



International
Labour
Organization

UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DECENT WORK

**Building on the ILO Rural Work Legacy
1970-2010**

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ACRONYMS

ACC	United Nations Administrative Committee on Coordination
ACOPAM	Cooperative and Organizational Support to Grassroots Initiatives
ACRD	Advisory Committee on Rural Development
ACT/EMP	Employers' Activities Department
ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers' Activities
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ALIMOND	Alimentation Mondiale
APP	Active Partnership Policy
ARPLA	Asian Regional Programme for Strengthening Labour and Manpower Administration
APSDEP	Asian and Pacific Skill Development Programme
ARTEP	Asian Regional Team for Employment Promotion
ASIST	Advisory Support, Information Services and Training
CBT	Community Based Training for (Self-) Employment and Income Generation
CCLA	Andean Consultative Labour Committee
CEACR	Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations
CEB	United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (formerly ACC)
CEEC	Central and Eastern European countries
CEIL	Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour of the International Labour Organization
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIADFOR	African Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CINTERFOR	Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (aka Inter-American Research and Documentation Centre on Vocational Training)
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
COMAGRI	Elimination of Child Labour in Commercial Agriculture in Eastern Africa
COMUANDE	Coordinadora de Mujeres Trabajadoras Andinas, or Andean Women's Workers Coordinating Committee
CONDI/T	Work and Life Conditions Branch
COOP	Cooperatives Branch
COOPAIDS	HIV-AIDS prevention and impact mitigation through cooperatives in selected African countries
COOP ^{AFRICA}	Cooperative Facility for Africa Programme
COOPNET	Inter-regional network programme for the development of human resources in cooperatives

COOPREFORM	Structural reform through improvement of cooperative development policies and legislation
COPAC	Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DECOTEC	Technical Cooperation Department
DEVCO TEC	Development and Technical Cooperation Department
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
DW	Decent Work
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programmes
ECC	European Economic Community
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EDUC	Workers' Education Branch, within ACTRAV
EII	Employment-Intensive Investment
EIIP	Employment-Intensive Investment Programme
EMPLOI	Employment and Development Department
EMP/INFRA	Infrastructure and Rural Works Branch
EMP/INVEST	Employment-Intensive Investment Unit
EMP/POLICY	Employment Policy Department
EMP/RU	Rural Employment Policies Research Branch
EMP/TEC	Appropriate Technologies and Employment Branch
EMP/URG	Special Public Work Branch [<i>previously Emergency Employment Schemes Branch (74-86), then EMP/INFRA (87-92), then EIIP (92-99), then EMP/INVEST (99-present)</i>]
E/POPLAN	Employment Planning and Population-related Activities Branch
ERP	Education for Rural People Programme
ESP	Governing Body Committee on Employment and Social Policy
EU	European Union
EURADA	European Association of Development Agencies
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
F/MAN	Management Training Branch
FFS	Farmer Field Schools
FFW	Federation of Free Workers
FORM	Training Department
F/PROF(RU)	Training for Rural Workers Branch
GB	Governing Body of the International Labour Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEA	Global Employment Agenda

GENDER	Bureau for Gender Equality
GENPROM	Gender Promotion Programme
GHS	Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labeling of Chemical
GJP	Global Jobs Pact
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HKMS	Hind Khet Mazdoor Sabha
HLTF	United Nations High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis
HMIS	Health Micro Insurance Schemes
HOTOUR	Hotel Business and Tourism Branch
HRD	Human Resource Development
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IALI	International Association of Labour Inspection
ICA	International Cooperative Alliance
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICRD	Interdepartmental Committee on Rural Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IFA	International Framework Agreement
IFAD	United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFAP	International Federation of Agricultural Producers
IFCS	Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety
IFPAAW	International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IFRTD	International Forum for Rural Transport and Development
ILC	International Labour Conference of the International Labour Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	International Labour Standards
INDISCO	Inter-regional Programme to Support Self-Reliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples through Cooperatives and Self-Help Organizations
INDUSTR	Industrial Sector Branch
INTERCOOP	Interregional programme for commercial exchanges among cooperatives
IOMC	Inter Organization programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals
IPCCA	International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture
IPCS	International Programme on Chemical Safety
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
IRAP	Integrated Accessibility Planning
IRTP	Integrated Rural Transport Planning

ITC	International Trade Centre
ITC-Turin	International Training Centre in Turin, Italy
ITPs	Indigenous and Tribal Peoples
IUF	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations
I-WED	Improve Your Work Environment and Business
IYB	Improve Your Business
IYCB	Improve Your Construction Business
IYDP	United Nations International Year of Disabled Persons
IYY	United Nations International Youth Year
JASPA	Jobs and Skills Programme for Africa
JFFS	Junior Farmer Fields and Life Schools
KAB	Know About Business
LB	Labour-based
LED	Local Economic Development
LEDAs	Local Economic Development Agencies
MATCOM	Materials and Techniques for the Training of Cooperative Members and Managers
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MNE	Multinational Enterprise
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
M/SME	Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
MDTs	Multidisciplinary Teams
NADF RT	National Association of Dekhan Farmers of the Republic of Tajikistan
NATLEX	International Labour Organization Database of National Legislation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NORMES	International Labour Standards Department
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ONE UN	One United Nations or “Delivering as One”
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
P&B	Programme and Budget of the International Labour Organization
PAC	Permanent Agriculture Committee
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PEETT	Poverty, Employment and Empowerment Task Team
PIACT	Programme for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment

PoA	Plan of Action
POL/DEV	Development Policies Branch
PORP	Programme on Participatory Organizations of the Rural Poor
PREALC	Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and Caribbean
PRO 169	Programme to Promote ILO Convention No. 169
PRODERE	Development Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees in Central America
PROG/EVAL	Evaluation Unit
PROGRAM	Bureau of Programming and Management
PROMER	Projet d'appui au développement de l'entreprenariat et de l'emploi en zone rurale
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
REDTURS	Network of community-based Tourism in Latin America
REL/TRAV	Relations with Workers Branch
REL/PROF	Professional Relations Department
RNFE	Rural Non-Farm Economy
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SARD	Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Initiative
SCORE	Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises
SDSR	Skill Development for Self-Reliance Programme
SEC/HYG	Safety and Hygiene at Work Branch
SECTOR	Sectoral Activities Department
SEED	Small and Medium Enterprise Development
SEWA	Self-Employed Women's Association, India
SFP	Social Finance Programme
SIDA	Sweden International Development Cooperation Agency
SIYB	Start Improve Your Business
SKILLS	Skills and Employability Department
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SOLVE	Interactive educational programme designed to assist in the development of policy and action to address health promotion issues in the workplace
SPF	Social Protection Floor Initiative
SPWP	Special Public Works Programme
STAT	Bureau of Statistics
STEP	Strategies and Tools against social Exclusion and Poverty Programme
SYNDICOOP	Poverty Reduction among Unprotected Informal Economy Workers through Trade Union-Cooperative Joint Action
SYWRB	Start Your Waste Recycling Business

TC	Technical Cooperation
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
TRAVAIL	Département des conditions et du milieu de travail (later called Conditions of Work and Employment Programme)
TREE	Training for Rural Economic Empowerment
TRUGA	Training for Rural Gainful Activities
TUIAFPW	Trade Unions International of Agricultural, Forestry and Plantation Workers
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNPPA	United Nations Public-Private Alliance
UNSF	United Nations Special Fund
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
USD	United States Dollar
USDOL	United States Department of Labour
WB	World Bank
WCARRD	World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
WEC	World Employment Conference
WEDGE	Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality
WEP	World Employment Programme
WFC	World Food Council
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
WHO	United Nations World Health Organization
WIND	Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Development
WISE	Work Improvement in Small Enterprises
WTO	World Trade Organization
YEN	Youth Employment Network
YEP	Youth Employment Program

I. INTRODUCTION

Rural areas have captured the attention of the International Labour Organization (ILO) since its earliest days.¹ Prompted at first by concerns over labour standards, working conditions, social dialogue, as well as employment issues, the rural dimension gained steady momentum from the 1950s onward, peaking in the 1970s and 1980s with all the ILO technical areas involved.

Despite a marked decline in the decades since, rural development has re-gained attention in recent years with the realization that the ILO's basic goal of poverty reduction, clearly established in the Declaration of Philadelphia,² cannot be achieved unless poverty is directly tackled in rural settings where it is the deepest, most widespread and persistent.

I.1. A sense of urgency for fast and integrated work

Rural areas today are home to over 75 percent of the world's poorest, and are plagued by a series of structural deficits that impede growth, development and poverty reduction. Decent work deficits are numerous and include higher rates of un- and under-employment (especially among youth and women); an alarming prevalence of child labour (agriculture alone represents 60 percent of all child labour); a high frequency of precarious work as wage workers are mostly temporary or casual; widespread informal activities; limited social protection; exposure to adverse working conditions due to poor labour standards coverage and monitoring; and little or no unionization.³

¹ In 1922 ILO's first Director-General, Albert Thomas, obtained a ruling from the Permanent Court of Justice that the Office was to concern itself with workers in agriculture as well as those in industry; and shortly thereafter established an "Agricultural Division".

² The Declaration of Philadelphia (1944) affirms in particular that "poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere"; that the ILO has the solemn obligation to further programmes to achieve the objectives of full employment, equity in education and training, raising standards of living, minimum living wages, adequate protection of life and health of workers in all occupations, extension of social security, collective bargaining, child welfare; and that it should promote "the economic and social advancement of the less developed regions of the world". ILO, *Declaration Concerning the Aims and Purpose of the International Labour Organization* (Declaration of Philadelphia), International Labour Conference, 26th Session (Philadelphia: ILO, 10 May 1944), sections III, IV.

³ ILO: Promotion of Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction. Report IV, International Labour Conference, 97th Session. Geneva: ILO, 2008.

Glaring “missed opportunities” abound in rural areas, such as the waste of agricultural produce for lack of proper transportation, local processing, storage, and marketing; an under-utilization of the rural workforce due to lack of skills and education; lack of physical and social infrastructure; environmentally unfriendly practices; and numerous other inefficiencies. That said, well-developed rural areas hold considerable potential for economic growth with high returns and good, productive jobs and livelihoods, as witnessed in some rural communities where modern, high-productivity and high-value added activities coexist with other less advanced processes (economically as well as in terms of decent work). Unlocking the potential of rural areas is thus “good business”, as much as it is ethically and socially compelling because human resources are at the centre of it.

Modern-day challenges posed by environmental concerns, as well as both the food security and economic crises, lend an additional sense of urgency to seek innovative paths and to muster the necessary collective will and resources for action. The multifaceted challenges and potentialities of rural areas also call on the ILO to advance in a collaborative and integrated manner, internally as well as externally. The ILO Green Jobs Initiative, the United Nations (UN) High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF), now gathering over 20 international agencies and institutions and directly reaching over 30 countries, and the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)’s initiative to tackle the economic crisis,⁴ where the ILO has a strong presence through its Global Jobs Pact (GJP) and Social Protection Floor (SPF), as well as the Millennium Development Goals (particularly MDG 1)⁵ and the recent “MDG Acceleration Framework, and the Second UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty that has as a leading theme, “Employment and Decent Work,” are all important opportunities that have salient rural dimensions.⁶ The Organization needs to deliver concrete, effective approaches and tools as well as experience to translate the decent work agenda into action and results at the global level.

The ILO is well-placed to tackle the challenges of the “rural workplace” as its mandate and expertise cover multiple complementary and mutually reinforcing facets related to rural human resources and economic activities, and given its extensive prior experience in rural contexts. Accordingly, this stocktaking exercise examines the approaches, tools, work methods, achievements and shortcomings

⁴ UN CEB, *The Global Financial Crisis and Its Impact on the Work of the UN System*, Issue paper (UN: September 2009).

⁵ MDG 1: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

⁶ See for example ILO’ mentioning “support for rural development” and for “rural employment and community development” among the areas where inputs of different agencies would be especially relevant to implement the Global Jobs Pact. UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC): *Recovering from the Crisis: A Global Jobs Pact*, Report of the Secretary-General (New York: UN, 6th May 2010), §5 and 9.

of the previous rural experience, starting from the heydays of the 1970s, to constitute a solid basis on which to build future initiatives aimed at unleashing the development potential of rural populations and rural economies worldwide.

I.2. Background and objective of the review

At the origin of this exercise are the discussions held at the 2008 International Labour Conference (ILC), which considered a report on *Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction*.⁷ The proceedings revealed a marked consensus among governments, employers and workers on the need for the ILO to engage more decisively in rural areas; and to do so urgently, effectively, and in an integrated manner, mobilizing the whole of its decent work agenda, as well as its whole structure consisting of tripartite national constituents and relevant external partners. The unanimously adopted Conclusions established priority areas of intervention, the first of which is to, "... provide to [the ILO] Governing Body (GB) a comprehensive report analysing the impact of prior activities focused on rural employment... to inform future work plans..."⁸

The objective of this review is threefold: Firstly, it is to take stock of the ILO's considerable rural development work to identify valuable approaches and tools that are or can be updated and adapted to fit current rural contexts and their global environment. Secondly, it is to identify lessons learned and gaps to fill, so as to give the Office, its constituents, and partners effective instruments to tackle future work. Lastly, it is to help sharpen the priority areas identified in the Conclusions of ILC 2008 and help shape a strategy and programme of work accordingly.

This review is not a historical narrative but instead uses ILO's history of rural work to understand and extract key experiences from past decades that have spelled success or signalled shortfalls, with an eye towards identifying approaches and strategies for more impactful future work in rural development.

This work also does not review in depth the evolving rural context or engage in conceptualizations and broad policy debates about development models for instance. These aspects are addressed in a

⁷ Op. Cit. ILO, *Promotion of Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction* (2008).

⁸ ILO, *Report of the Committee on Rural Employment*, Provisional Record, International Labour Conference, 97th session (Geneva: ILO, 2008), § 77. "Inform" is here taken to mean provide shape, not merely provide information.

number of official ILO documents.⁹ Neither does the review attempt to provide exhaustive information about any technical areas, but aims to capture its main features, highlights, and evolution over time to allow for extracting lessons.¹⁰ Organizational priorities and processes are given greater emphasis as they are key to determining the intensity of rural work as well as how the various technical facets and units of the Organization articulate their work and their relations.

I.3. Scope and methodology

This review explores the impact of the ILO's work on rural employment and development since the 1970s when such work intensified markedly. Impact is reviewed at "360°" in terms of decent work components, covering job creation and income generation, with special attention to women, youth, and other disadvantaged groups with untapped potential. It addresses issues such as access to skills and employment services, sustainable entrepreneurship, extension of social protection and improved occupational safety and health and working conditions, International Labour Standards, and the need for strengthened rural organization. It includes core processes such as social dialogue, capacity building of constituents and stakeholders, participatory approaches, gender equality and mainstreaming, inter-disciplinary and inter-departmental working arrangements, external partnerships, policy/strategic indenting and sustainability.

Information gathering consisted of the following: reviewing major ILO publication, reports, official documents, internal and external exchanges contained in the ILO archives and elsewhere; interviewing ILO staff, in particular 20 individual structured interviews with "privileged informants" (defined as present and former staff having worked and driven issues related to rural employment and development since the 1970s);¹¹ over 50 interviews with current specialists and staff in programming and operational activities in oral and written form (the latter through questionnaires that reached the whole ILO structure including HQ, field, and ITC-Turin units); a focus group discussion among 13 officials; and feedback from over 40 beneficiaries and partner agencies (also through questionnaires).

⁹ See particularly reports and discussions leading to the Resolution concerning the contribution of the ILO to the raising of incomes and living conditions in rural communities (ILC, 44th Session, 1960); the Resolution concerning rural development (ILC, 60th Session, 1975); the Resolution concerning rural employment promotion (ILC, 73rd Session, 1988); and the Resolution promoting rural employment for poverty reduction (ILC, 97th Session, 2008).

¹⁰ Technical specialists may wish to use this as a stepping stone to undertake a more in-depth stocktaking in their respective areas.

¹¹ The review includes a number of notable quotations from "privileged informants" as they are particularly vivid expressions of situations and views also found in other documents and interviews.

The review is therefore based mostly on qualitative evidence. However the multiple sources used to gather information has allowed for double (and triple) checking, thus strengthening the reliability of its findings. Details about the methodology used, including work arrangements and challenges encountered are available in Annex 1. The challenges themselves provide valuable lessons.

Quantitative data are provided where possible, although it must be noted that this type of information for rural areas remains scarce. Moreover, quantitative data on rural areas must be used with caution due to the fact that there exists (as yet) no standard, accepted definition of “rural.” The use of different measures by different institutions therefore hinders comparative studies as it may result in skewed analyses and policies.

For the purpose of this review we use the definition accepted in the ILC 2008 Report on *Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction*:

“...the size of the locality or the smallest civil division in a country is most typical. Thus, urban areas are often defined as localities with a population of 2,000 or more inhabitants, and rural areas as localities with a population of less than 2,000 inhabitants and sparsely populated areas. For countries where density of settlement is not sufficient to distinguish urban and rural areas, international recommendations propose the use of additional criteria: the percentage of the economically active population employed in agriculture, the general availability of electricity and/or piped water in living quarters, and the ease of access to medical care, schools and recreation facilities, for example. In reality, urban and rural areas form a continuum and are inextricably linked.”¹²

This definition is by no means without limitations, and indeed, we must be mindful of the “gradations” that exist within rural areas, which the World Bank (WB) for example refers to as a “continuum” of rural between the “isolated farm [and] thriving metropolis;”¹³ and which the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) distinguishes as “five rural worlds”.¹⁴ The difficulty of arriving at an acceptable definition itself is testament to the complexities of rural areas, as well as the possibilities, which will be discussed in the following pages.

¹² Op. Cit ILO, *Promotion of Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction* (2008), 12.

¹³ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2008* (Washington, D.C.: WB, 2008), 133.

¹⁴ These are: 1) large-scale commercial agricultural households and enterprises; 2) traditional landholders and enterprises, not internationally competitive; 3) subsistence agricultural households and micro-enterprises; 4) landless rural households and micro-enterprises; and 5) chronically poor rural households, many no longer economically active. For more information read OECD: *Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: Agriculture* (Paris: OECD, 2009).

I.4. Structure

The Review is organized chronologically, starting roughly in the 1970s. Within each main time period several key rural focus groups, technical areas and approaches are presented as sub-sections. “Repeating” sub-sections do not imply repeated information, but rather an intentional reiteration to illustrate “continuity” in the ILO’s work in each of these elements over the years, noting adaptations to the opportunities and challenges of the profiled time periods.

The review first provides an overview of the ILO’s work in rural areas in the “heydays” of the 1970s and 1980s. It then moves on to the 1990s, when activities related to rural areas were gradually marginalized to the point of disappearing from ILO’s list of priorities. The 2000s are approached as a period of growing “rediscovery”. The ILC 2008’s unanimously adopted Resolution on “Promoting Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction” constitutes a milestone in its reaffirmation of the ILO’s role to empower rural women and men and in pointing to specific work expectations for the Office and the ILO tripartite constituents alike.

Building on this past work and an abundant legacy, the review ends with the proposal of a fresher, more dynamic vision for the upcoming decade of the 2010s. It calls on the ILO to establish a results-based rural work strategy capable of generating a unifying sense of purpose and responsibility organization-wide.

II. ILO'S RURAL "HEYDAYS" (1970s-1980s)

II.1. Antecedents

The ILO has a lengthy history of involvement in rural areas. The 1921 ILC is often referred to as the "Agricultural Session" given its adoption of agriculture-centred Conventions and Recommendations, including on the prevention of unemployment,¹⁵ right of association,¹⁶ living conditions,¹⁷ and night work of women,¹⁸ children and young persons.¹⁹ A year later, ILO's first Director-General, Albert Thomas, secured a ruling from the Permanent Court of Justice²⁰ stating that the Organization's mandate included workers in agriculture (in addition to those in industry).

By 1938 a Permanent Agriculture Committee (PAC) was established as a tripartite forum within which to discuss ILO work on rural affairs,²¹ followed by the setting up of the tripartite Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour (CEIL) (1946) and the tripartite Committee on Work on Plantations (1950). At this point rural employment had become a clear ILO priority, prompting among others, Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1951 and 1955, which strengthened the ILO's international mandate in rural contexts and highlighted some core areas for involvement such as vocational training, cooperatives, rural industries, and migration.

Decolonization starting in the late 1940s prompted the ILO to increase its work on employment, particularly as related to the new developing states. Emphasis was not yet on wholesale development strategies and employment, but on vocational training and modern industry. Such policy reflected a period of full employment experienced by developed countries where the main policy concerns were shortages of skilled and unskilled labour, the modern industrial sector, labour and capital productivity. However, as an increasing number of developing countries joined the ILO the balance tilted towards their concerns.

ILO work priorities changed to reflect the needs of its newest Constituents. Accordingly in 1960 the ILC adopted a Resolution on the "Contribution of the ILO to the Raising of Incomes and Living

¹⁵ Unemployment (Agriculture) Recommendation, 1921 (No.11), now withdrawn.

¹⁶ Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921 (No.11).

¹⁷ Living Conditions (Agriculture) Recommendation, 1921 (No.16), now withdrawn.

¹⁸ Night Work of Women (Agriculture) (Agriculture) Recommendation, 1921 (No.13).

¹⁹ Night Work of Children and Young Persons (Agriculture) Recommendation, 1921 (no.14).

²⁰ Nowadays, the International Court of Justice.

²¹ It would be renamed the Advisory Committee on Rural Development (ACRD) in 1974.

Conditions in Rural Communities, with Particular Reference to Countries in Process of Development”, which called on the Organization to step up its work to raise incomes and living conditions in rural communities, with special emphasis on developing countries. Work on rural employment was promoted by the adoption of the Employment Policy Recommendation, 1964 (No.122), which contained a special section (§ 27) on the issue and urged the ILO to pay special attention to the needs of rural economies.

Around this time the ILO established a Rural Development Programme, set under the primary responsibility of the Workers Division and composed of a variety of Units: Rural Employment, Rural Training, Rural Institutions, and Rural Conditions of Life and Work, with rapidly increasing resources. The ILO’s work was multifaceted, covering a broad range of issues such as employment planning and promotion, training, working conditions, and institution building. In the mid-‘60s these Units were attributed to various major Branches and Units, embedding rural issues in all three of the ILO’s technical Departments,²² as well as in two Industrial Committees, [one on Rural Workers (covering non-salaried workers) and the other on Plantations (covering salaried workers)], although with an informal coordination mechanism.

II.2. ILO rural work approach, institutional set-up and work focuses

II.2.1. Context setting

The 1970s were a time of contrasts, with many newly independent states posting solid growth rates, but remaining mainly as agrarian economies and plagued by persistent poverty and lack of jobs, particularly in rural areas. Urban areas, which experienced most of the growth, were unable to absorb the influx of rural labour and provide good jobs and living conditions. Rural economies meanwhile, as a result of long neglect, could not incorporate surplus labour either, which brought into question the development models of the ‘50s and ‘60s that advocated for mainly urban economies, viewing rural areas as “reservoirs” to support the expected growth of urban industries.

Around this time, the Green Revolution was gaining force, and highlighting the potentialities of rural areas. The Revolution, mainly linked to the hybridization of wheat, rice and other crop varieties,

²² Human Resource Department (Rural Unit in the Vocational Training Branch, and Rural Employment Unit in the Manpower Planning and Organization Branch); Social Institutions Department (Rural Institutions Section in the Co-operative, Rural and Related Institutions Branch); and Conditions of Work and Life Department (Rural Workers Unit in the General Conditions of Work Branch)

caused wheat production in India for example, to soar from 12 to 17 million tons. While the long-term effects, and even “benefits” of the Revolution remain uncertain,²³ at the time it was lauded for its variety of positive employment and social repercussions such as: increased demand for labour-intensive farm work such as weeding, mostly carried out by women; and, since the Revolution was “scale neutral,” bringing benefits to large- and small-scale farmers alike, thus contributing to poverty reduction.

II.2.2. Overview of rural work

The ILO’s 1960 Resolution highlighted the challenge of rural development, and the Office had already started responding to it by setting up an Office-wide rural-oriented strategy. In 1969, the ILO launched the World Employment Programme (WEP) to develop employment-oriented strategies, with a particular focus on rural areas. Since the vast majority of poor in developing countries were concentrated in rural areas with many driven by destitution to swell the ranks of the urban poor, it was felt that eradicating rural poverty, unemployment, and underemployment would strike at the roots of poverty and unemployment in general.²⁴ The Director-General’s report introducing the WEP stressed (among others) the need to shift investment from capital-intensive to labour-intensive activities, from physical (i.e. machinery) to human capital, and from urban to rural development.²⁵

The ILO was indeed a pioneer in rural development, preceding the Second UN Development Decade of the ‘70s, which reflected the shift in emphasis by the international development community from the “modern” industrial sector to rural special needs. The emergence of rural as a priority was further evidenced at the UN World Food Conference (1974),²⁶ which called on the UN to place more emphasis on rural development. It also resulted in the establishment of a Task Force on Rural

²³ “In recent years there has been some controversy over the question whether or not the “Green Revolution” has been instrumental in pushing up agricultural wages. A study of 15 districts of Punjab and Haryana states in India concluded that there was no increase: on the contrary, there was a slight decline ...” ILO, *Problems of Rural Workers in Asia and the Pacific*, Report III, 9th Asia Regional Conference (Manila: ILO, 1980), 17; see also Eric Holz-Gimenez and Raj Patel, *Food Rebellions! Crisis and the Hunger for Justice* (Oxford: Pambazuka Press, 2009).

²⁴ One of its main objectives was to “halt and indeed reverse the trend towards ever-growing masses of peasants and slum dwellers who have no part in development.” David A. Morse, “The World Employment Programme,” *International Labour Review*, Issue 6 (June 1968), 518.

²⁵ ILO, *The World Employment Programme* (Geneva: ILO, 1969), pp. 68 and 81.

²⁶ Resolution II on Priorities for Agricultural and Rural Development, *World Food Conference*, Fourth Item on the Agenda, International Organizations Committee, Governing Body 195th session (Geneva: ILO, Feb-March 1975): <http://www.eclac.org/cumbres/3/43/FAORLC-41001WorldFoodConference.doc> visited on 25th Feb. 2011. These points are also mentioned by the Policy and Programme Coordination Committee of the UN ECOSOC in July 1976.

Development within the UN Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and the creation of an International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in 1976. Many agencies and donors thus reoriented their work programmes towards direct and rapid help to the rural poor,²⁷ making rural development a universal theme and priority rather than a specific, self-contained activity.

Several key ILO legal instruments of the mid-‘70s strengthened its mandate and gave sharper focus to its work, namely the 1975 ILC Resolution on Rural Development (based among others on the first review of ILO’s Rural Development Programme in 1974), which solicited an increase in rural development activities and brought greater focus on rural poverty alleviation; the Rural Workers’ Organization Convention, 1975 (No.141); and the inclusion in the Human Resource Development Recommendation, 1975 (No.150) of a section on rural areas (§ 33-37) calling for special and specific efforts to achieve equality of opportunity between rural and urban populations. The Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action of the 1976 World Employment Conference (WEC), deserves special mention. It called for according high priority to the development of rural areas in all its dimensions, from agriculture modernization to development of agro-based industries, including rural crafts, to the provision of physical and social infrastructure, appropriate technology, vocational training, credit facilities and cooperatives (for land use, but also equipment, credit, transportation, marketing, processing and services in general), special efforts to ensure effective workers’ participation, and agrarian reform including land distribution, to achieve effective national development strategies.²⁸

The ILO’s rural “strategy” focused mainly on knowledge building through considerable groundbreaking research and analysis; operational interventions; and subsequently policy advice. The ILO’s entry point was employment; but to achieve productive employment leading to poverty reduction it developed the concept of “Basic Needs”, which incorporated a variety of technical and social issues ranging from technology to trade, macro- and micro- policies, fiscal policies, education

²⁷ The World Bank, for instance, saw the proportion of its lending programme going to rural activities climb from 3.2% in the late 1960s to 15.3% at the turn of the 1980s; multiplying by 33 times the volume of money at current value. From “*Review of ILO Rural Development Activities Since 1983*”, First item on the Agenda, Panel of ILO’s Advisory Committee on Rural Development (Geneva: ILO, 3-5 December 1985).

²⁸ ILO, *Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action*, adopted by the *Tripartite World Conference on Employment, Income Distribution and Social Progress and the International Division of Labour* (Geneva: ILO, June 1976). The WEC was broadly attended, gathering Government, Workers’ and Employers’ delegates from 121 member states (including in addition to the ministries of labour, the ministries of economic planning, employment, trade, foreign affairs and development assistance), 22 international agencies and 58 NGOs. Also see Louis Emmerij and Dharam Ghai, *The World Employment Conference: preliminary assessments*,” *International Labour Review*, Vol. 114, No. 3, Nov-Dec 1976.

and skills, working conditions, health, and participation, resulting in a holistic view that was revolutionary at the time (see part II.2.4.2. for details).

II.2.3. ILO rural work management – a combination of coordination and compartmentalization

The ILO's approach rested on an assumption of shared-responsibility for rural issues within the Organization²⁹ facilitated by a lead Unit and mechanisms for coordination. Weak coordination networks however, combined with the large number of actors, made for a peculiar atmosphere of coordination *and* compartmentalization within the Organization.

Coordination mechanisms included the Advisory Committee on Rural Development (ACRD) at Constituent/GB-level, and the Interdepartmental Committee on Rural Development (ICRD), at Departmental level. The ACRD was to provide overall counsel and direction to the ILO in rural matters, while the ICRD (with the Rural Employment Policies Research Branch (EMP/RU) as Secretariat) would ensure a coordinated internal response.

II.2.3.1. Rural Employment Policies Research Branch (EMP/RU)

The Rural Employment Policies Research Branch (EMP/RU), set up in 1973,³⁰ formed the lead Unit and designated “in-House hub” for rural matters. It constituted the real “engine” of ILO rural development strategy through its voluminous and pioneering work. It also provided support to the WEP and its Regional Employment Teams, ARTEP³¹ in Asia, JASPA³² in Africa, and PREALC³³ in Latin America.

EMP/RU was also responsible for spearheading approaches such as the Participatory Organization of the Rural Poor (PORP). It also worked on land reform, rural technology, and women rural workers.

²⁹ Indeed, at its peak, in the 1980s, ILO had over 14 Units at Headquarters engaged in rural development work: Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP), Work and Life Conditions (CONDI/T), Cooperatives (COOP), Workers' Education (EDUC), Emergency Employment Schemes (EMP/URG), Rural Employment Policies Research (EMP/RU), Appropriate Technology and Employment (EMP/TEC), Employment planning and population-related activities (E/POPLAN), Management Training (F/MAN), Training for Rural Workers (F/PROF(RU)), Hotel Business and Tourism (HOTOUR), Industrial Sector (INDUSTR), Relations with Workers (REL/TRAV), Safety and Hygiene at Work (SEC/HYG).

³⁰ EMP/RU combined the Rural Employment and Rural Institutions Units.

³¹ Asian Regional Team for Employment Promotion (ARTEP).

³² Jobs and Skills Programme for Africa (JASPA).

³³ Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and Caribbean (PREALC).

II.2.3.2. Advisory Committee on Rural Development

Growing interest in rural matters coupled with explicit requests from the G77 prompted the GB to “revive” the Permanent Agricultural Committee (PAC) in 1974 as the Advisory Committee on Rural Development (ACRD), signalling stronger and higher-level commitment to rural work. The ACRD was composed of workers’, employers’, and government representatives with direct knowledge of rural areas, and also benefitted from the active participation of other agencies (particularly FAO, World Health organization (WHO), UN and OECD) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The ACRD was mandated to report to the GB on questions related to rural development; to provide advice on ILO action related to agricultural and non-farm activities, as well as on initiatives with other UN agencies, NGOs and donors; and to serve as liaison with the “rural world”.

The 11 sessions it held between 1974 and 1990 discussed reports about specific rural challenges,³⁴ and reviewed the ILO’s work on rural development every two to five years. Exchanges were animated and frank, identifying strengths, but also shortcomings, in the ILO’s rural activities, such as the tendency to cover too many fields, resulting in inadequate allocations of time and resources; and preoccupation with research and surveys at the expense of more direct, action-oriented endeavours. Solutions pointed to specific directions for strengthening the ILO’s work, including greater focus on the lowest income groups (i.e. landless rural wage-earners, small farmers, tenants, sharecroppers, women, plantation workers, self-employed and forestry workers),³⁵ to give them the means to achieve productive and gainful employment; more integrated approaches (including multi-purpose, multi-disciplinary projects; and greater linkages with institutions and macroeconomic policies); promotion of rural workers’ organizations and workers’ education, to allow their effective participation in policy-making, programme implementation and self-help; institutional reforms;³⁶ advocacy for fair prices of agricultural products/primary commodities vis-à-vis prices for manufactured goods; promotion of

³⁴ In particular: *Manpower and Training Needs for Rural Development* (1974); *Incomes of Agricultural Workers, with Particular Reference to Developing Countries* (1974); *Poverty and Employment in Rural Areas of Developing Countries* (1979); *Rural Employers’ and Workers’ Organizations and Participation* (1979); *Promotion of Employment and Incomes for the Rural Poor, Including Rural Women, Through Non-farm Activities* (1983); *Rural Labour Markets and Employment Policies: Issues Relating to Labour Utilization, Remuneration and Other Positions of Women* (1983); *Structural Adjustment and Its Socio-economic Effects in Rural Areas* (1990); *The Socio-Economic Impact of Technical Cooperation Projects Concerning Rural Development* (1990).

³⁵ ILO, *Declaration of Principles and the Programme of Action* adopted by the World Employment Conference (Geneva: ILO, June 1976).

³⁶ Debates on Land Reform were particularly “heated” and practically spanned all 16 years of ACRD.

appropriate technology; a push in 1974 towards assistance to small-scale, cottage and handicraft industries, to rural public works and to tackle the prolonged drought in the Sahelian region; promotion of living and working conditions; and compilation of current rural trends, data, facts, to name a few.

Other valuable inputs from ACRD discussions relevant today include an appeal in 1974 to devise new and improved approaches to rural vocational education and training in developing countries, including non-formal schemes (and their linkage to formal training schemes); targeting skills relevant to the communities where youth live, as well as those that can open possibilities in urban and external labour markets; and ensuring coordination with other technical fields to form fully integrated plans for the development of rural areas.

There were also earnest calls to identify impediments to the integration of rural populations, particularly of small farmers, into the modern economy (such as the absence of farmers' and rural workers' organizations to promote their interest; lack of cooperatives and local government bodies for the promotion of economic and social development; hurdles to obtaining credit, transport, marketing and other services). There were also calls to ensure that the three aspects of development (technical, economic and social), proceed simultaneously, including the need that member States ensure a minimum level of social security and social welfare to their rural populations, so as to prevent distortions and, among others, the migration of rural youth towards urban centres.

The ACRD moreover consistently solicited the ILO to be more “flexible” and “pragmatic”, encouraging it to be less traditional and bolder in its approaches: for instance by promoting the training of women in non-traditional and management skills, and consciously including women “... as change agents and beneficiaries in all projects”.³⁷

Regarding internal work organization, the ACRD noted that a central Unit on rural development (like EMP/RU) needed to be complemented by Office-wide dedication to the issue in order to achieve a coordinated response. It also urged for increased external collaboration with other key players, particularly the World Food Programme (WFP), IFAD, FAO, and others such as the International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers (IFPAAW), the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), and Trade Unions International of Agricultural, Forestry and Plantation Workers (TUIAFPW).

³⁷ ILO, *Report of the Advisory Committee on Rural Development*. Advisory Committee on Rural Development 10th Session (Geneva: ILO, 22 November - 1 December 1983), 5.

Internal reactions to ACRD input are mixed. It was generally recognized as a suitable platform for debate at a high technical level. Its reviews of the ILO's past work were regarded as constructive, and were occasionally taken into consideration by the Office. However, several occasions during the 16 years of its existence where the ACRD had to "repeat" advice and guidance hint at a weaker overall impact in terms of shaping the ILO's future rural strategy and work, which was part of the Committee's mandate. This may have contributed to the GB's decision in 1990 to relegate the ACRD to a Tripartite Technical Meeting.

