

WORLD OF Work

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ILO

**Societies
under strain:
Are you safe?**



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE



The ILO: Then and Now

World of Work magazine is published five times per year by the Bureau of Public Information of the ILO in Geneva. Also published in Chinese, Czech, Danish, Finnish, French, German, Hindi, Hungarian, Japanese, Norwegian, Russian, Slovak, Spanish and Swedish.

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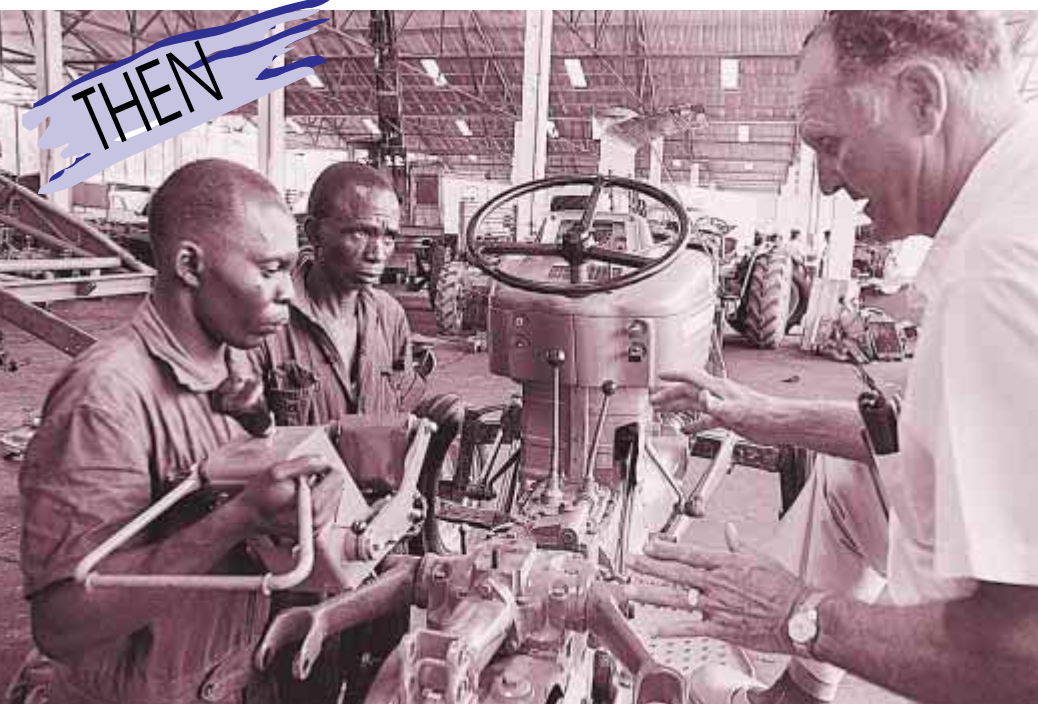
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Printed by SRO-Kundig SA, Geneva

ISSN 1020-0010

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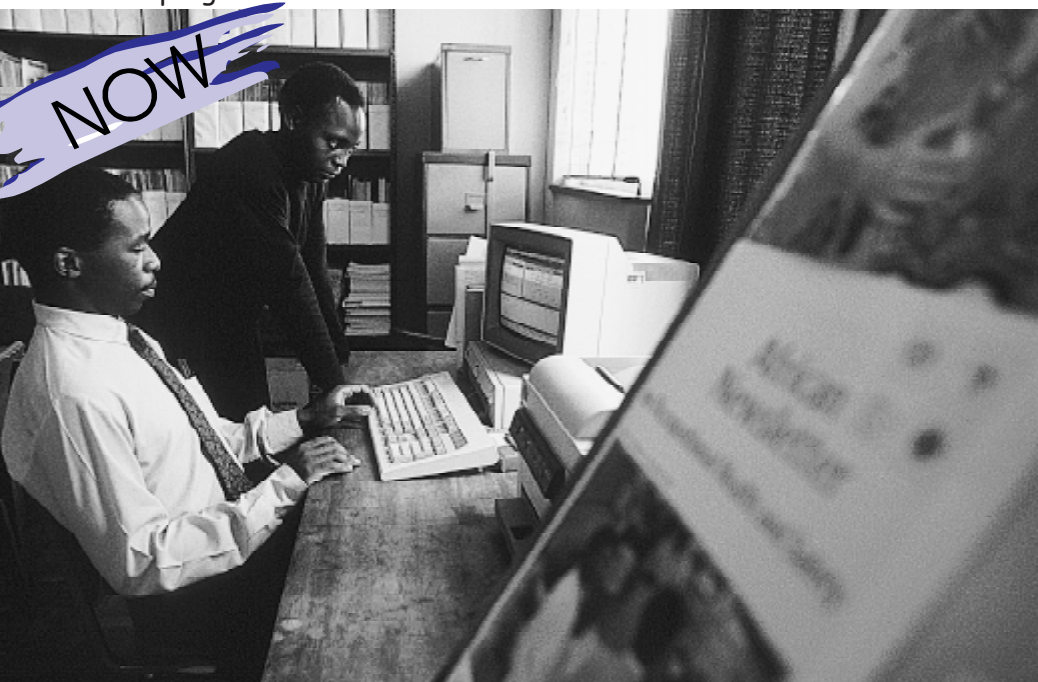


ILO/Jean Mohr

After the Second World War a new era dawned for the ILO. The election of the American, David Morse, as the Director-General of the ILO in 1948, coincided with the renewed development of the standards work of the Organization and the launching of ILO technical cooperation in 1950.

Since then, ILO technical cooperation has become a worldwide phenomenon. In the last decade, an annual average of some US\$130 million has been spent on such projects as training, small and micro-enterprise development, strengthening social security systems, reintegration of ex-combatants into national economies, assisting unions in occupational safety and health, setting up rural cooperatives, strengthening employers' organizations, and working with governments to revise labour laws. Today, the ILO has technical cooperation programmes in some 140 countries and territories.

NOW



ILO/Jacques Maillard

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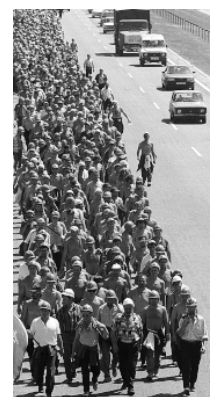
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Created in 1919, the International Labour Organization (ILO) brings together governments, employers and workers of its 175 member States in common action to improve social protection and conditions of life and work throughout the world. The International Labour Office, in Geneva, is the permanent Secretariat of the Organization.



New ILO report warns of “destructive backlash” if societies ignore social inequities

Seventy-five per cent of the world's 150 million jobless lack unemployment insurance protection. And even the world's richest countries have reduced protection provided by unemployment insurance. This year's World Labour Report 2000: Income Security and Social Protection in a Changing World¹ adds that a wide range of threats exist to worker security and protection worldwide.

GENEVA – In Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, workers have the most generous unemployment protection systems of all ILO member countries.

Australia, Canada, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States belong to “medium-level type systems”. Fewer of the unemployed in these countries receive benefits and the compensation which is provided is lower than that available in the first tier of countries.

In the rest of the world, however, the social security situation is grim.

“The vast majority of the population in many developing countries, including informal sector wage earners and self-employed persons, have no social protection whatsoever,” warns the report,

adding that “the major focus must be on the extension of coverage” to these workers.

Still, “alarmist rhetoric notwithstanding, social protection, even in the supposedly expensive forms to be found in most advanced countries, is affordable in the long term,” says ILO Director-General, Juan Somavia. “It is affordable because it is essential for people, but also because it is productive in the longer term. Societies which do not pay enough attention to security, especially the security of their weaker members, eventually suffer a destructive backlash.”

Government support is “indispensable”

The report notes that millions of people in the informal sector “earn very low incomes and have an extremely limited capacity to contribute to social protec-

tion schemes”. They cannot afford to save much of their meagre incomes or look forward to pensions or health insurance benefits. Often, they are reluctant or simply unable to seek help from social assistance schemes where these exist.

For low-income developing countries, the report says “it is imperative to give priority to schemes specially designed to meet the needs of informal sector workers”. Government support is deemed “indispensable” in the effort, and a possible starting point would be the extension of statutory social insurance schemes “toward increased – and possibly universal – coverage”.

The report makes various proposals to extend social protection, which now covers less than half of the world’s population. The three main options toward meeting the goal include extension of existing programmes, creation of new programmes which target informal sector workers and the development of tax-financed social benefit systems.

“Changes in family structure have combined with other developments, notably rising unemployment and inequality, to produce a steep rise in child poverty rates between the mid-1960s and the mid-1990s”, says the report.

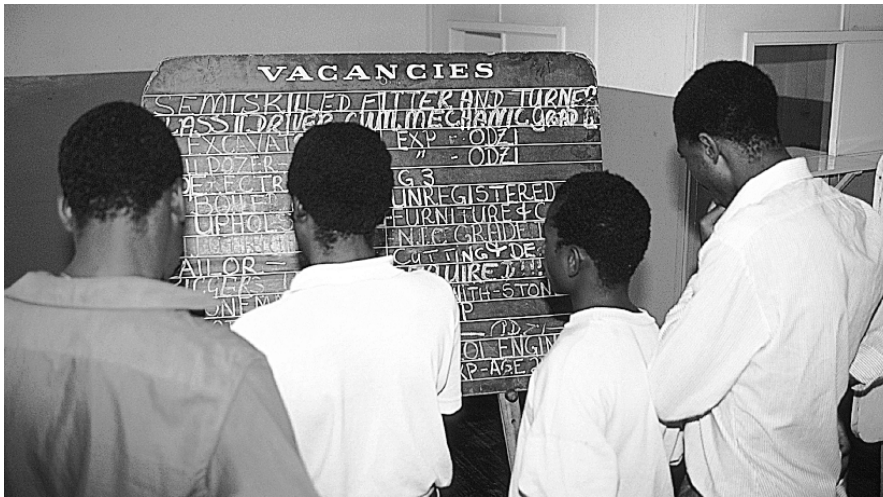
Fertility rates are falling throughout the world, which allows more women to enter the labour market. However, largely because of falling fertility rates, the population is ageing rapidly in most parts of the world. This is having a major impact on the ratio of the working-age generation to retired segments of the population.

The report outlines various measures designed to improve income security for women:

- Practical measures (maternity ben-



ILO/P. Deloche



ILO/Jacques Maillard

efits, child care facilities, parental leave) which help men and women combine paid employment and child rearing, and which support the access of women to paid work.

- The extension of compulsory social security to all employees including the categories in which women are heavily represented (e.g., domestic and part-time workers).

- The recognition of unpaid child rearing work through the award of credits under contributory systems or through the provision of universal benefits.

The lack of unemployment insurance protection

Developed countries – In the top 14 countries listed previously, unemployment protection consists of various layers of benefits. The first and most important one consists of unemployment insurance benefits paid during the initial period following the loss of a job, with average net replacement rates of more than 60 per cent of national average earnings. This rate is significantly higher than in those countries belonging to the next category.

Most countries with a high-level system have a second layer of unemployment benefits, usually called unemployment assistance. This layer covers workers who have exhausted their entitlements to unemployment insurance and provides them with a grace period before they come within the purview of less generous social assistance schemes.

Almost all OECD (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development) countries in the 1990s reduced the protection provided by their unemployment benefit systems. Eligibility rules have been tightened and the duration of benefits and replacement rates have been reduced in nearly all European countries.

In a trend sometimes known as “workfare”, many Western countries have made benefits conditional on participa-

tion in training, the acceptance of jobs deemed suitable by the unemployment benefits administration, or on demonstrably intensive job-search activities. Efforts have also been intensified, through active labour market policies, to get the unemployed back to work.

The report suggests that the provision of unemployment benefits should be closely coordinated with labour market policies. It also pleads for extending the coverage of unemployment benefits, which would provide income security to larger groups of unemployed and have a positive effect on labour market flexibility.

Health care

Mortality rates are higher for the poor than for the rich at all ages, but that differential is particularly high during infancy and childhood. “From 0 to 4 years, mortality in the 20 per cent poorest countries of the world is nine times higher than for the rich, and for those aged 5 to 14 it is ten times higher”, says the report.

The availability of adequate preventive and curative care is vital to ensure that workers are fit enough to earn a decent living. And it is the function of the health care financing system to ensure that the large and unpredictable costs of health care do not fall directly on the budgets of individual households. Many workers, particularly those who are outside regular wage employment, do not have any satisfactory health care coverage.

In low-income countries of sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia, micro-insurance schemes for health care are being developed to bring the advantages of risk-pooling to people who are otherwise unprotected. The development of these schemes is highly dependent at the present time on support from governments, NGOs and international organizations, such as WHO and the ILO. They contribute, through popular participation in their setting up and in their management, to the social and political inclusion of the excluded.

SOME KEY TRENDS AND ISSUES AFFECTING SOCIAL PROTECTION

The number of people living in extreme poverty around the world has increased by 200 million people in just the last five years, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, Eastern Europe and south-east Asia.

850 million people work less than they want or earn less than a living wage.

Poverty is one of the major factors driving 250 million children into the labour force, and jeopardizes their attendance in school.

In certain developed countries, rates of divorce have increased up to 500 per cent (Canada, United Kingdom) over a 30-year period, meaning many more children are living in single-parent households.

In many of the same developed countries, births to unmarried women also jumped up to six times over the same 30-year period, which again puts many children into single-parent households.

