



SIXTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**General status report on ILO action
concerning discrimination in
employment and occupation**

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	1
I. Supervision of the application of standards on discrimination.....	1
Constitutional procedures	1
II. Office activities to promote equality of opportunity and treatment.....	2
III. Gender equality.....	3
IV. Migrant workers.....	7
V. Disabled workers	9
VI. Discrimination and indigenous and tribal peoples.....	10
VII. Discrimination and workers of the occupied Arab territories	12

Introduction

1. The Director-General's campaign, launched in May 1995, to promote the universal ratification of certain fundamental ILO Conventions, has led to increased ratifications and moves towards ratification of the Conventions considered fundamental in the area of discrimination in employment and occupation. These are the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) and the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100). The activities of the Office and its multidisciplinary teams have included the promotion of Conventions Nos. 100 and 111 through workshops, seminars and technical advisory services. These activities have also led to a number of ratifications and moves toward ratification of additional ILO Conventions whose objectives include the prevention of discrimination in employment and occupation on other grounds, such as the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156). The adoption of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up at the 86th Session of the International Labour Conference has also provided additional opportunities for the ILO and its constituents to promote equality of opportunity and treatment in employment and occupation.

I. Supervision of the application of standards on discrimination

2. The Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations continued to review the application of these Conventions at its session in November-December 1999. As in previous years, the Committee's comments reflect concerns with regard to the effective implementation of provisions prohibiting gender-based wage discrimination, discrimination in employment and occupation on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin and employment-related discrimination against workers with family responsibilities. Governments continue to seek the assistance of the Office to overcome obstacles to the ratification of these Conventions, as well as difficulties in implementing the principles contained in them.

Constitutional procedures

3. At its past three sessions (March, June and November 1999) the Governing Body has adopted the reports of committees it established to examine representations submitted under article 24 of the ILO Constitution involving the Conventions referred to above. At its 274th Session (March 1999), the Governing Body adopted the report of the tripartite committee on a representation alleging Bolivia's non-observance of Convention No. 169. At its 275th Session (June 1999) the Governing Body adopted the report of the tripartite committee regarding a representation alleging non-observance by Hungary of, inter alia, Convention No. 111. Lastly, at its 276th Session (November 1999), the Governing Body declared receivable a representation alleging that Colombia has not adopted satisfactory measures for the observance of Convention No. 169. At the same session, the Governing Body adopted the reports of the tripartite committees it had designated to examine the following matters: a representation alleging the non-observance by Bosnia and Herzegovina of Convention No. 111, and a representation alleging the non-application by Mexico of Convention No. 169.

II. Office activities to promote equality of opportunity and treatment

4. In 1999, a number of regional and subregional tripartite activities were carried out to promote ILO standards on equality of opportunity and treatment, including: a subregional seminar for labour court judges on equality in employment (Harare, Zimbabwe, February 1999); a subregional tripartite seminar on national legislation and international labour standards for the Caribbean (Nassau, Bahamas, August 1999); a seminar on international labour standards for lawyers and legal educators (Turin, August 1999); and a subregional seminar on recent trends in employment equality issues for labour courts and tribunals (Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, October 1999). Seminars and workshops were also presented in a number of countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, the Philippines and India. Technical advice was provided on the implementation of Convention No. 100 in response to a request from the Government of India, as well as on the ratification of Convention No. 111 in China. In response to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran's request for technical assistance on the application of Convention No. 111, a mission to that country was carried out by senior labour standards specialists in October-November 1999, which is expected to be followed by subsequent meetings and seminars during 2000. A number of activities promoting the ILO Conventions on equal opportunity and treatment are planned for 2000, including an East African subregional tripartite meeting, a national tripartite seminar in Estonia on the ratification of Convention No. 111, and two further regional seminars in China, both on the ratification of Convention No. 111. In addition, the Office intends to hold a seminar in Venezuela in 2000 to provide technical assistance with regard to that country's anticipated ratification of Convention No. 169.
5. The annual Office report on the activities of the multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) in relation to standards, including those on equality of opportunity and treatment, was submitted to the Committee on Legal Issues and International Labour Standards at the 276th Session of the Governing Body (November 1999), and provides an overview of the work of the MDTs over the past year.¹
6. The Office has recently begun providing technical assistance in the drafting of new legislation on affirmative action for the Government of Fiji.
7. The Office has continued to submit regular written reports and provide oral information on its activities to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and its subsidiary bodies, as well as to the treaty bodies established to monitor the application of United Nations instruments relevant to the ILO's mandate. In 1999 the Office submitted reports on discrimination in employment and occupation to the committees supervising the following treaties: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination; and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Office also participated in the Tenth Meeting of Persons Chairing the Human Rights Treaty Bodies (May 1999) to discuss closer cooperation between the United Nations treaty bodies and the ILO, and in the workshop held in May 1999 for Chairpersons of the UN Treaty Bodies on Gender Integration in the Human Rights System. The Office continued to collaborate in the field of standards with the United Nations, its specialized agencies, and intergovernmental organizations with which the ILO has entered into special arrangements for this purpose.