II.2.3.3. Interdepartmental Committee on Rural Development

In 1976 an Interdepartmental Committee on Rural Development (ICRD) was established with EMP/RU as Secretariat³⁸ to maximize in-House coordination. Its mandate was to exchange information on rural development programmes and policies and, "undertake periodic reviews and appraisals of rural development programmes and its constituent elements and make appropriate recommendations..." accordingly. It also issued recommendations about Office-wide policy on rural development, and questions of coordination at departmental levels. The ICRD functioned as a forum and internal advisory panel to inculcate a "rural conscience"³⁹ in all departments to ensure that rural dimensions were considered in all aspects of the ILO's work. As its Secretariat, EMP/RU reviewed programme and project proposals from various Departments as well as Regional Offices, and managed a specific rural development fund (a Regular Budget allocation) averaging USD 900,000 – 1,200,000 per biennium.

ICRD's annual meetings were a rich source of mutual information and understanding on matters of common concern in rural development, and provided an excellent forum for discussion and exchange of ideas. Its early years saw the gathering of "Rural Focal Points" from a variety of departments, in addition to regularly scheduled Committee meetings. Rural focal point gatherings allowed participants to discuss programme proposals, budgets, and overall provided an opportunity for greater communication. However the meetings do not appear to have taken place after the mid-1980s.

³⁸ The ICRD was chaired by the Deputy Director-General for the Technical Programmes Sector, then the Assistant Director-General in charge of Interdepartmental programmes; was constituted by the Directors of the Employment and Development Department (EMPLOI), Training Department (FORM), Professional Relations Department (RELPROF), Sectoral Activities Department (SECTOR), Department des conditions et du milieu de travail (TRAVAIL, English title Conditions of Work and Employment Programme), Bureau of Programming and Management (PROGRAM), and Technical Cooperation Department (DECOTEC).

³⁹ Jack Martin, Interview (27 August 2009).

While it helped facilitate discussions, ICRD action was lacking on more substantial functions such as: evaluating initiatives; monitoring impact of the rapidly expanding rural-related programmes and extracting lessons; ascertaining whether activities contributed to an effective ILO approach to rural development; and proposing changes in the focus of rural development. More importantly, the Committee did not fulfill a condition of its Terms of Reference (TOR), which was to conduct systematic appraisals. Although it did initiate several “review” exercises, they were often prepared by officials working on the initiative in question and failed to provide in-depth, independent analysis of the issues, and served more to inform Committee members about select activities. As a result, the ICRD offered little feedback (in the form of recommendations or even conclusions) about technical work and even less on the ILO’s rural development policy. Additionally, there was a noticeable lack of continuity in the Committee’s work, which meant that an issue of importance in one session would not receive strong attention in subsequent sessions, and follow-up work was limited.

An examination of ICRD operations in 1987 highlighted these shortcomings and suggested systematic reviews of programmes and TC projects, leading to a first review in 1989 of some 30 projects, that was also presented to the ACRD. It was to be followed by an EMP/RU (as ICRD secretariat) - PROG/EVAL (Evaluation Unit) joint evaluation on the socio-economic impact of rural development projects from other Units⁴⁰ that failed to materialize due to the consequent dismantling of EMP/RU. At the last ICRD meeting in 1990, there was consensus on the ILO’s need to take stock of past work to define future orientations; and on increasing interdepartmental coordination on a number of themes, namely institution-building, integration of ILO standards into TC, and the need to step up work in non-farm employment; but no tangible follow-up materialized.

The Committee fared better in its external functions, mainly as a liaison with other agencies. It maintained a close working relationship with the ACC Task Force on Rural Development, which allowed for broader dissemination of the ILO’s rapidly increasing rural knowledge on a more global scale. For instance, the ILO influenced the Programme of Action compiled by the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) in 1979. The recommendations of the WCARRD in turn formed the basis for much of FAO’s reformed approach to rural development. The ICRD was also effective in promoting and proposing joint ventures with a variety of partners, ranging from funding agencies like IFAD, to trade organizations like the International Trade Centre (ITC).

⁴⁰ This joint evaluation was also announced in the ILO Programme & Budget 1992-1993.

Internally however, the ICRD also fell short of promoting joint work within the ILO. As a result, ILO rural work was voluminous but scattered, and largely dominated by EMP/RU and WEP.

II.2.3.4. EMP/RU and the WEP - Leading rural development work

At its peak in the late-'70s, the WEP counted over 90 professionals, two thirds with advanced degrees, who were “driven” by an idealism typical of those years to undertake groundbreaking studies. This made for a highly energetic and productive atmosphere that put the ILO in the limelight. This energy, creativity and productivity, coupled with significant financial endowments enabled the production of a large volume of high quality, technical work with a large readership among development practitioners. This in turn strengthened motivation and further attracted the collaboration of global talents such as Hans Singer, Dudley Seers and Richard Jolly, as well as Nobel Prize winners Arthur Lewis, Wassily Leontief, Amartya Sen and Jan Tinbergen, leading to more creative approaches and products that attracted more high-level profiles, attention, and resources.

Unfortunately, the very strengths that allowed EMP/RU to produce superior work and gain international visibility tended to alienate it from Constituents and the rest of the Office, endangering its sustainability and the viability of its approaches. While EMP/RU was an impressive programme, its progressive concepts, policies and programmes, and some rigidity on a number of issues such as agricultural reform and land reform at time led to “clashes” with the traditional ILO stances. The “passion” with which the Unit defended these causes was not tempered by a sense of politics, compromise, and team work. Relatively little attention was paid political viability, and few efforts were made to train and adapt the many high-powered academics to the Organization, its weights and balances, diplomatic standards and processes, in which they were working. As a result, they somewhat tended to operated in isolation, “sheltered” from the politics of the GB, but also alienated from Constituents’ needs. This led to memorable “frank exchanges”, including in the ACRD and GB; and may have contributed to declining favour in the eyes of the GB.

The “strong focus line and fortress mentality”,⁴¹ combined with the progressive nature of the work undertaken were at times perceived as “arrogance” on the part of the Employment Programme, or at least some of its Units and officials. This caused a number of innovative and successful programmes,

⁴¹ Jack Martin, Interview (27 August 2009); and Gerry Rodgers, Eddy Lee, Lee Swepston and Jasmien Van Daele, *The International Labour Organization and the Quest for Social Justice, 1919-2009* (Geneva: ILO, 2009), 212.

such as that on rural women⁴² and PORP, to remain rather isolated from the rest of the ILO. Besides missed opportunities for coordination and synergies, this compartmentalization may have caused the disappearance of approaches and programmes altogether, despite their intrinsic interest. It was particularly true in cases where approaches and programmes were shouldered and “driven” by one single individual, such as in the case of the PORP.

“Tensions” also surfaced at times between new concepts and approaches, such the topics of landlessness, poverty, work at village level, and “traditional” ILO work. There were at times “divergences” between “constituents and traditional ILO officials” on the one hand, and the donor-funded rural research programme that focused on land reform, organizing the poor and women on the other. Although some level of “tension” could be seen as healthy, to stimulate creativity and progress, at times it created blockages and antagonism.

That said, some important synergies are worth noting. For instance EMP/RU’s emphasis on “workers’ rights” since its inception and then also on workers’ organisation and education, and community participation, allowed for collaboration with the ILO’s Standards Department and Workers’ Bureau, which had actually pioneered the ILO’s work in rural areas as early as the 1920s.⁴³ This led to new and fruitful synergies at a time when the Employment and Standards Departments had been evolving in parallel.

There were also a few joint projects such as the Appropriate Technologies and Employment Branch (EMP/TEC)’s support for an agro-forestry project in the Philippines that combined Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) with good forestry and agricultural practices to decrease work-related injuries. Such collaboration was rare though, and depended more on “chance”, for instance when colleagues happened to know of others working in the same area, rather than through an established system of knowledge sharing.

Thus, while the ICRD served as a professional-grade forum for discussion and information sharing, it could not prevent the compartmentalization that had already set in as a result of individual personalities and the unequal distribution of rural-related work within the ILO.

⁴² In the case of the Programme on Rural Women this was also due to the fact that at the time gender awareness did not yet exist and gender dimensions were rarely included in work.

⁴³ See, for example, the Rights of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1021 (No.11), the Social Insurance (Agriculture) Recommendation, 1921 (No.17) and the Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery (Agriculture) Recommendation, 1951 (No.89).

II.2.4. Types of work

The ILO's rural work of the time involved considerable research, especially at Headquarters, but also in ILO's Regional Employment Teams (including its dissemination at innumerable seminars and other meetings), TC projects, and some policy advice. Since the Organization was venturing into previously uncharted rural territories, it had to conduct much of the research and analysis on the areas it wanted to target, to use as basis for its specific programmes and approaches.

II.2.4.1. Research

A major research effort started in the mid-'70s on rural employment and poverty, triggered by the question of why rural poverty was increasing in an age of high-growth. It first identified important problems related to incentive systems favouring the non-agricultural sector (import substitution and industrialization, for instance), to decreasing terms of trade between raw materials and manufactured goods, thus creating a double penalty on the rural poor; and further noted how rural non-agricultural activities were mainly undertaken as a survivalist strategy.

The magnitude, nature, structure, trends and causes of rural poverty, along with policy options to combat it, received special attention. Various determinants of poverty were analysed, such as access to assets, leading to an emphasis on agrarian reform. As these were found to be important but insufficient determinants, studies then focused on labour market conditions and dynamics, patterns of rural employment (i.e. part-time agriculture, the use of child labour, etc.), wages, returns to labour (including women and children), and working conditions, which proved equally important in determining the well being of rural populations.

Considerable work also focused on a variety of rural employment facets, at macro- as well as micro-level. These included agriculture in development strategies and macroeconomic policies; the patterns of rural development and their impact on employment and incomes; basic needs; rural institutions; participation and organization including participatory organisations of the rural poor; the role of community (grass root) involvement in planning, local resource mobilization, migration, cooperatives, rural small-scale industries, self-employment; women's economic participation and role in rural

development; the sexual division of labour; working children and other disadvantaged groups such as youth, indigenous populations and the disabled.

An important volume of the ILO's work targeted issues related to working conditions such as occupational safety and health, labour inspection, social security, wages, various employment statuses, including numerous forms of precarious work and informal activities. Research included the impact of key developments in rural contexts, such as technology changes and high-yielding seed varieties. Other valuable research focused on specific agricultural activities (poultry, apiculture, vegetable crops, fisheries, plant nursing, etc.), crops and their processing, storage and marketing (cotton, coffee, tea, rubber, palm oil, sugar cane, fish, meat, etc.), agricultural innovation, and numerous other non-farm activities (e.g. handicrafts, weaving, soap-making, furniture and brick-making). The aim was to promote employment-friendly technological choices in sectoral investment policies and initiatives, improving working conditions and introduce ILO social policy objectives in sectoral economic policies and programmes. In the 1980s, as knowledge increased, analytical work shifted towards policy-related issues.

Also worth noting are the ILO's efforts to gather statistical information, since national statistics in general were usually lacking in rural measurements. Very often existing measurements would not detect intricacies such as the fact that women were actually cultivating the land, while men technically owned it. This discovery for example, significantly altered the approach of training programmes, which then sought to incorporate women in the process. Breakthroughs in measurement reforms included the discovery of interrelationships with information gathered by other agencies,⁴⁴ as was the case when the ILO and the WHO integrated their rural data to reveal a correlation between a baby's weight and a family's economic status.

This impressive research effort left a legacy of publications, reports, and other materials.⁴⁵ Its results contributed among others to the all-important paradigm in development indicating that growth itself does not guarantee employment creation and poverty reduction, which the ILO advocates to this day.

⁴⁴ At the initiative of Farhad Mehran (from Statistics Bureau).

⁴⁵ See for example *Poverty and Landlessness in Rural Asia*, World Employment Programme, ILO, 1977; Moise Allal, Geoff A. Edmonds, and Ajit S. Bhalla, *Manual on the planning of labour-intensive road construction*, ILO, Geneva 1977; William Bartsch, *Employment and Technology Choice in Asian Agriculture*, NY: Praeger, 1977; Amil Bhaduri and Anisur Rahman (eds.) *Studies in Rural Participation*, New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Pub, 1982; Ajit Bhalla (ed.), *Technology and Employment in Industry*, ILO, Geneva, 1974; Philippe Egger, *Travail et agriculture dans le tiers monde*, ILO, Geneva, 1993; Dharam Ghai and Samir Radwan (eds.), *Agrarian policies and rural poverty in Africa*, ILO, Geneva, 1983; Dharam Ghai, Azizur Rahman Khan, Eddy

II.2.4.2. Basic Needs

The Basic Needs approach deserves special mention. The idea was conceived by the WEP in the mid-‘70s, when it became clear that employment creation was not an end in itself, but serves to fulfil the basic needs of populations. Basic Needs constituted the essence of the ILO’s Report for the 1976 World Employment Conference (WEC) and was received with much enthusiasm. The concept was defined as the concrete requirements of families and communities in terms of food, shelter, clothing, health, education and transportation for instance.⁴⁶ Employment was considered a means as well as an end, and participatory approach to decision-making played a key role. At the core of the strategy it was proposing is a shift to a pattern of economic growth that is more employment-intensive, more equitable, and more effective in reducing poverty.

The approach was revolutionary in many ways. In particular, it placed families and communities and their consumption needs at the centre of employment and development strategies. It also set specific production targets, and derived from them the rate of economic growth needed to achieve those needs, rather than setting projected rates of per capita economic growth as previously done.

The Basic Needs approach was also used in a number of ILO Country Employment Strategy Missions, and successfully impacted development work broadly, including that of the World Bank’s Policy Planning Staff Group. While its broad, all-encompassing nature rendered the approach attractive, those very characteristics made it difficult for the ILO to manage it alone and would have required UN-wide participation (which is perhaps happening today as discussed later).

Lee, and Torkel Alfthan, *The basic-needs approach to development. Some issues regarding concepts and methodology*, ILO, Geneva, 1980; Rizwanul Islam (ed.), *Rural Industrialization and Employment in Asia*, ILO, New Delhi, 1987; Azizur Rahman Khan and Eddy Lee (eds.), *Poverty in Rural Asia*, ILO, Bangkok, 1984; Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, ILO, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981; Amartya Sen, *Employment, Technology and Development*, ILO, Oxford: University Press, 1999. Also see footnote 74 for publications on rural women. Many other publications were country-specific and often prepared by local researchers or subject specialists. They were around 30-60 pages long, pragmatic, action-oriented, and thus also accessible to “busy” policy-makers and practitioners. As the publication cost was low, distribution was often free; and the regional employment teams were deeply involved in their production and dissemination, thereby reaching a large audience. Examples include a number of Working Paper series on labour absorption in agriculture, covering in particular Asian countries; agrarian reform; rural poverty and employment, covering Central America in particular; and the socio-economic implications of structural changes in plantations in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

⁴⁶ First they include certain minimum requirements of a family for private consumption: adequate food, shelter and clothing, as well as certain household equipment and furniture. Second, they include essential services provided by and for the community at large, such as safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport and health, education and cultural facilities. ILO, *Employment, Growth and Basic Needs: A One- World Problem*, Report of the Director-General to the World Employment Conference (Geneva: ILO, 1976), 7.

The WEP gradually moved away from basic needs to concentrate more on labour market issues. The '80s in general saw a gradual waning of basic needs as a development strategy, given its requirement of a highly pro-active and interventionist state, while the debt crises of those years, and the first Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) were pushing in the opposite direction. Furthermore, its operational use to formulate practical policy ideas, for instance, proved somewhat challenging given the number and complexity of its components and the extensive modelling it required. The approach is perhaps better known for its contribution to the conceptualization of poverty and development challenges.

The idea of basic needs considerably impacted development thinking and actually lives on in the present. It has been stimulating work and ideas on the impact of specific goods and services on human development. It has been used since the early 1990s by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Human Development Reports in its Human Resource Development (HRD) indices. More recently it inspired the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approach, which sets specific human needs objectives, such as food, health and education as a means to diminish poverty.⁴⁷ The ILO's own Decent Work Agenda, and particularly its more recent Social Protection Floor Initiative on which it is collaborating with other agencies, contain substantial basic needs elements.

II.2.4.3. Capacity building

Various capacity building products were developed from this research, such as a whole series on management and technical training in agricultural cooperatives, vocational training, vocational rehabilitation in rural areas, income generation and cash crop agriculture, transportation, irrigation, rural public works, rural electrification and its socio-economic consequences, technology, biotechnology, environment protection, energy and renewable energy technologies, solar drying firewood and charcoal preparation, rural non-farm skills such as food storage, farm equipment needs, youth, forestry training, smallholder agriculture, land reforms, food security, survival strategies after famine and other crises, agricultural credit and banking for the rural poor, and strengthening of rural workers' organizations and NGOs in rural development.⁴⁸ The ILO International Training Centre in

⁴⁷ Louis Emmerij, *The Basic Needs Development Strategy*, Background paper for the World Economic and Social Survey 2010; Richard Jolly, Louis Emmerij, Dharam Ghai and Frédéric Lapeyre, *UN Contributions to Development Thinking and Practice* (UN: UN intellectual history project series, 2004).

⁴⁸ The exact volume of work is difficult to gauge, as there is no systematic record of the number of publications, training tools, working papers and seminar papers produced. However, some partial bibliographies provide a general idea of the type of product, thematic, target group and geographic area focuses. ILO, *Rural Development: An Annotated Bibliography of ILO Publications and Documents, 1983-1990* (Geneva: ILO, 1991)

Turin (ITC-Turin) developed additional training materials, as well as over 40 different training workshops on various aspects of rural employment, ranging from general topics such as “Rural development projects : design and appraisals”, “Management of agricultural enterprises”, “Skills development in rural contexts” and “Cooperatives for rural development” to more specific ones focused on “Design of low-cost agricultural machinery”, “Conservation, marketing and transportation of agricultural products”, “Planning and management of integrated agro-industrial systems”, and “Advanced training in animal husbandry” for instance.⁴⁹

II.2.4.4. Technical Cooperation

ILO’s analytical and training work was complemented by a steady increase in *operational interventions*. The annual volume of newly approved TC projects grew from less than USD 3 million to over USD 127 million between 1960 and the late-1980s with rural areas consisting of 60-65 percent of total work⁵⁰ ranging from rural employment promotion, to public works, training schemes, appropriate technology, women participation, cooperatives and small enterprise development. Over half of all projects operated in Africa, some 28 percent in Asia, and 17 percent in Latin America.⁵¹ Also worth noting is a marked trend in the mid-late 1980s from institution building and technical advisory services to direct assistance to populations through income generation, training and employment projects.

II.2.4.5. Policy services

Advisory services were a fourth major area of ILO rural work in those decades, and were solidly based on research and TC work, and the approaches thus delivered. They were mainly offered within projects or upon *ad hoc* constituent requests.

Advisory services also took the form of Employment Strategy Missions, another unique undertaking by the ILO that targeted some eight countries between 1970 and 1983. These missions were major multidisciplinary undertakings based on research and technical cooperation to formulate policy

is particularly informative, revealing in its 757 entries a clear concentration on analytical work, employment, women, youth and the Africa region.

⁴⁹ ILO, *Director-General’s Report on the activities of the Centre*, (Turin, ILO-ITC Turin, 1970-2010).

⁵⁰ Peek, Peter and Philippe Egger. *ILO Projects for Rural Development: Some Preliminary Evidence on Their Impact*. Report for the 1989 annual meeting of the Interdepartmental Committee on Rural Development, Agenda Item 5. Geneva: ILO, 1989.

⁵¹ ILO, *Rural Employment Promotion*, Report to the International Labour Conference (Geneva: ILO, 1988), 102.

advice. The bigger missions, such as those to Colombia (1970) and Kenya (1972) would often take up to three weeks and involve over 20-30 participants, including representatives from FAO, IFAD, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and WB officials. Other missions were more focused and smaller, such as the 1984 mission to reach Afghan refugees in Pakistan; and the 1985 mission to tackle famine in Ethiopia. The impact of these missions on policies is hard to gauge however, as there was no mechanism to evaluate or follow up on them. Records indicate that most of them, including those to Pakistan and Ethiopia, managed to identify various TC project opportunities that were then realized through funding by different agencies and bilateral donors. These missions also clearly contributed to advancing identification and conceptualization of new trends. The Kenya employment mission for instance coined the term “informal economy,” which gradually gained broader attention to become a leading concept in government policy and development work of the 1990s. Employment Strategy Missions also spread concepts such as “using the people” and “peoples’ participation” as a basis for increasing employment, thereby advancing the new paradigm of macro-economic policy changes to stimulate more labour-intensive patterns of development.

The ‘80s witnessed a considerable number of ILO meetings on rural matters, at global and regional levels, in which analytical, operational and policy advocacy work converged. Among the key gatherings were the Panel of the Advisory Committee on Rural Development (Geneva, 1985); ILO JASPA’s Regional Workshop on Policies and Projects for Rural Employment Promotion in Africa (Addis Ababa, 1985); the International Seminar on Rural Employment Promotion Strategies (Beijing, 1986); and the Workshop on the Interrelationship between Macro-economic Policies and Rural Development (Geneva, 1989).

The 1988 ILC Discussion on Rural Employment Promotion provides another important record of the ILO work. The background Report takes stock of the voluminous amount of work undertaken in the preceding decade and considers the challenges of the 1980s, particularly the prolonged global economic recession, increasing indebtedness of developing countries and ensuing structural adjustment programmes, growing unemployment and underemployment, persistent poverty to derive a “rural-focused, employment-oriented development strategy”.⁵² This Strategy aims at greater labour absorption in rural areas, through increased linkages between a dynamic non-farm rural economy and an increasingly productive agricultural sector. The Report calls for “... a shift of emphasis in the work of the ILO ... [towards] strengthening the agriculture/non-agriculture linkages... [and] ... the

⁵² Op. Cit. ILO, *Rural Employment Promotion* (1988), 114.

promotion of employment in the rural non-farm economy....”⁵³ The ensuing Resolution confirms this strategy, referring in particular to the conclusions of the 1986 report on the promotion of small- and medium-sized enterprises, and their importance in rural areas; and calling to “...combine research, advisory services and technical cooperation...” to “...shift away from isolated micro projects into more interrelated projects of a coherent programme...”. In addition, it called for expanded evaluation and monitoring of TC project socio-economic impact, with priority to activities in support of rural women.⁵⁴

II.2.4.6. External relations

External relations and collaboration formed a major element of the ILO’s rural work agenda. Prolific and active engagement made the ILO an authority on rural employment and development, including among agencies specialising in rural development. The ILO was a precursor in work to understand rural issues. Its publications had significant impact at the inter-agency level and on the academic world, and at times opened the way for work on rural poverty later undertaken by core agencies such as FAO and WB.

Given the scale of poverty in rural areas, its vast size and complexity of the various tasks, inter-agency collaboration on rural development grew and broadened rapidly since the mid-1970s. The ILO worked mainly through the ACC Task Force on Rural Development (operating from 1975 to 1986),⁵⁵ that made poverty-oriented rural development the unifying concept and objective of the UN system and a reference point.⁵⁶ The Task Force was first chaired by the ILO, and then by FAO. After the 1980 assessment of its work, the Task Force agreed that its catalytic role should focus on three specific areas: 1) joint action at the country and regional level; 2) promoting people’s participation in rural development; and 3) monitoring and evaluation of rural development.⁵⁷ As a result, a Panel on Promoting People’s Rural Participation was set up and led by ILO; and Monitoring and Evaluation

⁵³ Ibid, 119.

⁵⁴ Ibid, §13.

⁵⁵ Recurrent items were, reporting on specialized activities, joint agency action at country level, monitoring and evaluation of rural development, progress in specific issues (ex in 1986, on people’s participation and women development), publications of interest, major obstacles encountered, coordination and country-level initiatives. A set of sub-groups carried out specific work, such as the Working Group on Programme Harmonization, focusing on intra agency as well as inter-agency coordination mechanisms to avoid conflicting action, synchronize parallel action, take complementary action and formulate common positions.

⁵⁶ UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), then the Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) held in 1979, in which ILO actively participated, crystallized this that UN system re-orient its programmes to ensure that benefits accrue primarily to the rural poor.

⁵⁷ UN, *Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination Task Force on Rural Development*, ACC 9th Meeting (Rome: UN, February 1981).

functions were led by IFAD, which rapidly highlighted the need to assess impact and compile lessons learnt. Lack of data and the difficulty in fixing a set of standardized performance indicators given the complexity of rural development issues made that task arduous though. Monitoring and evaluation were found to be the weak part of operational and advisory exercises. The concept itself was nebulous and this made evaluations nebulous too.⁵⁸ Interestingly, in the mid-1990s this Panel also called for assessing the “social rate of return” of interventions: that is, not only monitoring income-related benefits, but also those related to strengthening institutions, increased levels of participation and provision of services, and satisfaction of beneficiaries.

ILO ties with rural development agencies multiplied, and some of them were formalized, in particular with FAO (1974) and IFAD (1978). The ILO also had particularly close ties with UNDP, which was a major source of funding for its work. Some notable collaboration included:

- An FAO/UNESCO/ILO Inter-Secretariat Working group on Agricultural Education, Science and Training in the ‘80s;
- ILO-WHO collaboration on living, workers’, working and health conditions (within a joint ILO/WHO committee on occupational health);⁵⁹
- A research and action programme in rural development launched with FAO and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development;
- Work with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and WHO on an International Programme on Chemical Safety;
- Work with FAO, UNEP and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) on alternative technologies for specific agricultural or craft products;
- Functioning as lead agency for the realization of an African network on farm tools and equipment; and

⁵⁸ Some of its other conclusions are also worth noting, such as difficulty to decide who is poor and need to go beyond income factors; models sometimes imprecise and not sufficiently tolerant of varied cultural and fast-changing situations; too much attention concentrated at the national ministerial level; insufficient strengthening of capacity of national institutions operating in rural development at various levels and of the linkages among them, leading to top-heavy and top-down approaches and not conducive to the involvement and benefit of deprived populations for whom rural programmes were designed; coupled with little attention paid to local institutions, that may be actually weakened by the sending of experts for short period, that does not allow training of nationals, including for the taking over of projects. They further highlighted scanty local resources, linked to overreliance on external resources, as at times donors were “queuing up”; need for greater linkages among sectors, and for integration of project approach into national planning mechanism; and internationally, need for greater communication, coordination and harmonization in interventions. Among the major positive project results noted are the consciousness raising of bottom up and self reliant rural development; the fact that political will and appropriate mandate can determine the success of bottom up rural development; and the importance of “making things move” so even small successes could be built on.

⁵⁹ The joint ILO/WHO Committee, set up in 1950 and operational to date, has been undertaking joint initiatives and has held over 13 major meetings covering in particular education and training in occupational health, safety and ergonomics; scope and organization of occupational health; reporting on occupational diseases; occupational exposure assessments; establishment of permissible limits; and an integrated approach to health management systems as an essential function of good management.

- Cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to develop new approaches in income-generating activities for refugees.

In the mid-1980s the ILO was regularly consulted in the design of WFP projects,⁶⁰ and was involved in over 30 evaluation missions a year, while WFP provided input on some of the ILO's public works initiatives. In the '80s and '90s a special ILO Unit, "Alimentation Mondiale" (ALIMOND),⁶¹ was created with WFP funds for the specific purpose of liaising with that agency, the World Food Council (WFC) and IFAD.⁶² The ILO was also part of many multi-agency missions, particularly frequent in those years, such as the programming mission to Yemen with IFAD in 1979 that led to a large ILO programme financed by IFAD on small farmers' development based on an integrated approach, to include credit, marketing and a gender focus (that later became a benchmark); and several FAO country missions, for instance to Somalia and Brazil, supporting agrarian reform. There was at the time a balanced exchange whereby the ILO contributed ideas to FAO and IFAD approaches and initiatives in return for financial support and complementary technical inputs for its employment missions and other activities.

Partnerships were also formed with trade unions and NGOs such as the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), IFPAAW, and TUIAFPW. Major programmes such as the Cooperatives Branch (COOP) and the Infrastructure and Rural Works Branch (EMP/INFRA) had close working relations of their own with other organizations. Meanwhile, contacts with FAO and WFP at working level at Headquarters and in the field were frequent.

It therefore appears that the ILO had a major impact on the international policy debate on rural poverty and development. The ILO was sought out to provide consultation on and work with international agencies such as the WB, FAO, IFAD, and WFP to name a few, or with bilateral agencies involved in rural development. As articulated by a privileged informant, "We [the ILO] were a big partner", and "were everywhere", prompting policy-makers to focus on rural areas.⁶³

This recognition, as well as collaboration, lessened over time. Shifts within the ILO to other priorities, lack of follow-up mechanisms, and loosely integrated work plans concerning rural issues all played a

⁶⁰ It would advise particularly on payment systems, work norms, working conditions, labour force composition and distribution of benefits from the initiatives and food aid itself.

⁶¹ In French: "Alimentation Mondiale" (World Food), Unit responsible for relation with the World Food Program.

⁶² ILO, *Rural Employment Promotion*, Report to the International Labour Conference (Geneva: ILO, 1988), 113.

⁶³ Peter Peek, Interview (15 September 2009).

part in its diminishing role as a principal authority. Additionally, issues of leadership sometimes slowed efforts in joint work, as in the case of the attempt to set up a network of agencies (FAO, UNIDO, ILO, and UNDP) to work on agricultural technology in the 1980s. Another concern, voiced by many, was the need to develop a common frame for action and cooperation (also at field level) between UN agencies to prevent wasteful duplication and burden on officials and organizations of member States.⁶⁴

Worth mentioning are the close policy and financial relations that existed at that time, also with bilateral development agencies such as CIDA, DANIDA, NORAD, and SIDA, as well as with Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the UK. They supported and showed keenness for the ILO's research and operational activities, and took an active part and responsibility in policy debates at national and international levels. This also resulted in intense contact at working level between the ILO technical staff and staff of these agencies, thus mutually enriching policy choices, research agendas, and programme promotion, as well as networking with national-level technicians and authorities, both in developed and developing countries.

II.2.5. Focus groups

The ILO's early research on rural poverty revealed several disadvantaged groups often overlooked in previous rural development efforts. These included women, wage and non-wage workers, Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (ITPs), and disabled persons. Work on rural employers was sparse in those years. ILO initiatives became increasingly focused on these target groups, resulting in TC projects, programmes, and approaches that actively attempted to include these marginalized sections of the rural population in development schemes. Child Labour and rural youth were also of concern to the ILO, but substantial work on the two topics would not take place till the late-1980s.

II.2.5.1. Women

The ILO was one of the first agencies to treat rural women as a distinct category. Interest in the topic stemmed out of the ILO's work on growth rates and labour absorption, which prompted questions about productivity, who actually works the land, and who benefits from it. By 1974 the ILO had set up a Women's Programme within WEP, with early studies focusing mostly on the sexual division of

⁶⁴ This is now reflected to some extent in the Paris Declaration as well as the One UN System.

labour; the characterisation and delineation of the contributions made by women to rural development; and the nature and operation of biases against women in terms of their access to resources (including land) as well as income from their labour.

The World Employment Conference (WEC) in June 1976 pointed out that rural women face the most disadvantages in many developing countries with regard to employment, poverty, education, training, and status overall. The WEC called for action aimed at relieving the work burdens of rural women by improving their living and working conditions.⁶⁵ In 1979 EMP/RU launched the Programme on Rural Women, based on ACRD's recommendation. Faced with inadequate knowledge on the topic, the Programme undertook further research on employment patterns, labour processes, poverty, and organizations related to rural women. It also conducted studies and field research on specific issues, ranging from investigating the role (or potential role) of women in mitigating environmental crises to more specific research on the role of women in individual industries (like carpet weaving, lace making, beedi⁶⁶ manufacturing); to issues confronting female-headed households (which continue to grow, especially among poorer social classes); to women as share-croppers; women as petty traders; women's status in rural labour markets; home-based women workers; and the impact of technical change on women's employment.

The Programme on Rural Women undertook groundbreaking research, introduced and worked on various innovative concepts and approaches, from women awareness raising, social mobilization and working collectively to solve problems, generate income, and give women a voice; to increasing women's access to government officials, and awareness-raising among employers to women's needs (in terms of health, education, shelter, water and sanitation); to women capacity building; to micro-finance for income-poor women, viewed at the time with suspicion by donors and other stakeholders, but nowadays is broadly accepted and indeed an important component of projects.

The general strategy of the Programme was to build a conceptual and informational base that could be widely disseminated through publications and seminars, such as a series of three tripartite regional seminars organized in 1981 for Asia, Africa, and Latin America incorporating the experiences of women from the countries of those respective regions. This information was to be used in developing technical cooperation projects, but was not fully utilized as governments and interest groups were

⁶⁵ Op. Cit. ILO, *Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action Adopted by the Tripartite World Conference* (1976).

⁶⁶ A beedi is a thin South Asian cigarette.

eager to see tangible country-level activities stemming from field study missions, so TC projects developed faster than initially expected.

Most TC projects targeting rural women aimed at promoting income-generating or other forms of remunerative employment; and at empowering women through participatory approaches, to help them decide and implement new initiatives. Creation and strengthening of women's organizations were high priorities, stemming from the belief that this was vital to the sustainability of any international effort to improve the lives of rural women. Extensive research and country studies had established that, "[rural] women do not simply take initiative, but act collectively through informal as well as formal organizations promoted and strengthened by projects."⁶⁷ The promotion of grass-roots level organizations among poor rural women was thus an integral part of many projects.

The Programme on Rural Women often shared tools, projects, and collaborated closely with the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) (specifically the Workers' Education Branch (EDUC)) efforts to organize rural workers. It also helped implement Conventions, such as the Rural Workers Organization Convention, 1975 (No. 141), to ensure that they reached rural women. Trade unions at the time were exclusively male dominated and the Programme helped organize women into rural workers' organizations. In India it helped some women obtain legal titles to land; in the Philippines it assisted trade unions that were not previously keen on organizing women; and in Bangladesh it worked with women plantation workers. An initiative in Sri Lanka targeting rural women plantation workers already organized into trade unions yielded successful results with workers reporting several improvements in domestic and working conditions, as well as the promotion of several women to the union hierarchy.

The Programme also helped in the early stages of India's well-renowned SEWA⁶⁸ by channelling funds to some of its activities to organize rural women. One such project, in India's Punjab and West Bengal regions, organised women to help them interact with government officials on land rights, land use and related issues, thereby nurturing women's capacity to demand the services they needed. The project involved women workers in jungle areas, and included indigenous people, agricultural labourers, and migrant labour. Rural workshops were set up where women workers could gather and

⁶⁷ ILO, *Review of ILO Rural Development Activities Since 1983*. Advisory Committee on Rural Development, 11th Session (Geneva: ILO, 1990), 19.

⁶⁸ SEWA is now registered as a trade union, with over a million members across India. It operates dozens of cooperatives that market and process agricultural products and provide insurance, health care, education and housing as well as a banking that does mainly micro-credit.

talk to officials about their problems and needs. In addition to project resources for training, the government provided its own funds, which made the initiative sustainable and increased local government's capacity and willingness to provide services to women workers.

Another path-breaking series of projects on "Employment Opportunities for Rural Women through Organization", was launched in India, Mexico, and Senegal, and spread rapidly to Nepal and Pakistan.⁶⁹ They consisted of a first phase to evaluate on-going rural development projects and programmes, with input from local actors and beneficiaries, to determine their impact on the poorest segments of rural women. Based on these results, a second phase was developed to provide assistance to women's organizations in the re-orientation and promotion of income and employment-generating projects. The overarching goal was to strengthen women's organizational base, so that they may develop and sustain activities aimed at goals they set for themselves. In West Bengal, a small organization previously numbering 34 women workers participating in the project grew to over 600 members from 20 villages in 18 months.⁷⁰ These and other cases demonstrated that once organized, even "women from very deprived areas ... [can]... gain access to significant resources from government agencies and programmes and from the community which had not previously reached them, involving land, finance, seedlings, technologies, health care, and nutrition."⁷¹

The Programme also launched several projects related to "Energy and Rural Women's Work", stemming from earlier studies on rural energy consumption which revealed cooking to be the activity that required most energy and time. While women did nearly all the cooking and most fuel gathering, they often had no voice on rural energy policy.⁷² Unfortunately the impact of this work at policy level is difficult to gauge due to a lack of documentation.

