



SIXTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Developments in the United Nations

Contents	<i>Page</i>
I. Major events of 2004	2
1. Fifty-ninth Session of the General Assembly (Autumn 2004)	2
2. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)	3
3. United Nations Development Group (UNDG)	3
4. United Nations Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	4
5. UNCTAD XI (São Paulo, 13-18 June 2004)	5
6. UN System Chief Executives Board (CEB)	5
7. Developments in areas of interest to the ILO	5
II. Bretton Woods institutions.....	7
III. Forthcoming major events of relevance to the ILO	8
1. United Nations Millennium Summit + 5	8
2. Commission for Social Development	8
3. Commission on the Status of Women.....	9
4. Commission on Sustainable Development	9
5. Commission on Human Rights	9
6. World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) (Second phase, Tunis, November 2005)	9
7. International Year of Microcredit (2005)	9

I. Major events of 2004

1. Fifty-ninth Session of the General Assembly (Autumn 2004)

1. The report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change: *A more secure world: Our shared responsibility*¹ was issued in the autumn and submitted to the General Assembly. The report discusses the need to meet the world's new and evolving security threats, and argues for a broader, more comprehensive system of collective security that tackles both new and old threats. The Secretary-General, commenting on it, referred to the inter-connectedness of contemporary threats to security, and emphasized that issues such as terrorism, civil war and extreme poverty cannot be addressed in isolation. He further endorsed the panellists' view that development is the "indispensable foundation" of collective security, and that the eradication of poverty and disease is an essential part of the effort to achieve a safer world. Other conclusions drawn by the Secretary-General from the report are that the UN must do more to advance an effective and principled counter-terrorism strategy, respectful of human rights and the rule of law. The Panel offers a vision of a United Nations for the 21st century, recommending reforms for each of its principal organs.
2. The 59th Session of the General Assembly² was significant in furthering the Secretary-General's reform agenda, much of which focuses on UN field operations. A report on operational activities identifies concrete action to improve coordination among United Nations entities at the country level, through joint programming and pooling of data and resources.³
3. On the eve of the opening of the General Assembly, some 30 Heads of State and Government, together with the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, participated in the high-level launch of the Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization⁴ by the Co-Chairs of the Commission. In his address, the Secretary-General stressed that "the best anti-poverty programme is employment and the best road to economic empowerment and social well-being lies in decent work". Another major achievement at the session for the ILO was the adoption by the Assembly of a resolution entitled: "A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All; Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization", in which it decided "to consider the wider challenges and opportunities linked to the issue of globalization, including those in the report, within the framework of the comprehensive review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, ... and the ten-year review of the further implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development by the Commission for Social Development in 2005". It also invites organizations of the United Nations system and other relevant multilateral bodies to provide information on their activities to promote inclusive and equitable globalization, and requests the Secretary-General to take the World Commission's report into account in his comprehensive report which is to serve as the basis for the Assembly's first high-level review of implementation of the Millennium Declaration in September 2005. The integration of the follow-up on the

¹ <http://www.un.org/secureworld/>

² For documents of the 59th Session, see <http://www.un.org/ga/59/documentation/list0.html>; for resolutions, <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide/r59.htm>.

³ Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development. <http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/TCPR.htm> and <http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/TCPR.04.Rpt.pdf>; Resolution A/RES/59/250.

⁴ GB.291/WP/SDG/1, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/gb/docs/gb291/pdf/sdg-1.pdf>

report of the World Commission into these two review processes reflects increasing international recognition of the need for “fully inclusive and equitable globalization”, and paves the way for fuller ILO involvement in major events and processes at the UN, including work to promote Decent Work as an essential means of achieving the MDGs.⁵

4. Some of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly Committees are of particular relevance, and several explicitly mention the ILO.⁶ The resolution on implementation of the first UN Decade for the eradication of poverty takes note of the Plan of Action for Promotion of Employment and Poverty Alleviation, adopted at the Extraordinary Summit of the African Union on Employment and Poverty Alleviation⁷ and notes the role of the ILO in assisting African countries in its implementation. Governments are urged to consider ratifying ILO fundamental Conventions Nos. 111, 138 and 182 in resolutions on trafficking in women and girls, and on rights of the child, and the resolution on migrant workers refers to ILO principles and norms in that area.

2. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

5. The ILO played a prominent role in the ECOSOC High-Level Segment in June which took as its theme “Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010”. The Director-General made a presentation to the opening session on the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization (WCSDG), with particular emphasis on its implications for LDCs. This presentation generated great interest in the report, with many copies distributed.
6. Other successful events included a round table at the Investment Promotion Forum, co-sponsored with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), entitled “Local private sector development: the role of microfinance/microcredit” and the ILO ministerial round table breakfast on “Globalization and LDCs: The Need for a Fair and Inclusive Process”.

3. United Nations Development Group (UNDG)

7. The ILO continued to participate in groups responsible for the text of the UNDG Guidelines for UN Country Teams. As a result the Guidance Note includes a number of decent work-related issues and references to relevant ILO resources, and covers employment among displaced youth and adults as one of the indicators for measuring poverty reduction and social integration among displaced persons. The Note forms part of the revised 2004 CCA/UNDAF Guidelines that provide for the involvement of the social partners in those processes, and recognizes their importance for governance and democracy and achieving country programme objectives.⁸
8. Having participated in the UNDG Technical Working Group on Iraq, the ILO receives resources for projects from the UNDG Iraq Trust Fund, and is involved in UNDG initiatives for ensuring a coherent system-wide approach to the UN’s work in Iraq. The ILO also participated in the UNDG-Emergency Coordinator Humanitarian Affairs Working Group on Transition Issues, and in the Technical Working Group on Needs Assessment in

⁵ A/RES/59/57 (draft: A/59/L.38).

⁶ EXREL website: “External relations in 2004” at <http://www.ilo.org/exrel>.

⁷ A/RES/59/247 (draft A/59/487/Add.1).

⁸ The CCA for Afghanistan (2004) addresses the importance of decent work and the ratification status of ILO Conventions.

Liberia. In Haiti, Iraq, Liberia and Sudan, employment is now among the cross-cutting issues covered in needs assessments.

9. Through its membership in the UNDG Working Group on the UN and Civil Society Organizations, established recently in response to recommendations of the Cardoso Panel,⁹ the ILO is in a good position to make better known the actual and potential contribution of employers' and workers' organizations to national and international development processes, and have these reinforced in future recommendations and guidelines applicable to the UN system.

4. United Nations Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

10. The ILO maintained its involvement in efforts towards implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs, emphasizing the relevance of decent work to reducing poverty and social exclusion. This included participation in various interagency groups and external events related to the Millennium Project and Campaign and related reporting processes, as well as providing written contributions and major input on issues of youth employment and HIV/AIDS. For the current year the ILO is chairing the UN Communications Group that is steering the Millennium Campaign. ILO field structures are participating actively in the country analyses being undertaken by the Millennium Project in two pilot countries (Ethiopia and Ghana) covered by Decent Work Pilot Programmes or a PRSP process.
11. In January 2005 the final report of the Millennium Project (an independent group of advisers reporting to the Secretary-General) was issued and submitted to the Secretary-General. The report, *Investing in Development: A practical plan to achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, brings together the findings of the ten Task Forces, focuses on the main requirements for achieving the Goals and showcases programmes that have made concrete progress.¹⁰ The report includes ten key recommendations on "MDG-based poverty reduction strategies", official development assistance, the role of civil society, identifying extreme needs and immediate priorities in education, health, infrastructure and the environment, the role of regional institutions, the liberalization of international trade, research, and coordination of international efforts.
12. As part of statistical monitoring of progress towards the MDGs, the ILO has contributed written storylines (brief synopses of current issues concerning specific Targets) on the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector and the unemployment rate of 15 to 24-year-olds, as well as other technical material. The ILO has also endeavoured to expand the range of MDG indicators in key ILO areas of concern, aimed at improving a measure of gender equality and giving a higher profile to broader employment issues. An ILO contribution was also provided to the CSD-13 (Commission on Sustainable Development) preparatory process entitled "Working out of poverty in human settlements", related to MDG Target 11 on improving the lives of slum dwellers.

⁹ For the Secretary-General's introductory note and full report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations (known as the Cardoso Report), see A/58/817 (11 June 2004).

¹⁰ *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, <http://unmp.forumone.com/>.

