



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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SOC 515

NOTE

from : The Presidency
to : COUNCIL (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs)

**Subject : ILO Forum on Decent Work for a Fair Globalization (31 October, 1 and
2 November 2007)**

(Any other business item)

Delegations will find attached a note by the Portuguese Presidency.

ILO Forum on Decent Work for a fair Globalisation
(1 October, 1 and 2 November, Lisbon)

In the framework of the decent work agenda, the International Labour Organization and the Portuguese Presidency jointly organized this Forum with the support of the European Commission.

The multiple signals of a growing concern with the social aspect of globalisation are positive indicators. The decent work agenda and the cooperation between different international instances were recognised as an essential instrument for sustainable development.

From the working sessions, the following global conclusions can be highlighted:

- **Access to quality education and training** is a universal right, a key element to personal development and a pre-condition to decent work, by promoting individual employability as well as economic and social progress. Lifelong learning is the only way to keep pace with fast changes in technology and work organisation brought about by globalization. ‘New opportunities’ programmes are an important means for dealing with education and labour market failures. The quality of education and training also affects the type of youth transition to the labour market and this should be a specific focus of coherent policies.
- **Economic development is essential** to meet the decent work challenge. Responses at global, national and regional levels should be informed by the values of equality, solidarity across generations and social cohesion as key factors of sustainability.
- **Sustainable strategies towards decent work are a shared responsibility** among a wide range of actors, requiring a common vision and effective partnership. The active role of social partners, civil society, and citizens themselves in partnership with public and international authorities at all levels, is of utmost importance. Social partners and civil society should be directly involved in the design.

monitoring and evaluation of measures. The international community should support different stakeholders in fostering public-private partnerships at national and local levels to promote programmes that match the needs for competitiveness of companies with workers' aspirations to decent work. Cooperation between international organizations, national governments, social partners and NGO's is essential in order to move forward in the years ahead.

- **Stimulating the structuration of social partners and civil society** where it is needed is crucial for sustainable policies. 'Organization' and 'voice' are important because no policies will be efficient without the full engagement and support of all concerned actors, and naturally the level of organization and institutional capacity of different actors is a major challenge.
- **Gender and ethnicity concerns should be included in policies** towards decent work in order to avoid the reproduction of labour market segregation and discrimination and denial of access to basic rights and responsibilities. Measures that incorporate the need to reconcile work, family and personal life should also be encouraged in order to foster a balance between these fields.
- **Global and regional networks and forums provide useful platforms** to share knowledge and experience on youth employment policies and programmes. The fast pace of globalization requires mechanisms to connect countries and actors, including through the use of information and communication technologies.
- **The informal economy is one of the most serious obstacles** to decent work and economic development. The situation faced by people in informal economies is complex and these challenges require coherent international, national and local policies. An integrated strategy should look at the synergies of different policies, for instance those dealing with macro-economy, taxation, property rights, skills development, technology, growth of domestic demand, land access and registration, enhancement of agricultural productivity.

- **International labour migration flows need to be addressed** in the context of decent work. In the context of sustainable development strategies, it should be beneficial for countries of origin and destination. The situation of migrants must be taken into account; channels of regular migration and legal job opportunities for migrants should be expanded; adequate and regulated recruitment procedures should be a part of integrated policies. Regularization of irregular migrant workers may be in the best interest of countries of destination, by improving working and living conditions and redressing the social security system. Ratification and implementation of the two ILO conventions on migrant workers and of the International Convention on the Protection of all Migrant Workers and Members of their families was called for, while the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration was recognised as being associated with the Decent Work agenda.
- **Reliable, comparable and up-to-date indicators and information are essential** to formulate and evaluate any policy. Urgent attention should be given to addressing the problem of data collection and compilation.
- **Access to social protection is a right but also a key factor for sustainable development.** This is the ethical basis of national social security systems. However, social security does not only mean rights but it is also a social and economic need. In a context of globalisation, national economies cannot function without social security systems that provides the basic level of security to residents and workers that helps them to accept the flexibility that globalisation requires. Social security facilitates social inclusion, fosters economic growth, helps to eradicate poverty and strengthens democracy. It is thus an indispensable element of national development strategies. The social and economic needs for social security should be translated into a universal social dimension.
- **Policy coherence is necessary but not sufficient: it needs a strategic goal.** One should ask policy coherence for what? What are the objectives that we want to achieve by having more coherent policies? There is a political consensus on decent work, productive employment and basic social protection and we need a coherent policy framework to implement it. The national and global levels are equally important. To achieve better policy coherence, it is important to reach agreements on national and global governance.

- **At the global level of coherence, it is important to identify key areas** such as the destabilizing effects of global imbalance on the economies of many countries, the creation of sustainable enterprises, and the capacity of developing countries to participate meaningfully in international trade negotiations. Policy coherence at international level does not mean a one-size-fits-all policy approach. It is a platform where the effects of one agency's policies on those of others are discussed, analysed and solutions to apparent inconsistencies are found.
 - **A new forum to deepen the debate at the global level**, bringing together different players and institutions, would be an effective contribution to the **definition of instruments and strategies** in order to take forward this policy agenda.
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