



Implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries: Contribution to the annual report of the Secretary-General and to the Mid-Term Review of the Brussels Programme of Action, 2006

Of the 50 Least Developed Countries, 34 are on the African continent. Most of the work of the ILO in the African region targets LDCs.

ILO assistance to constituents in member States is prepared and implemented within time-bound and resourced programmes called Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). They are a tool for the effective decentralization of responsibility in the implementation of a coherent and integrated ILO programme of assistance. Tripartism and social dialogue are fundamental principles and tools to strengthen assistance to, and the participation of, ILO constituents in the promotion of decent work. DWCPs provide a framework to determine, with the participation of constituents, priority areas of cooperation in accordance with the ILO's mandate and strategic objectives. Within the priority areas identified, intended outcomes are defined which form the basis for programme activities and resources, including regular and extra-budgetary funding. DWCPs are the ILO contribution to national development plans and programmes, including poverty reduction strategies, development assistance frameworks and common country assessments. They are formulated in gender-sensitive terms, specifying how intended outcomes will affect women and men. The practical implementation of the DWCPs is illustrated in the attached table.

A related issue is the ILO's work in relation to Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. The ILO has contributed to the PRSPs in six least developed countries, three in the African region (Ethiopia, Sudan, and Tanzania), and three in the Asia and Pacific region (Cambodia, Nepal, and Yemen). In Africa, Ethiopia and Tanzania had prepared complete PRSPs by 2004 and are currently preparing their second PRSPs. Sudan however has still only prepared an interim PRSP with separate sections for the northern and southern parts of the country, and is in the process of drafting a complete PRSP. In the Asian and Pacific region, Cambodia, Nepal and Yemen prepared complete PRSPs somewhat earlier, by 2003, and are currently in the process of implementation through longer-term frameworks in their national development plans.

The PRSPs are country-owned in principle, which is an important step towards their achievement in practice. To this end the PRSPs have begun to foster consultation across wider civil society to identify problems and help formulate policy. The ILO has sought to strengthen country ownership of the PRSP and the consultation process by enabling the inclusion of representatives of the people directly affected by poverty – workers, their employers, and the ministries concerned. This has meant focusing its work on the PRSPs on promoting the involvement of employers' and workers' organizations in the design of the policies. The ILO has applied a strategy that is sustainable in such poor countries, based on prioritizing the generation of employment and improving the working conditions of the poor – a strategy of creating decent work. Such decent work strategies have been country-specific, ranging across broad policy issues, from globalization to macroeconomic policy, labour market intervention, social protection schemes, the informal sector, and major deficits in terms of rights and voice, especially among women, children and vulnerable groups.

In countries that have moved ahead from the completion stage of their PRSPs to their implementation, the ILO is seeking to connect the advocated strategies for generating employment and decent work to the budgetary process through budgetary reviews, proposals, and monitoring.

Finally, the ILO has developed a series of generic capacity-building tools for PRSPs, including a manual and an advocacy guidebook, which are available to all least developing countries.¹

The attached table illustrates key ILO activities in a number of developing countries. The information is structured along the lines of the Commitments in the Brussels Programme of Action.

Geneva, January 2006.

¹¹ <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/dwpp/>

Implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries International Labour Office, January 2006

Of the 50 LDCs, 34 are on the African continent. Most of the work of the ILO in the African region targets LDCs, even if this is not specified. The following examples illustrate the ILO's work. This list is only a sample, and only a few ILO projects are mentioned.