5. UNCTAD XI (São Paulo, 13-18 June 2004)

13. The Eleventh United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XI) adopted the São Paulo Consensus¹¹ as well as a short political declaration.¹² A side event was held on the WCSDG report, which involved two Commissioners. UNCTAD was given a mandate to work on a number of issues relevant to the ILO's priorities regarding follow-up on the report of the World Commission. These include identifying the basic elements of sound macroeconomic policies conducive to an expansion of productive capacity, faster and sustained growth, employment creation and poverty alleviation; and examining all issues relating to liberalization of trade in services.

6. UN System Chief Executives Board (CEB)

14. The *UN System Chief Executives Board* (CEB) held two regular sessions in 2004. At the spring session Executive Heads discussed "bridging the digital divide", stressing the importance of implementing the Plan of Action of the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society. At the retreat, they discussed the future of multilateralism, making extensive reference to the recommendations of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, which were presented by the Director-General. In October, discussion focused mostly on preparations for the 2005 Review of the Millennium Declaration, underscoring the political importance of the Summit of Heads of State and Government to be held in September 2005. They also reviewed the UN system ICT strategy, sharing their respective experience in knowledge management. Staff security and safety were discussed extensively. At their retreat, CEB members took stock of progress in achieving coherence in UN system activities at the country level and further steps to be taken to maximize its collective impact.

7. Developments in areas of interest to the ILO

15. The ILO presented written and oral reports to the UN *treaty bodies* responsible for the application of the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and on Civil and Political Rights; the International Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These bodies regularly refer to information provided by the ILO and recommend the ratification and application of relevant ILO Conventions. In turn the ILO supervisory bodies reflect the information received by UN treaty bodies and refer to their conclusions whenever appropriate. The new treaty body created to supervise the implementation of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families began to organize its work. The ILO was requested to provide suggestions regarding the operation of the new body, coordination with relevant aspects of ILO treaty supervision, and to provide its technical expertise on migration and the application of standards. The Convention has now been ratified by 27 States Parties, with 16 additional signatory states, including nine that have ratified one or both of the ILO Conventions on migrant workers.
16. *Human rights*: The ILO provided substantive input to the work of the Commission on Human Rights at its 60th session,¹³ which addressed various issues of interest to the ILO, including migrant workers, women, the rights of children, structural adjustment policies and their effects on human rights, the impact of globalization on the full enjoyment of

¹¹ http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/td410_en.pdf.

¹² http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/tdl382_en.pdf.

¹³ <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/chr/sessions/60/index.htm>

human rights, extreme poverty, HIV/AIDS and the incompatibility of democracy with racism.

17. *Migration*: The Director-General continued to be actively involved in the work of the Geneva Migration Group, composed of the Executive Heads of ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNODC and UNCTAD. ILO participated in a number of important UN meetings on migration, including the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development, and IGO Working Group on Trafficking. The ILO also actively participated in regional hearings of the Global Commission on International Migration.
18. *Gender*: ILO activities on gender issues won increasing recognition within the UN system. The ILO Gender Audit was presented to the ECOSOC 2004 High-Level Segment as a means of pursuing and monitoring gender activities in the UN system. Following up on this, the ILO led a gender audit of UN system entities in Zimbabwe. The ILO also contributed to the implementation of a resolution on the elimination of all forms of violence against women adopted by the General Assembly by addressing the issues of sexual harassment at work, and sexual exploitation of women through trafficking; and furthered the implementation of the conclusions adopted by the 48th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women on women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and post-conflict peace-building by promoting awareness of the gender-poverty-employment link.
19. The year 2005 is the *International Year of Microcredit (IYM)* and the ILO laid the groundwork for increased promotion of its work in this area at the IYM launch events at the UN in November. The ILO hosted representatives of Member States and civil society, including employers' and workers' organizations, at a round table luncheon discussion entitled *How microfinance contributes to decent work and poverty reduction in a globalized economy* as part of the launch.
20. *HIV/AIDS*: The ILO submitted a paper on HIV/AIDS to a seminar in preparation for the item on the relevance of population aspects for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals on the agenda of the 38th Session of the Commission on Population and Development, and will submit a contribution to the 38th Session of the Commission itself. In July 2005, the ILO will be taking over the rotating chair of the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations (CCO) of UNAIDS for one year.
21. In 2004 the *UN Global Compact* continued its efforts to establish a strong global identity and reach out to both multinational and small and medium-sized domestic companies worldwide. At the end of the year some 1800 companies had formally written to the UN Secretary-General to express their support for the initiative. The Director-General represented the ILO at the Global Compact Leaders Summit in June. On this occasion a tenth principle (on corruption) was added to the Compact. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime was subsequently asked to join the inter-agency team that provides regular guidance to the Compact. The ILO is an active member of this team.
22. *Disability*: The ILO continued to be actively involved in the elaboration of the UN International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. The ILO provided written contributions, including a working paper on the right to decent work of persons with disabilities, thus promoting the relevant ILO instruments with a focus on employment.
23. *Indigenous and tribal peoples*: The ILO has been an active participant in the work of the ECOSOC Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The International Decade of the World's Indigenous People concluded in 2004 with an assessment by the General Assembly of its achievements. The Working Group of the UN Commission on Human Rights concluded its ten-year mandate to examine a draft Declaration on Indigenous Rights, without adopting a text, and the draft will be before the full Commission in 2005. The Inter-Agency Support