¹ GB.276/LILS/7.

8. Office publications in 1999 on the subject of discrimination in employment and occupation included the General Survey on migrant workers carried out by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, submitted to the International Labour Conference at its 87th Session (June 1999). Working papers were prepared and presented in Finland and India on equal remuneration for work of equal value. A working paper was presented at an academic conference in Spain on Convention No. 156, "Balancing work and family responsibilities in Europe: The ILO experience". In late 1999, Professor J. Faundez's book, "Affirmative Action: International Perspectives", was released in Spanish. In addition, the Office has completed its case book, "Supplementary case materials for the training of judges and lawyers on equality issues".
9. In the context of follow-up on the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), the ILO has been involved in preparations for the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, entitled *Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century* (New York, June 2000). The Office will also participate in the First Preparatory Committee in May 2000 on the forthcoming World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which is to be held no later than 2001.

III. Gender equality

10. The year 1999 was characterized by a major shift in the Office's approach to the promotion of gender equality. In his statement of 8 March 1999, on the occasion of International Women's Day, the Director-General expressed his strong political commitment to an integrated gender policy. Within the United Nations system, gender mainstreaming has been adopted as the main strategy designed to make gender a cross-cutting issue and an integral part of all programmes, projects and other activities developed by the ILO.
11. As part of the strategy to implement the Director-General's integrated gender policy, the Office of the Special Adviser on Women Workers' Questions was replaced by the Bureau for Gender Equality, which reports direct to the Director-General. The Bureau developed an Office-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in the ILO, adopted in October 1999, which seeks to incorporate gender-sensitive goals and procedures in all areas of the ILO's work. As part of the Plan, a major capacity-building programme for ILO staff at headquarters was carried out in the second half of 1999. The programme's objective was to enhance the staff's commitment to gender equality and to define ways of mainstreaming gender concerns in the specific technical areas covered by each sector. Approximately 300 persons from all sectors of the Office have participated in a series of discussion sessions and workshops. With respect to training for field staff, a regional workshop on "quality of employment in Latin America – new challenges in promoting gender equality in the world of work" was held in Santiago, Chile. The workshop included gender focal points and specialists from the various sectors. The Gender Bureau also upgraded the home page on gender on the ILO's website and established an Intranet site. It also prepared two major publications, which will be published in early 2000: an "ABC of women workers' rights" and a "Briefing kit on gender issues".
12. As regards preparations for the United Nations Special Session on *Women 2000*, the ILO participated in a regional preparatory conference in Africa sponsored by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and organized a major tripartite regional conference in Manila, Philippines. A Governing Body symposium on "Decent Work for Women" will be held during the 277th Session of the Governing Body in March 2000.