Poverty rates for households headed by a single mother are at least three times higher than for two-parent households in Australia, Canada, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway and the United States.

Social security expenditure as a percentage of GDP has risen in most countries over the period 1975-92, but there have been exceptions to this trend, especially in Africa and Latin America.

However, small-scale financing systems are not likely to be the only answer to the key problem of adequate access to health care. Most industrialized countries have introduced social health insurance (or national health services), which initially only covered formal sector workers, but were then extended to lower paid workers, farmers and self-employed people. Most developing countries are still in the first phase of social health insurance coverage.

Since the formalization of the labour force is a long process and may in fact never be completed, many governments in developing countries will have to use a variety of health financing mechanisms

(Continued on p. 33)



Child labour: Burkina Faso

In West Africa, a new programme against child labour

Of the 250 million child workers in the world, 80 million live in Africa. In the west African nation of Burkina Faso, child workers - boys and girls - are found all over the country, too often working under appalling conditions. ILO-IPEC has launched a programme of action in cooperation with Burkina Faso's government to cope with the situation. Tor Monsen, ILO Information, Norway, reports.

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso – The fact that at the age of 10, Fatoumissatou is helping keep her family alive, is not unusual. Like many children her age in Burkina today, Fatoumissatou works here in the nation's capital city, selling fruit and vegetables with her mother, and managing to provide not only for herself but also to partly support her brothers and sisters.

She dreams of going to school, but that is too expensive for her impoverished family. Neither Fatoumissatou nor her family could imagine having that amount of money.

Of the world's 250 million child labourers, Fatoumissatou is not unique. Like many of the children working today in Burkina Faso, she is at a tender age, has no education, works long hours, has no

social protection and can count on little social assistance in case of accident or injury (See graph, p. 7).

In fact, a recent survey of child workers in Burkina found that some 51 per cent of the children in the country below the age of 18 are working. Most work more than six hours a day, never go to school and often work without pay. In the worst cases, they are exposed to dangers, including dust and explosives. Some must bear heavy loads and operate dangerous machinery. Fourteen per cent of these children are below the age of 10.

Until recently, very little information about child labour was available in Burkina Faso and there was no national programme to deal with the issue. Now the International Labour Organization (ILO), in collaboration with the government, is working to change this.

The national programme of action

The ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) started in 1992, and is today the largest programme against child labour in the world, with some 1,000 projects involving an alliance of 90 countries. The ILO is working with the Government of Burkina Faso to establish a national programme of action against child labour.

In 1997, the ILO conducted a survey among 2,000 children, involving child

SOME OF THE RESULTS FROM THE ILO/IPEC SURVEY:

The ten biggest problems for child workers in Burkina Faso:

- ✓ workers' tender age
- ✓ heavy loads
- ✓ long-lasting injuries because of heavy loads
- ✓ lack of training
- ✓ dangerous working environment
- ✓ no social protection
- ✓ long working hours
- ✓ extremely dangerous work
- ✓ no assistance after accidents
- ✓ poor living standards of the family

workers in the agricultural sector, apprentices in the informal sector, children labouring in particularly risky workplaces such as stone quarries, and among young girls in Ouagadougou.

The study found that the main problems underlying child labour in Burkina Faso are widespread poverty and the poor

ILO/IPEC aims at stopping extreme forms of child labour, such as child labour in hazardous working conditions, bonded child labour, child prostitution and trafficking of children. IPEC also gives special attention to children under 12 years of age, and working girls - all in line with the new Convention 182, adopted by the ILO International Labour Conference in June 1999.

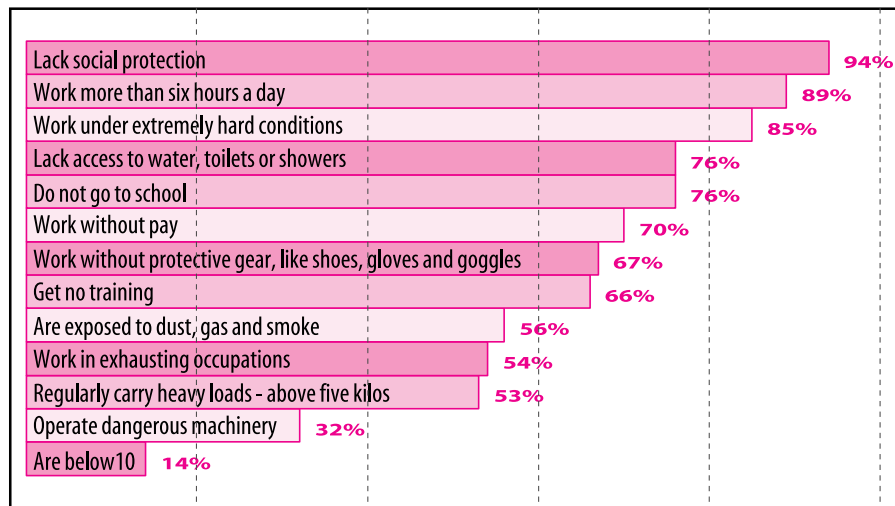
education system. The country is ranked as the world's fourth poorest country. Thirty per cent of all children enter school, but many drop out soon afterwards. Many girls leave school before completing their studies. Only nine per cent of all women in Burkina Faso can read and write.

The country has few natural resources and is economically vulnerable. Burkina Faso depends on human resources as a main development strategy. However, the continuing economic crisis prolongs and aggravates the poverty problem. Much of the population does not have access to basic needs like food, water, health and education. The survey found that 44.5 per cent of the population live below the poverty line.

Children are victims

Predictably, children are among the primary victims of growing poverty, often having no choice but to work to help keep their families alive. The national

CHILD WORKERS IN BURKINA FASO. SOME KEY NUMBERS FROM ILO/IPEC SURVEY:



ILO

plan against child labour aims at preventing children from starting work at an early age, and stopping dangerous and the worst forms of child labour. Conditions for the child workers have to

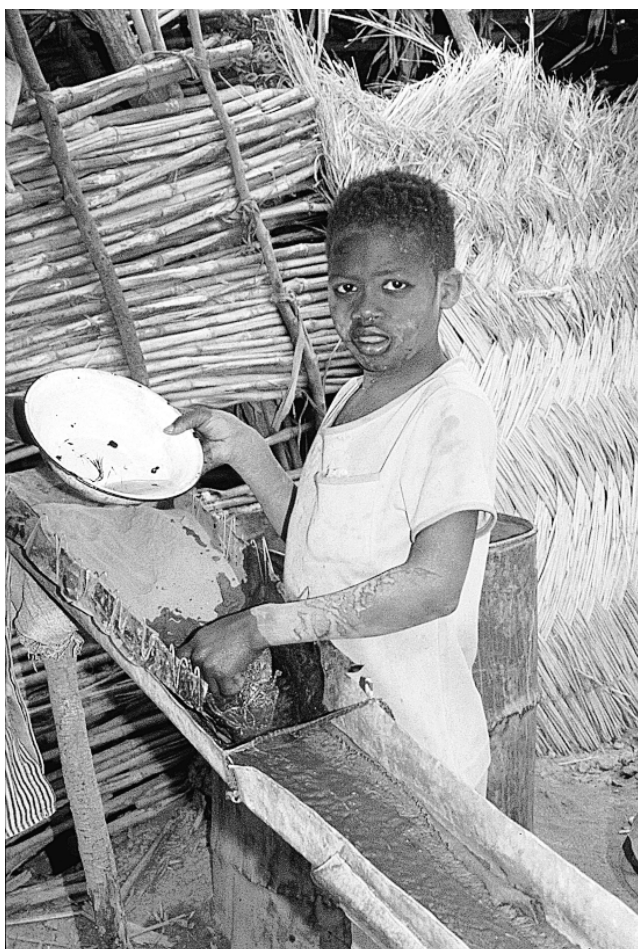
improve, but only as a step towards total elimination of child labour.

The 2,000 children who were involved in ILO/IPEC survey in Burkina Faso will be the first to benefit from the project. First and foremost will be the youngest and most vulnerable, and children working in the most dangerous jobs. The project collaborates with various partners to increase its efficiency: parents, local communities, employers and employees, government bodies, NGOs, religious and traditional leaders, doctors, teachers, researchers and journalists.

It is important to keep the public up-to-date on the work against child labour. Every project has its own strategy to raise awareness, especially suited to the different target groups. Debates are encouraged and organized in the local communities and rural areas. Radio broadcasts on facts about child labour can be heard almost on a daily basis in Burkina Faso.

Among the strategies for fighting child labour and reducing overall poverty, micro-credit programmes have been set up to improve many families' access to the means of production. Anti-poverty programmes also encourage many people – especially women – to start small scale businesses. Public health services must be improved through vaccination campaigns, better family planning and training in basic hygiene. More people need access to education, particularly girls. □

– Tor Monsen,
ILO-Information/Norway



ILO/J.M. Derrien

I want to help, but I'd rather be in school.

Child labour: Cambodia

From the "rue des petites fleurs"* to the suburbs of Phnom Penh, child labour worsens

In this country of nearly 11 million people, classed among the poorest in the world (GDP less than \$US 300 per person), 16 per cent of all children between 5 and 17 years of age - more than 600,000 - are working. The majority have completely dropped out of school to work, and only 40 per cent follow some form of schooling outside of working hours.

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia – Child workers are visible everywhere: in brickyards, salt ponds, rice paddies, rubber plantations, and on fishing boats. They also work as domestic help in well-to-do households (a study conducted in just one neighbourhood of the capital, Phnom Penh, counted 4,000 child domestic workers). Each morning, on “Stung Meanchey”, the large garbage dump on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, clusters of children can also be seen rushing behind the trucks to collect anything which can

be recycled (plastics, metals) among the piles of fetid rubbish.

And thousands of barefoot children, dressed in grimy T-shirts, wander the streets of Phnom Penh and other cities (Battambang, Sihanoukville) in small groups. Some shine shoes, others sell fruit, chips, or water, while others beg for money from tourists.

All of these children, whether workers or beggars, are from poor families; according to statistics published in Cambodia, nearly 90 per cent of working children do so to contribute to the survival

of their families, to whom they give their earnings.

These children often come from rural refugee families, who have had their land confiscated and who have come to the city in an attempt to survive, or else from families heavily in debt (one of the principal factors of their indebtedness is the prohibitive price of medical treatment and medicines; one illness can cause an entire family to become destitute). Many are also from families affected by divorce and separation. Children raised by single mothers are obligated to work at a very early age, while youngsters who don't get along with a new, violent stepfather end up on the streets.

An increasingly violent society

In the cities, the children's begging hides a tragic reality: the youngest are taken under the wings of “big brothers”, gang leaders around twenty years old, who terrorize them. The little beggars who don't bring back enough money in the evening are punished with cigarette burns or knife cuts. These delinquents also push the children to “sniff” glue, or even take them to Thailand where they must beg in the tourist areas.

This violence against children is partly



ILO/P. Deloche

*“Street of little flowers”

explained by the progressive criminalization of Cambodian society, which is a result of war and social inequality.

To begin with, the political normalization of 1994 was not accompanied by disarmament, and the weapons left over from the war were scattered throughout every level of society. Every Cambodian kept what he needed to defend himself, and the capital no longer even counts the number of gangland killings, robberies and armed threats. The growth in illegal activities is also explained by the chronic lack of jobs. Moreover, many unemployed war veterans have joined the "mafia" network, which, since the mid-90s, has made huge profits from the many night clubs, casinos and karaoke bars, as well as from prostitution.

An "explosion" of sexual exploitation

The NGOs present in Cambodia note a veritable "explosion" of the sexual exploitation of women and children over the past several years.

Procurers kidnap street children, or buy young girls from poverty-stricken families for several hundred US dollars or in exchange for medicines. Some poor widows "also give up their eight or nine year-old daughters for the promise of a job in the city or of adoption. But one also sees girls abducted as they leave school," affirms a Frenchwoman, an NGO volunteer.

These young girls find themselves in the brothels of the "street of little flow-

GIRL WORKERS IN THE CLOTHING FACTORIES OF PHNOM PENH

Night falls in the outskirts of Phnom Penh, and there is a crush in the streets; at factory closing time, thousands of young women - often very young - cram into trucks or mopeds and go back to their sleeping quarters in the suburbs, where they cook, do their laundry and sleep four or five to a room only a few metres in size.

The several dozen clothing factories of Phnom Penh, financed with American, Chinese or Thai capital, export "casual wear" (T-shirts, cotton pants) around the world. Entry is prohibited to anyone who doesn't work there. These factories provide one of the few opportunities for work in the city, and young girls from the provinces flock to them. Many are under 15 years old, but lie about their age. They must pay US\$30

to be hired.

The working day is from 10 to 14 hours long depending on the factory. No lunch break; they buy a meal from a street vendor in the factory and eat standing up without leaving their workstations. They are paid US\$40 to US\$50 per month, but a worker can earn US\$100 if she also works at night.

This US\$100 represents only the average rent in Phnom Penh, or the price of a bicycle, but is much more than the salary of a schoolteacher (US\$15 per month). That's why many young people accept this pace of work to feed their families, and it's not rare to see exhausted and underfed workers faint at the workplace. But it's better not to fall sick; missing one day chops US\$5 off of their salary.

ers", in Phnom Penh, or in the night clubs on the bank of the river, where armed guards keep a close eye on them. According to one NGO, there are between 10,000 and 15,000 minors forced into prostitution in Phnom Penh. A study carried out in 1995 in the capital and in 11 provinces established that one-third of the prostitutes were between 12 and 17 years old.