Efforts were also undertaken to promote participation of women in Special Public Works Programs (SPWPs). It was noted that due to the nature of most projects, the number of women participants were low;⁷³ but rural women stand to benefit from these projects, the jobs created by labour-intensive

⁶⁹ ILO, *Review of ILO Rural Development Activities Since 1979*. Advisory Committee on Rural Development, 10th Session (Geneva: ILO, 1983), 48.

⁷⁰ Zubeida Ahmad and Martha Loutfi, *Women Workers in Rural Development* (Geneva: ILO, 1985), 32.

⁷¹ Ibid 32.

⁷² Elizabeth Cecelski, *The Rural Energy Crisis, Women's Work and Basic Needs, Perspectives and Approaches to Action*, (Geneva: ILO, 1985), 2.

⁷³ ILO, *Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women in Employment*, Report VII, International Labour Conference (Geneva: ILO, 1985), 88.

schemes, as well as the final result, be it improved water supply and sanitation systems, roads, or the construction of rural housing units.

In 1990 alone EMP/RU was overseeing 14 TC projects on rural women distributed throughout Africa and Asia, with nine more projects in the pipeline, in addition to advisory missions to identify needs of rural women and recommend policy action accordingly. The sustainability of several projects has been widely linked to the commitment of national institutions to fund capacity-building and run programmes, often precursors of the integration of the project's approach into mainstream work. A good example is the Vulnerable Groups Programme in Bangladesh of the early 1980s, which targeted female-headed households for its large capacity building/training components (an unusual target at the time, but chosen because they were among the poorest), that became part of an on-going government programme assisting the poorest women in the country.

While it had much to contribute, links between the Programme and other units of the ILO were not always strong. The Programme encountered several challenges with Regional Employment Teams for instance, who were working on high-level macro-economic and employment issues that did not correspond to those of the Programme on Rural Women.

By 1990, the ILO's analytical work and practical experience on the role of women in rural development had been synthesized in over 150 working papers, books and conference papers covering a wide range of topics ranging from land tenure, to cooking, to the phenomenon of sex workers.⁷⁴ The Programme had pioneered findings on intra-household division of labour, unpaid work, home work, female hardship and poverty and women's organization that laid the foundation for the new vision on women in development and gender equality in the world of work.

⁷⁴ See Martha Loutfy, *Rural Women: Unequal Partners in Development* (Geneva, ILO, 1980) and "Development with women: Action not alibis," in *International Labour Review*, 126 (1), Jan-Feb 1987, pp. 111-124; Zubeida Ahmad and Martha Loutfy, *Women workers in rural development* (1985); Zubeida Ahmad, "Rural women and their work: dependence and alternatives for chance," in *International Labour Review*, 123 (1), Jan-Feb 1984, pp. 71-86; Pasuk Phongpaichit, *From Peasant Girls to Bangkok Masseuses* (Geneva, ILO, 1982); and Christine Oppong and Katharine Abu, *Handbook for data collection and analysis on seven roles and statuses of women*, (Geneva, ILO, 1985).

II.2.5.2. Workers

The Workers' Education Programme specifically targeting rural areas, set up in the mid-1970s within the Workers' Education Branch (EDUC) within ACTRAV, was also highly innovative. It emerged as a result of strong support from the GB in 1971⁷⁵ and the Rural Workers' Organizations Convention, 1975 (No. 141) and related Recommendation (No. 149), to build up rural workers' capacity to organize and have a proper voice and means to improve their working and living conditions.

EDUC's main goal was to empower the local (rural) unions to help themselves. It would provide occasional support for events organized by workers' organizations themselves, and trainings on a few, specifically identified topics, with the option for follow-up and support.

To that end, it undertook a series of research projects, country studies, and field investigations with the objective of identifying the most appropriate forms of workers' education methods, techniques and materials to use with various categories of rural workers, ranging from plantation workers, subsistence cultivators, landless labourers, to tenant farmers and migrant workers. It also helped to review the administration, activities and services of rural workers' organizations. A number of studies led to practical field projects, while on other occasions, studies could not have practical impact due to difficulties in disseminating results and related information for political, personnel, or other procedural reasons.⁷⁶

In almost twenty years of operation, EDUC launched projects in over 20 countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Despite its small size, EDUC was the authority on matters related to rural workers. Its work appeared regularly in ILO reports to inter-agency groups such as the ACC Task Force on Rural Development and ACC Task Force Panel on People's Participation. EDUC worked closely with other ILO units, particularly EMP/RU and COOP, as well as with the International Labour Standards

⁷⁵ At its 183rd Session, the GB endorsed the report of a Meeting of Consultants on Workers' Education stressing that, "without a substantial effort on the part of the Office to make intensive efforts to encourage and assist workers' organizations to develop educational institutions and programmes on a scale commensurate with the magnitude of problems in the rural worker field the ILO will have missed a chance to serve the majority of workers in the developing world." ILO, *Technical Review of ILO Rural Development Activities since 1965 and Suggestions for the Future Orientation of the ILO's Work*. Advisory Committee on Rural Development 8th Session (Geneva: ILO, 30 Sept. – 11 Oct. 1974), 42.

⁷⁶ ILO, *Inter-Regional Symposium on Workers' Education for the Strengthening and Development of Rural Workers' Organizations*. Working Paper (Geneva: ILO, 1983), 2.

Department (NORMES), to ensure delivery of well-rounded products.⁷⁷ On an inter-departmental level, EDUC's rural focal point had written agreements with counterparts in POL/DEV and Industrial Sectors Branch (INDUSTR) to meet regularly to facilitate projects' work, minimize overlap, and share funds.

Training courses and projects played a major role in EDUC's efforts to strengthen and develop rural workers' organizations. These targeted specifically trainers, educators, and activists, with a special emphasis on women's participation, to enable them to disseminate information to affiliates at the more local, rural levels. These were complemented by workshops and seminars that served as refresher courses or provided information on specific issues. In all such activities, frank and honest discussions played a major role to allow finding a home-grown solution to locally identified issues.

Regarding operational work, in the early '80s EDUC launched the "Workers' Education for the Strengthening and Development of Rural Workers' Organizations in Six Select Countries of Latin America",⁷⁸ with Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) funding, to put into practice the new concept of "special services"⁷⁹ (see Special Services Approach, Appendix 4). Through the use of participatory methods and special services, the project supported rural workers in: promoting and assisting members of existing (or new) trade unions; developing training activities to help rural workers run these structures effectively; and promoting self-help activities for rural workers. Within two years, the targeted rural workers had developed 128 Plans of Action, of which several were replicated by other worker organizations or groups, bringing the total number of activities to 142.⁸⁰ The cost of planned activities varied from USD 3,000 to USD 100,000, and included building local union offices, new workers' education programmes, and small co-operative stores; various stock- and crop-raising activities; to the building of community health centres, workers' housing schemes, and a large-scale dairy enterprises. A progress report at the end of 1983 found 57 projects to be fully operational, 41 underway, and another 28 in advanced preliminary stages.⁸¹ Nearly half the activities cost less than USD 3,000 each, and almost half were entirely financed by the members, their

⁷⁷ See for example project in Philippines (1986), where with combined support from EDUC and COOP, the Federation of Free Workers (FFW) collaborated on developing a programme of training for cooperative educators. The ILO activity helped create a pool of competent cooperative trainers and extension workers.

⁷⁸ Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras and Panama, besides Venezuela that served as pilot country.

⁷⁹ ILO, *Special Services; A Real Instrument to Strengthen the Economic Basis of the Rural Workers' Organizations and to Promote People's Participation* (Geneva: ILO, 1986).

⁸⁰ Jorge Giusti, *Resume of EDUC's Activities Regarding Rural Employment Generation*, Department Minutes, (Geneva: ILO, 1986).

⁸¹ Ibid.

organizations, or federations.⁸² At the end of the project in 1986, participating rural workers' organizations were equipped with several new instruments, notably trade union coordinators, revolving loans, and planning offices to help sustain local trade unions through employment generation programmes.

EDUC used this successful project as a template for other initiatives it launched in Africa and Asia. Among them was a 1983 Training of Trainers (TOT) initiative with the agricultural trade union, Shetkari Shetmajoor Panchayat, in Maharashtra, India.⁸³ EDUC helped organizers increase recruitment in their respective districts by "nearly 11,000 paying members among the self-employed, landless and wage workers."⁸⁴ More importantly, it trained workers to identify problems at village level and take them up with the appropriate authorities. In this case efforts led to the organization of pressure group activities (with minimal advisory support from EDUC) to prompt authorities to provide work under the State's employment guarantee scheme, thus securing precious work days for male and female members. In a similar project, EDUC worked with another rural workers' organization, the Hind Khet Mazdoor Sabha (HKMS),⁸⁵ to implement change by motivating villagers to undertake new economic activities in rural areas with greater employment-generation potential.

Other key TC initiatives included a joint EDUC/COOP programme with the Filipino Federation of Free Workers (FFW) started in 1986 to create a local consortium of cooperative trainers and extension workers, effectively combining cooperative principles with union strategy.⁸⁶ In 1985 a project on "Workers' Education for Women Members of Rural Workers' Organizations in Ghana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe" was launched to integrate women into traditionally male union structures.⁸⁷ The project devoted a full year to assessing the conditions for women's activities within several pre-existing rural workers' organizations. Based on these findings it held several courses for women participants to develop an activist mentality and knowledge on trade unions, agrarian, and labour legislation as well as women's rights and roles in trade unions. It also developed specialists in women workers' activities, with curricula consisting of topics such as health and family education, the development of organization-based services and self-help activities for women members and leadership roles. At its

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ ILO project: "Workers' Education Assistance to Shetkari Shetmajoor Panchayat (SSMP)," Poone, India (1981-1985).

⁸⁴ Op. cit. ILO, *Special Services: A Real Instrument to Strengthen* (1986), 4.

⁸⁵ ILO project: "Workers' Education Assistance to Hind Khet Mazdoor Sabha (HKMS)," India (1985-1989).

⁸⁶ Op. Cit. ILO, *Special Services: A Real Instrument to Strengthen* (1986).

⁸⁷ ILO project: "Workers' Education for Women Members of Rural Workers' Organizations" (1985-1990).

end in 1987, the project achieved its goal of having a team of local women activists competent in improving women's participation in rural workers' organizations.⁸⁸

More work on integrating women into trade unions occurred in the 1990s under a series of projects financed by Scandinavian donors titled, the "Workers' Education for Women Members of Rural Workers Organizations", in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The projects were culturally- and gender-sensitive, with educational materials specifically adapted for each country and situation.

EDUC was thus highly active in promoting and facilitating worker education across the world as a way to promote rural women' and men' associations. It sponsored numerous TC projects that targeted an often marginalized sector of the population; held seminars, workshops, published papers, developed teaching materials; and sought to transfer knowledge to local organizations so that the impact would be felt long after the projects were officially closed. EDUC maintained partnerships with Worker constituents and collaborated considerably in-House. While documentation to gauge real, long-term impact is limited, it seems that EDUC's work did reach national policy levels in a number of cases, and also resulted in increased ratification of Convention 141.⁸⁹

II.2.5.3. Employers

While the Employers' Activities Department (ACT/EMP) never had a specific programme targeting employers in rural areas, ILO projects benefiting rural entrepreneurs took place on an *ad hoc* basis. This included several round tables or seminars organized by the ILO since 1970, to assist employers' organizations in Africa (Francophone regions), Latin-America, Asia and Arab countries. Assistance was directed at employers' associations in all branches of economic activity, including agriculture and related activities. Many participants voiced concerns still valid today, for instance, "... that the living conditions and leisure opportunities in the rural areas should be improved to keep young people away from the lure of the towns."⁹⁰ They also stressed the need to promote industries in rural areas for the processing of agricultural products and to reduce imports of consumer goods that could be produced

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Of the 40 countries that have ratified Convention C141, 29 did so during the mid-1970s and 1980s, versus 11 ratifications since 1990. Ratification Rates for C141, available at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/ratifce.pl?C141>

⁹⁰ ILO, *Report of the Regional Technical Seminar on Industrial Relations for Employers' Organizations in French-Speaking African Countries*, Mimeographed (French only), (Geneva: ILO, 1977), 5-6.

locally. An increase in the volume of exports was thus identified as one way in which employment in rural areas could be increased.⁹¹

ACT/EMP was also involved in the establishment of a regional rural vocational training centre in the Asian and Pacific region.⁹² The project report highlighted trends and developments in rural vocational training in the region, including ILO activities at national, regional and sub-regional levels. It pointed out that “governments, employers’ and workers’ organizations, NGOs and others interested in rural development had undertaken a broad and diverse range of rural vocational training activities and would particularly welcome further ILO support in developing national policies and well coordinated programmes for rural vocational training.”⁹³ Although this information may seem anecdotal, it shows ACT/EMP’s involvement in various projects while keeping in mind its main mandate: to foster employers’ organizations so they can contribute to socio-economic development.

The ILO also reached rural employers’ organizations through a project that supported the promotion of small- and medium-size enterprises via the Improve Your Business (IYB) tool (at its embryonic stage at the time).⁹⁴ The project started with a series of seminars for Asian and Pacific Employers’ organizations.⁹⁵ This was followed by a meeting in Niamey (Niger) in December 1982, and later resulted in DANIDA-funded TC projects promoting IYB in East Africa (1989-93).⁹⁶

II.2.5.4. Indigenous and Tribal Peoples

ILO work on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (ITPs) started with the 1954-72 Programme of Technical Assistance to the Indigenous Populations of the Andean High Plateau action (better known as the Andean Indian Programme), an ILO-led multi-agency initiative⁹⁷ to protect the interests of indigenous

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² ILO, *Establishment of a Regional Rural Vocational Training Centre in the Asia and Pacific Region*, Governing Body, 225th Session, Committee on Operational Programmes (Geneva: ILO, Feb-March 1984).

⁹³ ILO, *Report of the ILO Committee on Operational Programmes*. Governing Body, 219th Session (Geneva: ILO, 1982), § 66.

⁹⁴ ILO project: “Assistance to Employers’ Organizations with Special Emphasis on Promoting Small Enterprise Development,” via employers’ organizations in Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia (1984-1988).

⁹⁵ The Seminar’ Round Table papers are available (see Archives TF 18-01-2-B-1-1-4-1 Jacket 1).

⁹⁶ ILO Project: “Assistance to Employers’ Organisations in East Africa with Special Emphasis on Small Enterprises Development” in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe (1989-1995).

⁹⁷ The multisectoral nature of this Programme led to participation of FAO, ILO, UN, UNESCO, WHO, and contributions from UNICEF and WFP.

peoples.⁹⁸ The Programme was piloted in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru; then extended to Colombia (1960), Chile and Argentina (1961), Venezuela (1964), and to Guatemala (mid-'60s). Its main objective was to train indigenous social promoters and peasant leaders to, "...serve as intermediaries in the introduction of modern practices of social and economic organization in their own communities as well as the mobilization of material and human resources of these communities for the improvement of their living and working conditions".⁹⁹ The approach reflected the prevalent belief of the time that "modernizing" and assimilating indigenous and tribal systems to the mainstream national system would improve ITPs' situation.

The Programme nevertheless operated on the novel premise that all activities were to have the support of ITPs and be based on their specific needs. It engaged in a variety of activities such as: animal husbandry and agriculture, land settlement, cooperatives (especially for agriculture and cattle production), health and sanitation, community development, housing, social welfare, education, and training. Much work was also devoted to health and cultural adaptation;¹⁰⁰ training in new methods of farming and other skills; and also education.¹⁰¹ With a regional office in Lima, each country had several "action bases" equipped with a workshop for practical training in woodwork and mechanics, a clinic or similar type of medical facility, classrooms, and agricultural equipment and supplies, from which local activities were launched. The Programme also functioned through cooperative structures (formal and informal) adapted to the needs of indigenous and tribal groups, through which to provide necessary technical services, especially those related to agriculture and handicraft production. Following the launch of WEP, the Andean Indian Programme also included trainings for employment creation activities.¹⁰²

Achievements of the Programme were manifold. Groups in Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela experienced increases in agricultural production, along with the introduction of cash crops. Schools

⁹⁸ This initiative was based on the recommendations of the first session of ILO's Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour held in 1951 in La Paz, Bolivia, related to developing vocational training programmes, recruiting of indigenous agricultural labourers and mine workers, extension of social insurance and other social assistance, protection of indigenous home crafts, and safety in industry and mining. ILO: *Report of the Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour* (CEIL/1/8.1951), 1st Session, (Geneva: ILO, 1951), 1.

⁹⁹ ILO, *Appraisal of the Achievements of the Andean Indian Programme*. Agenda Item 2, Panel of Consultants on Indigenous and Tribal Populations (Geneva: ILO, 1962), 9.

¹⁰⁰ Some activities gave particular attention to problems involved with the resettlement of Native Communities from the highlands to the lowlands.

¹⁰¹ One of the problems mentioned with education was that it tended to push those with an education towards developed cities and away from [rural] Native lands. A challenge therefore was to educate people while getting them to stay.

¹⁰² ILO, *Activities of the ILO 1969*, Report of the Director-General to the International Labour Conference, Fifty Fourth Session (Geneva: ILO, 1970).

were opened in areas where no instruction had been available previously, and adult literacy courses were arranged in a number of countries. Vocational training institutes or workshops were also set up for skilling indigenous workers in carpentry, blacksmithing, mechanics, weaving, masonry and pottery. The programme helped many trainees set up workshops of their own. The medical facilities it established facilitated the launch of health campaigns and improvements in environmental sanitation.¹⁰³ An evaluation estimated that 161 communities and 330,000 people had been reached through the various activities undertaken by the Programme;¹⁰⁴ and a final tally recorded the number of direct beneficiaries at 250,000 with double the amount of indirect beneficiaries.¹⁰⁵

A review in the mid-1980s still found its influence on methods and policies, especially its integrated approach that promoted simultaneous and coordinated treatment of the many aspects of the life and work of the beneficiaries, which is now considered a basic requisite of rural development. The Programme also motivated governments, for instance of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru, to formulate “National Integration Plans” for their Indigenous populations, prompting special consideration and efforts to address their needs in a variety of technical areas and offering them a practical tool with which they could determine the type of action required.

The initiative was also important for dispelling common misconceptions in those days about ITPs, by providing “...conclusive evidence that the alleged apathy and inertia of the inhabitants disappear and their attitude changes when they are convinced that the assistance offered them is useful and practical and does not serve as a cover for exploitation”,¹⁰⁶ and thus demonstrating that ITPs, like any other group concerned about its wellbeing, respond favourably to external influences as long as they are respectful of the existing society and their cultural values. The experience of the Programme served as a source of knowledge and the following years witnessed an increase in reading materials on ITP conditions worldwide, including an ILO publication that was considered the most complete study of the subject.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ ILO, *Technical Review of ILO Rural Development Activities since 1965 and Suggestions for the Future Orientation of the ILO's Work*, Advisory Committee on Rural Development, 8th session, Item 1, (Geneva: ILO, 1974), 54.

¹⁰⁴ ILO, *Appraisal of the Achievements of the Andean Indian Programme*. Agenda Item 2, Panel of Consultants on Indigenous and Tribal Populations (Geneva: ILO, 1962), 11.

¹⁰⁵ ILO, *ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, 1989 (No. 169): A Manual* (Geneva: ILO, 2003), 3.

¹⁰⁶ Op. Cit, ILO: *Technical Review of ILO Rural Development Activities since 1965* (1974), 54.

¹⁰⁷ ILO, *Indigenous Peoples: Living and Working Conditions of Aboriginal Populations in Independent Countries, Studies and Reports*, New Series No.35 (Geneva: ILO, 1953).

The ILO's direct work with ITPs through the Programme also led to its adoption of the Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Populations, 1957 (No. 107) and accompanying Recommendation No. 104, covering such topics as land rights, working conditions, health and education, and forming the first international legal treaty on the matter.¹⁰⁸ It was followed up with the establishment of an ILO Indigenous and Tribal Population Service in 1962 to develop a systematic research programme providing informational materials as the basis for operational activities; but also to coordinate the activities of relevant ILO Units and to serve as a channel of communication between these Units and the Andean Indian Programme and similar projects elsewhere. It also ensured a liaison among agencies involved in projects related to ITPs, as well as ILO representation at inter-agency meetings.¹⁰⁹

Between 1975 and 1985 the ILO launched a variety of comprehensive rural TC initiatives targeting ITPs in Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru, and direct advisory services to governments, national institutions, and workers' organizations.¹¹⁰ Other projects studied concerns specific to ITPs, such as the 1982 joint ILO-Inter-American Indian Institute programme researching traditional forms of organization and economic activity in the indigenous Andean environment.¹¹¹

The late-'80s brought major changes in development thinking and public perceptions of ITPs, leading to a revision of C107 based on the rejection of the "assimilationist" approach that had heretofore influenced work on ITPs. The resulting Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, 1989 (No. 169) included the fundamental concept that, "...the ways of life of indigenous and tribal peoples should and will survive and that these peoples and their traditional organizations should be closely involved in the planning and implementation of development projects which affect

¹⁰⁸ ILO, "History of ILO's Work," Available At:

<http://www.ilo.org/indigenous/Aboutus/HistoryofILOswork/lang--en/index.htm>.

¹⁰⁹ ILO, *Action Taken to Implement the Recommendations of the Second Session of the Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour*. Panel of Consultants on Indigenous and Tribal Populations, First Session (Geneva: ILO, 1962), 14.

¹¹⁰ They include one on self-supply by vulnerable groups (1979-81), and another on extension and consolidation of rural women's production associations (1984-85) in Bolivia; one on increasing handicraft and agricultural production (1981 in Costa Rica; one on developing appropriate endogenous technologies for rural areas (1979-93 in Ecuador; and starting in 1985 a wide-ranging sub-regional project of support to organizations of indigenous workers in Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru). ILO, *Rural Development – Taking Into Account the Problems of Indigenous Populations As Well As the Drift of the Rural Population to the Cities and Its Integration in the Urban Informal Sector*, Report II (Agenda Item 2), 12th Conference of American States, Members of the ILO. (Montreal: ILO, March 1986), 44-51.

¹¹¹ The Indigenous Institutes of Bolivia and Peru and the Directorate of Indigenous Affairs of the Ministry of Social Welfare of Ecuador also participated; and technical meetings were organized in Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador to discuss results.

them”.¹¹² As stated in its the preamble, C169 is grounded on the recognition of indigenous peoples’ aspirations to exercise control over their own institutions, ways of life and economic development, and to maintain and develop their identities, languages and religions within the framework of the States in which they reside. The principles of consultation and participation therefore represent the cornerstone of the Convention, and is to this day, “... recognized as the foremost international policy document on indigenous and tribal peoples. It sets minimum international standards, and seeks to bring governments, organizations of indigenous and tribal peoples and other non-governmental organizations together in the same dialogue”.¹¹³

The new approach underlying C169 has important implications with regard to rural development. Its Articles 2 and 33 for instance, require States to “institutionalize” the participation of ITPs in policies that affect them; and Articles 6, 7, and 15 provide the general legal framework with respect to consultation and participation of ITPs. States must ensure that ITPs participate at all levels of decision-making, in elective institutions, administrative bodies and other bodies responsible for policies and programmes that concern them. States must also ensure that ITPs are consulted, through their representative institutions, prior to the adoption of legislative or administrative measures that may affect them directly¹¹⁴. The Convention also affirms ITPs’ rights to decide their own priorities of development, to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development, and to participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of national and regional development plans that may affect them directly.¹¹⁵

¹¹² ILO, “Ten Years After: A Decade of Progress for Indigenous Peoples,” *World of Work Magazine*, No. 52, (Geneva: ILO, Nov. 2004), available at http://www.ilo.org/wow/Articles/lang--en/WCMS_081337/index.htm

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ For a description of the “qualitative elements” that a consultation process should respect in order to comply with the Convention, please see “Indigenous and Tribal Peoples’ Rights and Practices – A guide to ILO Convention No. 169”, Chapter V.

¹¹⁵ “Even where there is some degree of general participation at the national level, and *ad hoc* consultation on certain measures, this may not be sufficient to meet the Convention’s requirements concerning participation in the formulation and implementation of development processes, for example, where the peoples concerned consider agriculture to be the priority, but are only consulted regarding mining exploitation after a development model for the region, giving priority to mining, has been developed.” Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), *General Observations concerning Convention No. 169*. 2009

II.2.5.5. Disabled persons

Persons with disabilities began receiving significant ILO attention in the early-1970s, when assisting them came to be recognized as a special responsibility in social development.¹¹⁶ Initial work consisted mainly of TC projects to set up vocational rehabilitation centres and employment workshops aimed to “shelter” disabled persons in protected environments. The first such project, following a request from Trinidad in 1971 to provide vocational skills training to polio-affected people, saw the ILO set up a workshop and training centre that later became the National Centre for Persons with Disabilities, still active today.¹¹⁷ It was followed by TC projects in Kenya (1973) and Uganda (1974) that established in both countries a vocational rehabilitation department within the Ministry (or Department) of Social Welfare.¹¹⁸ It also created vocational skills training centres in urban and rural areas targeting physically disabled persons, including youth, also operational to this day. Many rural rehabilitation centres were established in West and East Africa offering vocational adjustment courses to help the disabled become accustomed to the demands of a full and often exacting rural work life and training in rural daily living.¹¹⁹

The ILO activities for disabled persons grew markedly in the 1980s, fuelled by the inclusion of vocational rehabilitation as a main theme in the Director-General’s report to the 1981 ILC,¹²⁰ as well as the Programme of Action of the UN Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-92).¹²¹ Activities multiplied in 1981, with the entire ILO Vocational Rehabilitation Programme¹²² geared to support the objectives of the UN International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP).¹²³ The IYDP played an important role in

¹¹⁶ ILO, *The Poor in Asian Development, An ILO Programme*. Director-General Report to the 1975 International Labour Conference. Geneva: ILO, 1975.

¹¹⁷ National Centre for Persons with Disabilities Available at: <http://www.ncpdt.org/> accessed on 19th Nov. 2010

¹¹⁸ In Kenya the government established the Vocational Rehabilitation Division in the Department of Social services. Ten rural vocational rehabilitation centres were subsequently established countrywide to offer artisan courses such as carpentry, dress making and leatherwork. African Union for the Blind: *State of Disabled Peoples Rights in Kenya (2007)* Report (Nairobi: African Union of the Blind, 2007).

¹¹⁹ Such as instruction in crop growing, chicken raising, animal husbandry, home economics, hygiene and literacy. On successful completion of the course, graduates were provided with basic hand tools before returning to their home areas; others banded together and formed small rural cooperatives. Source: ILO: *Report of the Director-General to the 1981 International Labour Conference*, 67th session (Geneva: ILO, 1981).

¹²⁰ ILO, *Vocational Rehabilitation of the Disabled, Full Participation and Equality*. Director-General Report to the 1981 International Labour Conference: Part I. Geneva: ILO, 1981.

¹²¹ United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons 1983-1992 Available At: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/disunddp.htm> Accessed on 19th Nov. 2010.

¹²² The programme was part of the Training Department activities.

¹²³ The International Year of Disabled Persons 1981, UN Available At: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/disiydp.htm> Accessed on 19th Nov. 2010.

raising awareness on the topic and considerably increased the volume of requests for ILO TC assistance to disabled workers, a trend that would continue up to the 1990s.

The ILO gradually developed more proactive approaches, emphasising inclusion and community-based rehabilitation services (including training centres in rural areas at regional and provincial level), innovative income-generating activities,¹²⁴ employment creation and self-employment schemes.¹²⁵ Work was carried out in partnership with the various relevant ministries (including ministries of social services, social affairs, and social welfare) and included strengthening governments' capacity to provide services to disabled persons. By 1989 over 60 developing countries were receiving ILO assistance for this purpose,¹²⁶ most of which had activities in rural areas. The ILO's work included helping the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to establish and train staff of the African Rehabilitation Institute, which became a new African intergovernmental body in 1986, and remains operational to this day.¹²⁷

II.2.5.6. Youth

Early ILO strategy concerning rural youth employment dealt mostly with the protection of young workers through legislation and regulation that created special measures for these youth. Notable instruments include the Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88), which provides special arrangements for youth, to be initiated and developed within the framework of the employment and vocational guidance services; the Employment Service Recommendation, 1948 (No. 83), which adds that special efforts should be made to encourage young people to register for employment and to attend employment interviews; and the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and its Recommendation (No. 146), which set guidelines for a general minimum age for admission to work.

¹²⁴ A successful enterprise in Addis Ababa called United Abilities Company, established under ILO TC arrangements and subsequently developed and expanded under Ethiopian management, was initially launched in an old building as an umbrella assembly workshop employing 18 blind, deaf and physically disabled persons (most of whom had previously relied on begging for a living). It was in 1981 providing well-paid employment for more than 400 severely disabled men and women; they in turn supported some 2,000 dependents. Source: ILO: *Report of the Director-General to the 1981 International Labour Conference*, 67th session (Geneva: ILO, 1981), p 19.

¹²⁵ ILO, *Report of the Director-General: Activities of the ILO, 1988*, International Labour Conference, 76th session (Geneva: ILO, 1989).

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ African Rehabilitation Institute, <http://www.africanrehab.org.zw/> accessed on 25th Feb. 2011

Promotion of youth employment in rural areas through TC activities began in the 1970s through the WEP. The Programme emphasised vocational and pre-vocational training and education to increase the “employability” of rural youth in a broader scheme to combat underemployment and unemployment. WEP was supplemented by the Special Youth Schemes for Development Recommendation, 1970 (No. 136), which promoted “special schemes” to facilitate youth involvement in activities that contribute to the socio-economic empowerment of their community and country, with special attention on incorporating youth in agricultural and rural development schemes conceived as part of overall national development plans. Under this initiative, the ILO carried out pioneering studies on youth and rural development, investigating such issues as how to implement youth employment programmes, and how to increase youth participation through cooperatives. It provided technical assistance to government projects aimed at strengthening and expanding national youth service programmes; and collaborated actively with UNICEF in the field to develop guidelines on training schemes for rural [and urban] youth in developing countries.

Vocational guidance and training for youth was promoted further through the adoption of the Human Resources Development Convention and Recommendation, 1975 (No. 142 and No. 150 respectively). Recommendation 150 contains a section devoted to the improvement of rural areas, noting that, “[p]rogrammes for rural areas should aim at achieving full equality of opportunity of the rural and urban populations as regards vocational guidance and vocational training”.¹²⁸

A major initiative of the ‘70s was the Skills Development for Self-Reliance (SDSR), which included a methodology to promote self-employment, small enterprises, and other income-generating activities in rural areas and generated a number of technical assistance programmes targeting rural youth.¹²⁹ In 1979 the ILO launched a TC project in seven Eastern and Southern African countries, to demonstrate its applicability. Ultimate beneficiaries included women, and other marginalized groups in need of new skills or of skill upgrading, as assessed through community surveys, to prepare them for productive employment in rural areas, especially self-employment. Training was provided on carpentry, metalwork, horticulture, home economics, husbandry, forestry and business management and demonstrated potential for generating self-reliance among participating communities. The project was extended in 1983 when host governments adopted self-reliance as a policy.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Human Resources Development Recommendation (No. 150), 1975: paragraph 34(1).

¹²⁹ See ILO, *Assessment of Selected ILO Projects Concerning Rural Small Industrial Enterprises*, ILO Governing Body, 238th Session, Committee on Operational Programmes (Geneva: ILO, November 1987).

¹³⁰ Ibid

From SDSR, the ILO developed the Training for Rural Gainful Activities (TRUGA) in 1983, which was initially launched in Bangladesh and Nepal. TRUGA targeted, among others, rural youth who had dropped out of school. It aimed to promote self- and wage employment in rural communities, with skills training as an entry point. Its activities usually involved rural non-farm employment, such as food processing, tool-making, fertilizer production, handicrafts and so forth. Based on its initial success, the methodology was also introduced in Indonesia, the Philippines, Somalia, and the Sudan. ITC-Turin was involved in organizing seminars to explain TRUGA's unique methodology and help government representatives draw up project proposals. The concept of self-reliance was central to both SDSR and TRUGA methodologies and involved a highly participatory approach where dialogue with target groups (in this case rural youth) would help design training packages. In the 1990s the approach would come to be known as Community-Based Training for (Self-) Employment and Income Generation (CBT).

In preparation for the International Youth Year (IYY) in 1985 the Office undertook a review of its activities to stimulate youth employment and training. Despite the visibility from the IYY, youth in general was not taken on as a major target, remaining instead as one among many beneficiaries. As a result the ILO's work aimed at rural youth remained largely unseen, as in the case of broader ILO initiatives of the '80s such as the "Cooperative and Organizational Support to Grassroots Initiatives" (ACOPAM), discussed later, and SPWP, both of which counted young rural workers among their beneficiaries. Nevertheless, the approaches, methodologies, and training materials developed by these programmes remain highly relevant for the promotion of employment for young people mired in rural poverty.

ILC discussions in 1988 advised the ILO to strengthen training in agriculture and rural-related skills, partnering with local business owners and providing training in local trades so that youth will not have to travel to urban areas to access such activities, thus discourage rural-urban migration. They also identified child labour as another challenge to youth employment in rural areas. The report noted that, "[d]espite high levels of youth unemployment and underemployment, the use of child labour is still widely prevalent in rural areas of developing countries",¹³¹ since the opportunity cost of hiring out children is perceived as being close to zero, and rural families may see child labour as an immediate solution to economic woes. However, this practice has dire consequences for both children and youth.

¹³¹ ILO, *Rural Employment Promotion*, Report VII, 75th session of the International Labour Conference. (Geneva: ILO, 1988), 38.

While Headquarters' work on rural youth appears to have been limited, it was sustained in the ILO's field structure. JASPA had an extensive programme of work on youth employment in rural areas alongside its urban programmes. PREALC carried out research and analysis examining the impact on rural youth of various structural changes, focusing on population, education and production. ARTEP conducted surveys on the nature and dimensions of rural youth employment in several Asian countries.¹³² The Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (CINTERFOR)¹³³ meanwhile, conducted independent research and tested methodologies for "disadvantaged youth" (a term that includes young people from rural localities). It also held regional workshops and meetings on training and employment issues for young workers (rural and urban), and thus greatly contributed to the ILO's literature on the topic.¹³⁴

II.2.5.7. Children

Child labour in rural areas has been an ILO concern from the earliest days, starting with the Minimum Age (Agriculture) Convention, 1921 (No. 7), as agriculture is a particularly dangerous sector. It continued to be addressed via standard setting in the '70s and '80s, through the passing of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), which applies particularly to specific sectors, including "plantations and other agricultural undertakings ... but excluding family and small scale holdings producing for local consumption and not regularly employing hired workers" (Article 5)¹³⁵.

The '70s and '80s brought on a marked change in the ILO's approach to the topic of child labour, as it was realized that labour standards alone could not prevent its occurrence. Formulating a more effective strategy to combat child labour thus required a better understanding of the roles of children within the broader economic and social framework that was creating a demand for this type of labour. A major, comprehensive effort was thus launched to analyze the causes and consequences of child labour in rural and urban economies. Research efforts began in earnest in the late-'70s and continued into the '80s, making up part of the ILO's important contribution to the UN International Year of the Child (1979). A series of surveys and studies were undertaken in over 20 countries throughout Africa, South and South-East Asia, and Latin America. Publications were issued on topics such as the

¹³² David H. Freedman, *Improving Skills and Productivity of Disadvantaged Youth*, Employment Working Paper No. 7, (Geneva: ILO, 2008): 17-18.

¹³³ El Centro Interamericano paragraph el Desarrollo del Conocimiento en la Formación Profesional

¹³⁴ Op. Cit., Freedman., 21.

¹³⁵ Greater emphasis on wage workers has been a recurrent theme in the ILO's work.

economic roles of children in low-income countries,¹³⁶ the social division of labour, access to schooling, and urban-rural migration patterns, to name a few.

