

**YEAR END MESSAGE FROM THE IOE PRESIDENT**

Dear friends,

This year end marks the completion of the first seven months of the mandate with which you have entrusted me as IOE President and during which I have been able to get to know some of you and examine more deeply the fundamental issues for the success of enterprises throughout the world.

Knowing little of the ILO, I have been able to measure the exceptional quality of the platform which it represents so that we, the key actors and masters of economic and social life in all countries of the world can – under the impulse of the Director-General – come together.

One of my wishes for the new year is that we show ourselves capable of seizing the opportunity that is officially given to us to develop, together with our partners – employees and governments – constructive relations cemented on reciprocal respect and confidence. It is only on these grounds that we can, with them, attempt to inject more innovation and realism into the traditional approach to the problems facing our society, and in particular that of globalization.

My second wish is that the IOE be more present in public debates at both the national and international levels. Wherever problems are raised affecting the international community of enterprises – which we represent – we must make our positions very widely known and fully understood.

Finally, and this is my last wish, I hope that the IOE continues to take upon itself the relevance of the positions it adopts and is successful in better defining those areas where enterprises can commit themselves by associating them more in its reflections.

May I personally, and on behalf of all the members of the Secretariat in Geneva, wish you and your families an excellent and very happy new year.

*François Perigot*

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<b>International Labour Organization</b>	
<p>As a follow-up to the ILO Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No.170), work on elaborating a globally harmonized system for the classification and labelling of chemicals (GHS) began in 1991.</p> <p>When the task of harmonizing classification criteria was nearly completed at the end of 1997, a Tripartite Working Group was set up by the ILO in 1998 with the task of harmonizing hazard communication tools, including labelling elements such as hazard symbols and statements for each hazard category and related levels of severity, as well as the format and contents of chemical safety data sheets.</p> <p>The Working Group recently completed its task, which was endorsed by the Governing Body last month. The employer experts support the efforts related to GHS, as a means to mitigate the impact of implementing varying hazardous chemicals classification and labelling regimes which pose technical barriers to trade in the global market. The full GHS documents are now available, among other papers, on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's Web Site at: <a href="http://www.unece.org/trans/main/dgdb/dgsubc4/c4doc_2001.html">http://www.unece.org/trans/main/dgdb/dgsubc4/c4doc_2001.html</a></p>	<p><b>International group of experts finalizes work on harmonization of chemical hazard communication</b></p>
<p>In response to the crisis in the sector of civil aviation, triggered by the September 11 events, the ILO will convene in Geneva, from 21 to 25 January 2002, a <i>Tripartite Meeting on Civil Aviation: Social and Safety Consequences of the Crisis Subsequent to the 11 September 2001 Events</i>.</p> <p>Initially scheduled as a <i>Tripartite Meeting on Restructuring of Civil Aviation: Consequences for Management and Personnel</i>, this meeting was re-titled by the ILO Governing Body to respond better to the recently revealed situation in the sector.</p> <p>Sixty delegates (twenty from the three groups) plus an expected large number of observers will attend this important event. On the employers' benches, representatives are expected not only from major airlines, but also from aircraft manufacturers and other directly involved industrial sectors.</p>	<p><b>ILO to respond to crisis in civil aviation</b></p>
<p>Readers may recall (<i>see IOE.Net No.1, January 2000</i>) that a tripartite meeting of experts had just drawn up a Code of Practice on Safety in the Use of Synthetic Vitreous Fibre Insulation Wools (glass wool, rock wool and slag wool). In Appendix A of the Code, the IARC (International Agency for Research on Cancer, an agency of the World Health Organization) evaluation of insulation wools was given as being Group 2B (<i>"possibly carcinogenic to humans"</i>). On 16 October, IARC re-evaluated the carcinogenic risks from airborne man-made vitreous fibres, including glass wool, rock wool and slag wool, as being those falling under Group 3 <i>"unclassifiable as to carcinogenicity to humans"</i>.</p>	<p><b>IARC re-evaluates carcinogenic risks from airborne man-made vitreous fibres</b></p>