The Cambodians who patronize the houses of prostitution pay in local currency (the riel), but foreigners pay in US

dollars. Several NGOs confirm that a visiting "businessman" can "rent" a young virgin girl for US\$200 to US\$300 a week. And the medical NGOs are alarmed by the surge in sexually transmitted diseases: in Cambodia today, AIDS is increasing exponentially. □

– *Bénédicte Manier**

*Journalist based in France specialized in social rights issues, recently published a book about child labour.

THE ILO/IPEC PROGRAMME IN CAMBODIA

The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) was established in Cambodia in 1996, to prevent child labour and to support the re-integration of child workers, in a country which largely lacks the means for education and social action.

"We are starting at a very low level, in terms of social infrastructure. In some ways, in this country everything is a priority," confides Mar Sophea, the national official responsible for the IPEC programme.

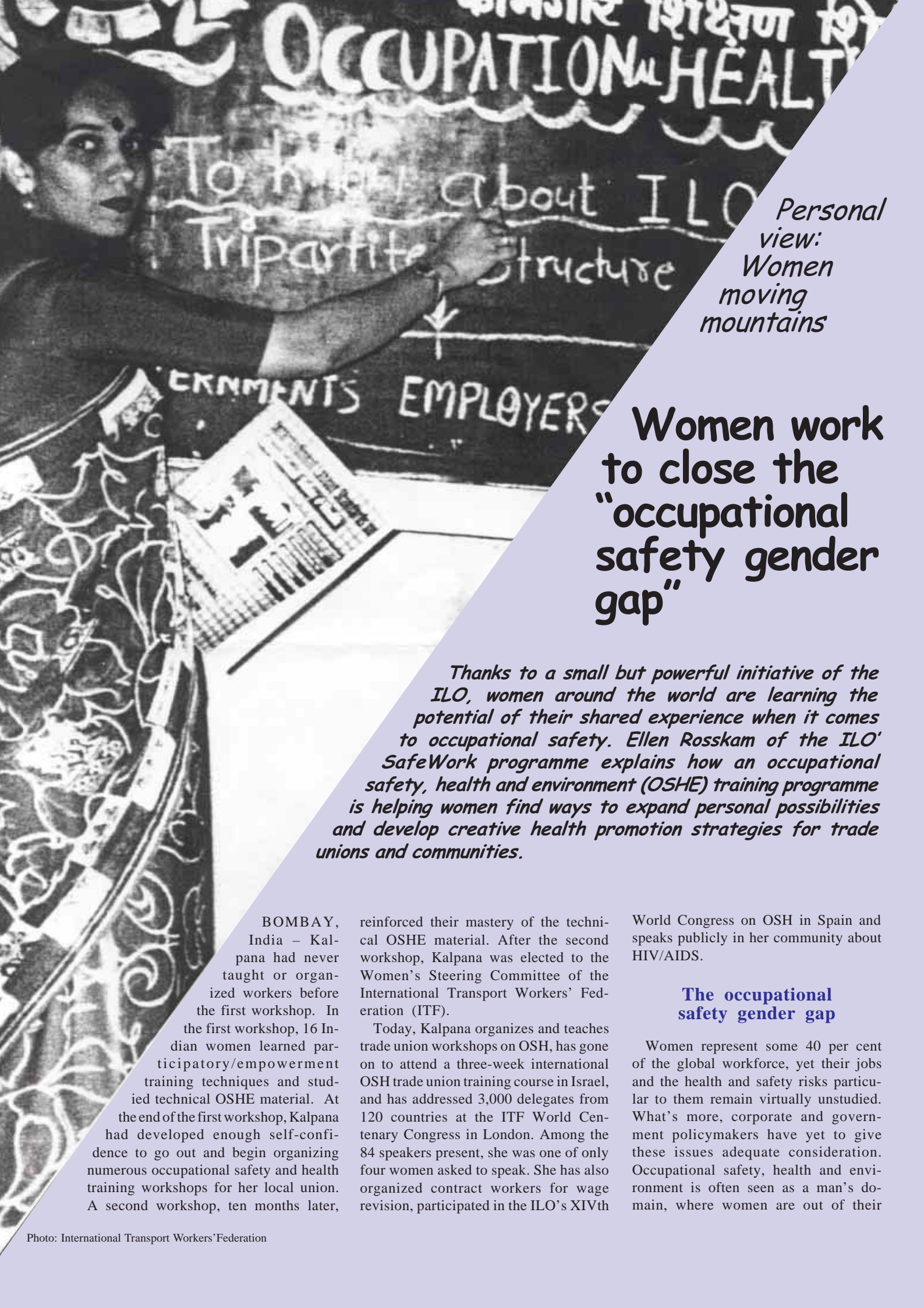
After a partnership agreement with the Government, a national plan of action was established for the period 1997-2001, with the Ministries (Social Affairs, Education, Labour, Health, Interior), associations of social workers, trade unions, employers' federations, and NGOs.

IPEC acts in several areas. In the world of work, it trains and supports labour inspectors, contributes to

removing children from the worst forms of child labour (notably prostitution), and raising awareness among employers.

At one level, IPEC also collaborates with rural development programmes, which enables them to provide an income to poor families. IPEC also supports NGOs in their activities (preventing the trafficking of children, informal schooling of young workers, lodging and re-integration of street children and prostitutes).

Over the last few years, several employers have signed collective agreements with the unions, some of them also accepting collaboration with the NGOs. But the task is more complex as far as sexual exploitation and street children are concerned. "It is difficult to change behaviour", says Mar Sophea. "It takes time, lots of time."



*Personal
view:
Women
moving
mountains*

Women work to close the "occupational safety gender gap"

Thanks to a small but powerful initiative of the ILO, women around the world are learning the potential of their shared experience when it comes to occupational safety. Ellen Rosskam of the ILO' SafeWork programme explains how an occupational safety, health and environment (OSHE) training programme is helping women find ways to expand personal possibilities and develop creative health promotion strategies for trade unions and communities.

BOMBAY, India – Kalpana had never taught or organized workers before the first workshop. In the first workshop, 16 Indian women learned participatory/empowerment training techniques and studied technical OSHE material. At the end of the first workshop, Kalpana had developed enough self-confidence to go out and begin organizing numerous occupational safety and health training workshops for her local union. A second workshop, ten months later,

reinforced their mastery of the technical OSHE material. After the second workshop, Kalpana was elected to the Women's Steering Committee of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF).

Today, Kalpana organizes and teaches trade union workshops on OSH, has gone on to attend a three-week international OSH trade union training course in Israel, and has addressed 3,000 delegates from 120 countries at the ITF World Centenary Congress in London. Among the 84 speakers present, she was one of only four women asked to speak. She has also organized contract workers for wage revision, participated in the ILO's XIVth

World Congress on OSH in Spain and speaks publicly in her community about HIV/AIDS.

The occupational safety gender gap

Women represent some 40 per cent of the global workforce, yet their jobs and the health and safety risks particular to them remain virtually unstudied. What's more, corporate and government policymakers have yet to give these issues adequate consideration. Occupational safety, health and environment is often seen as a man's domain, where women are out of their

league. This perspective not only limits the empowerment of women but also the drive for, and the nature of, effective solutions to workplace problems. The equation is simple: globally, if more people are trained and made aware of the importance of OSHE, the numbers and the staggering social costs of workplace fatalities, accidents and environmental catastrophes can be significantly reduced.

Women are conspicuously absent as decision-makers, both in corporate boardrooms as well as in trade union offices. Women workers face many hardships: they find it difficult to advance in the rank and file of a trade union, they lack support from the male leadership for organizing and conducting OSHE training courses, and have difficulty ensuring that other women participate in such training courses. Demonstrating particular competencies or advancing in union ranks often provokes jealousy from colleagues. Women may even find obstacles built up before them just because they are women. As a result, women workers often feel intimidated when addressing technical health and safety subjects, especially in front of a group of male workers.

The lack of participation by women in solutions affecting their own health is exacerbated by the fact that women are often reluctant to get involved in officially designated Occupational Health and Safety Committees. They feel they lack the critical technical skills and expertise, a belief that only increases the cycle of low self-esteem and feelings of incompetence.

The ILO recognizes that in order for real change to take place, safety and health professionals need to demystify technical areas, empower workers, focus on the risks particular to jobs performed by women on the job, and encourage unions to activate Women's Committees as well as involve women in Health and Safety Committees. This reflects the recognition that the health and safety risks to women in jobs performed by women are different from those experienced by men. For example, because tools and personal protective equipment (PPE) are designed for men, women often face a situation where their size renders the equipment and PPE ineffective, thereby increasing their risk of injury or illness. In addition,

failure to study exposure effects particular to women creates an occupational safety gender gap that leaves women unnecessarily vulnerable to such exposure.

From New Delhi to Manila: Globalizing women's OSHE

In an attempt to reduce the barriers to women's participation in health and safety in their workplaces, the ILO sponsored a series of workshops with the help of a grant from the Norwegian government. The success of the first workshop in New Delhi, India, in 1993, led to others in India and the Philippines, and inspired other union safety programs aimed at supporting and utilizing women in the workplace.

To date, this ILO effort has provided training for some 60 women union members throughout the Philippines and India in conducting health and safety workshops

"I don't want my daughter to grow up feeling inadequate and uneducated like I have. I want her to feel in control of her life. This is why I want to gain these new skills and pursue this direction."

A Filipina trade unionist

for their respective unions. The impact of these women has been tremendous; they have gone on to train several hundred other workers in health and safety issues. They have won the support of their mostly male union and company management and as a result have continued to organize their own training workshops. And, if that is not enough, some of them have gone on to do further community health work, which again impacts many more thousands of people.

These "train-the-trainer" workshops helped the women understand the importance of their role in their unions and their potential to become agents of change. By working together and creating a supportive group environment in the classroom, the workshops empowered the women to carry out newly adopted roles with their newly devel-

oped skills in the field.

"I don't want my daughter to grow up feeling inadequate and uneducated like I have. I want her to feel in control of her life. This is why I want to gain these new skills and pursue this direction." This powerful statement reveals the motivation behind one Filipina trade unionist's desire to become an OSHE instructor for her trade union.

The workshops required the participants to leave their homes and jobs to travel to the city where the workshop was held for at least one week at a time. Building a strong sense of solidarity among each group of women trainees took time, the outcome of days and nights spent together. Many women had never spoken or instructed in public, some had never travelled alone or so far before. Despite the cultural and personal stress that this presented, no one left the programme. All barriers were overcome.

Seeing and hearing each other tackle technical issues was extremely effective for the women participants. It built the self-confidence needed to face male or mixed groups of workers. The classroom was designed to be a "safe zone" with the participants as owners. They were encouraged to utilize the training space as they saw fit. For example, trainees decorated the walls of their classrooms with "risk maps", visually depicting the location of different hazards at their workplaces.

Using participatory techniques and the principles of Paulo Freire's "education for critical consciousness", trainees underwent the process of relating what was being discussed and practised in the classroom and in the workplace to their own life experiences. In contrast to lecture-based learning, this consciousness-building process allowed the trainees to translate how workplace and environmental hazards could affect them and their families, and to build up the confidence allowing them to think creatively about ways of addressing problems. Equally important, the process created a greater understanding of group dynamics and provided the facilitation skills needed to work effectively with their fellow workers, which they could then use to reach the goals of heightened awareness of workplace safety, health and environmental is-

(Continued on p. 33)

Where pain was part of the job

Diving safely: How Thailand's "Sea Gypsies" unravelled "the bends"

In Thailand, the Urak Lawoi, or "Sea People" gather fish by diving relatively deeply beneath the Andaman Sea. Until recently, their diving gear left them highly exposed to the hazards of "the bends" or decompression illness. Now, by adapting to their diving techniques, they have dramatically reduced the dangers of their work. David Gold of the ILO SafeWork Programme explains how the "Sea Gypsies" of Phuket have rejected a "culture of pain".*

KOH SIRAY, Thailand – Seventeen years ago, Khun Doomin Pramongkit was among several "Sea Gypsies" – indigenous divers working 48 metres below the surface of the Andaman Sea off the island of Phuket – when a disaster struck that would change his life forever. A compressor supplying air through a long, snake-like rubber hose failed. With no backup air supply flowing into his diving mask, Khun Doomin swam rapidly to the surface, bringing on a case of the dreaded "bends" and paralyzing him.

But Khun Doomin was the lucky one that day. Of the other divers, one died from the "bends" or decompression illness, on reaching the boat. Another died later in the village.

Today, Khun Doomin, now 44, remains paralyzed from the waist down. As he cannot take care of himself, he relies on his wife and public health workers to assist him with even the most basic activities.

A culture of pain

Khun Doomin belongs to a group of some 400 indigenous fisherman-divers who live and work on Thailand's west coast. Known locally as Urak Lawoi, or Sea People in the Sea Gypsy language, they gather fish, shellfish, crabs and lobsters, sea cucumbers and sea urchins, for export to neighbouring countries. Like many local fishing folk in North, South and Central America, Oceania and Asia, they dive or adapt their traditional diving techniques using compressed air, to harvest such marine life which is more difficult to obtain by other means.

Within this group, only men dive. Aged 13 to 62, the Urak Lawoi divers use very primitive equipment to work under the sea. On the surface, a gasoline or a diesel powered compressor (often salvaged from an old truck) is mounted on the open-decked diving boat and supplies up to four divers at a time with compressed air.