13. In the Employment Sector, the Gender Promotion Programme – which includes the International Programme on More and Better Jobs for Women – has been active in supporting the sector's gender experts (located in its different units) through the provision of information, training and a regular consultative forum, with a view to ensuring that all sector activities are gender-sensitive and gender-responsive.
14. The Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) carried out training, advisory services and projects designed to strengthen women's participation in trade unions. Following the successful gender training workshop held in Entebbe, Uganda in 1998 for regional staff of international trade secretariats in Africa, a similar workshop was organized for Asia in Penang, Malaysia. The main objective of the workshop was to provide participants with the necessary skills to integrate gender perspectives and equal opportunities policies into the education programmes, strategies and campaigns of their organizations. Subregional seminars were held in Abidjan and Harare to promote the participation of women in trade unions.
15. The Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) conducted seminars for employers on international labour standards, including those on equality in employment and occupation, in Nepal (January 1999) and India (November 1999). It conducted a seminar in Kenya on women in management (August 1999) and completed a project in Africa and Asia promoting women's participation in private sector activities.
16. With regard to the Education Sector, the Salaried Employees and Professional Workers Branch (TRAVINT) has prepared a report for the Joint Meeting on Lifelong Learning in the Twenty-First Century: The Changing Roles of Educational Personnel (Geneva, 10-14 April 2000). The report focuses on the numbers of women personnel in positions of responsibility in education and trends in feminization in the teaching profession.
17. In 1999 the Conditions of Work Branch (CONDI/T) did preparatory work for the first discussion by the International Labour Conference, in June 1999, of a proposed Convention revising the Maternity Protection Convention (Revised) (No. 103), and its related Recommendation (No. 95), as well as for the second discussion in 2000. CONDI/T is also finalizing a report that includes a major section on work and family policies, in particular regarding the harmonization of work and family concerns, their influence on satisfaction and productivity at work, and the costs and benefits of measures linking work and family responsibilities. In addition, it is carrying out ground work on sexual harassment at the workplace.
18. The International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin continued to conduct a number of training courses and activities both in Turin and in the field which focused specifically on issues relevant to women workers. In 1999, the Centre's regional programme for Africa included a "Gender, Poverty and Employment Seminar for Southern Africa" (Harare) and a seminar on "Capacity-Building Policies and Strategies for Women in Creating Micro-Enterprises" (Turin). The programme for Arab States included a seminar on "Gender, Poverty and Employment Policy Formulation" (Beirut); and on the training of trainers for women's entrepreneurship development (Palestinian Authority and Gaza). The Turin Centre conducted projects on the promotion of female entrepreneurship in Albania, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Romania and Viet Nam. A seminar on international labour standards and women workers' rights was held in Guatemala, and a seminar on strategic planning for the Employment, Gender and Poverty Programme was held in Chile, as well as a tripartite programme for the promotion of equality of opportunity and treatment in employment and occupation.

19. The area offices and multidisciplinary teams have focused on issues of gender equality as part of their general programme on international labour standards. The Harare MDT provided technical advice for gender audits of national legislation being carried out in the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe and training in international labour standards and gender analysis techniques to the 15 task force commissioners for those projects. In November 1999 the Harare MDT held a gender workshop for the Namibian Employment Equity Commission, with technical input from the Area Office in Pretoria. The Harare MDT also organized a Start Your Business workshop for regional women coordinators of the Associated Mineworkers' Union of Zimbabwe.
20. The ILO's Colombo office participated in three studies as part of a joint structural adjustment project with the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), entitled "Employment protection for women in the context of economic reform and structural adjustment". The Office will be assisting the National Committee on Women, which coordinated the project, in planning follow-up action. The Colombo office also adapted a joint publication with the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the "Manual on entrepreneurship development for women: A manual for trainers" to local conditions and translated it into Tamil and Sinhala, as well as a video on successful women entrepreneurs in English, Tamil and Sinhala. The Office facilitated a gender sensitization programme in one of the largest trade unions for plantation workers, providing leadership training for women in trade unions and awareness training for men and women workers. The programme also covered training to increase the number of women in decision-making positions in trade unions and to improve working conditions for women in plantations. It funded workshops conducted by workers' and employers' organizations on gender sensitization and women's rights in the workplace.
21. The Northern Africa multidisciplinary team's project on gender and employment in the context of economic reform in Egypt is aimed at improving the position of women in the Egyptian labour market. The project is expected to include policy-makers, government agencies, NGOs, international organizations, scholars, and media professionals. During a workshop in May or June 2000, this group will prepare an action plan to enable women to take advantage of the opportunities created by the new economic environment in Egypt, while mitigating its adverse effects.
22. The ILO's Ankara office provided assistance to the State Statistics Institute of Turkey (SIS) in issuing labour statistics on groups subject to discrimination, including women workers and working children. That office has also given technical assistance to the SIS in conducting employment and wage structure surveys within the framework of the project, and collecting and publishing information on gender-based discrimination in employment and occupation obtained from the surveys.
23. The ILO Area Office in Dar es Salaam has focused on the situation of women workers through three projects carried out in collaboration with ILO constituents. The projects are designed to build women's organizational capacity, redress gender-based differences generated by structural adjustment measures, and address specific sectoral issues relevant to women workers. The first project, a women's small business development project funded by the Netherlands, was initiated in 1990 to assist poor rural women in the Mufindi district, Iringa region, of United Republic of Tanzania. A second project follows up on the national plan of action to promote women's employment in the context of structural adjustment projects. Technical activities undertaken during this project include a review of Tanzanian labour laws, followed by tripartite workshops to discuss the results of the review. The third project targets women workers in the sugar sector in United Republic of Tanzania.

