

**FOR INFORMATION**

FOURTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Implementation of the Global
Employment Agenda: An update**

1. This paper presents the regular update on the implementation of the Global Employment Agenda (GEA) as requested by the Committee at the time of its adoption in March 2003. It follows the format based on the four priority areas identified in the “Vision” document presented to the Committee in March 2006.¹ This format, as noted by the Committee at the November 2006 session, allows it to better monitor on a regular basis progress on each of these elements. The four areas are: (i) making employment central in economic and social policy-making at the global, regional and national level; (ii) the informal economy; (iii) youth employment; and (iv) meeting the special needs of Africa. Table 1 in the appendix provides an overview of progress made by the Office in giving effect to the general guidance of the Committee, as requested at its 297th Session in November 2006.²

**I. Making employment central in economic
and social policy-making****(a) Global*****Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM)***

2. The ILO’s Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) highlights global trends relating to the world of work using world and regional estimates and country-level data of labour force participation, employment, employment by sector, employment by status, unemployment, youth unemployment, employment elasticities and working poverty.
3. The KILM’s fifth edition was launched in September 2007. It provides interesting findings on recent labour market trends which have important implications for analysing and framing policies for the creation of decent employment, fostering productivity growth and for reducing poverty. Its analysis shows that productivity levels increased over the past

¹ GB.295/ESP/1/1.

² GB.297/14(Rev.), para. 24.

decade for almost all regions, with the fastest increase observed in East Asia, where output per worker almost doubled. Considerable increases over this period were also seen in Central and south-eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS and South Asia, where productivity levels increased by around 50 per cent. Meanwhile, the United States continued to show the highest labour productivity levels in 2006 measured as value added per person employed per year, at US\$63,885; followed by Ireland (US\$55,986) and Luxembourg (US\$55,641) at a considerable distance. However, measured as value added per hour worked, Norway showed the highest labour productivity (US\$37.99), followed by the United States (US\$35.63) and France (US\$35.08).

4. According to the KILM, 1.5 billion people in the world – or one third of the working age population – are “potentially underutilized”. This new estimate of labour underutilization is comprised of the 195.7 million unemployed people in the world and nearly 1.3 billion working poor who live with their families on less than US\$2 per day per family member. Whereas the unemployed want to work but lack the opportunity to do so, the working poor are working but do not earn enough to move out of poverty.
5. The Asian region saw a substantial reduction in the number of working women and men living on less than US\$1 a day; the number of working poor in Asia decreased by as many as 148 million between 1996 and 2006, representing a drop of nearly 50 per cent. In contrast, sub-Saharan Africa’s weak economic performance resulted in an increase of 24 million in the number of working poor.
6. The report also estimates that half of all women and men employed are considered vulnerable to poverty. Most of these work in the informal economy and carry a higher risk of being unprotected, without social security and without a voice at work. Over 70 per cent of the workers in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are in such vulnerable employment. The report also shows that about one third of the working-age population are not participating in the labour market. This inactivity is much higher for women than for men, with only two out of ten men of working age inactive compared to five out of ten women. This shows that a large female labour force potential remains untapped.
7. The KILM, through its 20 indicators, provides a rich source of data for analysing the relationship between key economic and labour market variables and thus in identifying factors that can play a major part in realizing the global goal of full and productive employment and decent work.³

Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work

8. In order to give concrete shape to the strong endorsement of the Decent Work Agenda in the 2006 ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration, the ILO, working closely with the UN system as well as the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO, developed a “Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work”. The Toolkit, which is designed to help organizations throughout the multilateral system to assess employment and decent work outcomes of their own policies, programmes and activities, was adopted in April 2007 by the UN system Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).

³ Within the first week following the launch, the KILM, fifth edition, received some 240 hits – when considering press, news agencies and newswire web sites throughout the world (in comparison, the Global Employment Trends 2007 received around 120 hits). The electronic version of the software and manuscripts are available on the Internet and were downloaded by nearly 1,800 users in the first ten days.

9. A major part of the Toolkit addresses areas related to employment creation and enterprise development and is based on the GEA implementation checklist. It also builds on the inventory of tools prepared as part of GEA implementation and shows how the strong support for the Decent Work Agenda has generated demand for approaches and tools developed by the GEA.
10. The Toolkit was presented by the ILO at the panel discussion in the Coordination Segment of the ECOSOC in July 2007, where it was recognized as a practical and valuable tool for incorporating employment and decent work goals in the multilateral system by countries participating in the panel discussion. This was reflected in the resolution adopted by the Coordination Segment that “recognized that full and productive employment and decent work for all is one of the key elements for poverty reduction strategies that facilitate the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs” and “encourages all relevant agencies of the United Nations to collaborate in using, adapting and evaluating the application of the Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work as developed by the ILO.”⁴