The air is pumped down through 100 metres of air hose to the diver, who breathes through his nose inside a mask pierced by a tyre valve connected to the air hose. Divers are weighted and work standing

or walking on the ocean floor. Their only protection from the cold water and marine life, such as stinging coral, is a long sleeved shirt and athletic style trousers.

Unlike professional, military, scientific and recreational diving, where charts or computers are used to limit the amount of time spent on the bottom according to the depth of the dive, the Urak Lawoi have no such sophisticated guidance. Instead, they measure depth using the anchor line, or on the basis of their familiarity of the area. Rather than watch the time, most of the divers stay underwater until the work is done, whether or not they are wearing a watch.

The results: a dangerous profession. A project survey of active Urak Lawoi

A shirt with the safety message, "Come up slowly from every dive," was given to each diver.



ILO/D. Gold

AVOIDING THE DECOMPRESSION CHAMBER

A recent article in the *World of Work* focused on the desire of both employers and workers' organizations to install several decompression chambers in a geographic area where pearl diving is taking place. While no one can argue with the importance of having adequate facilities available to treat decompression sickness, in the situation involving Khun Doomin and his fellow divers, a better understanding of the risks of diving, having a positive attitude towards dealing with those risks, and having the knowledge and skills necessary to prevent decompression sickness could have kept this situation from occurring in the first place.



ILO/D. Gold

A diver surfaces with a basket of shellfish.

divers found that 85 per cent of the divers surveyed felt pain was part of their job. The population of divers suffers from an occupational mortality rate of 300 deaths per 100,000 workers (by comparison, construction workers covered by Thailand’s social security system showed an occupational mortality rate of 70 deaths per 100,000 workers for the same period). Just over five per cent of the active diving and ex-diving population are disabled due to diving.

Learning how to survive

The practices, attitudes towards risk, and incidences of injury, disability and death of the Urak Lawoi have been studied through a project in concert with Thailand’s Ministry of Public Health. Dr. Alan Geater, a senior lecturer in epidemiology at Prince of Songkla University in Hatyai, Thailand, is a member of the project team. Dr. Geater recently observed that the project first developed baseline data to develop an understanding of the situation among the Urak Lawoi divers. It identified certain key areas where it expected that the risks of decompression illness were high, and encouraged changes of attitudes and behaviour to reduce the risks.

Sixteen health care workers were selected from the villages and districts where the Urak Lawoi live. They were trained by the project so that they could participate in survey activities, physical examinations, and informational and educational activities.

An ILO strategy known as WISE (Working Improvements in Small Enterprises) was used by the project to develop

simple, easy to remember, low-cost rules to assist health care workers to develop informational tools with a view to improving safety in diving practices and reduce the risk of decompression sickness.

Involving boat owners, village leaders, divers and health care workers, ten short, straightforward rules for safe diving were developed. An illustrated one-page information sheet for each rule was also developed, tested, printed and distributed throughout the villages. These rules were the basis for a series of participative workshops, supervised by the project and designed and conducted by the local health care workers to raise the awareness of the boat chiefs about techniques for reducing the risk of decompression illness.

According to Ms. Aurai Samakkaran, a public health nurse working with the project, “We [the health care workers] can empower the Urak Lawoi, through information and education, so that important diving safety messages will still be with them once we leave.”

The project also provided each active diver with a shirt, used for diving, with a safety message on the back.

Avoiding dangerous practices

The ILO SafeWork Infocus Programme focuses on hazardous occupations. Both fishing and diving are considered to be

hazardous occupations. Raising the level of knowledge and awareness of risks as well as working to change attitudes and behaviour is a means of empowering the diver and boat owner to find solutions to improving their safety and health at work.

“In one large village where preliminary evaluation of the effects of the project has been undertaken, there is evidence of increased general awareness of the risks of diving and efforts to avoid dangerous practices. There are signs that this information is now spreading on its own through the people in the village, observed Alan Geater.

One problem which has plagued many diving boats is that other boats, passing too close to the dive boat, may cut the air hose of the diver below with their propellers. Recently, in one of the project’s participative training sessions, the boat owner was asked to display the international diving flag warning other boats to proceed slowly and keep clear. The following evening the boat owner came running into the village explaining that a large sailing vessel was moving rapidly towards the dive boat, saw the flag and turned away. The other boat owners and divers are now eagerly seeking information and training sessions on the use of the international diving flag. □

**David Gold, is a member of the ILO SafeWork staff and independently worked in the development and implementation of this project.*

DECOMPRESSION ILLNESS: WHAT IS IT?

Decompression illness is defined as decompression sickness and barotraumas (pressure injury). A large percentage of the air we breathe is nitrogen. At normal atmospheric pressure (pressure at sea level) nitrogen gas is passed in and out of the lungs through the normal respiratory process. As a diver descends to depth, the nitrogen passes through the lungs and is liquefied under pressure. It then circulates in the blood through the different tissues of the body. If the diver ascends from depth slowly, nitrogen is released through the normal respiratory process. However, if the diver ascends too quickly, there is not enough time for the

dissolved nitrogen to escape from the tissue and as the pressure is reduced, bubbles form in both the blood and tissue. These bubbles may block blood vessels and create tissue damage. The deeper the diver works and the longer the diver stays at depth, the more nitrogen will build up in tissues and the longer it will take the diver to release the nitrogen from the tissue. Slow ascents and decompression stops are normally practised to allow for the release of nitrogen gas through the respiratory system. Barotrauma is injury caused by a sudden change of pressure. It may affect parts of the body such as the sinuses, lungs or ears.

Report from the Philippines

When "The Promised Land" became a nightmare

The rumbling sound that awakened the squatter colony of some 80,000 people in the urban village of Payatas one morning in July, was a one-hectare-wide, 20-metre high pile of garbage mixed with mud which suddenly collapsed after weeks of heavy rain. When the rumbling stopped, some 200 people were dead, buried in what was ironically termed by locals as "The Promised Land". World of Work correspondent Isabelo Samonte visited the disaster site and filed this report.

PAYATAS, Philippines – The 1,000 or so makeshift shanties in Payatas didn't stand a chance when the mountain of garbage began to move. As the pile of refuse cascaded down, many of the shacks were buried, entombing hundreds of people under junk, muck and mud.

For the rural migrants who have come to this mega city in search of work and a better life – especially schooling for their children – it was the latest indignity in a life marked by low pay, unregulated working conditions and exploitation.

Instead of the hoped-for pot of gold, they have ended up daily scaling a 20 metre mountain of trash in search of bits and pieces they can sell to eke out a meagre living.

Says one of the scavengers, Bandyoy: "It is very hard to get a ride (to another place of work), so we just build shelters near the workplace. It is a cruel joke, from rural poor to urban poor. But this is better than being jobless."

A scene of contrasts

Within sight of Manila's modern skyline, high-rise condos and shopping malls, the 30-hectare (74 acres) village in Quezon City, about 7 kilometres northeast of the capital city, is a site of grinding poverty and the antithesis of decent work.

As the poor who live there scratch



Giancarlo M. Samonte

Mountain of trash behind a makeshift videoke bar.

out a living, they have also reportedly become prey to syndicates which have built an "underground" city of informal activities to contract subdivision toll fees, landfill leases, dumping rights, dump truck drivers and haulers, and junk shop owners and buyers.

Child labour also flourishes here, with youngsters scrambling alongside adults to find anything that can be resold. Payatas has replaced the child labour site called Smokey Mountain which a few years ago hosted thousands of child scavengers, until a programme initiated by the ILO with the government's Labour Department,

and implemented by the ERDA Foundation, ended child labour activities there.

Says Mario Geronimo, a private solid waste management executive, "It is about time to apply modern technology with environment-friendly operations that will give the scavengers a decent work with better quality of work and life."

Philippine situation

Although efforts to resettle the squatters have been proposed, many rejected the initiative for the simple reason that the proposed new worksite was too far

from the Payatas dump where they made their daily living scavenging for recyclable materials.

“I asked these people to leave but they didn’t want to,” a local executive said. “Industrial plans didn’t push through because the squatters didn’t want to leave.”

Another reason may be that scavengers earn from PHP 200 (US\$5) to PHP 500 (US\$11.50) net daily with no obligations on social security, taxes, insurance, etc., a sum higher than the daily minimum wage.

In the wake of the mudslide, however, some squatters are now willing to move to a site in Montalban just ten minutes away from the Payatas dump under a government relocation housing settlement project.

Other government initiatives which have been introduced include the Payatas 2000 Development Plan, a Task Force created by Executive Order for the closure and rehabilitation of the dump site. The National Agenda for Anti-Poverty Alleviation was launched recently to help the workers and the informal sector.

Some legislative proposals include: national land use and zoning law, national

settlement plan for informal settlers, creation of a housing and resettlement department, and the support of NGOs.

The problem is not a simple question of management of waste. Its roots could be traced to poverty, rural underdevelopment, landlessness, unemployment, lack of income opportunities, social exclusion and many other causes which need political will to overcome. It is a matter of providing decent working and living conditions for the workers and the informal sector, particularly the poorest of the poor.

For Bandoy, the solution ultimately may be found elsewhere, far from the steaming dump. As he entered a makeshift *videoke* bar near the mudslide site recently to share glasses of “*lambanog*” and try to forget the village’s hardships, he said, “If I have enough savings, I dream of leaving Payatas. I want to return my family to the provinces and go fishing. I also want my children to finish school.” But for Bandoy and others like him, the alternative to The Promised Land may just be an impossible dream.

– By Isabelo A. Samonte, Manila



Giancarlo M. Samonte

Scavengers continue to scale the mountain of trash for bits and pieces of recyclable materials.

South Africa: Possibilities and limits of international trade union cooperation

Workers' representations at the international level need the local organization's support

A conflict inside the trade union at the Volkswagen works, Uitenhage, South Africa, has revealed both the possibilities and the limits of international cooperation between bodies representing the workers. Mediation attempts by the worldwide group of companies' international works council, as well as by Volkswagen personnel management, have proved fruitless. In contrast to Volkswagen's main Brazilian plant, where a wave of dismissals has been avoided

by transfrontier cooperation between workers' representatives and management, some 1,300 workers at Uitenhage have been dismissed. German journalist Martin Kempe reports from his visit to South Africa.

Through the windows of his office, Phumele S. Ndoni looks out on the market square with its consumptive-looking trees. Today, access to the square has been barred with plastic tape. About a hundred men are walking around the square chanting rhythmically, swing-

ing banners and inviting onlookers to join them. The sight of the crowd in the market square with its banners and protest slogans is making the mayor of the South African town of Uitenhage, known to everyone only as “Bicks” – a nickname acquired in the days of the struggle against apartheid – feel uncomfortable. A group of trade unionists from NUMSA (National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa), standing a little apart from the demonstrators, and a few shop stewards from Uitenhage’s Volkswagen works are also waiting impatiently for the town hall to open.

When the time comes at last, everybody streams into the building. An elec-

GLOBALIZATION OF WORKS COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

The preliminary work leading to the internationalization of the activities of workers' representatives at Volkswagen was done in the 1980s by works committees and shop stewards at the Wolfsburg parent plant. The tradition of cooperation between workers and management, built up within the Volkswagen group over a number of decades, was favourable to the development of trans-frontier bodies of the works committee type. The group's European works council was set up as far back as 1990, five years before the adoption of the European Commission's guideline making this obligatory. An agreement to set up a World Works Council followed in 1999 as a logical consequence of Volkswagen's development into a worldwide group of companies.

The agreement guarantees freedom of trade union activities and free choice of workforce representatives at all locations of the Volkswagen group, and regulates the financing of the World Works Council's operations out of company funds. All the important car makes (Volkswagen, Audi, Skoda, Seat, etc.) and

all major locations are represented on the council, with the exception of the Shanghai and Changchun locations in China (with a combined workforce of approximately 16,000).

The worldwide employees' side consists of 27 members (11 Germans and 16 from other nations) plus a trade union official. It meets once a year at different locations for a conference lasting several days. Its object is to promote the exchange of information on developments and strategies within the group as a whole and to ensure that the interests of all locations are taken care of in a balanced manner and in a spirit of solidarity.

The group accords extensive information rights to workers' representatives both locally and at the international level. The World Works Council does not enjoy participatory rights in accordance with Germany's Industrial Constitution Law. However, the German Workers' Participation Act does offer the local members a possibility of influencing strategic developments which go beyond the limits of a specific site, since such developments generally affect all the German sites.

tronic barrier and numerous security guards are there to make sure that no weapons are brought into the hall, built to accommodate 450 persons. Every seat is filled when, at 10:30 a.m. On 15 May 2000, Judge Brandt opens the session of the Conflict Mediation Commission established in accordance with South Africa's labour laws. He is to rule whether, in January 2000, Volkswagen/South Africa was legally entitled to dismiss some 1,300 workers who, after a two-weeks' strike, had ignored an ultimatum ordering them to return to their posts. Most of those present are on the side of the dismissed workers. But Mayor "Bicks" Ndoni, the NUMSA trade unionists and the Volkswagen shop stewards hope that the dismissals will be declared legitimate.

Several thousand kilometres to the north, in the central office of the Volkswagen group of companies at Wolfsburg, Hans-Juergen Uhl, the Secretary-General of the World Works Council of the Volkswagen group of companies, is waiting for news about the results of the Uitenhage proceedings. Like everyone else concerned, he has been waiting for months. Judge Brandt adjourned the proceedings *sine die* after just one week. By the end of August, no decision had as yet been reached. World staff representative Uhl, too, hopes that Volkswagen will win the case. He fears that the works will be plagued by lasting unrest if the proceedings drag on until the local elections due in the autumn.

