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### Bureau for Gender Equality

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# Outlook

In my first week as the new Director of the Bureau for Gender Equality, I witnessed our Director-General, Juan Somavia, join an elite group of laureates when he received the MDG3 Champion Torch in Oslo, Norway. Each torch bearer promises to do “something extra” in support of gender equality and women’s economic empowerment. This campaign was launched by the Danish Government in March 2008 to revitalize efforts for promoting the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 3 by 2015, a goal that is still today far out of reach. In accepting the Torch, the D-G pledged the ILO, among other things, to work towards an international labour standard to combat discrimination and abuse of domestic workers; implement programmes in post conflict areas to protect women against forced labour and trafficking; pursue a campaign with women business leaders to protect women in high risk industries and sectors; and to reinforce women’s organizations and dialogue. And there is the promise to reflect these commitments in the Strategic Policy Framework 2010-15 and approved budgets, currently being developed. In other words, my directorship got off to a flying start!

I joined the ILO in 1979 and over the years have had the pleasure of putting my legal and human rights expertise to use in a wide range of Departments and Offices: the Freedom of Association and Equality and Human Rights Coordination Branches (NORMES), the Southern African Multidisciplinary Team (SRO-Harare), the Department for Government, Labour Law and Administration (GL-LAD) and, most recently, the Social Dialogue, Labour Law and Labour Administration Branch (DIALOGUE). I have experience in international and compara-

tive labour law, and have always had a special interest in human rights, HIV/AIDS and of course gender equality. Some readers might recall my research and articles on sexual harassment and on affirmative action in the world of work. And colleagues in the field will remember all those training courses on better implementation of Convention No. 111 – a text that I am passionate about – that we put together. From where I sit now, it seems like destiny has pulled me towards this fight to eliminate discrimination right from the start. My welcome into the Bureau has been so generous, and I would be remiss not to give a special word of thanks to the former Director, Evy Messell, for her work over the past years: Evy, gender equality is in your heart, at the heart of decent work!

In this issue of *ILO Gender News* you will find articles from both headquarters and the regions illustrating how so many women and men in this Organization are truly committed to further gender equality in the world of work. And let us not forget that we are mere months away from the 2009 International Labour Conference, where “Gender equality at the heart of Decent Work” is the subject of a General Discussion, as decided by the Governing Body a year ago. To raise awareness on this theme before the Conference, GENDER launched a campaign in June 2008, which you can read about on the very next page. As in previous issues, the newsletter is divided into three sections; news from headquarters, news from the regions and new publications.

I really look forward to working with you and hope you enjoy the read!

JANE HODGES  
*Director, Bureau for Gender Equality*

The following describes some of the activities at headquarters over the past year.

# News from



*“By increasing overall awareness and understanding of gender equality issues, we can actively contribute to securing decent work for all women and men.”*

*Juan Somavia, ILO Director-General*

## Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work – ILO launches year-long campaign

During the June 2008 International Labour Conference, the ILO launched a one-year global campaign to highlight the central role of gender equality in its Decent Work Agenda and in the work of constituents. The campaign will feed into a general discussion on gender equality and decent work at the International Labour Conference to be held in Geneva in June 2009. During the general discussion, delegates from governments, employers' and workers' organizations of ILO member States will discuss and draft a "roadmap" to promote gender equality.

"Mainstreaming gender equality is central to the Decent Work Agenda," said ILO Director-General Juan Somavia, speaking about the campaign launch. "Although progress is being made, gender equality is still lagging behind in the rapidly changing world of work. By increasing overall awareness and understanding of gender equality issues, we can actively contribute to securing decent work for all women and men."

The campaign aims to:

→ increase general awareness and understanding of gender equality issues in the world of work

- highlight the specific linkages between gender equality and securing decent work for all women and men
- promote the ratification and application of key ILO gender equality labour standards
- advocate the importance of overcoming existing barriers to gender equality as beneficial for all

The campaign, which focuses on 12 decent work themes, will use a gender lens to illustrate how issues in the world of work affect women and men in different ways, particularly in their equal access to rights, employment, social protection and social dialogue. These issues include:

- combating child labour through access to education for both girls and boys
- highlighting the importance of maternity protection and paternity leave in the world of work
- breaking down gender stereotypes in youth employment
- focusing on the specific challenges facing older women and men workers

- recognizing the often different needs and vulnerabilities of women and men migrant workers and their families
- workplace family policies to help address the needs of male and female workers with family responsibilities
- underlining the differing occupational health and safety issues for women and men workers

During the next 12 months, the Bureau for Gender Equality and its worldwide gender network will reach out to constituents and other international partners about the campaign and provide information on gender equality issues.

The campaign's first theme, highlighted the importance of education for both girls and boys, was marked in June as part of the 2008 World Day against Child Labour. Materials produced for the campaign's themes, as well as links to key related resources, will be posted on the campaign website as they become available.

For more information on the campaign or to receive materials, please e-mail [gendercampaign@ilo.org](mailto:gendercampaign@ilo.org) or visit [www.ilo.org/gender](http://www.ilo.org/gender). ■



The Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008-09, which is the instrument for implementing the ILO policy on gender equality, was overwhelmingly received by members of the Governing Body on 15 November 2007. (Photo: © ILO)

The UN Secretary-General's report on the improvement of the status of women in the UN system cites ILO as a good practice of gender balance through our **Action Plan for Gender Equality**. Good news for the Office! For more information, please see GA A/63/364.