(b) Regional

11. The Africa Regional Meeting held in Addis Ababa in April 2007 adopted a concrete programme for promoting the Decent Work Agenda in Africa for 2007–15, including through integrated Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). This programme draws on the lessons learned from the implementation of the 11-point plan of action adopted at the African Union Heads of State and Government Extraordinary Summit, Ouagadougou, September 2004, progress on which has been regularly reported upon to the Committee, as many of the actions related to the core elements of the GEA. Amongst the main objectives identified in the conclusions of the African Regional Meeting are:
 - Mainstreaming decent work into national, regional and international development strategies.
 - Investing in enterprises and decent work opportunities in Africa.
 - Promoting decent work for Africa’s youth.
 - Closing the skills gap.
 - Enabling social inclusion through job creation for conflict prevention and reconstruction.
12. The African Regional Meeting also called on the Office, working with the African Union (AU) Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), regional economic communities (RECs), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the ILO’s tripartite constituents, to operationalize the decision of the 39th Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (Ouagadougou, 2006) to establish a Regional Employment Forum. The Forum would provide a meeting place for all networks of unions, employers, organizations, researchers and governments to share and develop best practice solutions to Africa’s employment challenges. A follow-up meeting was held in Tunis between the AfDB, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECA) and the ILO in September at which it was agreed to move ahead with formulation of an action plan, identification of

⁴ See resolution of the ECOSOC Coordination Segment, 2007, ECOSOC web site.

priority thematic areas and strategies to guide the work and functions of the Forum, which, to avoid ambiguities, has been renamed the African Regional Employment Network.

- 13.** In Asia, the recently concluded Asian Employment Forum: Growth, Employment and Decent Work, held in Beijing in August 2007 addressed the broad implementation challenges posed by the adoption of the Decent Work Decade (2006–15) for Asia at the Asian Regional Meeting last year. The focus was in particular on policy directions for job creation and poverty reduction, policies and programmes for sustaining productivity and competitiveness on a foundation of decent work, labour market governance and policies for rolling back informality. It called for assistance to constituents in the implementation of the GEA as an operational and integrated framework for the employment pillar of the DWCPs and as a means to achieve “tangible outcomes and practical measures” in implementing the Asian Decent Work Decade. In this respect, there was a call for the establishment of an Asian Decent Work Knowledge Network. The Regional Office, in collaboration with headquarters, is currently developing a detailed workplan for the design and establishment of the Network.
- 14.** The ILO Regional Office for Latin American and the Caribbean, together with the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin, has implemented the employment component of a two-year programme on social cohesion supported by the European Commission (EuropeAid). A key aim of the programme is to facilitate experience and knowledge sharing on employment policies as a means to strengthen institutional capacities of the State and the social partners in participating countries. The activities have focused on measuring and analysing labour market indicators, designing employment policies and monitoring and assessing their impact. A number of countries have benefited from the programme.
- 15.** The ILO continues to work closely with the European Union on employment and labour market issues. The ILO actively participated in the Portuguese Presidency Conference on “Flexicurity: The key challenges” in Lisbon in September 2007 as panellist with labour ministers from the EU countries.
- 16.** In Central and Eastern Europe, the ILO continues to work closely with countries involved in the Bucharest Process: Country Reviews of Employment Policy (CREPs) which have made extensive use of the GEA framework and its core elements. As part of this support, the ILO participated in the national tripartite seminar held in April 2007 on the “Country report on employment policy of FYR Macedonia”. Some of the key issues covered were: (i) reallocating resources from passive to active labour market programmes; (ii) improving the design and targeting of ALMPs focusing on preventive and employability oriented strategies; (iii) fostering closer links between the education and training systems and the world of work, closely involving the social partners in the process; (iv) ensuring a gender sensitive education and training system; (v) the reduction of the informal economy through appropriate tax policy and legislative changes; and (vi) the promotion of further atypical and flexible forms of employment in the formal economy.
- 17.** In order to strengthen the work of the Office and ensure synergies and close coordination and collaboration between headquarters and the field specialists for ILO work on employment in Latin America and the Caribbean, a workshop was organized in Lima in May 2007 which was attended by the Employment Sector’s Executive Director and the Regional Director. The workshop pursued two basic objectives: (i) to strengthen Office capacities to achieve the goals established in the Decent Work Hemispheric Agenda of the Americas (DWHA); and (ii) to identify/learn from best practices in the Americas in order to strengthen ILO work at global level.

18. The workshop agreed on joint action in a number of areas and was in line with the “Vision” document’s objective of enhancing the Office’s effectiveness and impact, especially at the national level, through closer coordination and collaboration between the Employment Sector and the field structure, which has primary responsibility for providing direct services to member States and constituents within the framework of the DWCPs.