In the days of apartheid, Uhl and other German trade unionists campaigned in favour of South African trade union rights and did their utmost to promote the development of workers' representation at the Uitenhage Volkswagen works. Their support of the trade unions' struggle against the racist apartheid system was not due to idealism alone; they recognized at an early stage that the development of a worldwide network of workers' representations was the only adequate response to the globalization of Volkswagen's activities.

In January 2000, when the conflict within the South African trade union was at its height, Uhl flew to South Africa together with Helmuth Schuster, the chief of Volkswagen's central personnel service, in the hope of mediating between the parties. But the efforts of these two emissaries from Wolfsburg



Cordula Kropke/May 2000



Cordula Kropke/May 2000

proved unsuccessful. Fundamental differences of approach among the shop stewards at South Africa's Volkswagen plant, having developed slowly over the years, had hardened over the issue of negotiating with the management on the subject of flexible working hours and other changes designed to enhance productivity. Volkswagen had called for such measures with the intention of bringing the Uitenhage plant, which was then operating at a loss, up to the world level in terms of both quality and productivity. At the same time, Uitenhage was awarded the production of a new medium-class car for export to Great Britain. This development was to create some 1,000 new jobs in the Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage area, where unemployment levels were reaching 50 per cent.

Because of the newly created jobs, and in the interests of guaranteeing the workers' long-term future prospects, a majority of the 32 elected shop stewards were prepared to negotiate. But a minority could not accept this "betrayal of the workers' hard-won rights" and called for "spontaneous" strikes in order to mobilize opinion within the works against the majority decision. When, in January 2000, NUMSA expelled the thirteen opposing shop stewards, violent clashes took place at the works, and production was halted for about a fortnight.

The NUMSA shop stewards claim that the majority of workers were against this strike, which had been engineered by intimidation and threats of violence. Mayor "Bicks" Ndoni and others warned that the place was "getting out of control". The two-weeks strike ended with an

ultimatum by the management, eventually leading to the dismissal of some 1,300 workers who had failed to return to their posts. In the meantime the workforce has been replenished by new recruits. Production in the last few months has been running according to plan.

Boninsile Mzoku, one of the dismissed workers' spokesmen, takes a completely different view of the whole situation. "Volkswagen wants to get rid of those of us who oppose the negotiations," he said at a press conference before the opening of the mediation commission's proceedings. And he accuses the trade union of making common cause with the management. "NUMSA has sold out the workers to the management," was the inscription on the banners of a splinter group not affiliated with any trade union, which many of the "opposition" have meanwhile joined.

The mediation commission headed by Judge Brandt is unlikely to persuade the parties to the conflict to reach a compromise. Neither the local management nor the worldwide works council thinks it possible for the dismissed workers to be reinstated, as that would entail dismissing the newly recruited personnel. But uncertainty over future developments within the works and the community is adversely affecting trade union activities and cooperation between the workforce and management.

Hans-Juergen Uhl of Volkswagen's worldwide works council can see hard times ahead for trade unions in South Africa and especially for NUMSA rep-

(Continued on p. 27)

SUCCESSFUL REPRESENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS: THE BRAZILIAN EXAMPLE

When, at the end of the 1990s, employment at Anchieta/Sao Bernardo, the Volkswagen group's central Brazilian works (with a workforce of approx. 18,000), was threatened with collapse because of the Asia/South America financial crisis, the chairman of the World Works Council, Klaus Volkert of the Wolfsburg parent works, supported his Brazilian colleagues in their negotiations with local management. The negotiations resulted in a settlement similar to the Wolfsburg "Alliance for Labour" – a package which included shorter working hours without full pay, flexibilization, and future employment guarantees.

Mario Barbosa, Brazilian trade union representative responsible for Volkswagen issues and South American coordinator on the World Works Council, concedes that some of his colleagues were initially opposed to this settlement, and especially to the limited scope of the wage adjustment arrived at. Finally, however, job security considerations won the day. "Not one Brazilian Volkswagen employee lost his job during the crisis," declares Barbosa.

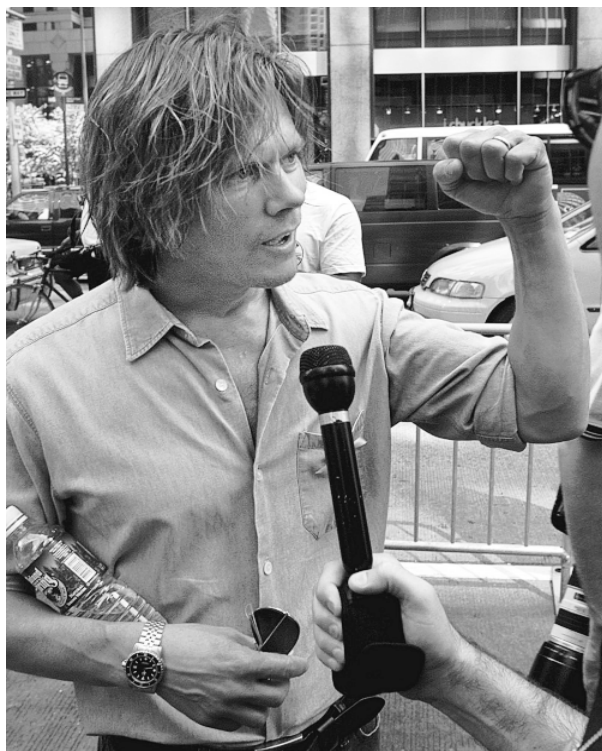
He is convinced that wage-earners have only one possible answer to the globalization of industry; namely, globalization from below through international networking of workers' representations. "We must get rid of competition between workers across all frontiers," says Barbosa, whose own efforts on behalf of a free trade union movement in Brazil go back to the time of the struggle against the military dictatorship in that country.

Planet Work



STRIKE ACTIONS

● The world's largest auto-maker has rattled the striking Screen Actors Guild (SAG) and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) with a commercial shot in July. SAG and AFTRA have been critical of General Motors (GM) for filming ads outside the **United States** during the actors' strike which began on 1 May. SAG and AFTRA members demanded residual payments for cable television ads and jurisdiction over ads shot for the Internet. – *Source: The Associated Press, 22 August 2000*



Keystone, 13 Sept. 2000

Actor Kevin Bacon speaks with a member of the media during a rally for the resumption of SAG-AFTRA talks with advertising agencies, in New York.

A regular review of trends and developments in the world of work

● A recent labor accord ending a strike by some 86,000 workers of Verizon Communications in 12 Eastern States in the **United States** “touches many of the hot-button issues of the new economy – includ-

ing stock options, profit-sharing and the relentlessness of long workdays,” according to *The New York Times*. The wage increases, improved pension benefits and reduction in mandatory overtime have prompted analysts to term the settlement by the workers for Verizon, which employs some 260,000 workers throughout the US, as “generous” by any measure. Among its elements are concessions that should make it easier to recruit union members from some of the company's units. While the experts hailed the agreement, company officials added they also felt it would enhance their firm's competitiveness. – *Source: The New York Times, 22 August 2000.*

● The **Belgian** enterprise federation, FEB, has called for a legal ruling defining the “normal” and “abnormal” exercising of a worker's right to strike. The move stems from a 1997 court ruling rejecting a request by an employer that strike pickets be banned from parading outside his company. The FEB said that employers also have certain rights in the

event of a strike and that these should be clearly specified. – *Source: L'Echo, Belgium, 19 August 2000*

MIGRATION

● **Asian and Middle Eastern** migrants are increasingly transiting through the Balkans on their way to industrialized countries in Europe, according to reports cited in *The New York Times*. The reports said Asian migrants were able to obtain visas in the former Yugoslavia for transit through Bosnia and Croatia and on to the rest of Europe. Middle Eastern migrants, meanwhile, are reportedly flowing through Bosnia, which has a Muslim-led government. *The Times* said authorities had caught 10,000 illegal immigrants trying to cross into Croatia in the first half of 2000, compared to 8,000 for all of 1999. – *Source: The New York Times, 22 August 2000*

● **Mozambique** has accused South African farmers of exploiting migrant farm workers, sometimes reporting them to police to avoid paying wages. South Africa has confirmed the practice, saying it is rampant in Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal provinces and that the South African farmers union had agreed to set up a task force to report on the problem. Officials estimate some 25,000 illegal Mozambican migrant workers are employed on South African farms. – *Source: Radio Mozambique, Maputo, 18 August 2000*

- Migrant “guest workers” are facing highway banditry while on their way home from Western Europe to Yugoslavia. Armed gangs are apparently hunting the travelling workers along the M1 highway between Budapest and western **Hungary**. Yugoslav officials told the “Mai Np” daily in Hungary that on one weekend, 31 families were robbed on their way home, including one family who were reportedly forced off the road and robbed of documents, valuables and cash worth DM 27,000. – Source: *MTI news agency, Budapest, 25 July 2000*

EMPLOYMENT

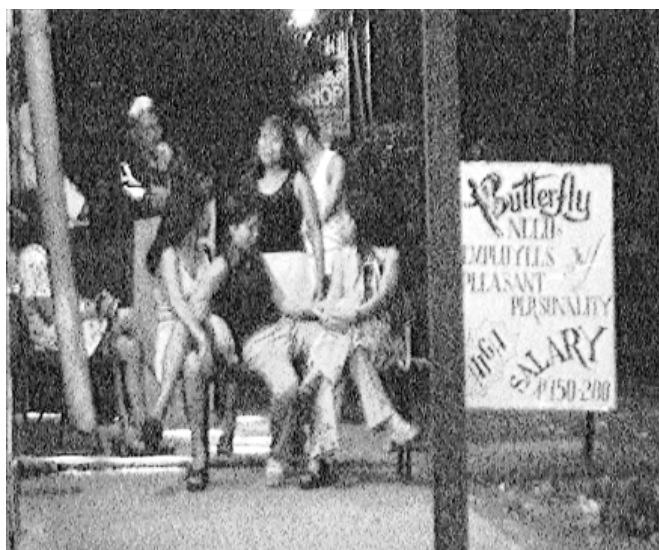
- China plans a three-year rural employment programme to provide jobs for surplus rural workers. The programme will reportedly involve training courses, and migrant workers are to be encouraged to return to their hometowns and establish businesses there. Statistics reportedly show that China has a surplus labour force of 150 million in the countryside. – Source: *Xinhua news agency, 25 July 2000*
- In **Panama**, the Labour

Ministry plans to reduce unemployment through professional training aimed at generating small and medium enterprises. Officials said the government has already reduced the unemployment rate from 13.2 per cent to 11.9 per cent, and aims to cut the figure to 7 per cent. – Source: *La Prensa, Panama City, 24 August 2000*

- The unemployment rate in **Russia** is dropping steadily, according to official statistics. Russia had some 7.2 million jobless at the end of July, down 17.4 per cent since the same month last year and 1.3 per cent since June. As of July, the unemployed represented nearly 11 per cent of the economically active population of some 72.3 million people, which is roughly half the entire Russian population. – Source: *Interfax International Ltd., 22 August 2000*

CHILD LABOUR

- The number of foreigners coming to **Asia** for child sex is rising sharply, due to the economic crisis and poor law enforcement, according to the nongovernmental or-



ganization *End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism* (ECPAT). The NGO said prices for children have decreased while more children are living on the margins of society and more foreign paedophiles are streaming into the region. ECPAT officials also told a United Nations meeting in Bangkok that Asian nations battling to curb the flourishing child sex tourism industry will train holiday resort workers to identify and report foreign paedophiles. ECPAT said representatives from tourism authorities in Cambodia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand have agreed to set up training programmes for “frontline staff” such as taxi drivers and tour guides. – Source: *Agence France Presse, 22 August 2000*

- A conference on children’s rights in **South Africa** has called for legislation which would ensure child prostitutes are treated as victims rather than criminals. Government officials told the meeting it was time to change the country’s laws, which were “designed by people who have no understanding of the child sex industry”. Officials said it was believed that hundreds of thousands of

South African children are involved in the sex trade, either because they are forced into it by individuals or compelled to find income due to poverty or being orphaned. – Source: *South African Press Agency, 22 August 2000*

- In **Iran**, the head of the country’s official trade union says some 300,000 Iranian children are working illegally in workshops and factories. Ali Reza Mahjub said the number of children working could double within a year, despite efforts by the government to ban child labour. – Source: *BBC World Service, 22 July 2000*

- The government of **Thailand** plans to teach children how to protect themselves from abuse and health hazards at the workplace. Some 50,000 copies of a study guide are to be distributed to teachers to help students find decent work and learn their rights. Officials said the number of child workers in Thailand had dropped recently as a result of measures and campaigns against exploiting children, but that education for those who must work or want to work was still needed. – Source: *The Bangkok Post, 24 August 2000*



Beijing, China: A young migrant Chinese man sleeps next to empty coke bottles and soda cans. Thousands of unemployed workers from the countryside travel to Beijing daily to collect anything that can be recycled or resold.



ILO/Georges Cabrera

Improving education amongst children in Pakistan... Officials announced a series of reforms, including the establishment of a fund for educating working children and freed bonded labourers.

