

Editorial

We are all well aware of the recent actions by some groups of what is now termed "civil society" in Seattle, Davos and Washington. These groups, sometimes unrepresentative and single issue driven, have shown a keen ability to disrupt meetings of what they see as the international faces of globalisation. Now it seems that Geneva is on their list of places to visit and we can expect them to be around for the Copenhagen +5 Special Session of the UN. Some of them may also start accompanying us at the June ILO Conference. Whilst the right to present disparate views must be respected, we are now in the position where the debate on globalisation is under real threat. Both public opinion and, most particularly, governments listen to them with interest. It is therefore timely for the business community to be more visible in this debate. We have not been strong enough in showing the positive effects of globalisation. Unless we are clear in expressing our views no one else will champion them for us.

Civil society and NGOs are part of the same debate. There are a number of these groups which are highly respectable, our organisations being part of them, playing a leading role in society. However, this new impetus for civil society, apart from encouraging into action the most "uncivilised" ones, is also providing increased roles for respectable NGOs in areas where historically they have been absent.

For the ILO this poses challenges. Tripartism cannot be reinvented, and attempts to do so will damage firstly the weakest of the constituents, the workers' organisations, but ultimately also the employers' organisations, in the developing world. Initiatives like the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the Global Compact can be endangered if new players are added. Social partners should be free to collaborate with NGOs in areas of their own choosing, but such relationships should not be imposed on them by others.

Antonio Peñalosa

Table of Contents

❖ IOE Activities	2
❖ IOE Members	5
❖ International Labour Organization	6
❖ United Nations Agencies News	8

Contact:

If you have any suggestions or contribution to make, please send them to us by fax (4122) 798 88 62 or e-mail us at ioe@ioe-emp.org

IOE Activities	
<p>Our report of the March ILO Governing Body session shows that the issue of ILO standard-setting is high on the IOE agenda for the coming months. Employers in the ILO have been calling for improvements, to no great effect, for a number of years. In the last few months however, there have been a number of welcome developments. The first was the statement of the ILO Director General that: <i>"If the ILO is to ensure its continued relevance in this field and reassert the usefulness of international labour standards, it will need to reinvigorate its efforts and experiment with new approaches"</i>(<i>"Decent Work"</i>, ILO, 1999). The second was the growing support from the governments for a wider debate on the future of ILO standard setting.</p> <p>The beginning of the debate has not been an easy one, particularly as the Workers' Group is of the mind that the real aim of the exercise is to abolish standard setting all together, which is not the case. We are working with the Workers' Group to try and convince them that the purpose of the review is to end up with credible and meaningful standards, which may or may not be Conventions but will be relevant to the world of work and to all ILO constituents. In addition, it is sometimes difficult to convince the ILO itself of the need for change. There is much our member federations could also be doing in their contacts with national governments.</p> <p>The next stage of the debate will be a discussion at the November Governing Body session. We expect that the paper prepared for this session will permit a wide ranging political debate on all aspects of the ILO's standard setting processes. In preparation for this, the IOE began consulting its members in December 1999 on their views on the way ahead. The aim is to have a position paper adopted by the IOE General Council on 29 May 2000.</p>	<p>ILO Standard Setting</p>
<p>Although the big debate on the future of standards is still to come, small improvements are already being made. At the time of its adoption, the ILO Constitution did not foresee any mechanism to extinguish outdated instruments. Over time, the ILO has accumulated a number of Conventions and Recommendations that no longer serve their purpose. This situation has blurred the whole standards system, weakening its credibility and thus, its effectiveness.</p> <p>It was with this in mind that, in 1997, the ILO Conference adopted an amendment to its Constitution to allow the elimination of outdated instruments through two different procedures. One, the abrogation procedure which applies to Conventions that are in force; and the other, the withdrawal procedure which applies to Conventions that are not in force as well as to Recommendations.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the Constitutional amendment, which gives life to the abrogation procedure, has yet to enter into force. To date, only 50 ratifications have been received which means 72 are still needed. In this regard, IOE members are urged to request their governments to ratify the amendment if they have not already done so.</p>	<p>Abrogation & Withdrawal of Conventions:</p> <p>Steps towards a better body of standards</p>

