

IOE.net

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF EMPLOYERS

REPRESENTING 148 NATIONAL EMPLOYER FEDERATIONS IN 141 COUNTRIES ACROSS THE WORLD

APRIL 2009



INTERNATIONAL
ORGANISATION OF EMPLOYERS

Index

Editorial: Opportunity in a Time of Crisis.....	1
G-20 Jobs Conference	2
G-8 Labour Ministers Meeting	2
Response to Economic Crisis.....	3
GOSH.....	3
Int. Labour & Social Policy Review	3
GIRN.....	4
African Employers & Migration	4
IOE Staff Movement.....	5
Reorientation of ILC 2009.....	5
ILC Gender Discussion.....	6
The Committee of Experts	6
Symp. on Demographic Challenge .	7
Helpdesk launched	7
Combating Forced Labour.....	7
No deal on Public Procurement	8
Impact of the Financial Crisis.....	8
Workshop on Food Price Crisis	8
Labour Administration in the Americas	9
Trade Union Rights' Violation.....	10
Green Jobs	10
Forthcoming Meetings.....	10

Opportunity in a Time of Crisis

The IOE has successfully led efforts to redirect the focus of the 2009 International Labour Conference (ILC) towards dealing comprehensively with the Global Jobs Crisis and to formulating exit strategies.

A newly formed Conference Committee of the Whole (CoW) will examine current responses and develop and communicate recommendations for future measures to tackle the crisis. The mechanisms for this CoW are still being elaborated (we have outlined the broad structure later in this IOE.net).

This change to the Conference agenda is highly significant.

The IOE advocated, in its *2008 Employers' Vision of the ILO*, the need for the Organization to adapt to changing circumstances and respond in a manner that adds value to its constituents. The IOE also strongly supported similar objectives laid out in the ILO's 2008 Declaration. A re-focused ILC is the first clear manifestation of those goals being met.

It is hoped the CoW will achieve the following three objectives.

First, provide constituents with a unique opportunity to exchange information in real time on crisis response strategies implemented around the globe. The importance of this exercise should not be underestimated. Innovative solutions are being explored throughout the world by enterprises and their workers, by national policy makers, by multilateral and regional organisations – sharing these solutions in a global space is vitally important and enriching for participants.

Second, based on analysis of these experiences, provide direction to the Office in its crisis response strategies.

Third, provide policy guidance to governments. This third outcome will most likely take the form of a set of conclusions, a Resolution or some other formal statement. It will be the main policy message issuing from the ILC and will contribute to the Global Summit scheduled to take place in the third week. From an employer perspective, it is imperative that this outcome be: direct and concise, communicable to the outside world, actionable and focused on practical policy guidance.

To attain these outcomes, discussions in the CoW need to be technically focused and designed to facilitate concrete and practical outcomes. Expertise from outside the ILO, including other multilateral organizations, should play a central role. Finally, much like the discussion on the 2008 Declaration, all parties need to move at the same speed to arrive at a genuine consensus that garners maximum support.

In this latter respect, it is unhelpful to promote the idea of a Global Jobs Pact almost as a foregone conclusion. A Global Jobs Pact may well emerge from the ILC discussions, but it is up to the delegates themselves to decide.

A meaningful outcome can be arrived at through focused, practical discussion and negotiated compromises. The 2009 Conference has the potential to be a significant milestone on the road to achieving shared goals in the future.

IOE and Member Activities

G-20 Jobs Conference

The IOE participated in the London Jobs Conference in late March which gathered experts from the G-20 countries and was designed as a preparatory technical meeting for the London Summit. The following were some of the key points proposed by the Conference to the G-20:

- *Reduce non-wage labour costs – for example, by temporarily deferring or reducing employers' social security contributions;*
- *Look at alternatives to redundancy – for example, at combining short time working and work-sharing with training;*
- *Monitor and share labour market policy developments in response to the crisis;*
- *Link social protection to labour market measures, for example, by encouraging job search;*
- *Implement measures to increase employment, for example, through public works, support for self employment, and for part time work;*
- *Deliver through partnerships with the private and voluntary sectors;*
- *Invest in skills that enable people to stay connected to the labour market, and to adapt to changing economic conditions.*

The full set of conclusions can be found on the IOE's web page in the 'Responding to the Economic Crisis' section.