Group on Indigenous Issues adopted a statement of concern that the Millennium Development Goals, and the ways in which they are being implemented, risk excluding indigenous and tribal peoples from their benefits, and in some cases could even worsen their situation.

II. Bretton Woods institutions

24. The ILO's relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions evolved significantly in 2004, leading to enhanced collaboration, policy dialogue and exchanges of information. The ILO continued to expand its collaboration with the World Bank, IMF and its national constituents as regards national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).¹⁴ Collaboration between the UN, World Bank, and ILO related to the development, design and implementation of a growing number of national youth employment initiatives linked to the Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network and follow-up to the MDGs was also significantly expanded in 2004, including substantial progress in the launch of a number of lead countries.¹⁵ The ILO and World Bank also collaborated on a number of special initiatives, including the World Bank's Conference on Scaling-Up Poverty Reduction (Shanghai, May 2004), preparations for the AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa (Ouagadougou, September 2004), the World Bank's Conference on Labour-Market Stock-Taking and Future Directions (Washington, November 2004) and a series of exchanges of views and experience on such issues as MDGs, social security and pension policies, as well as a growing number of consultations at the national level on employment and social policies.
25. The World Bank and IMF collaborated in the preparation of the Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. The World Bank and IMF have participated in the preliminary meetings in May and November 2004 to discuss follow-up to the Commission's recommendation concerning a Policy Coherence Initiative addressing the question of growth, investment and employment in the global economy. Mr. Wolfensohn invited the Director-General to present a "Presidential Fellows Lecture" on the WCSSDG report and possible ILO follow-up action in June 2004.¹⁶ The ILO has strengthened its participation as an observer at the Spring Meetings (Washington, April 2004) and Annual Meetings (October 2004) of the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) and the Joint World Bank-IMF Development Committee. The Director-General continued to send written comments to the IMF concerning their draft *World Economic Outlook*, prepared twice each year, as well as written statements circulated at the IMFC and Development Committee.¹⁷ The Director-General held private meetings with both Mr. Wolfensohn and Mr. de Rato in June 2004 to further explore opportunities for enhanced collaboration with the ILO. The Director-General also personally attended the WB/IMF Annual Meetings in October of the IMFC and Development Committee, and made a presentation on the Report of the World Commission and the ILO's role in Follow-up to the Report at the Ministerial Session of the Group of 24 held in advance of the Annual Meetings. The ILO participated in the ECOSOC Special High Level Meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization in New York in April 2004 on the theme of "Coherence, coordination and cooperation in the context of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus", at which President Halonen of Finland gave

¹⁴ See [GB.283/ESP/3](#).

¹⁵ Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ghana, Ethiopia, Honduras, Indonesia, Mali, Nepal, Pakistan, Tanzania, and Viet Nam.

¹⁶ <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/dgo/speeches/somavia/2004/worldbank.pdf>.

¹⁷ <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEVCOMMINT/Documentation/20264340/DCS2004-0042-ILO.pdf>.

a presentation on the report of the WCSDG.¹⁸ Collaboration has also been strengthened as a result of the enhanced commitment and efforts of the World Bank and IMF Offices in Geneva and the ILO's Office in Washington to promote technical exchanges and timely liaison between the ILO and the BWIs at both HQ and field levels.