<p>However, things look better with the withdrawal procedure - which is already fully operative. In the next two-year period, 25 obsolete standards (five Conventions and twenty Recommendations) will be proposed to the International Labour Conference for their withdrawal.</p>	
<p>The steps taken by the UN to develop the views of “business” on the goals of the Global Compact have focused on discussions with Multinational enterprises, most recently in London on 10 April. The IOE has participated in previous meetings and has stressed the need to widen the business audience to engage employers from other national perspectives but particularly from the developing world.</p> <p>To achieve this the IOE, in conjunction with the ILO will host a working meeting of 18 member federation presidents from developing countries in Geneva 26-27 May 2000 to focus on how they see the Global Compact working within their own context and to provide the UN and ILO in particular, with guidance as to what future action they can take to make the Compact a truly global reality.</p>	<p>Global Compact Meeting 25-27 May</p>
<p>As the June Conference approaches, where the revision of this Convention will be the subject of a second discussion, we are becoming aware of a number of initiatives attacking the revision and the employers’ position on it.</p> <p>The first is from UNICEF, which contends that the employers are set on removing nursing breaks from the existing Convention, thereby undermining the rights of working mothers. In response to them it has been clearly pointed out that the employers have supported the revision in an attempt to create an instrument capable of broad general support and ratification, something the existing Convention has been unable to achieve given its low ratification rate; and secondly to point out that the existing reference to nursing breaks is to be found not in the Convention itself but rather in the accompanying Recommendation.</p> <p>The concern for employers lies in the inclusion in the proposed revision of nursing breaks in the body of the Convention, thereby creating new legal entitlements, which had not previously existed. In keeping with our view that the Convention should reduce prescription, we believe that the issue should remain in the Recommendation where it has been since 1919.</p> <p>The second initiative is from an NGO in Switzerland which is campaigning to stop any revision of the Convention mainly because they see; it as an employers’ initiative and therefore not in the best interests of workers and one which has been going on secret! Both perceptions are incorrect. As mentioned above the employers are looking to create a new instrument which provides adequate protection to women during pregnancy in a way which similarly recognises the legitimate interests of employers and which allows flexibility in its implementation. It is likely that more activity of this type will occur in the lead up to June. We would appreciate members advising us of any such initiatives that may come to their attention.</p>	<p>ILO Conference: Maternity</p>

<p>As in Copenhagen in 1995, the IOE and the ICC will again collaborate in hosting a half day roundtable to provide attendees at the UN Special Session and Geneva 2000 Forum with a business perspective relating to the social goals that Governments will discuss.</p> <p>The meeting will take place on June 28th at 2 p.m. at the International Conference Centre of Geneva.</p> <p>Focusing on business and the world of work the session has two panels :</p> <p>Panel 1 – The impact of the knowledge economy on business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements of knowledge-based business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Availability of a skills pool capable of mastering and contributing to new technological developments – Availability of venture capital – Entrepreneurial talent prepared to take risks • National and international regulatory frameworks that facilitate new businesses • The impact of the knowledge economy and knowledge-based business on development. <p>Panel 2 – The world of work in the 21st century</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment and labour standards in the 21st century <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – new forms of employment – mobility and stability – training and skills – fundamental principles and rights at work • Trade unionism in the 21st century • Challenges and opportunities for the developing world. <p>Members will shortly receive further information on this round table so that contact can be made with their own national delegations to invite them to attend this significant event.</p>	<p>IOE/ICC Geneva 2000 Round Table</p>
<p>The IOE participated in a two day Workshop on Child Labour and Child Protection in Washington from 12 to 13 April 2000, which was one of the activities of Children’s Week 2000, an event that had been organised by the World Bank. Participants at the workshop also included representatives from international agencies such as the ILO and UNICEF, researchers, NGOs working on child labour issues and trade union representatives.</p> <p>One of the IOE’s contributions at the workshop was to present the activities that employers were undertaking at a session on “Stakeholders’ Initiatives”. Apart from the initiatives that were being taken at the international level, the work that our members were doing at the national level figured prominently in the presentation. The IOE also participated as a discussant at the same session in which presentations were made by Save the Children, RUGMARK and the BBC World Trust on their initiatives, which included social labelling and awareness raising through the media.</p>	<p>Child Labour: World Bank</p>