IOE contact: Gary Rynhart: rynhart@ioe-emp.org

G-8 Labour Ministers Meeting

The IOE and the Business and Industry Advisory Council to the OECD (BIAC) presented a joint business statement to the G-8 Labour Ministers Social Summit in Rome in March, which also included Ministers from South Africa, Egypt, Brazil, India, China and Mexico. The overarching business messages were: actions must support job creation; employment must be the objective of policies over job security; the most vulnerable must be protected; social dialogue is necessary; protectionism is not the answer:

The Ministers identified a number of common measures that could be taken to protect existing and increase new jobs, to develop skills and to strengthen social protection. These fell into four broad areas:

1. *Promoting targeted, effective and active labour market policies to help reduce unemployment;*
2. *Enhancing skills development and matching jobs with labour market needs*



3. *Ensuring effective social protection systems to help affected workers and families;*

4. *Enabling labour markets to respond to broader structural changes.*

As with the conclusions of the London Jobs Conference, those of the Social Summit also fed into the G-20 and were alluded to in the G-20 Communiqué, with reference to a specific role for the ILO:

"We therefore welcome the reports of the London Jobs Conference and the Rome Social Summit and the key principles they proposed we call upon the ILO, working with other relevant organisations, to assess the actions taken and those required for the future." (Paragraph 26 The Global Plan for Recovery and Reform, G-20 Communiqué, April 2009)

All related documents are on the IOE website in the 'Responding to the Economic Crisis' section.

IOE contact: Gary Rynhart: rynhart@ioe-emp.org

Response to the Economic Crisis

The Secretariat has developed a section on the IOE website dealing specifically with the crisis: <http://www.ioe-emp.org/en/global-jobs-crisis/index.html>

This section is comprised of all related IOE documents, along with information from IOE members, the ILO, the World Bank, the OECD and other actors. It also contains all recent high-level international statements.

We invite members to send us any additional information that could be helpful to other federations.

IOE contact: Gary Rynhart: rynhart@ioe-emp.org

Global Occupational Safety and Health Network

The IOE successfully launched its new Global Occupational Safety and Health Network (GOSH.net) at the end of March in Geneva.

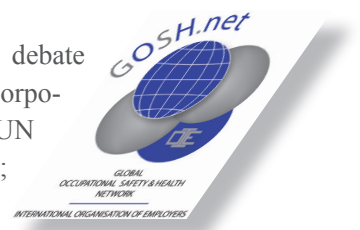
Its mission is similar to that of the Global Industrial Relations Network (GIRN) in providing a unique opportunity for business to discuss and debate current and emerging OSH issues on a confidential basis. It differs from the GIRN in including in its membership IOE member federations along with multinational enterprises.

The inaugural meeting was attended by five member federations and seventeen company representatives. Experts from the World Health Organization (WHO), the EU Risk Observatory and specific speakers from Can-

ada and China, helped facilitate debate on the following topics: global corporate sanctions; IOE influence on UN bodies (particularly the WHO); Chinese occupational health and safety legislation and identifying and managing emerging risks at EU level.

A communications platform is being developed further to support the needs of GOSH members. The next GOSH.net meeting will take place in Madrid in October 2009.

IOE contact: Janet Asherson:
asherson@ioe-emp.org



International Labour and Social Policy Review

The third edition of the IOE's International Labour and Social Policy Review will be launched at the 2009 International Labour Conference in June.

Originally, the Review's aim was to publish policy and technical contributions from IOE members - national employers' organizations. This year, however, we have decided to reposition the Review as a broader publication and consequently have received contributions from beyond the traditional employer constituency, including from the Heads of four major international organizations: Directors General of the International Labour Office; the International Organisation of Migration and the World Trade Organization and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as an article from the trade union movement.

We invited contributors to provide us with articles pertinent to the current economic crisis that were enquiring, frank and honest. We have not been disappointed and the range and balance of articles make this a very rich and exciting publication.

We would like to increase the profile of this publication and invite members to submit to us the names of key national institutions and other actors who would welcome receiving a copy of the Review.

IOE contact: Gary Rynhart: rynhart@ioe-emp.org

Global Industrial Relations Network



The IOE Global Industrial Relations Network (GIRN) held his fifth meeting on 7 and 8 April. The event was hosted by the Coca-Cola Company and organized in collaboration with the United States Council for International Business (USCIB).

