INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)

"The primary goal of the ILO today is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity."

ILO Director-General Juan Somavia

Mandate

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a UN specialized agency which seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights. The ILO was founded in 1919 and became the first specialized agency of the United Nations in 1946. ILO Headquarters are located in Geneva, Switzerland.

The ILO has four principle strategic objectives:

1. To promote and realize standards and fundamental principles and rights at work;
2. To create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment;
3. To enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all;
4. To strengthen tripartism and social dialogue.

These objectives are realized in a number of ways:

1. Formulation of international policies and programmes to promote basic human rights, improve working and living conditions, and enhance employment opportunities;
2. Creation of international labour standards in the form of Conventions and Recommendations; backed by a unique system to supervise their application;
3. An extensive programme of international technical cooperation;
4. Training, education, research, and publishing activities to help advance all of these efforts.

The ILO has a unique tripartite structure in the United Nations, in which employers’ and workers’ representatives – the “social partners” of the economy – have an equal voice with those of governments in shaping its policies and programmes. The ILO also encourages this tripartism within its Member States by promoting a “social dialogue” between trade unions and employers in the formulation and implementation of national policy on social, economic and many other issues.

The ILO activities in Armenia

The ILO activities in Armenia are coordinated by the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and the Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (the Office is located in Moscow). They are supported by the ILO National Coordinator in Yerevan. Apart from Armenia, the Office covers nine other countries of the region – Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Priorities for the cooperation between the ILO and the Republic of Armenia for 2007-2011 were formulated in a Decent Work Country Programme signed in Yerevan in March 2007 by the ILO Subregional Director and the tripartite partners - government, employers’ and workers’ organizations. Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) are the main instrument for ILO cooperation with Member States through-
out the world. They organize the ILO cooperation in a coherent and integrated framework that effectively enables the country to make progress towards achieving Decent Work for All. DWCP for Armenia is an important contribution to international development framework, such as poverty reduction strategies, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), national Millennium Development Goals strategies and other integrated development plans.

A priority issue in the Programme is the improvement of employment policies. Armenia was heavily affected by the impact of the global financial and economic crisis. The GDP contracted by about 14.4% in 2009. The ILO reacted in a timely manner to the request of the Government, and a study on the crisis impact to the labour market in Armenia was carried out with ILO’s support. The ILO assist social partners to elaborate the employment strategy and effectively use labour market analysis in formulating and implementing labour market policies in order to strengthen links between education and the labour market. Technical advice and capacity building are provided for the improvement of the law and practice concerning recruitment, oversight and protection of migrant workers, prevention, prosecution of trafficking cases and protection of victims of trafficking. Another central issue is the strengthening of social partnership. The Programme foresees further development of a legal basis for social partnership and social dialogue, including sectoral and enterprise level collective bargaining, and the promotion of tripartite and bipartite commissions. Collective bargaining will help to address such issues as wage disparity, wage discrimination and low-pay among others. Due to joint efforts of the government, workers’ and employers’ organizations, and with the support of the ILO. A National Tripartite Agreement was signed in 2009 and a National Tripartite Commission was established.

The Decent Work Country Programme also aims to improve social protection in Armenia, especially within the national occupational safety and health (OSH) system. Safety and working conditions in the country have been deteriorating since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the labour inspectorate has ceased to exist. The ILO calculates that accidents and poor working conditions cost employers and the country up to 4 per cent of the Gross National Product. With the ILO’s support, 60 Labour Inspectors participated in trainings on international Labour Standards and Risk assessment.

Several ILO methodologies like MST (Modular Skills Training), WISE (Work Improvement in Small Enterprises) and SIYB (Start and Improve Your Business) have been tested and implemented in Armenia. The Decent Work Country Programme further promotes putting the country’s employment, OSH legislation and practices into compliance with the international standards as well as establishing social security schemes on Occupational Accidents and Diseases Insurance, Unemployment and Maternity Protection.

Other priorities of the Programme include HIV/AIDS prevention at the workplace and the application of ILO Conventions No. 138 and 182 on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

On the ILO-Moscow bilingual website you will find news, country information, full texts of the ILO Conventions and Recommendations, project briefs, publications, our quarterly Newsletter, articles about the ILO and a lot of other useful information.

CONTACT:
International Labour Organization

ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and the Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia
15 Petrovka Street, office 23
Moscow 107031, Russia
Tel: (7 495) 933 0810
Fax: (7 495) 933 0820
E-mail: moscow@ilo.org
URL: http://www.ilo.ru

ILO National Coordinator in Armenia
UN House
14 Petros Adamyan str.
Yerevan 0010, Armenia
Tel: (374 10) 54 39 72
Fax: (374 10) 54 39 72
E-mail: hovhannisyan@ilo.org
URL: http://www.un.am