIDS in the workplace. From July 2005 to July 2006, the ILO is chairing the highest decision-making body of UNAIDS, the Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations (CCO).

The ILO Subregional office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia has also been very active and consistent in promoting ILO principles and approaches to HIV/AIDS and the world of work. In this issue we will tell our readers about several projects implemented by our office. ■

ILO project successfully completed

In 2002 the ILO launched in two pilot regions – the Altai Krai (Territory) and Volgograd region - its own component of the project *Comprehensive Partnership Strategies for HIV/STI Prevention among Young People in the Russian Federation*. The project was implemented in cooperation with five other UN agencies - UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC and WHO and the UK Department for International Development. Among federal partners were the Russian Health and Social Development Ministry, Federal Labour and Employment Service, Education Ministry and Federal Agency for Education, among regional – administrations of the Altai territory and Volgograd region, local centres on prevention and struggle against HIV/AIDS, the Altai State University and the Volgograd Medical University. Within its project component the ILO trained specialists for employment centers and colleges in HIV/AIDS prevention techniques. In 2005, the ILO project was completed by two final conferences in Volgograd (September 29) and Belokurikha (October 4).

Belokurikha, a town in the Altai territory, brought together for a final conference around 100 teachers, medical workers, psychologists, inspectors and directors of employment centres, representatives of the Federal Labour and Employment Service, the Federal Agency for Education and the administration of the Altai territory. They discussed the results of the ILO’s project.

“ILO’s project component is aimed at training specialists for employment cen-

tres and colleges of the Altai territory commissioned to prevent HIV/AIDS among students and provide young people with information and medical services. Two vocational schools in Barnaul and Biisk each and 65 employment centres became venues of the project,”- Maria Yegorova, specialist of the Altai Krai center on prevention and struggle against HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STI), said.

The ILO in cooperation with specialists of the Altai territory published a manual “Your Health” for college students participating in the project. “A one-year course included information on personal hygiene, healthy diet and lifestyle, family planning as well as such themes as violence, alcoholism, drug-use and smoking. After the course, students passed tests, which showed that their awareness of the topics discussed grew by 15-20 percent,” Maria Yegorova said.

There were also such booklets as “Health of an adolescent” and “Your safety is in your hands. Healthy person has more chances for employment”, as well as posters “Drugs: facts only”, “HIV/AIDS: facts only”, “STI: facts only”. Several jingles on HIV/AIDS problems were created in cooperation with the Moscow Fund of Independent Radio Broadcasting and were disseminated to employment centres of the Altai territory and Volgograd region.

“We also organized seminars both for students and trainers of vocational schools. They watched films on HIV/AIDS and discussed problems and shared their points of view,” Maria Ye-

gorova said.

Your Health manual and other accompanying materials have been tested and approved by the Russian Ministry of Education and Science.

Forty-five psychologists, 62 inspectors and 65 directors of employment centres, specialists and senior officials of the Altai territory’s department of the State Employment Service underwent training at employment institutions. The Federal Service on Labour and Employment worked out, tested and send to Russia’s regions a Concept of raising staff’s awareness of HIV/AIDS and health as a labour resource.

Participants in the **Volgograd** conference noted that the ILO’s project contributed to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment in the region.

International experts pointed to visible results of the project’s implementation and said that funds earmarked for the project were properly used. According to specialists, this year in January-August in the two pilot regions the number of new registered HIV/AIDS cases reduced.

Foreign partners have allocated 1.5 million U.S. dollars to set up vocational medical institutions, select and train specialists.

They highly assessed the programme and expressed readiness to continue this work and bring experience not only to the two pilot regions (the Altai territory and Volgograd region), but also to the rest of Russia and the CIS. ■

ILO/AIDS Director calls to make workplaces “Centres of Hope” in responding to HIV/AIDS

On October 11-12 Kiev hosted a seminar entitled “Experience exchange and good practices of interventions on HIV/AIDS in the world of work in the region of eastern Europe and Central Asia.” The meeting discussed better integrated responses to the epidemic in the CIS countries.