<p>During its November 2001 Session, the ILO Governing Body authorized publication of a Code of Practice on the Management of Disability at the Workplace, drawn up by a tripartite group of twenty-seven experts which met in Geneva in October.</p> <p>The Code of Practice, which is a non-binding instrument, outlines the general duties of employers and workers' representatives and the responsibilities of competent authorities; the framework for the management of disability issues in the workplace; recruitment; promotion; job retention; adjustments; and confidentiality of information. This 31-page Code, which received the support of the employer experts, is intended to be read in the context of national conditions and applied in accordance with national law and practice. It is available on the ILO's WebSite at :</p> <p><a href="http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/gb/docs/gb282/pdf/tmemdw-2.pdf">http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/gb/docs/gb282/pdf/tmemdw-2.pdf</a></p>	<p><b>Managing Disability at the Workplace</b></p>
<p><b>United Nations Agencies and other International Organizations News</b></p>	
<p>UNICE's Council of Presidents has appointed as its new Secretary-General, Philippe de Buck van Overstraeten, currently Chief Executive Officer of Agoria, the largest sectoral federation in Belgium.</p> <p>Mr de Buck van Overstraeten will take up the post on 1st January 2002.</p>	<p><b>UNICE's New Secretary-General</b></p>
<p>The 2002 version of UNEP/Wuppertal's calendar and assistant guidebook for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), "The Efficient Entrepreneur", is ready to order for the year 2002. "The Efficient Entrepreneur" provides a month-by-month programme that assists SMEs on how to measure, improve and report on their business performance. The 2002 edition is available in English, French and Spanish.</p> <p><a href="http://www.uneptie.org/outreach/business/calendar.htm">http://www.uneptie.org/outreach/business/calendar.htm</a>.</p>	<p><b>The Efficient Entrepreneur</b></p>
<p>UNIDO has released its Business Plan for the medium-term period 2002-2005. Under the plan, UNIDO has grouped its activities into two areas: "strengthening industrial capacities" and "cleaner and sustainable industrial development". In implementing this approach, UNIDO will concentrate its activities in the least developed countries, especially in Africa, with particular emphasis on agro-industries and on support to SMEs in all developing regions.</p>	<p><b>UNIDO</b></p>

## **IOE Activities**

The IOE in conjunction with ILO/AIDS, the Federation of Kenya Employers and the Pan African Employers' Confederation organised a workshop in Mombasa, Kenya on 26 and 27 November 2001. The event brought together 21 representatives of employers' organisations in East, Central and Southern Africa to discuss the launching of a time-bound action programme to combat HIV/AIDS in the workplace within the sub-region. The Eastern and Southern Africa sub-regions are the most affected by the pandemic according to the latest data released by UNAIDS. Employers in the sub-region are losing management personnel, professionals and both skilled and unskilled workers to the pandemic. Certain sectors like mining, commercial farming, transport and tourism have been worst hit. In order to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, the following actions need to be taken.

- Each employers' organisation should carry out a baseline survey on the socio-economic impact of the pandemic and the initiatives taken by its members to respond to the problem
- Use the findings of the survey to sensitise board members of EOs and CEOs of companies on the need to take action
- Develop a national or sectoral strategy by setting up a broad based working group bringing together relevant stakeholders like workers' organisations, organisations of people living with HIV/AIDS, Government National Aids Control Councils, and Associations of Medical Practitioners.
- The working group should develop guidelines for employers on how to deal with the pandemic in the workplace
- Implement workplace programme which include information and education on prevention methods, develop a company policy on HIV/AIDS, provide voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) and monitor impact of programmes using indicators such as morbidity, condom use, attitude change
- Finally employers' organisations were called upon to seek partnerships with UN agencies and other partners in order to mobilise technical and financial resources.

The workshop also discussed the relevance to enterprises of the recently launched ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work.

Participants also stressed the importance of sharing experiences and best practices. They particularly commended the Federation of Kenya Employers for its elaborate workplace HIV/AIDS activities.