The programme of the meeting included a session on “Managing in the downturn”. This session presented an opportunity for participants to share experiences on what policies have and/or will be put in place to tackle the current challenges. Other important and relevant topics were also discussed: the casualisation of labour and its implications; labour law in the U.S and its implications for companies; an update of China’s employment contract law and ongoing challenges and lessons learnt.

The next meeting of the GIRN is scheduled to take place in the fall, most probably at the end of October.

IOE contact: Barbara Leon: leon@ioe-emp.org

African Employers’ Organizations making International Labour Migration a win-win Situation

Leaders of employer organizations from East, Central and Southern Africa met in Swaziland on 6-7 April for their annual conference. The theme for this year’s event was “Labour migration: harnessing Africa’s talent for the continent’s economic development”. The theme of labour migration was chosen following the initiative by African leaders from the sub- region to merge the sub-regional Economic communities of SADC (Southern Africa), COMESA (Eastern and Southern Africa) and EAC (East Africa) into one entity.

The new economic bloc will have a population of 527 million and a combined GDP of 625 billion US dollars. Free movement of labour within the new entity is one of the issues being discussed by heads of state and governments. The employer leaders attending the meeting expressed the wish to be consulted in the discussions since labour migration flows are employer driven with employment for migrant workers provided largely by the private sector in the destination countries such as multinational and small and medium sized enterprises.

Several companies that participated in the discussions such as MTN, Coca Cola, Standard Bank and Royal Swazi Sugar Company called on employer organizations to work closely with governments to help them have access to the skills they needed for their operations in the different countries. Some companies, especially those in new technology industries such as mobile telephony, felt that their investments were



Visit of the Royal Swazi Sugar Company

sometimes hampered when host governments insisted on them recruiting locally where necessary skills and experience had not yet been developed.

In order to address these concerns, employer leaders called for the development of labour market information systems for the sub-region, sharing of information and strengthening of their network so that they can lobby for the inclusion of labour mobility issues in regional trading agreements.

They also decided to carry out rapid assessment surveys on the impact of the global economic crisis on their member companies. A meeting to deliberate on ways of mitigating the impact of the crisis will be organized in Nairobi, Kenya on 18-19 May in 2009.

IOE contact: Frederick Muia: muia@ioe-emp.org

IOE Staff Movement

The IOE will welcome a new Senior Adviser, Scott Barklamb, on May 1. Scott, former Director – Workplace Policy, for the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Manager of the ACCI Melbourne office, will be the IOE regional Adviser for Asia, with special responsibility as the contact point for Asian member federations. With his wide experience in the field of workplace relations, Scott will be bringing his expertise to IOE industrial relations activity as well as to human rights and communications. The Secretariat is looking forward to having Scott join the IOE team!

Contact: barklamb@ioe-emp.org



Scott Barklamb, Senior Adviser



International Labour Organization

Reorientation of the 2009 International Labour Conference

As a result of a decision taken by the March Session of the ILO Governing Body, a reorientation of the agenda of this year's International Labour Conference has been agreed.

The General Discussion on Gender will now occur within a compressed time frame, completing all of its work by Wednesday 10 June. The proposed General Discussion item on Demographics will not take place. The Conference discussion on a *standard-setting item on HIV/AIDS* and the *Committee on the Application of Standards* will remain unchanged.

A newly formed "Committee of the Whole" (CoW) will focus on the employment and social policy consequences of the economic and financial crisis.

This committee will commence its work with a series of thematic discussions ('Hearings' is the term being proposed by the Office to stress where the focus is to lie.). Likely topics include: *social dialogue and enterprise adjustments to economic downturn; social safety nets and social protection; public employment schemes; sustaining and promoting SMEs and micro-enterprises; employment services and active labour market policies; targeting new entrants to the labour market, particularly youth; wage policies; migrants; financing crisis responses; microfinance; fundamental principles and rights at work; the ILO response.* These topics will probably be grouped under six to eight themes.

The format of the hearings will involve 1-3 experts who will provide an overview on a given theme followed by an open debate. It is likely that an employer and worker will lead in each discussion.