Work on rural child labour remained particularly problematic given resistance across cultures and regions of the world to the idea that “helping out,” particularly on family farms, can qualify as “child labour”. Agriculture is typically under-regulated in many countries, so child labour laws, if they exist, are often less stringent than in other industries.¹³⁷ Adding to the challenge is the fact that the work of rural children is often invisible and unacknowledged as it is carried out on behalf of the family or a third party as piecework or contribution to a quota required of a family on larger tasks.¹³⁸

By the 1980s the ILO was working at the policy level with member States to ensure the adoption and strict enforcement of laws and regulations on minimum age, as well as those prohibiting the employment or work of children in hazardous activities. Nevertheless the ILO’s work occurred in an *ad hoc* manner as there was no designated unit or projects to systematically promote activities to prevent child labour.

Recognizing that child labour would not be eradicated in the near future, even with national policies posing restrictions on the practice, the ILO adopted a secondary approach aimed at mitigating the effects of labour on children by targeting working conditions. As a result, it started promoting policies on occupational safety and health and the improvement of the physical environment in the workplace, based on the idea that “long-term development policies can be complemented by immediate measures aimed at regulating and humanising work by children so as to protect them against practices or conditions that jeopardise their normal physical and mental development, deny them the possibility of acquiring knowledge and skills and block their opportunities for the future”.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Gerry Rodgers and Guy Standing, “Economic Roles of Children in Low-Income Countries.” *International Labour Review*, Vol.120, No.1, Jan-Feb 1981, pages 41-47.

¹³⁷ ILO, *The End of Child Labour: Within Reach*. Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. International Labour Conference 95th Session 2006 Report 1 (B). (Geneva: ILO, 2006).

¹³⁸ Child labour for third parties may be hidden because it is carried out as piecework or contributes to a quota required of a migrant farm-worker family on larger farms or plantations, and labour subcontracting arrangements by agricultural enterprises can disguise the phenomenon and allow employers to disclaim responsibility for any child found working on their farms or plantations.

¹³⁹ ILO, *Report of the Director-General, part 1: Child Labour*. Report of the Director-General to the International Labour Conference 69th session 1983. Geneva: ILO, 1983. The Report recognizes that in most developing countries and in many developed countries as well, child workers are found mainly in rural areas (p. 9); and it analyses the particularities of rural child labour.

The research and policy work of these decades gradually made child labour a central programmatic issue for the ILO, leading in 1992 to the launching of the Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

II.2.5.8. Migrant Workers

Migration for employment has long been seen by many poor households as a livelihood strategy to cope with economic, social, political or environmental risks. For some, it is a matter of survival. In many countries the lack of employment and difficult working and living conditions combined with disparities in incomes and human security are perennial causes of out-migration from rural areas.

The ILO has addressed labour migration issues since its inception. It has pioneered several international conventions on migrant workers, developed policy and administrative models and provided advisory services and technical cooperation from its earliest days. While the ILO's labour migration activity has not focused specifically on rural areas, it was always understood that a large portion of international labour migration originates from rural areas. In some cases, migrants from rural areas go abroad directly, while in others it is a secondary movement following rural to urban migration within countries.

Incidentally, migrants have worked in rural areas in destination countries since before the industrial revolution. Migration historically provided for labour needs in agriculture, mining, infrastructure construction and other activities in rural areas worldwide. As noted in a historical compilation of the ILO's work on migration, "... late colonial times witnessed many distinct streams of workers, generally flowing from the rural hinterland to costal trading towns or mines, such as in Malaysia and South Africa, or to plantations, as in Gabon, Ghana, the Ivory Coast and also in Malaysia. Political independence scarcely impacted on the numbers of migrants, though sometimes on their composition... South-South migration was also an important feature in long-decolonized Latin America and in the Caribbean. For example, Haitians harvested sugar cane in the Dominican Republic...."¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Roger Böhning: *A brief account of the ILO and policies on international migration*, ILO Century Project (Geneva: ILO and ILS, 2010).

The reality that most of these migrants worked in jobs with little labour or social protection was a motivating factor for the elaboration of international standards by the ILO. The first Migration for Employment Convention (No. 66) was adopted by the ILO in 1939. While its entry into force was hindered by the events of World War II, it did provide the backbone for the revised Migration for Employment Convention 1949, (No. 97).

Post-WWII ILO work on migration focused on urban destination issues in Western countries, while decolonization in Africa and agriculturally dependent economies elsewhere gave rise to the ILO's involvement in migration situations in rural areas. This work included, for example a Commission of Inquiry appointed in 1981 to examine the observance of a set of international labour Conventions by the Dominican Republic and Haiti regarding Haitian workers in the Dominican sugar cane industry; as well as the ILO's assistance in the early and mid- 1980s with the return of migrants expelled from several African countries.

II.2.6. Main programmes, technical areas and approaches

Several programmes, technical areas, and approaches supported by the ILO's rural development work and displayed the Organization's technical expertise. Profiled below are the main ones from that time: labour-intensive works and cooperatives programmes that were particularly large and impactful; and technical areas of enterprises, skills, labour inspection, OSH and working conditions, and the participatory approach.

II.2.6.1. Labour Intensive Works

The Special Public Works Programme (SPWP) was a major component of the ILO's rural work in the '70s and '80s. It rapidly progressed from research, to surveys, to programmes, growing in size to reach over 20 countries, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Central America at its peak in the mid-1980s. Its work accounted for over 50 percent of ILO TC funds and attracted, in its first ten years of operation alone (1974-1983), over USD 65 million, mostly in the form of grants and funds for technical cooperation activities.¹⁴¹ It established a solid reputation with governments, donors and other agencies alike, and allowed for the ILO to be acknowledged as a technical leader in the field.

¹⁴¹ Jacques Gaude, Ng Phan-Thuy and C. Van Kempen, "Evaluation of Special Public Works Programmes: Some Policy Conclusions", in *International Labour Review*, Vol. 123, No. 2 (Mar-April 1984), 204.

SPWPs were “special” in the sense that the investment funds they mobilized for participating countries were “additional” to investment budgets normally available to Governments. These enabled Government and local populations to test innovative concepts, approaches and programmes to provide basic economic and social infrastructure with and for the people, demonstrate their feasibility and cost-effectiveness, include necessary capacity-building, and influence policy-level decision-making at a larger scale (i.e. in investment programmes funded under normally available investment budgets).

The Programme’s dual goals were to help build much needed economic and social infrastructure through cost-effective, technically sound labour-intensive technologies, and in this way constitute a source of employment and income for the poorest. It was initially meant to supplement through visible, short-term aid packages, the long-term strategic research work of other EMPLOI Units, so as to strengthen the credibility of wider EMPLOI approaches in beneficiary countries and “...supplement regular employment policy measure by assisting governments in the urgent provision of employment for a particular sector of the population through the construction and use of durable assets not initially foreseen in the development plan”.¹⁴²

SPWP activities focused on soil conservation, road work, irrigation and water supply, and social infrastructure. In Burundi (1979-1982) activities involved afforestation, erosion control, and road construction. Activities in Rwanda (1980-1983) helped create a regional network of feeder roads, and contributed to reforestation and erosion control. In the West Bengali region of India (1980-1982) work included irrigation and reforestation.¹⁴³ Initial evaluations yielded encouraging results, often proving the efficiency of labour-intensive methods over capital-intensive methods.

A number of unique features made the Programme especially attractive. Firstly, activities were executed by governments themselves. The ILO used TC projects to provide technical advice and training to national staff as well as assistance in setting up suitable monitoring systems. Between 1979 and 1984 the Programme had organized 27 national training workshops in 14 countries for over 500 medium- to high-level national staff involved in planning, implementation, and evaluation of programmes.¹⁴⁴ The objective was to build a core group of national planners, technicians, and administrators who would then be able to plan future SPWPs according to the country’s socio-economic needs, and progressively introduce relevant policy choices and operational approaches into mainstream investment programmes.

¹⁴² Gaude et al., 1984, op. cit: 203.

¹⁴³ For more details see Gaude et al., 1984: Table 1, p. 211.

¹⁴⁴ Op. Cit., Gaude et al., 1984: 209.

The approach thus allowed for significant impact at national policy level. Secondly, it strongly encouraged the active participation of local target group communities from design to execution and long-term maintenance, with an emphasis on capacity building of staff and institutions at various levels in both the public and private sectors. In a Nepali project (1980) for instance, local committees were formed by beneficiaries to oversee management and distribution of irrigation water and maintenance of the irrigation system¹⁴⁵; in Tanzania (1980), the village council was actively involved in project identification and selection; and in Rwanda (1980), beneficiaries had a similar involvement and also managed logistics such as recruitment, shifts, and payment. This allowed for developing a national and local network of institutions and supporters for the approach, which proved crucial to overcoming “instabilities” such as changes in regimes and strategy. Thirdly, the Programme was known for its rigorousness and the use of a thorough screening process in the preparation of each project followed-up by monitoring and evaluations using consistent evaluation tools the SPWP had developed exclusively for its projects.¹⁴⁶

Other agencies viewed the ILO’s SPWP as having convincing overall (long-term) policies, technical reliability, and a high quality of services. Frequent contacts and joint activities with the UNDP, the WB, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), WFP, the European Economic Community, and Nordic countries in particular, made them aware of the technical qualifications of the ILO SPWP staff, which consisted of a field-Headquarters network that allowed combining theoretical and first-hand expertise, coupled with a critical mass of technical support staff at the centre and in the regions, as well as a stable network of qualified external collaborators and consultants. The ILO was seen as a reliable technical agency available for a wide variety of technical inputs (review missions, training inputs, joint research and publication efforts, project staff inputs, core project management often of multi-donor programmes and so forth).

As an evaluator of the Programme put it “ILO opened the eyes of the world to [employment-intensive investment (EII)]”.¹⁴⁷ It is both particularly needed in rural areas and particularly fit to their

¹⁴⁵ Peek and Egger, *Evaluation of Three Special Public Works Programmes: Burundi, Nepal and Sierra Leone, Main Report*. UNDP/ILO Joint Meeting for Support to Special Public Works Programmes (Geneva: ILO/UNDP, 1986), 27.

¹⁴⁶ Three main questions had to be answered before projects were taken up: what is the added value of our involvement, where do we want to be five years later, and what happens after we leave. This implied that wherever possible ILO funded its own preliminary missions to avoid initial dependence on outside donors, who pushed for ILO involvement regardless of feasibility. “Ironically, this “non-promotion” approach attracted outside interest”. Helmut Watzlawick, interview (29 September 2009).

¹⁴⁷ Ng Phan Thuy, interview (28 September 2009).

characteristics. This is also the case of Cooperatives, the second major TC programme in those heydays of ILO rural work.

EMP/URG, and the programme that replaced it, EMP/INFRA, had strong support from the inter-regional programme of UNDP which provided funding for several experts stationed at ILO Headquarters for almost 20 years. Scandinavian countries funded (and continue to do so) two regional EMP/INFRA teams in Africa and Asia promoting employment-intensive investment programmes. Being financially autonomous and much in demand in the regions, the SPWP survived the severe funding cuts of the early '90. Since the mid-'80s EMP/INFRA maintained solid and continuous working relationships with counterparts in the World Bank, which led to the ILO's involvement as technical consultant in WB programmes, as well as a DANIDA-funded position for an ILO adviser at the WB. It also developed strong relations with the WFP's food-for-work schemes that provided support to several large-scale SPWP initiatives in Sudan and Bangladesh for example.

EMP/INFRA appears to have had more contacts outside the ILO, with other agencies and donors, than with other ILO Units. As a result, its initiatives did not attempt to integrate other ILO concerns such as child labour, working conditions, workers' rights and gender, for instance.

In the 1980s, the ILO was faced with a rapidly growing demand for services, but also donor fatigue. The Programme adapted its approach, and large-scale public works were now designed to demonstrate labour-intensive technologies, training programmes and methodologies promoting collaboration among local actors to serve as catalysts for the mainstreaming of those approaches in countries' public works programmes. An important window for the Organization remained in the role it played as specialized consultant, as this allowed for the continuation of policy work from within national programmes.

II.2.6.2. Cooperatives

The ILO has consistently recognized the central role of cooperatives, establishing as early as 1920 a Cooperative Technical Service¹⁴⁸ to collaborate with employers' associations on job creation and with workers' unions on improving working and living conditions, mainly through policy advice and legal consultations. Following the ILO's "Recommendation concerning the Role of Co-operatives in the Economic and Social Development of Developing Countries", 1966 (No.127), and as the ILO began responding to the development needs of newly independent member States, a Cooperative Branch was formalized with Regional/Sub-regional Advisors.¹⁴⁹ A major policy paper and action plan were also submitted to the United Nations Special Fund (UNSF, predecessor of UNDP), to carry out TC programmes in new member States. The ILO and UNDP launched a series of projects spanning some 50 countries between the '70s-'90s,¹⁵⁰ with the ILO coordinating over 100 technical field experts at any one time. The positive results opened the door to a stream of bilateral funding.¹⁵¹

The food crisis of the '70s forced aid strategies for rural areas to address food security and job creation simultaneously. Cooperatives, with their natural link between food production and employment, presented an ideal strategy for bringing relief to poverty- and hunger-stricken rural areas, while giving a boost to agriculture and therefore the capacity of rural areas to act as an economic "shock absorber".

In the face of serious drought and ensuing famine in the Sahel that was devastating rural as well as urban populations, the ILO and WFP jointly launched a major programme worth USD 44 million sponsored by Norway, called "Cooperative and Organizational Support to Grassroots Initiatives" (ACOPAM).¹⁵² It operated from 1978 to 1999 and was for many years the ILO's largest TC programme assisting grassroots cooperatives in five Sahelian countries to raise agricultural production, improve transportation and storage of food, marketing and finance (see the Cooperatives Approach, Appendix 4).

¹⁴⁸ The first Director-General actually proposed that the cooperative movement be institutionally represented in the Organization. As this proposal was not approved, he invited the workers' group to include, whenever relevant, representatives of the cooperative movement in the delegations to ensure their interests would be properly addressed. He also established a Cooperative Technical Service.

¹⁴⁹ The Arab States, Asia, the Caribbean, East Africa, Latin America and West Africa each had a specific cooperative advisor.

¹⁵⁰ Cooperatives for agricultural producers, food banks, handicraft and manufacturing, transport, consumers and saving societies, etc.

¹⁵¹ Funding mainly originated from Denmark, Norway and Sweden

¹⁵² In French: "Appui Coopératif au Programme Alimentaire Mondial"

An official ex-post assessment of ACOPAM¹⁵³ identified many valuable lessons and noted that while the Programme did indeed contribute to the food security of an extended number of beneficiaries through its direct support to 725 select organizations¹⁵⁴, its coverage was relatively “limited” due to: the intensive time commitments required to ensure viability of grassroots organizations; a tendency to design and have donors fund direct support projects; a multiplication of successful activities on their own rather than through national agencies; and a lack of proper national “anchorage” and partnerships to increase national and other actors’ ownership, knowhow and mastery in the use of ACOPAM methods.¹⁵⁵

Notable exceptions to this limited coverage were the Programme’s support to national strategies for cereal bank and national cooperative reforms, and its development and dissemination of methodologies and training tools towards the end.

ACOPAM had a major and broad impact on the ILO itself, which replicated the approach in several countries such as Cameroon, Chad and Madagascar. Its lessons were transmitted via several other cooperative initiatives such as COOPREFORM,¹⁵⁶ COOPNET,¹⁵⁷ INTERCOOP¹⁵⁸ and INDISCO. Those lessons also gave rise to the Strategy to Eradicate Poverty (STEP) programme, considered by many to be a follow up of ACOPAM. The ILO can still glean good practices from ACOPAM, which leaves behind a comprehensive set of training manuals on topics ranging from management of cereal banks to gender and development.¹⁵⁹

In spite of its wide appeal, ACOPAM was not considered in line with mainstream ILO activities until the ‘90s. It remained somewhat “on the margins”, both at Headquarters and at regional and sub-regional levels, despite proven results that led to its growing prestige within the ILO. It also

¹⁵³ Ann Mossige and Erik Whist, *Evaluation of ACOPAM*, 2002, unpublished report. ACOPAM’s **impact** was determined by analyzing the degree to which ACOPAM’s performance within its two main objectives (strengthening local organizational capacities and increasing and diversifying the economic activities of local organizations) had an impact on ACOPAM’s overall goal: to improve Sahelian female and male farmers’ self-sufficiency and food security.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹⁵⁶ Structural Reform through improvement of cooperative development policies and legislation (COOPREFORM)

¹⁵⁷ Inter-regional network programme for the development of human resources in cooperatives (COOPNET)

¹⁵⁸ Interregional programme for commercial exchanges among cooperatives (INTERCOOP)

¹⁵⁹ These manuals, developed in 1992-97 and based on these experience acquired, include four on management of cereal banks; four on land management, four on functional alphabetization for management of irrigated land, one on export enterprises, one of gender and development and another on gender and organizations of producers. In 2010 ILO is envisaging to use ACOPAM’s experience in terms of cereal banks and irrigated land in particular in the arid zones of South Madagascar, and update and adapt to Madagascar the relevant manuals.

contributed greatly to agency goals on poverty alleviation by increasing rural employment and securing social rights; and was exemplary in gradually strengthening a project's gender sensitivity and in screening projects for gender sensitization. Evaluators were surprised by the ILO's reluctance to support the continuation of ACOPAM's work, as well as by the limited efforts to make use of its experiences, including its human resources.¹⁶⁰ This reluctance has been attributed to ACOPAM's high level of independence, which resulted in shallow ownership and narrow anchorage within the ILO; ACOPAM's financial autonomy, which made it unnecessary to seek partnerships with other ILO programmes; and to some extent the fact that all documents and training materials were in French, thus limiting broader dissemination of and capitalization on ACOPAM's experiences, including contacts with other parts of the ILO.

The ILO's cooperative work included another major programme, the "Materials and Techniques for the Training of Cooperative Members and Managers" (MATCOM), operating between 1978 and the early '90s, which developed and implemented over 40 trainers' manuals and 60 learning elements – some of which were translated into over forty languages. They were used by different types of cooperatives in several economic sectors, by various target groups and levels of cooperative management. Training manuals targeting consumer and agricultural cooperatives, for instance, offer practical and detailed advice on how to improve business operations, ranging from budgeting practices to storage methods. The high demand for MATCOM training materials prompted an ILO review (in 2008) with an eye towards adaptation to modern-day situations.

In spite of organizational hurdles, these successful programmes demonstrate the capacity of rural cooperatives to support the growing efficiency, competitiveness and capitalization of rural producers. They play a valuable role in identifying the precise way in which coalitions, partnerships and new associations could be constructed in rural societies, with an emphasis on those that strengthen the participation and well-being of the most marginalized and disadvantaged groups. At its peak in the '80s, the ILO's cooperative approach was implemented in over 50 member States, ranging from the development of agricultural producer cooperatives, cooperative food banks, handicraft and manufacturing cooperatives, to transport, housing, consumer and savings societies.¹⁶¹ The cooperative approach and its tools from the '70s and '80s remain highly relevant to this day and have been incorporated into ILO programmes such as those on Social Finance and Enterprises.

¹⁶⁰ Anne Mossige and Erik Whist, *Evaluation of ACOPAM*, Scanteam, Oslo, 2000.

¹⁶¹ Joseph Fazzio, *The ILO and Cooperatives – Ninety Years of Partnership for a More Decent World for Working People*. ILO and Cooperatives, COOP News No. 1 (Geneva: ILO, 2009), 2-3.

II.2.6.3. Entrepreneurship and Enterprises

Since the late '70s the ILO's WEP included a Programme on Appropriate Technologies (EMP/TEC), which aimed at documenting the importance of choices of technology for employment generation and income distribution, with a specific focus on small rural industries. Its work ranged from advising Governments, enterprises and workers, and their institutions, in sectors such as road construction and rehabilitation, cottage industries and handicrafts, combining analytical work with the research-based conception of operational tools and capacity building.¹⁶² The objective was to provide detailed guidance to practitioners on appropriate technology, for example through a series of some 20 short manuals spanning subjects such as tanning hides, fish processing, maize milling, and solar drying of food, as well as a computerised technological information system. The programme was also involved in the development and diffusion of adapted farm tools and implements, such as inexpensive hand tools and hand-operated and animal-drawn farm equipment. TC projects helped test and refine those technologies. A number of products still remain, such as a handicraft development organization in Madagascar and a project to assist Laotian rural women to produce, market, and now export, textile products.

Another Unit, the ILO Management Development Programme, focused on assisting small-scale enterprises (on issues related to productivity, management, enterprise expansion and creation of productive employment), based on an adaptation of experiences with urban entrepreneurs; and on improving the management of large agricultural and rural development programmes.

Entrepreneurship capacity building was a third area of work that in the '80s introduced the ILO's Improve your Business (IYB) tool. The first major TC project using this tool took place in the mid-'80s, to support employers' organization in promoting small and medium size enterprises, and targeting "rural areas where small enterprises have best potential."¹⁶³ As mentioned earlier, this initiative began in Asia (1981) and Africa (1982) through a series of seminars. Its success led to its replication in East Africa from 1989 to 1993.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² See, for example, Maurice Allal and Enyinna Chuta, *Cottage Industries and Handicrafts: Some Guidelines for Employment Promotion*. (Geneva: ILO, 1982).

¹⁶³ ILO, *Assistance to Employers' Organizations with Special Emphasis on Promoting Small Enterprise Development*, via employers' organizations in Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia (1984-1096).

¹⁶⁴ For more information see ILO Archive file 18-159-4-A-2-10.

Then Director-General, Francis Blanchard, highlighted the special importance of reaching rural areas that, “have until now benefited too little from industrialization”.¹⁶⁵ He stressed the need to support small rural enterprises that have an important capacity to create jobs, multiply, and satisfy the basic needs of local populations.

Likewise the Report discussed at the ILC of 1986 on the Promotion of Small and Medium-sized Enterprise contained over 200 references to rural enterprises and to their role in rural development, including micro-finance.¹⁶⁶ Conclusions of that discussion noted among others how, “for developing countries in particular, the promotion of small enterprises in rural areas should command a high priority”, along with assistance to NGOs that play a very useful role in supporting their development.¹⁶⁷ Consequently they foresaw that “assistance [to] SMEs and entrepreneurship development in the rural sector will be a priority area of the ILO’s action for many years.”

II.2.6.4. Skills

Skills development for employment was a major component of ILO initiatives in the ‘70s and ‘80s, particularly those targeting youth and women. In 1988 alone over 35 rural vocational training projects were operational,¹⁶⁸ assisting rural training institutions to improve effectiveness and efficiency, advising governments in the formulation of national rural vocational training policies and plans; and developing specific technical skills. ILO’s three regional training programmes,¹⁶⁹ albeit not focused on rural training, also helped provide technical advice and develop new approaches.

In response to the inadequacy of traditional rural vocational training the ILO started to conceive in the second half of the ‘70s a new generation of rural skills development programmes primarily concerned with agricultural development. They were based on short courses and demonstration seminars in Farmer Training Centres and agricultural extension services.

¹⁶⁵ ILO, Director-General’s speech at the Niamey (Niger) seminar to launch the IYB tool, December 1982, pp. 3-4 (see ILO Archives TF 18-01-2-B-1-1-4-1 Jacket 2).

¹⁶⁶ ILO, *The Promotion of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises*, Report VI, 72nd session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva: ILO, 1986).

¹⁶⁷ ILO, *Conclusions concerning the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises*, 72nd session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva: ILO, 1986), paragraph 19.

¹⁶⁸ ILO, *Rural Employment Promotion*, Report VII, 75th session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva: ILO, 1988), 55.

¹⁶⁹ The Asian and Pacific Skill Development Programme (APSDEP), the African Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CIADFOR), and the Inter-American Centre for Vocational Training Research and Documentation (CINTERFOR)

At the time, training for non-farm occupations in rural areas, if offered at all, took place in poorly equipped institutions that were often located in regional or provincial centres and were oriented more towards providing skills better suited to urban labour markets than the countryside.¹⁷⁰ Realizing too that many rural families try to supplement their farm incomes through non-farm activities, that industrial enterprises were scarce in rural areas, and that this resulted in considerable self-employment, the ILO's new rural training methodology was based on relevance of content and delivery methods, as well as on cost-effectiveness, and integrated elements of support to self-employment. It used a systems approach that, while focused on training, took into account surrounding key factors to enable trainees to gain employment and income. Such an approach included identification of employment opportunities matching local needs; self-reliance involving, among others, highly participatory approach of target groups and other stakeholders in the design of training packages; and post-training assistance for instance to obtain micro-finance and start a micro-enterprise.

This systemic approach was tested in two main projects over the 1980s. The first, Skills Development for Self Reliance (SDSR) for Eastern and Southern Africa,¹⁷¹ yielded positive results, with impact evaluations revealing that in spite of difficulties related to specific countries (for instance administrative delays) graduates, especially women, did indeed experience an increase in income.¹⁷² The second major project, launched in Asia in 1983,¹⁷³ was an adaptation of SDRS, with slightly different instruments and procedures, which formed the Training for Rural Gainful Activities (TRUGA) approach. ITC-Turin was involved in organizing seminars on this methodology, and with helping government representatives draw up project proposals. A Meeting of Experts on Community-based Training, held in 1993 at ILO's ITC-Turin to discuss the experiences with SDRS and TRUGA, led to combining them to form one single approach, the Community-Based Training for (Self-) Employment and Income Generation (CBT) approach; which allowed nonetheless for adaptations to local socio-economic and institutional specificities.

¹⁷⁰ Alex Gorham and Arsenio Espinoza, *Rural Vocational Training: Recent Experiences and Lessons Learned*. (Geneva: ILO/ITC-Turin, 1990). And José Zarraga: *Skills Training Programmes for Rural Workers*. Mimeographed. (Geneva: ILO, 1986).

¹⁷¹ Participating countries were: Kenya, Lesotho, Somalia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

¹⁷² ILO/SIDA, *Skills Development for Self-Reliance – Kenya, Tanzania, Swaziland and Zambia*. Report of ILO/SIDA evaluation mission, mimeographed. (Geneva: ILO/SIDA, 1991).

¹⁷³ This type of projects were first implemented in Bangladesh and Nepal, then spread to the Philippines, Belarus, Russia and some Central Asian Republics, Indonesia, Somalia and the Sudan.

II.2.6.5. Occupational Safety and Health and Working Conditions

Recognizing that agriculture is one of the three most hazardous sectors (after mining and construction), and that many of these workers are exposed to long hours, difficult working conditions, hazardous machines and chemicals, and situations requiring extreme physical exertion, the ILO first sought to improve conditions through standard setting. Early efforts though did not fully acknowledge the scope of the dangers inherent in agricultural tasks. Thus, the Conditions of Employment of Plantation Workers Convention, 1958 (No. 110), and its Recommendation (No.110) merely suggest that, “...Members should take appropriate measures for the prevention of accidents and occupational diseases” (R.110, Art. 45). The Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No.155), supplemented by Recommendation (No.164), has generic occupational safety and health requirements applicable to all sectors, all the while allowing member States to temporarily exclude branches of economic activity, such as agriculture, from its scope.¹⁷⁴ Such exclusions have been used in several countries but should be progressively eliminated.¹⁷⁵

Work in the ‘60s to ‘80s also focused on research and capacity building, leading among others to a number of reports, such as *Occupational safety, health and welfare in the wood working industries* (1967), *Occupational safety and health problems in the timber industries* (1981), *Ergonomics applied to forestry* (1983), *Occupational health and rehabilitation of forest workers* (1985), and to a *Code of practice on safety and health in agricultural work* (1965)¹⁷⁶, which provided a set of rules and guidelines for operators. This was followed by a *Guide to safety in agriculture in 1969*, which provided further details on prevention, and by a publication in 1977 on the *Safe use of pesticides*, which explained general principles and safety requirements for various applications, transportation techniques, as well as prevention measures. These were complemented by another Code of practice in 1978 on *Safe design and use of chainsaws*, and in 1979 by a *Guide to health and hygiene in agricultural work*, targeting a broad audience, and dealing with the physiology and toxicology of pesticides, as well as with medical surveillance.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ On the conditions specified in its Articles 1 (2) and (3).

¹⁷⁵ See ILO: General Survey on occupational safety and health (Geneva: ILO, 2009), §34-37 and §45-46.

¹⁷⁶ The Code was meant to implement two ILO Resolutions: an ILC Resolution of 1950 highlighting the need for further study of the safety and health problems associated with mechanization and the use of chemicals in agriculture; and the Resolution adopted in 1955 by the ILO Permanent Agricultural Committee soliciting international safety and health standards for agriculture.

¹⁷⁷ The Guide targets among others agricultural extension workers, farm managers, school teachers, primary health care workers and workers' education leaders; providing advice on living conditions and environmental hygiene (housing, farm buildings, water supply, manure and sewage, environmental health, food sanitation), ergonomics, prevention and management of pesticide poisoning and other occupational diseases, as well as on occupational health services and medical inspection.

In the 1980s, the ILO also prepared a set of practical manuals and guides relevant to agriculture within its occupational safety and health series. This included *Safety and health of migrant workers* (1983), *Dermatoses and Professions* (1983), *Safe use of pesticides: guidelines* (1985), *Occupational cancer: prevention and control* (1988), *Maximum weights in load lifting and carrying* (1988), *Organization of first aid in the workplace* (1989), and *Occupational lung diseases: prevention and control* (1991).

In 1988, an ILC Resolution concerning rural employment promotion expressly indicated that workers should be adequately protected against potential occupational hazards (related for example to chemical and biological hazards emerging from new technologies), and called on the ILO to develop strategies for improving the living and working conditions of rural workers and to assist in the establishment of integrated national occupational safety and health programmes. It also called for work on this matter within the Programme for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment (PIACT),¹⁷⁸ an initiative launched in 1976 in response to the growing attention paid to small enterprises, to help improve working life, including prevention of occupational diseases and accidents, application of ergonomic principles, upgrading of work organization, working time arrangements and conditions of work in general, and greater concern for the human element in the transfer of technology.¹⁷⁹ Although its approach was general, a number of activities did focus on rural areas and issues.¹⁸⁰ The ILO capitalized on the positive experiences of PIACT to develop in the late '80s the Work Improvement in Small Enterprises (WISE) methodology, from which it derived the Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Development (WIND) in the '90s.

¹⁷⁸ In French, Programme International pour l'Amélioration des conditions et du milieu de travail

¹⁷⁹ See for example, Jean de Givry, "The ILO and the Quality of Working Life - A New International Programme", in *International Labour Review*, Vol. 117, No.3 (May-June 1978), 261-272.

¹⁸⁰ See for example, Iftikar Ahmed, *Improved Working Conditions and Environment in Philippine Forestry*, (Geneva, ILO, 1977), Working document No. 9 for the Philippine National tripartite conference on Improving Working Conditions and the Environment (Manila, 12-14 December, 1977).

II.2.6.6. Labour Inspection

Labour inspection has been a great concern and major challenge for the ILO.¹⁸¹ Implementing labour inspection is especially arduous in rural settings where it is hindered by the fragmentation of work, patterns of employment, transparency issues (on the part of inspectors, employers, and workers),¹⁸² widespread informal activities, labour migration patterns, forced labour, child labour, and public administration functions related to labour inspection. The task is further complicated by characteristics of rural areas, in particular the widely scattered smallholdings;¹⁸³ the small number of wage-earning agricultural workers; and the fact that rural workers are mainly self-employed or family workers, not covered by labour laws.¹⁸⁴ The precarious nature of rural employment and wage systems, combined with shortages of labour inspectors and vehicles for visiting remote rural enterprises, makes the task especially difficult.¹⁸⁵

In the 1970s the ILO broadened the scope of its labour inspection legal instruments. The Labour Inspection in Agriculture Convention, 1969 (No. 129) and its corollary, Recommendation No. 133, aimed at preventing the exclusion of agricultural enterprises from the national system of labour inspection. These were preceded by the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) and the Plantations Convention, 1958 (No. 110), both of which had an impact on labour inspection in rural settings. The coverage of C129 is broad in terms of “type” of economic activity,¹⁸⁶ and includes, “...undertakings and parts of undertakings engaged in cultivation, animal husbandry including

¹⁸¹ Even in countries where agriculture is the main activity, where rural workers represent between 60 and 80 percent of the population, labour inspectors tend to confine their activities to the protection of workers employed by large industrial enterprises in the capital or in the major cities, i.e. to a minority of workers representing between 10 and 20 percent of the economically active population. See ILO: General Survey on Labour Inspection (full reference in bibliography), Third item on the agenda: Information and reports on the application of Conventions and Recommendations. Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (articles 19, 22 and 35 of the Constitution). International Labour Conference, Report III (Partie 1B), 95th session (Geneva: ILO, 2006).

¹⁸² The work in Latvia, Lao, Pakistan and Bangladesh for example highlighted the transparency issue for labour inspectors. The International Association of Labour Inspection (IALI) created an Ethical Court for Administrators. See also http://www.iali-aiit.org/iali/download/directions/Code_of_Integrity.pdf accessed on 25th Feb. 2011.

¹⁸³ For more details see also ILO: *Labour Inspection on Plantations*, Third Item on the Agenda, Report III, Committee on Work on Plantations, Fifth Session (Geneva: ILO, 1966). Chapter IV: The staff, its powers and the facilities and cooperation it needs.

¹⁸⁴ ILO, *Study on Labour Inspection and Precarious Employment in Agriculture and the Food Industry*, (Geneva: ILO, October 1993) (in Archive Registry 55216 LA 9-30 Jacket 1).

¹⁸⁵ ILO, *Strategies and Practice for Labour Inspection*. Governing Body, Employment and Social Policy Committee, Third Item on the Agenda (Geneva: ILO, November 2006).

¹⁸⁶ It is broader than previous ones, such as that on Conditions of Employment of Plantation workers, 1958 (No.110) and Related Recommendation (No. 110), that only covered commercial cultivation or production.

livestock production and care, forestry, horticulture, the primary processing of agricultural products by the operator of the holding or any other form of agricultural activity” (Article 1.1). Nonetheless the scope of Convention 129 is somewhat limited by Article 4, which states that in order to be subject to labour inspection, an agricultural undertaking must employ wage-earning workers or apprentices, and also excludes holdings on which the work is performed by family members or co-operators. This is partly compensated by Article 5, which invites every Member State to extend labour inspection coverage in agriculture to other categories of persons working in agricultural undertakings (that is, tenants who do not engage outside help, share-croppers, members of a cooperative and operator’s family members), thus empowering labour inspection systems to extend their activities to all agricultural workers. The adoption of Convention No. 150 and Recommendation No. 158 (1978) on Labour Administration constituted a further advancement as it invited Governments to gradually extend the coverage of labour administration systems to categories of workers who are not “by law” employed persons, such as tenants who do not engage outside help, sharecroppers and similar categories of agricultural workers, members of cooperatives, etc.

II.2.6.7. Participatory approach

Democratization and the development of representative trade unions and rural workers’ organizations were leading themes of the ‘70s and ‘80s. Besides mainstreaming this dimension in its work, in 1977 the ILO set up a Programme on Participatory Organizations of the Rural Poor (PORP), based on the fact that the landless, sharecroppers, and other groups of rural poor require basic organization and empowerment in order to benefit from other development initiatives. “Participation” was the key concept; and its highly self-motivated originator, Anisur Rahman, went so far as to undertake an unpaid six month self-study in a rural village in Bangladesh, where he lived and worked, as a private citizen, to promote and refine the approach. The end-product was a “revolution” in development work that had heretofore viewed beneficiaries in a passive, receptive role. Its objective was to enable villagers to actively participate in decision-making processes and arrive at solutions that genuinely address their needs and concerns. Moreover, it emphasized the empowerment of beneficiaries to make decisions for themselves beyond the immediate purposes and duration of a project or programme.

Work focused on conscientization of people as to their rights and capacity building (on land tenure, a given economic activity, bureaucracy, money lending, etc.). In one initiative, groups of people were given grants to research on their needs, organizations, economic activities, local government, landlords and moneylenders, with help from specialists in the case of more technical and complex

matters. In this way, beneficiaries received skills and experience to be used after a project's completion as well as on other matters. Work was initially concentrated in South and South-East Asia. After a model was developed drawing on these experiences, it was extended to Latin America and to Africa by the mid-1980s, eventually reaching over 15 countries.