- 24.** The ILO Manila Area Office is currently engaged in an ongoing trade union pilot project on violence against women (VAW), including activities on sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace and domestic violence. The pilot project will gather data to determine the nature and extent of the violence affecting women within the identified factories, develop user-friendly educational materials aimed at women workers, promote changes in attitudes toward VAW through awareness-raising activities among the workers, integrate concerns regarding VAW into union activities, and provide direct services, including counselling and crisis intervention. It is anticipated that lessons learned from the project will be implemented at the national level.
- 25.** The Yaoundé MDT has continued to provide advisory services to organizations of female entrepreneurs and women workers' organizations. A subregional tripartite workshop brought together eight countries in the subregion to promote the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, placing special emphasis on problems specific to girl children, particularly the trafficking in girl children for employment as domestic workers. The Yaoundé MDT undertook a review of the situation in ten countries in Central Africa with regard to training, employment, conditions of work and other factors relevant to discrimination. As a result, a subregional database is being established for use by the countries in the region.
- 26.** The Caribbean subregional tripartite seminar on recent trends in employment equality issues for labour courts and tribunals, held in Port-of-Spain in October 1999, explored specific developments and issues concerning sexual harassment, HIV/AIDS discrimination, and equal pay for work of equal value, promoting the application of relevant ILO principles and standards. The tripartite subregional seminar on national legislation and international labour standards in the Caribbean, held in the Bahamas in August 1999, included presentations and discussions on discrimination, equal remuneration, migrant workers, disabled workers, and indigenous and tribal peoples. National seminars were also held in Suriname and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on promoting equality and gender issues for trade unions.
- 27.** The MDT in Dakar carried out a number of activities aimed at female trade union leaders in Senegal, including a seminar for 30 trade union leaders to familiarize them with national legislation and international labour standards relevant to women's issues; and a workshop with female trade union leaders and their male counterparts which focused on strategies to eliminate gender-based discrimination. A gender sensitization and training programme for women workers affiliated to the Union Syndicale des Travailleurs de Guinée (USTG) was carried out in Guinea, training 252 trade unionists throughout the country in national and international standards protecting women workers' rights. The Dakar MDT also conducted workshops for human resource managers and trade union leaders to raise awareness of the rights of women workers.
- 28.** The Central European multidisciplinary team (CEET) carried out training seminars on women workers' rights in Hungary and Ukraine, as well as training sessions on women workers' rights and ILO Conventions, in cooperation with international trade secretariats, aimed at increasing women's participation in trade unions. The CEET conducted a regional workshop on equality for trade union educators and trade union officials in cooperation with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the European Trade Union Council (ETUCO) in March 1999. It carried out a series of two-day national tripartite seminars in Moldova, Romania and Slovakia on the situation of women in the labour market, organized in conjunction with the national labour ministries of those countries. In cooperation with the Gender Bureau, the CEET also conducted country studies regarding the situation of women in the labour market in Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania.