<p>The workshop was organised in Dakar by the ILO in conjunction with the <i>Conseil National du Patronat du Sénégal</i> and the IOE. It brought together child labour focal persons from Senegal, Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. All are employers' organisations with an IPEC programme.</p> <p>Apart from the definition of an employers' strategy for the eradication of the worst forms of child labour, the workshop provided a forum for the promotion of ILO Convention n°182.</p> <p>At the end of the workshop, the participants agreed on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the worst forms of child labour should be eradicated immediately regardless of the social, cultural or economic conditions prevailing in the countries. • It was important for employers' organisations to move beyond awareness raising campaigns and initiate concrete projects on the ground. The ILO (ACT/EMP) was ready to help employers' organisations in this endeavour within the framework of the IPEC programme. • The long-term solution to child labour lies in sustained economic growth leading to poverty alleviation and social progress. • This is a problem that requires the involvement of society as a whole. Employers and their organisations should therefore seek to form alliances and networks with other interested organisations in order to come up with concerted solutions to this problem. 	<p>Workshop on the definition of an employers' strategy for the elimination of the worst forms of Child Labour</p>
<p>IOE Members</p>	
<p>The Swedish Employers Confederation (SAF) and the Federation of Swedish Industry have decided to unite their activities and create a new organisation "Business Sweden".</p> <p>The main priority areas for the new organisation will be :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate and focus lobbying and creation of opinions, locally, nationally as well as internationally • Concentrate on the main structural issues of economic policy, taxation, conditions for ownership, labour market policy, trade policy, public sector, infrastructure education and research • Influence the development of the new economy • Handle necessary co-operation issues between (member) associations. <p>It is intended to have "Business Sweden" in place after the Annual General Meetings in 2001. Key decisions are to be taken by Extraordinary General Assemblies in the autumn of 2000 and the regular 2001 Annual General Meetings. Between these two rounds of assemblies some form of interim organisation will probably be needed.</p>	<p>Changes in Sweden</p>

International Labour Organization

The 88th Session of the International Labour Conference will be held in Geneva from 30 May to 15 June 2000. Information pertaining to the Conference, including the agenda and some of the reports to be submitted to the Conference, are now becoming available on the ILO web site : www.ilo.org. The calendar for the Conference is as follows:

International Labour Conference

Agenda items	1st Sitting	Adopt. report
Application of Standards	30 May	13 June
Maternity Protection	31 May	12 June
Human Resources	31 May	12 June
Safety and Health in Agriculture	31 May	12 June
Resolutions Committee	30 May	10 June

Plenary Debate: Discussion of the Director General's report in plenary starts on Monday 5 until Tuesday 13 (except Tuesday 6). The report will only be available a few days before the Conference.

Global Report: This report is going to be available as of May 25th on the ILO web page. The discussion in plenary shall take place on Tuesday 6 June.

Myanmar: The first discussion as how this issue will be dealt with should take place at the first meeting of the Selection Committee on Tuesday 30th May

Official visitors: The programme has not been confirmed, however the following Heads of State are envisaged at this stage to visit the Conference:

- Tony Blair (UK) – Official visitor
- Presidential Panel – The Heads of State of 4 countries: must probably Argentina, Finland, Indonesia and Nigeria.

Other events not included in the agenda organised during the Conference:

- HIV/AIDS Debate – Thursday 8 (afternoon)
- Meeting on the Sofia Stability Pact – Thursday 8 (afternoon).