(c) National

19. It is at the national level that the most concrete results of the implementation of the GEA in support of DWCPs can be realized. This implementation update reports on the recent initiatives in the United Republic of Tanzania, Jordan (box 1) and Mongolia as well as work on development of national skills policies in a number of countries and the recent review of ILO technical support on employment and more specifically enterprise development in China (box 2). Both the United Republic of Tanzania and Jordan show the priority and commitment of governments at the highest level to operationalize employment plans, with ILO technical support being provided as part of the “One UN” in the former, and to strengthen the coordinating role of the Ministry of Labour in the latter. Mongolia shows how a national employment planning exercise results in prioritizing key objectives – in this case – youth unemployment and upgrading the informal economy. The increasing demand for ILO technical support in framing skills development policies shows the importance countries are assigning to increasing their competitiveness and productivity in the face of globalization and in China for entrepreneurship and enterprise development as the economy moves to encourage the growth of small and medium enterprises in the private sector.

United Republic of Tanzania

20. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the ILO is working closely with policy-makers at the highest level and the social partners to operationalize the National Employment Policy (NEP, 2006) under the National Employment Creation Programme (NECP) and “One UN” programme. The GEA framework is being extensively applied in this exercise.
21. Poverty reduction is the most important development challenge on the policy agenda in the United Republic of Tanzania, and the creation of productive employment and decent work is recognized as a major tool for reducing income poverty while enhancing economic growth. The objective of the NEP is to have Tanzanian society engaged in decent gainful employment that is capable of generating adequate income to sustain it and reduce poverty.
22. The NECP is built around four core elements: private sector development, skills development, employment-intensive works and strengthening of the Ministry of Labour’s ability to support and monitor the labour market. The employment policy for Zanzibar has been formulated and finalized under the title “Jobs for Zanzibar”.
23. The ILO has played a central role in increasing awareness of the importance of decent work in the fight against poverty, which has led to the inclusion of important labour and employment issues into the Tanzanian poverty reduction strategies, as well as provided specific technical assistance in the drafting of the NEP. The Tanzania Decent Work Programme is not a stand-alone document supported “only” by ILO constituents, but an integral part of the country’s development process, as it contributes directly to the NECP, which in turn is directly linked to the poverty reduction strategy. This is a guarantee for national ownership, a prerequisite for local resource mobilization, and an excellent basis for further partnerships and synergies.

24. At the request of the President of the United Republic of Tanzania and of the UN Resident Coordinator, a high-level joint ILO–UNDP employment advisory mission was carried out in May 2007 to: (i) review the policy framework on growth, employment and poverty reduction; (ii) make recommendations on the NEP and the NECP in the context of the poverty reduction strategy and the President’s objective of creating 1 million productive jobs by 2010; and (iii) make recommendations for optimizing work of UN agencies as “One UN” in support of growth, decent employment and poverty reduction plans.

25. The joint ILO-UNDP mission’s advice stressed:

- The critical importance of employment as the missing link in the growth–poverty relationship and the need to explicitly include this element in the poverty reduction strategy.
- The need to integrate growth strategies with sector-specific job-creation strategies for poverty reduction to promote job-rich growth. Particular focus should be placed on targeting high youth unemployment in the economy.
- The NECP must be recognized as a cross-sectoral and intra-governmental programme, the implementation of which needs to be supervised by a body with authority above the line ministry level, e.g. a national employment council.
- It is essential that the UN provide multi-dimensional broad support for its implementation. In this regard, the mission recommended that the draft joint UN programme on “Wealth Creation, Employment and Economic Empowerment” align itself close to the NECP’s core elements of private-sector development, skills development and employment-intensive works, incorporating cross-cutting issues of youth and women’s unemployment in a decentralized setting.

Box 1

Implementing the Global Employment Agenda in Jordan: The National Employment Policy

The Government of Jordan has been quite committed to addressing the employment challenge and over the years has devised a number of national development strategies and initiatives which aim at reducing poverty and unemployment. However, two major gaps persisted: first, since employment was not considered as central to economic and social policies, it remained as a residual consequence to existing development plans and strategies. Second, most of these plans and strategies did not provide enough tools nor effective responses to the existing and emerging employment challenges. The result is that despite political commitment, the country lacked an overarching coherent approach to employment issues.

Following a request by the Government, the ILO developed the Decent Work Country Programme, which drew heavily on the GEA framework and which responds to the current priorities through addressing the challenges of increasing job opportunities, improving job quality, raising labour productivity levels while maintaining economic growth rates. These features of Jordan’s DWCP were singled out by the Prime Minister and the ILO Director-General during the Asian Regional Meeting in Busan in 2006.

The development of the employment policy, which constitutes a main pillar of the DWCP, started by stimulating strategic dialogue and allowing for a transparent debate. This was done through a high-level national consultation during July 2007 which was chaired by the Prime Minister and which was attended by key ministers (finance, labour, trade and industry, interior, institutional reform and justice) and the social partners. The outcome of this consultation was the need for improved coherence and coordination, and the Ministry of Labour was mandated by the Prime Minister to develop the first Jordanian employment policy.