## Action Plan for Gender Equality

The Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008-09, which is the instrument for implementing the ILO policy on gender equality, was overwhelmingly received by members of the Governing Body in November 2007. The plan, which uses a results-based approach and is aligned with the Programme and Budget (P&B) for 2008-09, is being used to guide and support gender mainstreaming efforts within the Decent Work Agenda. Implementation of the Plan is being funded, in part, by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

The beneficiaries of the plan, which targets all ILO staff at all levels, are constituents: governments, and workers' and employers' organizations. ILO staff members – especially gender focal points and programming specialists – are being offered training to act as catalysts for gender mainstreaming in their work units and offices (see for instance the article on page 5, *Training on gender mainstreaming*).

The plan focuses on key result areas of the ILO's work and includes indicators and targets. It gives details on roles and responsibilities for implementation, describes institutional mechanisms for

gender equality within the organization, and lists outcomes and strategies/activities within the P&B's strategic objectives which are directly relevant to gender issues and/or women's empowerment.

During discussion at the November 2007 Governing Body session, government representatives said they welcomed the plan, as gender equality was essential to achieving social and economic development. They supported the initiative since it aimed to implement the ILO policy on gender equality, which was outlined by the ILO Director-General in 1999. Governments supported the plan's alignment with the P&B 2008-09, including the use of targets and indicators, as well as the fact that its strategies aimed to support constituents' capacity and efforts to promote gender equality.

The representative of employers' organizations stressed the importance of formal mechanisms in organizations and other groups to mainstream gender, of sharing the "how to" and good practices in this area, and of working with gender-sensitive partners.

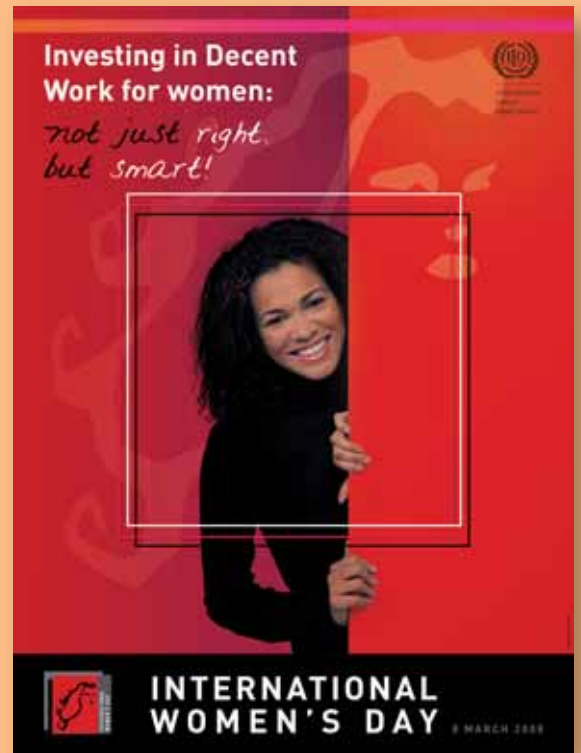
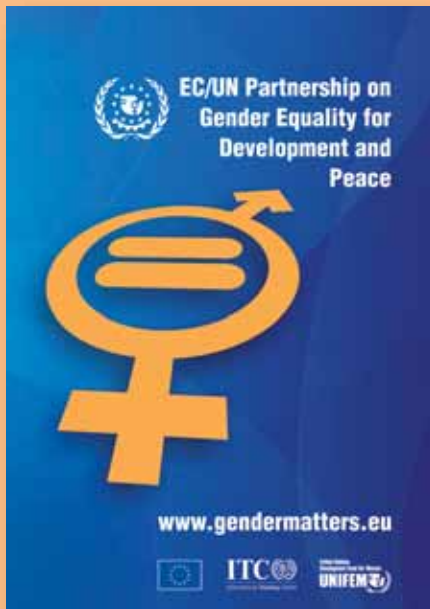
The representative of workers' organizations said the plan was a mechanism to enhance national-level gender main-



The cover of the spanish version of the Action Plan for Gender Equality.

streaming efforts, and that Decent Work Country Programmes were the right context in which to aim for progress – and to identify gaps – in achieving gender equality.

For more information, please e-mail [gender@ilo.org](mailto:gender@ilo.org).



## EC/UN Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace

Gender equality and women's empowerment are central to development, peace and aid effectiveness. It is with this in mind that the European Commission (EC), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the ILO International Training Centre based in Turin are implementing a Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace. The partnership aims to support stronger action on gender equality and women's empowerment in national development processes and in cooperation programmes supported by the EC. The initiative will also focus on effective implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted in 2000 to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in responses to conflict and post-conflict situations.

The three-year partnership is being implemented in 12 pilot countries: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Suriname and Ukraine. In seven countries, mapping studies have been initiated to measure the extent to which national priori-

ties for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment are reflected in the countries' development strategies. The studies are being used to feed into consultations with key stakeholders to identify capacity needs, agree on monitoring indicators and build coalitions to ensure that gender equality is adequately addressed in new aid modalities. Findings from the studies also contributed to a gender equality discussion at the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held from September 2-4 in Ghana.

