



FIFTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Governing Body Symposium on
Decent Work for Women – the
ILO’s contribution to *Women 2000:
Gender equality, development and
peace for the twenty-first century*
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1. This paper describes ILO activities that have contributed to the implementation of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, September 1995), and reviews preparations made by the Office for *Women 2000*. An ILO report will also be prepared for *Women 2000* reflecting the issues addressed and the concerns expressed by the ILO and its constituents at the regional and interregional levels and during the Governing Body Symposium.

I. ILO efforts to implement the Beijing Platform for Action

2. At its 265th Session (March 1996), the Governing Body considered a document¹ on strategic orientations for ILO follow-up activities to implement the Beijing Platform for Action. Seven of the 12 areas of concern identified in the Platform were closely linked to the ILO's fields of competence and mandate, and can be summarized under three headings –

- poverty eradication and productive employment;
- working conditions and social protection;
- international labour standards and normative action on women workers.

Within that framework a number of specific programmes and projects were launched, including the International Programme on More and Better Jobs for Women.

3. Over the past year, ILO follow-up activities to give effect to the Platform have extended to other areas, in particular, social dialogue and institutional and financial arrangements.

II. Progress made towards the implementation of the Beijing Platform

A. International labour standards and normative action on women workers

4. Since the Fourth World Conference on Women the International Labour Conference adopted the following instruments of direct relevance to women workers and girls:
 - the Home Work Convention (No. 177) and Recommendation (No. 184), 1996;
 - the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998;
 - the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182) and Recommendation (No. 190), 1999.
5. The adoption of the Declaration marked a renewed universal commitment by Members of the Organization to respect, promote and realize the principles of freedom of association,

¹ GB.265/4.

effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour, the effective abolition of child labour, and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. All seven core Conventions cited in the Declaration touch on women's concerns, but its adoption spurred further ratification of two Conventions of particular interest. Since the Fourth World Conference on Women, 19 new countries have ratified the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), bringing the total number of ratifications to 141. A total of 17 further ratifications were registered of the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), bringing the total number of ratifications to 143.² The worst forms of child labour Convention adopted in June 1999 calls for account to be taken of the special situation of girls.

B. The ILO's contribution to implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

1. Critical areas of the Platform

6. ILO programmes and projects developed and implemented to promote gender equality cover a wide range of concerns. Gender equality in the world of work is approached as a matter of human rights, but it is also critical for sustainable development, the effective use of human resources, and family and child welfare. Both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of employment are addressed in the Platform, as well as the empowerment of women. Current targeted assistance focuses on employment creation and poverty alleviation and covers the promotion of job quality and the provision of social protection to specific groups of women workers, as well as combating the trafficking of women and children. Activities related to women workers' rights also receive importance.
7. Since Beijing, demand for support in the field of gender equality at work by ILO constituents has been steadily increasing, which attests to the positive impact of gender awareness-raising activities and mainstreaming efforts. Increasingly, a gender perspective is systematically incorporated in all ILO programmes and projects, and many targeted activities take a holistic approach and touch simultaneously on various critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action. ILO activities to implement the Platform in the areas related to its mandate are summarized below.

(a) Women and poverty

8. Poverty alleviation projects continue to be formulated in a developmental perspective, but an increasing number have the aim of mitigating the social consequences of economic reforms and restructuring, financial and economic crises, conflicts and natural disasters. There has been considerable flexibility in redirecting the substantive or geographical focus of certain programmes, for example to include women affected by the crisis in Asia as a special target group. Activities in post-conflict situations have broadened their scope and shifted their emphasis from ex-combatants towards households, offering packages that include women and children.

Research and analysis

9. A study was carried out on the impact of microfinance by the Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (CGAP), with the aim of establishing poverty yardsticks and impact

² See also GB.277/LILS/6.

assessment methodologies to contribute to mainstreaming gender concerns into microfinance activities.