Additionally, a *Global Summit on Dealing with the Job Crisis* will be held on 15-16 June (the CoW will complete its committee work most likely on 12 June). The Global Summit will involve Heads of State, senior policy makers, high level representatives of business and labour, and other global opinion leaders. The outcome from the CoW will form a significant contribution to the Summit deliberations.

In terms of employer preparation, we ask members to contact the IOE Secretariat with:

- *Names of individuals (not specifically employers) whom we could propose as experts for the hearings;*
- *Employer specialists for the thematic hearings;*
- *Suggestions for high-level personalities for the Global Summit.*

Considering the breadth of issues under discussion and the usual constraints on delegation size, we encourage members to open discussions with their governments to increase the size of delegations to reflect commitment to the exceptional circumstances. We have initiated discussions with the ILO in this respect.

For the CoW, the Employers' Group will need a broad spectrum of representatives able to deeply engage in the issues under discussion. In this respect, receiving names as early as possible of technical employer delegates will greatly facilitate our preparations. The Secretariat will notify members once the programme for this Committee has been clarified.

IOE contact: Valérie Gugl: gugl@ioe-emp.org

ILC Gender Discussion

As previously mentioned, as a result of an Employers' Group initiative an agreement was reached to reshape the agenda for the 2009 Conference. The General Discussion on Gender Equality will be shortened. The Commission on Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work will now meet from Wednesday 3 June until Wednesday 10 June.

A productive discussion is envisaged and will propose meaningful and sustainable results. For employers, one of the key objectives of the discussion is to take the opportunity to chart a strategic course for the future work of the ILO in the area of gender equality. This work should consider diverse labour markets and different realities as well as national circumstances. Promoting gender equality must take into account, respect and support business needs and priorities.

Because of the new ILC Agenda, it is extremely important for the Group to start working together and support the spokesperson.

With a view to forming a working group, we encourage members to communicate their intention to attend this Commission at their earliest convenience.

IOE contact: Barbara Leon: leon@ioe-emp.org

The Committee of Experts

Employers' organizations, like trade unions, can influence observations made by the ILO's Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR).

They may do this in addition to influencing the list of individual cases examined in the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS).

According to Article 23 of the ILO Constitution, any employers' or workers' organization – whether or not it has received copies of government reports – may at any time transmit its comments to the ILO regarding the way in which an ILO Member State is applying in law and in practice one or more ratified Conventions. The CEACR and the CAS have emphasized the value of such comments as a means of assisting them, particularly, in assessing the effective application of ratified Conventions. Observations made by the CEACR are published every March in a report which constitutes the basis for the work of the CAS in June.

Therefore, if an employer organization is interested in having its Government added to or taken off the list of individual cases being examined in the CAS at

the International Labour Conference, a way of having some influence in the process is by sending comments to the Experts. In light of the above, the IOE once again invites member federations to supply relevant comments directly to the International Labour Office regarding the manner in which a government is applying in law and in practice one or more ratified Conventions. The comments should highlight not only problems or negative aspects of the application of a Convention but also progress and achievements made in that regard. The Office will then forward these comments to the government concerned, which will have an opportunity to respond before the comments are examined by the Experts.

Comments should be submitted to the International Labour Office no later than the 1st of September 2009 to the following email address (normes@ilo.org) so that the Experts, in their November/December meeting, may consider them when drafting their comments.

IOE contact: María Paz Anzorreguy:

anzorreguy@ioe-emp.org

Symposium on the Demographic Challenge

The ILO's Bureau for Employers' Activities is organising an international symposium on the Demographic Challenge and its implications for business. It will be held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 28 and 29 April 2009, and will bring together employer representatives from a wide range of countries, both developed and developing.

The expertise informing the discussions will include leading researchers and thinkers, as well as practitioners from the business community who have taken a lead in addressing the ageing of the workforce.

The symposium will review demographic trends and their impact on business. It will also look at cur-

rent debates and the public policy and regulatory frameworks already in place. Participants will additionally consider a plan of action for society and business to successfully meet the challenges of ageing populations.

