

Draft Proposal for a Tri-partite Regional Workshop on: *Core Labour Standards and Job Creation in Africa*

Yaoundé, Cameroon, 24-27 October, 2005

Background and objectives

During their Extra-ordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Reduction which took place in Ouagadougou on 8th-9th September 2004, the African Union Heads of States and Government underlined in their final Declaration their commitment to support the continuing efforts made by their governments, social partners and civil society organizations to promote the decent work agenda of the ILO. Implementing the agenda would mean achieving four related, strategic objectives, namely the creation of productive employment for women and men, respect for core labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work, extending social protection, and promoting effective social dialogue. Prior to the Extra-ordinary Summit, in an address to African political leaders, the social partners “recalled that there is no sustainable human development without the promotion and respect of fundamental rights of workers” and they reiterated the need for the “respect for the fundamental conventions of the ILO which should apply to all workers”.

Against this background, it is considered important to try and ensure that both workers and employers representatives, as well as government officials concerned, have a sufficient understanding of the ILO’s core labour standards and their relevance to the creation of decent jobs and poverty reduction.

It is therefore proposed that a three-and-a-half-day, tripartite regional workshop be organized and facilitated by the International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin, Italy.

Tentatively, the workshop will take place in Yaoundé, Cameroon, 24-27 October, 2005.

Participants

Five countries, from the 5 different sub-regions in Africa, and having drafted poverty reduction strategies, will be invited to participate with three participants each, representing government, employers’ and workers’ organisations, respectively. The countries to be invited might be Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Ethiopia, and Zambia. [alternative suggestions include: Benin, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Uganda, and Tanzania]. Assuming that this would not involve extra costs, a tripartite delegation of the country where the workshop will take place (i.e. Cameroon) will also be invited.

An effort will be made to ensure that a significant number of women take part.

Contents and methodology

The proposed activity will focus in particular on the linkages (trade-offs and complementarities) between respect for core labour standards and the creation of

decent jobs, and, thus, poverty reduction and development as a whole. Having introduced core standards and fundamental rights at work as a key element in a rights-based approach to development, subsequent sessions will introduce the relationship between creating more and better jobs on the one hand, and poverty reduction through promoting economic growth and redistributive measures on the other.

Following an introduction of the ILO's Global Employment Agenda, as well as of the conclusions reached by the 2004 Ouagadougou Employment Summit and the related Social Partners Forum, two pertinent case studies will be presented, on labour-based construction and on eliminating child labour, respectively. These presentations and case studies aim at illustrating that respect for core labour standards and fundamental rights of workers and the promotion of more and better jobs are not incompatible. Indeed, in mutually reinforcing each other, both may in fact be indispensable in enhancing socio-economic development. In that respect, corporate governance (good management and business ethics) and public governance (labour markets, institutions for employment promotion, economic environment) as well as improving productivity, are of particular importance.

The workshop would conclude with a panel discussion focusing in particular on concrete measures that governments, employers' and workers' organisations, may take towards achieving additional synergy between respect for core labour standards and job creation in Africa.

Subject specialists, mainly senior ILO staff, would facilitate the workshop and present various topics. During and after their presentations, ample time will be made available for participants to express their views and share the experience of the countries they represent, notably as regards their poverty reduction strategies. Group sessions will be conducted with a view to seek consensus on particular issues and approaches, and to elicit practical country-level information and solutions.

A tentative time table including the various programme elements is appended.

Proceedings will be conducted, through simultaneous translation, in English and French