Strategies and Tools against Social Exclusion and Poverty (STEP)

10. STEP promotes the extension of innovative social protection measures for the most vulnerable groups and aims at reaching workers insufficiently protected by existing systems. A detailed assessment of the integrated social insurance scheme of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India was carried out. At the global level a study is being conducted into the protection of socially excluded women, particularly in the informal sector. A meeting on the subject was held at the ILO in December 1999 in collaboration with the international network on Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) and the Harvard International Institute for Development (HIID), with some financial support from the World Bank.

Operational activities

11. Targeted activities to increase the participation of women in informal sector employment and improve the income and working conditions of poor rural women include vocational and skills training, credit and savings schemes and the identification of viable income-generating activities for women. Activities were also initiated on the social protection of excluded women.
12. In the light of the ongoing feminization of poverty, the ILO has developed and launched a capacity-building programme on gender, poverty and employment based on poverty eradication strategies centred around the triple objectives of –
- enhancing women's access to quality employment opportunities;
 - strengthening their bargaining and negotiating power;
 - providing innovative strategies for social protection, especially for less-organized workers such as those engaged in the informal sector and homeworkers.

Public information, outreach and advocacy

13. The capacity-building programme on gender, poverty and employment has developed a modular package on gender, poverty and employment, which is being adapted to local contexts in Latin America, Africa and Arab States.

(b) *Education and training of women*

14. Over the last two decades, school enrolment rates of girls and women have risen in almost all countries, and female students have demonstrated their ability to perform as well as, and even better than, their male counterparts, but academic performance by itself has not translated into correspondingly equal employment and training opportunities in the labour market. Though education and training can give access to better jobs, it has not been sufficient to break the barriers of occupational segregation or gender disparity in wages. Widening the education and training choices of women, ensuring access to new jobs based on new technologies, facilitating the access of women to workplace-based training and lifelong learning programmes are all key factors for gender equality.

Research and analysis

15. The ILO's *World Employment Report 1998-99* was devoted to training. A special chapter focused on women and training in the global economy.

Operational activities

16. A number of country projects have been implemented to improve women's access to vocational training. In Latin America a regional programme on strengthening technical education and vocational training for low-income women started in 1999, financed by the Inter-American Development Bank. Emphasis has also been placed on educating and training women to develop an entrepreneurial spirit. COOPNET (Human Resource Development for Cooperative Management and Networking) concentrated on gender mainstreaming and, together with the International Cooperative Alliance in Latin America, started work on a manual on cooperative leadership development for women.

Public information and outreach/advocacy

17. A set of *Gender guidelines for employment and skills training in conflict-affected countries* were published in 1999. They address the need for reconstruction and peace-building to be guided by the overall principles of justice and equity in a democratic society.

(c) Women and the economy

18. Economic changes have restructured global labour markets and opened up new opportunities and new challenges. In spite of their increasing participation in the labour force and some positive developments, the majority of women workers continue to face persistent barriers in the labour market. The increase in the quantity of women's employment has not been matched by improvements in the quality of their employment. Women are mainly found in low paid, low- or semi-skilled atypical forms of wage work or self-employment. Often poorly protected, they are more vulnerable to increasing labour market insecurity. Programmes addressing the impact of economic globalization and economic reform on women workers include that on employment promotion for women in the context of economic reform and restructuring, and that on promoting women's employment and participation in social funds. These programmes identify measures to address the specific needs of women workers.

Information collection and database development

19. Under the KILM (Key Indicators of the Labour Market) project³ the ILO is developing an expanded range of key indicators of labour market performance to include new employment trends. Fifteen of those indicators are disaggregated by sex and cover population, employment, unemployment, underemployment and educational attainment. The project collects and disseminates information for the years 1980, 1990 and all subsequent years for which data are available.
20. The International Programme on More and Better Jobs for Women is preparing a database on the equal employment opportunity policies of countries and public and private sector corporations, which will be made available on the Internet and on CD-ROM to ensure widespread dissemination.

³ GB.276/ESP/2.