“We need to reach out to every workplace to invest in education and information thus intensifying all ongoing prevention efforts. Awareness and evidence-based information are prerequisites for effective and successful responses to HIV/AIDS”, said Dr. Sophia Kisting, Director of the ILO Program on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work at a regional meeting here today. In the CIS countries, the HIV/AIDS epidemic unfolds at a similar speed as their labour markets and social infrastructures are comparable. The latest data from 75 countries suggest that AIDS costs more than half a percent of per capita growth every year. It is estimated that in Europe and Central Asia at least 2 million people are living with HIV/AIDS. According to ILO estimates, 80 per cent of HIV infections in the CIS region concern economically active workers. In 2003, the number of HIV infected persons in the Russian Federation alone was almost 40 times higher than in 1997 – one of the fastest growth rates of the pandemic worldwide. The ILO estimates that – if such growth continues – the country’s



Dr. Sophia Kisting, Director of the ILO Program on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work

working population may decrease by 1.1 million in 2015, and by 2.1 million in 2050.

“AIDS directly undermines the foundations of development.” said Dr. Kisting.

The main determinant of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is the current socio-economic situation in the CIS region. Widespread poverty has resulted in deteriorating people’s health. In turn, AIDS has the potential to deepen poverty and increase inequalities. Poverty and HIV/

AIDS reinforce each other, creating a vicious circle. In addition, migration, which is prevalent in many countries, is another important factor contributing to the spread of the epidemic.



Opening speech by Ivan Sakhan, Ukrainian Minister of Labour and Social Policy

Finally, transition modes have changed over time: the steadily growing number of heterosexually transmitted new infections shows that the epidemic begins to spread across the entire population.

Dr. Kisting emphasized the role of care and treatment as an essential part of prevention. Where applicable, we must ensure access to confidential treatment centres as part of workplace programmes, she said.

The meeting brought together business, labour and government representatives from the CIS region to exchange best practices in the fight against HIV/AIDS and discuss better integrated responses to the epidemic. Participants noted the need to reach a critical mass of response to the epidemic based on effective coordination and partnership between governments, workers and employers.

As detailed information of the impact of HIV/AIDS on the world of work is still very limited in the CIS countries and not enough studies have yet been done, the ILO, in collaboration with national partners has embarked on various workplace programs on HIV/AIDS in the region.

In Ukraine a project called “Catalytic Activities in the World of Work” helped to raise awareness of the tripartite constituents on HIV/AIDS and promote workplace prevention programmes at the enterprise level. Provisions related to HIV/AIDS prevention and non-discrimination of workers living with HIV/AIDS were included in collective agreements at all levels, in the new draft Labour Code and in the National Programme on HIV/AIDS Prevention.

In the Zakarpatsky region, Ukraine, the ILO has implemented HIV/AIDS prevention programmes at four local enterprises from different sectors at risk, including health services and tourism. The businesses signed a joint Declaration of Intent on HIV/AIDS prevention and non-discrimination of workers living with HIV/AIDS. Another one-year project in Ukraine promotes partnership between local authorities, employers, trade unions, businesses and NGOs.

An ILO/US Department of Labour project in the Russian Federation assists a number of pilot enterprises from different sectors in the Moscow and Murmansk regions in developing non-discriminatory HIV/AIDS policies. The project could be replicated in other regions of the country, as well as in other CIS states.

In prevention the ILO focuses above all on youth, who hold the promise of learning safe behavior. A project covering the Volgograd region and the Altai Krai (Territory) of Russia addresses young people and students.

In collaboration with GTZ, the German technical cooperation agency, ILO/AIDS has implemented a number of awareness raising activities, including



the translation of ILO Code of Practice into Russian, Armenian, and Ukrainian with more languages to follow; and encouraging local research in the areas identified by constituents. The ILO/GTZ project focuses also on capacity-building to strengthen tripartite constituents as part of the national response to HIV/AIDS.

In his opening speech at the meeting in Kiev Ukrainian Minister of Labour and Social Policy Ivan Sakhan said: “Before HIV/AIDS was considered a purely medical problem. Now, thanks to the ILO efforts, we have realized that it is a complex social and labour issue. It is a global challenge, and we need to respond to it”. ■



Initiative leads the way

We continue to brief our readers on the highlights of the ILO's Start and Improve Your Business programme that marks its tenth anniversary in the region.

Experience shows that the SIYB programme's success in this or that region depends not only on the knowledge of trainers and master-trainers, the high quality of the program supported by ILO's years-long experience and the diversity of business development courses, but quite frequently on the initiative of a concrete person. The example of the city of Belgorod, in Western Russia, is very telling in this respect.