LABOUR LAWS

- A Commission on Labour Laws in **Pakistan** has completed its work of simplifying, rationalizing and consolidating the country's labour laws. Officials say a labour reform programme is being formulated in consultation with workers, employers and other stakeholders. Pakistan has ratified five of the eight ILO core conventions and its laws are being amended accordingly. Officials also announced a series of reforms, including a lifting of a ban on one trade union, enhancement of the minimum old age pension, an increase in death grants to the families of deceased workers and improvement in the marriage grant to daughters of workers, and establishment of a fund for educating working children and freed bonded labourers. – *Source: Pakistan Press International, 8 August 2000*

- **Nepal** abolished bonded labour in July, and has written off the labourers' debt. The move came following two months of agitation by

bonded labourers in the west of the country which culminated in a sit-in in the capital Kathmandu. More than 36,000 bonded labourers are expected to be freed under the initiative. – *Source: BBC World Service, 17 July, 2000*

SAFETY AT WORK

- A recent ruling by a court in the United Kingdom has set the stage for thousands of workers in **South Africa** to file claims against a mining company, even though it no longer has any interests in their country. Some 3,000 South African asbestosis sufferers are claiming damages from a UK-based mining company and demanding compensation. However, the fate of thousands of other asbestosis sufferers remains unsettled. – *Source: Business Day, South Africa, 21 July 2000*

- Does occupational safety and health sell at the box-office? A new film produced in the **United States**, entitled "The Perfect Storm" suggests that the plight of

workers can pull in audiences. The film, based on a true story of the same title by the author Sebastian Junger, shows the living and working conditions of a crew of a sword-fishing boat off the coast of North America, and what happens when they sail into a tempest of weather fronts in October 1991 which created the worst ("Perfect") Atlantic storm in a century. The film about the lives – and deaths – of the fishermen took in US\$21.7 million on the first weekend of its US debut in July. – *Source: BBC News, 3 July 2000*

- Train station workers in metropolitan Tokyo in **Japan** are facing a rising tide of violence – from passengers. The Tokyo branch of East Japan Railway Co. reported that attacks on station workers rose from 35 in 1998 to 162 in 1999, and that 76 workers had applied for accident compensation as a result. Many of the attacks came during summer and at the end of the year, when alcohol consumption increases, the report said. No figures for the national total

of attacks were given. – *Source: The Yomiuri Shimbun, 22 June, 2000*

MEANWHILE

- **Poland** has come a long way in the 20 years since strikes led to the signing of an unprecedented agreement allowing independent, self-governing trade unions for the first time in a Communist state. Where workers and students once fought riot police in Warsaw's Old Town, Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski recently distributed copies of his new book, "Poland – A Home for Everybody", expressing his views on the rule of law, Poland's role in Europe, and *social justice*.

Those were issues first championed independently by the Solidarity trade union when it came into existence at the shipyards in Gdansk on 31 August 1980, under the leadership of Lech Walesa. The shipyard electrician and union organizer became Poland's first post-Communist president.

– *Source: Polish News Agency and the editor, World of Work, 25 August 2000* □

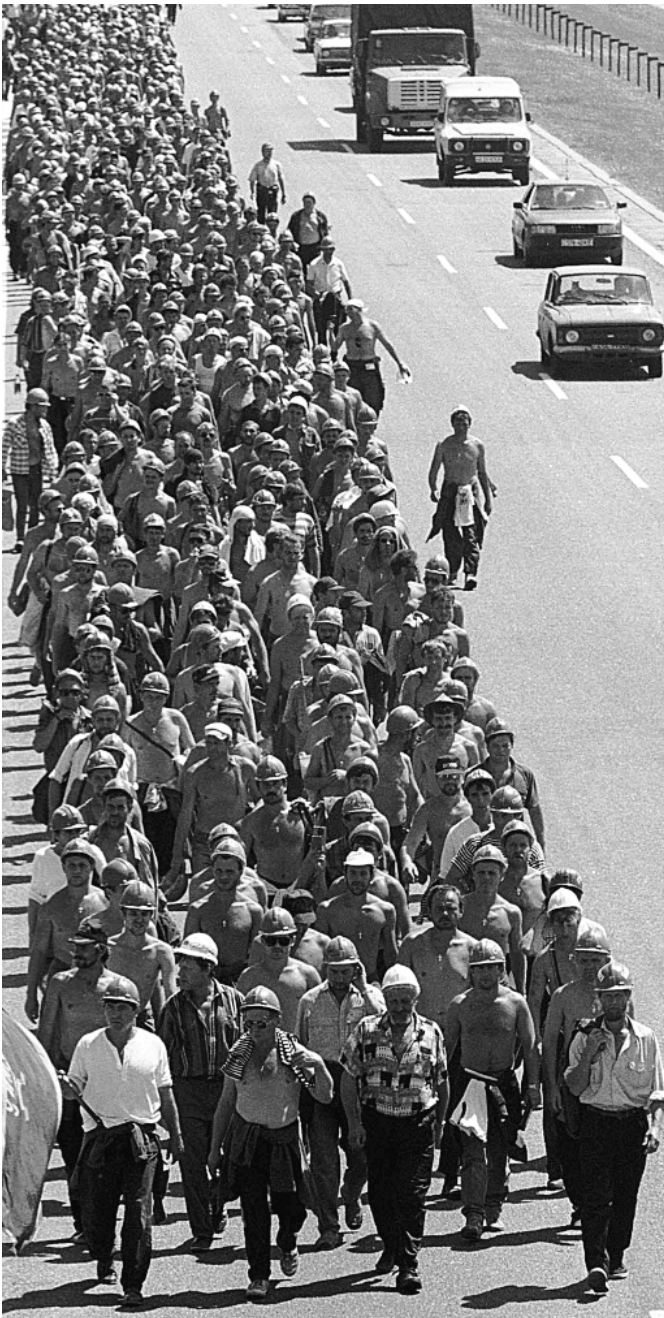


Keystone

Tokyo railway station. The Tokyo branch of East Japan Railway Co. reported that attacks on station workers rose from 35 in 1998 to 162 in 1999.



A regular review of the International Labour Organization and ILO-related activities and events taking place around the world.



A column of more than 1,000 striking miners moves towards Ukraine's capital Kiev, demanding their long-overdue wages.

Keystone

HELPING UKRAINE

▲ The US Department of Labor (DOL) has announced a two-year technical assistance programme with Ukraine addressing mine safety and health, services for jobless workers, child labour, industrial relations and gender equality. The programme will cost US\$3.75 million in FY 2000. As part of the programme, DOL will work through the ILO to help Ukraine develop a plan of action to combat child labour, to foster effective industrial relations activities to prevent and resolve labour disputes and promote collective bargaining, and to promote gender equality and nondiscrimination in the workplace. *For further information, please contact the ILO Field Programmes in Europe and Central Asia. Phone: +4122/799.6666, fax: +4122/799.6061, e-mail: europe@ilo.org*

NEW OECD GUIDELINES STRESS CORE LABOUR RIGHTS

▲ On June 27, governments from 33 countries adopted a revised version of the Organization for Economic Cooperation

BUSINESS AND LABOUR ENDORSE UN GLOBAL COMPACT

▲ Representatives from nearly 50 companies met with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan on July 26, to pledge their support for nine principles covering human rights, labour standards, and the environment. By endorsing this "Global Compact", companies agree to uphold the four principles set forth in the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The business leaders were joined by representatives from 11 nongovernmental and four labour organizations, including the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and Union Network International. ILO Director-General Juan Somavia and chief officials of other UN agencies addressed the gathering. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan told the delegates at the High-Level Meeting on the Global Compact that "we must ensure that the global market is embedded in broadly shared values and practices that reflect global social needs... I proposed the Global Compact as one step towards reaching those goals. The Compact is based on nine key principles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organization's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and the Rio Principles on Environment and Development."

Business associations also undertook to initiate concrete plans intended to advance the goals of the Compact. For example, the International Organization of Employers will organize regional workshops before the end of the year.

CAN PYGMIES FIND DECENT WORK?

HELPING PYGMY TRIBES BE “FROM SOMEWHERE”

▲ Pygmies in Central Africa are facing deteriorating living and working conditions. The ILO/INDISCO programme has developed a pilot project in Cameroon to address the problem. Decent work among these communities involves organizing themselves, securing traditional resources and promoting participatory development as stipulated in ILO Convention No. 169 on indigenous and tribal peoples.

When Kapupu Diwa Mutimanwa speaks of his people, he speaks of their lack of identity.

“We, the Pygmies, are from nowhere,” says the director of the Programme for Integration and Development of Pygmy People (PIDP), a central-African NGO founded by and for Pygmies. “The majority of the three million Pygmies in Africa have no nationality, no citizenship, nor any kind of identity that is recognized. As a result, we do not pay taxes. Some of my people are very happy with this, but I find it very serious, because it means that we cannot share in the development of the country and we have no right to any assistance.”

The Pygmies, who generally prefer to be called according to their specific ethnic group such as the Aka, Baka, Mbuti or the Efe, are found across several different countries (among them: Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, the Central African Republic, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Democratic Republic of Congo).

For centuries, elaborate clan relationships, extensive trade with, and in some cases exploitation by, the neighbouring Bantu communities have existed. While highly dependent on their traditional forest lands and forest products, agricultural produce has long been important for their diet as well.

Recent years have led to a sharp deterioration of the working and living conditions of many Pygmy communities. The forest resources they traditionally depend on have come under huge pressure from major logging activities and commercial hunting.

In many cases, Pygmies themselves are engaging in these activities. In some countries for example, Pygmies have been employed on commercial plantations or even for large-scale logging on their traditional lands. Jobs are usually insecure and periodic. Sedentary life styles are also increasingly part of the changing reality. Today, only 5 per cent of the Baka in Cameroon live solely in the forest. Many are facing the challenge of traditional livelihood strategies breaking down, taking up agriculture and confronting the market economy. A recent study by the ILO International Institute of Labour Studies sees lack of access to land as a major cause of social exclusion of ethnic groups such as the Pygmies.

Working to stabilize livelihoods

The INDISCO project will address the threats to stable livelihoods in two ways. On the one hand, it will support the Baka community on subjects such as land tenure, as



ILO/MDT, Youmde, Cameroon.



ILO/MDT, Youmde, Cameroon.

provided in the 1994 Forest Law. On the other hand, it will support the establishment of a Pygmy organization to strengthen employment and income generation.

On the subject of the Baka Pygmies, the Cameroon Minister of Social Affairs told the ILO this February that she wants to promote a new image of the lives of her brothers and sisters of the Baka communities. She notes that the 1996 Constitution insists on the respect for human rights for all, as well as everyone’s right to well-being and development. These and other rights “are the irreversible beacon of our actions, present and future, in favour of our marginalized populations”, she said.

Ignorance over the identity of the Pygmies lies at the root of the failure of all development efforts so far. “Let us take a simple example,” says Mr. Kapupu, “Certain organizations had brought hoes and machetes to the Pygmies. Immediately, the latter, who have no use for such implements, went to sell them to the Bantus”. Participatory development models allowing Pygmies to promote their own development agenda is the crux of the INDISCO strategy and forms the basis of this new pilot project.

– A. van der Goes, F. Thornberry, P. Larsen, (ILO)



and Development's Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, which hold companies to higher labour standards, and include language on child labour and slave labour. An accompanying commentary notes that the guidelines "echo all four fundamental principles and rights at work which are contained in the ILO's 1998 Declaration".

For further information, please contact the ILO Multinational Enterprises Department. Phone: +4122/799.7724, fax: +4122/799.6354, e-mail: multi@ilo.org

INTERNATIONAL TRAINING COURSE IN LABOUR STATISTICS

▲ An international training course in labour statistics was organized at the ILO Training Centre in Turin (Italy) from 4-29 September 2000. The principal objective of the course was to enhance the capacity of participants to contribute to the meaningful development of labour statistics in their countries.

For further information, please contact the ILO Bureau of Statistics. Phone: +4122/799.8631, fax: +4122/799.6957; e-mail: stat@ilo.org

WORKSHOP AIMS TO REDUCE GRIM TOLL

▲ Senior officials of the ILO and Thailand's Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare organized a workshop in Rayong (Thailand) from 4 to 6 July for representatives of government and the social partners to identify safeguards and safe practices to reduce work-related injuries, illnesses and deaths. The Director of the ILO global SafeWork InFocus Programme, Dr Jukka Takala told delegates that "the greatest tragedy is that more than half of the work-related deaths could have been avoided by using available information and safety practices".

For further information, please contact the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok. Phone: +662/228.1234, fax: +662/288.1735, e-mail: apwebeditor@ilo.org

ILO INDIGENOUS AND TRIBAL PEOPLES CONVENTION, 1989 (No. 169)

▲ The ILO is responsible for the only (two) international instruments, which deal exclusively with the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples. ILO Convention No. 169 is unique in that it acknowledges the specific identities, lifestyles and cultures of indigenous and tribal peoples. In other words, it recognizes the right to be different.

The Convention covers a number of issues which are of the utmost importance to indigenous and tribal peoples. Some of these are: the right to practice their own culture and traditions, the rights to traditionally occupied lands, the right to natural resources and to participate in the use, management and conservation of these resources, restrictions on displacement and land alienation, and issues concerning education, health and employment.

The Convention emphasizes the right of indigenous and tribal peoples to be consulted at every stage of development which may affect them. It also highlights their right to engage actively in the development process, making decisions on matters of concern to them.

The Convention has been ratified by: Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Fiji, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Paraguay and Peru.