Research and analysis

21. Building on a ten-year programme on home work in South-East Asia, an action-oriented research programme on homeworkers was launched by the ILO. A regional technical workshop was held in Chile in May 1999, based on a series of case studies of Latin American countries. The programme continues to support information exchanges between experts on emerging trends and new profiles of homeworkers.
22. The International Programme on More and Better Jobs for Women, in collaboration with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), gathered information on what trade unions are doing to promote gender equality. A preliminary report was presented in May 1999, and a manual on good practices is being prepared. Research on employment policies affecting older women workers and women workers in export processing zones has also been undertaken.
23. Activities related to the use of appropriate methodology to improve working conditions in small enterprises have been carried out in various regions. The WISE methodology is adapted to small enterprises, the WIND methodology is designed to assist men and women in small-scale farming households, and the WIDE methodology links working conditions and enterprise development to address the informal sector and micro-enterprises.
24. Gender-oriented studies on the impact of the financial crisis have been undertaken in Indonesia, Thailand and the Republic of Korea.

Operational activities

25. Training and awareness-raising seminars have been organized to enhance the capacity of constituents to promote more and better jobs for women. Targeted activities have focused on improving working conditions and industrial relations for women workers.
26. National action plans were formulated in several countries under the International Programme on More and Better Jobs for Women. They identify priority areas for legislative reform, and employment promotion and social protection measures. The programme has begun implementing national action plans in Estonia and Mexico. With growing donor support, technical cooperation activities are also commencing in Pakistan, Bangladesh, the United Republic of Tanzania and the Mekong subregion. Some of these activities are aimed at ensuring that women's productive employment leads to the reduction of child labour, combating the trafficking of children and women into exploitative forms of labour, and bringing overall improvements in family welfare and poverty eradication.
27. A subregional project in Central America on organizing women workers in export processing zones started in late 1998, aimed at improving working and living conditions in this sector.
28. The tripartite task force created in the United Republic of Tanzania in 1996 was formalized into a national forum on gender, labour and employment issues by the Ministry of Labour in January 1998.
29. In Côte d'Ivoire the national policy workshop on employment, gender and economic reform, held in November 1998, led to the adoption of an Action Plan to be used as a reference for the preparation of the central planning budgetary document for government ministries.

- 30.** The International Small Enterprise Programme (ISEP) was launched in 1998 to assist policy-makers, employers' and workers' organizations and small enterprise support organizations in the design and implementation of integrated, cost-effective enterprise development programmes aimed at the creation of sustainable jobs in micro and small enterprises in both the formal and informal sectors. In the area of support for women entrepreneurs, services were provided to improve the design and effectiveness of women's enterprise development programmes in Arab countries and in African and European countries emerging from conflict.
- 31.** Tripartite commissions on gender equality in the world of work were set up in the four MERCOSUR countries and Chile. The commissions act as advocates in their own institutions as well as national advisory bodies on gender and employment issues.
- 32.** The challenges posed by the HIV/AIDS pandemic were discussed at a Regional African Tripartite Workshop held in Windhoek, Namibia, in October 1999. A draft Platform of Action was adopted,⁴ which emphasizes the need for prevention and the protection of men, women and children. It refers to two gender-specific areas for action: (i) the economic, social and political empowerment of women in order to reduce their vulnerability; and (ii) the transformation of gender roles, norms and social structures.

Public information, outreach and advocacy

- 33.** The following publications were issued:
- *Gender and jobs: Sex segregation of occupations in the world*, Richard Anker, ILO, Geneva, 1998.
 - *Gender equality and occupational segregation in Nordic labour markets*, Helinä Melkas and Richard Anker, ILO, Geneva, 1998.
 - *The sex sector – The economic and social bases of prostitution in South-East Asia*, edited by Lin Lean Lim, ILO, Geneva, 1998.
 - *Gender sensitization package for cooperative leaders*, ILO, 1998, Geneva.
 - *As one employer to another ... What's all this about EQUALITY* (set of guidelines).