Commitment 1. Fostering a people-centred policy framework		
Goals and Targets	Policies adopted and measures undertaken	Comments
Make substantial progress toward halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty	<p>The ILO Director-General's Report to the 2003 International Labour Conference entitled "Working out of Poverty"² develops an analysis of the relationship between the absence of Decent Work opportunities and poverty and therefore the need to focus on policies to promote more and better jobs as a key component of the global drive to reduce and eradicate poverty. African governments and employers' and workers' representatives confirmed on that occasion the fundamental point that employment and empowerment were the best ways to break out of the poverty trap and promote dignity for all. To advance that goal, the ILO launched in October 2003 a pilot phase of national consultations that provided a unique forum for dialogue between governments, employers and workers, and other development actors including universities, women, youth and community leaders. Of the 13 dialogues held in Africa, 8 were in LDCs (Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Senegal, United Rep. of Tanzania, Zambia). A Report on those dialogues was presented at the 10th African Regional Meeting (Addis Ababa, Dec. 2003).³</p> <p>In 2002, the ILO established the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. The Commission released its report entitled "A fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All" in February 2004.⁴ It developed its conclusions and recommendations after listening to the voices of a wide variety of people in consultations held around the world; 3 out of 9 national dialogues took place in African LDCs and one out of 7 regional dialogues.</p> <p>The decision by the African Union Heads of State and Government to convene a first of its kind Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Burkina Faso in September 2004 provided a window of opportunity to reverse the trends in poverty, unemployment and underemployment, coupled with crisis and the increasing impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the economy and social fabric of the continent. The preparation of the Summit involved interaction between African heads of state and government, workers' and employers' representatives, and development institutions working in Africa, further strengthening the importance of employment in economic and social policies. The visibility of the work of the ILO, particularly that of placing employment at the centre of Africa's development, was adopted by the Summit in its decision to have "employment creation as an explicit and central objective of our economic and social policies at national, regional and continental levels for sustainable poverty alleviation and with a view to improving the living conditions of our people" (para. 3). The Summit also adopted a Plan of Action and Follow-up Mechanisms at the national, regional and continental levels.</p>	The challenge is to support the growing awareness of the vital role of employment in poverty eradication through policies, programmes and investments that have a tangible impact on people, their families and the communities in which they live and work.

² <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc91/pdf/rep-i-a.pdf>

³ <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/rgmeet/10afm/dg-rep3.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.ilo.org/fairglobalization>

Commitment 1. Fostering a people-centred policy framework		
Goals and Targets	Policies adopted and measures undertaken	Comments
	<p>Consequently, the ILO Programme and Budget for 2004-05 for the African Region was reviewed to bring it into line with the request by African constituents in terms of: (i) Follow-up actions to be launched at the national level, subregional (REC) and continental levels; (ii) the target areas identified (entrepreneurship, youth and women, capacity-building, the rural and informal economies; (iii) instruments to know what to do and how to measure progress on employment and poverty reduction (knowledge management); (iv) review of ILO products and tools, and developing new ones; (v) promote increased partnerships internally and with other agencies and institutions; (vi) fund-raising strategy at local, subregional and regional levels.</p> <p>Moreover, the main focus for the African region for the biennium 2006-07 is poverty reduction through the mainstreaming of Decent Work in PRSPs and any other poverty reduction programmes. Based on the chosen priorities, programmes and activities will be elaborated at national, regional and continental level taking into consideration the outcomes of the AU Summit, the relevance of such activities to national PRSPs and other national development programmes as well as subregional, regional (AU/NEPAD) and global (MDGs) development strategies and framework.</p>	

Commitment 2. Good governance at national and international levels		
Goals and Targets	Policies adopted and measures undertaken	Comments
N/A	<p>The ILO helps LDCs in improving national good governance by promoting the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.⁵</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Togo are covered by a project supporting the application of the Declaration (PAMODEC). • Efforts continue to encourage universal ratification of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). The ILO International Programme for the Eradication of Child Labour (IPEC) is helping member States fulfil their obligations under these Conventions. For example, IPEC launched a major subregional programme entitled "Prevention and reintegration of children involved in armed conflict in Central Africa". The countries participating in the programme include Burundi, Congo, DR Congo and Rwanda. • Projects are also ongoing in some African LDCs on the promotion of social dialogue as a tool for participatory development and promotion of good governance. With the support of PRODIAF (Promotion du Dialogue Social en Afrique Francophone), ILO is promoting good governance through the reinforcement of social dialogue 	<p>The challenge is that, although the region has a high rate of ratification of core ILO Conventions, application still gives rise to problems in some countries.</p>

