



#### FOURTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

## **The ILO's contribution to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+10)**

### **Introduction**

1. The General Assembly of the United Nations, at its 55th session,<sup>1</sup> decided to organize a ten-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) at the summit level to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable development. It will be called the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the Commission on Sustainable Development will act as the preparatory committee for the Summit to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa. The General Assembly at its 56th session<sup>2</sup> decided that the Summit should be held from 26 August to 4 September 2002, with the participation of Heads of State and Government during the period 2-4 September.
2. The General Assembly decided that: the review should focus on the identification of accomplishments and areas where further efforts are needed to implement Agenda 21 and other results of the UNCED Conference; should address, within the framework of Agenda 21, new challenges and opportunities; and should result in renewed political commitment and support for sustainable development. The General Assembly further decided that the Summit should ensure a balance between economic development, social development and environmental protection, as these are independent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. The General Assembly reaffirmed that Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Sustainable Development should not be renegotiated, but that the Summit should focus on identifying measures to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 21.
3. The aim of this document is to briefly inform the Governing Body about the preparatory process for the Summit and the ILO's contribution to this process. It will also indicate some of the key areas in which the ILO has been contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21 and to sustainable development that the Governing Body may wish to consider.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly resolution 55/199.

<sup>2</sup> A/C.2/56/1.71 adopted 12 December 2001.

The outcome of such a discussion would provide guidance for the ILO's further contribution to the WSSD.

## Preparatory process

4. The Commission on Sustainable Development, acting as the preparatory committee, held its First Session in April-May 2001, with three additional sessions scheduled. The Second Session (New York, 28 January-8 February 2002) undertook a comprehensive review and assessment of progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21. At its Third Session (New York, 25 March-5 April 2002), it is expected to agree on the text of the document containing the results of the review and assessment, as well as conclusions and recommendations for further action. At its Fourth Session, to be held at the ministerial level (Indonesia, 27 May-7 June 2002), the preparatory committee will prepare a concise and focused document that should emphasize the need for a global partnership to achieve the objectives of sustainable development, reconfirm the need for an integrated and strategically focused approach to the implementation of Agenda 21, and address the main challenges and opportunities faced by the international community. The document submitted for further consideration by the Summit should reinvigorate, at the highest political level, the global commitment to a North/South partnership and a higher level of international solidarity and to the accelerated implementation of Agenda 21 and the promotion of sustainable development.
5. In addition to the work of the WSSD preparatory committee, however, there has been a very extensive series of meetings, conferences and special preparatory review initiatives at local, national, regional and international levels that will feed directly into the WSSD preparatory process. Of particular note are the five regional preparatory meetings, held between September and November 2001. The UN Secretariat has prepared a summary/compilation of the outcomes of the meetings that notes that almost all have underlined five priority issues: (1) the international community should concentrate on the expeditious implementation of Agenda 21; (2) the importance of the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, i.e. economic development, social development and environmental protection; (3) new factors like globalization should be addressed to promote equity and inclusion; (4) the Summit should focus on certain key areas and deliverables that accelerate progress towards the realization of the goals of sustainable development especially by building on the goals agreed at various United Nations conference/meetings, and particularly the Millennium Summit goals; and (5) the need to strengthen international institutional arrangements for sustainable development.<sup>3</sup>
6. Many preparatory activities and initiatives also have been carried out at the national level, including the establishment of national preparatory committees in many countries that have prepared national reports on the implementation of Agenda 21. The General Assembly encouraged the active involvement of all government agencies responsible for economic development, social development and environmental protection to provide coordinated inputs and contributions to the preparatory process. Major groups (including business and industry and workers and trade unions) have also been encouraged to participate in the preparation of the national reports.
7. One of the interesting initiatives of the Commission on Sustainable Development has been the introduction of multi-stakeholder dialogue segments as a formal component of their

<sup>3</sup> UN "Priorities for WSSD – An overview of the regional preparatory meetings", 20 December 2001 (copies available on request).