29. The South Asia multidisciplinary advisory team (SAAT) participated in a regional gender task force to document national follow-up on the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing). It participated in a national tripartite workshop on the application of Convention No. 100 (Delhi, June 1999). As follow-up on one of the recommendations of the workshop, a study has been conducted on pay differentials (and other aspects of gender inequality) in the banking and finance sector. SAAT also provided technical advice for an Indian national trade union campaign on women workers in the fish-processing industry. It conducted workshops promoting the participation of women workers in leadership positions in trade unions (Chittagong, August 1999 and New Delhi, September 1999).
30. The Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations concluded a General Survey on Migrant Workers at its November-December 1999 session, which was discussed by the Committee on the Application of Standards of the International Labour Conference in June 1999. The Conference Committee endorsed the importance of the ILO's activities in this area and agreed with the Committee of Experts that the Governing Body and the Conference should examine the need to revise existing ILO standards on the subject. A proposal in this regard is before the Governing Body at its present session.

IV. Migrant workers

31. The ILO's activities in regard to international migration for employment focus on providing support to migrant-sending and migrant-receiving countries in order to help them deal with current policy concerns, cooperate in the recruitment and return of migrant workers and improve protection for migrant workers and their family members, including protection from discrimination in employment and occupation. In recognition of the growing significance of migration issues in virtually every region of the world, the Director-General re-established the Migration for Employment Branch (MIGRANT) in October 1999 to continue to address the problems created by the increased movement of workers across national boundaries. MIGRANT continues to prepare for the ILO High-Level Meeting on Achieving Equality in Employment for (Im)Migrant Workers (Geneva, 8-11 March 2000), under the programme of ILO seminars, which will assess the seven-year ILO project on "combating discrimination against migrant and ethnic minority workers" conducted in Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. As a result of the project, the Office will prepare an overview of anti-discrimination and equality measures taken by governments and by employers' and workers' organizations, which will be presented at the forthcoming World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001.
32. The Office has responded to several requests for technical assistance and specialized advice on the formulation of national migration policies and programmes and the promotion of new national frameworks for the prevention of discrimination against migrant workers. Requests have also been received from Kyrgyzstan for technical assistance to strengthen its migration policy and administration and for assistance in the establishment of an improved statistical database for the Bishkek Migration Centre. Similar requests have been received from Kazakhstan and South Africa, and missions to those countries are planned in the current year. In Israel, technical support was provided to the Confederation of Israeli Trade Unions (HISTADRUT), in establishing a centre to assist foreign workers. In addition, a regional meeting convened by the Beirut office to follow up on the World Summit for Social Development addressed the problem of the treatment of migrant workers, which was discussed among labour-sending and labour-receiving countries of the Arab region. The Office also dispatched a mission to Costa Rica in

November 1999 to provide technical advice on how the country might handle the question of providing more secure status to the many thousands of migrant workers who entered the country in the wake of Hurricane Mitch the previous year.

- 33.** The Office participated in the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and has made initial contributions to the work of the recently appointed UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants. The Office joined in June 1999 with the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in co-sponsoring the International Migration Policy Programme, an inter-agency programme providing training, capacity building and networking for senior government migration managers in various regions. The ongoing Informal Network on Foreign Labour in Central and Eastern Europe, launched in 1996 and supported by the Luxembourg Government, completed a regional study focusing on improving the protection of rights of migrants workers from CEE/CIS countries in the European Union. The project also addressed the equal treatment of migrant workers and the position of nationals of the former USSR and its successor States. In addition, a country case study of Hungary examined how the country might adjust its migration laws and regulations to comply with European Union requirements on the free movement of persons.
- 34.** The Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) held an Asia-Pacific regional symposium for trade union organizations on migrant workers in Malaysia. The symposium highlighted problems regarding the employment and working conditions of migrant workers; raised awareness of existing laws and practices and relevant ILO Conventions and Recommendations; and assisted trade unions in developing policies, strategies and educational activities to protect migrant workers.
- 35.** In February 1999 the ILO Manila Area Office completed a technical cooperation programme on "Entrepreneurial development: Support for the reintegration of migrant workers and their families". The project targeted Filipino overseas workers and its goals included creating a sustainable livelihood for such workers, reintegrating them into the national economy and progressively reducing the migration for employment of women and other vulnerable groups overseas.
- 36.** The ILO's Colombo Area Office funded a programme connected to the Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau (SLFBE) to train trainers in counselling skills. The SLFBE, through its own and other private training centres, attempts to ensure that all women migrant workers that leave Sri Lanka are given basic training in needed skills.
- 37.** The Harare MDT provided technical assistance in organizing and conducting the Southern Africa subregional seminar on migrant labour standards for ten African countries (Zimbabwe, March 1999). It also prepared technical presentations for a course on international migration law and policy, organized by Zimbabwe government officials.
- 38.** Following a request from the Indonesian Government, two joint Ministry of Manpower-ILO workshops were held in Jakarta in the second half of 1998 to consider policy options on protection for migrant workers, how to promote responsible recruitment agents and what kinds of complaints procedures might be appropriate for migrants. The MDT in Manila rendered drafting assistance to the staff of the Ministry throughout 1999 in drafting a special Act on Migrant Workers and participated in two provincial seminars organized by the Ministry to obtain local feedback on protection questions in major regions of emigration.