This meeting follows up on the failure of the discussion on Contract Labour to produce any outcome from its deliberations at the June 1998 Conference. Members will recall that there was no consensus over the definition of "Contract Labour" and therefore no basis on which to proceed with a Convention. This May meeting will consider whether, instead, there can be an identification of workers in "situations requiring protection" and, if so, how they could be properly defined and protected. The meeting will then advise the ILO of what, if any, future action should be taken to deal with these "identified persons". The Committee will consist of 12 Governments, 12 representatives from the Workers' Group and 12 from the Employers' Group (appointed by the Governing Body in March 2000).

Meeting of Experts on Workers in situations needing Protection Geneva 15-19 May 2000

<p>The joint meeting on <i>Lifelong learning in the twenty-first century: the changing roles of educational personnel</i> was held in Geneva from 10 to 14 April 2000.</p> <p>The meeting recognised the primary importance of education, especially in today's globalized world. It also stressed the fact that early childhood development education should be accessible to all children and that universal free and compulsory basic education in primary and secondary schools should be provided at least to an age that respects the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), i.e. age 15 years. In this context, the prominent role of governments in financing education as a basic right was highlighted.</p> <p>As to ILO future activities in this field, the employers' group insisted on, and obtained, having the ILO undertake research on: 1) evaluation and validation of knowledge skills and competence, and the means by which informal and prior learning may be evaluated and recognised and 2) the features and financial aspects of individual learning accounts as one policy option for funding lifelong learning systems. The documents of this meeting can be obtained from www.ilo.org.</p> <p>The governments/employers' group also submitted a resolution inviting the ILO Governing Body to consider that future sectoral meetings of the education sector should be held on a fully tripartite basis. This resolution stemmed from the fact that, although governments and employers have always worked together in a spirit of co operation in these joint meetings, both felt that the private sector was now a reality in education, which has to be fully taken into account, especially in the tripartite organisation that is the ILO. Although rejected by the Workers and not discussed, the idea has now been put on the table and will be considered by the Governing Body, with this time, hopefully, the support of governments.</p>	<p>Sectoral Meeting: Education</p>
<p>The pace at which technologies evolve nowadays, especially in the field of communications, was at the heart of a "<i>Symposium on Information technologies in the Media and Entertainment Industries: their impact on employment, working conditions and labour-management relations</i>" organized by the ILO in Geneva, from 28 February to 3 March 2000.</p> <p>Participants stressed the utmost importance of training in this field which will soon, if it is not yet the case, be one of the key elements of our economies. Therefore, the meeting requested the ILO to undertake research on best practices and funding options for training in different regions and countries, and to promote training and retraining in the use of information technologies.</p> <p>The meeting also recognized the numerous problems this rapid evolution poses in terms of copyrights, and invited the ILO to co-operate at the international level, within the scope of its mandate, to promote action to protect these rights.</p> <p>Also, and this is certainly one of the most difficult obstacle to overcome, the meeting stressed the importance of facilitating access of developing countries to the new information technology, particularly through the provision of technical assistance in training and advanced training.</p>	<p>Sectoral Meeting: Information technologies</p>