The Programme involved renowned intellectuals such as the grassroots activist and Nobel laureate, M. Yunus, the well acknowledged promoter of women's organizations and founder of the Grameen Bank, who recognized the approach as relevant and innovative. Attempts also began in the mid-'80s to link this participatory work with established trade unions in development and pressure-group work. However, in the late '80s, following the departure from the Office of its originator, who was the only official managing and mastering the approach, the Programme rapidly "fizzled out. The lessons learned did not reach the policy level envisioned; and the approach was not replicated further despite its widely-recognized value. This episode clearly illustrates the danger of a "one-man show", whereby a single official was responsible for a project or approach with little or no mainstreaming with the greater House agenda.

II.3. Impact, Legacy and Lessons

II.3.1. Impact assessment

The decades of the '70s and '80s profiled above generated a prodigious amount of rural initiatives. Regrettably a systematic analysis of their impact is hampered by the lack of necessary documentation. Impact assessments were relatively limited (in number and scope) at the time, mostly for lack of human and financial resources, although the need for more systematic efforts was widely acknowledged. Of the limited number that were undertaken, fewer remain available for consultation, having been lost during Office restructuring, as in the case of EMP/RU files, or purged as "old materials". Some important evaluations of ILO programmes and structures nonetheless did take place periodically, and are still available, namely those within the ACRD, as mentioned in section II.2.3.2.

As concerns the ILO's TC projects, one frequently cited reason for lack of full-fledged evaluations was the size of projects, which were usually too small (under USD 500,000) to justify data collection expenses. Potential for assessment was thus predetermined based on size, with project designs for smaller initiatives usually focusing more on inputs, activities and outputs, with relatively little attention to general objectives, and even less to the ILO's higher-level objectives (as featured in the ILO's Constitution and relevant Conventions, Recommendations and Resolutions). Even fewer

evaluations made provisions to gauge impact that could manifest itself months or even years after the end of a project. A notable exception was SPWP, which appeared relatively more successful at focusing on impact-type issues due in part to the larger size of their intervention, the involvement of external agencies, and thus more rigorous accountability requirements.

The importance of evaluation exercises was demonstrated by an appraisal undertaken in 1973 by an ILO Advisory Working Group on Evaluation of Rural Employment Promotion and Integrated Rural Development Projects. It drew important and astonishingly “modern” lessons such as the need for:

- Full government commitment (in the form of a clearly formulated rural development policy, an effective administrative and coordinating mechanism for national, regional and local activities and resource allocation in terms of materials and personnel inputs);
- International cooperation to fit national frameworks, supporting and supplementing government policies and programmes;
- Careful preparation and planning of integrated rural development, and for the preparation of long-term, well-phased, priority-oriented and flexible projects;
- Work on promoting agriculture *and* non-farm activities;
- Maximum degree of decision-making decentralization and relaxation of rigid administrative rules and procedures; situation-specific integrated rural development programmes;
- Expanded international efforts in integrated rural development and inter-agency coordination mechanisms to avoid duplications and reinforce complementarities;
- Examining difficulties encountered, as justification for continued and increased involvement.¹⁸⁷

Evaluations of select operational activities were often presented to the Governing Body for informational purposes and general discussion. However, results and lessons learned usually focused on project work management.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Op. Cit. ILO, *Technical Review of ILO Rural Development Activities since 1965* (1974), 12-13.

¹⁸⁸ Their recurrent findings ranged from unrealistic objectives, plans and expectations, to administrative and logistic delays and other constraints, to staff qualification and transfer of trained staff, to projects operating in parallel to existing governmental structures, with uncertain links to national institutions and chains of command, to constituent’s uncertain decision making and changes of priorities.

A few *ad hoc* reviews provide more impact-oriented assessments of selected projects and policy implementation.¹⁸⁹ Among their main lessons is the “appeal” of projects with simultaneous action on several fronts (in spite of their complexity involving the coordination of various units and expert); as opposed to those concentrating on a single bottleneck, which are admittedly easier to manage and deliver quicker results. Similarly, it is easier to work with project target groups already active in the trade or craft being developed than with persons not yet employed. Project length and project stages should include time for a preparatory phase (of about a year) to carry out in-depth studies, design a proper (simple) management structure, make choices in collaboration with future beneficiaries and carry out pilot activities to test the various technical solutions (bearing in mind among others, the need to match maintenance costs and modalities to the village capacities).

Rural project designs also need to consider that while structures can be set up in three years (the usual length of a project), it is difficult to achieve the active participation of beneficiaries and creation of the human and organisational resources to manage them within such short period of time. Three years could therefore constitute a pilot phase, concentrating on capacity building of local resources and enlisting the support of the local population, to improve chances of success and the viability of the whole programme. The extended phase would develop possibilities to sustain the programme at a local level, including a permanent unit responsible for promoting and supervising this type of initiative within their normal work programme, and institutional support at the national level. The staggering of objectives over time will also allow experts to become familiar with local potentials and constraints, and to build capacity and provide support to national technical services in related areas. The lessons also ask not to pay too much attention to the “profitability” of pilot projects (which can be modest or uncertain), since they are carried out for demonstration purposes, to introduce new approaches and working methods.

A larger impact-assessment in 1989 of 30 ILO rural projects,¹⁹⁰ reaches somewhat similar conclusions, using as criteria growth (particularly income-generation), equity (in terms of capacity to reach the poorest), sustainability, and popular participation. Its results tend to favour “multi-purpose” projects, for example those combining technical and entrepreneurship training with post-training assistance in the form of credit and marketing facilities and advisory services. This was the case of a

¹⁸⁹ For instance, Peter Kilby and Paul Bangasser: “Assessing Technical Cooperation: the Case of Rural Industry”, in *International Labour Review*, Vol. 117, NO. 3, (May-June 1978), 343-352; and Jacques Gaude, André Guichaoua, Bertin Martens and Steve Miller, “Rural Development and Labour-Intensive Schemes, in *International Labour Review*, Vol. 126, No. 4 (July-August 1987), 423-446.

¹⁹⁰ Opt. Cit Egger and Peek (1989), The review uses qualitative data and a combination of written and oral sources.

Cottage Industries training Programme for particularly poor women in Bangladesh providing instruction in tailoring, processing fibres, knitting, weaving and cane/bamboo production, where 95 percent of beneficiaries indicated they had experienced a net increase in their incomes.¹⁹¹ A range of integrated activities, step by step approaches consisting of a sequence of activities to allow building up local capacity gradually are recommended to reduce the higher probability of failure. As for the challenge of maintaining assets and procedures after project completion, direct implication of beneficiaries in the project and their conviction that the project benefits them directly play a major role. This was seen in a community irrigation project in Nepal where a users' committee composed of the village chief and representatives of project beneficiaries were given responsibility for asset maintenance and for dividing resource [water] allocation and maintenance responsibility among beneficiaries.¹⁹²

In terms of equity, these same projects demonstrate the difficulties in ensuring access to, and participation of, the poorest segments of the target group. In the case of the Nepal irrigation schemes, larger farmers seemed to have benefited the most, although the workers employed to construct them generally came from the poorest segments. In the Bangladesh example, locale elites found the project attractive as well and took part in it themselves, resulting in a situation where most of the trainees came from semi-urban areas and more economically prosperous background.¹⁹³ Another challenge of targeting disadvantaged groups is that since projects are to be economically viable, technical departments, but also donors and national counterparts, tend to select participants who are less "risky" to be able to demonstrate quicker and bigger returns on the resources invested.

As concerns people's participation, that same assessment concludes that there exists no one guaranteed method to ensure it. Nevertheless participation needs to feature as an explicit objective in project designs and evaluations as it is a fundamental "basis" that needs to be planned, prepared, and budgeted for. Participation is key to the success of initiatives, as well as their sustainability. The assessment also examined the dimensions of institution building and self-reliance, and found that the most promising approaches "work their way up" from the bottom by building capacity among institution officials to negotiate, bargain, and control particular activities. This process is aided further when coupled with a fundamental basic interest from beneficiary organizations and national

¹⁹¹ Samāja Kalyāṇa and Mahilā Bishayāka Mantraṇālaya. *Final Report on the Evaluation of the Thana-level Cottage Industries Training-cum- Production Centers* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Project Management Institute, 1988).

¹⁹² ILO/UNDP, *Evaluation of Three Special Public Works Programmes: Burundi, Nepal and Sierra Leone*, (Geneva, 1986).

¹⁹³ Samāja Kalyāṇa and Mahilā Bishayāka Mantraṇālaya. *Final Report on the Evaluation of the Thana-level Cottage Industries Training-Cum-Production Centers* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Project Management Institute, 1988).

authorities.¹⁹⁴ Another way of promoting sustainability is through self-reliance. To this end the use of locally available resources (skills, materials, technologies, markets, etc.) and upgrading of existing ones is crucial.

Sustainability, which is about ensuring that temporary actions are translated into lasting changes, has been among the concerns least addressed in evaluations; and yet it is perhaps the most fundamental for solid development. For example, in several labour-intensive works programmes that were reviewed, government support during the project was often limited to financial support for maintaining institutions, rather than activities, with even less attention on continuation after the project's end.¹⁹⁵ Few projects in fact seem to seriously address the cost to the government of continuing a particular initiative. The main lesson here is that technical assistance needs to adapt to the institutional absorption capacity and economic and financial situation and priorities of countries. This concern is also mentioned repeatedly in several project evaluation reports submitted to the GB. A project cannot be an entity separate from the local and national contexts, or from the capacities and longer-term involvement of ILO operations in the field. Linked to this idea are two other key principles: that projects need to combine direct assistance to the rural poor with technical and policy advisory services during the project and after its completion; and that they need to be consistent with macro-economic policies.

Available assessments allow us to conclude that the ILO was generally quite successful at the micro-level with new approaches and actors, and moderately so at the meso-level, such as in setting up and building up capacity of training and other institutions. Reaching the national (or macro-) level however, proved most challenging. It is uncertain as to how much the ILO's path breaking concepts and approaches impacted national policies and strategies as the ILO did not build specific technical advisory services on these concepts and approaches, for instance. Nevertheless its employment missions benefited from the knowledge; and in a number of areas, such as women and EII, there were instances of the ILO's concepts and approaches being "driven into" the thinking, debates and decision-making of key ministries, including technical ministries and ministries of economy and finance. Indeed, the ILO was particularly incisive in the international policy debate on development

¹⁹⁴ ILO, *Employment Opportunities for Rural Women through Organization*. Phase III, 1984-1985, interim evaluation (Geneva: ILO, 1985).

¹⁹⁵ ILO, *Sierra Leone Labour-Intensive Rural Works Programme*, Evaluation Report (Geneva: ILO, March 1988).

and on rural policy through highly innovative concepts and approaches (See table 1), which calls for developing means to reach policy levels as an important component of rural initiatives.

II.3.2. A rich legacy of cutting-edge concepts and approaches

The rural development work of the ILO in the '70s and '80s present a wealth of concepts and approaches that the Organization, and the development community at large, can build on today. The ILO was a forerunner, often leading research and, "... was the first one to voice shortcomings"¹⁹⁶ in rural development and on approaches used to tackle it. Some ILO pioneering concepts that are still viewed as "modern" include: *injecting human resource, popular participation and related social aspects into rural work* (at a time when the WB, IFAD and FAO for instance, was concentrated on agricultural production and productivity); introducing *a focus on labour absorption*, rather than production, when considering agriculture and poverty; setting *"poverty" and its eradication at the core of rural development*, and providing keys to grasp its structure, determinants, trends and effects; establishing the concepts of *entitlement* (including the right to food, particularly in difficult circumstances such as poverty and famines); *rights to land and land reform*; *appropriate (employment-friendly) technological choices, micro-finance, minimum wages and working condition for growth with equity*; and *growth with equity* itself.

The ILO also revealed the phenomenon of *informality* and its basic features and determinants; explained the essential nature and dynamics of *participatory approaches*, and of *workers' and women's mobilization*, and provided methods to achieve them. It demonstrated *women's potential* as protagonists in rural labour markets as well as in the development of their families and communities. More importantly, the ILO developed the means to unlock this potential, for instance through dedicated initiatives that organized women beneficiaries and put them in contact with authorities, but also by ensuring that more general programmes and policies go in that same direction of unlocking women's potential (or at least that they do not go in the opposite direction). Efforts by the EIIP to ensure women's equal access to training and job opportunities and equal wages for work of equal value present a good example of such efforts.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, the ILO promoted *self-empowerment of rural populations* through self-awareness, organization and participation, coupled with training and

¹⁹⁶ Samir Radwan also stresses that ILO developed useful collaboration with the academic world, NGOs and agencies, for instance during a project, but particularly where there was no organic link to ILO, they disappeared with the project ... interview (14 September 2009).

¹⁹⁷ Jean Majeres, interview (18 August 2009).

productive income generation, as a basis for the development of those areas. In a similar vein, it adopted an *enabling approach towards disadvantaged groups* such as ITPs and disabled persons, rather than a merely protective one. The ILO also established the role of *employment intensive works* and *cooperatives* in combining the economic goals of infrastructure development and productive activities, fundamental in rural areas, with those of job creation, social wellbeing, equitable growth and participatory/democratic processes, all equally important to the creation of growth-oriented rural communities.

Likewise, some approaches and tools were abandoned along the way by the ILO, such as the basic needs approach, which had become overly complex and too broad for the ILO's mandate (although as mentioned earlier it did inspire a host of other concepts and approaches within ILO and more broadly, and is still referred to as a major step in rural development). It is encouraging that the World Bank now appears to be "rediscovering" basic needs-based strategies and the UN too through the concept of MDGs. Unfortunately some other tools and approaches were discontinued in spite of their proven value and relevance within the ILO mandate. The financial and human resources to use them and keep them up to date dwindled or stopped altogether, such as the case of the MATCOM family of tools, and of worker's organizations; both of which warrant "rediscovery". Other approaches and tools that were just as promising, such as PIACT and Start Improve Your Business (SIYB), matured in the following years into full fledged instruments that are among the most successful ones today.

The ILO's impact on rural development in these years is undeniable; and as previously mentioned, a good part of its legacy is "ready for use" or deserves to be rediscovered and updated. Just as important to helping shape rural development strategy and methodology are the key lessons from these heydays of the ILO's rural work that explain achievements, as well as shortcomings. They include human resources, institutional commitment, work organization, strategy and methodology, external and impact-oriented evaluation, and provide valuable insight for shaping future ILO initiatives.

Table 1. Legacy and lessons for today's work

<p>ILO pioneering concepts and approaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Growth with equity ➤ Rural development central to growth and development ➤ Poverty, and poverty eradication at the core of rural development ➤ Human resource-based rural work ➤ Focus on labour absorption, rather than merely on production ➤ Appropriate (employment-friendly) technology and employment-intensive works ➤ Informality ➤ Small enterprises ➤ Microfinance ➤ Basic needs ➤ Enabling approach towards disadvantaged groups ➤ Entitlement ➤ Right to land and land reform ➤ Minimum wages and working conditions, for growth with equity ➤ Self-empowerment of rural populations ➤ Participatory approaches ➤ Workers' mobilization ➤ Women's mobilization ➤ Gender division of labour
<p>Lessons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organization-wide backing of a rural agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ILO constituents' commitment to set rural dimensions high on the ILO's agenda ➤ Joint vision and responsibility for rural work ➤ Active networking, open communication, joint work, integration, and coordination indispensable; avoid isolation, false sense of "self-sufficiency" and competition among Units, which leads to waste, sub-optimal impact and uncertain sustainability ➤ Active promotion by top management of coordination mechanisms ➤ ILO constituent commitment to enter rural areas ▪ Strong human resource capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Critical mass of human resources (in number, skill type, "know-how" and drive), befitting work required ➤ Adequate human resources at country level to ensure quality "presence" for rural work ➤ Balance between independent thinking, innovation and sense of political viability

- **Reaching policy**
 - Translating policy advice into programmes and operational work, and vice versa
 - Tight links between projects and policy from the start
 - Integrating programmes, their approaches and tools into the ILO's tripartite structure (to impact it and obtain support from it)
 - Lengthy projects to build up national capacity and interest and ensure policy integration
 - Project tracking and follow-up to ensure sustainability and policy integration
 - Focusing, to allow time and resources to mainstream approaches into national policy

- **Integrated approaches**
 - Lengthier and more complex, but more effective and sustainable given the multidisciplinary nature and interconnectedness of rural challenges and potentialities
 - Mutually supporting links to be established at earliest stage
 - Combined efforts with labour ministries and other institutions and stakeholders, nationally and locally

- **Broad participatory approach**
 - Projects and programmes to involve beneficiaries from conception to follow-up
 - Building technical, organizational and participatory capacity of disadvantaged groups and institutions
 - Importance of resource pooling (e.g. through cooperatives)
 - Key role of employers and workers in organizing rural groups and developing their voice
 - Post-project guidance and mentoring essential

- **National ownership**
 - Commitment of national and local authorities, direct involvement, and ownership
 - Match absorption capacity of national institutions, and build it up

- **Partnerships**
 - Vital role of partnerships with international agencies and NGOs complementary to ILO
 - Vital role of partnerships with donors, ensuring continuous, mutually beneficial dialogue in field and at Headquarters

- **Follow-up**
 - Mechanisms to track project continuity, up-scaling and replication, essential for maximum impact
 - Systematic impact reviews essential to extract lessons and strengthen approaches

II.3.3. Lessons for today's rural work

II.3.3.1. Rural work, an ILO-wide affair

A review of lessons should begin by emphasizing that behind the ILO's achievements stood the International Labour Organization in its entirety, decisively backing rural work. Indeed almost 80 percent of the Employment Department's tasks,¹⁹⁸ and over 60 percent of the ILO's technical cooperation work, were dedicated to rural development.¹⁹⁹ Organizing itself to reflect this "rural priority" in those days meant setting up a Branch, EMP/RU, committed to conducting and promoting work in rural areas. The work of this Branch was supplemented by numerous "rural" Units within Departments, as well as by Focal Points, who were all coordinated by an internal facilitating body, the ICRD, to ensure a coherent response. At a higher level the ACRD was present to ensure the visibility of rural dimensions among the GB and Constituents, guide the Office's work, and also promote linkages with other agencies to strengthen ILO efforts and maximize impact.

This strategy had its weaknesses however, which are themselves important in the lessons they provide. Most apparent is the *need for active networking, open lines of communication, joint work, integration, and at least coordination*, and to discourage marginalization and compartmentalization, which can give rise to a false sense of competition among Units resulting in wasteful practices, sub-optimal impact and uncertain sustainability.

Organizational sustainability of rural work appears as a major challenge. The ILO's integration of rural work and responsibility sharing was done through the interest of its constituents. Rural issues and programmes were not particularly high on their agenda, regular budget funds were relatively limited compared to the amount of work undertaken. As rural workers and employers are usually not strongly organized, and as main national workers' and employers' organizations have difficulty reaching the countryside and attracting potential affiliates from these areas, ILO constituent commitment or motivation to push the ILO to work in rural areas was not solid. Donors play a key role by consistently financing important research and advisory and operational work undertaken, but cannot replace constituents' strategic commitment to keeping rural dimensions on the ILO's agenda.

¹⁹⁸ Magnitude of work gathered from several interviews.

¹⁹⁹ Op. cit. Egger and Peek 1989.

II.3.3.2. A strong human resource base

The phenomenal amount of initiatives undertaken Office-wide was the result of a large number of high-calibre economic and social researchers and technical specialists.²⁰⁰ Their work was essential to ensure quality results and credibility vis-à-vis beneficiaries, constituents, partners and donors alike. The high level of technical knowledge was important in developing effective, efficient and research-based operational tools, and in implementing them. And these specialists also constituted strong technical support teams. When coupled with a solid vision (particularly an ability to see how rural areas “fit” development work and the ILO’s overall mission) and high levels of motivation, this constituted the *critical mass of human resources, in number, skill type, “knowhow”²⁰¹ and drive, befitting the task at hand.*

The ILO also had an *adequate volume of human resources at country level to ensure “presence” for rural work*, be they regular officials or officials linked to projects. Employment regional advisory teams, typically comprised 8 to 10 specialists, worked well and attracted considerable support from the UNDP and Nordic countries in particular. These teams were especially important as field offices often had little knowledge of rural problems and were more focused on urban areas and the organized sector.

Considerable internal, and particularly external resources, were available to support this critical mass of human resources and their work. They engaged in cutting edge activities, and as a result at times “[placed] the ILO before the World Bank and FAO”,²⁰² thereby attracting further internal and external support.

EMP/RU and the Employment Department in general, were staffed by high-level and highly-motivated specialists convinced in the justice of their causes. It gave them the *boldness to tackle “unconventional” issues, develop “unusual” and often highly progressive approaches, and venture into unexplored areas.* In the words of a former ILO official, *“the ILO needs a [rural] brain”*,²⁰³ meaning, it needs to rebuild its rural intellectual capacity so it can be innovative again, maintain some

²⁰⁰ These officials came from key development think-tanks (ex. Institute of Development Studies, Sussex; Institute of Social Studies, The Hague; and Institut d’études en développement économique et social, Paris) and/or with extensive field experience.

²⁰¹ Ng Phan Thuy refers to “knowing your stuff”, resulting from expertise and know-how (defined as the essence of lessons learnt and practice that remains in the subconscious)

²⁰² Dharam Ghai, interview (27 August 2009).

²⁰³ Martha Loutfy, interview (2 October 2009).

independence, highlight its originality, and be able to ask “the questions that matter”. It *should not strive to “speak the same language” at all times, but leave room for divergent ideas and opinions, in order to keep the debate at a high level.*

Simultaneously, the ILO should guard against “pure academics” who may work without much consideration as to the political viability of their aims. Thus at times while the work was innovative, for instance on land reform, and put ILO on the map, it also alienated Constituents who felt a deep divide between their realities and, as put by one former ILO official, those of the “high-powered academics in their ‘ivory tower.’”²⁰⁴ The resulting tense atmosphere at times discouraged constructive dialogue and blocked progress. *Strong ideological divides need to be tempered by a sense of political viability therefore, and a balance must be found between independent thinking, innovation, and opportune timing, which are indispensable to the ILO’s advancement and continued relevance.*

Those ILO Units that stand out at any given point in time as strongest, most prominent, productive or innovative should be wary of adopting a ‘self-righteous’ or self-sufficient stance as this creates a divide with the rest of the Office that challenges internal work organization and collaboration efforts.

II.3.3.3. An overall problematic work organization

The basic structure of the ‘70s and ‘80s had *various parts of the Office mainstreaming rural dimensions within their own work, while a designated Unit played a catalytic and coordinating role in rural work, to ensure or at least stimulate monitoring and impact evaluation.* However there is broad agreement that these parts worked in a highly compartmentalized way. As noted previously, joint efforts were often “fortuitous,” resulting from personal linkages or coincidences, rather than through an established system of in-House networking and information sharing.

There was a general *tendency for large programmes to isolate themselves from the rest of the Office structure, at Headquarters as well as at country level,* in an attempt to maintain control and secure funds. This is best demonstrated by, “the Employment Programme’s strong focus and fortress mentality”,²⁰⁵ as noted by a former ILO official, which combined with some jealousy and suspicion on the part of other Units prompted isolationist tendencies. As a result, “close working relations with

²⁰⁴ Jack Martin, interview (27 August 2009).

²⁰⁵ Dharam Ghai, interview (27 August, 2009).

other organizations were sometimes stronger than within ILO or between those organizations and ILO”,²⁰⁶ as observed in the case of the COOP and EMP/INFRA Units in particular.

Other programmes, like the initiative on workers’ education and workers’ protection in plantations, came to an end due to their lack of *integration within the tripartite ILO structure*. Collaboration with ITC-Turin was also relatively limited. The Centre was used by the rest of the Office mostly for logistical purposes such as holding courses and meetings. Besides missed opportunities for internal collaboration and synergies based on respective comparative advantages, or at the very least coordination, *isolation puts at stake the viability of and support for a project or programme*. The danger of isolation and discontinuation is even stronger in the case of one-person programmes and projects.

Admittedly it is challenging to have officials and Units, particularly of a high profile, work together. *An entity to spur and maintain a “rural conscience” throughout the ILO and “holding it all together” is important*. Inter-departmental committees and focal points may not be enough for the task. *There needs to be an Institutional vision and an overarching strategy jointly “owned” by the different Departments, as well as a jointly owned structure to ensure work coordination along agreed axes*. Arrangements may include networks or teams of officials working together on a particular issue, with a programme manager controlling resources and the other managers forming a steering committee (as was the case in the following decade for specific themes such as gender, privatization and crisis response, for instance). What is also needed is *clear policy direction from top management supporting and promoting a coordination mechanism*. *Constituents have a crucial role too, as their interest in rural issues and support for a well coordinated work arrangement is vital to ensure its credibility and viability*.

II.3.3.4. Reaching policy

Reaching policy level, locally, nationally, regionally and internationally is essential to make a broad, lasting difference. The ILO’s main impact was on the international policy debate on rural policy, both at macro-level, through new concepts, and at micro-level, with new approaches and actors, particularly in the areas of employment intensive works and cooperatives. The ILO was also one of the few UN agencies recognized in the field for having a visible impact through its training centres for instance, some of which are still in operation.²⁰⁷ However again, there is general consensus that policy

²⁰⁶ Helmut Watzlawick, interview (29 September 2009).

²⁰⁷ Girma Agune and Christian Joussein, interview (26 August 2009).

impact was generally more elusive at the national level. In the words of an ex-official, Ms. Ng Phan Thuy, “the ILO was good at micro (experimental) level; less good at meso- (institutional) level, and weakest at macro (policy) level approaches.”²⁰⁸

It is crucial to *bridge policy and practice*, that is, to link up conceptual work, both research and policy development and implementation, with field work, to anchor it to reality. The ILO generated good approaches and lessons from its TC and analytical initiatives; but they were rarely integrated into mainstream policy, although on many occasions the reasons lay outside the ILO’s control.

A number of new concepts and approaches were driven into the thinking, debates and decision-making of key ministries and agencies, but this was limited to specific programmes and countries.²⁰⁹ The large employment missions, particularly those to Kenya and Colombia, seem to have impacted policy, but fell short of expectations, particularly in terms of follow-up policy and programmes, and cost-benefit. Insufficient links to policy makes it difficult to ensure sustainability of specific initiatives. More importantly, it also affects the viability and long-term, broader impact of approaches and programmes that are developed and piloted at a small scale precisely so they may convince policy-level decision makers to integrate them and budget them into mainstream strategies and structures. There needs to be a logical sequence *building up from local expertise to national policy formulation*; and *tighter links between projects and policy from the start*. Among others, this requires that ILO officials and TC staff stay up-to-date on the latest policy developments in order to identify entry points; as well as to envision how the ILO can then get policy to reach the poorest segments in rural areas.

Projects should also be sufficiently lengthy, *five years or more, in order to establish links, build up national capacity and interest, show results, and support integration into policy*. Sound programmes and projects can have considerable impact. It is therefore worth investing sufficient time and effort to develop a good initiative, with core objectives and results to show impact, which can then be monitored to ensure sustainability, up-scaling, duplicating, and ideally, mainstreaming into national policy. The importance of *tracking projects and follow-up to ensure impact* cannot be emphasized enough.

²⁰⁸ Ng Phan Thuy, interview (28 September 2009)

²⁰⁹ For instance the adaptation of construction policy in Ghana and Nigeria to allow parceling out contracts so small and medium rural enterprises can become involved in public works.

Projects in rural areas require particular attention to their sustainability in view of geographical remoteness, occasionally “conservative” mentalities and traditions and weaker labour market and other institutions. *Sustainability in rural areas calls for long-term commitment by government (at the level(s) most relevant in a given country, e.g. at national, regional, provincial and village levels), donors and implementing agencies, coupled with broad local participation, partnerships and imaginative, context-specific solutions.*

Research work should result among others in *short, pragmatic and action-oriented policy briefs, guides and other practical materials easily accessible to policy makers* and other practitioners.

TC projects, research and other initiatives need integration into ILO field offices’ regular work so that officials at the country level feel ownership and responsibility to support these initiatives and their follow-up, as well as to promote policy-level linkages.

Lastly, reaching policy also means *integrating Programmes and their approaches and tools into the ILO’s tripartite structure*, both to impact it and obtain support from it. The task, which was elusive at the time, remains a pivotal challenge.

II.3.3.5. Focus

Insufficient policy impact may also be linked to the ILO tendency to cover too much ground, which would leave little time to work on mainstreaming initiatives and approaches into national policy. In choosing issues and initiatives, there should be *great care to avoid “biting off more than you can chew,”²¹⁰ as well as pursuing too many small initiatives at the expense of having a real impact.* In other words, the ILO should refrain from over-committing its resources, focusing its efforts instead on a few, select interventions.

II.3.3.6. Integrated approaches

In order to achieve strategic policy impact, or even simply to realize a successful rural employment generation scheme, the ILO also needs to *combine working with (and if need be build the capacity of) its counterpart, the labour ministries, other relevant line ministries and logical partners in rural development, namely national agencies and decision-makers who can influence development policies*

²¹⁰ Jack Martin, interview (27 August 2009).

in favour of rural populations, relevant employers' and workers' organizations, well established NGOs and associations of beneficiaries, local expertise and with providers of financial assistance.

An additional step for the ILO is to successfully promote *a national institutional integrated approach* in which the various relevant national institutions coordinate their work on a specific matter, for example as achieved by several programmes on women's empowerment.

Integrated work in general appears to be the most promising. It is an essential component of the holistic approach that needs to be pursued in rural areas to tackle the complexity and interconnectedness of rural challenges and potentialities. *An integrated programme should cover all the technical and institutional components required for its long-term success* (from institutional development, technology, training, entrepreneurship, marketing, micro-finance, social protection,²¹¹ working conditions, child labour, women empowerment, social dialogue, to data and other information management needs, for example), with priority assigned to each component according to local needs. *Mutually supporting links and synergies between components are equally crucial.* At the time, various technical areas of ILO work were successful and even path-breaking, but there is convergence of views that, “all these efforts were never integrated into a coherent, comprehensive strategy”,²¹² including for example employment and social protection, cooperation with other agencies and institutions supporting each other, and support from major constituents. This compartmentalization limited full impact and contributed to the gradual decline of even highly successful Programmes.

An integrated programme should also include tight links between different types of work (research, advisory services, technical cooperation and capacity building) in mutually supportive ways. A TC programme for instance, needs to be aware of and use results from relevant research and existing capacity building tools; and in turn it needs to envision how its own results could contribute to advisory services and capacity building.

Rural programmes of the '70s and '80s demonstrate that the integrated approach is not the easiest route, as there is a risk of overburdening a given programme. Nevertheless they also indicate that the approach is the most valuable and efforts need to be made to realize it, for instance by using a step-by-step approach and including capacity building elements. “It is useful to have one overall framework

²¹¹ Most resilient projects, for example, were found to be those including some social protection.

²¹² Gus Edgren, interview (13 September 2009).

with a clear idea about its components, linkages and sequencing among them; use whatever entry point is available; then bring in other ILO concerns as needed and opportune; and finally reach policy”.²¹³

The resounding message of these decades as noted by many of the officials interviewed can be summed up as: “*Specialize, specialize, specialize*”, and “*Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate*”,²¹⁴ with one complementing the other.

II.3.3.7. Broad participatory approaches

A major lesson from the decades just considered is that: *projects and programmes must come from the people*. Truly participatory approaches starting from project conception and continuing on to ensure sustainability are of the essence, particularly in rural areas. Without the direct involvement of beneficiaries, a project’s true objective needs cannot be conceived, goals cannot be achieved, and results cannot be sustained. For instance, a project may provide training on how to use a machine, but without direct involvement of beneficiaries it may miss the fact that it also has to provide training on how to maintain it. In the ‘70s and ‘80s this perspective was revolutionary as authorities tended not to pay much attention to the needs of “little people”,²¹⁵ let alone request their feedback. Usually, “the capital often spoke for the whole country”,²¹⁶ and sending out a few people to the countryside when developing a project to get feedback was considered sufficient. Meanwhile the ILO approach recognized that initiatives need to be truly demand-driven.

The participatory approach stems from the realization that while rural areas may share some characteristics with each other, such as broad diversity of economic activities and labour and poverty statuses of inhabitants, each also has specificities that need to be grasped. This calls in particular for a *profiling of disadvantaged groups*. It subsequently requires *investment to build up technical, organizational and participatory capacity of disadvantaged groups*, and *envisaging post-project guidance and mentoring*. This needs to be combined with linking up with national and local organizations which can then provide services to them. In rural areas it is essential *to involve locally established NGOs and other actors*, as they are best placed to work and to build up capacities of disadvantaged groups in these areas. This is all the more important since in rural contexts workers and

²¹³ Jean Majeres, interview (18 August 2009).

²¹⁴ Dharam Ghai, interview (27 August 2009).

²¹⁵ Dharam Ghai, interview (27 August 2009).

²¹⁶ Girma Agune and Christian Joussein, interview (26 August 2009).

employers are not frequently organized. In terms of longer-term sustainability, the main actors of a rural project should be the local collaborators and agents of change remaining on the spot. Their expertise and experience can also enrich ILO's work, and make donor agencies more confident in a programme's capacity to deliver. Further, they can prove useful for interactions with governments of beneficiary as well as donor countries in helping reach policy, thereby strengthening and increasing the scope of achievements.

Lastly, broad participation also calls *on important work by employers and workers to organize rural groups and help them develop a "voice" locally, and at higher levels.*

II.3.3.8. National (and local) ownership

Commitment of national and local authorities, direct involvement, and "ownership" remain crucial to "open doors" and dedicate human and financial resources to a programme; to sustain it; as well as for policy change. Any plans must be locally and nationally articulated, designed, owned, led, and built in consultation with all stakeholders. This needs to be coupled with capacity building of government officials. A typical TC project includes training officials from the relevant government ministries on how to organize and implement a rural programme and its activities, and having them implement as part of training, a number of concrete activities. Locally adapted measures need to be conceived at planning stages to get around the possible hurdles of officials' low qualifications, lack of motivation and high turnover; but also to ensure that projects and programmes are not over-ambitious and match the absorption capacity of national institutions.

II.3.3.9. Partnerships

As mentioned earlier, the complexities and volume of rural work solicited, coupled with the ILO's need to specialize, mean that *external partnerships with international agencies and NGOs complementary to the ILO, as well as with donors, are vital.* Joint work with other agencies have proven feasible and mutually useful. The ILO's strategy of very close collaboration also helped impact the policies of other agencies. The ILO developed useful collaboration with the academic world, NGOs and other agencies, for instance during projects, and in broader research and debates. The ILO was good at presenting its work and comparative advantages, and at engaging in mutually reinforcing partnerships. However, particularly where there was no organic link to ILO and relations were linked to a specific individual or project, these tended to disappear with the end of the project. Mechanisms

ensuring continuity of institutional dialogue and partnership are also important elements of long-term success and support.

Donors always play a very significant role. In the '70s and '80s multi-bilateral funds financed most of the ILO's rural work. At that time the main, progressive donors were the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), DANIDA, SIDA, the Netherlands, Germany, DFID, UNDP and WFP. In many cases funds spanned long periods; the longer time span allowed for complex projects that could carry out much needed sensitization, human resource and institutional capacity building. *Continuous dialogue with donors at field and Headquarters level, with mutually beneficial joint work and achievements can cement the ILO-donor relationship.*

Extra-budgetary resources though were seemingly not sufficiently "internalized", in the sense that they fell short of prompting the ILO to develop capacity on its own by allocating more of its regular budget resources, as donors were hoping, to sustain the ILO's rural work and build up its long-term rural capacity and intervention mechanisms.

II.3.3.10. Follow up

Lack of *mechanisms to check the continuity of projects, their up-scaling and replication* is particularly damaging to the ILO's work. Results and impact, particularly those reaching policy level, often take longer than the life-time of a given initiative and require long-term support.

Systematic evaluations and even more, impact reviews, are also essential in order to build on past experiences, and to refine approaches to rural development. Their scantiness during the past decades impedes the extraction of more specific lessons, thus impacting this very review. What is noted here has been gleaned from extensive interviews with Officials and ex-Officials, "surviving" project documents, as well as through extensive and determined efforts at information gathering.