The IOE has already selected candidates to attend this meeting who will have their travelling expenses funded. **However, the symposium is open to all federations and their enterprise members who wish to travel at their own expense.** Further information can be found at the following link:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/actemp/whatwedo/events/2009/symposium.htm>

Helpdesk Launched

The long-awaited "Helpdesk" offering ILO guidance to multinationals was launched in March. The Helpdesk deals with companies' questions relating to international labour standards and draws on guidance provided by the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the ILO MNE Declaration and a range of other declarations, conclusions, guidelines, tools and other instruments. Companies are able to confidentially ask questions and, through a process involving the ILO's Bureau for Employers' Activities

overseen by the IOE, to receive answers where they can be found within the organization's authoritative decisions, mainly the supervisory system. *The Helpdesk provides guidance only.* It does not assess company compliance or endorse any company or initiative, nor does it provide information on national labour laws or national industrial relations practices.

IOE contact: Barbara Leon: leon@ioe-emp.org and: assistance@ilo.org

Combating Forced Labour - Fall Workshop for Arab countries

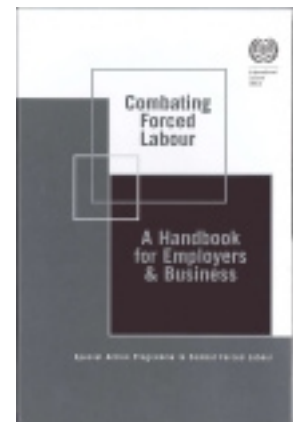
The IOE has been actively working with the ILO department on Forced Labour (SAP-FL). This collaboration has resulted in the development of products such as the Handbook for Employers and Business in Combating Forced Labour, and the convening of workshops and awareness-raising events that have already brought together employers' organisations, global companies and SMEs in the United States, the Eastern European and Asian Regions.

Building on this success, the IOE and SAP-FL are planning to convene a workshop for Employers in Cairo in the fall. The purpose of this event is to raise

employer awareness in this region of forced labour and trafficking and to mobilise action by business actors to address them.

Initial consultations have been held with IOE, SAP-FL and employers' organisations from the region, as the aim is for these events to respond to their needs, priorities and national realities.

IOE contact: Barbara Leon: leon@ioe-emp.org



Public Procurement: No Agreement on Convention 94

A Global Dialogue Forum on Decent Work in Local Government Procurement for Infrastructure Provision was held in Geneva on 17 and 18 February 2009.

While there was broad consensus on principles during the whole discussion, at the last Plenary, the Workers requested several substantive changes to the proposed conclusions prepared by the Office, many of which were not acceptable to the Employers, especially related to their wish to promote Convention 94 on public procurement.

As there was no time available for further discussion, it was decided that no conclusion should be adopted.

The final, and only, document from this meeting will be the report of the discussion which will be available soon on the ILO website.

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/techmeet/gdfp09/index.htm>

IOE contact: Jean Dejardin: dejardin@ioe-emp.org

Impact of the Financial Crisis on Financial Sector Workers: Wide Tripartite Consensus

The Global Dialogue Forum on the Impact of the Financial Crisis on Financial Sector Workers, held in the ILO on 24 and 25 February 2009 was a resounding success.

The consensual conclusions recognize, among others, the specific prerogative of management, while reinforcing that social dialogue can help in solving social and labour-related issues caused by the crisis and in mitigating the negative impact on employment.

These conclusions also recognize that there will be redundancies, but only as a last resort. They also caution against protectionist measures, which would only serve to aggravate the crisis.

http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/lang--en/docName--WC-MS_103375/index.htm

IOE contact: Jean Dejardin: dejardin@ioe-emp.org

Tripartite Technical Workshop on the Impact of the Food Price Crisis on Decent Work

This workshop, which took place from 5 – 6 March 2009, achieved its main objective of involving the ILO in the UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF), as well as to encourage the HLTF and national authorities to *make use of the networks of employers' and workers' organizations at international and national level in policy development and in ensuring delivery of policy outcome (... ..) and to involve employers' and workers' organizations, supported by the ILO field structure, in the development and delivery of national plans to ensure food security.*

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/techmeet/twfp09/index.htm>

IOE contact: Jean Dejardin: dejardin@ioe-emp.org

UN and other International Organizations

Labour migration and labour market information systems in the Americas

An inter-American network for labour administration (RIAL) workshop held in Canada in late February focused on the implications for migration, mobility and labour market information systems in the hemisphere in response to the current economic crisis. The workshop additionally facilitated an exchange of best practices from across the hemisphere on the development of labour market information systems.

