



## ***Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All: Details of Upcoming Activities***

In an effort to help Member States extend social security coverage to more of their citizens, the ILO will intensify efforts already underway in more than 30 countries. Activities will initially concentrate on five key areas:

### ***1. Extending Social Security Through Social Dialogue***

***An initiative focusing on three countries – Honduras, Mali and Sri Lanka – where the ILO will promote approaches based on social dialogue between governments, workers' and employers' groups to develop plans for implementing social security reforms aimed at extending social security coverage....***

For the time being, this experimental process, financed by the Government of the Netherlands, is limited to three developing countries – Honduras, Mali and Sri Lanka; if found successful, this process can be replicated in many other developing countries. In each country, a national diagnosis is to be developed through the concerted efforts of government ministries, representatives of employers and workers, as well as civil society organizations and social security institutions. The national diagnosis will examine the social security needs of workers in the formal and informal economy, as well as assesses the effectiveness of statutory and community-based schemes to cover these workers.

In all three countries, the draft diagnosis has now been discussed in national seminars, with full participation of all interested parties. In Sri Lanka for example, the national seminar concluded that a new health care strategy will have to be developed, and it identified weaknesses in the administration of employment security plans and the need to gather more information on community-based schemes and their potential. In Mali, the national diagnosis has led to the recommendation to set up a compulsory social health insurance scheme for workers in the public and private sector as well as a social assistance medical care scheme for the poor.

The diagnosis provides the basis for national action plans that are currently being prepared in all three countries. It is expected that these plans will be carried by broad social and political support. The process followed in these countries assures the enduring commitment of governments, social partners and civil society, and it creates an open and democratic space to find solutions through dialogue. These national action plans will also form the basis for the launch of national campaigns on social security and coverage for all.

## ***2. Extending Social Security to the Excluded in Five Portuguese-Speaking African Countries***

***A project aimed at Portuguese speaking countries in Africa – Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome & Principe – which is designed to help them better understand which groups of people are excluded from their social security systems and devise ways to bring them under full coverage....***

In these five countries, only a small percentage of the labour force, most of which is in the informal economy, is covered by statutory social security. This project, financed by the Portuguese government, will seek to increase the number of salaried workers who are covered by existing social security systems, while creating special statutory schemes for non-salaried workers that take into account their needs and ability to contribute. In addition, increased coverage will be attained through the development of community- and occupation-based schemes specially designed for the excluded in the informal economy. The latter two activities of the project will be developed over the next four to five years.

For the project on the fight against social exclusion to be successful, it is first of all necessary to better understand the process of social exclusion. To this end, a study on the impact of the informal economy on poverty and exclusion will be completed at the beginning of 2004. Secondly, it will develop and maintain a website that will improve its visibility and will encourage exchanges between various participants. A specific tool included in this website will be the “Learning and Resources Electronic Centre for Social Inclusion” to improve the project’s intervention capacity at the local level. This second activity will be undertaken during the full project duration, and will be continued after completion of the project. Governments, the social partners and civil society organizations will be closely associated with the conception and implementation of the project’s activities.

## ***3. The Global Social Trust Pilot Project***

***A programme aimed at extending social security by enabling people in industrialized countries to help finance the strengthening of social security systems in developing countries...***

Under this programme, developed countries would be partnered with least developed nations, with individual contributors in the developed countries being offered the opportunity to make regular, voluntary contributions of a few euros a month to the Trust. The money collected would then be used to kick-start basic social protection schemes in least developed countries – and support them until they can become self-supporting. It is envisioned that the benefits under the programme would go a long way toward reducing poverty in developing countries.

The core benefits supported by the Trust would consist of basic income security, basic education and essential health services provided to the family unit. On the financing side,

there is evidence of considerable support among people in developed countries. A survey in Germany indicated that as many as 25 percent of adults would be willing to contribute on a regular basis. However, even with a modest participation rate of only five percent of all employees in the richer OECD countries, the annual volume of contributions collected would still be sufficient to make a major contribution towards poverty alleviation in developing countries.

With the help of the social partners in a European country, the ILO is preparing to launch a Global Social Trust pilot project to provide income support to HIV/AIDS affected families in Southern Africa.

#### ***4. Strengthening Community-based Social Security Schemes***

***A project aimed at developing a better understanding of community-based social security plans that have emerged in developing countries, to devise ways to support them and enable them to grow, and to determine their potential for becoming part of wider, integrated national plans....***

This initiative will target poor and excluded groups in the informal economy, as well as low-income formal economy workers whose social security coverage does not meet their needs. In many countries the rapid proliferation of community-based social security schemes has demonstrated their important potential to contribute to the extension of social security services answering the priority needs of the excluded segments of the population, mainly with regard to health care. While some of these schemes have succeeded in developing efficient services to the benefit of their members, many are still found in dire need of more technical support in order to attain their full potential and to become sustainable. At the same time, there is a need for broader awareness and understanding of these schemes and their potential for helping countries expand social security coverage.

The ILO-STEP (Strategies and Tools against social Exclusion and Poverty) Programme has already carried out 35 technical cooperation projects on community-based schemes in 38 countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. In total, these projects provided direct technical support to more than 100 community-based schemes, covering about 400,000 members. These projects have also supported the design and development of policies and legislation to strengthen community-based schemes.

Beginning this year, the STEP Programme will undertake a worldwide survey on existing community-based social security schemes, in an effort to gain more knowledge on their experience and potential to improve access to health care. This information collected will lay the foundation for further technical assistance activities, while encouraging the development of communication networks among the various schemes and other interested groups. Further, the initiative will focus on strengthening the technical capacities of the schemes in the areas of financial and risk management (prevention and reparation mechanisms), while developing a better articulation with all concerned parties such as social security institutions, technical

ministries, policy-makers, health providers, national and local support organizations, the donor community.

## ***5. Extending Health Care Coverage in Latin America and the Caribbean***

***An initiative, in cooperation with the Panamerican Health Organization (PAHO), to better understand and attempt to reverse the decline in health care coverage in Latin American and Caribbean countries, where about 140 million people do not have access to health services....***

The ILO and PAHO will cooperate in helping countries define national action plans to extend health care coverage through a variety of mechanisms, such as social health insurance, community-based approaches and opening up access through public health care facilities.

The exclusion from health care coverage can take many forms, varying from a total lack of access to health care facilities, to excessive financial burden to the household, to a lack of dignity and/or quality in the delivery of health care services. Exclusion is determined by a number of factors, including the unsuitability or lack of health care provision, as well as the financial, geographical or cultural barriers that prevent the access to health care. The complexity of this problem is exacerbated by the self-excluding behaviour of individuals who choose not to use the available services because they are afraid of discrimination or because they think that their particular condition cannot be treated through the available health care facilities.

Together with PAHO, the ILO has taken the initiative to help countries to reverse this trend, with the ultimate aim to ensure health care coverage for all. During the first two years of the initiative, all participating countries will define national action plans as how health care coverage will be extended through a variety of mechanisms, such as social health insurance, community-based schemes and free access through public health care facilities. During the last three years, a first start will be made with the implementation of the action plans.

The number of participating countries will depend on the availability of resources. To raise funds, a Donors Meeting on the ILO/PAHO Initiative will be held in Stockholm, Sweden, probably on the second half of November 2003. The meeting will be co-sponsored by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Office (SIDA), the ILO and the World Health Organization/PAHO.