(d) Women in power and decision-making

- 34.** More new opportunities have been opened for qualified women to occupy lower and middle-level management posts. Yet inherent discrimination exists in the organizational structures and processes of enterprises, as well as in society, which prevent them from reaching the top positions. The nature of women's career paths is a major factor blocking their progress, as well as the lack of access to the necessary networks and the need to harmonize career and family responsibilities. Women's limited access to management jobs is largely a reflection of labour market gender inequalities at all levels and in all sectors.

⁴ GB.277/4.

Operational activities

35. The programme on women in management in Africa focused on providing women with adequate skills to become efficient managers. Emphasis is also placed on promoting union organization of women. A *Women in Management* training manual has been developed.
36. In December 1997 a tripartite meeting was held entitled “Breaking through the Glass Ceiling: Women in Management”.⁵ It focused on the professional and financial services sector, but reached conclusions with wider relevance in terms of career development and the promotion of gender equality policies.

Public information, outreach and advocacy

37. The 1997 report on “Breaking through the Glass Ceiling: Women in Management” has been updated and published as a book for *Women 2000*.

(e) Human rights of women

38. The ILO Conventions concerning gender-specific issues have a long history. From the 1950s onwards standards concerning women workers have evolved from protective Conventions to others addressing equality concerns. The Report of the Director-General *Decent work* points to three priorities for the ILO in the field of human rights and work: the promotion of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, increased efforts to eliminate child labour, and renewed work on standards.

Information collection and database development

39. The Follow-up on the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, promotional in nature, provides a new avenue for the flow of information on the rights and principles enshrined in the seven fundamental ILO Conventions, including equality of opportunity and treatment in employment and equal pay for work of equal value.

Research and analysis

40. The ILO has implemented programmes to combat discrimination against migrant workers. Local studies were undertaken to measure the degree of discrimination in different countries, followed by national meetings to study the research findings and their implications for policy. These studies included a gender dimension.

Operational activities

41. As regards the promotion of democracy, a number of activities were undertaken to support employers’ and workers’ organizations and strengthen the understanding of fundamental workers’ rights, such as freedom of association and collective bargaining.
42. The project on training and information dissemination on women workers’ rights, initiated in 1996 and completed in 1999, operated in ten countries (China, Egypt, Hungary, Mali, India, El Salvador, Suriname, Ukraine, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe). The outputs included the establishment of national tripartite steering committees, a network of gender resource persons among ILO constituents, and the design and implementation of joint action plans

⁵ GB.271/STM/4.

to promote women workers' rights and the principle of equality of opportunity and treatment for women.

Public information, outreach and advocacy

43. The ILO's training package on women workers' rights has been translated into various national and local languages and adapted to specific national conditions.

(f) *Women and the environment*

44. Working conditions and the working environment are sources of hazards for both men and women. The different response of men and women workers to health and environmental hazards is essentially due to work-related risks in specific types of work and the multiple roles they play in society. In general, working women undertake tasks with a lower risk of occupational accidents, but they are more exposed to specific health risks (for example, exposure to pesticides in agriculture and chemicals in micro-electronic industries).

Operational activities

45. Emphasis is placed on safety in hazardous occupations, the fight against occupational diseases, and improving the working environment. Various national and industry-level activities are aimed at improving working conditions and productivity in small and medium-sized enterprises in branches of activity where women workers predominate. Activities such as awareness-raising, training-of-trainers courses and industry-level workshops for entrepreneurs were carried out in Asia (Mongolia and the Philippines), Africa (Ghana, Mauritius, Nigeria, Seychelles, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda) and Central and South America (Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Haiti and Uruguay). A manual for entrepreneurs in the garment industry was finalized and is being used by employers' organizations, productivity centres, training institutions and government agencies.

(g) *The girl child*

46. Working girls deserve special attention, as they are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse and are more likely to be denied the right to education. The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) has carried out projects targeting girls in bonded labour, prostitution, domestic work and manufacturing. IPEC's goal is not just the removal of individual children from work in which they are exploited, but the long-term goal that will be achieved when new generations of children are effectively prevented from entering the labour market.

