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NEWSLETTER

Special Action Programme to combat Forced Labour



The work of the ILO Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour (SAP-FL) has recently been highlighted by the presentation of the 2010 William Wilberforce Award to its former head, Mr Roger Plant. The citation for the Award, which is given by Free the Slaves in recognition of an individual's contribution to the global fight against slavery, acknowledged in particular SAP-FL's achievements in the field of research under Roger Plant's leadership.

The ILO's estimates of a minimum of 12.3 million people in forced labour, and of almost \$32 billion in illicit profit pocketed each year by human traffickers, continue to be widely cited. The Organisation's 2009 Global Report further examined the financial cost to affected workers in terms of unpaid wages, unremunerated overtime, wage deductions and fees, estimating this at some \$21 billion.

SAP-FL is continuing its efforts to expand knowledge of forced labour, including trafficking in human beings. We have provided technical support for quantitative surveys to estimate levels of forced labour in five countries, while the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) has conducted parallel surveys of forced labour involving children. As a result, the ILO will soon publish methodological guidelines on surveys to measure forced labour of adults and children.

NEWS

In 2010, UNGIFT launched a virtual knowledge hub that will serve as a clearing house where governments and other stakeholders can access information on the issue of human trafficking – including research, advice on good practices and other guidance material for use by the general public and specialised audiences.

The virtual hub will include interactive features to allow the sharing of material and experience, the promotion of an e-network among practitioners and the propagation of knowledge about trafficking in persons. The platform also aims to promote and disseminate the work of civil society organisations, and its goal is to become the largest public electronic library for issues relating to human trafficking.



Programme for the Promotion of the ILO Declaration
on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

Brazilian experience in the fight against forced labour

In 2010 Brazil celebrated the 5th anniversary of the National Pact to Eradicate Slave Labour in Brazil. The Pact commits signatories to take specific measures to ensure that they do not buy or sell products that have been tainted with slave labour, and to take preventive action. The Pact has been signed by more than a hundred business leaders from the private sector and civil society.

Cooperation between public and private sectors in Brazil has been widely recognised as a success story, and as a blueprint for good practice that can be shared with other countries.

Gulnara Shahinian – the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences – also noted in her report that the Government of Brazil had put in place exemplary policies. She further emphasised the ILO’s positive and substantial role in working with all stakeholders in Brazil to combat forced labour.

The ILO is particularly proud to present “Retrato Escravo”, a compilation of photos by Sérgio Carvalho and João Roberto Ripper, immortalising the distress of Brazilian workers suffering conditions analogous to slavery.

Published with the support of Fundação Vale, this book is a tool for raising awareness about slave labour in Brazil. Exhibitions of the pictures are being held throughout Brazil.



Presentation of Employers’ Code of Conduct on Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings and Forced Labour

The Georgian Employers’ Association (GEA) has developed, with the support of the ILO, a Code of Conduct for Georgian employers that explicitly prohibits coercion and forced labour. It contains principles drawn from Georgian legislation and regulations, from ILO Conventions and Recommendations, and from other international instruments such as the Palermo Protocol and the Council of Europe Convention on Trafficking in Human Beings. Produced in conjunction with employers’ organisations and business associations in Georgia, the Code is a voluntary instrument that seeks to promote private initiatives to complement and support compliance with the law.

It serves as a management tool to help employers play an effective role in preventing and addressing forced labour and trafficking within their own spheres of influence.

On 7 December 2010, the GEA organised a presentation and signing ceremony for the Code, attended by many representatives of the Georgian Government, as well as representatives from the ILO, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the European Commission.

The Georgian Employers’ Association acts as custodian of the signed Code, which is open for signature by all interested employers and businesses.

Combating human trafficking in Oman

On 9–10 October 2010, the ILO supported “Prevention, Prosecution and Protection in Oman”, a workshop on trafficking in human beings, organised by the Oman Ministry of Manpower under an ILO project funded by the Government of the Netherlands. In Oman, foreign workers, most of them from South Asia, constitute almost half of the labour force. Under Oman’s “sponsorship system”, as in other countries with similar systems in place, migrant workers can only enter, work in, change employer and leave the country with the permission of their employer. While the sponsorship system is not in itself necessarily exploitative, it does create an environment of dependency and vulnerability in which abuses are more likely to occur.