⁵ <http://www.ilo.org/declaration>

Commitment 2. Good governance at national and international levels

Goals and Targets	Policies adopted and measures undertaken	Comments
	<p>institutions and enhancing the capacities of social partners. For this purpose, the ILO helped African social partners make a better contribute to the NEPAD process as part of the decision-making bodies.</p> <p>Regarding post-conflict peace-building, reintegration and reconstruction, an ongoing project in the Great Lakes Region targets the socio-economic reinsertion of ex-combatants and their families through vocational training and labour market entry. The ILO is actively involved in the World Bank-led Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (MDRP). This includes Angola, Burundi and the DR Congo. In Angola, the ILO is cooperating with UNDP, OCHA, FAO and the Angolan Institute for Social Reintegration of Ex-Soldiers (IRSEM) in a Special Project funded by MDRP. The Special Project targets vulnerable ex-combatants located in the provinces where assessments have shown a higher intention of returning. IPEC projects in Burundi, Congo, DR Congo and Rwanda are fully integrated in the countries' demobilisation and reintegration programmes.</p> <p>Gender is a cross-cutting issue and is being integrated in all ILO projects and programmes. Some projects may be more specific like the one on enhancing gender mainstreaming capacity of ILO Constituents in Tanzania and Rwanda (project of promotion of gender equality in the world of work). Gender was systematically incorporated into the Poverty reduction project in Sao Tome & Principe. Women entrepreneurship as well as systematic training of women were consequently incorporated into the private sector development framework.</p> <p>In Bangladesh, under the Decent Work Pilot Programme, the ILO engaged the tripartite partners – government, and workers' and employers' organizations – in a social dialogue process in 2004-05 on the challenges of securing the benefits of globalization while promoting productive and decent employment and reducing poverty. As a result, the Bangladesh tripartite advisory body to the Decent Work Programme agreed on priority issues, and endorsed policy research and development in these areas – promoting decent work goals in the national Poverty Reduction Strategy, developing a national social protection strategy, enhancing both the competitiveness of, and decent employment in export-oriented industries, and improving the opportunities and quality of overseas employment for Bangladeshi migrant workers. In collaboration with the ministries of commerce and labour, the ILO supported a national tripartite meeting in August 2005 on “Enhancing Employment and Global Competitiveness through Decent Work: Post-MFA Challenges and Opportunities”, which highlighted the need for integrated economic-social policies, the contribution of workers' organizations in shaping the post-MFA policy agenda, and the importance of constructive labour relations and mutual trust between employers and trade unions.</p>	

Commitment 3. Building human and institutional capacities

Goals and Targets	Policies adopted and measures undertaken	Comments
<p>A. Social infrastructure and social service delivery</p>	<p>The Director-General of the ILO together with representatives of workers and employers launched the Global Campaign for the Extension of Social Security and Coverage for All in Africa at the ILO's 10th African Regional Meeting (Addis Ababa, December 2003). The campaign is being operationalized in Africa through the implementation of a Special Initiative for Africa on Social Security. The Initiative is based on 3 major objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The identification at the national level of needs, difficulties, strategies and relevant tools relating to the extension of social protection, advocating a gender equality approach. • The establishment of reinforced technical cooperation and assistance for the implementation of identified strategies at the country level on a social dialogue basis, for the extension of social protection, including enhancement of the effectiveness of existing social security schemes. • Advocacy in relation to the extension of coverage of social protection in order to integrate poverty reduction strategies. • The Special Initiative is benefiting from ILO experience in implementing technical cooperation projects and technical assistance in Senegal, Mali, Benin, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Ethiopia, DR Congo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Mauritania, among others. • The ILO's STEP Programme (Strategies and Tools against Social Exclusion and Poverty) develops innovative strategies and mechanisms in many LDCs across Africa, aimed at covering specifically those excluded from existing social security systems through the establishment and extension of community-based social protection systems. • A project on poverty reduction in Sao Tome & Principe allowed the reinforcement of capacities in the area of microfinance. The preparation of a national policy on microfinance is ongoing with ILO support. 	<p>The challenge is to continue efforts to draw on social protection as a major tool to mitigate risks and to extend this tool to vulnerable groups, in particular in the informal and rural economy.</p>
<p>B. Population</p>	<p>Regarding migration, the ILO implemented a project entitled "Labour Migration for Integration and Development in the EuroMed Context and West and East Africa" whose objective is to elaborate and promote the adoption of new policy frameworks, strategies, systems and mechanisms for regulating labour migration as an instrument of development, particularly by elaborating institutional mechanisms within and between formal regional economic and social integration initiatives, as well as within concerned countries. The project includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Tanzania and Uganda.</p>	

