

## Recent policy statements

Based on the gender mainstreaming strategy for the ILO Decent Work Agenda adopted in 2000, the five ILO regional offices have developed policy statements and strategies. These were designed for the ILO world of work context, and are based on the 1997 definition of gender mainstreaming of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Gender equality is a cross-cutting issue of the ILO four strategic aims: rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue. For the first time, gender equality was adopted as one of the Organization's operational objectives in the *ILO Programme and Budget for 2004-2005*. Indicators for the objective aim to measure progress of ILO tripartite constituents—governments, trade unions and employers' organizations—in taking positive action to increase gender equality in the world of work. These indicators focus on the ratification and application of four key international labour conventions for gender equality (discrimination, equal remuneration, maternity protection and workers with family responsibilities), as well as balanced representation of women and men at decision-making levels, including in ILO governance institutions, meetings and training activities.

## Operational activities

The first ILO Gender Audit, which took place from October 2001 to April 2002, reviewed implementation of the gender mainstreaming policy of the Office. The audit was the first ever such participatory gender audit by a UN system organization. A final report (on the ILO Gender Equality Tool website) found many good practices in gender mainstreaming. It also made recommendations to meet the need for ongoing capacity building on gender concepts, and the practical "how to" of mainstreaming. The second ILO Gender Audit—currently underway—is also based on a participatory and learning approach at the individual, work unit and organizational level. The participatory gender audit methodology will also be used by the UN agencies working in Zimbabwe for them to conduct in 2003 a collective gender review of their work.

Another initiative taken by the ILO is an inter-regional project on enhancing the gender mainstreaming capacity of ILO tripartite constituents. The project, launched in March 2001, is taking place in China, Nepal, Uganda and Tanzania. Through the project, strategies are being designed to promote gender equality in national and organizational contexts. Good practices and lessons learned are being shared. Tools and guidelines useful for mainstreaming gender in other national contexts are also being produced.

Additional resources have also been allocated to assist governments, and employers' and worker's organizations to design and implement their own gender policies and strategies. Projects and activities will be executed in 26 countries around the world. For example, the ILO tripartite constituents in the Russian Federation and Yemen are preparing gender equality action plans. More gender capacity building activities are being held in Bolivia, China and Uganda. Efforts are being made to strengthen the gender dimension in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) processes in Morocco and Iran. And an ILO tool kit and guidelines are being developed for wide dissemination.

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Other ILO work aimed at addressing the gender dimensions of poverty cover a wide range of issues and processes. Concerning the UN Millennium Development Goals, ILO is responsible for providing data and analysis on the indicator on women in non-agricultural paid employment under goal three on promoting gender equality and empowering women. ILO promotes the collection of sex-disaggregated data in its assistance to enhance national statistical capacity.

ILO is working to expand income opportunities for women entrepreneurs by improving their business skills and access to resources. The ILO Gender, Poverty and Employment (GPE) is a training programme designed to build capacity to analyze the inter-relationships between these issues and incorporate them into poverty alleviation strategies. Particular efforts are being made to strengthen the gender aspects of the ILO Jobs in Africa and ILO/AIDS programmes.

HIV/AIDS and the world of work will be the focus of a UN expert meeting co-sponsored by ILO. The outputs of this meeting will contribute to the preparations for the March 2004 Commission on the Status of Women which will examine the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality.

The ILO uses a participatory approach in its gender mainstreaming activities in order to promote partnerships and ownership. Efforts to continue building on the knowledge base and enhancing information sharing include the Gender Equality in the World of Work ILO electronic newsletter, the database-driven ILO Gender Equality Tool website, and Open and Virtual Learning Space on Mainstreaming Gender Equality.

## **Other recent activities**

In 2003 the ILO developed an easy-to-use guide to serve as a tool in promoting equitable participation of women and men throughout PRSP processes. The guide, which is being validated in several countries, also describes strategic entry points and highlights good practices.

The ILO also produced a report on *Good Practices: Gender Mainstreaming in Actions Against Child Labour* in order to share experiences and lessons learned in combating child labour while promoting gender equality. Workshops and coaching on gender in child labour issues and initiatives are underway in different regions with some ILO staff and implementing partners.

Research and action on trafficking in human beings-whose victims are mostly women and girls-often fail to give due attention to underlying causes. These include gender inequality and discrimination at work. Recent ILO work in this area includes a report on *Trafficking in Human Beings: New Approaches to Combating the Problem*. Another just-published guide is *Preventing Discrimination, Exploitation, and Abuse of Women Migrant Workers: An Information Guide*.

A major ILO report was submitted to the 2003 International Labour Conference entitled *Time for Equality at Work, Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*. ■