III. FROM RURAL “MARGINALIZATION” (1990s) TO “REDISCOVERY” (2000s)

III.1. Marginalization of the rural dimension in the 1990s

III.1.1. Determinants and work re-organization

The 1990s saw a widespread decline in interest in rural development. At the international level there was a serious push for policies and work promoting globalization, free market, competition and modernization. Globalization entailed among others substantial increases and shifts in international resource flows, growing speculative capital flows, and important amounts of private investment going to rapidly developing countries. Additionally, poverty in rural areas had become more endemic despite increased work on them during the two previous decades. These factors combined presented all the more reason to move on to a different strategy, one that focused on industry and urban areas, increasingly perceived as holding greater potential for economic advancement and modernization. Consequently, by the mid-1990s rural development had fallen somewhat “off the radar” of most policy makers, analysts, and programme developers, both at national and international levels.

The several “waves” of SAPs in the ‘80s and ‘90s used to tackle the mounting debt incurred by many developing countries further diminished attention to rural development issues. SAP’s emphasis on budget cuts and a reduced role for the State resulted in serious curtailments in infrastructure investment, especially physical and social infrastructure such as health and education, which are the foundations of rural growth. In addition to their emphasis on urban development and commercial agriculture, SAPs also entailed a sudden dismantling of subsidies to factors of production and price stabilization mechanisms, drastic drops in public spending and private financing, including Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) in agriculture, whose remaining portion also went increasingly to large producers). Consequently the share of ODA devoted to agriculture, which had climbed steeply since the mid-‘70s to reach a peak of around 17 percent in 1989, fell precipitously to a mere 3.6 percent in the early 2000s before the trend would reverse.²¹⁷

The steady decrease in commodity prices coupled with growing difficulties to access the markets of developed countries in the ‘90s rendered investments in agriculture less attractive, compared to those

²¹⁷ OECD-DAC: *Measuring Aide to Agriculture*, April 2010.

in industry and services, also considered to be more “modern” and promising sectors. Agricultural policy was less aimed at rural income generation and poverty alleviation, and more at securing cheap urban food and cheap urban labour. Rural economies were increasingly viewed as antiquated and unresponsive to development efforts; and it seemed that more impact could be attained in the urban sector, which was already attracting a steady flow of workers from rural areas. The new strategy was to develop the urban economy, with the expectation that it would automatically drive along rural growth.

The ILO mirrored this general change in attitude. There was a sentiment that rural development efforts had led to little tangible progress in increasing rural incomes in most developing countries.²¹⁸ The fact that the ILO had long been at the cutting edge of work in this area was viewed more as indicating that the ILO had done “enough” for rural and needed to move on to other areas where impact might be stronger and quicker, and which were more prominent on the international scene and consequently more present in the minds of constituents and donors. It could also be said that urban “voices” were becoming more prominent in ILO fora, increasingly drowning out those of rural interests and further accelerating the shift in priorities.

In the early ‘90s the ILO underwent an important internal reconfiguration, prompted in part by the new leadership and the Organization’s financial crisis, which further displaced rural work in multiple ways. The most obvious was the dismantling of rural structures throughout the Office set up in the previous two decades. In the process many were made redundant, modified to fit new roles, or merged with other units. The two main consultative bodies for rural matters met similar fates: the ACRD was transformed into a tripartite technical meeting as of 1992 and, while it held on to its advisory role, it no longer concentrated on rural issues; and the ICRD simply ceased to function after 1990. EMP/RU was dismantled shortly thereafter, and most of its elements became part of a new, more general, Development and Technical Cooperation Department (DEVCO/TEC), in 1994. It was then dismantled further and merged with other departments; and regrettably its documents and data repositories became scattered throughout the Office. The decision to disband EMP/RU was probably the most damaging, as it meant that rural work lost its main in-House engine and advocate, thus eliminating any possibility of maintaining interest and work in rural areas. Many rural specialists also left the Office for a variety of reasons, or took up other responsibilities.

²¹⁸ ILO, *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1992-93 Rural Development*, Interdepartmental Committee on Rural Development Discussion paper, (Geneva: ILO, 24 April 1990).

A review of ILO Programme and Budget (P&B) records reflects this gradual disappearance of the rural dimension from the ILO's overall work plan, which ceased to list it as a cross-cutting or integrated theme after the 1994-1995 biennium. Previously "rural" activities are first merged with "informal" ones, in light of widespread informality in rural areas, and then replaced all together.²¹⁹ The 2004-05 P&B targets the informal sector as the area most in need of attention in order to make an impact in efforts to reduce poverty.²²⁰ Additionally, there was not much distinction between *rural* informal and *urban* informal, while increasingly the ILO's work on the informal sector came to focus more on urban areas. In this way the term "informal" helped to somewhat "transition" the ILO's work from a rural to a more urban focus. Whenever the term rural was explicitly mentioned, it came to be more in reference to indigenous and tribal peoples' issues.²²¹

A third reorientation that marginalized the rural dimension was the ILO's Active Partnership Policy (APP),²²² which was a new method of delivery adopted in 1993. It included a move away from analytical and technical cooperation work to advocacy and policy advice embodied by the slogan that the "ILO is not a development agency".²²³ These changes were accompanied by a move away from the large units of technical specialists at Headquarters and full regional employment teams, to a scattering of specialists throughout the field. Here again P&B records of the early '90s track the trend of rural work being systematically shifted out to regional and country offices. Besides widening the Headquarters-field gap, this change interrupted a mechanism which, however imperfect, had headquarters- and field-work reinforcing each other with Headquarters proposing innovative concepts and approaches that would be tested in the field; then refining them and developing new ones according to feedback from the field. This cycle of field experience feeding into conceptualization work at Headquarters had until then contributed to new methodologies, stronger programmes (and eventually to sharper policy advice), and had contributed to the success of approaches such as labour-intensive employment, PORP, and Special Services, to name a few.

Internally the ILO faced a new structure of work organization that de-emphasized rural work, resulting in a decreasing volume of work on rural issues; scaled-down programmes for rural areas; and an

²¹⁹ ILO, Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1994-1995 (Geneva: ILO, 1993), "The Rural and Informal Sectors" (p. 18), "Women Workers in the Rural and Informal Sectors" (p. 60-13).

²²⁰ ILO, Programme and Budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (Geneva: ILO, 2003), "Strategic Objective No. 3."

²²¹ Op. cit ILO Programme and Budget 1994-1995.

²²² ILO's Active Partnership Policy was designed to bring the Organization closer to its tripartite constituency in member States and to enhance the coherence and quality of its technical services through Country Objectives, predecessors of today's DWCPs. These would be prepared by the ILO's Area Offices, in collaboration with the newly set up Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs), and would identify priority areas for ILO work and specific interventions based on dialogue with constituents.

²²³ Helmut Watzlawick, interview (29 September 2009).

interruption of knowledge building and lack of follow-up needed to ensure that TC efforts were reaching policy levels.

These events led to disappointment among partner agencies. The dismantling and heavy cuts in some technical programmes related to rural issues, the disappearance of the employment regional teams and dispersion of their technical staff, for instance, led to a marked decrease in relations with the UNDP, the WB and some bilateral donors, causing one UNDP official to remark that, the “ILO has left without forwarding address.”²²⁴ In light of the Organization’s long absence from this topic, “Regaining the credibility and support that ILO used to enjoy from these other agencies now presents a long and uphill struggle.”²²⁵

III.1.2. Impact on Units, approaches, and programmes

Waning interest in rural work affected all technical subjects, sometimes more gravely than others, such as the case of Workers Education, labour-intensive works and cooperatives. That said the ILO did not cease to operate in rural areas. Several noteworthy initiatives that thrived during these years, such as Local Economic Development (LED), working conditions, entrepreneurship and enterprise support, women and youth, will be examined in the following pages. However these rural-relevant initiatives remained noticeably low-key when compared to programmes of the previous decades.

III.1.2.1. Workers Education

Among the departments experiencing a drastic decline in rural work was ACTRAV, particularly after EDUC was discontinued in the mid-‘90s and its rural post abolished in 1992. ACTRAV’s work on rural issues also took on the trends of the time and came to be increasingly referred to in conjunction with the informal sector (although ACTRAV did make the distinction between *rural* informal and *urban* informal). This was evident in the study, “Trade Unions in the Informal Sector,”²²⁶ which revealed the stakes and problems that the complex “informal sector” (urban and rural) poses for the

²²⁴ For instance remembered by Helmut Watzlawick, interview (29 September 2009).

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ ILO, “Trade Unions in the Informal sector: Finding Their Bearings, Nine Country Papers (Bulgaria, Columbia, El Salvador, Ghana, Hungary, India, Italy, Kenya, Philippines).” *Labour Education* 1999/3, No.116 (Geneva: ILO, 1993).

trade union movement, while making only a passing reference to the specific challenges of unionization in agriculture.

III.1.2.2. Labour-intensive works

SPWP was one of the major programmes that survived the restructuring, but with sharp reductions in staffing and financial resources resulting in a drastic adaptation of its work organization to compensate for the decreased resources, while remaining impactful. It became the Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) under EMP/INVEST, and operated within the Employment Policy Department (EMP/POLICY), as part of an inter-disciplinary approach to job creation, which included simultaneous efforts to develop the capacities of central and local governments, training institutions and local private sector. EIIP saw its activities decrease due in particular to severe staff reductions. Its work was also affected by changing donor preferences, which now favoured more “glamorous” themes and initiatives yielding quicker results. In response to these circumstances the Programme adapted its approach by seeking out support from a variety of donors; creating project committees so as to limit peer pressure and the risk of sudden unilateral policy change; and by intensifying specialists’ contacts with donors. It also worked increasingly through the Advisory Support, Information Services and Training Programme (ASIST), established in 1990 to serve as “a link between country level activities, sub-regional backstopping and EMP/INVEST”²²⁷ [soon followed by the creation of an ASIST Africa (1991) and an ASIST Asia-Pacific (1998)], to tackle increasing demands. Meanwhile a biannual international forum, the Regional Seminar for Labour-Based Practitioners, was set up in 1990 to provide international support and knowledge sharing.

Also worth noting is EIIP’s participation in the International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD), set up in 1992 with help from NORAD, CIDA, SDC and SIDA, and still operational.²²⁸ This involvement resulted from its earlier research²²⁹ and operational work that marked

²²⁷ ILO, *Employment Intensive Investment Programme – Programme Delivery*, Available at, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/recon/eiip/delivery/eiipasist.htm> accessed on 25th Feb. 2011
As the operational arm of EIIP, ASIST works at the local level to promote and support employment-intensive approaches through four areas: Local Level Planning, Labour Based Technology, Small Scale Contracting, and Rural Infrastructure Maintenance Systems.

²²⁸ It consisted first of a few agencies and donors interested in promoting rural populations’ access to services, then grew rapidly. By the early 2000s, 20 National Forum Groups had come into being; and regional Forums were set up in Asia, East and West Africa and Latin America, staffed with specialists from the countries/regions concerned.

²²⁹ See for example, Ian Barwell, Geoff A. Edmonds, John D.G.F. Howe and Jan de Veen, *Rural Transport in Developing Countries* (London: ILO, 1985).

a new approach towards rural transportation in general and introduced a rural transport planning tool, “Integrated Rural Transport Planning” (IRTP), to identify transport patterns and needs of rural households.²³⁰ ILO’s input contributed significantly to IFRD’s common policy goals, international programmes, training activities and technical reports.

III.1.2.3. Cooperatives

While the Cooperative Branch also faced significant cutbacks in the ‘90s, the growing number of requests and the increasing complexity of its development activities allowed the Branch to continue undertaking impactful work in rural areas. The “Programme for Cooperative Development in Rural Areas” was launched in 1993 in partnership with DANIDA. This initiative set up the COOPREFORM Programme to help countries create an enabling climate for autonomous and economically viable cooperatives, especially in the wake of SAPs.²³¹ Results were impressive: as in less than a decade it had assisted 62 countries; helped draft over 50 cooperative acts, layperson’s guides and model by-laws and compose 29 draft cooperative policy papers; issued a brochure on participatory lawmaking and participatory cooperative policy-making and a checklist on cooperative legislation; and set up NATLEX, a comprehensive database containing among others a vast repository of cooperative legislation.²³²

COOPREFORM was instrumental to the resurgence of interest in cooperatives and recognition of the economic and social potential of genuine cooperatives. As a result the ILO adopted the Recommendation on the Promotion of Cooperatives, 2002 (No.193), mandating the Office to further assist constituents and cooperative organizations in cooperative development. Other initiatives that came out of the Programme for Cooperative Development in Rural Areas included COOPNET (1993), a programme to strengthen cooperative management and networking among cooperative training institutions across countries and regions; and INDISCO (1993), a programme to promote business opportunities among Indigenous and Tribal Peoples based on self-reliance and traditional livelihoods.

²³⁰ IRTP would later become the Integrated Accessibility Planning (IRAP) tool in the early-‘90s, reflecting a wider scope of objectives.

²³¹ ILO, *COOPREFORM Structural Reforms through Improved Cooperative Development Policies and Laws*. 10th Progress Report (January-December 2000) and Work Plan (January-December 2001), 8. (Geneva: ILO, 2000 and 2001).

²³² Joachim Schmitz, *COOPREFORM 1993-2001: Structural Reform through Improvement of Cooperative Development Policy and Legislation – An Analysis* (Geneva: ILO, 2002), 10.

III.1.2.4. Entrepreneurship and Enterprises

Work on entrepreneurship and enterprise support continued to thrive, albeit with less attention to rural areas and their economic activities, in spite of the fact that farms and related sectors such as food processing, packaging, production of farming tools and implements all constitute enterprises. From the '90s onward, the ILO developed a wide array of management capacity building tools²³³ fitting the various stages of enterprise development (from sensitization, to launching business, performance improvement and expansion), the sizes of enterprises, target groups (including illiterate people) and a variety of trades, from handicrafts to waste management. The most well known and frequently used are Know About Business (KAB), an entrepreneurial education and business skills package to encourage young men and women to think about entrepreneurship and the role of businesses in economic and social development; SIYB, to help start viable businesses and strengthen performance of existing micro and small enterprises; Improve your Construction Business (IYCB); and Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED) programme, supporting employment generation by creating an enabling environment and institutional capacity for women entrepreneurs, developing tools and support services for women entrepreneurs and mainstreaming gender into all ILO enterprise interventions²³⁴ (see Entrepreneurship Skills Approach, Annex 4). While these tools were not developed for rural areas specifically and were mostly used in urban settings, they proved very useful in rural areas with little or no adaptation.

Rural-relevant enterprise work included in the late 1980s-1990s analytical work on clusters of MSMEs, focusing in particular on the functioning of industrial districts, especially in Italy (composed of MSMEs specialised in a given stage of the production process. Their dynamism, their mix of competitiveness and collaboration, and their ability to drive the growth of an entire geographical area constitute particularly attractive features.

The 1990s also saw the beginning of more systematic ILO work on the functioning of value chains, the vast majority of which are based on agricultural products; and built the basis for considerable analytical and technical cooperation work on them in the following decade.

²³³ See EMP/ENT Tool List:

<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/empentrp/docs/F156451343/EMP%20ENT%20%20Tool%20list.doc> accessed on 25th Feb. 2011

²³⁴ See ILO, *ILO strategy on promoting women's entrepreneurship development*, Governing Body, 301st session, Committee on Employment and Social Policy (ILO: Geneva, March 2008), p.11

III.1.2.5. Indigenous and Tribal Peoples

The Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, 1989 (No. 169) paved the way for new programmes and approaches in the 1990s and beyond. Multidisciplinarity, interconnectedness and mutual stimulation among TC, research, policy work and standards proved particularly effective for ILO's delivery, adaptation, and impact on its constituents and other agencies. With the assistance of DANIDA, the ILO has since launched two major programmes: the Inter-regional Programme to Support Self-Reliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples through Cooperatives and Self-Help Organizations (INDISCO) in 1993,²³⁵ and the Programme to Promote ILO Convention No. 169 (PRO169) in 1996.

PRO169 is a technical cooperation programme to promote and implement the right of ITPs on a global scale, as well as to improve their socio-economic situation in compliance with the principles of C169. Its current activities cover 22 countries (11 in Latin America, six in Asia and five in Africa). Most activities supported through PRO169 include a strong element of information dissemination, training and capacity building. The Programme has developed a number of initiatives to address the information, training and capacity-building needs of several very different target groups ranging from national governments and social partners to indigenous fellows and interns. The strategy covers different levels of intervention (community, local, national, regional and international) as well as a diverse target group, which necessitates a variety of entry points, modalities, tools and languages.

PRO169 also conducts work on the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) to document ITPs' own perception of poverty and ensure ITPs' participation in the PRSP process to assist in having their needs, priorities and rights taken into account. Poverty reduction remains a crucial concern for the approximately 350 million ITPs worldwide. While they make up only 5 percent of the population, they constitute 15 percent of those living in poverty. Most recently the ILO published a *Practice Guide for Including Indigenous Peoples in Poverty Reduction Strategies* (2008), providing good practices and operational recommendations for a rights-based approach to addressing the multiple facets of poverty as perceived by ITPs themselves.

²³⁵ ILO Programme: 1993-1999 (Phase I); 2000-2003 (Phase II).

III.1.2.6. Local Economic Development

The emergence of Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives in the 1990s is a notable exception to an otherwise steady decline in the ILO's rural work. Although not conceived specifically for rural contexts, LED's emphasis on developing strategies for geographical areas, taking into account their specific opportunities and challenges, and on having local private and public stakeholders jointly define strategies and implementation modalities in a broadly representative forum, makes it particularly suitable for rural areas (see Approach on LED, Annex 4).

The ILO developed its LED approach in the inter-agency programme PRODERE (1990-95)²³⁶ to support peace-building in Central America through local development based on participation and consensus of local stakeholders achieved within Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs)²³⁷. The local development strategies they developed swiftly and effectively addressed local needs in terms of business development, jobs, reconciliation and community building in an integrated way. The success of LEDAs can be gauged by their continued presence and operation.²³⁸

The LED approach was used in other peace-building processes, such as in Cambodia in the mid-late '90s, where it combined employment intensive works, enterprise development and skills development. The achievements of the approach facilitated its spread among a variety of settings.

III.1.2.7. Occupational Safety and Health and Working Conditions

The decade started with the ILO adopting the Safety in the Use of Chemicals at Work Convention, 1990 (No. 177), aimed at reducing illness and injuries at work linked to the widespread use of chemicals in agriculture. Pesticides alone were thought to be poisoning some two million persons annually, of which about 40,000 were fatal.²³⁹ This was followed by the publication in 1991 of a

²³⁶ PRODERE, the Development Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees in Central America, was a multi-disciplinary UN programme (involving ILO, UNDP/UNOPS, UNHCR and PAHO) for displaced persons, refugees and returnees in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Belize.

²³⁷ Today the local forum can take many institutional forms: steering-committee, ad-hoc consultation group, association etc.

²³⁸ IDEASS, *Local Economic Development Agencies for Governance and Internationalization of Local Economies, and Human Development*. (Rome: IDEASS, 2009). See also UNDP, ILO, UNOPS, EURADA, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: *Local Economic Development Agencies: International Cooperation for Human Development, Economic Democracy and Poverty Reduction*. 2000.

²³⁹ ILO, *Safety and health in the use of agrochemicals: a guide* (Geneva, ILO, 1991), preface.

guide on *Safety and health in the use of agrochemicals*, intended as a training aid in the ILO's TC projects to encourage national action and complement the work of other agencies such as FAO, UNEP and WHO on safe working conditions in agriculture.

This work was complemented by support to sectoral work, particularly in agriculture (including plantations) and forestry, for instance in preparing reports on *Occupational Safety and Health in Forestry* (1991), *Wage workers in agriculture: conditions of employment and work* (1996), and *Improving working conditions and increasing profits in Forestry* (1996).

The 1990s also saw the execution of the ILO's first TC project on occupational safety and health in agriculture that operated in Costa Rica and Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Panama from 1993 to 1998. This project tested a model strategy for the development of national policies on the topic in developing countries, comprising a legislative framework and a national policy on occupational safety and health for the sector; a system of classification of agrochemicals; a preventive health surveillance system; national capacity building and supportive mechanisms; a network of information and training on occupational safety and health in agriculture; and an environmental protection approach. The project was also meant to enrich an International Programme on Safety and Health in Agriculture that the ILO also launched in the 1990s.

An ex-post review of the project²⁴⁰ indicates that it achieved development of technical and institutional capacity in governmental institutions, workers' organizations, as well as among agricultural enterprises and self-employed farmers. However, it lacked time to reach policy levels and to have authorities develop the needed legislative framework and national policy and allocate resources to sustain the initiative over time. The review indicated that to achieve policy impact and sustainability the project should have lasted around 10 years. Internationally, the project made important contributions to the formulation of the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No.184), and to its follow up, such as the elaboration and use of a guide for workers' representatives on the implementation of that Convention. However, the international Programme on Safety and Health in Agriculture disappeared shortly after as the official in charge of it was assigned to other duties.

The WIND methodology launched in 1995 in Vietnam is another valuable exception in the midst of the ILO's declining attention to rural areas. WIND is the adaptation to a rural context of the WISE

²⁴⁰ Dagoberto Rojas Quesada, *Informe de la investigación realizada para determinar el impacto post-ejecución del proyecto « Promoción de la Seguridad y Salud del Trabajo en la Agricultura en América Central »* (ILO: 1998).

approach first launched in 1988 to reduce workplace hazards by helping small businesses develop safer and healthier working conditions in a cost-effective manner. WIND is unique because it improves both working and living conditions in low-cost ways, through the use of local capacities and building on existing mechanisms. It also ensures joint involvement of village men and women in planning and implementation and fits broader plans of the community for development and empowerment (see WISE and WIND Approaches, Appendix 4).

III.1.2.8. Social protection

Another welcome exception to the ILO's reduced activity in rural areas was the launching of the STEP programme in 1998, to fight poverty and social exclusion through the extension of social protection and health insurance to unprotected men and women workers in the rural and informal economies. STEP, directly derived from the ACOPAM initiative, provided technical assistance, experience and training to various mutual health organizations on issues such as feasibility, management, follow-up, monitoring, coverage, health packages, law and linkages with national institutions. In the Philippines for instance, it improved the management and services of Health Micro-Insurance Schemes (HMIS) through training at local and national levels and community surveys to assess social protection needs of target communities. It achieved better response to gender issues such as maternity benefits and preventative health care (including on HIV/AIDS); increased awareness/capacity of local and national government officials on HMIS benefits; and developed and disseminated knowledge on HMIS contribution to poverty reduction and local economic and social development.²⁴¹ By the early 2000s STEP had reached over 40 countries of West and Lusophone Africa, Latin America, South Asia, and Europe.

III.1.2.9. Women

By the mid-'90s work on rural women had slowed considerably, especially once EMP/RU's Programme on Rural Women was discontinued. By 1991 the Director-General's annual activity report had stopped making specific references to rural women, including them instead with women informal

²⁴¹ ILO project: "Extending Social Protection through Health Micro-Insurance Schemes for Women in the Informal Economy – Philippines" Final Report for January 2003 - March 2005 (ILO: Geneva, 2005)

sector workers.²⁴² By 1995 rural women were no longer targeted with special initiatives, but were included as a category of beneficiaries of larger efforts such as ACOPAM or INDISCO.²⁴³

One notable exception at the time was a series of projects entitled “Workers’ Education for Women Members of Rural Workers Organizations” launched in Africa, Asia, and Latin America by EDUC just prior to its termination in the mid-‘90s, with funding mainly from Scandinavian countries. The projects, conducted in partnership with international unions such as the IUF, and national, local unions, were culturally and gender-sensitive, with much attention on the effectiveness of educational materials, which were specifically adapted for each country or situation. They aimed to assist rural workers (particularly women) to develop and manage their own organizations, while also helping set up schemes for developing special services to improve their capacity to participate in rural and national development. While exact figures are not available, it seems that these projects have had highly positive effects that continue to be felt today. They include the institutionalization of women’s posts and committees in their unions (to the extent that some unions changed their constitutions to provide permanent positions for women in their executive committees); an increase in the number of women office bearers within their organizations; an increase in the confidence of women members; and an increase in the number of women activists in unions.²⁴⁴

In the early ‘90s women’s issues were re-labeled as “gender issues”. Nevertheless work on women and rural women continued through the years with a number of TC projects and some research work. It included technical workshops on self-employment, schemes for rural women in South Africa, evaluator mission to Egypt, Zimbabwe, and advisory missions to Bangladesh and Ghana for example. The establishment of a Bureau for Gender Equality in 1999 helped to further incorporate the gender dimension in ILO work.

²⁴² ILO, *Report of the Director-General – Activities of the ILO, 1992*. International Labour Conference, 80th session. Geneva: ILO, 1993.

²⁴³ ILO, *Report of the Director-General – Activities of the ILO, 1994-95*. International Labour Conference, 83rd session. Geneva: ILO, 1996.

²⁴⁴ Sue Longley, Interview, March 2010; and documents from the ILO project: “Women’s Education for Women Members of Rural Workers’ Organizations in Asia” (Phase II started in 1984)

III.1.2.10. Youth

Youth gained increased attention in the mid-‘90s as the ILO’s strategy shifted from the predominantly labour supply-side focus of the ‘70s and ‘80s (i.e. training and education) to include labour demand issues in the ‘90s. Consequently, an “Action Programme on Youth Unemployment” was initiated in 1996-1997 to increase awareness about problems faced by young workers entering the labour market; promote and better grasp labour market policies and programmes for youth; and improve Member State’s capacity to design and implement youth employment policies and programmes. The Programme did not specifically target rural youth, but called for a, “... comprehensive analysis of the measures that have been implemented in the various countries, based on a series of national assessments and practical evaluations”,²⁴⁵ including rural initiatives, provided the country had any. While the programme had genuine intentions, not all objectives were met. Several comparative reports on policy experience were produced, particularly on employment and training policies for youth entering the labour force; education, employment, and training policies and programmes for disabled youth; and minimum wage and youth unemployment; but these reports fell short of really addressing the situation of rural youth as they were based on the responses of a few industrialized, transitional, and developed countries.

In 1998-99 an Action Programme, “Strategies to Combat Youth Marginalization and Unemployment” was set up to develop, “... a coherent and systematic method of intervention that can be adapted to national situations and integrated into employment policies with a view to combating youth unemployment and exclusion.”²⁴⁶ In this case differentiation between rural and urban was made clearer, with documents making special mention of the differences and challenges faced by rural youth versus their urban counterparts in finding gainful employment. It formulated several strategy documents assessing the different types of policies and programmes existing in rural and urban areas of developed and developing countries, and outlining policies accordingly. However it is difficult to ascertain as to what extent policies were implemented, as well as their success, for lack of follow-up documents.

²⁴⁵ ILO, Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1996-1997. Governing Body, 264th Session, Programme, Financial, and Administrative Committee (Geneva: ILO, 1995), Labour Market Policies (Major Programme 60), Action Programme on Youth Unemployment (§60.40)

²⁴⁶ ILO, *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1998-1999*. International Labour Conference, 85th Session (Geneva: ILO, 1997), Development Policies (Major Programme 125), Action Programme on Strategies to combat youth marginalization and unemployment (§125.12).

In 1998, the ILC adopted the Resolution Concerning Youth Employment that boosted the topic of youth employment throughout the ILO. However, it failed to make specific mention of rural youth, using instead the broader term of “disadvantaged categories of youth.” In spite of this oversight it prompted a tripartite inter-regional symposium in Geneva the following year, to discuss strategies for combating youth marginalization and unemployment.²⁴⁷ The symposium revealed an alarming trend that *underemployment* among rural youth was a major contributing factor to the high rates of *unemployment* among urban youth. It noted that, “[i]t will be hard to solve the problem of urban youth unemployment as this is likely to induce a flow to the cities from the land in countries where the reserve of rural youth labour force is large. Programmes need to be developed to slow the flow from the land and deal with the underemployment of the young in rural areas”.²⁴⁸ The finding was a wake-up call to countries to re-evaluate their strategies on combating youth unemployment in urban areas if there are as many (or more) under-employed youth in rural areas. Subsequently, research has gone on to demonstrate that under-employment and poverty in agriculture and other subsistence activities in rural areas tend to prompt internal and international migration.

While the ILO’s rural work was no longer a priority and slowed markedly in the 1990s, it did not come to a complete halt, which allowed for the topic to be picked up again in the next decade when international attention gradually shifted back to rural areas.

III.2. Rediscovery of rural contexts in the 2000s, with a Decent Work perspective

III.2.1. Strong “drives” towards rural work

The decade of the 2000s has witnessed a gradual revival in rural issues in the international development agenda, with a steady acceleration since 2007. Commercial agriculture, industrialization, globalization and free trade, which were viewed in the 1990s as engines of development, failed to deliver in terms of growth; but more importantly in terms of employment creation and poverty reduction. Pockets of poverty and even extreme poverty persist, increasingly concentrated in rural areas, with no signs of relief.

²⁴⁷ International Symposium on Strategies to Combat Youth Unemployment and Marginalization, Geneva, 13-14 December 1999.

²⁴⁸ ILO, *Employing Youth: Promoting Employment-Intensive Growth*, Report for the Interregional Symposium on Strategies to Combat Youth Unemployment and Marginalization (Geneva: ILO, 2000), 35.

This trend was apparent by the mid-1990s. The 1995 World Summit for Social Development, in which the ILO played a leading role, may be viewed as a precursor to the rediscovery of the rural dimension, with its Plan of Action calling for measures to tackle poverty by means of special focus on rural areas.²⁴⁹ The need for a renewed rural focus was again voiced a year later at the World Food Summit and the Meeting of the ACC Subcommittee on Rural Development (discussed later).

The MDGs (2000) constitute the first universal indication of renewed commitment to rural areas and populations and indirectly revive the ILO's mandate on this issue. The first MDG in particular, which calls for the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, provides a major entry point for the ILO's involvement in rural issues, particularly after the addition in 2008 of Target 1B aimed at "Achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people".²⁵⁰ In 2003, the Economic and Social Council considered the theme "Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development",²⁵¹ and the 2005 World Summit for Social Development reaffirmed that, "...rural and agricultural development must be adequately and urgently addressed and [...] should be an integral part of national and international development policies,"²⁵² linking it to poverty eradication and the achievement of the MDGs; and urging that UN member countries, "...resolve to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all including for women and young people, essential objectives of our relevant national and international policies as well as our national development strategies....".²⁵³ More recently, in 2009, the UN CEB High Level Committee on Programmes successfully proposed to integrate rural employment into the draft plan of action for poverty eradication as a means to operationalize the General Assembly's Resolution 63/230 (19 Dec 2008) on the Second Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) that set "Full employment and decent work for all" as a theme for that Decade.²⁵⁴ These actions all confirm the ILO's mandate on rural issues and represent urgent calls for ILO action.

²⁴⁹ UN, *Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development* (Denmark: UN, 1995). Available at http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/wssd/pgme_action.html accessed on 25th Feb. 2011

²⁵⁰ UN, United Nations Millennium Goals Website at: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml> accessed on 25th Feb. 2011.

²⁵¹ The theme was discussed by the High-level segment of the 2003 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. UN ECOSOC, *Promoting an Integrated Approach to Rural Development in Developing Countries for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development*, Report of the Secretary-General, Substantive Section 2003, Item 2 (UN Geneva, 2003) .

²⁵² UN, *Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly. 60/1. 2005 World Summit Outcome* (New York: UN, 2005), § 46.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, § 47.

²⁵⁴ UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination, *Report of the High-level Committee on Programmes on its Eighteenth Session*, 17 and 18 September 2009, New York (New York: UN, 20 October 2009), 12-13.

Within the ILO rural employment also appears in the Report to the ESP of March 2004 on *Productive employment for poverty reduction and development* (core element 10 of the Global Employment Agenda), that sets as major goals, “to increase incomes, productivity and labour absorption in farm and non-farm sectors”, by improving “...access to productive assets and finance... the price structure, introducing yield-raising technology, marketing facilities, levels of skills, and strengthening the bargaining power of workers as well as small producers.”²⁵⁵ The ILO received strong support from all three constituents to work on these challenges.

Support is also present in the form of the ILO’s Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, whose “vision of globalization is anchored at the local level,”²⁵⁶ and calls to expand employment opportunities and raise productivity for the poor, with special reference to agriculture, women and the informal sector. Vital consideration is given to social protection schemes aimed at reaching rural economies. These considerations also feature in a central chapter of the ILO’s 2004-05 *World Employment Report*.²⁵⁷

Discussions around 2005 among the ILO’s Employment Sector management on the need to fight poverty through development and decent work in rural areas were met with resounding support from within the Office, and were echoed by the Employers and Workers alike. This led to the proposal of “Promotion of rural employment for poverty reduction” to the March 2006 Governing Body²⁵⁸ as a topic for the 2008 ILC. The proposal was met with support from both social partners and Member States (individually as well as in their regional blocs). The Conclusions of the ILC 2008 Committee on Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction, which constitute the foundations for the ILO’s future work and their follow up, are examined in greater detail in part IV of this Review.

In the late-2000s, the food security and the global financial and economic crises further boosted interest in rural development (discussed in section IV.1.3).

²⁵⁵ ILO, *Productive Employment for Poverty Reduction and Development*. Governing Body 289th Session, Committee on Employment and Social Policy, Second Item on the Agenda (Geneva: ILO, March 2004), 5.

²⁵⁶ ILO, *World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization: A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All* (Geneva: ILO, 2005), 67.

²⁵⁷ ILO: *World Employment Report 2004-05: Employment, Productivity and Poverty Reduction* (Geneva: ILO, 2004), chapter 3: “Why agriculture still matters.”

²⁵⁸ ILO, *Agenda of the 97th Session (2008) of the ILC*. Governing Body, 295th session (Geneva: ILO, March 2006).

III.2.2. Work on priority technical areas and focus groups

Work of the ILO technical departments gradually reflected the Office's renewed mandate and keenness towards rural areas. The level of activity increased following the debates of the Committee on Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction's at the ILC 2008, particularly after the publication of its Plan of Action for the Office. Once again some programmes and Units stand out in their response.

III.2.2.1. Employment-intensive approach

The food security and economic crises, as well as growing environmental concerns, have renewed interest in labour-intensive public works to provide quality local, green jobs. Since 2000, the ILO has been working to promote employment-intensive investment in 52 countries throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as in the Middle East (Iraq), and Central Asia (Azerbaijan).²⁵⁹ Over the past decade the EII approach has been credited with creating over 1 million direct jobs and an estimated 2 million indirect jobs in investment programmes in which the EIIP has been directly involved through demonstration and capacity-building activities.²⁶⁰ The employment-intensive approach has proven ideal for rural development, for instance in Madagascar (see Box page 105), as it is designed to maximize use of locally available resources and minimize foreign inputs making it 30 to 80 percent less costly while creating 2.5 times more jobs, doubling national income and household consumption, and saving over 30 percent of foreign currency requirements²⁶¹ (see the EIIP Approach, Appendix 4).

²⁵⁹ ILO, *Independent Evaluation of the ILO's Strategy for Employment-Intensive Investment (EIIS)*. Governing Body, Programming, Financial, and Administrative Committee (Geneva: ILO, November 2006), 4. See also "Employment Intensive Investment Programme – Countries Covered," Available at, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/recon/eiip/countries/index.htm> accessed 25th Feb. 2011

²⁶⁰ Riswanul Islam, "Decent Employment through Labour-Based Technology in Infrastructure," ACC Network on Rural Development and Food Security, Available at: <http://www.rdfs.net/oldsite/en/themes/Employ-e.htm>, accessed on 13th Dec. 2010.

²⁶¹ ²⁶¹ ILO, "Employment and Investment Policies," Employment Intensive Investment Programme. Available at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/recon/eiip/areas/policies.htm> accessed 25th Feb. 2011

Box 1

Example: Long-term Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) involvement in Madagascar

ILO supported the Government of Madagascar in implementing a range of EIIPs in rural settings over the last 20 years. A variety of sectoral infrastructure works providing basic services to rural and urban communities (rural road construction and maintenance, irrigation canals, school buildings and other economic and social facilities at villages and communal level) lend themselves well to employment generation and also promote growth through the productive use of these assets (e.g. better marketing of farm produce thanks to new roads). From 1995 to 2005, the share of public investment using labour based technologies in local development infrastructure increased from 5 to 15 percent.

These programmes have promoted private sector implementation of public works, and a wider local-resource based approach promoted and supported by the EIIP training Centre set up in Australia.