Advised by ILO experts about international standards and experiences in other countries, the Oman government has begun to address the issue by creating a hotline, publishing leaflets and establishing a Dispute Settlement Mechanism within the Ministry of Manpower. In 2011, the ILO will further support training of labour inspectors, and promote awareness among employers and members of the newly established General Federation of Oman Trade Unions.

Luxor International Forum: End Human Trafficking Now! - Enforcing the UN Protocol

On 10 – 12 December 2010, the Special Action Programme to combat Forced Labour took part in the “Luxor International Forum: End Human Trafficking Now – Enforcing the UN Protocol”, held in Egypt. Organised by the Suzanne Mubarak Women’s International Peace Movement (SMWIPM) in cooperation with UN.GIFT, the Forum followed up the 2006 Athens Conference, which created the “Athens Ethical Principles against Trafficking” and the 2008 Bahrain Conference, which ended with the Manama Declaration. The Athens principles embrace seven main values, and hundreds of companies have agreed to abide by them, but it is their implementation by businesses that will contribute to the eradication of human trafficking worldwide.

The Luxor International Forum aimed at engaging the private sector, including the media and entertainment industries, in the fight against human trafficking. It gathered more than 500 representatives of private companies – among them Manpower, Chopard and Microsoft – and of international organisations such as UNODC, ILO, Interpol and UNICEF. Governmental entities were also represented, as were civil society, academia, youth public and media organisations.

The Forum included sessions on the Palermo Protocol, law and corporate practice, youth viewpoints, exploitative tourism and the impact of the media and entertainment industries. It also saw the launch of a UN.GIFT E-learning Tool against Human Trafficking, a web-based modular training programme for business leaders, managers and employees, and the first public screening of the new documentary on human trafficking and modern slavery “Not My Life”, filmed on five continents.

During the event’s closing ceremony, corporate executives were presented with the first Business Leader’s Award to Fight Human Trafficking. The jury announced three winners: Robert Rigby-Hall, Senior Vice-President of LexisNexis, USA; Christopher Davis, International Campaigns Director for The Body Shop, UK; and Marilyn Carlson Nelson, Chairwoman of Carlson, USA. These leaders were honoured for their commitment, creativity and leadership in fighting human trafficking within the corporate environment.

The Forum highlighted the leading role played by the business sector in ending human trafficking and the urgent need for greater involvement in anti-trafficking initiatives by business and the media.

An independent evaluation of SAP-FL reviewed the programme's accomplishments and challenges in the four-year period from 2006 to 2009, and provided the new programme manager and team members with helpful insights and recommendations for future strategic planning. The evaluator acknowledged SAP-FL's many positive achievements, highlighting the "value-added" of the core team working closely with field-based operational staff. Progress was recognised in the areas of data collection and analysis, policy and legal definitions and development of training materials. For the future, it was suggested that SAP-FL should aim to develop itself further as a "knowledge unit", particularly through more systematic documentation of lessons learned and analysis of impact.

On 14–16 December 2010, the ILO held an inter-regional workshop for labour attachés: "Strengthening the protection of migrant workers in Middle Eastern destination countries" in Amman, Jordan. The workshop aimed to train labour attachés about international standards and practices on the protection of migrant workers, including anti-trafficking legislation adopted in destination countries, and to foster networks, exchange of information and good practices among labour attachés and other government representatives. It gathered about thirty labour attachés and diplomatic staff from Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Thailand and Ethiopia, working in Middle East countries, as well as representatives of the Jordanian Government, social partners and NGO's.

On 4 November, in New York, the UNODC formally launched the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children. The Fund aims to provide humanitarian, legal and financial aid to victims through partnerships with governments, intergovernmental or non-governmental organisations.