The ILO International Training Centre is providing methodological support and facilitating knowledge and information dissemination through the partnership website. It is also delivering technical assistance services to partners, particularly in relation to gender mainstreaming in EC aid delivery methods.

For more information, please e-mail [communications@itcilo.org](mailto:communications@itcilo.org) or visit [www.gendermatters.eu](http://www.gendermatters.eu)

## ILO marks International Women's Day

Over the past decade, the number of working women has increased by 200 million as they continue to enter the workforce in greater numbers. While more women are completing higher levels of education and some are moving into senior management positions, glaring inequalities still exist in workplaces throughout the world. Women represent 40 per cent of the working population worldwide – yet comprise 60 per cent of the world's working poor. Women also face increasing unemployment rates, greater likelihood of being in vulnerable employment, and must often reconcile the double burden of unpaid family care work.

The theme of this year's ILO International Women's Day event, held 7 March at ILO headquarters in Geneva, was "Investing in Decent Work for Women: Not Just Right, but Smart". The theme recognized growing evidence that promoting women's equality is not only a matter of human rights, but also makes good economic sense.

"Gender inequality isn't just bad social policy; it is bad economics", said Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General of



ILO Director-General Mr. Juan Somavia with discussion panellists for an ILO International Women's Day event. (Photo: © ILO, Crozet, M.)

At the training held in Turin in May, some 25 staff members from field offices and headquarters units, discussed strategies for sharing information and lessons learned. (Photo: © ILO)



the ILO speaking on the occasion of International Women's day, which is officially marked on March 8. "The most recent ILO global report, on *Equality at Work: Tackling the challenges*, highlights the role that gender inequality plays in constraining productivity, growth and prosperity. Addressing such inequality at the workplace and tapping into the vast socio-economic potential of women through improvements in their status in labour markets would benefit individuals and families, workers and employers, and societies and national economies. In other words, investing in Decent Work for women is not just right, but smart."

The ILO event, attended by some 500 women and men, featured a panel discussion comprised of Ms. Evelyn Oputu (Managing Director of the Bank of Industry in Nigeria), Ms. Michaela Walsh of the United States (Founder of Women's World Banking), Ms. Rupa Manel Silva (Founder of the Women's Development Service Cooperative Society/Women's Bank of Sri Lanka) and Ms. Agnes Jongerius (President of the Trade Union Confederation of the Netherlands and Vice President of the International Trade Union Confederation).

For more information, please e-mail [gender@ilo.org](mailto:gender@ilo.org). More information is also available on [www.ilo.org/dcomm](http://www.ilo.org/dcomm) (click on "events").

## Training on gender mainstreaming

Using knowledge sharing to promote gender mainstreaming in Decent Work Country Programmes was the focus of a four-day training session held at the ILO International Training Centre in Turin, Italy in May. Some 25 staff members from field offices and headquarters units, of whom four were men, discussed strategies for sharing information on gender equality initiatives as well as lessons learned.

"Having access to and sharing relevant information is crucial in achieving gender equality", said Evy Messell, former Director of the ILO's Bureau for Gender Equality. "This is because gender issues are complex, multi-dimensional and cut across all sectors of ILO intervention".

The interactive training, jointly organized by the Bureau for Gender Equality and the Gender Coordination Unit of the International Training Centre, included sessions on: how to conduct gender analysis; the ILO vision, mandate and policy on gender equality in the world of work; and implement-

ing the Organization's Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008-2009. A series of "open space" modules were conducted by participants to develop their individual work plans to apply what they had learned once they were back at their offices or units.

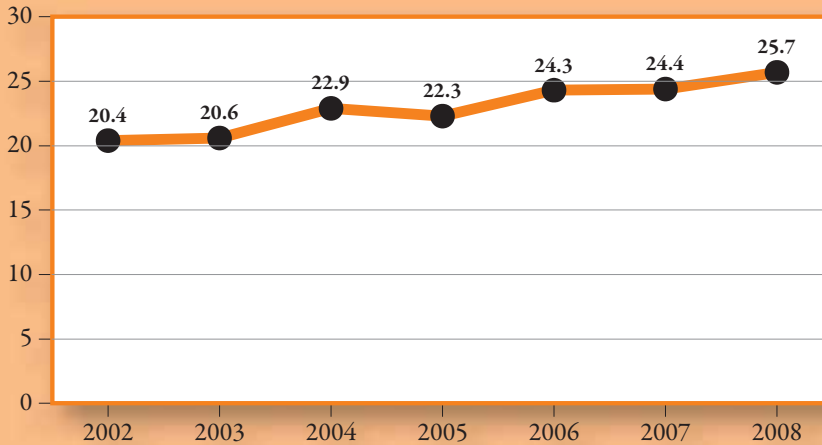
A summary of the progress and challenges in implementing the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality will be presented to the Governing Body in March 2009.

For more information, please visit [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)

*“Promoting knowledge sharing and gender equality have much in common. Both are processes leading to empowerment.”*

*Marc Steinlin, Ingenious People's Knowledge*

ILC: Total % of women participants (2002-2008)



## Women's participation at 2008 International Labour Conference

Statistics gathered at the June 2008 International Labour Conference showed a 1.3% overall increase in women participants compared to 2007. Participants were defined as delegates, substitute delegates and advisers. In comparison to the participation of women in the 2007 conferences, participation increased by 2.8% for governments and 1% for workers' organizations, while dropping 1.3% for employers' organizations. Statistics are available from 2002 onwards by region, and for government and employers' and workers' organizations.