39. The South Asia multidisciplinary advisory team (SAAT) provided technical advice on the implications of the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) in Sri Lanka. It organized a number of seminars in Indonesia to discuss proposals for improving existing legislation on migrant workers.
40. The ILO Warsaw office organized a regional seminar on migration statistics and the informal network on foreign labour, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of Poland (Warsaw, 1999). CEET carried out a tripartite seminar on the employment and free movement of workers in the context of Poland's accession to the European Union (Nicosia, October 1999).

V. Disabled workers

41. The ILO's objectives include the promotion of employment for persons with disabilities, particularly in an environment characterized by global competition and the deregulation of labour markets. The Vocational Rehabilitation Branch (REHAB) carried out a technical cooperation project in seven Caribbean countries aimed at guaranteeing equal access for persons with disabilities to ordinary vocational training institutions. In Namibia and Morocco the ILO, UNESCO and WHO are carrying out community-based rehabilitation projects to promote equal opportunities and treatment for disabled persons located in rural and small urban areas. The ILO international research project on job retention and return to work strategies for disabled workers published its findings and recommendations in "Proceedings of the International Symposium on Job Retention and Return to Work Strategies for Disabled Workers" (February 1999). The project's findings have been included in the drafting of the ILO Code of practice on the management of disability and related issues in the workplace, in progress since February 1999. Case studies detailing the effective disability management practices now practised in enterprises were developed during 1999 for inclusion in the code, which will be sent out for review by the ILO's social partners in 2000.
42. In 1999, the Vocational Rehabilitation Branch (REHAB) conducted work on mental health issues at the workplace; the vocational rehabilitation of people with mental disabilities; and employer practices that help contain disability costs and promote mental health. It carried out five country situation analyses on mental health in the workplace, focusing on depression, a clinical diagnosis which the World Health Organization (WHO) has identified as the primary cause of mental disability worldwide. These analyses will be published in the first half of 2000.
43. The Yaoundé MDT has worked on the issue of discrimination against disabled workers on two levels. First, it has supported the organizational efforts of disabled persons themselves, notably to facilitate the establishment of the Central African Federation of Associations for the promotion and protection of the rights of handicapped persons (FACAPH) at the subregional level. Secondly, it has provided assistance for the development of strategies for the African Decade of Handicapped Persons (officially launched on 3 December 1999). The Yaoundé MDT has established programmes specifically directed at disabled persons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Angola, where the programme targets war-disabled persons. In collaboration with UNICEF, the Office is developing programmes to promote the reintegration into social and economic life of young persons in the Congo and Burundi who are considered disabled due to their having undergone psychological and physical trauma as a result of war, drug addiction and sexual abuse. In January 2000, the ILO launched a pilot project in Bosnia and Herzegovina to reintegrate war-disabled persons into the labour market. A similar effort is under examination in Sierra Leone.

44. The Colombo office participated in a workshop held in collaboration with the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) to explore the feasibility of establishing an employer network on disability in Sri Lanka. The network would act as a link between the various interested parties, including the Ministry of Social Services – whose responsibilities include vocational rehabilitation, non-governmental organizations – and the Ministry of Vocational Training, the media and the business community, in order to provide market-oriented training opportunities and secure employment for disabled persons.