### **Time-bound Action Plan to Combat HIV/AIDS in the Workplace**

<p>The IOE was invited to participate in this conference on building cooperation in Africa and the business investment and humanitarian challenges. Organised by the International Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with the Business Humanitarian Forum, the event was held in Paris on 6 December 2001 and was attended by representatives from business, government, media and humanitarian experts. Participants discussed the problems affecting Africa with regard to conflict, refugees, reconstruction and health and the role that business can play in responding to them. The IOE made a presentation on the efforts its members in the continent were making to respond to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.</p> <p>The Keynote address was made by Prof. Ibrahim A. Gambari, UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa to Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Professor Gambari called on business to play an active role in peace-making and stabilisation in the continent. He recalled that some businesses had played a negative role especially in weak states where they had supported factions in civil wars. However on the positive side, several businesses had been partners in progress in many resource-rich African countries, with Botswana as an example. Since business had a dual capability in terms of peace and security, it would make sense to seek to direct its resources and energies to more of a stabilising factor in many societies in Africa.</p> <p>In his message to the Meeting, Secretary General Kofi Annan thanked the business community for supporting the principles of the Global Compact .</p>	<p><b>Building Cooperation in Africa - Business Investment and Humanitarian Challenges</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IOE Members</b></p>	
<p>At the initiative of BIA (Bulgaria), the employers' federations from candidate countries to the European Union created the Applicant Countries Employers' Organisations Network (ACEON). The purposes of the ACEON are to develop and strengthen cooperation between employers' organisations, promote the role of employers' organisations in the context of EU enlargement, strengthen their capacity, exchange information, identify common problems and undertake joint activities, build partnership especially with UNICE and finally promote the approach and put into practice mechanisms for defending the common interest of employers thereby preparing the ACEON members for their effective participation in UNICE activities.</p> <p>The First Conference of the ACEON, funded by the European Commission, was held in Albena (Bulgaria) on 14 to 16 November 2001 and participants prepared a Resolution, which was sent to all European stakeholders. The IOE supported this initiative and will cooperate in the future with this important network.</p>	<p><b>Applicant Countries Employers' Organisations Network (ACEON)</b></p>

<p>Since his election in December 1998, Venezuelan President Chavez has launched a campaign against what he calls Venezuela's oligarchies - amongst them the trade unions, employers and the catholic church. As a result of the issuing by the President of 49 executive decrees authorising the mass expropriation of lands with the subsequent disruption to both property rights and business operations, the Employers' Federation in Venezuela, FEDECAMARAS, with the support of the Venezuelan Workers' Confederation, called on its members to stop their activities for one day on 10 December as a protest against the Government's hostility to the business community. To support this protest, the IOE wrote to President Chavez, in coordination with FEDECAMARAS, asking him to reconsider the disputed decrees and offered its support to efforts by the Government to look to work in a constructive dialogue with the employers' and workers' organizations of the country.</p>	<p><b>IOE addresses letter to President Chavez of Venezuela</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Other news</b></p>	
<p>Throughout the year, the ICFTU has been undertaking a self-review of how it functions in order to better position itself in the globalized world. The Executive Board is now starting to consider the findings of the review. So far, the following developments have been endorsed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Approval of the development of "Global Unions" as a common identity for the international trade union movement and as a platform for international campaigns.</li> <li>▸ Launch of a Global Unions' Youth Initiative planned to inform young workers of the better wages, conditions and protections offered through union membership and to reinforce union organisation of young workers.</li> <li>▸ Global campaigns for women workers, action to ensure MNEs abide by international labour standards.</li> <li>▸ Initiative to close the "digital divide" in the trade union movement by ensuring it access and training.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The future of the International Trade Union Movement</b></p>
<p>Guy Ryder, currently special adviser to ILO Director-General Juan Somavia has been appointed acting General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions following the announcement of the retirement of Bill Jordan, General Secretary since 1995. Mr Ryder is expected to take up the Brussels based role early in the new year.</p> <p>ICFTU Assistant General secretary since 1993, Eddy Laurijssen has also left to take up the position of Director of the ILO office in Brussels, effective as from 1st December.</p> <p>For more information: <a href="http://www.icftu.org/">http://www.icftu.org/</a></p>	<p><b>New Secretary-General for ICFTU</b></p>

<b>New Publications</b>	
<p>This ACT/EMP publication provides an interesting and comprehensive overview of the whole ILO standards system from an employers' perspective. From the creation of international labour standards (ILS), through their denunciation, abrogation and withdrawal, passing through the process of their supervision, the Guide contains interesting insights from its authors, Alfred Wisskirchen and Christian Hess. The guide is compulsory reading for any international labour lawyer, but is also a useful tool for anyone involved with ILS, either at national level or as an employer delegate to the International Labour Conference. Spanish and French versions will also be available soon.</p>	<p><b>NEW: "Employers' Handbook on ILO Standards-related Activities"</b></p>