The aim of the employment policy, which is currently being drafted by the Ministry of Labour in consultation with a national tripartite committee and with technical support by the ILO, is to strengthen the approach to employment as a key element to socio-economic development, economic growth and poverty reduction. The policy, which draws on the GEA framework and its core elements, is to:

- maintain a consistent commitment to achieve high levels of employment rates;

- reach a consensus between the Government, social partners and other actors on how to reshape and streamline national employment and labour market policies and actions;
- ensure consistency with other processes. This includes macroeconomic, sectoral and social protection policies;
- ensure an adaptable labour force and labour markets which are responsive to change;
- improve the capacity for responding to medium and longer term employment challenges. Allow for a visible debate on employment at the national level and the ability to monitor and evaluate progress in employment outcomes as a measure of government effectiveness.

Mongolia

- 26.** Mongolia first adopted an Employment Promotion Law in 2001 and a National Employment Promotion Programme in 2002. Recent revisions in legislation and the programme respond to changing circumstances to make more effective use of the Employment Promotion Fund and to reach a wider group of Mongolian workers. A National Employment Forum is being organized with ILO technical support in November 2007, which will focus on two components of an employment strategy – the informal economy and youth employment. Considerable progress has been made in understanding and outlining the challenges and options. Participants at the forum will be asked to review the policy of the Government of Mongolia on the informal economy and discuss the draft National Action Plan on Promotion of Youth Employment.
- 27.** The National Employment Conference organized in 2001 had introduced the GEA framework and core elements to a broad range of policy-makers from line ministries, social partners and local officials. This was followed by a National Conference on the Informal Economy in 2002 to draft an appropriate strategy for the informal economy in Mongolia. The national policy on informal employment was adopted by Parliament in January 2006. It outlines an action plan based on the ILO concept of decent work. The objective of this policy is to “formalize” informal employment by providing government services; creating legal, economic, labour and social protection guarantees to protect people in informal employment from risks; and ensuring economic growth.⁵ The policy will be implemented in three phases, with the first during 2005–07, the second 2008–11 and the third 2012–15. The implementation strategy includes links with macroeconomic policy, improvements in the legal environment, coordination with employment promotion policies, improvements in social protection, and cooperation through social dialogue and public participation.
- 28.** In 2005, within the context of an ILO project, a national committee on youth employment was set up. During 2006, a “School-to-work transition survey” was conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO) of Mongolia with financial and technical assistance from the ILO. The results from this survey have been used in a national report by the NSO focusing on the development context and an international report by the ILO making global comparisons using econometric analysis. The information and analysis have also been used in preparing a draft National Action Plan on Youth Employment that will be discussed during the forthcoming National Employment Forum. Its overarching goal is to decrease the youth unemployment rate by a third by 2015. Four objectives have been defined for that purpose: improve and develop skills, create new jobs to absorb the new entrants, ease the process of starting a business, and ensure equal opportunities.

⁵ Government of Mongolia: The policy of the Government of Mongolia on informal employment, approved by Parliament in January 2006, unofficial translation.

National skills development policies

29. The Committee had also advised when discussing core element 6 at its November 2006 session the renewal of ILO efforts to support national skills development policies and further integrate skills development into national employment strategies. Providing this kind of support takes a variety of forms. In Pakistan, for example, technical support focuses on enabling broad stakeholder participation in discussion of implementation strategies and enabling stakeholders to learn from the experience of other countries, particularly in Asia, on implementation, finance and assessment challenges and how to overcome them. In Bangladesh, support takes the form of a substantial five-year technical cooperation project, in partnership with the European Union, to match skills development to sector development priorities as part of private sector promotion, but also to upgrading availability of skills training in rural and informal economies as part of poverty reduction strategies. In Latin America, close collaboration with ILO/CINTERFOR includes generating comparative research on the experience of public policy and national training institutions in using skills development to promote national strategies in competitiveness and productivity. In Cambodia, the effort has focused at the policy and programme design stage, in response to a request for support to build a coherent skills and job-creation policy – based explicitly on presentation and tripartite discussion of the GEA as a framework for national policy development. In Africa, technical support is being provided for national skills development policies and legal frameworks in Ghana, Burundi, Madagascar, Cameroon and Niger, as part of sector upgrading policies in Morocco and Egypt, through technical assistance to improve vocational training institutions and systems in Liberia and Egypt, and through policy advice to regional initiatives in francophone West Africa to improve the use and impact of training funds in meeting employers' needs and enhancing workers' employability through better matching supply of and demand for skills.

Box 2

China: Review of the employment component of the ILO programme in China

The biannual joint committee meeting to review the Memorandum of Understanding between China and the ILO was held in August 2007 with participation by the Minister of Labour and Social Security (MOLSS), the ILO Director-General and Executive Directors of Sectors 1 and 2. The review of the employment component of the ILO's programme in China provided positive feedback on the Office's work, particularly in connection with the support provided for the formulation of the Employment Promotion Law which was adopted in late August and which reflects many of the core elements of the GEA. Also there was recognition of the Office's support to MOLSS work on active labour market policy impact assessment, enterprise development, skills upgrading, microfinance and employment services. A follow-up meeting between MOLSS and the Executive Director of the Employment Sector identified detailed priorities for ILO support to MOLSS's work, in particular the implementation of the DWCP.

