

# **INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)**

## **Support to NEPAD**

**Period of Report: August 2004 to April 2005**

### **ILO's work in support of NEPAD**

The major contribution of ILO to NEPAD is two-fold. First, ILO assists in integrating employment into NEPAD as a key objective that should be more explicitly articulated. Second, ILO contributes to the integration of social objectives into NEPAD by showing how employment promotion, social protection and poverty reduction can be approached in an integrated and mutually reinforcing manner.

ILO interacts with the NEPAD Secretariat in the following major areas:

- Employment strategy that enhances productivity in today's global economy: expansion of trade and FDI, promotion of the Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work so as to make globalization work for all as described in detail in the World Commission Report on the Social Dimension of Globalization (February 2004); technological innovation, ICT, entrepreneurial initiative and higher levels of investment for the growth of enterprises in the context of the core labour standards, etc.
- ILO has several programmes dealing with human resources development, such as imparting skills that are directly relevant to employment and income generation. ILO is co-chair of the Cluster on Human Resources Development, Employment and HIV/AIDS (Convener: UNICEF). ILO/Pretoria has taken part in the Coordination of UN support for NEPAD under the cluster.
- The ILO Decent Work programme entails poverty reduction through labour intensive projects, training for rural, non-farm activities, protection of labour standards in commercial agriculture, rehabilitation programmes following natural disasters and cessation of political conflicts, and promotion of cooperatives. Infrastructure development is specifically an area of ILO's well known comparative advantage. ILO's regional ASIST programme clearly demonstrates links between employment creation and poverty reduction, a key element emerging from NEPAD's strategic areas and the Plan of Action recently adopted on the occasion of the AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Reduction in Africa. A Framework of Collaboration between NEPAD and ILO/ASIST is being considered for signature.
- ILO's involvement in country employment policy reviews and in the PRSP process comprises assistance to strengthen the capacities of social partners to actively participate in the PRSP formulation process, and in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of PRSPs, as well as technical support and input to the PRSP formulation itself.
- In the area of labor migration, a major feature of ILO's work is the articulation and launching of an ILO "African Labour Migration Policy Initiative", to provide a coherent approach and an operational framework for relevant activity in the region. Migrant Workers was the subject of the General Discussion of the International Labour Conference in 2004.
- ILO attempts to mainstream gender into all its activities and seeks to enhance the gender

- mainstreaming capacity of ILO constituents.
- The Decent Work objectives also provide a necessary environment for the initiation and execution of sustainable development programmes based on consultation, participation and social stability, using the unique tripartite structure of the organization. Besides support to social partners at national level, ILO provides assistance to African regional and sub-regional structures of the social partners: Pan-African Employers Confederation (PEC), International Confederation of the Trade Unions (ICFTU), Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU), ODESTA, etc.
- ILO supports the on-going regional and sub-regional integration process by helping strengthen existing sub-regional and regional structures. ILO plays a special role in promoting dialogue within and among regional and sub-regional institutions in a number of areas including tackling the social dimensions of economic reforms, strengthening the capacity of sub-regional institutions to adopt common approaches to critical development issues such as globalization, access to market, harmonization of labour standards and business codes, etc. On-going dialogue and assistance is taking place with: ECA, UEMOA, ECOWAS (West Africa), SADC (Southern Africa), AMU (North Africa) ECCAS (Central Africa), EAC (East Africa).

### **AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa**

As a follow-up to the decision of the 37<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU (Lusaka, July 2001), and at the initiative of President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, AU Heads of State decided to organize a first-of-its-kind Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa.

The Summit took place in Ouagadougou (September 2004) and produced a Declaration, a Plan of Action and a Follow-up Mechanism. That paved the way for placing employment at the centre of economic and social policies and will enrich and consolidate NEPAD with social considerations. The ILO is committed to support the AU, RECs and member States in their implementation of national/regional action plans as follow-up to the Summit.

ILO in Africa operates at national, sub-regional and regional levels in a unique manner by addressing them through two-track channels: ILO's unique tripartite structure and the UN System. That means that ILO tripartite social partners (Governments, Employers and Workers) and the civil society, notably the informal economy, are involved in any development agenda.

### **Collaboration with other UN agencies in support of NEPAD**

The two-track channel approach gives ILO good access to socio-political decision-making level through our tripartite partners' involvement as well as enhanced performance in technical assistance delivery through the UN System.

The preparation of the Issues Paper, submitted by the ILO in collaboration with 15 UN Agencies as a key technical document for the Extraordinary Summit, has been a practical exercise of policy coherence at work. It has served to re-center our views on job creation which reduces poverty, and clearly established links between growth, investment, employment creation and decent work.

The UN Country Team (UNCT) constitutes a good entry point and can play a catalyst role for follow-up of the Summit's decisions. In post-Summit UNCT meetings, debriefing is on-going. The Issues Paper provides a blueprint for UNCTs to support in a coherent manner the national action plans as well as Presidential/National Employment Summits where they will be organized (for example, in Ghana and Nigeria). This process will also help to build on interagency collaboration and partnership in promoting coherence towards supporting the implementation of national/regional Action Plan.

### **Institutional support to the NEPAD secretariat**

ILO considers itself as a faithful partner in the operationalisation of NEPAD and the promotion of growth and development in the African continent, and the Decent Work approach is its key instrument in this respect. ILO wishes also to help NEPAD to assess the job creation potential of its priority areas (energy, transport, education, infrastructure, etc) and to devise appropriate tools and policies for promoting a pro-active use of employment creation in the fight against poverty.

The NEPAD Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in October 2004 (attended by the ILO Africa Region Director) had significant implications on the current developments for ILO. A major challenge is to find a clearly defined "niche" for cooperation and partnership between NEPAD and ILO. ILO was not featured in the reports presented and employment/decent work seem to have no place in the NEPAD Agenda.

The existing cooperation between ILO and AU, especially in relation to the process and outcome of the recent Ouagadougou Summit on Poverty and Employment, should serve to map the cooperation between the two institutions. NEPAD was involved with the Ouagadougou process and had worked with ILO from an early stage at the Addis Ababa ILO 10<sup>th</sup> Regional Meeting (Dec. 2003) and in Maputo AU Summit (July 2003). NEPAD also acknowledges that the World Commission Report on Globalization is in line with NEPAD's thinking. NEPAD has also engaged ILO-AIDS in relation to HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

A more detailed framework for ILO/NEPAD cooperation could be developed within the framework of the AU, since NEPAD is an AU programme of action. In broad terms, ILO would bring comparative advantage in mainstreaming decent work into NEPAD and bringing on board ILO social partners as well as social dialogue which is in tandem with the NEPAD spirit of transparency, consultation and participation. The value of bringing the job content into the African Peer Review Mechanism would also add value to the notion of peace and security, democracy and governance.

The ILO experience in gender mainstreaming including gender auditing is also likely to add value through the ILO/NEPAD cooperation. Other areas of cooperation are: migration, meeting MDGs, youth employment. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NEPAD and the ILO detailing main areas of cooperation is envisaged. More discussions on this issue with the NEPAD Secretariat will take place in early 2005.