The Berlin Alliance against Trafficking for Labour Exploitation

Under the auspices of the Berlin Alliance, an initiative implemented by (among others) the IOM and the ILO, a conference took place on October 18, in Berlin, to discuss "A Rights-based Approach to Counter Labor Trafficking – US and German Experiences". The opening address was given by Luis C deBaca, US Ambassador-at-Large and head of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. The event offered a forum for experts from the US and Germany to exchange methods and experiences in the combat of labour trafficking, with particular reference to the cooperation of state and non-state actors.

On behalf of the Berlin Alliance, Dr Norbert Cyrus, Dr Dita Vogel and Katrin de Boer carried out an exploratory study on the forms, origins and extent of trafficking for labour exploitation in selected industrial sectors in Berlin and Brandenburg. They interviewed employees of counselling agencies who had counselled workers in situations of extreme labour exploitation between 2005 and 2009. The cases collected in various sectors (construction, gardening, private households, etc) show that extreme exploitation can occur in officially registered and listed employment, and that EU citizens are affected as well as persons of irregular immigration status.

Social and legal factors such as residency status, multiple dependencies or lack of social integration put workers more at risk of falling into an exploitative situation than personal factors such as sex, age, education or language skills. Subtle forms of coercion and deception were observed in this context. In total, thirteen cases were identified as offering grounds for suspicion of trafficking for labour exploitation. Yet only two investigations were instigated from 2006 to 2009 in Brandenburg, along with ninety-eight in Berlin, and they resulted in only one conviction.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Interview with Nver S. Sargsyan, Project Officer, Armenia

Can you briefly describe your work?

My work is to support and oversee the overall implementation of the ILO's "Strengthening of a Comprehensive Anti-Trafficking Response in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia" project in Armenia. The project is funded by the European Commission and is implemented jointly by the ILO, IOM, OSCE and the ICMPD under the leadership of the ILO. It is actively supporting the Government of the Republic of Armenia in reinforcing a comprehensive policy to combat trafficking and forced labour. I update the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) on current development and activities. I also ensure that the project is in line with the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), as well as with the Republic of Armenia National Action Plan (NAP) on Combating Trafficking.

To what does the term "forced labour" refer in Armenia? What are the forms it takes?

Forced labour cases concern mainly Armenian migrants exploited in the construction sector in the Russian Federation.

Forced labour is banned in Armenia by the constitution. The term "forced labour" is not, however, defined by any other law or by the Labour Code. This lack of definition creates confusion in identifying cases, as well as many law enforcement problems. The ILO project, together with other international and national organisations and social partners, advocates inclusion of the definition of forced labour in the Labour Code.

Combating forced labour: a handbook for employers and business

Already published in Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, English, Georgian, and Spanish versions, the handbook is now available in French. It provides guidance for employers and businesses to strengthen their capacity to address the risk of forced labour and human trafficking in their operations and supply chains.