In connection with the work done in support of enterprise development in China, it should be mentioned that a three-year Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) China programme has just been completed. The programme has been very successful, with an estimated 1.2 million new jobs generated across all the locations where the methodology has been introduced so far. Some 6,500 trainers have been trained and this makes the programme larger than the rest of the entire global portfolio of SIYB programmes. The Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom which, along with Japan, has been the main donor, stated at a meeting to mark the completion of the project in August 2007 that it had been one of their most successful globally.

II. Informal economy

30. In March 2007, the Committee reviewed the progress made in the operationalization of the International Labour Conference (ILC) framework on decent work and the informal

economy adopted at the 2002 ILC.⁶ The joint presentation by the Employment and Social Protection Sectors highlighted the state of knowledge, policy debate and lessons learned in policy areas cutting across all strategic objectives of decent work. The Committee examined the issues raised in the paper, supported the comprehensive and integrated approach proposed and provided guidance for future work in this area.

31. Progress is being made in the implementation of the current workplan of the InFocus Initiative on the informal economy (appended to the March 2007 Committee report). More specifically:

- Preparations and consultations are under way for the Interregional Symposium on the Informal Economy: Enabling Transition to Formalization to be held 27-29 November 2007. The overall objective of the Symposium is to share knowledge and experience on good practices and different approaches developed for enabling the transition to formalization. The Symposium will provide a venue for a tripartite technical review of effective policies, programmes and practices in key areas of action. It is expected that it will further identify possible follow-up activities in research, capacity building and technical cooperation in the framework of the Programme and Budget for 2008–09 joint outcome on the informal economy. An intra-Office consultation, involving field and headquarters staff, is envisaged to take place immediately after the Symposium on 30 November, paving the ground for follow-up work in the 2008–09 biennium.
- Updating the statistical picture on the informal economy including the use and analysis of the most recent data available in the ILO/STAT database.
- Assessment and integration of multiple ILO tools, which includes an updated database on existing tools and the preparation of a consolidated reader/toolkit devoted to various themes.
- A focused interactive discussion on “Rolling back informality” at the Asian Forum on Growth, Employment and Decent Work, held in August 2007.
- In-depth country reviews and documentation of good practices in various policy areas.

III. Youth employment

32. The Office played an active role in the conference Young People in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: From Policy to Action (Rome, 21–23 May 2007), organized by the World Bank with the support of the Italian Development Cooperation. The event gathered representatives of governments and youth organizations from 29 countries in ECA as well as Kosovo. This was the first ECA-wide forum convened to discuss the findings and recommendations of the World Bank’s 2007 World Development Report entirely devoted to youth issues, and to devise follow-up action in the region. Specifically, the ILO’s Youth Employment Programme was called upon to provide inputs to and shape the employment dimensions of the Conference. In addition to delivering a keynote address in the youth employment plenary session, the Office organized and coordinated three thematic sessions. This helped, on the one hand, secure the participation as speakers of ILO constituents in several sessions and, on the other, voice and channel the policy messages and lessons underpinning the ILO’s work on youth employment. These messages are by and large

⁶ GB.298/ESP/4.

echoed in the final Conference Statement. Consultations are under way to identify specific follow-up action for joint ILO–World Bank work at the country level.

33. Since early 2007, the Office has been actively engaged in the work related to the “youth, employment and migration” thematic window of the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F). The Fund was established by UNDP with the Government of Spain in December 2006 to accelerate efforts to reach the MDGs and to support UN reform at the country level. Participation in a high-level inter-agency team has enabled the Office to mainstream the issues at the heart of the Decent Work Agenda and the GEA, as well as key areas of ILO technical expertise, into the terms of reference guiding project proposal submissions under the Fund. This provides the ILO with an opportunity to lead country-level work, while paving the way for increased coordination and coherence among UN agencies around the issue of youth employment.
34. Participation in this process also represents a concrete step forward to put into action the recent agreement between the UNDP and the ILO for closer cooperation, specifically in the area of youth employment. To support field and headquarters work in connection with this thematic MDG-F window, the Office, through its Youth Employment Programme, has established an interactive web-based platform. Besides giving quick access to useful documents, tools and resources organized by countries and themes, the platform provides a lively and dynamic space for the exchange of knowledge and expertise. In the long run, this innovative ILO knowledge-sharing initiative should become a fully fledged community of practice on youth employment.

IV. Meeting the special needs of Africa

35. Given the importance of apprenticeship as the major means of imparting skills in the informal economy, a new research agenda has been launched to learn how the institution of traditional apprenticeship systems might be more effective in upgrading skills of young people in the informal economy and improving the employability of apprentices in the formal economy. A workshop in May 2007 brought together researchers, representatives from other agencies and staff from skills development and IPEC technical cooperation projects to compare experience on upgrading apprenticeships in various parts of the world, but mainly in West Africa. The participants agreed on some emerging policy challenges and on practical ways to continue to learn from each other. This work is planned in collaboration with the Working Group for International Cooperation in Skills Development.