Commitment 3. Building human and institutional capacities		
Goals and Targets	Policies adopted and measures undertaken	Comments
C. Education and training	<p>Regarding access to education, most IPEC programmes aimed at eliminating the worst forms of child labour in African LDCs contain an education component and specific measures addressing the special situation of the girl child. For example, through the IPEC project in Tanzania, “Supporting the Time-Bound Programme on the Worst Forms of Child Labour”, among other things, vocational education and skills training is being provided to 3.000 targeted youth and their families. Through COBET in the Ministry of Education and Culture, transitional education is being provided to 16,000 withdrawn targeted children and those identified under prevention initiatives.</p> <p>The ILO is actively involved in helping LDCs governments set up vocational training institutions. In Niger, the NIGETECH programme helps develop human resources by offering decentralized vocational training in 5 regions and for 13,000 beneficiaries including workers, apprentices, craftsmen, as well as young unemployed people, in order to allow them to access the world of work.</p>	
D. Health, nutrition and sanitation	<p>The ILO 10th African Regional Meeting (Dec. 2003) adopted a resolution on HIV/AIDS at the workplace to guide the extension of ILO’s work in the region, in particular in the promotion of its workplace Code of Conduct.⁶ As follow-up to the Regional Meeting, the International Organization of Employers, ICFTU/AFRO and OATUU organized a high-level workshop on the operationalization of the resolution in March 2004. There is a growing consensus among governments, employers and workers on a number of issues of common interest, including HIV/AIDS. Moreover, the ILO is conducting a certain number of national and subregional HIV/AIDS projects in the workplace in African LDCs aimed at prevention and education. In most countries in Central Africa, the ILO has helped employers’ organizations design and implement their strategic plan for combating HIV/AIDS in the workplace.</p>	
E. Social integration	<p>As a tripartite institution, the ILO helps workers’ and employers’ organizations strengthen their capacities and promote social dialogue. The ILO plays a leading role in fostering dialogue, partnerships and participatory approaches to decision-making at the national, subregional and global levels, thereby contributing to social peace. The ratification and application of key instruments such as the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), the Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), helps deepen and widen the use of social dialogue as a means of building consensus, managing change and promoting good governance. Moreover, the ILO provided support to the Social Partners Forum held in conjunction with the AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation. The ILO will also provide support to the Social Partners’ involvement in the post-Summit phase (institutions and programmes).</p> <p>The ILO has created a programme to systematically analyse, evaluate and disseminate financial sector issues relevant for employment and social justice. This programme’s work is organized around three major themes: reducing vulnerability, creating jobs through enterprise development and making financial policies more employment-sensitive.</p> <p>Also of note is the creation of a subregional tripartite committee at the level of the UEMOA and CEMAC.</p>	