III. Forthcoming major events of relevance to the ILO

1. United Nations Millennium Summit + 5

26. The General Assembly has decided to convene in New York, at the beginning of its sixtieth session, a Summit of Heads of State and Government (A/59/545). The Summit, to be held from 14 to 16 September 2005, will be an event of decisive importance. It will comprehensively review the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the integrated follow-up to the major United Nations Conferences and Summits. With a view to assisting member States in their deliberations, the Secretary-General will submit a comprehensive report in March 2005. This report will draw on the findings of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and on the final report of the Millennium Project. The ILO has been involved in the preparation of the report, highlighting in particular the importance of productive, full employment. Reform of the United Nations principal organs is also expected to be on the agenda of the Summit.

27. The Office will also prepare a global analysis and evaluation of National Action Plans on youth employment in May 2005 in time for submission by the Secretary-General to the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. In addition to the International Labour Conference discussion in June, this global analysis and evaluation report provides the ILO with an opportunity to better integrate decent and productive work into the five-year review of the Millennium Declaration, of which youth employment is an integral part.

2. Commission for Social Development

28. At its 43rd session (9-18 February 2005) the Commission for Social Development reviewed the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly "Copenhagen + 5". The ILO contributed actively to this review, submitting a background paper and participating in a panel discussion with the World Bank and the IMF as well as in a round table on promoting full employment.

29. In its background document, the ILO stresses that by focusing on the intertwined issues of poverty reduction, employment and social integration, the Social Summit has strengthened the link between the ILO's mandate and constituency and the international development agenda. Apart from making an extensive review of the ILO's contribution to the implementation of Copenhagen since 1995, the paper also stresses that in drawing attention to the importance of decent work and fair globalization as instruments to ensure that the global economy delivers on development objectives and the aspirations of people, the report of the World Commission fills a gap in the follow-up to both the Social Summit and the Millennium Declaration. It concludes that to realize the ambitions of the Millennium Declaration and of the Copenhagen Declaration, there is a need for complementarity of action at national and international levels. There is also a need for partnerships at all levels, and coherent action among multilateral organizations is particularly important for the achievement of the goals of the Copenhagen and Millennium Declarations.

¹⁸ <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd0404hilevelBWI.htm> and E/2004/73.

3. Commission on the Status of Women

30. In February-March 2005 the Commission on the Status of Women will review the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the special session of the General Assembly “Beijing + 5”. The ILO has submitted a summary of new initiatives and steps to increase the integration of gender perspectives in all policies and programmes of the ILO, 2000-05. The ILO is co-sponsoring a side event by ICFTU on Women in the Global Economy. The session will also present an opportunity to promote further the ILO gender audit within the UN system.

4. Commission on Sustainable Development

31. The 13th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development will in April function as the policy session of the first-two year implementation cycle, with a focus on water, sanitation and human settlements. The outcome of CSD-13 will underpin common endeavours in the coming years to meet the MDGs and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation targets and commitments on water, sanitation and human settlements. The ILO contributed a paper to CSD-13 (see para. 12 above).

5. Commission on Human Rights

32. At its 61st session (March-April 2005)¹⁹ the Commission on Human Rights will consider the “comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action” in addition to its regular agenda items.

6. World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) (Second phase, Tunis, November 2005)

33. The ILO has become a member of the UN ICT Task Force which is steering work on the agenda for Tunis. The ILO has submitted proposals for the Tunis agenda to the drafting group to emphasize the importance of the world of work and of the recommendations of the WCSDG.

7. International Year of Microcredit (2005)

34. During 2005 and beyond, the Social Finance Programme will participate in a major inter-agency initiative to identify constraints and opportunities for building inclusive financial sectors.²⁰ A “Blue Book” will be produced with concrete action plans to stimulate the various constituencies at the national level to achieve this. As part of this project and as follow-up on the Monterrey Consensus, the ILO will in May host a Global Meeting on Building Inclusive Financial Sectors, sponsored by the UNCDF and Financing for Development Office.

Geneva, 7 February 2005.

Submitted for information.

¹⁹ <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/chr/sessions/61/index.htm>

²⁰ UN-Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), supported by the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and ILO.