annual sessions. These multi-stakeholder dialogues will be continued as part of the preparatory committee process at the second and fourth preparatory meetings and at the Summit itself. This provides a unique opportunity for workers and trade unions and business and industry as well as seven other major groups<sup>4</sup> to become directly involved in the preparatory process for the WSSD.<sup>5</sup> Each of the major groups have prepared reports for the WSSD preparatory process related to the chapters concerning their groups included in Agenda 21, for example, Business and Industry (Chapter 30)<sup>6</sup> and Workers and their Trade Unions (Chapter 29).<sup>7</sup>

8. In accordance with decisions taken at the first preparatory committee meeting, the WSSD process foresees an explicit strategy to encourage two types of outcomes from the Summit. The first would be the traditional document negotiated by States that would assess progress achieved, identify major constraints and suggest measures to overcome those constraints regarding the implementation of Agenda 21 and also reinvigorate the political commitment to sustainable development and address new challenges and opportunities within the framework of Agenda 21. The second type of outcome would consist of a series of commitments, targets and partnerships made by individual governments or groups of governments at the regional and/or interregional level, as well as with involvement of or among major groups. These commitments would be announced during the partnership events scheduled to take place during official meetings of the Summit and would be released as part of the Summit's outcomes.

## **ILO contribution to the WSSD preparatory process**

9. The ILO actively participated in the preparatory process for the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in June 1992 and was represented at the Conference by a tripartite delegation. In November 1992, the ILO convened a Tripartite Advisory Meeting on Environment and the World of Work that reviewed ILO activities in this field and particularly follow-up by the ILO to UNCED and Agenda 21.<sup>8</sup> The Tripartite Advisory Meeting fully endorsed the following four priority themes for future ILO action:

- The ILO should support its tripartite constituents to enable them to deal directly and effectively with relevant environment and sustainable development matters.
- The ILO should integrate relevant environment and sustainable development considerations into its major programmes.

<sup>4</sup> The nine major groups included within Agenda 21 are women, children and youth, indigenous people and their communities, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers and their trade unions, business and industry, scientific and technological community and farmers.

<sup>5</sup> One of the first multi-stakeholder dialogues was held at the Fourth Session of the CSD in May 1996 and was entitled "Day of the Workplace" and was devoted to reports by business and industry and workers concerning their own practical experience in implementing Agenda 21 at the workplace. This was reported to the ESP in document GB.267/ESP/Inf.1.

<sup>6</sup> See UN E/CN.1/2002/PC.2/6/Add.7.

<sup>7</sup> See UN E/CN.1/2002/PC.2/6/Add.6.

<sup>8</sup> GB.254/5/6 – Report on the Tripartite Advisory Meeting on Environment and the World of Work.

- The ILO should include relevant environment and sustainable development considerations in the design and implementation of its technical cooperation activities.
  - The ILO should collaborate with the United Nations system, especially concerning follow-up action related to the UNCED, and with other international and regional institutions concerned with environment and development.
- 10.** The ILO has carried out a wide range of activities linked to these four themes over the past ten years and has made significant progress in several key areas called for by Agenda 21. Projects have been successfully implemented by both the Bureau for Employers' Activities (e.g. Employers' Organizations and Cleaner Production-INT/95/MO4/NOR) and the Bureau for Workers' Activities (e.g. Workers' Education and Environment-INT/93/M12/NOR) aimed at the strengthening of capacity of employers' and workers' organizations to deal with relevant environment and sustainable development matters. Following up on UNCED recommendations concerning the environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals (Agenda 21, Chapter 19), the SafeWork programme has played a key role in building a global framework for the sound management of chemicals, including the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) and the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC). Within this framework, ILO was the lead agency in developing a globally harmonized system for the classification and labelling of chemicals.<sup>9</sup> The Sectoral Activities Department has overseen the increasing integration of environment and sustainable development issues within industrial meetings and reports concerning key sectors such as forestry, tourism and agriculture<sup>10</sup> that have demonstrated the value of such tripartite mechanisms for social dialogue on these issues. The ILO also actively supports the UN Secretary-General's Global Compact initiative that calls on business and industry to integrate nine principles, including the ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work as well as principles drawn from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Rio Principles on Environment and Development, into their own management practices and systems. Significant efforts to promote and strengthen capacity to apply ILO standards that were cited in Agenda 21, and especially ILO core standards, the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) and many ILO occupational safety and health standards, have also been made over the past ten years. It should also be noted that the ILO's contribution to the World Summit on Social Development and its follow-up is also directly relevant to the review of Agenda 21 and preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development.
- 11.** The most important consequences for the implementation of Agenda 21 and the achievement of sustainable development, however, may be expected to come not simply from specific ILO programmes and projects but from the synergy and value added of the ILO's new strategic approach to a Decent Work Agenda that combines employment rights, social protection and social dialogue within a strategy driven by sustainable development. Decent work provides an integrated policy framework that will enable the ILO – as well as others – to more effectively link the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development at local, national or global level.
- 12.** The ILO will be drawing attention to the role of a Decent Work Agenda and the Global Employment Agenda driven by sustainable development objectives throughout the WSSD