VI. Discrimination and indigenous and tribal peoples

45. The Office continued to promote the ratification of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) as well as the effective application of Convention No. 169 and the earlier Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, 1957 (No. 107), which is still in force in a number of countries. The technical cooperation project financed by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), set up to promote ILO policy on indigenous and tribal peoples within the framework of these standards, also continued its activities at the national, subregional and international levels. Following the UN General Assembly's proclamation of 1994-2004 as the *International Decade of the World's Indigenous People*, the Office has continued to contribute to the stated goals of the Decade by organizing activities to promote the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples.
46. In Asia, a second phase of cooperation with the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Highland People's Development (IMC), is under way following a series of training workshops on development management held in Cambodia during 1998. In India, follow-up activities to the 1997-98 workshops on the empowerment of tribal women in Andhra Pradesh took place between March and September 1999. This second phase of workshops addressed legal rights, access to natural resources, and indigenous knowledge systems. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the project has been supervising a Policy Study on Ethnic Minorities in Rural Development, which is an integral component of a four-part study on rural development – part of Lao's National Rural Development Programme. In Thailand, following a workshop on information exchange on development experiences with highland peoples in Chiang Mai, discussions are under way regarding a national policy workshop as part of an ongoing process of cooperation with the Government to create an institutional framework for dialogue and cooperation between indigenous and tribal peoples and the Thai Government. In Viet Nam, the project's counterpart is the governmental Committee for Ethnic Minorities in Mountainous Areas (CEMMA), which is developing a coordinated approach to indigenous and tribal peoples' socio-economic development.
47. A fact-finding mission to Cameroon in July 1999 evaluated the situation faced by Pygmy forest workers. A follow-up needs assessment mission, combining capacity-building and awareness-raising activities, took place in September, in collaboration with the Confédération syndicale de travailleurs du Cameroun and the Cameroon Government. In Kenya, an Eastern African Indigenous Women's Conference was held in August 1999 as a collaborative arrangement between the project and the African Indigenous Women's Organization (AIWO). In Namibia, the project's focus has been on community-based development with a view to strengthening and promoting traditional economies and self-reliance. In South Africa, a second Conference on the Constitutional Accommodation of Vulnerable Indigenous Communities in South Africa, supported by the project, was held during March 1999. The project has also carried out a needs assessment study, in collaboration with the South African San Institute (SASI) and the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC). Following a Conference on Indigenous Peoples of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa, which took place in Arusha, the United Republic

of Tanzania during January 1999, the project is planning a series of workshops at the village level in order to introduce indigenous and tribal people in rural areas to ILO Convention No. 169. During September, a training course on international human rights and policy process, organized by the Saami Council in collaboration with the European Union and the Pastoralist Indigenous NGOs (PINGOS) Forum, took place in Arusha, whose aim was to provide indigenous and tribal participants with sufficient knowledge of international human rights mechanisms to assist them in promoting and protecting their rights.

48. The project is currently completing the “Basic Guide to Convention No. 169”, intended for use at the community level. Translations of the Convention itself into Kiswahili, Amazigh, Lao and Thai are also forthcoming. A “Directory of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples’ Organizations” has been developed to strengthen networking and cooperation with such organizations. A publication on traditional occupations is nearing completion. Other project publications focus on recent activities in Cambodia, India, Lao People’s Democratic Republic and South Africa.
49. In August 1999, following the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, an Indigenous-to-Indigenous Exchange was undertaken in the form of a study tour, facilitating capacity building and information exchange between selected indigenous representatives. The aim of the “indigenous-to-indigenous” approach is to facilitate and strengthen cooperation between indigenous peoples of different regions.
50. The Interregional programme to support self-reliance of indigenous and tribal communities through cooperatives and self-help organizations (INDISCO) continued its activities in Asia, Africa and Central America. In 1999, literacy training courses were organized for 1,500 indigenous and tribal persons in their local languages in India, the Philippines, Viet Nam, Thailand, Namibia and Belize. Culturally adapted training curricula were developed for indigenous children through two INDISCO projects in Belize and Thailand. The curricula will be tested in schools in 2000. Specific technical training on gender, small enterprise and cooperative management, environmental impact assessment and indigenous culture and gender was provided through 20 INDISCO projects attended by 650 participants. Two new projects were launched in 1999 in Namibia (the Bushmen/San) and in the United Republic of Tanzania (the Maasai). Participatory project formulation exercises were completed in Cameroon and Lao People’s Democratic Republic, and these new projects will start in 2000. The INDISCO programme enters its second phase in 2000 which will run for four years, during which priority will be placed on strengthening indigenous and tribal peoples’ organizations in project management and the dissemination of best practices for policy improvement.
51. INDISCO has developed a project for the benefit of the Pygmies of Cameroon, launched by a workshop held in February 1999 in Yaoundé, which should get under way during 2000. The Manila Area Office participated in an INDISCO project, “Support to management of ancestral domains of indigenous communities of the Philippines”, completed in December 1999. This multi-bilateral venture project aimed at building the capacity of the indigenous communities of Benguet, Bukidnon and Sarangani to manage effectively their own community development plans and to support their indigenous institutions and culture.