Ministries of Labour from 22 countries were represented at the workshop, along with members of CEATAL (the business technical advisory committee on labour matters to the OAS) and COSATE (the union equivalent) and specialists from the ILO, the IOM, the OAS, the Inter-American Dialogue and the Inter-American Conference of Social Security, among others. CEATAL was represented by two delegates, one from Canada and one from Panama.

In its intervention CEATAL underlined that it would be a serious mistake to suspend all initiatives that facilitate labour mobility in response to the economic crisis as mobility will be crucial in placing workers in available jobs and will allow a swift return to sound, strong economic conditions. CEATAL said that the three major issues demanding attention during the crisis were labour standards, worker mobility, and free trade, and the best responses to the crisis will be those developed through tripartite social dialogue.

In general, the participants recognized that social dialogue is essential for tackling the current crisis and defining what actions should be taken, and that together, governments, workers' and employers' organizations can work for better management of job-related migrations. In this context, labour ministries have a key role to play in formulating and administering labour migration policies, defining mechanisms for coordination and consultation with social stakeholders, monitoring private placement agencies and operating labour market information systems for guiding migration policy on the basis of labour market needs.

Mention was made of the importance of strengthening regional ties in tackling the crisis, essentially because at the regional and subregional levels countries are highly interdependent. Reference

was made to the fact that the crisis could have the positive outcome of creating new opportunities for cooperation and social dialogue on the harmonization of policies for regulating migratory flows and on special support measures for migrants among the region's governments and social stakeholders.

A number of recommendations for improving labour migration policy in the Americas, were proposed at the workshop, such as: establishing training and skill-certification programs for migrant workers; entering into agreements for pension transferability; reconsidering foreign worker hiring quotas; gathering and exchanging more complete information about migrants and migratory flows; drafting a model bilateral agreement to encourage temporary migration by less qualified workers; and exchanging best practices for implementing temporary worker programmes.

In the run-up to the XVI Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour which will be held in Buenos Aires, September 23-25 (attendance of all the Ministers of Labour of the region is expected) the following preparatory events will take place:

- *First Preparatory Meeting of the XVI IACML and RIAL workshop on labour inspection, May 12-15 in Mexico City, Mexico*
- *Second Preparatory Meeting of the XVI IACML: Three days during the week of July 20-24 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.*



*Daniel Funes de Rioja,
President of CEATAL*

IOE contact: María Anzorreguy:
anzorreguy@ioe-emp.org

Other news of interest

Trade Union Rights' Violations: the ITUC Perspective

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has published its "2008 Annual survey of violations of trade union rights" providing an overview of the situation around the world from the trade unions' viewpoint.

From an employer perspective, this material does not always make for pleasant reading. However, it is important for IOE members to know what unions are reporting on their country and employers, particularly when it may have economic and commercial consequences for enterprises. To access the survey please click the following link (<http://survey08.ituc-csi.org/survey.php?IDContinent=0&Lang=EN>).

IOE contact: María Paz Anzorreguy, anzorreguy@ioe-emp.org

Green Jobs

The economic crisis is regarded as an opportunity to promote employment in the environment sector by means of green jobs. However, to date the green jobs debate has been narrow and misleading. The main inspiration for green jobs should be that environmental protection, increased employment and economic development go hand in glove. A recent discussion paper (in English) by the German Employers (BDA) on "Green Jobs" articulates these concerns and is available on the IOE's web page in the 'Responding to the Economic Crisis' section.

Major forthcoming meetings

28 - 29 April	Employer Symposium on Demographic Change (Geneva)
11 - 14 May	Tripartite Meeting on Promoting Social Dialogue and Good Industrial Relations from Oil and Gas Exploration and Production to Oil and Gas Distribution (Geneva)
18 - 21 May	ILO/IOE/CAPE mmeeting on Skills and the Crisis in Asia (Bangkok)
18 - 19 May	IOE/PEC/FKE/ILO African Employers' Forum on the Financial Crisis, Economic Recovery and Employment (Nairobi)
1 June	IOE Management Board (Geneva)
2 June	IOE General Council (Geneva)
9 - 10 June	Global Compact Annual Local Networks Forum (Istanbul)
3 - 19 June	International Labour Conference (Geneva)
10 - 11 September	IOE European Meeting (Riga)
1 - 2 October	GOSH.NET Meeting (Madrid)