ILO/P. Deloche

ILO/INDISCO

▲ ILO/INDISCO is the ILO's response to the dismal living and working conditions of the estimated 300 million indigenous and tribal peoples around the world. ILO/INDISCO offers technical assistance on how to translate the provisions of ILO Convention No. 169 on the ground. This consists of five major elements: strengthening the organizational capacity of indigenous peoples, strengthening their livelihood opportunities, preserving and promoting traditional heritage, promoting gender concerns and environmental regeneration. INDISCO is operational

in five countries in Asia and Africa. Its main donors are DANIDA, the Netherlands, Rabobank, AGFUND, CIDA and UNDP.

The Project to Promote the ILO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, based in EGALITE, the Equality and Employment Branch of the ILO, provides policy advice and capacity building assistance to governments and indigenous and tribal peoples' organizations, and is active in over ten countries throughout Africa and Asia. The main objectives of the Project are to promote awareness of the ILO's work on indigenous and tribal peoples, to encourage the application of relevant standards in this respect, especially Convention No. 169, and to enhance the capacity of indigenous and tribal peoples to participate in development processes affecting them.



ILO/P. Deloche



in the press...in the press...in the press...in the press...

World Labour Report 2000, social security, child labour, Social Summit make the news

New Straits Times Press (Malaysia)

19Jun2000 MALAYSIA: Safer workplace must get priority.

By Lee Lam Thye.

THE right to life is the most fundamental human right. The right to work in a safe and healthy environment is also the fundamental right of any worker.

Yet every year, according to the International Labour Organisation, more than 1.2 million people are deprived of that right as a consequence of accidents and work-related diseases.

More than 100,000 work fatalities occur every month, more than 3,000 every day, two per minute. This global phenomenon, if left unchecked, will lead to consequences which are unacceptable economically, socially and morally.

"Safe work with safer work for all" is the ILO's response to the global challenge of occupational safety, health and the environment.

Statistics provided by the ILO at the Mauritius meeting depicted a grim picture such as:

- * workers suffer more than 250 million accidents every year;
- * accidents and diseases together account for over 1.2 million fatalities annually, more than all fatal road accidents worldwide; and,
- * more than 10 million workers suffer crippling injuries and diseases resulting in permanent disability and loss of income.

BBC NEWS

You are in Business

Front Page Wednesday, 21 June, 2000, 08:52 GMT

World 09:52 UK

UK UK lags behind on worker rights

The UN has called on governments to provide better protection for workers as insecurity rises as a consequence of globalisation.

In its World Labour Report 2000, the International Labour Organisation says most of the world's workers have no insurance against unemployment, ill health or old age.

The problem is worst in the developing world, but the ILO says it is also becoming tougher for workers in Europe and North America to claim social benefits.

TRIBUNE DE GENÈVE

(21.6.00, Switzerland)

Les trois quarts des chômeurs du monde n'ont aucune protection

SOMMET SOCIAL Le BIT rend son rapport sur le travail, avant le rendez-vous onusien.

Les trois quarts des 150 millions de chômeurs dans le monde ne bénéficient d'aucune assurance chômage, selon un rapport du BIT rendu public mardi. Le nombre plus générale, moins de la moitié de la population mondiale dispose d'une protection sociale.

Le rapport du Bureau international du travail (BIT) «Sécurité de revenu et protection sociale dans un monde en mutation» est publié

à quelques jours du sommet du suivi sur le développement social, qui s'ouvre jeudi à Genève.

Quatorze pays se trouvent en tête de liste des pays les plus généreux pour l'assurance chômage. Ce sont l'Allemagne, l'Autriche, la Belgique, le Danemark, l'Espagne, la Finlande, la France, l'Irlande, la Luxembourg, le Norvège, les Pays-Bas, le Portugal, la Suède et la Suisse. Meilleure élève, l'Espagne

accorde des indemnités équivalent à 77% des salaires nationaux moyens. Sept autres pays accordent des allocations de chômage nettes élevées à un moins grand nombre de chômeurs: l'Australie, le Canada, les Etats-Unis, l'Irlande, le Japon, la Nouvelle-Zélande et le Royaume-Uni. Les prestations vont de 23% des salaires (Nouvelle-Zélande) à 58% (Canada et Etats-Unis).

Herald Tribune

(21.6.00)

Globalization Is Said To Cause Job Losses

By Elizabeth Olson

Special to the International Herald Tribune

GENEVA — Globalization and increasing trade liberalization have meant job losses and new, less secure work arrangements, the International Labor Organization said in a report published Tuesday.

The report added that 75 percent of the world's 150 million unemployed people have no jobless benefits.

Europe leads in providing the most generous unemployment benefits to its workers, but even in its wealthy countries, there were reductions in unemployment insurance in the 1990s, according to the ILO's "World Labor Report 2000."

MONDIALISATION Une étude du BIT

Un plaidoyer pour la protection sociale

Genève : Laurent Mossu

La protection sociale doit être partout élargie et renforcée ! Tel est le mot d'ordre lancé par le Bureau international du travail face au phénomène de la mondialisation. Les avantages d'économies et de sociétés ouvertes sont une réalité communément admise, note le BIT, qui constate cependant que ces atouts ne profitent pas suffisamment à tout le monde. L'incertitude et l'insécurité ne sont plus uniquement le lot des exclus de la société, elles imprègnent profondément les attitudes et les réactions de la classe moyenne. Juan Somavia, le directeur général du BIT, prévient ainsi que la résistance à la mondialisation que l'on observe dans bien des milieux pourrait à la longue compromettre le processus d'intégration internationale et mettre en péril les retombées positives.

LE FIGARO économie

(21.6.00, France)

Süddeutsche Zeitung

Die Süddeutsche Zeitung - aktuelle Ausgabe

SZ vom 21.06.2000 Wirtschaft

(Germany)

Keine Arbeit, kein Geld
ILO: 112 Millionen Beschäftigungslosen fehlt Unterstützung / Verschlechterung in Osteuropa

jkp Genf - Das Internationale Arbeitsamt (ILO) fordert dringend den Ausbau der Arbeitslosenversicherungen. 112 Millionen Arbeitslose erhalten zurzeit keinerlei Arbeitslosengelder, teilt die ILO im Weltarbeitsbericht 2000 mit. Vor allem Arbeitnehmer der Dritten Welt litten unter den ungenügenden Leistungen von Arbeitslosenversicherungen.

arabia.com

Quarter of population lives on less than dollar a day

A quarter of the world's six-billion population lives on less than a dollar a day, according to the International Labour Organisation.

June 20, 2000, 01:58 PM

GENEVA (AFP English) - A quarter of the world's six-billion population lives on less than a dollar a day, the International Labour Organisation said Wednesday.

In the course of the last five years the world's poor have increased by 200 million, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, eastern Europe, central Asia and South-East Asia, the ILO's annual report said.

In the developing world nearly a third of the population lived on less than a dollar a day, 30 percent of adults were illiterate, 30 percent had no access to drinkable water and 30 percent of children under five years of age were beneath normal weight.

Articles have been excerpted and are not always in the exact format in which they appear originally. They are trimmed and rearranged sometimes, for space reasons.



in the press...in the press...in the press...in the press...

zurück Rundschau

(21.06.00, Germany)

Nur wenige Arbeitslose geschützt

ILO-Bericht weist auf soziale Lücken in vielen Ländern hin

rb FRANKFURT A. M. Eine funktionierende Sozialversicherung ist noch immer ein "Luxus", den sich nur wenige Länder leisten. In einem Bericht weist die Internationale Arbeitsorganisation (ILO) darauf hin, dass drei Viertel der registrierten 150 Millionen Erwerbslosen weltweit ohne Schutz durch eine Arbeitslosenversicherung sind. Das gleiche gilt für die 750 bis 900 Millionen Unterbeschäftigten im informellen Sektor der Entwicklungsländer.

23Jun2000 NIGERIA: PM NEWS (LAGOS) - '2 Billion People Earn Less Than One Dollar Daily' - ILO.

By MOSES UCHENDU.

Lagos - The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has declared that it is disappointing that more than one quarter of the world 6 billion population (about 2.2 billion people) live on less than one American dollar per day.

The revelation contained in the ILO annual report released this week, states that in the last five years, the world's poverty level has increased by 200 million mainly in the sub Saharan African countries, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and South East Asia.

ILO says the situation is worse in the Third World countries, especially in Africa where over 30 per cent of adults are illiterate, 30 per cent have no access to potable drinking water and another 30 per cent of children under five years of age are beneath normal weight.

The ILO identified the cause of the poverty in the Third World countries as war, famine and poor economy which have subjected a greater part of the population to untold hardships and poverty. All Material Subject to Copyright

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Source: MIDDLE EAST INTELLIGENCE WIRE THE PROGRESS (FREETOWN) 23/06/2000

21Jun2000 SWITZERLAND: ILO calls for better jobless allowance system.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) called on the international community Wednesday to improve the unemployment allowance system to help the households of the jobless student.

The quality of the unemployment allowance system even in developed countries has in general deteriorated over the past decade, the Geneva-based U.N. agency said in an annual report.

The ILO, estimating the number of jobless people around the world at 150 million, said 75% of these people are denied any type of unemployment welfare benefit.

The ILO classified developed countries in accordance with the levels of overall welfare benefits for the jobless, including allowances springing from an unemployment insurance system.

It gave an A rating, the best, to 14 developed countries, including Austria and Switzerland. The United States, Japan and five other countries were rated B.

The general employment situation is losing stability as a result of globalization and efforts to remove pressures in world commerce, the report said.

India, Thailand, China and some other countries lag far behind better-off nations in guaranteeing sufficient state-run welfare benefits such as unemployment allowances, it said.

Improving the unemployment allowance system would provide a basis for stable economic expansion, the report said.

(c) 2000 KYODO NEWS.

10Jul2000 SOUTH KOREA: Children Under 13 Banned From Labor.

The Labor Ministry said yesterday that it will revise rules to bar children under 13 from getting hired as early as this month.

The revision comes in compliance with a newly effective International Labor Organization (ILO) regulation, which bans labor, albeit light, by children under 13.

Currently, children in Korea aged below 15 can get jobs if he or she holds a permission to work. Those employing children under 15 without such a permission are subject to up to two years in jail or 10 million won in fines.

(c) 2000 hk internet Co. for the Korea Times.

Sources:THE KOREA TIMES 10/07/2000

TRIBUNE DE GENÈVE

(21.6.00, Switzerland))

Un Sommet ne remplace pas la lutte sociale

MARDI 27 JUIN 2000

PALAIS DES NATIONS. Appel des Nations unies et des institutions financières internationales à l'ouverture du Sommet social: il faut réduire de moitié l'exécutive partout dans les quinze prochaines années. Juan Somavia, (photo), directeur général du BIT, relève ce

pendant que «ce n'est pas un Sommet qui peut remédier à la crise sociale». Et qu'il s'agit d'exhausser ce à trouver dans le travail pour tous et la création d'emplois. Finalement, Genève a offert une fête chaleureuse et colorée à ses hôtes.

THE EARTH TIMES
JUNE 30, 2000

Elimination of child labor is termed a priority

BY C. GERALD FRASER

A stone structure with the silhouette of a nobody on a lawn at the International Labor Organization Building is labeled: "From exploitation to education."

The caption on this classic and relatively benign, emblem of children in work refers to what Steve Rabeless says is the ILO definition of child labor: "All economic activity of children that interferes with their education."

The director of ILO's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor, Rabeless says child labor can indeed be eliminated, his belief buttressed by 25 years of experience with ILO and recent concrete examples in Bangladesh and Pakistan. Asia is where the program is having its greatest effect. "In the course of two to two-and-a-half years we have succeeded in eliminating child labor in the entire garment industry in Bangladesh—7,000 children. None are working there today, except perhaps the odd occurrence individual cases."

Child labor has been "practically" wiped out in soccer ball production in Pakistan, Rabeless said. "Six thousand children. So we know it can be done. It's not a matter of having the technical know and the experience and the project know-how."

"The subject of child labor," Rabeless explained, "is a delicate one. It's not with joy that governments, and families, let their children work. Poverty is the major factor behind child labor, but it is not the only factor. There is tradition, the mentality, the absence of educational facilities and an intense quality of education that makes children drop out—and the lack of job—children and families see that at the end of the road there are no jobs, so why bother?"

Government's reluctance to seek ILO guidance in ending child labor, Rabeless said, may be based on the "toxic" subjects of social reform and social traditions in some societies."

Indiatimes news

INDIA

The Times of India The Economic Times Indiatimes Exclusives Navbharat Times PTI

EGS, SEWA draw kudos from ILO

By Vidyadhar Date

MUMBAI: Maharashtra's Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Gujarat's Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) have drawn kudos from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for providing jobs to people.

In its World Labour Report 2000, released earlier this week, the ILO has noted that the EGS is based on the explicit recognition of the right to employment. Moreover, men and women are paid uniform piece-rate wages which are above agricultural wages. However, the report also says that corruption has seeped into the scheme.

The ILO commended the role of SEWA in organising poor women and providing insurance to nearly 32,000 women workers.

CHINA DAILY

THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, 2000

Globalization affects global immigration

Far from reducing international migration flows — by moving products instead of people — globalization will give rise to increased migration pressures in the years ahead.

A new book published by the International Labor Organization — Workers without Frontiers: The impact of globalization on international migration — argues that flows of goods and capital between rich and poor countries will not be large enough to offset the needs for employment in poorer countries.

Instead, social disruption caused by economic restructuring is likely to shake more people loose from their communities and encourage them to look abroad for work.