For more information, please e-mail [gender@ilo.org](mailto:gender@ilo.org)

## Gender Network supports knowledge sharing

At its November 2007 session, the ILO's Governing Body adopted an organization-wide strategy for knowledge sharing in the ILO. In preparation for the strategy, an in-house survey was conducted to measure ILO staff members' attitudes and perceptions about knowledge sharing. Some 390 responses were received.

The ILO Gender Network, which consists of some 100 women and men gender focal points, constituted a sub-sample in the survey. This allowed findings related to the network to be compared to the larger sample. Of the total survey sample, 42 respondents were network members. Sub-sample results showed that network members had significantly more experience with knowledge sharing

than the sample at large and were considerably more aware of opportunities for knowledge sharing.

"I am not surprised about the sub-sample findings", said Mr. Marc Steinlin of Ingenious People's Knowledge, which designed the survey. "Promoting knowledge sharing and gender equality have much in common. Both are processes leading to empowerment".

The survey provides an important baseline for the ILO and will be used for monitoring implementation of its knowledge sharing strategy. ■



*“The United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality [...] plays a central role in promoting gender equality throughout the United Nations system...”*

## Using programming mechanisms to advance gender equality

On January 17 at ILO headquarters in Geneva, some 35 staff of ILO work units met to discuss entry points in the ILO Programme and Budget (P&B) 2008-09 for advancing gender equality in the world of work. Organized by the Bureau for Gender Equality, the meeting's discussion focused on one of the five joint immediate outcomes in the P&B: “Increase capacity of constituents to develop integrated policies and programmes to advance gender equality in the world of work”.

Joint immediate outcomes are intended to address areas that require coordinated policies and draw from multiple technical fields. Responsibility for implementing the outcome on gender equality, which includes indicators and targets, rests with all ILO regional offices and with headquarters-based sectors, while coordination rests with the Bureau for Gender Equality.

Participants were briefed on the ways in which the recently revised ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality – which

is aligned with the 2008-09 P&B – relates to the joint immediate outcome on gender equality, including roles and responsibilities of management and staff. Programming requirements and implementation planning for the outcome were also explained, and a discussion session provided clarification for reporting on the outcome's targets.

For more information about the Programme and Budget, please visit [www.ilo.org/program](http://www.ilo.org/program)

## Inter-Agency Network discusses gender audit

The United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, which brings together heads of gender units of the UN system and meets in New York in February, discussed the benefits and challenges of introducing system-wide gender auditing. Members said the gender audit methodology was a useful tool, and that experience showed was best used on a voluntary and systematic basis.

The Network, which plays a central role in promoting gender equality throughout the United Nations system, planned to hold another meeting toward the end of 2008 and would also further discuss gender audits after a more detailed ILO presentation.

To date, gender audits have been conducted in 29 ILO field offices and headquarters units, as well as in UN agencies and by ILO constituents in all regions.

For example in 2007 the Russian Federation's largest trade union federation, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia, used the ILO's gender audit methodology to assess its effectiveness in representing the interests of working women and addressing gender issues in collective bargaining and social dialogue.

For more information, please e-mail [gender@ilo.org](mailto:gender@ilo.org)

# News from the Regions

The following describes some of the activities in the regions over the past year.

*“Tanzania is among the leading countries in Africa to adopt and implement gender budgeting”*

*Jürgen Schwettman, Director of ILO-Dar es Salaam*

## Gender equality in employment practices

The ILO, with support from the Government of Denmark, launched an initiative to assist in mainstreaming gender in employment policies and programmes in Tanzania.

The initiative, which is a joint effort with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), began in mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar in April. It is expected to play a key role in advancing gender equality in the country's joint UN programme on wealth creation, employment and economic empowerment, in which the ILO has a lead implementing role. Tanzania has a strong national commitment to gender equality and the employment dimension is clearly highlighted in its poverty reduction strategy.

“Since our launch”, said Ms. Flora Minja, who coordinated the initiative in the ILO-Dar es Salaam office, “we have emphasized capacity building of ILO constituents at the district level to ensure that the gender dimension is taken into account when implementing employment policies”.

An important part of the initiative has been the training of Ministry of Labour staff on gender budgeting.

“Tanzania is among the leading countries in Africa to adopt and implement gender budgeting”, said Mr. Jürgen Schwettman, Director of ILO-Dar es Salaam. “However, it is important to note that gender budgeting in employment creation means more than increasing resources for low-income and marginalized groups. It means looking at the whole budget process from women's and men's points of view to analyze its implications”.

At a high-level meeting hosted by ILO-Dar es Salaam in May, representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Youth Development formally adopted an action plan for implementing gender budgeting within the Ministry.

The ILO Employment Policy Department, Bureau for Gender Equality and Regional Office for Africa are technically supporting the initiative.

For more information, please contact the ILO Office in Dar es Salaam, [daressalaam@ilo.org](mailto:daressalaam@ilo.org) ■

## Promoting women's entrepreneurship in the Arab States, Asia and Africa

The demand for ILO support on women's entrepreneurship development among constituents has been steadily increasing, as reflected in the large number of Decent Work Country Programmes that mention women's entrepreneurship as a priority. The promotion of decent jobs through entrepreneurship development is part of the Organization's Global Employment Agenda and in March the Governing Body endorsed an ILO strategy on promoting women's entrepreneurship development.