Strengthening ILO technical capacity in meeting the special needs of Africa

36. To strengthen the ILO’s technical and managerial capacity to support efforts at the continental, regional and national level to meet the special needs of Africa, the Employment Sector has initiated a number of steps which included a workshop arranged jointly by the Employment Sector and the Africa Regional Office with the ILO employment specialists in Africa in Dakar in June 2006.
37. To monitor progress on the decisions and joint workplan agreed at that meeting, a “Closing the biennium retreat: ILO support to Africa in the area of employment”, was held in Geneva in September 2007. The meeting, which included the Regional Director and other officials from the Regional Office, reviewed the implementation status of the major joint programmes and activities agreed upon at the Dakar meeting (“Dakar Matrix”) and had an in-depth discussion on four selected areas, namely: (i) managing the increased demand and

expectations for ILO services; (ii) analytical and policy research; (iii) resource mobilization; and (iv) informal economy. The meeting also reviewed ILO/AU cooperation in the context of the three African Union initiatives the Employment Sector is presently supporting, namely: Africa Regional Employment Forum; Employment Policy Framework building on RECs; and the informal economy.

38. An important part of the meeting was to review support to DWCPs in the area of employment in a number of countries and how this support could be strengthened to respond to the conclusions of the Africa Regional Meeting for promoting the Decent Work Agenda in Africa 2007–15.

Geneva, 12 October 2007.

Submitted for information.

Appendix

Follow-up on guidance given by the ESP Committee (since November 2006)¹

Agenda item: Guidance/decisions *	Follow-up
<p>Business environment, labour law and micro- and small enterprises (GB.297/ESP/1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop “a broad inter-sectoral research programme” and provide guidance to constituents in this area. Focus on the “win-win territory”. ■ Concerning collaboration with the World Bank on measuring and characterizing the quality of labour law, Committee members agreed that any cooperation with other institutions should take place based on a distinctive and well-articulated ILO position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Draft research plan developed. It focuses on three pillars regarded as part of the “win-win territory”: better representation, better regulation (emphasis on social protection) and better enforcement. A series of case studies documenting experiences from South Asia, Africa, Chile, Peru, Ecuador and New Zealand are under way. ■ Collaboration is foreseen with Sectors I, III and IV and contacts have been established. An inter-sectoral advisory group exists. ■ Joint work with the Bureaux of Employers’ and Workers’ Activities is being undertaken. It includes capacity building for employers’ organizations and joint research with the workers. The overall aim of the joint work with the Bureau of Workers’ Activities is to document associative strategies of workers’ organizations that have successfully reached out to MSEs (formal and informal), their strengths and weaknesses, and how and under what legal and institutional framework representational functions are performed more effectively. Comparative research is starting, covering initially 16 countries (Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe). ■ An internal task force has been established under the supervision of the Executive Director to study the “Doing business” methodology and to assess alternative paths of action.
<p>Strategies and practice for labour inspection (GB.297/ESP/3)</p> <p>Point for decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Committee recommended that the Governing Body invite the Office to develop, evaluate and implement a strategy for the support of the modernization and reinvigoration of labour inspection, with international collaboration as required to achieve these goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A draft action plan was developed following the March 2007 Governing Body meeting. This plan covers promotion and advocacy, capacity building and training, project management, the joint immediate outcomes for strengthening labour inspection, and internal reporting and evaluation. ■ A tripartite labour inspection workshop was held in Pakistan with the goal of helping to strengthen the provincial labour inspection system of Punjab. ■ A technical background paper called “Ethical and professional code of conduct for labour inspectors” will be developed in cooperation with the International Association of Labour Inspection (IALI) and other units in the ILO with the goal of strengthening transparency and good governance. ■ SafeWork and Social Dialogue have had preliminary discussions about a draft model for the audits called for in the joint outcomes.

¹ GB.297/ESP/2 (“Collective bargaining and the Decent Work Agenda”) was postponed from November 2006 to November 2007. GB.298/ESP/5 (“The Decent Work Agenda in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs): Recent developments”) was postponed from March 2007 to November 2007.

- A large international conference was held in Düsseldorf to further develop the issues of labour inspection and good governance in DWCPs.
- Two international workshops were held to address labour inspection functions and training as well as supply chain management.
- A first analysis of the global labour inspection portal was carried out in cooperation with DCOMM.
- As part of the integrated labour inspection training system, training tools on labour inspection in agriculture and construction were completed in cooperation with ILO Turin. Similarly, a handbook for labour and factory inspectors has been published, which is being used to train labour inspectors on HIV/AIDS prevention and impact mitigation as part of their regulatory functions and advisory services.

Youth employment (GB.297/ESP/4)

- General agreement on the work modalities of the YEP, along with the need to continue its activities in line with the 2005 ILC resolution and its action plan.
- YEP should expand its knowledge base, including in the suggested priority areas (economic policies for employment expansion; skills, technology and employability; enterprise development; labour market policies and institutions: governance, empowerment and institutional capital).
- YEP should develop mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the impact of policies and instruments on youth employment outcomes.
- YEP should engage in an assessment of the impact of the Office's work on youth employment.