The total number of migrants around the world now surpasses 120 million — up from 75 million in 1965 — and continues to grow,

so says Workers without Frontiers in a new book about the impact of globalization on global migration.

"In a world of winners and losers, the losers do not simply disappear; they seek somewhere else to go," says the book's author, Peter Stalker.

The ability to find good jobs and earn much higher pay is the prime reason people are emigrating today.

■ A 1996 survey of 496 undocumented Mexicans in the United States found that they earned an average of US\$31 per week in their last Mexican job compared to US\$278 per week in the United States, an earnings ratio of 9:1.

■ In 1997, Indonesian labourers earned US\$0.28 per day in their country versus US\$2 or more per day in neighbouring Malaysia.



Screen capture, CNN

During the UN Millennium Summit in New York, ILO Director-General, Juan Somavia appeared on CNN's "Q&A" on 1 September 2000 where he answered questions from viewers worldwide. Topics ranged from the debate over globalization, to pressing labour concerns such as pay inequalities between men and women, child labour, and the ILO's role in tackling these problems.

Social protection

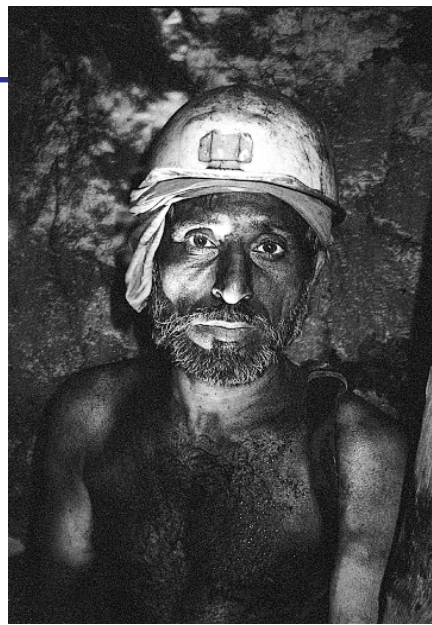
(Continued from p. 5)

to achieve their policy goals. "What mix they use – public, private, cooperative or grassroots – is of secondary importance so long as the mix as a whole can really achieve universal [health care] coverage," says the report.

Old age and survivors' pensions

The report says that many developing countries only recently began to develop pension systems, and some nations still have not instituted any scheme to protect retired workers.

In many parts of sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Latin America and Asia, coverage is lower than 10 per cent of the labour force. The report adds that



ILO/David Browne

old age still spells insecurity for certain groups of the population in the industrialized countries.

People who have worked in the informal sector, predominantly women, are likely to have very low incomes in old age and become dependent on public assistance.

Women moving mountains

(continued from p. 11)

sues. In the classroom, women workers benefited from practising their role as OSHE trainers in front of a highly supportive group. This was a key element in building self-confidence and creating successful outcomes.

From being a "zero" to Bombay's "Best Citizen"

Since her beginnings as a self-described "zero", Kalpana, the Bombay port computer worker has not stopped moving and shaking the Transport and Dock Workers' Union and the City of Bombay. She has borne a heavy burden as a woman activist in her union. She undertook an individual initiative to organize non-union ports. Doing what others in her union had not tried to do, she was labelled, scandalized, and her reputation tarnished. But she is a crusader and keeps going. On February 1, 2000, the Municipal Corporation awarded her "Best Citizen of Bombay"! For this honour, she was awarded a Certificate by the Mayor of Bombay, at the Mayor's Bungalow in Bombay.

Kalpana and her sisters demonstrated their self-transformation into motivators and transmitters of OSHE information and created a multiplier effect. Experiences training women workers in the Philippines yielded similar results.

One group of women can end up training literally thousands of workers. In the industrialized countries the results are the same. LaVerne, an American working for a gas company, was required to answer customer billing complaints at an average of one phone call every one minute and 69/100 of a second, while remaining friendly at all times. She was sent by her union to an OSH train-the-trainer workshop. Having her self-confidence built up by the training, the practice and the supportive environment, LaVerne went on to become the National Director of Training for her union's OSH department. Today, moving more mountains, LaVerne is the Director of an Occupational Health Centre, responsible for an entire city (and she is still friendly!).

Against barriers, endless possibilities

The successes of these women have provided the inspiration to move into other arenas with women workers. In Brazil, for example, women widowed by occupational accidents will be given the opportunity to become transmitters and motivators of safety culture on construction sites, with remuneration from the Civil Construction union. This programme will also mitigate the poverty which usually engulfs workplace widows, who may become marginalized by their plight, sinking into drug abuse and prostitu-

"It is therefore clear that, in spite of their impressive achievements, pension systems still have much unfinished business," the report says. "At the same time, they need to adapt to increasing life expectancy and to changes in labour markets and gender roles."

It concludes that "contributory social security schemes remain the instrument best suited as the main source of retirement income for workers in the vast majority of countries". However, it says the main priorities need to be increasing pension insurance coverage and improving governance.

¹ World Labour Report 2000: Income Security and Social Protection in a Changing World, International Labour Office, Geneva, June 2000, ISBN 92-2-110831-7. Price: 45 Swiss francs. Copies of the report may be obtained from ILO Publications, International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva, Switzerland, Tel.: +4122/7997828, fax: +4122/7996938, e-mail: pubvente@ilo.org, Web site: www.ilo.org/publns.

tion, sometimes dragging their children along with them.

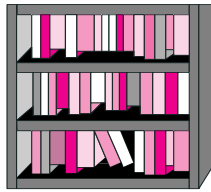
Instead, the women in this programme will be encouraged to participate in on-the-jobsite literacy training through occupational safety and health, and become involved in training seminars where they can discuss prevention, rehabilitation, return to work policies and access to treatment services.

This is but one example of an innovative way to provide women living on the edge with a new future, one in which they move from the isolation brought on by yet another example of the occupational gender safety gap, into a new sense of solidarity with others facing a similar plight. In the Philippines, women trainees illustrated this sense of solidarity with poignant drawings showing them and sister trade unionists on other continents connected by an imaginary umbilical cord. Many of the ILO workshop graduates have continued to keep in touch with their classmates. In our global village, the experiences and successes of one group of women workers can directly impact the lives of another. There does indeed appear to be an invisible umbilical cord between these groups of women, nourishing their efforts and giving life in faraway places to others whom they will probably never meet. The barriers are many, but the possibilities seem endless.

– Ellen Roskam, MPH,
ILO SafeWork Programme



Media shelf



In print

■ **Termination of Employment Digest.** ILO 2000. ISBN 92-2-110842-2. Price: 50 Swiss francs.

This highly topical book provides a valuable overview of legislation on termination of employment, illustrating the various approaches taken to the subject in national systems around the world. Accessible and wide-ranging, the Digest reviews the legislation of 72 jurisdictions from a diversity of systems reflecting different geographic, developmental and legal environments, and offers a practical reference for the lay reader as well as lawyers and other experts.

To highlight the different national approaches, the Digest presents a broad summary for each country covered, which includes information on sources of regulation, contracts of employment, scope of legislation, termination of employment, dismissals, notice and procedural safeguards, severance pay and avenues for redress. Numerous comprehensive tables are also presented to set out important information and to provide quick, easy reference.

Dealing exclusively with employees in the private sector,

the Digest places termination of employment in the perspective of today's labour market. It offers a valuable comparative overview of the legislation governing termination of employment in the various countries and examines how its development has been perceived and changed over time.

This book can be of interest to governments, employers, trade unions, labour practitioners and academics; anyone who utilizes comparative information on legislation governing termination of employment.

■ **Current International Recommendations of Labour Statistics, 2000 Edition.** ILO. ISBN 92-2-110846-5. Price: 20 Swiss francs, US\$14.95; UK£11.95

All the ILO texts on labour statistics which are now current are presented in this volume. It includes the Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (no. 160), and Recommendation, 1985 (No. 170), adopted by the International Labour Conference, and a number of resolutions adopted by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 1993 and 1998 to supersede earlier ones.

■ **Sustainable agriculture in a globalized economy.** Report for discussion at the Tripartite Meeting on Moving to Sustainable Agricultural De-

velopment through the Modernization of Agriculture and Employment in a Globalized Economy. ILO, Geneva 2000. ISBN 92-2-112171-2. Price: 15 Swiss francs.

How is the agriculture sector – the largest employer of the world labour force – affected by globalization? What role does it play, and how can this role be enhanced in a sustainable manner to improve the living standards of farmers and farm workers? These are the themes addressed in this report, the first to be written on the agriculture sector looking into the next century. Apart



from macro-level issues such as the role of agriculture in development and commodity prices, the report focuses on social issues such as child labour, women's role in agriculture, occupational health and safety, private voluntary initiatives, and genetic modification, since it is in these areas that the rapid transmission of ideas through modern communications is affecting labour practices on farms.

■ International Labour Review.

Printed edition: One-year subscription (four issues), Vol. 139 (2000): 99 Swiss francs; US\$80, GB£48, 60 Euros. Two-year subscriptions and electronic version also available. More information on <http://www.ilo.org/revue>

The forthcoming issue of the **International Labour Review** (due out in November) opens with an article by **Richard Anker** on practical problems and issues in data-gathering on child labour. This is followed by an empirical examination, by **Ajit Ghose**, of the effects of trade liberalization on employment and global inequality. **Susumu Watanabe** then looks at the future of employment and wage systems

in Japan, notably regarding aspects of performance related pay. Changes in the national legislation applicable to international contracts of employment is the subject of an in-depth analysis by **Marie-Agnès Sabirau-Pérez**. The issue closes with a contribution by **Mark Lansky** on concepts and recent thinking concerned with gender, masculinity and equality, followed by the customary **Books Section**.



Letters

to

the

Editor

World of Work has started a Letters to the Editor column to reflect the interests of a wide readership. Letters will be printed according to space availability and relevance, and the Editor reserves the right to edit the text.

✉ We take this opportunity to acknowledge with thanks a copy of 'World of Work', very useful and informative of ILO. We would certainly benefit from it in our activities.

*Khurshid Ahmed
General Secretary
All Pakistan Federation of Trade Unions
Lahore, Pakistan*

✉ I request your assistance. I need your magazine every time. I am a student of Law at the University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus.

After reading your magazine, I was highly impressed and made up my mind to develop and contribute towards the promotion of the work, it is really interesting.

*Onoh, Festus Oforohim
Nigeria.*

✉ Tous mes remerciements pour l'envoi régulier de votre magazine si utile pour l'information auprès de nombreuses personnes intéressées.

*André-H. Chatillon
Puidoux, Suisse.*

✉ We would like to subscribe your magazine 'World of Work'. We will be happy to pay for the subscription. We need the magazine urgently and earnestly.

We have also learnt that the magazine is available not only in English and a few other languages, but also in the Indian national language, i.e. Hindi. We would like to receive a copy in Hindi as well.

You are aware of the role the Indian Trade Unions are playing in the face of challenges arising out of application of modern technology. Our Federations have been existing for the last 20 years.

*Raja Kulkarni, President
National Federation of Petroleum Workers
Indian National Chemical Workers Federation
Mumbai, India*

✉ La presente reciban los más cordiales y sinceros saludos de quienes laboramos en el Centro Latinoamericano de Trabajo Social (CELATS) Organismo de Cooperación Técnica Internacional no Gubernamental y sin fines de lucro, cuyo objetivo es el fortalecimiento teórico

práctico de la labor que el Trabajo Social realiza en el Perú.

Conscientes de la misión que desempeña vuestra institución en favor del desarrollo y la promoción social, queremos expresarle nuestro reconocimiento y agradecimiento por el envío de su Revista TRABAJO No. 32 de una excelente calidad impregnado en cada uno de sus artículos, los cuales serán difundidos entre el personal de nuestra institución y Documentación.

De esta manera sentimos fortalecer nuestros lazos institucionales, con deseos de seguir proyectando nuestros objetivos trazados y continuar trabajando por el bienestar de nuestros países y de América Latina.

*Lic. Lily Gutierrez Valencia
Directora Ejecutiva
Centro Latinoamericano de
Trabajo Social
Lima, Perú*

✉ I find your periodical World of Work Magazine quite informative and useful to the agencies engaged in development of manpower either for self employment or for job employment.

The Centre for Entrepreneurship Development Madhya Pradesh (CEDMAP) is engaged in self employment and entrepreneurship development for the last 10 years and has facilitated more than 50,000 people to start different activities.

*P.N. Misra
CEDMAP, Bhopal,
India*

✉ *Original letter received in Hindi:*

I have received the Hindi edition of *World of Work*, the ILO Magazine, with surprise and pleasure. In fact, this edition should have been published a long time ago; however, better late than never.

Now the workers of our country who do not speak English will be able to avail of the experience of workers around the world and learn of their situation.

*Arvind Kumar
Director, Lok Jagriti Kendra
Deoghar, Bihar,
India.*

The International Financial and Actuarial Service of the International Labour Office (ILO FACTS)

No. 36, September/October 2000

We Serve People

A brief portrait

We Serve People

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Depending on their state of economic development, countries redistribute between 5 and 30 per cent of GDP through national social protection systems: social assistance schemes, health benefits, pensions and short-term cash benefits. These important transfers must rely on good financial governance. Financial governance is the competent utilization of all quantitative techniques to keep social protection systems in short- and long-term financial equilibria. The mission of ILO FACTS is the development of the capacity of government agencies and autonomous social protection agencies to carry out sound quantitative planning and improve management and governance of social protection schemes. ILO FACTS provides services to workers' and employers' organizations, as well as to governments.



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