Operational activities

47. IPEC direct action programmes target the children and their families in order to prevent the problem and reintegrate victims. They cover advocacy campaigns as well as capacity building by strengthening: (i) legislation and enforcement; (ii) research and information dissemination; and (iii) country coordination and networking. In pursuing strategic priorities at the national level, worldwide advocacy against child labour to mobilize and coordinate support for change remains an important element of the IPEC programme.

2. *The International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin*

48. The Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Programme of the Turin Centre covered training activities targeted at groups of women and men from among ILO constituents, as well as representatives of political bodies and civil society at large,

including NGOs, academia and the media. All regions were targeted, mainly with a national or subregional focus. Priority was given to the following:

- human rights of women;
- policies and strategies for women entrepreneurship;
- capacity building on gender equality, poverty eradication and employment promotion;
- strengthening institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women.

3. Contributions to UN bodies

Good practices in gender mainstreaming

- 49.** A number of good practices have been identified in the above programmes and projects at the national and regional levels. A number have been submitted to the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality for inclusion in its database. These concern mainstreaming gender in national employment policies – the case of the tripartite task force in the United Republic of Tanzania; a tripartite programme for the promotion of equal opportunity at work in the MERCOSUR countries and Chile; homeworkers in the global economy; and economic reform, employment and gender.

Technical input for UN publications

- 50.** In addition to the above programmes and activities, the ILO also made substantive contributions to the *World survey on the role of women in development: Globalization, gender and work*, the main background document for *Women 2000*. The main thrust of its input was that while some women have benefited from greater labour market opportunities and increased economic autonomy, many have been the victims of change. Women continue to be over-represented in the least protected sectors of the economy and the growth of female-headed households means that the insecurity of women's employment affects children and other dependants. The gender inequality inherent in existing labour market institutions is reflected in the persistence of occupational segregation, gender wage gaps and the "glass ceiling" phenomenon. At the same time, new challenges need to be addressed. The structure of production and the notion of work itself are changing, and household profiles are diversifying. Enterprises need greater flexibility, but at the same time workers need greater autonomy and security. Balancing family demands and paid work puts pressure on both men and women.

- 51.** Priority areas for future action should aim at eliminating the persistent gap between the de jure achievement of equality for women and the de facto results of economic policies, legislative measures and labour market outcomes by –

- improving the employability of women throughout their lives and widening their access to income;
- reconciling work and family responsibilities, including encouraging further ratifications of the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156);
- ensuring a safe and decent working environment;
- increasing the protection of women and families against growing insecurity;

- developing gender-sensitive tools to monitor and evaluate progress.

C. Institutional and financial arrangements

52. In the ILO's Programme and Budget for 2000-01, its first strategic budget, and in the Director-General's Report *Decent work*, gender has been identified as cutting across the four strategic objectives of promoting fundamental principles and rights at work; creating greater employment and income opportunities for women and men; enhancing the coverage and effectiveness of social protection; and strengthening social dialogue. Tangible progress has been made in the following areas.
53. *Enhanced commitment to gender issues at the highest political level.* Soon after taking office, in his speech on 8 March 1999 the Director-General pledged a strong commitment to gender equality and expressed his intention to give high priority to "ensuring that the ILO is counted among the most progressive organizations in the field of gender equality". In the light of this strong commitment, efforts are being reinforced in the following three areas:
- *Structure:* All sectors have developed and strengthened institutional arrangements to effectively mainstream gender in their work. Gender issues are being integrated into new and existing mechanisms for programming, implementing, monitoring and evaluation.
 - *Substance:* Efforts are being made to integrate gender equality concerns in all technical work, support and operational activities. This will create new analytical frameworks, enrich the knowledge base and improve the quality of products, services and information. All sectors will apply gender analysis and take explicit action, including gender-specific activities, to promote gender equality.
 - *Representation:* To improve the gender balance of Professional staff within the Organization, a target of 50 per cent women Professionals has been set, to be reached by the year 2010. Career development opportunities for General Service staff will be improved and specific measures taken to create a family friendly working environment. The new Office structure already shows an improvement in gender balance at the Directorate level.
54. This process of *policy formulation and strategic planning* was considerably and visibly strengthened by the issue of an internal circular on gender equality and mainstreaming in the International Labour Office (Circular No. 564) in December 1999 and the approval of the Action Plan on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in the International Labour Office for its implementation.⁶
55. The *International Labour Conference and the Governing Body* also demonstrated enhanced commitment to gender equality concerns. Two informal ministerial meetings were held during the International Labour Conference, in 1998 and 1999 respectively, concerning "More and Better Jobs for Women" and "Let's Make Gender Equality a Reality". During its 276th Session (November 1999) the Governing Body supported the strengthening of the ILO's work on gender issues by approving the increase of financial and human resources devoted to gender included in the Programme and Budget proposals for 2000-01, meaning that more resources have been devoted to gender issues. Gender