In the early 1990-s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union nine families of forced migrants left Tajikistan and came to Russia, determined to find jobs and start life anew.

"We have been through so many difficulties while looking for jobs and obtaining registration at a new place. Then we decided to set up an organization that would help us and other people like us solve our problems," the head of the Vera (Faith) women migrant organization, Leniza Umerkina said. "People in a difficult life situation should not lose hope that they may find a better life in Russia. But that is a kind of life they are to build with their own hands, including by starting their own business. We believed all the way that we would succeed and would not give

up, and this was the reason why we called our organization Vera (Faith)," she said.

In 2000, Leniza Umerkina, SIYB master-trainer Olga Lunina and other representatives of seven non-governmental migrant organizations from Belgorod, Voronezh and Lipetsk underwent SIYB trainings organized by the ILO in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Since then they have trained others and improved their own skills.

The Belgorod State University's Strategic Initiative innovation and technological centre chaired by Ivan Sukhorukov also contributes to the development of small and medium-sized businesses in the Belgorod region. Five years ago the centre was granted an abandoned building of what once was the Elektrokontakt electric equipment plant. Now 170 different small and medium-sized businesses work there, and the SIYB courses have been opened. They have brought together entrepreneurs of different level and skill – from beginners to well-established ones.

"It all began with the initiative of the women migrant organization Vera, and we joined it," Sukhorukov said. "At present, we and Vera are partners. To implement the SIYB programme 1.3 million roubles have already been allocated. One million of this sum is the money raised by leasing the region's

public property, and another 300,000 roubles have been donated by the International Labour Organization."

"So far, the Belgorod region is Russia's only region working with ILO's unique programmes - "Start and Improve Your Business" and "Know About Business". These business courses were supported by the regional administration. Over the SIYB five-year work in Belgorod, 600 people took these courses, including 130 students of Belgorod's universities and colleges. According to recent surveys, one-third of those who attended the courses started their own businesses and the others found good jobs.

Business schools have already been opened in four more towns of the Belgorod region – Shchebekino, Yakovlevo, Valuiki and Sary Oskol, where on the basis of the Employment Centre jobless people and new entrepreneurs started to learn the ABCs of business. Vera and the Strategic Initiative innovation centre in cooperation with the ILO and with the support from Belgorod region governor plan to organize SIYB courses in other districts to give people an opportunity to start their own businesses, and help their dreams come true. ■

By information of the Belgorodskaya Pravda daily

The world without strangers

On November 17, 2005, the Hungarian Cultural Centre hosted an awarding ceremony for winners in the All-Russian contest of children's photos "The world without strangers" (migration problem as children see it). The contest was organized within the framework of the New Eurasia Foundation's programme "Development of inter-ethnic relations and settlement of migration problems in Russia's regions".

The jury selected nine winners in different nominations. The winners visited master classes by famous photographers such as Leo Kandl (Austria), Yuri Rost (Russia), and Levan Paatashvili as well as by stu-



ILO's prize goes to Alina Akhokas

dents and teachers of the Moscow International Film School.

Project's sponsors and partners

took part in the awarding ceremony. The ILO Moscow Office was among the contest's sponsors. The head of the ILO's project "Combating human trafficking and its forced labour outcomes in Central Asia and the Russian Federation", Sten Petersen, presented a digital photo camera Canon Digital IXUS 700 to ten-year old Alina Akhokas from Petrozavodsk, who won the nomination For Special Vision of the World.

Each winner got personal congratulations. Famous Hungarian jazz musician Istvan Grenco concluded the ceremony with his performance. ■



Safe Work – Good Business!

From November 29 to December 2 the All-Russia Exhibition Centre in Moscow hosted the 9th international specialized exhibition Occupational Safety and Health-2005. It was organized by the Russian Health and Social Development Ministry and the association of designers, manufacturers and providers of personal protective equipment. Taking part in the exhibition were 223 organizations from Russia's 59 cities, including 10 foreign companies from the U.S., Germany, France, Switzerland, Finland, Italy, Slovakia, Latvia, Ukraine and Belarus.

The conference entitled Occupational Safety Economics was held within the framework of the exhibition. The ILO was represented by the coordinator of the project on improving occupational safety in the North-West Region of Russia, Roman Litvyakov. He delivered a report entitled "Lower Risks – Lower Costs. Real Cost of Occupational Accidents."