VII. Discrimination and workers of the occupied Arab territories

52. As in previous years, the Office has continued to examine the situation of workers in the complex and sensitive socio-political context of the occupied Arab territories. At the 87th Session (June 1999) of the International Labour Conference the Director-General presented the 22nd report on the situation of workers of the occupied territories. The report was based on the findings of two missions. The first mission sent by the Director-General visited Israel and the occupied Arab territories, gathering information on the employment conditions of workers in the occupied Arab territories. In accordance with usual practice in previous years, the second mission visited the Syrian Arab Republic, holding consultations with the government authorities and the employers' and workers' organizations concerned.
53. The report highlighted recent developments with respect to the situation of Palestinians working in Israel, as well as workers in the Golan. As regards the former, the report documented the obstacles to equality of opportunity and treatment that Palestinian workers face with respect to access to employment within the occupied territories in Israel and in settlements. The report reflected concerns that the security measures, including the closure of the occupied territories, made it difficult for Palestinians to cross the border into Israel for employment. Other problems experienced by the Palestinian workers included lack of clarity in the applicable minimum wage legislation, frequent incidents of non-payment of wages and the need to use intermediaries to obtain work permits. The security measures noted have impeded the development of the Palestinian employers' industrial and commercial activities and discouraged the import and export trade and, according to officials of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Occupied Territories (UNSCO) and other United Nations organizations in the field, have hindered implementation of the technical cooperation projects being carried out to help the Palestinian economy become self-sustaining.
54. Reference was also made in the report to the working and living conditions of Syrian Arab citizens of the occupied Syrian Golan, who are subject to discrimination with regard to wages, insurance and unjustified dismissal from employment.
55. The report indicated that, according to the Israeli authorities, close relations had developed over the past few years between the Israeli and Palestinian authorities in the field of labour and employment, and that it was current Israeli policy to give priority to Palestinians over foreign workers in the Israeli labour market. In addition, according to the Israeli authorities, the number of permits issued allowing merchants and traders from the occupied territories to do business in Israel had more than doubled in 1998 and was still on the rise. The report also stated that the decline in the Palestinian economy appears to have come to a halt, and current trends suggest that income per capita may be on the increase for the first time in five years. A comparison between the census of establishments in the occupied territories conducted in 1994-95 and that conducted in 1997 suggests that economic activity and employment within the occupied territories increased significantly during this period. While the overall numbers of persons employed in such establishments increased by 25 per cent, the most significant increase was seen in the number of women workers, which increased by almost 58 per cent.
56. The ILO has undertaken a number of activities to improve the living and working conditions of people in the occupied territories. In the 1998-99 biennium, the Office's regional programme for the Arab States focused on assisting the countries and territories concerned with the peace process in the subregion, particularly in the West Bank and Gaza. The priorities continue to be capacity building for officials responsible for labour and employment in the subregion, as well as for the representatives of the social partners.

In 1999, the ILO continued to execute a significant technical assistance programme in the West Bank, Gaza and the Palestinian territories, totalling over US\$10 million. Future technical assistance will continue to focus on workers' rights, capacity building, employment creation, promotion of social dialogue, social protections and tripartism.

- 57.** The Director-General is examining the preparation of the report on this subject to be submitted to the International Labour Conference in June 2000.

Geneva, 18 February 2000.