This training Centre, made fully operational with a core group of professional trainers, has been the central element to arriving at a countrywide application of the EIIP approach. Many donor-funded projects, central and decentralized structures can now contract qualified SMEs, consulting engineers and technical staff as well as local organizations all trained by the Training centre. In 2005, the CFHIMO became financially independent, a major achievement in aid-supported programmes. Although the centre will continue to receive technical support from the ILO, the main challenge has been met to establish it as a “reference centre” on issues such as quality, costs, contract management, employment and conditions of work for both private sector (SME and engineering consultants, local organizations...), communal and community-based works of public interest. In this way the Centre has also contributed to reinforcing good governance through improved contract management.

The success of EIIP, particularly the high quality of work by contractors trained in the EIIP Training Centre, has resulted in requests by the government for additional ILO advice and support for capacity building to implement programs using a similar LB approach, standards, and implementation and training strategies, sponsored by a variety of donors.

A well documented 2007 comparative impact study of the experience in Madagascar shows that the overall impact of investments in rural roads on employment and income is 2.3 times higher with the labour-based (LB) option than with the capital intensive option, and savings in foreign exchange are 30 percent higher.¹ Concerning primary schools, the unit construction cost per square meter using local materials is 42 percent lower than prefabricated schools built with substantial imported materials, while the direct employment effect is 54 percent higher. Direct and indirect employment/income is nearly three times higher than in prefabricated construction and foreign exchange savings are considerable.² The study reveals further impact as public spending, for 2005, on infrastructure using the LB approach resulted in twice the increase in added value, twice the increase in household consumption and income, and twice the number of jobs created, in comparison with capital intensive works.

It is worth noting that the advantages of the LB approach are mainly due to the inter-sectoral links created before and after implementation of works. Overall, two thirds of the positive impact on employment, added value, household income and consumption is due to indirect effects and one third to direct effects of construction itself. LB approaches, based on an optimum use of locally available resources, favour the local market and contribute greatly, via distributed revenue, to a higher level of monetisation of the rural economy.

Based on these experiences, the government with ILO support (mainly funded by Norway) has also developed methodologies and macro-economic models for evaluating actual and potential impact of sectoral infrastructure investments on employment creation. Before the political crisis, Madagascar’s Ministry of Planning was working on linking these methodologies to the planning and programming of resource allocations for public investment, involving joint programming between the Ministry of Planning and the different technical ministries responsible for implementing the public investment budget. The objective was to upscale this LB-based approach with a view to achieve *structural* changes in the economy. This upscaling requires three conditions: 1) a critical mass of trained small- and medium- size enterprises throughout the whole country providing quality work; 2) access facilitated for local companies to procure contracts, adapting contractual procedures to the capacity and constraints of these businesses; and 3) taking into account, when planning and programming works, different options for the execution of infrastructure projects.

¹ Eric Norbert Ramilison et Jean Gabriel Randrianarison, *Cadrage Macro-économique et Potentiel des Approches Fondées sur l’emploi et les Ressources Locales* (Genève: OIT, 2007).

² Marc Van Imschoot, *Etude Comparative des Différentes Approches Utilisée pour la Réalisation des Infrastructures de base à Madagascar: Impact sur la Création d’emplois et l’utilisation de Devises* (Genève: OIT, 2007).

III.2.2.2. Cooperatives

The new millennium also signalled renewed interest in the cooperative approach with the adoption of the ILO's Recommendation on the Promotion of Cooperatives, 2002 (No.193). The Recommendation re-emphasizes the role of cooperatives in job creation, mobilizing resources, generating investment and growth, while ensuring fullest participation from members. Cooperatives are recognized as a form of solidarity that facilitates a more equitable distribution of the benefits of globalization; and specific action is recommended to strengthen them.

The ILO's work continued on a number of initiatives such as COOPREFORM, to set up SYNDICOOP (2004-2006), a poverty alleviation project for unprotected informal economy workers through trade union-cooperative joint action; and COOPAIDS (2004), to meet the needs of cooperative members with HIV/AIDS and their families.

Bolstered by the continued demand for its initiatives the Cooperative Unit took two strategic steps. The first was to use its accumulated experiences to enter a new phase in 2008, one based on a more community-driven approach that places beneficiaries in the "driver's seat," and focuses on strengthening existing cooperatives (and institutions supporting cooperatives) to promote independence and self-sustainability. This trend, exemplified by the COOP^{AFRICA} programme, sees the ILO playing more of a supportive role, focusing on promoting an enabling legal framework for cooperatives, providing advice, training, funding, establishing local support networks, and Centres of Competence (see Cooperatives Approach, Appendix 4).

The second was to undertake an updating and revision of MATCOM tools, to take account of the new contexts, challenges and opportunities faced by today's cooperatives. A general review of those materials in 2008 confirmed that "MATCOM is an ILO trademark for quality training material in cooperative management [and] certainly the most comprehensive collection of cooperative training materials".²⁶² Accordingly revisions have begun, resulting in the updating of several modules.²⁶³

²⁶² Gabriele Ullrich, *Review of MATCOM Material*, (Geneva: ILO, August 2008), Unpublished, 25.

²⁶³ Discussions on MATCOM the following year between ILO officials from HQ and ITC-Turin, external specialists, the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and the NGO Agriterro confirmed a broad interest in MATCOM. A MATCOM Revision Meeting in April 2009 also indicated support for starting the revision process and to using partnerships, "...in the revision phase as well as in the implementation strategy for greater ownership, sustainability and outreach".

To complement the strengthening of cooperatives through traditional TC work, the Unit is now providing policy advisory services based on R193 to support the development of strong national legal frameworks for a broad variety of genuine cooperatives. The Unit has thus assisted over 65 countries in the last 15 years with reforming their cooperative policies and laws, such as the *Ley Marco para las cooperativas de America Latina*; the Uniform Cooperative Act for the *Organisation pour l'Harmonisation en Afrique du Droit des Affaires* (OHADA); and has conducted an implementation assessment of the 2003 European Union Regulation on cooperatives in the 27 EU members and three European Economic Area (EEA) countries.

The ILO's heightened emphasis on cooperative policy and legislation is accompanied by its call for political dialogue on the economic and social importance of cooperatives; a request for more and better statistics on cooperatives; and support for cooperative-specific education and training, especially in schools, which all contribute to the active promotion of cooperatives as a profitable, sustainable enterprise.

III.2.2.3. Entrepreneurship and Enterprises

Employment and entrepreneurship remain a primary rural work area for the ILO. In many countries, small but productive enterprises, including cooperatives, often provide a means to diversify, modernize and promote employment-intensive rural economic growth. In the 2000s the ILO continued disseminating a large number of approaches and good practice in the areas of entrepreneurship promotion, business management training for small entrepreneurs, local economic development, cooperatives, small enterprise access to financing, and public and private infrastructure investment tenders. Nearly half of the ILO TC projects operating in rural areas in that decade contain one or more enterprise dimensions, including micro-finance. It also developed new tools to support small enterprises and employers' organizations, as well as women and youth entrepreneurs, such as KAB and Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE).

In 2007, the ILC discussion on the promotion of sustainable enterprises emphasized the importance of rural development,²⁶⁴ although its conclusions fall short of highlighting the rural dimension of

²⁶⁴ ILO, *The Promotion of Sustainable Enterprises*. Report VI, International Labour Conference, 96th session (Geneva: ILO, 2007), v.

sustainable enterprise promotion.²⁶⁵ The emerging emphasis in the ILO's work on value chains (most of which are in agro-businesses and green jobs where rural areas and activities are both among the main victims of and contributors to environmental degradation and climate change), stepped up work on rural enterprises, through novel dimensions.

III.2.2.4. Local Economic Development

LED-related work accelerated in the first half of the 2000s. Approximately one fifth of ILO TC projects in Africa and Asia featured rural-related interventions among their technical areas. Also ITC-Turin and Headquarters jointly organized numerous courses and other capacity building based on the LED approach.

LED's continued relevance in post-crisis contexts, confirmed by interventions from post-Tsunami Banda Aceh (Indonesia) in the mid-2000s, to post-conflict Liberia and post-earthquake Haiti in late 2000s, made it a privileged instrument in the ILO post-crisis work, leading among others to the development of a specific tool on Local Economic Recovery.²⁶⁶

III.2.2.5. Skills

The important role of skills development for social and economic development and decent work was highlighted in a series of ILO discussions and conclusions, with specific references to rural areas, in particular: the Conclusions concerning human resources development (ILC 2000), Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), the Global Employment Agenda adopted by the Governing Body in March 2003, the conclusions on promoting pathways to decent work for youth (ILC, 2005), the conclusions on the promotion of sustainable enterprises (ILC, 2007), and the Paid Educational Leave Convention, 1974 (No. 140). Although not directly mentioning rural areas, the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration, 1977, as amended in 2000 and 2006) is also relevant with respect to opportunities for training.

²⁶⁵ ILO, *Resolution and Conclusion Concerning the Promotion of Sustainable Enterprises*. International Labour Conference, 96th session (Geneva: ILO, 2007), 94-105.

²⁶⁶ ILO, *Local Economic Recovery in Post-Conflict: Guidelines* (Geneva: ILO, 2010).

The 2000s saw the development of the Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) approach that promotes local economic and employment opportunities for rural people and disadvantaged groups, including women, youth, disabled persons and the poor. It offers training in a wide variety of technical skills as well as complementary skills such as rural project management, home and family improvements, safety and health, and functional literacy (see the TREE Approach, Appendix 4). This methodology builds strongly on its predecessor, CBT, but differs in organizational layout at national and local levels as TREE involves more actors and facilitates post-training support. TREE has been used in African and Asian countries. Its broad participatory approach, coupled with its response to concrete local skill needs has also proved particularly valuable in sensitive areas such as the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan, where in 2002-2007 it provided skills to 3,000 youth, women and disabled persons, over 93% per cent of whom used them to secure livelihoods.²⁶⁷

TREE dissemination accelerated in 2009, through the publication of a manual;²⁶⁸ the launching of a pilot programme in Vietnam in partnership with public and private sector institutions to provide training to the rural poor including on entrepreneurship, and directly contributing to the Ministry of Labour's work to promote economic opportunities for the rural poor; and the launching of a large Danish-funded five-year project, "Skills for Youth Employment and Rural Development in Southern and West Africa", covering Benin, Burkina-Faso and Zimbabwe.

III.2.2.6. Occupational Safety and Health and working conditions

The millennium opened with preparations for the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184) and its related Recommendation (No.192), the first international instrument to address agricultural safety and health hazards in a comprehensive manner. It proposed a framework on which national policies can be developed, together with mechanisms to ensure workers' and employers' participation. It also covers preventative and protective measures, and addresses the specific needs of young workers, temporary and seasonal workers, and of women workers before and after childbirth. While ratifications are still limited, Convention No.184 provides comprehensive guidance to the ILO's member States and social partners working to improve their national laws and practices. It is

²⁶⁷ ILO/USDOL, *Final Evaluation of TREE Project: Pakistan and the Philippines*. Dr. Huxley and Ms. Lazo (Geneva: ILO/USDOL, 2007). See also ILO, *Evaluation of the InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability*. Governing Body, 291st Session, Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee (Geneva: ILO, 2004).

²⁶⁸ ILO, *Rural Skills Training: A Generic Manual on TREE* (Geneva: ILO, 2009).

also an important reference text for voluntary initiatives such as codes of conduct schemes where occupational safety and health often feature prominently.

This were complemented by the issuing of a set of factsheets in 2000 on Safety and health in agriculture, presenting in an accessible way information on occupational hazards in agriculture; legislation on occupational safety and health in the sector; the impact of difficult working conditions on women's health; the ILO's Programme on Occupational Safety and Health in Agriculture; relevant ILO Conventions and Recommendations; and the guiding principles for integrated national policy and programmes of safety and health in the sector.

The adoption of the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No.187) and Recommendation (No.197), while of general application, strengthened the focus on safety and health matters.

Follow up work included the development of practical guidelines, leading among others in 2007 to the publication of a guide on the *Protection of workers from ultraviolet radiation*; and in 2010 to a *Practical manual on ergonomic checkpoints in agriculture* guidelines; and a *Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Agriculture*.

As for the WIND Programme, in the 2000s the ILO facilitated its spread from Vietnam to Cambodia, Korea, Laos, Mongolia, the Philippines and Thailand, followed by countries in Eastern Europe, Africa²⁶⁹ and Central Asia,²⁷⁰ and finally to Latin America.²⁷¹ The potential of this approach however goes well beyond OSH. In Central Asia for instance trade unions and employers' representatives took advantage of the social dialogue created by the approach to address broader issues ranging from access to land and water rights, declining agricultural prices, community-based micro-insurance and micro-finance, unemployment, entrepreneurship training to set up small businesses and income-generating activities, and the organization of cooperatives.²⁷² It also signals potential for broad collaboration ILO-wide²⁷³ (see Box page 119), as well as for external collaboration with FAO, IFAD

²⁶⁹ ILO project : « Améliorer les Conditions de Travail et les Conditions de Vie des Familles et des Enfants dans le Milieu Agricole au Sénégal, Bénin et Mali » (2007-2010).

²⁷⁰ The WIND Programme in Central Asia (2003-2009) covered Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

²⁷¹ Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay.

²⁷² As an anecdote, a small farmer was heard declaring that “This tripartism is for us!”

²⁷³ Particularly, but not only with SIYB, the TREE approach, IPEC, GENDER, and ACTRAV and ACTEMP

and UNDP in particular. The various experiences are well documented, including through videos and a general review in 2010.²⁷⁴

III.2.2.7. Social Security

In 2001, the ILC adopted Conclusions and a Resolution on Social Security that renewed the ILO's commitment to the extension of social security coverage and the improvement of the governance, financing and administration of social security, recommending that each country determine a national strategy for working towards social security for all. It set among ILO work priorities the launching of, "...a major campaign ... to promote the extension of coverage". This Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All took place between 2002 and 2006 and consisted of an interactive internet platform, relying on inputs from ILO specialists and a broad array of partner institutions, including from UN agencies, academic and training centres, NGOs and donors. It also involved knowledge development, technical assistance at country level, advocacy and monitoring and evaluation services.

In the meantime, following up on the recommendations of the 2004 World Commission on Social Dimensions of Globalization,²⁷⁵ the ILO started working on a concept to support social protection systems that would ensure minimum levels of social protection worldwide. The economic crisis revived interest in that fact that some 80 percent of the global population lack basic social guarantees. The concept was highlighted in the ILO's 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and its 2009 Global Jobs Pact. Shortly thereafter, "A Social Protection Floor" was established by the UN CEB as one of nine joint UN priority initiatives, with the ILO and WHO as joint lead agencies and ensuring cooperation from over 15 other UN agencies and the World Bank. Its stated goals, to provide a minimum income and livelihood security, facilitate access to essential social rights, transfers such as to ensure a minimum income security, services such as water, health care, and education, make it particularly relevant to rural areas, even though official texts do not refer to rural populations as a specific target group. Implementation is taking place rapidly, including the development of a manual for country operations, country-level interventions themselves, South-South exchanges, and series of trainings at various levels, including for national social protection planners.

²⁷⁴ Kazutaka Kogi, *International Experiences in Applying WIND* (Geneva: ILO, 2010). Unpublished report.

²⁷⁵ ILO, *A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All*. Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization (Geneva: ILO, 2004), 135-136, 612-622, Annex 1.

III.2.2.8. Standards

In addition to the regular monitoring of convention implementation through the ILO's supervisory system, especially its Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEARC), in 2010 the ILO launched a two-year project to develop a global tool for enhancing the capacity of ILO Constituent to promote freedom of association and collective bargaining in rural areas,²⁷⁶ especially by building on the experience of recent courses at ITC-Turin courses on that subject.

In the related area of labour inspection, which is fundamental to ensure the enforcement of International Labour Standards, to provide technical information and advice to help in implementation, and to ameliorate national legal provisions and regulations accordingly, the ILO considered a plan of action to prompt ratification and effective implementation of Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) and Labour Inspection (Agriculture) convention, 1969 (No.129).²⁷⁷

The preparation of two ILO capacity building modules on labour inspection in rural areas (one targeting policy makers, the other to be used by labour inspectors) began in mid-2010. They are to provide realistic, cost-effective basic guidance, while taking into account the specific challenges in rural areas as well as existing mechanisms that could be used or adapted to play that role, including workers' and employers' involvement.

III.2.2.9. Workers

Workers' activities targeting rural areas stepped up in the mid-2000s, primarily following the International Workers' Symposium, a biannual event that in 2003 focused on "Decent Work in Agriculture". Among others, it solicited the ILO to "seek additional regular budget resources to strengthen activities on the agricultural sector and establish a focal point dedicated to the agricultural and rural sector".²⁷⁸ A year later the ILO and the IUF produced an agricultural workers manual on

²⁷⁶ ILO project: "Promoting Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining Rights in the Rural and Export Processing Sectors" (2010-2011).

²⁷⁷ ILO, *Ratification and Promotion of Fundamental and Governance ILO Conventions*. Governing Body, 306th Session, Committee on Legal Issues and International Labour Standards (Geneva: ILO, November 2009), Appendix.

²⁷⁸ ILO, *Conclusions to the International Workers' Symposium on Decent Work in Agriculture* (Geneva: ILO, 15-18 September 2003), 4.

health, safety and environment.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, the ILO managed to mainstream agricultural workers into the work of other agencies, particularly through the Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development initiative (2002),²⁸⁰ through policy briefs and brochures presenting the role of agricultural workers and trade unions, decent work and International Labour Standards in sustainable agriculture and rural development.

III.2.2.10. Child Labour

Attention to child labour in rural areas, particularly in agriculture, grew as well, boosted in part by special efforts to ratify and implement the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182) and related Recommendation (No.190). This resulted among others, in time-bound country programmes on the worst forms of child labour in agriculture, and an extensive three-year regional programme (begun in 2002) on prevention, withdrawal and rehabilitation of children engaged in hazardous work in commercial agriculture (COMAGRI) in Kenya, Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The Programme developed and implemented over 40 Action Programmes, and managed to withdraw nearly 15,000 children and prevent nearly 17,000 more from child labour. Its work was based on strong social dialogue and institutional capacity building components.²⁸¹ Trade unions and employers' organization were in many cases protagonists, such as in Tanzania where, together, they pressed for safe working conditions and fair pay for 14-18 year-olds working legally on tea and tobacco farms.

The active involvement of social partners on the issue is also to be noted: both the Employers (ACTEMP) program and the workers program (ACTRAV) focused on child labour in commercial agriculture, through research on child labour in specific sectors, such as horticulture in Moldova, commercial oil, palm and rubber plantations in Ghana, coffee, tea and tobacco commercial farms in Tanzania.²⁸² In the Latin America region, work has been incorporating new aspects of child labour,

²⁷⁹ Peter Hurst and Peter Kirby, *Health, Safety and Environment: A Series of Trade Union Education Manuals for Agricultural Workers* (Geneva: ILO, 2004).

²⁸⁰ SARD is a multi-stakeholder framework established to support transition to people-centered sustainable agriculture and rural development. It is led by civil society and international agencies and facilitated by FAO.

²⁸¹ ILO/USDOL, *Independent Final Evaluation on the Regional Programme on Prevention, Withdrawal and Rehabilitation of Children engaged in Hazardous Work in Commercial Agriculture* (Geneva: ILO/USDOL, 2005).

²⁸² See for example, Tor Mosen, *Bitter Harvest: Child Labour in Agriculture*. ILO Project Developing National and International Trade Union Strategies to Combat Child Labour. Bureau for Workers' Activities (Geneva: ILO, 2002).

particularly those related to migration and indigenous populations.²⁸³ Child labour is also being addressed through social initiatives such as conditional cash transfer programmes. In Mexico and Brazil, for instance, such programmes offer financial support to families, conditional on school attendance, the use of preventive health services and nutrition to prevent the need for child labour.

Capacity building experienced a similar boost, through guidance materials²⁸⁴ and a course on tackling the worst forms of child labour in agriculture, which featured regularly among ITC-Turin courses since 2007.

The need to reach children in rural areas more quickly and effectively prompted the ILO to seek partnerships with other agencies. This led in particular to a declaration of Intent on Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture between the ILO, FAO, IFAD, IFPRI/CGIAR, IFAP, and IUF, signed on 12 June 2007,²⁸⁵ targeting plantation workers, small farmers, and children in supply chains that resulted in the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture,²⁸⁶ officially launched on World Day against Child Labour 2007, dedicated to agriculture. Concrete joint initiatives began with an FAO-ILO workshop on child labour in fisheries and aquaculture (Rome, April 2010); collaboration to issue a Partnership statement for The Hague Global Child Labour Conference (May 2010); and country-level interventions starting in Malawi to support inclusion of agriculture in child labour national action plans; and a forthcoming handbook for mainstreaming child labour in agriculture in partner agencies and other relevant institutions.

²⁸³ See ILO, *Action Against Child Labour 2008-2009: IPEC Progress and Future Priorities*. ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (Geneva: ILO, 2010); In 2010 a new project in Mexico, entitled “Stop Child Labour in Agriculture” contributes to the prevention and elimination of child labour in the agricultural sector, with a special focus on indigenous children and child labour as a result of internal migration.

²⁸⁴ In particular, ILO, *Training Resource Pack on Child Labour in Agriculture*. ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (Geneva: ILO, 2005); and ILO, *Tackling Hazardous Child Labour in Agriculture: Guidance on Policy Making and Practice*. ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (Geneva: ILO, 2006).

²⁸⁵ The partnership includes the ILO; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR); the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP); and the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations (IUF).

²⁸⁶ http://www.ilo.org/ipec/areas/Agriculture/International_Partnership_IPCLA/lang--en/index.htm accessed 15th Nov. 2010.

III.2.2.11. Gender

In the first half of the 2000s work on rural women was also to some extent part of the Gender Promotion Programme (GENPROM) targeting in particular rural women in Africa and Asia. It included a major TC project in Bangladesh, “Women’s Empowerment through Employment and Health”, supported by the United States Department of Labour (USDOL) from 2000-2005. The project consisted of elements promoting employment, social protection as well as fundamental rights for tens of thousands of poor rural women, both self-employed and tea plantation workers.

Efforts to view employment and social protection issues facing women and men through a gender lens resulted in both internal capacity building and outreach to constituents. ITC-Turin has over two decades worth of products to develop and implement gender training programmes for ILO constituents, development agencies, and other stakeholders, which include rural women issues. The ILO has also conducted primary research on a wide variety of gender equality issues with a rural dimension in the world of work.²⁸⁷ A commitment to gender equality by key ILO donors has led to technical cooperation projects and programmes that reach beyond women-specific goals towards an approach that involves implications for both sexes. These efforts were reflected in the Governing Body’s decision on gender mainstreaming in technical cooperation of 2005, which recognized work to extend freedom of association to rural women workers.²⁸⁸

In 2009 the ILC discussed the issue of “Gender equality at the heart of decent work”, offering a timely opportunity to move the discourse to action and guide the Organization’s future aspirations for promoting gender equality, including in rural areas.²⁸⁹ The ensuing ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2010–15 refers to the conclusions of the 2008 ILC Committee on Rural Employment, and calls for governments to strengthen investment in public and community services, including in rural areas, and to enhance rural women’s access to and control of productive resources; for workers’

²⁸⁷ See for instance Martha Fetherolf Loutfi (ed.), *Women, Gender and Work: What is Equality and How Do We Get There?* (Geneva: ILO, 2001).

²⁸⁸ ILO, *Thematic Evaluation Report: Gender Issues in Technical Cooperation*. Governing Body, 292nd Session, Committee on Technical Cooperation (Geneva: ILO, March 2005), § 46. See also ILO, *Minutes of the 292nd Session of the Governing Body*. Governing Body, 292nd session (Geneva: ILO, March 2005), §. 223.

²⁸⁹ ILO, *Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work*. International Labour Conference, 98th session, Report of the Committee on Gender Equality, Sixth Item on the Agenda (Geneva: ILO, 2009), § 18.

organizations to strengthen women's role and representation; and for the ILO to implement targeted interventions in rural areas.²⁹⁰

Realizing the need for integrated approaches to develop and effectively use women's rural potential and aspirations, the ILO joined forces with FAO and IFAD in 2009 to organize a workshop that mobilized ILO officials from a variety of Departments, the field and ITC-Turin, to address the issue. Its rich discussions were followed by the production of a comprehensive analytical publication examining status, trends and gaps in gender work, along with eight policy briefs to guide decision-makers in selected technical areas of intervention.²⁹¹ The workshop itself, its joint preparation and follow-up, was a major stepping stone that opened the door for broader joint initiatives.

²⁹⁰ ILO, *Action Plan for Gender Equality 2010–15; Phase I: Aligned with Programme and Budget 2010–11* (Geneva: ILO, 2010), 9.

²⁹¹ FAO-IFAD-ILO, *Gender Dimensions of Agriculture and Rural Employment: Differentiated Pathways Out of Poverty*. Papers presented at the FAO-IFAD-ILO Workshop on Gaps, trends and current research in gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment: differentiated pathways out of poverty, Rome, 31 March - 2 April 2009 (Rome: FAO, 2010). The eight policy briefs cover the areas of Gender and decent work, agriculture feminization, women in employment-intensive works, child labour, skills development, entrepreneurship, value chains and migration.

Box 2

Example: Work Improvement in Neighborhood Development Programmes in Central Asia

The **Kyrgyzstan** WIND Programme supported by the ILO has been operating since 2004 to introduce occupational health and safety conditions in rural areas. The initial objective was to spread knowledge of OSH and means of protection to farmers, but its success rapidly prompted the Kyrgyz government to set up OSH structures and dedicate resources at national, regional, and local levels. The Programme is led by the Agro-Industrial Complex Trade Union, with tripartite support country-wide. Its first phase (2004-06) focused on translating the WIND manual piloted in Vietnam, into Russian and Kyrgyz while adapting it to national and local context specificities; training 122 trainers, among which were trade union and labour inspection activists, and having them transmit their knowledge through seminars to all 460 municipalities reaching 12,000 farmers. This work led to the inclusion of the WIND approach in the government's "Programme on Improving Protection, Safety and Working Conditions in Agriculture" in 2007-2009.

The second phase (2007-09) saw the development of a manual on OSH in the use of agrochemicals; the training of 109 trainers among the Ministry of Agriculture's specialists in veterinary medicine and agrochemicals; organizing 358 seminars at municipality level and reaching over 10,000 farmers on WIND, safe work with agrochemicals and on brucellosis prevention. The Ministry of Agriculture set up a unified vertical three-stage OSH system, with OSH and WIND responsible persons at municipal, regional and national levels. It also created a new OSH department and allocated resources for long-term WIND implementation. A third phase is scheduled for 2010 and 2011, to train responsible persons on OSH at the regional and municipal levels.

These achievements encouraged extending the experience to **Tajikistan**. In that case, the National Association of Dekhan Farmers of the Republic of Tajikistan (NADF RT) championed a variant of WIND for honey production aimed at supporting families of migrants, especially women to establish small beekeeping businesses. Supported by the Ministry of Labour and in collaboration with local authorities and the ILO, NADF RT established a Bee-Keepers Support Centre in the Tavildara honey valley in 2006. The center provides vocational training in honey production, including new technologies, training in WIND, OSH and proper labour management combined with SIYB methodology, as well as micro-finance, veterinary and bee-house related carpentry services. In two years, over 20 training workshops in "Beekeeping and entrepreneurship" reached over 1,000 new bee-keepers who increased their annual income by an average of USD 1,000. At a honey festival organized by the Programme in the summer of 2009 the Tajik president called to replicate this example in other regions. That same year, the NADF RT built a second Bee-Keepers Support Centre in another part of the honey valley that is larger and provides additional services such as a packaging machine and accommodation for trainees. It also hopes to ensure uniform packaging and proper quality control of the honey that would help exporting it, namely to the EU, thereby increasing their profit margins.

Important products of those two country programmes include (besides regular and dramatized/theatrical seminars, guidance booklets, posters illustrating WIND messages and other capacity building tools) UN press trips, articles, interviews, sets of photos and videoclips that allow for sharing experiences broadly.

III.2.2.12. Youth

More recently the ILO has been pursuing an increasingly “comprehensive” strategy towards rural youth, addressing in particular labour supply as well as labour demand issues, and including various technical areas and external partnerships. The ILC 2005 generated an important discussion on rural youth employment in rural areas. Its background report was “outspoken” on the rural dimension of youth employment,²⁹² openly stating that rural youth should be at the forefront of interventions aimed at reducing poverty, particularly considering the current large-scale migration of young people to urban areas.²⁹³

The present technical assistance portfolio on youth employment increasingly includes rural areas. While a 2009 evaluation of the YEP could only report limited instances (e.g. in post-tsunami Banda Aceh, Azerbaijan and Mali), initiatives are now multiplying, particularly in collaboration with FAO and other agencies. Thus, within the framework of the MDG Fund initiative sponsored by Spain, the ILO’s programmes for rural youth are now operating in Albania, Honduras, Malawi, Nepal, Tunisia, Serbia and Sudan. They are mainly to provide alternatives to migration and provide jobs for youth as part of post-war peace building. Analytical work is also progressing, such as the FAO-ILO-UNESCO study on youth training and employment opportunities in the rural areas of the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.²⁹⁴ To strengthen rural youth support, in October 2010 the ILO started an IFAD-funded exercise to develop a methodology for reviewing rural strategies and projects targeting rural youth through the “decent work lenses”, to be piloted in Egypt, Madagascar, Nepal, Nicaragua and Senegal.²⁹⁵

²⁹² ILO, *Youth: Pathways to Decent Work*. Report VI, International Labour Conference, 93rd Session (Geneva: ILO, 2005), specifically §§ 127 and 128.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁹⁴ FAO-ILO-UNESCO, *Training and Employment Opportunities to Address Poverty Among Rural Youth* (Bangkok: FAO-ILO-UNESCO, 2009).

²⁹⁵ ILO Project: “Promoting decent and productive employment of young people in rural areas: A review of strategies and programmes” (October 2010 - September 2011)

III.2.2.13. Migrants

The Resolution and Plan of Action on Migrant Workers adopted by the 92nd ILC in 2004 revitalized the ILO's attention to labour migration, including by prioritizing technical cooperation and capacity building. As of 2010, the ILO has some 20 TC projects addressing labour migration across Africa, Asia and the CIS countries. Nearly all of them include components focused on or significantly addressing migration from and/or to rural areas. Notable recent examples include a project funded by Spain in Mali, Mauritania and Senegal that is essentially about arranging and regulating international mobility for rural employment in Spain;²⁹⁶ an EU-supported project in Central Asia supporting the enhancement of legislation, institution building and tripartite cooperation with a focus on rural origin migrants from the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan, as well as rural employment of migrants in agriculture in Kazakhstan;²⁹⁷ and the Africa "MIGSEC" project on extending social security to migrant workers covering 13 countries and the East Africa Community focusing by-and-large on migrants originating from rural areas and employed in rural areas in destination countries.²⁹⁸

III.2.3. Sectoral Activities, ITC-Turin and regional rural focus

III.2.3.1. Sectoral Activities

Significant work on rural areas has also been undertaken within the specific sectors of agriculture (including plantations), forestry, fishing, food and drinks, and tourism. Specific tripartite Sectoral Committees were functioning since the 1930s,²⁹⁹ meeting at various intervals throughout the years. These meetings have served as a forum for exchanging information, for discussing and deliberating on given developments and challenges; for reaching agreements that, while not binding, created and sustained institutional frameworks for future engagement, including suggested sectoral action at national and international levels, while constituting an important network for intra-sectoral international exchanges.

²⁹⁶ ILO project: "Labour migration governance and its link to development" (2009-2013).

²⁹⁷ ILO project: "Regulating labour migration as an instrument of development and regional cooperation in Central Asia" (2007-2011).

²⁹⁸ ILO project: "Improvement of regional and national strategies for the extension of social security coverage of African migrant workers" (2008-2011).

²⁹⁹ Permanent Agricultural Committee (1938-74), Committee on Work on Plantations (1950-95), Committee on forestry and Wood industries (1985-95), Committee on the Conditions of Work in the Fishing Industry (1954-95), Committee on Food and Drink Industries (1984-95), Hotel, Catering and Tourism Committee (1989-1995)

Over the years the ILO's sectoral work and meetings underwent several rounds of reforms in an attempt to adapt their work to the evolving economic, social and technological context.³⁰⁰ A Programme of Industrial Activities was set up in 1970 to give continuity to industrial committees. This Programme evolved into a Sectoral Activities Department (SECTOR) in 1975, that was further strengthened in 1981 to ensure its coordination and control of activities as well as basic resources, and to facilitate arrangements with other departments in the preparation and conduct of sectoral meetings. SECTOR was also to undertake research; provide technical contributions related to specific sectors; collect, analyze and disseminate information; participate in preparatory work on international labour standards; provide technical advisory services; and collaborate with other technical units. The Department thus came to consist of sectoral specialists, as it was asked to do more than organize meetings. Since then it was thus not only responsible for servicing meetings, but became a Department composed of sectoral specialists.

Follow-up to the meetings has been a long-standing concern, acknowledged as crucial to ensure the impact of committees' resolutions and conclusions, and to achieve coherence and programmatic integration among departments. However, there was difficulty in translating those resolutions and conclusions into concrete Programme and Budget proposals in the different ILO technical departments.

The challenge over the years has been to achieve a balanced combination between the multidisciplinary of the sector-specific perspective and the cross-sectoral, and usually less interdisciplinary approach of the ILO's technical Units; and also to ensure linkages, cross-fertilization and synergies between the work of the Sectoral Programme and that of technical Units. At times technical departments resisted direct involvement in preparing and following up on sectoral meetings and workplans. Records indicate that SECTOR was a full and active member of the ICRD, but was less involved in the substantial research and advisory work on agriculture, plantations and land distribution and other rural issues undertaken within the WEP for instance. Nonetheless those records also provide encouraging evidence of SECTOR collaboration, particularly with units dealing with training, industrial relations and labour administration.³⁰¹

³⁰⁰ For a detailed historical review, see Weisband, Edward, *ILO Industrial Committees and sectoral activities*, Sectoral Activities Programme, Working paper, 1996

³⁰¹ See ILO, *Industrial committee-type meetings and implementation of PIACT and the WEC [World Employment Conference] Programme of Action*, Working paper prepared for the Fourth Informal Meeting on Industrial Committee-type Meetings, (ILO: Geneva, November 1977)

In the 1990s there was a call for “unity” by the Director-General. Among others he requested some coherence among department work programmes, and promoted flexible forms of collaboration across the Office such as interdepartmental programmes. SECTOR participated in a number of these programmes, for instance the one on the environment that saw the forestry specialist detached to the ILO Office in Santiago for one year.

An extensive review and evaluation of the Sectoral Activities Programme in 1993-95,³⁰² led the Governing Body to confirm that sectoral tripartite meetings would constitute the basis of ILO’s Programme on Sectoral Activities, but that sectoral committees and their periodic meetings, would be replaced by a single category of meetings decided after tripartite as well as interdepartmental consultations, to ensure that topics reflect constituents’ priorities and are related to the priorities and work programme of the Office. The GB also called for increased emphasis on follow up to the decisions of sectoral meetings, implying a strengthening of cooperation between specialists in SECTOR, and those in technical departments, including in the field.³⁰³

Another review of the Sectoral Activities Programme, in 2002-03, took a step further towards integrating sectoral activities into ILO’s mainstream work by launching Action Programmes targeting specific challenges in a few sectors at a time.³⁰⁴ They included in 2004-05 one on Decent Work in Agriculture, which focused on improving OSH in agriculture through social dialogue in 9 countries at national level through improvements in the legal regulatory and policy framework; enterprise level via large-scale training programmes for safety managers and workers’ safety representatives of agricultural enterprises; and at community level through the WIND methodology. The self evaluation conducted at the end reveals a number of features that contributed to the Programme’s success; in particular, choosing a theme (occupational safety and health) lending itself to collaboration among the social partners and government, the use of pre-existing tripartite structures, the selection of countries based on requests from their constituents, and extensive collaboration between SECTOR’s agriculture specialist and colleagues in all relevant ILO technical and field units.³⁰⁵

³⁰² ILO, *Evaluation of the Sectoral Activities Programme*, March 1994; and ILO, *Report of the Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues*, March 1994.