"The most important strategic task of our project is to raise Russian employers' awareness of occupational safety and health. This will contribute to the protection of workers' life and health and successful economic development," he said. "Within the framework of the ILO project we are working out an algorithm for estimating real costs of work-related diseases and accidents. As a result a universal calculator of costs will be created, which will allow an employer to easily estimate potential costs of occupational accidents. In creating the calculator we rely on world-recognized calculation methods used in Great Britain, Canada and the European Union. We also cannot put up with Russia's current system of compensations for hazardous working conditions. These are direct costs born by the whole society that are never recovered."

"World experience proves that organizations with high occupational safety standards are most prosperous irrespective of their size or the industrial sector they work in. Management of such companies pays great attention to costs from work-related accidents and puts this sector under effective control. The slogan "Safe Work – Good Business!" is very up-to-date. A modern Russian employer should clearly understand the gains to be derived from providing employees with safe and healthy working conditions," Litvyakov said. ■

We work as a network

Interview with Wiking Husberg, OSH Senior Specialist of the ILO Office in Moscow

When I began to work here in the mid 90s, one of the first things I noticed was a huge language barrier. There were hundreds, even thousands of OSH specialists in Russia, but as good as they were they did not know what was going abroad, but there was also the other side of the coin – the English speaking specialists were not aware of what was going on in Russia.

That brought us to start a large-scale programme for translating OSH publications from foreign languages into Russian. The main breakthrough was the Encyclopedia on Occupational Safety and Health that was translated from English into Russian by the Russian Labour Ministry with the financial assistance of the ILO. It was a huge and painstaking team work, as the Encyclopedia consists of 12,000 pages! Labour ministry specialists from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus as well as experts from St. Petersburg have been invited to translate separate chapters. Now the Encyclopedia is available as a printed version, on the web (www.safework.ru) and CD-rom. We have already disseminated about 2,000 CD-roms of the Encyclopedia in the CIS countries. The thing is that not all the CIS countries have fast access to Internet and it is much easier for them to have and print out publications from CD. Another problem is how to translate from Russian into English as there are many interesting researches and publications in the region.

The second important work after the Encyclopedia is the Bookshelf of Safe-Work, where we have all publications on OSH and update them twice a year. At present, the Bookshelf has 100 publications translated into Russian – approximately 15,000 pages.

To familiarize people with ILO's translated materials, our Russian colleagues created Virtual Academy of Safe-work, where we have all ILO conventions and recommendations, all the new codes of practice related to occupational safety and health, all training materials, world safety publications and the whole range of materials that are relevant for Russia and the CIS.

This year was also productive — we translated and published such publications as ILO World OSH Day Reports "Prevention: a Global Strategy (2005) and "Safe Work and Safety Culture" (2004), brochure "Social Partnership and OSH", training material "Safety, health and welfare on construction sites", brochure "Labour Inspection. Conventions 81,129". I should like to especially mention a brochure entitled "Workers' Right to Accident Compensation", which was released

in Russian, Armenian, Azeri, Georgian and Tajik languages at the same time.

On October 26-27 in Taraz, Kazakhstan, we held a seminar on the Kazakh labour inspection audit. The ILO suggested to print the safety management system ILO OSH 2001 in the Kazakh language. This standard should be introduced at the republic's medium and large enterprises. As of January 2006 the Kazakh version of the Okhrana Truda (Occupational Safety) monthly journal will be printed in the Republic

OSH specialists from the ILO, Russia and other countries of the region work as a network where we jointly plan our activities. We have three OSH information centres in Russia and we are in the process to set up such centres in each CIS country. In Azerbaijan, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan the centres are already operational. ■



New publications

On New Year Eve's we published a Russian version of the ILO information leaflet, which contains the key information about our organization, and the ILO Moscow calendar – 2006. Pages of the Calendar are devoted to different activities of the ILO. Both publications are available at the ILO Moscow Office.



In Brief

■ On September 22-23 the Legislative Assembly of the Irkutsk region hosted a roundtable meeting entitled “**Social Partnership in Russia**”. It was organized within the framework of the European Union project on Social Partnership. Labour Legislation and Arbitration. Expert on Social Dialogue of the ILO Moscow Office Martina Krichmayr represented the ILO. “Social dialogue is always in the focus of our attention. It is the valuable tool for reaching a consensus as regards the adjustment of labour laws and measures necessary to raise work efficiency of the state and private enterprises in the real economy sector,” she said. The Deputy Speaker of the regional Legislative Assembly, Dmitry Bashmayev, said in his opening remarks that such seminars are held all around Russia. “The main thing is to create a rostrum on the basis of the Legislative Assembly for discussing social partnership and labour relations,” he said.