<sup>9</sup> See GB.282/10, p. 17, and GB.282/STM/6.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, *Globalization and sustainability – The forestry and wood industries on the move*, Geneva, 2001, 122 pp.; *Sustainable agriculture in a global economy*, Geneva, 2000, 68 pp.

preparatory process. The ILO will work to ensure that the social dimension of sustainable development receives appropriate attention at the WSSD so as to lead to results that provide a balanced and integrated approach to the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. The activities of the ILO Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization are also very relevant to the WSSD preparatory process, for example the document and discussion on poverty reduction and decent work in a globalizing world<sup>11</sup> and the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization established by the ILO.

13. The WSSD preparatory process is expected to give high priority to major new initiatives to accelerate action on poverty reduction and the transition to more sustainable production and consumption patterns. Reducing the decent work deficit is an essential requirement for the success of these possible WSSD initiatives. The ILO's unique tripartite structure and its capacity to promote and facilitate social dialogue represents a particularly powerful mechanism to catalyse the transition to more sustainable production and consumption processes. The ILO could provide guidance and support for the integration of employment and social factors within the processes established to manage the transition to cleaner technologies at the enterprise, sectoral, national, regional or international level. The Global Employment Agenda recognizes that the ILO can play a central role in shaping such a new investment strategy for sustainable development focused on the accelerated replacement of old, unsustainable technologies with new, cleaner technologies. For example, the Global Alliances for Employment mechanism of the Agenda provides for the possible convening of round tables with relevant UN and Bretton Woods institutions to bring together representatives of these agencies and researchers, policy-makers and the social partners to reflect on common goals and action. The convening of a round table concerning such an investment strategy for sustainable development could represent a practical ILO contribution to the WSSD process.
14. The WSSD is expected to promote a major boost in investment based on a shift to sustainable technologies that decouple economic growth and social development from pressures on natural resources and the environment. Greater attention should be given to integrated policies that promote employment and social development and environmental improvements that also generate sustainable economic growth and development.
15. The WSSD is expected to focus such an integrated approach to sustainable development investment in three priority sectors: agriculture, transport systems and energy systems. These three sectors, that have a particularly significant impact on the environment, are essential to achieving priority decent work objectives and especially poverty reduction and basic improvements in quality of work and life. The ILO will draw particular attention to the increasing role that the ILO's four strategic objectives, and especially its tripartite constituents and social dialogue, can play to facilitate an efficient and fair transition to sustainable development.
16. *The Committee on Employment and Social Policy may wish to recommend that the Governing Body request the Director-General to take account, in preparing the ILO's contribution to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, of the opinions expressed by the meeting on the issues highlighted in this paper.*

Geneva, 25 January 2002.

<sup>11</sup> See GB.280/WP/SDG/1.

*Point for decision:* Paragraph 16.