⁶ <http://www.ilo.org/aids>

Commitment 4. Building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs		
Goals and Targets	Policies adopted and measures undertaken	Comments
A. Physical infrastructure	<p>The employment potential of infrastructure projects is vast, but is often not realized. Many projects are equipment-intensive, frequently using foreign contractors. This may be necessary for airports, motorways or heavy bridges. But employment-intensive alternatives are available, for more basic infrastructure, and offer major advantages.</p> <p>For some years now, through its Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP), the ILO has been helping African member States maximize the impact of infrastructure investments on employment and local economic development. It has done this through the Employment-Intensive Approach strategy. Furthermore, the ASIST African regional programme –the operational arm of the EIIP – offers services to projects and programmes in several sub-Saharan countries in complementary areas such as local planning tools, road construction and maintenance, rural and urban infrastructure, irrigation, soil and water management, drainage, sanitation and waste management. These projects have helped to improve the basic infrastructure in many countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where 80 per cent of the activities are located. The ASIST programme is a centre of excellence on employment-intensive programmes and policies that directly influence the major investment programmes of the Bretton Woods institutions and regional development banks, in particular in post-crisis situations.</p>	
C. Enterprise development	<p>Enterprise development is at the heart of the ILO’s mandate. One example is the GERME Programme (Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Togo) and the Start and Improve Your Business Programme (SIYB) in Eastern and Southern Africa are management training programmes for micro- and small entrepreneurs. They aim at creating wealth and jobs through the strengthening of entrepreneurs’ capacities. An assessment has shown that the entrepreneurs’ turnover, benefits and productivity increase significantly as a result of the training. The ILO is implementing a microfinance project in Burundi in collaboration with UNDP and UNEP.</p> <p>Through various programmes COOPREFORM (an ILO-DANIDA programme on cooperative development in rural areas), COOPNET (Human Resources Development for Cooperative Management and Networking), STEP (Strategies and Tools against Social exclusion and Poverty), and ACOPAM (Appui coopératif aux pays assistés par le PAM), the ILO has helped progress to be made in areas such as the reform of policy on cooperatives, the reinforcement of entrepreneurship capacities of cooperatives, and the extension of social security to the most vulnerable groups (micro-insurance schemes). A ten-year Action Plan to fight poverty through cooperative entrepreneurship in Africa was adopted by some fifteen countries in Central Africa (Panafrican Cooperative Conference). In Burundi, the ILO has helped prepare national policy on microfinance.</p>	
	<p>The ILO 10th African Regional Meeting also encouraged the ILO to extend its work on local economic development, with the close participation of governments, workers’ and employers’ organizations, relating to programme design and implementation. In both the urban informal economy and rural communities, this participatory approach has added value to initiatives such as employment intensive infrastructure investment programmes. In 2004, the ILO signed an agreement with the International Cooperative Alliance to implement a “Common Cooperative Agenda” aimed at creating decent jobs and reducing poverty. The agreement will enhance efforts to develop joint programmes and projects for promoting cooperative and local economic development. With ILO support, some countries (Congo, DR Congo and Burundi) have formulated employment creation programmes through cooperative entrepreneurship development, focusing on both rural and urban areas.</p>	

Commitment 4. Building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs		
Goals and Targets	Policies adopted and measures undertaken	Comments
E. Agriculture and agro-industries & H. Rural development and food security	<p>The 10th African Regional Meeting recognized the central importance of agriculture and related rural industries to the enlargement of decent work opportunities. Improving food security, working conditions, incomes, health and safety and productivity in agriculture is critical to reducing poverty among women and the rural poor. Strategies to achieve higher labour intensity in both rural and urban areas are actively promoted and implemented in order to tap the considerable employment creation potential of such investments.</p> <p>An Issues Paper, prepared in collaboration with 15 other agencies and programmes of the UN system and submitted to the AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, also identified agriculture and rural development as key sectors to create more and decent jobs.</p> <p>See also enterprise development (4.C)</p>	

Commitment 6. Reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment		
Goals and Targets	Policies adopted and measures undertaken	Comments
	In co-operation with the ILO, SustainLabour and the Global Compact, UNEP organized the Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment (15-17 January 2006) at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi. The event aimed to reinforce the social and labour dimension of environmental conservation and sustainable development; and to strengthen the relationship between UNEP and the world of labour.	

Commitment 7. Mobilizing financial resources		
Goals and Targets	Policies adopted and measures undertaken	Comments
	In developing its internal Resource Allocation Mechanism for donor funding for technical cooperation, the Office has made the targeting of LDCs one of several criteria in selecting proposals for funding	

Goal 3 – Promote gender equality and empower women

Target 4 – Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015

Indicator 11 – Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector

The following figures are presented on non-agricultural informal employment (northern and sub-Saharan Africa):

Wage employment as a percentage of non-agricultural informal employment, 1994-2000			
Country/Region	Total	Women	Men
Northern Africa	38	28	40
Algeria	33	33	53
Egypt	50	33	53
Morocco	19	11	22
Tunisia	48	49	48
Sub-Saharan Africa	30	29	30
Benin	5	2	9
Chad	7	1	14
Guinea	5	2	6
Kenya	58	67	44
South Africa	75	73	77