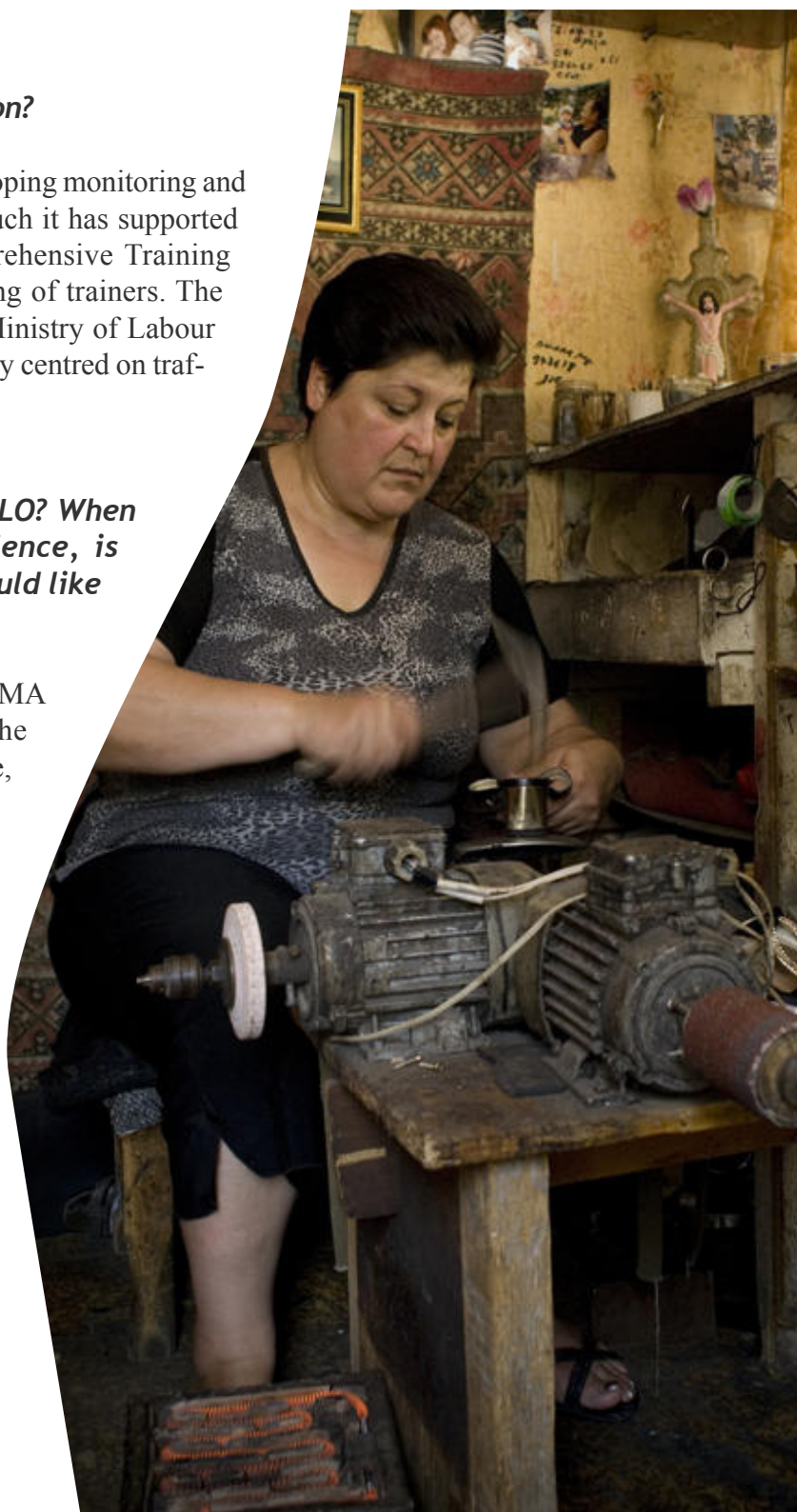


What current activities are you working on?

The project is now in its second phase and is developing monitoring and evaluation indicators for the 2010-12 NAP. As such it has supported the development of a Law Enforcement Comprehensive Training Manual that will form the basis for future training of trainers. The project is also working with the Police and the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues to develop databases, respectively centred on traffickers and victims.

How long have you been working for the ILO? When you look back on your work and experience, is there any particular highlight that you would like to share with us?

I joined the ILO in 2007, after taking my second MA in International Development Management. The ILO was a new world, a new beginning for me, and still is a world to be explored. Of course it is the people who make the difference to a project that I consider one of the most successful in Armenia. Credit must therefore go to my ILO colleagues at HQ and in the field; without their support and encouragement we could hardly have achieved what we have. I must also thank my team members in Armenia for making every effort to ensure our team-work's success. One of the project's biggest successes in Armenia was development of National Referral Mechanisms for Victim Assistance. The project had expressed to the Republic of Armenia its willingness to provide support in refining and improving what was the first NRM model in Southern Caucasus. It is extremely important that this model, as a regional first, is both applicable and practically useful.



Our warm congratulations to our colleague Nver, who became the father of a little boy while we were preparing this issue.

Looking for new material to raise awareness about forced labour and trafficking?

Take a look at the forced labour playlist on [Youtube ILO channel](#) and at [Say No to Forced Labour](#), a flash presentation available in three languages.