Among activities to support women's entrepreneurship, training events held in the Arab States, Asia-Pacific and Africa provided opportunities for sharing experiences and discussing women's entrepreneurship development. ■





The GET Ahead training package is designed for women who run or want to start a business.

Participants from a variety of areas attended the first training of trainers GET workshop in the Arab States. (Photo: © ILO)



## GET Ahead training starts in Arab States

The first training of trainers workshop for the Gender and Entrepreneurship Together: (GET) Ahead for Women in Enterprise course in the Arab States took place 11-16 March in Amman, Jordan. The GET Ahead training package is designed for women – particularly with low incomes – who want to start, or who already run a small-scale business.

The training course was organized by the ILO and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), within the framework of a Local Area Development Programme (LADP). The LADP is an area-based initiative of seven UN agencies in three governorates of Iraq. Participants included 11 men and 16 women from a variety of development and business organizations, unions, associations and international development agencies in northern Iraq, the occupied Palestinian Territories, Lebanon and Jordan.

The course, which was coordinated by the ILO Regional Office based in Beirut with technical support from the Subregional Office in Bangkok, focused on enterprise development, gender and value chain analysis.

A preparatory value chain analysis conducted by the northern Iraqi partici-

pants in their own local contexts with select products allowed for reflection on bottlenecks across the production process. Action plans prepared by the participants are being implemented through local organizations in northern Iraq and are allowing for hands-on testing of the knowledge gained from the training. For more information, please e-mail [beirut@ilo.org](mailto:beirut@ilo.org)

ment and Gender Equality (WEDGE) programme, with funding from Irish Aid, has partnered with the ILO Geneva-based Skills and Employability Department to support the inclusion of women with disabilities throughout all programme activities.

For more information, please go to [www.ilo.org/seed](http://www.ilo.org/seed)

## Asia-Pacific Regional Technical Meeting

Some 25 ILO staff working in offices of the Asia-Pacific region recently received training in Bangkok on women's entrepreneurship development. Participants, including specialists, senior programme officers and technical cooperation staff, learned about approaches to promote women's entrepreneurship development and how to incorporate these into Decent Work Country Programmes.

Participants were also informed about the ILO strategy on promoting women's entrepreneurship development and learned about experiences in other regions. For example, in Africa the Women's Entrepreneurship Develop-

## Regional workshop held in Africa

A workshop on women's entrepreneurship development was held on 5-7 May in the ILO Office in Dar es Salaam. The regional event brought together key stakeholders in Africa to discuss how to mainstream women's entrepreneurship development in the Decent Work Agenda in Africa. The event was also attended by representatives from the Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE) programme, employment and enterprise specialists from ILO headquarters in Geneva, and enterprise and gender specialists from the region.

For more information, please e-mail [daressalaam@ilodar.or.tz](mailto:daressalaam@ilodar.or.tz)



The film "Maid in Lebanon II: Voices from home" is a sequel to the first film and portrays four cases of Lebanese employers and their maids. (Photo: © ILO)



At the Consultation in New Delhi it was agreed that the conventional definition of employment excludes certain types of women's work. (Photo: © ILO, Crozet, M.)

## Film on Lebanese maids screened

The ILO Regional Office for Arab States based in Beirut held a screening on May 29 of the 40-minute documentary film "Maid in Lebanon II: Voices from home".

The film by Carol Mansour is a sequel to the first film and portrays four cases of Lebanese employers and their maids. It targets the Lebanese public in order to generate debate on the role that women migrant domestic workers play in the nation's households. The film poses questions and suggests answers about workers' rights, employment contracts, and everyday terms and conditions of work.

Over 200 people attended the screening, including the migrant domestic workers featured in the film. Viewers said they appreciated the film's emphasis on improving cross-cultural understanding and encouraging new patterns of working relationships. Many said that they had learned something new about the situation of women migrant domestic workers in Lebanon.

As part of a promotion strategy, the gender team of the ILO Regional Office has posted a seven-minute version of the film on the social networking website

www.YouTube.com and have encouraged local, regional and international television channels to show the film.

For more information please e-mail [beirut@ilo.org](mailto:beirut@ilo.org) ■

## Banking on diversity in Brazil

The Brazilian Federation of Banks, known in Portuguese as FEBRABAN launched a programme in April to enhance diversity in the banking sector in April. The main aim of the programme, developed in collaboration with a technical committee in which the ILO participated, is to promote good practices for equal opportunity through a range of actions. These include a media campaign, awareness-raising activities for managers and carrying out research.

As part of the programme, FEBRABAN will collect data on the race, sex, schooling and other characteristics of approximately 400,000 employees in the Brazilian banking sector. These results will guide the federation's actions to promote equal opportunity.

For more information, please e-mail [brasil@oitbrasil.org.br](mailto:brasil@oitbrasil.org.br) ■

## India considers gender perspective in national employment policy

In many cases the economic growth taking place in India is not sufficiently inclusive and gender inequality remains a challenge, according to many observers. Although a small proportion of women reach the highest rungs of the economic ladder, most remain in the informal economy, where they face disparities in wages and types of jobs.