■ On October 26-27 Taraz, Kazakhstan, hosted a **seminar on the Kazakh labour inspection audit**. It brought together representatives of Labor Ministries, employers’ associations and trade unions and chief inspectors from Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. OSH senior specialist of the ILO Moscow Of-

fice Wiking Husberg attended. The seminar promoted Convention 167 on OSH in Construction. “Ratification of this Convention is very important for Kazakhstan, which faces a construction boom, as well as for other CIS countries, where the construction sector is on the rise,” he said. Wiking Husberg also called on the seminar’s participants “to introduce safety management systems, such as the ILO OSH 2001 standard, at medium and large enterprises.”

■ From November 30 to December 2 Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, hosted a seminar on the development of social partners and partner organizations’ opportunities entitled “**Policy of Equal Opportunities**”. It brought together over 35 tripartite partners from the CIS. The ILO was represented by project coordinator of the ILO Subregional Office Irina Melekh. “The seminar was aimed at familiarizing tripartite constituents and relevant partner organizations in Kyrgyzstan with the ILO gender policy, key equality conventions/recommendations as well as promoting equality in their policies and practical actions. We also managed to identify major areas of cooperation with the ILO in promoting gender equality and priorities for 2006-2007.”

■ On December 19-21 a seminar on **International Labour Standards and the Social Dialogue Development in Russia** was held at

the Marriott Aurora Hotel in Moscow. It was organized by the ILO upon the request of the State Duma (Parliament). Taking part in the seminar were the Director of the ILO Moscow Office, Mr. Werner Konrad Blenk, Director of the ILO’s International Labour Standards Department, Ms. Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry, Chairman of the State Duma Committee on Labour and Social Policy, Andrei Isayev, representatives of the Russian Health and Social Development Ministry, employers’ and workers’ associations. Participants discussed the role of the International Labour Standards (ILS) for sustainable development of the Russian economy, national labour legislation and the role of ILS for improving labour relations. In his opening statement Mr. Blenk noted that labour standards are the models of social organization that help us find the balance between flexibility and security. The Russian Federation has made much progress in this sphere and ratified a total of 60 ILO Conventions, including eight key ones. At the same time there are areas, particularly migration and social security, where the ratification of international labour standards could help the country formulate a national policy. Today all of us – parliament, government, employers and workers – should pool efforts in working out and implementing labour standards for successful and sustainable development of the country, Werner Blenk said.



Countries of the subregion: Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is the largest country in Central Asia. During the past two decades the country shows a considerable economic growth by all indicators.

Wages have grown by 26 percent on average and per capita income – by 33 percent. Investments into the processing sector made up



Capital of Kazakhstan – Astana

2.5 billion U.S. dollars. Kazakhstan faces good perspectives thanks to its oil wealth.

Oil extraction and oil-related construction, transportation, and processing accounted for more than 16 percent of GDP in 2004, and fuel and oil products made up 63 percent of exports.

Despite Kazakhstan being the sixth largest country worldwide in terms of the size of its



The Kolsai Lakes

live in poverty.

In 2003-2005 the government implementing the Programme for Poverty Reduction, and the proportion of people living below subsistence level decreased from 35% in 1996 to 19% in 2004.

Kazakhstan joined the ILO in 1993 and since then has ratified 16 ILO Conventions. The republic became the first Decent Work Pilot Country in the CIS.

Under the Decent Work Country programme Kazakhstan is upgrading labour administration, strengthening the OSH system and eliminating the worst forms of child labour (WFCH) and HIV/AIDS at work place.

grasslands, many of the 6 million people who depend on these resources for their livelihood,

The government pays special attention to youth employment. The State Fund of youth policy development helps young people to find jobs organizing fairs of vacancies, vocational training courses and students’ construction teams. The ILO implements its project Increasing Employability of Disadvantaged Young Men and Women in the Caucasus and Central Asia in Taldykorgan, the Almaty region.

Kazakhstan became the first country –



non-member of the European Union – to audit its national system of labour inspections in November-December 2004 under an agreement with the ILO and in cooperation with the International Association of Labour Inspectors.



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