<p>The next ILO World Employment Report will focus on the impact of the “Knowledge economy” on the world of work. As part of the preparation of the report the ILO is running a virtual conference web site seeking input and feedback on this topic.</p> <p>To participate or to find more information visit the web site: www.virtualwer.org</p>	<p>World Employment Report</p>
<p>United Nations Agencies and other International Organizations News</p>	
<p>The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), together with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, is one of the three UN partners to implement the UN Secretary-General Global Compact.</p> <p>The Global Compact calls on business worldwide to promote nine basic principles in relation to human rights, labour standards and environmental protection. The environmental principles are that businesses should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges; • undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and • encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally-friendly technologies. <p>UNEP, through its Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE), is working closely with the private sector to make the environment component of the Global Compact work.</p> <p>In 1999, key UNEP DTIE activities relevant to the private sector have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>supported information exchange through its web page</i> (www.uneptie.org) and the specific databases Maestro, the International Cleaner Production Information Clearinghouse (ICPIC), the OzonAction Information Clearinghouse (OAIC), Chemicals; • <i>published a number of reports of direct relevance to the private sector</i>, including technical guides and case studies on clean technologies in specific industrial sectors, inventories of information sources on cleaner production and chemicals, a series on environmental reporting, handbooks on the environmental impacts of trade liberalisation, training manuals. • <i>developed the use of environmental management systems (EMS): the Environmental Management Systems Training Resource Kit</i> developed with the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC) is now available in 14 languages. It has been supplemented with the <i>Guide to ISO 14001 Certification/Registration</i>; • <i>operated or developed voluntary initiatives</i> with companies and enterprises in the field of finance, insurance, tourism, tour operators, oil and mining; • <i>promoted the signing and implementation of the UNEP International Cleaner Production Declaration</i>. Signatories of the Declaration commit themselves to 	<p>UNEP and the Global Compact</p>

<p>adopting a preventive strategy, environmental performance targets, and to regular reporting of their achievements towards the goals of cleaner production. Information about the Declaration: www.uneptie.org/Cp2/declaration/home.html.</p> <p><i>For more information contact:</i> <i>Laura Williamson, UNEP DTIE, 39-43 Quai André-Citroën, 75739 Paris Cedex 15, France. Tel. +33 1 44 37 14 69; Fax +33 1 44 37 14 74;</i> <i>E-mail: lwilliamson@unep.fr; web site: www.uneptie.org</i></p>	
<p>The UN Office of The High Commission for Human Rights will convene its third World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in South Africa in 2001. The Conference will focus on action orientated and practical steps to eradicate racism including measures of prevention, education and protection as well as the provision of effective remedies.</p> <p>For specific information on this event please contact the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights: E-mail husbands@un.org, web site www.unhchr.ch</p>	<p>United Nations High Commission for Human Rights</p>
<p>The European Commission is to present, in the summer of 2000, a document outlining its future activities on employment and social policy. A key question for the debate will be how synergies between the economic and social dimensions can be created by both institutions and policy.</p> <p>As the Commission sees it: “‘The new social agenda should be about initiating a virtuous circle through the interlinkage between Community action on employment, social protection, social inclusion, social dialogue, equal opportunities, and anti-discrimination. This should underpin improving the quality of life of all people in the European Union. Concretely, this calls for quality in work, quality in industrial relations and social quality. Quality in work refers, for instance, to the organisation of work adapted to the needs of both companies and individuals, fair remuneration and employment-friendly social protection. The quality in industrial relations will be determined by the capacity and the willingness of the social partners to agree jointly on the necessary adaptation and modernisation, including coping successfully with corporate restructuring and industrial change. Social quality implies a high level of social protection and social services available to all people in Europe as well as social inclusion based on real opportunities for all.</p> <p>The guiding principle will be that social policy is a productive factor. The new social policy agenda should emphasise that people are central to the renewed and modernised European model, both as creators of income and wealth, and as consumers. Labour markets cannot be treated simply like commodity markets. Social protection and redistribution of wealth are to be organised so as to be conducive to both economic growth and social progress. Putting people at the heart of social policy calls for increasing the attention to be given to life cycle issues and developing policies, which reflect the main phases of life.</p> <p>The new social agenda must take full account of the preparations towards enlargement in the pre-accession strategy, the negotiations for membership, and the integration of</p>	<p>European Commission: New Social Agenda</p>