- Framework of cooperation between ILO–UNDP–UNIDO on youth employment in Mano River Union (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone) and Côte d'Ivoire.
- Active involvement in the process related to the "Young people, employment and migration" thematic window of the MDG-F, with emphasis on better integration of migration and youth employment issues.
- Assistance to Slovenia in view of its EU Presidency (first semester 2008), which will focus on youth employment as one key priority area (Tripartite Meeting of Experts, Ljubljana 6–7 Dec. 2007).
- Substantive technical inputs to the World Bank Conference "Youth People in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: From Policy to Action" (Rome, May 2007).
- Establishment of Sector-wide research agenda on youth employment.
- Research launched and under way on: contractual arrangements and youth employment outcomes; sectoral policies and youth employment trends in Chile; child labour and youth employment linkages in Brazil (jointly with IPEC); and lessons learned from best practice in entrepreneurial/private sector initiatives in creating and sustaining youth employment.
- New technical cooperation projects launched and operational.
- See also GEA implementation updates GB.298/ESP/1 and GB.300/ESP/4.

Implementation of past decisions taken by the Committee on Employment and Social Policy (GB.297/ESP/5)

Point for decision:

The Committee recommended that the Governing Body request the Office:

- in preparing documents for consideration by the Committee, to give due regard to identifying areas where guidance and/or points for decision are required; and
- to report at each November session of the ESP Committee on progress made in giving effect to the general guidance of the Committee.

- Of the four papers discussed by the Committee at its March 2007 session, one was for information (GEA implementation update), one had a point for decision (wages), and the other two were for debate and guidance. The latter two papers had sections that outline areas where guidance was sought from the Committee (skills) or pointed to lessons learned and the way forward (informal economy).

Agenda item: Guidance/decisions *

Follow-up

Implementation of Decent Work Country Programmes: Checklist of policy areas on social protection (GB.297/ESP/7)

- Broad consensus that social protection is a vital element of decent work and the report provided a strong foundation for future work by the Office, including better adapted tools.

- Of the five papers submitted to the Committee at its November 2007 session, one is for information (GEA implementation update), one has a point for decision (Global Social Trust), the other three are for debate and guidance, with sections on implementation and knowledge gaps identified (GEA implementation overview), lessons learned and the way forward (PRSPs), and proposed future work (collective bargaining).
- The present table responds to the request for a progress review at the November session of the Committee.

- Projects to implement the Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All in the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia were launched in January 2007. A High-level International Conference on Health Protection in Developing Countries: Breaking the Vicious Circle of Disease and Poverty was held by the French Government in March 2007 in Paris. As input to the discussions, a draft paper on the ILO's strategy towards universal access to health care was prepared and has been circulated to constituents for global consultation. A research paper on "The right to social security and national development" was published in January 2007. A paper on "Growth, employment and social protection: A strategy for balanced growth in a global market economy" was discussed in an Informal Ministerial Meeting of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs during the ILC in 2007. The Social Security Department is developing a quantitative modelling tool that allows countries to assess the cost of a minimum social security package.
- Progress had been made in the two cross-cutting conditions of work projects in Europe and Asia. First, in strong collaboration with the European Commission, changes in working and employment conditions have been investigated across 27 EU countries plus Croatia. A similar project has been launched for Asia and the Pacific, with a strong emphasis on the effects of globalization and deregulation. The results were presented in a workshop in February 2007.
- With respect to progress on HIV/AIDS and the world of work, a meeting was organized in December 2006 in Turin with representatives of the IOE and ICFTU-AFRO from eight countries in the African region as well as several major donors. The objective of the meeting was to strengthen implementation of the IOE-ICFTU global agreement on HIV/AIDS.
- The "Bremen Declaration on Responsibility and Partnership – Together against HIV/AIDS" was adopted by Ministers of Health from the European Union and 16 non-EU countries at a conference organized by the German Government in March 2007, explicitly recognizing the value of the ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work.
- A DfID-funded project on labour migration was launched. The project includes work on: (a) updating and expanding the international labour migration database; (b) updating and expanding the set of good practices annexed to the ILO Multilateral Framework; (c) preparatory work for a training course on labour migration policies held in Turin in April; and (d) preparatory work for testing the module on labour migration statistics to be incorporated in household surveys. National "practice testing" studies on discrimination and access to

Agenda item: Guidance/decisions *

Follow-up

employment in Sweden and France were completed and presented to the Governments in December 2006 and March 2007, respectively. The web site on equality, discrimination and integration regarding migrant and immigrant workers <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/equality> and the publication *Integration in Europe: A practitioners' handbook* were launched.