The Indian Ministry of Labour and Employment, in cooperation with the ILO, held a National Technical Consultation on Employment Policy for India on 21-22 May in New Delhi. Participants, who discussed issues related to gender equality in the world of work as well as other topics, concluded that the gender dimension should be both a cross-cutting issue and a specific area of attention in the nation's employment policy.

Concerning women and employment, participants noted that the conventional definition of employment excludes certain types of women's work. For this reason a more inclusive conceptualization was required. Women's work was often qualitatively different and therefore accurate



A worker in Nigeria receives HIV sensitization. (Photo: © ICEM)



mapping was required to measure women's actual contribution to the economy.

From an employment policy perspective, a significant development would be to recognize the importance of strengthening the support structures for women's work. This ranges from putting in place better physical infrastructure for women's safe employment to addressing household responsibilities and dynamics, which often determine how women spend their time.

For more information, please visit [www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/newdelhi](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/newdelhi)

## Gender Dimensions of HIV/AIDS

Gender equality is one of the ten key principles in the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work, which provides policy guidance and practical programming advice for workplace action. The linkages between gender inequality, poverty and the disease are also recognized in the ILO Global Programme on HIV/AIDS in the World of Work (ILO/AIDS). A number of ILO efforts to address HIV/AIDS in the world of work over the past year have included a gender component.

This includes compiling sex-disaggregated data and field-based evidence during project implementation. An assessment of four HIV/AIDS workplace projects in Ghana, Lesotho, Botswana and Madagascar identified factors that place women at higher risk of HIV infection, as well as inequity in their access to treatment, care and support. A similar study is ongoing in Burkina Faso and Cameroon. In Pakistan, a study identified ways of strengthening gender-sensitive HIV/AIDS programmes and policies in the world of work.

Efforts to address the barriers to HIV/AIDS, such as denial and discrimination at the workplace, included a workplace programme implemented in Thailand to help increase condom use by migrant female factory workers. In India and Nepal, projects are promoting income-generating activities for women whose partners have died of AIDS. In Sri Lanka, potential migrant workers were trained on HIV prevention using gender-specific approaches and materials.

To help develop skills to reduce vulnerability to HIV infection, training modules on gender and HIV/AIDS were mainstreamed in project design in Mozambique as part of the ILO project on Strategies and Tools against social Exclusion and Poverty (STEP).

The needs of migrants are being addressed through pre-departure preven-

tion and awareness-raising activities. In Eastern Europe, the ILO is developing HIV/AIDS information for use in pre-migration training guides. Many of the migrant workers in the countries covered are under-aged women. In Pakistan, a study is assessing, through a gender lens, the vulnerability of outgoing migrant workers. In the Russian Federation, workplace education in the Murmansk Sea Trade Port is addressing the vulnerabilities of mainly female workers. In collaboration with government and unions, a project in Indonesia is conducting research on

HIV/AIDS and other work migration issues. The project is also helping to educate migrant workers, including through awareness-raising activities for female migrant workers.

Education and training materials that include gender equality as a key principle and articulate the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS, including in programme delivery, were used in various countries. In the Russian Federation, gender-specific training sessions were provided to workers in enterprises to address risk factors and individual behaviors. Training provided through a project in Kyrgyzstan resulted in the creation of a pool of national facilitators to conduct gender audits.

For more information, please e-mail [iloaids@ilo.org](mailto:iloaids@ilo.org)

## Social security meeting held in New Delhi

Effective social security coverage of workers in the Asia-Pacific region remains a distant goal for most countries with the exception of Australia, New Zealand and Japan. According to Reiko Tsushima, Gender Specialist in the ILO Subregional Office in New Delhi, “Globalization, trade liberalization and widening income disparities between and within countries means that there are substantial challenges for both national and community-based social security schemes. Because of this, the design of pluralistic social security systems is a central challenge. Gender is one important variable that should always be taken into account in such design”.

With this in mind the Subregional Office, in collaboration with India’s Ministry of Labour and Employment, hosted the Asia-Pacific Regional High-Level Meeting on Socially Inclusive Strategies to Extend Social Security Coverage 19-20 May in New Delhi. The meeting brought together representatives of governments, workers and employers from 21 countries in the region.

Most social security schemes reflect the traditional concept of women as a dependant and men as the main breadwinners, despite recent changes in the makeup of families and women’s growing participation in economic activities. This traditional concept perpetuates the notion of women as “secondary workers” and underscores the gender bias present in many labour market institutions and systems.

In South Asia, the vast majority of social security schemes cover only workers in the formal economy, and thus exclude the majority of both men and women who are working in the informal economy. Adding to these major challenges is the subregion’s track record, according to many observers, of governance issues, low implementation capacity and high levels of corruption.

In recognition of these challenges, ILO constituents at the meeting dis-

cussed issues including maternity protection and social protection coverage for informal sector workers.

For more information, please visit [www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/newdelhi](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/newdelhi) ■

## COOPAfrica: Strengthening cooperatives and women’s participation

Since 1920 the ILO has supported the development of cooperatives, which play an increasingly important role in facilitating job creation, economic growth and social development. The ILO engagement with cooperatives development reached a new level in October with the launch of the Cooperative Facility for Africa (COOPAfrica), which is funded by the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) and which aims to promote cooperatives as a way to reduce poverty in Africa.