⁶ GB.277/5/2.

issues occupy a significant place in all strategic sectors. They are being systematically incorporated into the design and implementation of programmes and projects. By comparison with the 1998-99 biennium, the resources earmarked for such activities in the technical sectors have grown by 156 per cent. The Bureau for Gender Equality has replaced the former Office of the Special Adviser on Women Workers' Questions and been allocated more resources to cover two additional Professional staff members and extend its gender mainstreaming activities. All the sectors have taken specific measures to facilitate gender mainstreaming and targeted activities to promote gender equality in their respective domains, with senior management assuming the main responsibility for gender mainstreaming. Three additional posts for senior gender specialists have been created in the regions (two in Asia and one in Africa).

56. *Strengthened capacity building for ILO staff and constituents on gender issues.* A series of activities, some of them under the interregional project on "Gender training for ILO staff and constituents" (1994-99), were organized at headquarters and in the field. These activities were aimed at enhancing general awareness and the ability to conduct gender analyses, as well as planning skills in technical areas and strengthening networking arrangements for exchanges of information and experience on gender mainstreaming. Extra resources, amounting to \$180,000, were allocated to capacity-building activities in the second half of 1999. One of the new characteristics of the capacity-building activities for staff carried out in 1999 was that they increasingly covered practical needs for gender analysis in the areas of competence of the participants and the development of tools for gender mainstreaming. More than 1,200 ILO staff have been trained over the last few years. In addition, various technical programmes and projects also set up capacity-building activities for constituents to help them implement more effectively gender mainstreaming and gender-specific activities to promote gender equality. Training on gender issues has been provided to constituents in more than 20 countries in all regions. The experience and lessons learned from these capacity-building activities are being evaluated and consolidated to facilitate exchanges of experience.

III. ILO preparations for *Women 2000*

A. In the regions

57. The preparatory process for *Women 2000* has not been the same in all regions, since some started the process earlier than others. Only in the second half of 1999 did supplementary resources become available to help the regions develop subregional concerns and coordinate preparations for Copenhagen+5 and *Women 2000*.
58. ILO regional offices, MDTs and sectors have contributed to preparatory meetings on *Women 2000* organized by the United Nations regional commissions; specific ILO meetings on *Women 2000* and Copenhagen+5 in some regions; the ILO report being prepared at headquarters; the Briefing Kit on Gender in the World of Work prepared by the Bureau for Gender Equality for *Women 2000* and other purposes thereafter.

Africa

59. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) held the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women (Addis Ababa, 22-26 November 1999). The ILO Regional Office for Africa contributed \$50,000 towards the preparation of the meeting. An ILO regional paper was prepared for the conference. ILO staff, including gender specialists and experts in Harare and Addis Ababa, also contributed short notes on ILO action in their subregions.

Arab States

60. The ILO Office in Beirut organized a Regional Tripartite Consultation on Employment (27-30 September 1999) as part of follow-up on the World Summit for Social Development. Efforts were made to develop synergies between the ILO's preparation for Copenhagen+5 and *Women 2000*. Extra funding was provided to enable some gender experts from the region to participate in the meeting in order to ensure that gender issues were addressed. A session on gender and employment – policy priorities was organized. A special working group met after the tripartite consultation and focused on gender issues in the region. A subregional study was also carried out.