<p>new countries into the European Union. It will also consider internationalisation – both in terms of pressures on the European social model and emerging opportunities as in terms of the definition of social standards in external relations.”</p>	
<p>Recently the European Union held a special summit in Lisbon. The main outcome was a call for the business community to work with European officials with a view to putting in place concrete structures for the development of innovation and creativity with the aim of stimulating employment growth.</p> <p>As a response to this, the Union of Industrial and Employers’ Confederation of Europe (UNICE) is inviting all of the European Union’s decision-makers to a dialogue with business people around the theme of “innovation and creativity”. This dialogue will be launched on the occasion of the “European Business Summit” (EBS) which will be held in Brussels on 9 and 10 June 2000.</p> <p>Themes to be discussed include cyber business, innovation and new markets and labour market flexibility. The meeting will be addressed by a number of senior business representatives. Further information can be obtained from http://www.ebsummit.org</p>	<p>European Union: Lisbon Summit</p>
<p>The WTO has published a new electronic bulletin. This monthly bulletin is open to all interested organisations. If you wish to receive this material, contact the WTO on ngobulletin@wto.org</p>	<p>World Trade Organisation</p>
<p>As part of our move to broaden our dialogue with other international organisations, IOE Secretary-General recently met with the Director General of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Paul Grossrieder.</p> <p>The Red Cross considers it timely to strengthen their collaboration with the private sector and its representative institutions. So far they have been dealing directly and exchanging information with local and national authorities. It is envisaged that at the next ILO Conference the new President of the Red Cross, Kellen Berger, will meet the Employers Group.</p> <p>The Red Cross has recently published a booklet entitled “War money and survival” which comprises a collection of articles by a diverse range of writers on the interaction between war and the economy and considers, for example, “the role of the private sector as a driving force for stability and reconstruction”</p> <p>For further information contact: E-mail: icrc@icrc.org, web site: www.icrc.org</p>	<p>International Committee of the Red Cross</p>

Other news	
<p>The ICFTU opened its 17th World Congress in Durban South Africa on April 3. As part of their addresses to the meeting both ICFTU General Secretary Bill Jordan and ICFTU President Leroy Trotman spoke of the need for the Trade Union movement to adapt to the changing world and saw its future relevance being dependent on its ability to organise labour within the new industries that were emerging from the rapid changes in telecommunications and other technology. They also spoke of the importance of the “global solidarity of trade unionism” and of the inevitability of stronger links between national unions and international trade union structures developing on the basis of discovered common interest as a result of globalisation.</p> <p>As part of this the ICFTU and 13 other trade union organisations have established a new web site called “Global Unions” to provide up to date information on international trade union activity on one site. The web page also includes a number of other types of information, one of, which lists current disputes for which international support is often sought</p> <p>Members can visit the site at www.global-unions.org.</p>	ICFTU
New publications	
<p><i>“Releasing the untapped potential of Enterprises through Socio Economic Management</i> Traditional approaches to the management of profit making organisations have generally emphasized economic objectives, as well as economic focused interventions to achieve these objectives. However, most organisations experience significant hidden economic costs which are not reflected in the balance sheets of such organisations. These hidden costs, which sometimes amount to even the total payroll costs of an organisation, are often human related.</p> <p>The publication, produced by collaboration between the Social Economic Institute of Firms and Organisations (ISEOR) and the Bureau of Employers’ Activities of the ILO, for training purposes, involves a set of diagnostic tools which require social as well as economic interventions in order to identify and reduce these hidden costs.</p> <p><i>Competition: an agenda for the 21st Century</i>, J. Prokopenko and S.R. de Silva</p> <p>The book covers the conditions and factors which contribute to competitiveness at the national as well as the enterprise level. It also covers the impact of competition in the areas of operations of employers’ organisations as well as on employers organisations themselves. The publication will be the basis for programmes with employers’ organisations to enable them to identify the shortcomings in their country’s competitive position so that they can prepare their own lobbying agenda with policy makers through a process of social dialogue. It also provides a basis for employers’ organisations to develop services to their members to enhance their competitiveness.</p> <p>Those wishing to receive more information concerning such publications should contact: the Bureau for Employers' Activities: actemp@ilo.org.</p>	ACT/EMP