The four key elements of the COOPAfrica approach are to: 1) establish an enabling legal policy environment; 2) support services through “centres of competence”; 3) promote effective coordination structures; and 4) use a “Challenge Fund” for innovative cooperative ventures.

The programme is located at the ILO Dar es Salaam Office and is currently being implemented in nine countries in Eastern and Southern Africa: Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Rwanda, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Other countries in the region will be added as the programme progresses.

Women have traditionally been underrepresented in cooperatives, and in many countries they still face legal constraints due to cooperative by-laws and other discriminatory practices. Women’s participation in cooperatives is often a challenge because they carry the main responsibility for family and household chores and therefore have less spare time.

Their engagement in cooperative activities is also often prevented due to their lack of experience, confidence, education and training.

As a first step towards equal participation of women and men, the programme will attempt to include a gender sensitizing and awareness raising component for cooperatives and their members. The programme will also focus on training women and helping them to access education, so that they gain confidence to participate in cooperative activities.

For more information, please visit [www.ilo.org/coopafrika](http://www.ilo.org/coopafrika) ■

## New project approved in Swaziland

In Swaziland, a new project was recently approved through the coop programme. The project’s beneficiaries are rural women who are members of existing or newly formed cooperative societies. The majority of cooperative members in Swaziland are women, who organizers say are very committed, regular savers and are reliable lenders willing to engage in collective and community-based activities.

While women in Swaziland are familiar with the local traditional ways of working and saving together, the project will aim to help them develop and enhance their traditional knowledge and skills. Building management and the organizational skills of cooperative members will be among the priorities of the programme.

The project will aim to establish viable cooperative organizations in order to provide services to their members such as rural production support, marketing and supply services, financial services and skills development. The project will be attached to the Cooperative Development Centre, which is supervised by a Commission for Cooperatives in the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives.

For more information, please go to [www.ilo.org/coopafrika](http://www.ilo.org/coopafrika) ■

Ms. Luesette Howell (ILO Employers' Activities Specialist) works with delegates in a tripartite subregional workshop on the harmonization of labour legislation, held in St. Lucia. (Photo: © ILO)



## Tackling gender issues in the Caribbean

With 12 countries now signed onto the agreement of the Caribbean Single Market, a new more regionally integrated business environment has emerged in the region, according to many observers. Globalization has also prompted the ILO tripartite partners – governments and employers' and workers' organizations – in each participating country to think beyond their national boundaries and reshape national agendas to contribute to a smooth integration process in a wider operating environment.

In recent years, the Subregional office for the Caribbean has seen a noticeable upsurge in requests related to gender issues in employment and globalization, particularly in the following areas and activities.

➔ **Migration** – Region-wide concern with migration patterns and education/skills requirements means that the ILO is encouraging related data collection and analysis by sex, age and occupation to identify labour market trends in the Caribbean among both women and men.

➔ **Review of model legislation drafted by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)** – The review focuses on model legislation in the areas of citizenship, equality for women in employment, equal pay, inheritance, maintenance and maintenance orders, sexual harassment and sexual offences.

➔ **Harmonization of labour legislation** – National legislation often needs to be updated for international standards to reflect the changing roles of women and men at work and in society. For this reason, the ILO has been assisting Caribbean countries that are in the process of reviewing their labour legislation.

➔ **Reconciling work and family life** – A national tripartite panel discussion on this topic organized by ILO and the Centre for Gender Studies of the University of the West Indies took place in July. Belize has ratified Convention No.156 on workers and

family responsibilities, and a representative of its Ministry of Labour participated in a related training programme at the ILO's International Training Centre in Turin.

➔ **Sexual harassment** – ILO studies suggest that much of the Caribbean countries' existing legislation on sexual harassment is limited in scope, although a number have already introduced legislation specifically addressing sexual harassment, while others have incorporated it within existing laws on discrimination. The ILO has provided technical support to tripartite partners in Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago to build their knowledge on sexual harassment and to work towards updating national legislation and workplace policies.

For more information, please e-mail [ilocarib@ilocarib.org.tt](mailto:ilocarib@ilocarib.org.tt)



Gender mainstreaming training in Liberia: participants from River Gee County. (Photo © ILO)

## GEMS in action in Viet Nam

The ILO Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (GEMS) and Toolkit for the Asia-Pacific region was the focus of two training events in Viet Nam in May. The toolkit, developed by the Bangkok-based ILO Regional Office to expand action on gender equality, focuses on enhancing internal structures, procedures and monitoring in the region.

Following the Government of Viet Nam's adoption of a law on gender equality in December 2006, all government institutions now need to ensure that legal documents and regulations are in compliance.

Over 60 representatives from government ministries, unions, the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and the Viet Nam Cooperative Alliance attended a seminar in May. At this policy-oriented event, participants used the ILO GEMS toolkit to review legislation and programmes, and to identify ways to mainstream gender mainstreaming in their work.

Participants concluded that the law on gender equality does not include the notion of indirect discrimination, and that most of the related decrees and programmes need to integrate gender issues

in order to promote gender equality. Participants developed action plans to institutionalize the use of the GEMS toolkit in their respective organizations. ■

## Gender mainstreaming training in Liberia

As part of implementation of the ILO/UNIFEM Joint Programme on Gender and Employment Generation in Liberia, a training workshop on gender mainstreaming was held in Monrovia on 16-20 June.