- Tripartite Regional Workshop on Labour Migration Policies in the Russian Federation and CIS countries was held in Moscow in December 2006. Publication of the Russian edition of the OSCE-ILO-IOM *Handbook on establishing effective labour migration policies in countries of origin and destination*. The EU-supported technical capacity-building project "Towards sustainable partnerships for the effective governance of labour migration in the Russian Federation, the Caucasus and Central Asia" was started.
- To see how the Office can best address social protection in DWCPs in Africa, a workshop on social protection policies and strategies was organized in collaboration with the Regional Office for Africa in Cairo in February 2007.

Wages around the world: Developments and challenges (GB.298/ESP/2)

Point for decision:

- The Committee recommended to the Governing Body that, recognizing wages as a major component of decent work and conscious of the knowledge gaps that exist in relation to wages and income issues, it invite the Office to develop and implement, in consultation with constituents, a programme of work, reflecting the availability of resources, the potential for mobilizing other actors and the need to build stronger partnerships with other institutions, which will initially address as a priority the following wage and income issues:
 - (a) collection and dissemination of statistics;
 - (b) country-level assistance, including in DWCPs;
 - (c) wage-setting mechanisms and wage bargaining;
 - (d) wages, productivity and economic performance; and
 - (e) wage differentials and disparities.

- Steps have been taken to issue a regular report on wage trends and policy developments around the world. Consultations have been carried out with Sector 2 and INTEGRATION to assess the availability of wage-related data in the ILO.
- In cooperation with the competent field offices, a network of wage specialists has been established in Latin America, and similar networks are about to be created in Asia and Africa.
- Country studies have been commissioned to gather data on key wage and income indicators, and prevalent wage-setting mechanisms, payment systems and wage policies.
- A policy-oriented research project on minimum wages in EU 27 has been submitted to the European Commission for funding.

Portability of skills (GB.298/ESP/3)

- Reconfirmation of commitment to continued learning (employers) and to competencies and career development (workers).
- Expressed interest in receiving information on policy options and international experiences.
- Call for closer cooperation with ILO/Turin Centre and ILO/CINTERFOR.
- Expressed interest in further work on core skills and the methodologies involved as well as on forward-looking skills development strategies.

- EMP/SKILLS participated in consultations to develop ILO/CINTERFOR's new strategy document and participated in its biannual Technical Advisory Committee meeting (Cartagena, Colombia, June 2007) with representatives of national training institutions, ministries, workers' and employers' organizations. Technical and financial cooperation in producing background research and a regional meeting on the role of national training institutions in skills and productivity (Brazil, September 2007). Means of action for ongoing coordination and cooperation to be agreed with newly appointed Director of ILO/CINTERFOR.
- Ongoing consultations with Turin Centre on expanded and new areas of cooperation in response to DWCP priorities; technical discussions scheduled end-2007 with incoming Turin staff in employment and training field; discussion on division of labour and teamwork planning scheduled with assistance of Turin facilitator for November–December.

Agenda item: Guidance/decisions *

Follow-up

- Discussions initiated and continuing with representatives of employers and workers on the preparation of the report for the general discussion on “Skills for productivity, employment growth and development” (ILC, 2008) to clarify the priority policy options for discussion and sharing of international experience.
- National case studies commissioned on forward-looking skills development strategies, roles of social dialogue, and updated impact.
- Research priorities proposed for 2008–09 biennium include joint work with other development and donor agencies to identify success factors in the design and implementation of approaches to improving competency-based training and recognition of prior core and technical training, and to improve impact assessment methodologies for assessing their employment impact (National Qualification Frameworks, upgrading traditional apprenticeships, methods to integrate core skills in training institution curriculum).

The informal economy (GB.298/ESP/4)

- Broad support for integrated approaches in support of formalization, taking into account diversity of country situations.
- Reconfirmed the ILC 2002 resolution’s twin objectives of preserving employment-generation potential and extending protection.

- Preparations and consultations are under way for the Interregional Symposium on the Informal Economy: Enabling Transition to Formalization, 27–29 November 2007. The overall objective of the Symposium is to share knowledge and experience on good practices and different approaches developed for enabling the transition to formalization. The Symposium will provide a venue for a tripartite technical review of effective policies, programmes and practices in key areas of action. It is expected that it will further identify possible follow-up activities in research, capacity building and technical cooperation in the framework of the Programme and Budget for 2008–09 joint outcome on the informal economy. An intra-Office consultation, involving field and headquarters staff, is envisaged to take place immediately after the Symposium on 30 November, paving the way for follow-up work in the 2008–09 biennium.
- Updating the statistical picture on the informal economy including the use and analysis of the most recent data available in the ILO/STAT database.
- Assessment and integration of multiple ILO tools which includes an updated database on existing tools and the preparation of a consolidated reader/tool kit devoted to various themes.
- A focused interactive discussion on “Rolling back informality” at the Asian Forum on Growth, Employment and Decent Work held in August 2007.
- In-depth country reviews and documentation of good practices in various policy areas.
- Support to DWCPs through the development and application of integrated approaches.

* Items that had a point for decision are marked as such. The other items listed here were for debate and guidance.