Asia

61. Asia is the only region to have organized an ILO tripartite consultation on *Women 2000* (Manila, 6-8 October 1999), in cooperation with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) of the Philippines. The ILO regional office prepared a report as background material. Technical sessions were devoted to the following themes: (i) globalization, employment, women and the girl child; (ii) women's rights in the world of work; and (iii) power-sharing and partnerships. The major output is a document of "common understanding" comprising 37 points negotiated between and approved by the participants. Copies of the report of the consultation are available on request.

Europe

62. Some national and comparative studies were commissioned through the Budapest and Moscow MDTs. The Gender Bureau participated and provided technical assistance to a preparatory workshop organized by UNIFEM in Budapest for governments and NGO representatives from Central and Eastern Europe.

Latin America

63. A publication of the ILO Regional Office for the Americas, entitled *Panorama Laboral*, regularly reviews the Latin American labour market. In its last issue the situation of women in comparison to that of men was chosen as a special theme. The Regional Office also earmarked some resources to produce regional promotional materials on gender, highlighting the ILO's competence in the field of gender in Latin America and its promotion of gender equality.
64. The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) convened a regional preparatory meeting (Lima, 7-9 February 2000). A substantive ILO report was prepared by the Regional Office. Copies of the report in Spanish are available on request.

B. At headquarters

65. An ILO report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform is being prepared by the Office. Drawing on regional and subregional reports, as well as technical studies by headquarters and the field, the report outlines progress made towards the goals articulated in the Platform relevant to the ILO; identifies gaps and obstacles hindering the achievement of these goals; and brings out emerging trends and issues regarding the situation of women workers in a globalized world. It also identifies priority areas for action. Its main thrust is that achieving decent work for men and women is a strategy that contributes to promoting gender equality and accelerating the implementation of the Beijing Platform. It will incorporate the key points of discussions of the Symposium.

C. Special events to be organized by the ILO during *Women 2000*

66. Two panel discussions will be organized by the ILO during *Women 2000*. The first will concern the empowerment of women and microfinance, to be organized in conjunction with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM); the second will concern the issue of combating poverty through decent jobs and gender equity. A third panel has been proposed on the situation of older women workers.

D. Publications

67. The following publications have been prepared:

- *Gender! A Partnership of Equals* is a briefing kit on gender in the world of work for policy-makers, ILO constituents and ILO staff. The package comprises contributions from officials and collaborators at headquarters and in the field on the gender issues that the ILO addresses in its programmes and activities.
- An updated version of the brochure prepared for the Fourth World Conference on Women.
- *ABC of Women Workers' Rights and Gender Equality*. This guidebook helps understand the legal frameworks and socio-economic developments surrounding gender equality and women workers' rights. It reflects recent trends in national legislation and practice.
- A number of existing ILO publications and working papers in high demand are being updated, translated into other major working languages and reprinted, such as *Gender, Poverty and Employment*, *Gender and Employment Dimensions of Social Funds*, *Gender Guidelines: Employment and skills training in countries in conflict*, the STEP brochure, *Women in Management*, the IPEC briefing kit, with newly added sheets about the girl child, *Working Conditions of Women Workers in EPZs*, *Gender Equality: A guide to collective bargaining*, *Homeworkers* (five studies), and *Telework*.
- The *International Labour Review* devoted its last two issues of 1999 to an examination of *Women, gender and work*. The first (1999/3) concentrates on an analysis of the underlying questions and debates, while the second (1999/4) concentrates on the empirical bases for judging relative positions and trends.
- A book, *A generation of equality: A life-cycle approach to rights and action*, is in preparation. The Beijing Platform for Action reinforced a life-cycle approach that calls for action to address the needs of women from infancy to old age. This is also the approach used by the ILO, as reflected in its strategic objectives, normative instruments and technical programmes.

E. An ILO stand

68. An ILO stand will be set up to display ILO publications and promotional materials on gender during *Women 2000*.

Geneva, 6 March 2000.