Representatives attended from each of the three counties (Nimba, Lofa and River Gee) involved in the project, including the county gender coordinator, heads of women and youth groups, and development planners from County Superintendent or Development Superintendent Offices. Participants also included representatives of the Ministry of Gender and Development, Ministry of Labour, Monrovia City Corporation and Federation of Liberia Youth.

The training covered analysis of the programme document, from a gender

and stakeholders perspective. They then assessed the status of women and men in each country and identified resources, stakeholders, agents of change and affirmative actions.

For more information, please e-mail Senior Gender Specialist, Mwila Chigaga ([chigaga@ilo.org](mailto:chigaga@ilo.org)) ■

## UN gender focal point training

The Gender Programme Coordination Group, which is one of the main mechanisms for mainstreaming gender in the United Nations, organized training for gender focal points (29 women and three men) from 14 UN agencies. The training included discussion of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality, the Organization's strategies for promoting gender equality and the GEMS Toolkit.

Participants practiced applying tools to mainstream gender in project design, budgeting, research, human resource development, training and meetings.

For more information, please e-mail [bangkok@ilo.org](mailto:bangkok@ilo.org) ■

# New resources and publications



## ILO Gender Equality Action Plan 2008-09

The action plan is a tool to guide and support gender mainstreaming across the ILO. It identifies key results areas and action steps, as well as indicators, targets and monitoring mechanisms. The action plan was overwhelmingly received by the Governing Body in November 2007. Available in: *Arabic, English, French and Spanish*

Download: [www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/Publications/](http://www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/Publications/)

## Global Employment Trends for Women

This report presents key findings and recent data on women's and men's employment across all regions of the world. While more women are working than ever before, the report shows that women are still more likely than men to be concentrated in low-productivity, low-paid and vulnerable jobs with little or no social protection, basic rights or voice at work. Available in: *English, French and Spanish*

Download: [www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/global.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/global.htm)



## Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work – campaign materials

This one-year campaign, designed to build to the 2009 International Labour Conference discussion on gender equality, features a different theme each month. Materials – including a brochure, poster and postcard – are developed for each theme and posted online.

Available in: *English, French and Spanish*

Download: [www.ilo.org/gender/Events/Campaign2008-2009/](http://www.ilo.org/gender/Events/Campaign2008-2009/)

## Unprotected Employment in the West Bank and Gaza strip

This study includes a policy brief, regional overview and glossary on informal employment. Additional case studies cover Yemen, Syria and Lebanon.

Available in: *English and Arabic*

Download: [www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/index.htm) (select “publications”)



## Small Change, Big Changes: Women and Microfinance

This four-page brochure provides an overview of the rationale and issues related to creating microfinance opportunities for women, lists ILO resources and includes strategies for advancing gender equality. Available in: *English, French and Spanish*.

Download: [www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/Publications/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/Publications/index.htm)

## Managing Diversity at the Workplace: Work and family

This CD-Rom, designed as a training package for employers' organizations, can also be used for self-study or for reference. It contains a range of information to guide workplace action, including work/family policies.

Available in: *English*

Download: Contact [actemp@ilo.org](mailto:actemp@ilo.org) to be mailed a CD-ROM



## Women, Gender and the Informal Economy

This discussion paper provides an overview of ILO research undertaken in the last two decades on women, gender and the informal economy. It examines methodological and analytical frameworks used in various studies, identifies research gaps, and proposes directions for future work.

Available in: *English, French and Spanish*

Download: [www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/index.htm)  
(select "publications")

## Issue Brief 1 – Promoting the Rights of Women Migrant Domestic Workers in Arab States: The Case of Lebanon

This issue brief is part of a series that examines women's labour force participation in the Arab States using a gender equality and workers' rights perspective. It looks at the increasing employment of women migrant domestic workers to fill the unmet needs in the provision of social care services.

Available in: *English*

Download: <http://www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources>

## Investing in decent work for women

This two-page fact sheet presents information and key statistics on the situation of women in the labour market. It discusses increasing evidence that gender equality is not only a rights-based issue but also makes good economic sense, and details relevant ILO means of action.

Available in: *English, French and Spanish*

Download: [www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/Publications](http://www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/Publications)

## Reconciling Work and Family: Issues and Policies in Trinidad and Tobago

This report examines trends and issues and provides information on workers' experiences, particularly women, in negotiating work and family responsibilities. It notes that in the current policy and institutional framework, workers with family responsibilities are mostly left to find individual solutions to their problems.

Available in: *English*

Download: [www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/condtrav/pub/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/condtrav/pub/index.htm)

## Issue Brief 2 – Social Care Needs and Service Provisions in Arab States: Bringing Care Work into Focus in Lebanon

This issue brief, part of a series examining women's labour force participation in the Arab States, looks at the growing unmet social care needs in the Arab States and the impact on women's labour force participation in the region. A policy brief on the same subject is also available.

Available in: *English*

Download: [www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources](http://www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources)

## Voices of Women Entrepreneurs

This booklet highlights the personal experiences of some women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia and the ways they who have benefited from ILO and Irish Aid-supported services and training.

Available in: *English*

Download: [www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/disability](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/disability)