³⁰³ See ILO document embodying the conclusion of the evaluation exercise: ILO, *Evaluation of the sectoral activities programme*, March-April 1995

³⁰⁴ ILO, *Review of the Sectoral Activities Programme: Towards greater flexibility and impact in 2004-05*, March 2003; and ILO, *Report of the Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues*, March 2003

³⁰⁵ ILO: *Evaluation report: Action Programme on Decent Work in Agriculture*, 2007, Manuscript

Sectoral work has been particularly intense in **agriculture**, the dominant rural sector and one of the most dangerous ones, particularly in developing countries. The Committee of Work on Plantations held 10 sessions between 1950 and 1995, and adopted over 100 conclusions and resolutions on various aspects of working and living conditions in particular. Agriculture tripartite meetings were also held on improving the conditions of employment and work of agricultural wage workers in the context of economic restructuring (1996), and sustainable agriculture in a globalized economy (2000). These were increasingly accompanied by research on select issues such as conditions of employment and work in plantations, with special reference to seasonal workers, women and young workers, and labour relations in plantations and productivity, in the 1980s and 1990s; and in the 2000s, on the expanding flower industry. In recent years, SECTOR increased inputs to other ILO initiatives, such the International Workers' Symposium on Decent Work in Agriculture (2003), and the Trade Union Education Manual for Agricultural Workers on Health, Safety and Environment (2004). It also multiplied "joint ventures" with other ILO units, particularly in the case of the International Labour Conference General Discussion on Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction (2008); the organization of a Tripartite Technical Workshop on the Food Price Crisis and its Impact on Decent Work (2009) and SECTOR's subsequent leadership in ILO's work on the food security crisis; and an ILO Code of Practice on OSH in agriculture, adopted by a Meeting of Experts in 2010.

In **forestry**, work has been fueled by concerns over contract labour, occupational safety and health, ergonomics and working conditions, skills development, and the impact of technological and structural changes. The Forestry and Wood Industries Committee held two sessions between 1985 and 1995; while tripartite sectoral meetings focused on technological change and training in forestry (1991), social and labour issues in the pulp and paper industry (1992), a code of practice on safety and health in forestry work (1997), social and labour dimensions of the forestry and wood industries (2001), and labour inspection in Forestry (2005). National tripartite workshops are also organized to discuss country-specific decent work deficits in forestry and recommend action accordingly, for instance in Malaysia, Indonesia and Peru (2007, 2010, 2011, respectively).

Capacity building has received special attention resulting among others in a *Training manual on fitting the job to forestry workers* (1992), a *Code of practice on occupational safety and health in forestry work* (1998), and *Guidelines for labour inspection in forestry* (2006). It has also entailed active promotion of national codes of forest practices and labour inspection, and national skills testing and certification; and production of technical papers such as *Safety and health in the European forestry sector – the impact of more open market and of increased regulation* (2009).

Collaboration with other parts of ILO has been steady, namely with the Occupational Safety and Health, and Working Conditions Units, and with the Enterprise Department on forestry-related LED and clusters. External collaboration has also been important, namely within the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training, that met every two years from 1954 to 2004.³⁰⁶ The Committee was replaced by a streamlined Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Forestry Experts Network with almost 300 members in 70 countries, to exchange information and promote cooperation among practitioners and institutions working on forestry workforce issues. The ILO has been particularly active, among others issuing its periodic newsletter, “FORWORKNET”.

Given the often challenging working and living conditions of small-scale fishermen and fishing communities, the ILO’s work in **fisheries** has focused on improving labour conditions, particularly as concerns recruitment, minimum age, work agreements, training, systems of remuneration, occupational safety and health, and social security, while taking into account structural and technical changes. Work includes various legal instruments directly related to fishers,³⁰⁷ in addition to general instruments and a number of relevant maritime instruments. The Committee on Conditions of Work in the Fishing Industry met four times between 1954 and 1995. Its 1988 meeting is notable for having discussed systems of remuneration and earnings, occupational adaptation to technical changes in the fishing industry, and the social and economic needs of small-scale fishermen and rural fishing communities, including occupational safety and health. Tripartite meetings subsequently covered the issues of safety and health in the fishing industry (1999), and other expert meetings leading to the consolidation of these standards into the Work in Fishing Convention (No.188) and Recommendation (No. 199), 2007.

The ILO work in fisheries has included close collaboration with the FAO and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), producing among others in the 1990s a *Guidance on fishermen’s training and certification*; a *Code of safety for fishermen and fishing vessels*; and *Voluntary guidelines for the design, construction and equipment of small fishing vessels*, updated respectively in 2001 and 2005. In recent years, the FAO, ILO and IMO have produced additional guidance focusing on safety and health issues on even small vessels (below 12 meters in length and undecked), which are more

³⁰⁶ For details, see Peck, T.J. and Richards, E.G., *The Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training*, ILO Sectoral Activities Working Paper no.220, 2004

³⁰⁷ The minimum Age (fishermen) Convention, 1959 (No.112), the Medical Examination (Fishermen) Convention, 1959 (No.113), the Fishermen’s Articles of Agreement Convention, 1959 (No.114), the Fishermen’s Competency Certificates Convention, 1966 (No.125), the Accommodation of Crews (Fishermen) Convention, 1966 (No.126), the Vocational Training (Fishermen) Recommendation, 1966 (No.126), and the Work in Fishing Convention (No.188) and Recommendation (no.199), 2007

likely to be found in rural areas. Joint UN agency work is particularly important bearing in mind that at national level responsibility for issues related to fishers' working conditions are often spread among several ministries, departments of agencies. Another challenge is the need to extend work to address not only those working on vessels but also those involved in the processing and marketing sub-sectors.

Collaboration within ILO has also been increasing, in training and advisory services for instance, and to support other ILO initiatives such as the 2010 FAO-ILO workshop on child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. It will be important for SECTOR to work closely with ACT/EMP and ACTRAV to strengthen employers' and workers' representative organizations, particularly in rural areas.

Steady growth of the **food and drink** industry since the 1970s in terms of production as well as employment, particularly in developing countries (where until then only a small part of agricultural products were processed), led the ILO to establish a Food and Drink Industries Committee in 1982. Concerns of the sector included dangerous working conditions, gender discrimination, increasing employment flexibility, and adaptation to modern technology, and more recently to value chains and food safety. The **tobacco** industry, experiencing a decline due to increasingly stringent health regulations, was added to the group. Tripartite meetings in the sector focused for instance on technology and employment in the food and drink industries (1998), the future of employment in the tobacco sector (2003), and the impact of global food chains on employment (2007).

Tripartite meeting work has been complemented by research, namely on various forms of employment and on occupational safety and health; and by technical cooperation activities, to deliver training on occupational safety and health in particular. Most recently, the ILO has developed and implemented in Chile and Mexico thus far, a management tool called SIMAPRO (System for the Measurement and Enhancement of Productivity), consisting of a set of training and evaluation guides to promote the application of decent work principles with an important element of social dialogue, and clearly established decent work and productivity goals.

As for rural **tourism**, the ILO's Hotels and Tourism Branch (HOTOURL) was located in the Enterprise Department until the late 1990s. It worked broadly in advisory services and technical cooperation programmes targeting mainly skills development, to match the increasingly diversified and changing needs of the sector, new technology and management techniques; the development of small tourism enterprises, particularly in collaboration with ILO's units on small enterprises (using for instance its SYB and IYB tools) and on cooperatives; and assistance to tourism entrepreneur association in

designing and organizing services such as training, management development and marketing. The ILO also focused on employment and working conditions such as occupational safety and health, wages, working hours, overtime, rest periods and worker-management dialogue, leading among others to the adoption of the Working Conditions of Hotels and Restaurants Convention (No.172) and Recommendation (No.179), 1991.

Since the 1970s-80s, rural, or eco-tourism has been gradually capturing ILO's attention, as more people seek out "alternative" vacation experiences as a result of growing awareness of environmental concerns, different lifestyles and cultures.

Tripartite sectoral meetings were organized on conditions of work, productivity and training for the first (and only) session of the Hotel, Catering and Tourism Committee (1989), on the effects of new technologies on employment and working conditions (1997), and human resource development, employment and globalization (2001). In the 2000s work has included analytical papers on socially responsible human resource and labour relations practices; violence at work; reducing poverty through tourism; and a Guide for social dialogue in the tourism industry. Given the importance of tourism for job creation, development and poverty reduction, particularly in rural areas, the ILO and the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) signed an agreement in 2008. Most recently, the ILO is undertaking a project to develop a toolkit on poverty reduction through tourism in rural areas of Least Developed countries, that will explain the meaning of and steps to set up rural tourism businesses based on decent work.

Through the work of SECTOR, the ILO can nowadays count on a considerable body of knowledge, tools and experience can thus now count on an important capital of expertise and experience in all economic sectors of relevance to rural development. While the centerpiece of ILO's sectoral work remains the cycle of tripartite sectoral meetings, SECTOR's scope of work has been expanding to cover in particular advisory services, technical cooperation, and tools development, as well as collaboration with other parts of the Organization and external partners. The positive results of this joint work are tangible and call for a strengthening of the trend, as well as for ensuring that information about sectoral work is more readily available and better disseminated Organization-wide and externally.

III.2.3.2. Turin Centre

Rural-related activities have featured on the ITC-Turin agenda since its early years. The rural emphasis (in terms of courses fully and explicitly dedicated to rural themes) roughly mirrors trends at Headquarters. The Centre organized over 18 rural courses in the '70s; as many as 57 in the '80s; 39 in the '90s; and 20 in the 2000s. From 1981 to 1993, "Rural Development" constituted one of 8 to 10 ITC Sectors of Activity.

Over the years the topics evolved considerably. The '70s focused on vocational training, management of agricultural enterprises, including those processing agricultural products, rural machines, equipment and technology. The '80s highlighted agricultural cooperatives, agriculture training institutions, conservation, marketing and transportation of agricultural products and agro-industry systems, issues related to energy, water and meteorology, and the management of rural development projects through multidimensional, integrated approaches. In the 1990s courses were more focused on skills and OSH, and the 2000s dealt with freedom of association, child labour, and OSH in agriculture.

The mid-'90s, particularly 1993, constitute the major turning point at ITC-Turin as community development, informal economy and particularly local economic development, started to be combined with rural development activities and then replaced rural issues altogether, particularly on employment-related issues. While these courses directly or indirectly addressed one or a few rural dimensions, they could not address systematically rural areas specificities, or present an overall view of rural areas and provide guidance about approaches and tools to tackle the challenges and potentialities of rural settings.

III.2.3.3. Regional trends

As revealed by the ILO's Regional Conference documents,³⁰⁸ rural work in the ILO's field structure also by and large mirrors the trends at Headquarters, although attention to rural matters is generally higher, particularly in Africa and Asia (see Chart 1 on page 133).

³⁰⁸ ILO Regional Conferences take place every four years.

- Africa

Rural development has been a persistent theme in the Africa Region throughout the last 40 years. It was clearly the main focus of African Regional Conferences in the '70s and '80s, before being merged with informal and/or urban workforce issues in the '90s and 2000s.³⁰⁹ Despite the shift, rural issues have always been regarded as crucial in all reports presented at the events. Most recently it is viewed as an indispensable condition to reaching the MDGs by 2015, as well as for tackling the effects of the ongoing economic crisis. Efforts have consistently focused on international labour standards, employment creation through employment-intensive investment, cooperatives, M/SMEs support, and capacity building of social partners' organizations, and on women and youth; and gradually, less and less on training, labour administration, labour inspection and social security arrangements.

The multiple challenges to rural development have been analyzed in-depth, particularly in the '70s and '80s, coupled with continuously sustained levels of policy advice and TC activities. It is somewhat surprising however, that the high emphasis on rural development in most reports presented to the Regional Conferences, and in discussions at the Conferences themselves, is less well reflected in the conclusions and recommendations, as well as in the plans of action to implement them.

Two recent summits reaffirm Africa's priority commitment to rural development. The first is the African Union Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa, whose Plan of Action features as its second priority, "... promotion of the agricultural sector and rural development, sustainable management of the environment for food security and development of support infrastructure".³¹⁰ More recently, the 1st African Decent Work Symposium, Recovering from the crisis: the implementation of the Global Jobs Pact in Africa, established "Promoting rural employment" as the first of eight key elements in the Roadmap agreed at that meeting, emphasizing a combination of employment intensive infrastructure investment, improved access to finance, support for farmers and rural MSEs, promotion of agro-processing,

³⁰⁹ Apparition of the term informal in 1994, rural systematically attached to informal and/or urban workers from 1999

³¹⁰ African Union, *Plan of Action for Promotion of Employment and Poverty Alleviation*, Assembly of the African Union, Third Extraordinary Session on Employment and Poverty Alleviation. (Ouagadougou: African Union, 8-9 September 2004).

support to member-based organizations (cooperatives, farmers' unions), and decentralized and participatory local governance.³¹¹

- Asia

As with Africa, rural issues have constituted a major component of the ILO agenda in Asia from the '70s to present, albeit with different emphases. In the late '60s and early '70s work focused predominantly on data collection and research to gauge negative employment-related trends in rural areas that were becoming apparent in an age of fast growth. As a result, rural issues climbed to the top of the agenda at both the 1971 and 1975 Asian Regional Conferences, which dedicated full reports to rural issues and peasant populations. The 1975 Conference, which focused on mass poverty alleviation, set rural development at the centre of its strategy and emphasized that the '...attack on mass poverty reveals a drastic shift of emphasis in national development policies towards the rural traditional'.³¹² Building on its previous research the ILO developed and implemented numerous programmes focusing in particular on international labour standards, employment creation through employment-intensive investment, cooperatives, M/SMEs support, promoting cooperatives, and capacity building of social partners' organizations. It also undertook various extensive vocational training programmes that became the backbone of the ILO strategy in the region, many of which targeted specifically women. Furthermore, the Asian Regional Programme for Strengthening Labour and Manpower Administration (ARPLA), supported by the ILO had a branch working to improve the conditions of work and life for rural women involved in agriculture. The ILO's technical cooperation rural programmes were particularly significant in Asia, to the extent that despite financial constraints from a UNDP liquidity crisis and withdrawal of US membership in the late '70s, the ILO managed to mobilize World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) funds, and actually increased investment in those programmes by 83 percent between 1975 and 1979.³¹³

In the late '80s however, emphasis on rural issues waned in Asia too, as evidenced by the fewer rural programmes and decreased attention to the topic in the reports presented at the Regional Conferences. The 1985 Conference in Jakarta, for instance, took a reflective posture evaluating the effectiveness of ongoing rural projects, but prepared an agenda that focused predominantly on urban and informal

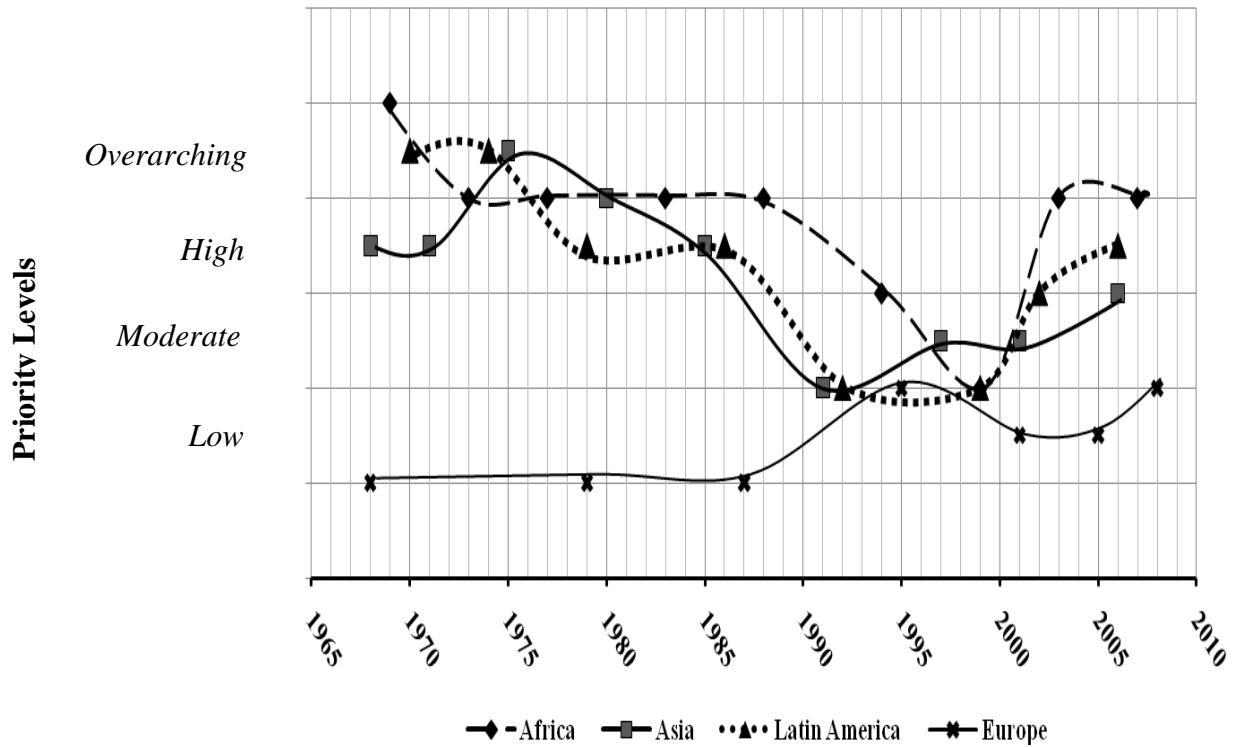
³¹¹ ILO, *A Roadmap for the Implementation of the Global Jobs Pact in Africa*, 1st African Decent Work Symposium, Recovering from the crisis: the implementation of the Global Jobs Pact in Africa (Ouagadougou: ILO, 1-2 December 2009).

³¹² ILO, *The Poor in Asian Development: An ILO Programme*. Report of the Director-General, first item on the agenda. ILO Asian Regional Conference, 8th session (Colombo: ILO, September- October 1975), 57.

³¹³ ILO, *Asian Development in the 1980s: Growth, Employment and Working Conditions*. Report of the Director-General to the Ninth Asian Regional Conference, Report I, Part I (Manila: ILO, 1980), 64.

workforce issues. In the '90s rural issues were sidelined, and they were removed from the agenda altogether following the 1997 Asian financial crisis that pushed the ILO and Asian governments to focus exclusively on fiscal management, macroeconomic development, and extending the ILO Decent Work Agenda. The early 2000s have seen a re-emergence of rural issues, with a fresh focus on extending social protection and OSH standards to rural workers, especially youth and the informal economy, coupled with locally relevant skills development, employment-intensive works, setting up microfinance mechanisms to make credit more accessible to rural populations, strengthening cooperatives and workers organizations.

Chart 1. Priority of Rural Issues in ILO Regional Labour Conferences



<u>Key:</u>	
Overarching:	Rural is the dominant subject of two or more reports and is central to the focus of the Regional Conference.
High:	Rural is the title subject of one or more documents and is an important issue at the Regional Conference
Moderate:	Rural is mentioned as a subsection or chapter within reports on other issues
Low:	Rural mentioned infrequently or not mentioned at all.

Note: The graph above plots the frequency (and hence priority) of rural issues at the ILO Regional Labour Conferences. The “points” on each line correspond to the year a regional conference was held, and the level of importance given to rural issues in documents related to that specific conference.

- Latin America and the Caribbean

The Americas started targeting rural issues in the early '70s, when a global recession created a noticeable rift between a burgeoning modern agricultural sector and an impoverished and stagnant traditional farming sector. As a result, the ILO pushed for land reform and assisted governments to integrate rural development strategies into national legislation.³¹⁴ The ILO also developed and ran numerous local education and training projects across the region.

In the '80s rural development continued to be a major topic, and Regional Conferences stressed how rural development is to be based on a set of coordinated measures, both at the national legislative and local level, to increase production, productivity and incomes in rural areas. However, resistance and slow progress on issues such as land reform and budget cuts as a result of the 1980s worldwide recession led the ILO to shift its work in the Americas from long-term institution building projects to short term consultancies. It focused instead on technical assistance to rural communities through a branch of its CINTERFOR program, and projects aiding cooperatives in 13 countries. In some cases these projects managed to directly influence the formulation of national policies. The focus on rural smallholders that was so present in the '70s did not exist in the '90s as governments focused on SAPs and macroeconomic reform. In the 2000s rural matters again became a topic of interest. Most recently the Region has embarked on employment generation schemes in rural areas to increase smallholders' productivity, ensure their access to land and resources, and develop non-farm industry in rural areas to boost employment opportunities, with indigenous populations and youth as important targets. Its 2006-14 Regional Agenda actually includes "Improving the working conditions and productivity of economic activities taking place in rural areas, including work done by indigenous people".³¹⁵

Regional Conferences show that special attention was paid to ITPs in the Americas, a focus that sets the ILO's work in the Region apart from programmes elsewhere. Pioneering work actually started as early as the '50s, through the Andean Indian Programme (discussed earlier), and continues to this day. More recently, the ILO has been supporting the Andean Women's Workers Coordinating Committee

³¹⁴ ILO's steadfast pressure to push forward agrarian reform stemmed from the findings of a 1973 FAO study that found 70 percent of the agricultural population owning 2.5 per cent of the cultivated land while 2% per cent owned 47 percent of cultivated areas. ILO: *Rural development: Taking into account the problems of the indigenous populations as well as the drift of the rural population to the cities and its integration in the urban informal sector*. Twelfth Conference of American States, Report II (Montreal: ILO, March 1986), 16.

³¹⁵ OIT, *Trabajo Decente en las Américas: una Agenda Gemisférica, 2006-15*. XVI Reunión Regional Americana (Brasilia: OIT, mayo de 2006), section 4.2.6.

(COMUANDE)³¹⁶ and the Andean Consultative Labour Committee (CCLA)³¹⁷ to raise awareness about the ILO fundamental Conventions among indigenous rural workers, as well as to help improve working conditions by strengthening rural workers' organizations and their bargaining capacity in national decision making bodies. The ILO has also been supporting "Redturs", a programme to foster new tourism opportunities and jobs to indigenous communities, in which these communities have the decision-making power to plan, operate and monitor tourism initiatives on their land (see Box 3 on the Redturs example, page 127).

- Europe

Rural development does not appear as a priority on the ILO agenda in Europe and Central Asia, which focuses instead on challenges linked to industrialization and technological change. Agriculture and rural areas were largely viewed throughout the '70s and '80s as the source of manpower to be used in industry and services. National progress was measured by the very transition of populations from agriculture to industrial centres. In the '90s, as new States that were primarily agrarian economies emerged from the dismantling of the Soviet Union, attention to rural issues increased somewhat, especially in Central Asia. Recently, the ILO's rural work in the Region has focused on child labour, human trafficking, and dangerous work, resulting in the effective dissemination of the WIND approach (see Box 2 on the WIND in Central Asia example, page 119).

³¹⁶ In Spanish, Coordinación de Mujeres Trabajadores Andinas.

³¹⁷ In Spanish, Consejo Consultivo Laboral Andino.

Box 3

Example: REDTURS – Tourism in indigenous rural communities

Redturs is a pioneering network of Latin American indigenous rural communities aimed at harnessing opportunities of global tourism and based on the inclusion and sovereignty of those communities in decisions regarding the nature, extent, speed and other modalities of tourism in their areas. Launched in 2000, initiatives are underway in 14 countries.¹ The ILO supports works with Redturs to improve business opportunities, rural employment and living conditions among indigenous communities.

Its members explain that, *‘We are aware that tourism can be a source of opportunities, as well as a threat to the social cohesion of our communities, their culture and natural habitat. We are thus encouraging self-management of tourism so that our communities can assume the leadership in its planning, operation, monitoring and development’.*²

Redturs supports the ILO Convention of the Fundamental Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, 1989 (No. 169). It also parallels the goals of rural employment, sustainable livelihoods, poverty alleviation, gender equality and sustainable environmental development.

The ILO’s support targets business development services, including training and marketing, and promoted information and communication technologies to facilitate information and knowledge sharing between the fourteen Redturs members, that is an important part of Redturs; and to increase access by the international community, particularly Europe, to its tourist markets. Among others, it helped develop Redturs’s ‘Portal of Living Cultures’, a tourist search engine promoting over 200 community tourist destinations.

National and regional meetings are held frequently, and help develop methodologies to assess community experiences, guidelines for Codes of Conduct, and led in 2003 to a framework for action titled, *Otavalo Declaration on Sustainable and Competitive Community Based Tourism with Cultural Identity*. More recently, Redturs members have emphasized the need for governments to set up policies providing an enabling environment for tourism development, leading to increasing national tourism policies and strategies.

Redturs demonstrates the capacity to combine innovative, productive rural economic initiatives that seize the opportunities of modern society; maintenance of the cultural heritage of indigenous populations and communities; and improved livelihoods and living conditions.

¹ Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rice, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru

² Redturs webpage: *Our Conception of Tourism*, available online at: <http://www.redturs.org/documentos/Trifoliar-English-p1-p2.pdf>, Accessed on 17th Oct. 2010.

III.2.4. Partnerships

At the height of its work on rural development, one of the ILO's strongest assets was its vast network of partnerships with other international organizations, ranging from the UNDP to the World Bank. This approach allowed for more comprehensive delivery as various organizations could contribute based on their comparative advantages. External links, of which a few important ones are highlighted below, were vital for the ILO to match the size, complexity, technicalities, and local specificities of rural employment.

Internationally, the 1996 World Food Summit was a precursor of the rural "rediscovery". It was an eye opener for the international aid community in raising concerns that agriculture and rural development had slipped from national agendas. That same year, the ACC Subcommittee on Rural Development (set up in 1993 to replace the UN Task Force on Rural Development established in 1975), discussed a WB policy paper stating its aims to reorient its rural development support towards targeting global and national food security, rural income increases and poverty reduction, and sustainable natural resource management.³¹⁸ Discussions focused on the need to support the active participation of all stakeholders, including local interest groups, rural producers and civil society organizations; to build partnerships for strategic interventions in rural development and policy-making processes; to establish the central role of institutions; and to define the "rules of the game" within the new agricultural models emerging from the global wave of political and economic liberalization.³¹⁹ These needs coincided with efforts to help rural organizations and other civil society institutions take part in the transformation and policy-making processes; to ensure that poor and disadvantaged groups would not be marginalized; and to support rural cooperatives, identified as capable of ensuring the growing efficiency, competitiveness and capitalization of rural producers.

At this very meeting the Subcommittee acknowledged various challenges to its effectiveness, particularly the difficulty experienced by some members in drawing attention to rural development and poverty alleviation within their respective organizations, especially to reach senior management and secure resources. The Subcommittee also realized its lack of direct interface with an intergovernmental body, making it difficult to identify countries' demands for its services in order to help them, as well as the need to become task-oriented, and to develop unique value-added products

³¹⁸ WB, *From Vision to Action in the Rural Sector* (Washington D.C.: WB, 1996)

³¹⁹ With characteristics including expanded agriculture, contract agriculture, urban agriculture, multi-functional agriculture, integrated agriculture, associative agriculture, feminized agriculture, flexible agriculture, human capital agriculture, biodiverse agriculture, and privatized agriculture. UN ACC, *Report of the Subcommittee on Rural Development on Its 24th Session* (Geneva: UN, 15-17 May 1996), § 83-85.

for member countries and agencies. It therefore set up a working group (composed of the FAO, IFAD, ILO, WB and UNICEF) to examine its future role and modalities of operation. However, in 1997 the Subcommittee was replaced altogether by the ACC Network on Rural Development and Food Security, which was set up to act as a country-level coordination mechanism for inter-agency follow-up to the 1996 World Food Summit and its shared goals of “Food for All”. The Network was later renamed the “UN System Network on Rural Development and Food Security”, as it is known today, to reflect its inter-institutional character.

The Network’s mandate is to provide support to governments in implementing the World Food Summit Plan of Action and rural development programmes, and to report on progress. It also coordinates work among partners, including non-UN stakeholders; and promotes partnerships and linkages among UN organizations and other stakeholders.³²⁰ The Network is composed of country level Thematic Groups on rural development and food security. At the international level it consists of a network of 20 UN system partners that provide support to these Thematic Groups. FAO provides the Network Secretariat, in cooperation with IFAD and WFP. Thematic groups were established in 78 countries but only remain active in some 40, a significant but reduced presence that has limited the Network’s global impact.³²¹ Its integration impact has also been limited, as its member organizations have not backstopped the Thematic Groups from their HQs, while the Secretariat can only support them through disseminating information. A global virtual network, “EVAK8”, to be set up by IFAD through its Website for sharing knowledge and experiences on rural development and food security in support to the Thematic Groups, has thus far remained an institutional platform mostly consulted by other UN institutions and practitioners from developed countries.

The ILO’s involvement has been sporadic. It has been part of Thematic Groups in Pakistan to prepare a paper for the UN community there on *Improving Preparedness and Response to Emergencies, Early Warning and Emergency Mechanism*. It supported the formulation of an integrated rural development project for Turkey’s Eastern Anatolia. It also worked on awareness-raising of food insecurity and rural development issues, helping formulate World Food Summit follow-up initiatives in Uruguay. And in Brazil it worked on local development and participatory territorial planning in its northeast and southern regions.

³²⁰ See for example, ACC Network on Rural Development and Food Security: *Guidelines for Thematic Groups* (Rome, FAO, 1999), that spells out the Network’s mandate in line with its three specific objectives.

³²¹ UN, *Report of the Auto-Evaluation of the UN System Network on Rural Development and Food Security* (New York: UN, 2005), 28.

Meanwhile, the 2003 Ministerial Declaration of the Economic and Social Council highlighted the importance of promoting partnerships among stakeholders to support rural development, which it considered essential to reduce poverty and achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.³²²

The United Nations Public-Private Alliance (UNPPA) for Rural Development set up in 2004 was a follow-up to that Declaration. This forum works to link actors within and outside the UN system that focus on the key role of businesses in rural development, as well as to stimulate entrepreneurial capacity-building and encourage investment, trade and related activities. UNPPA's mission is to stimulate replication of business policies and practices that are both profitable and promote the social and economic advancement of rural populations through country-level and other initiatives. To this end it networks with and builds upon a range of existing programmes and concerns, including by the FAO, the World Bank, UNDP, IFAD, UNCTAD, ILO, the UN Global Compact, and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs; and outside the UN, a number of business associations such as the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the International Chamber of Commerce, the Business Council for the United Nations, Rotary Clubs, and the World Agriculture Forum. The UNPPA is active in four countries thus far – Angola, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia and Madagascar.

The International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture (IPCCA) mentioned earlier is also worth noting, particularly given its membership with seven major relevant institutions and its broad objectives spanning laws on child labour, ensuring that children do not engage in hazardous work, promoting rural strategies and programmes to improve rural livelihoods, including child labour concerns in agriculture policy making, overcoming the urban/rural and gender gap in education, and promoting youth employment opportunities in rural areas.

In the area of cooperatives, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the ICA and the ILO in 2004. Based on this, joint work has been focussing on policy dialogue, decent work in cooperatives, education and training and cooperative policy and legislation.³²³ The ILO is also a member of the Committee for the Promotion and the Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC), which

³²² UN ECOSOC, *Promoting an Integrated Approach to Rural Development in Developing Countries for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development*, Draft Ministerial Declaration of the High-Level Segment submitted by the President of the Council on the basis of informal conversations, Substantive session (Geneva, 30 June-25 July 2003).

³²³ www.ica.coop accessed on 25th Feb. 2011

includes FAO, ICA, IFAP and UN, among others. Together with other COPAC members, the ILO is leading the preparations for UN International Year of Cooperatives declared for 2012.³²⁴

Since 2006 the ILO has also been involved in the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) Initiative, a multi-stakeholder framework established to promote people-centred sustainable agriculture and rural development led by civil society, supported by governments and international agencies and facilitated by the FAO. Within it the ILO highlights the role and specificities of agricultural workers as well as the issues of health, safety, working conditions, social security, child labour and International Labour Standards, while FAO focuses on agricultural and farming aspects.

Collaboration with the FAO and the IFAD is particularly important. The ILO has formal framework agreements with both,³²⁵ although collaboration has been relatively scant until recently despite periodical meetings, mainly due to lack of funds for follow up (in the case of FAO). FAO-ILO work on joint field initiatives has been increasing in the 2000s. It has included the “Jobs for Peace” programme, taking place within the UN Peace Building Fund for Nepal; a programme to provide productive alternatives to violence to youth in the post-conflict process through an integrated approach combining well established FAO and ILO approaches such as the SIYB, Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and Junior Farmer Fields and Life Schools (JFFS). Most recently it has also led to an FAO-ECLAC-ILO study on *Labour market policies and rural poverty in Latin America* (2010), and an FAO-ILO joint plan of action signed in early January 2011 to tackle employment, agriculture and rural development in Latin America, focussed on rural employment and labour market data, policy analyses and recommendations on labour market dynamics and rural poverty, and gender and poverty in rural areas. Also worth noting is the FAO-ILO joint website³²⁶ and the inclusion of ILO tools such as MATCOM in FAO’s rural finance portal.³²⁷

The FAO-IFAD-ILO workshop on “Gaps, trends and current research in gender dimensions of agriculture and rural employment: Differentiated pathways out of poverty” (March-April 2009), mentioned earlier, presents a solid stepping stone for future collaboration between the three agencies. Besides ascertaining some genuine interest for the decent work approach by IFAD and FAO, it allowed for building and tightening important linkages among several technical representatives of the

³²⁴ www.copac.coop accessed on 25th Feb. 2011

³²⁵ An MOU with FAO, signed in 2004 (www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/leg/agreements/fao3.htm accessed on 25th Feb. 2011); and an Agreement with IFAD, signed in 1978 (www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/leg/agreements/ifad.htm accessed on 25th Feb. 2011).

³²⁶ www.fao-ilo.org/ accessed on 25th Feb. 2011

³²⁷ www.ruralfinance.org/ accessed on 25th Feb. 2011

three agencies (particularly in agriculture, gender, child labour, enterprise and infrastructure), and established a common plan of action comprising of: (a) the development of joint knowledge products (namely enriching the FAO-ILO website with highlights of the workshop, a publication, and a set of policy briefs on gender issues in rural areas); and (b) joint ventures at local level. This workshop also opened a communication line between the FAO, IFAD and the ILO's Rural Employment Programme.

Another milestone was the ILO's participation in an FAO Workshop on "Food crisis: education and training for rural people at stake" (June 2009). The workshop opened the possibility for ILO membership in the FAO/UNESCO "Education for Rural People (ERP) flagship programme"³²⁸ and for creating links between the FAO's "Education for Rural People" toolkit³²⁹ and the ILO's relevant training tools such as the TREE, WIND, the MATCOM, KAB, and SIYB family of tools.

An ILO group meeting with IFAD on July 2009 facilitated further understanding of each other's goals, main axes of work, products and work modalities, and identification of specific areas for collaboration. Youth employment was selected as one such area, leading within months to the IFAD-funded project "Promoting Decent Work and Productive Employment of young people in rural areas: a review of strategies and programmes", previously discussed.

A similar group meeting with Oxfam on July 2009, preceded by a meeting between the President of Oxfam and the Director-General, revealed comparative advantages and priority areas of work for future collaboration.

At a higher level, in July 2009 the ILO joined the High-Level Task Force of the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF). In addition to participating in its exchanges at various levels, the ILO membership prompted the inclusion of employment, social protection, and social dialogue dimensions to the HLTF's *Updated Comprehensive Framework for Action*.³³⁰ The ILO also planned engagement in

³²⁸ This 2002 initiative is a partnership among some 330 national and international agencies and NGOs committed to overcoming the urban-rural gap in education, increasing access to and quality of education for rural people, and advocating education for rural people as a crucial step to achieve the MDGs. It concentrates on technical support to countries willing to develop specific strategies as part of national education and rural development plans; on advocating and mobilizing partnerships for education for rural people in strategic global, regional and national events; and on exchanges of good practices

³²⁹ This toolkit provides a large volume of on-line education and training materials (divided by main topic and education level and type, addressed to all those involved in formal and informal education for rural people, including teachers, instructors, trainers, parents, researchers and extensionists.

³³⁰ Op. Cit. UN HLTF, *Updated Comprehensive Framework for Action* (2010).

some of the 30 country interventions in which the HLTF intends to develop an integrated support approach, among others by mobilizing employers' and workers' organizations.

IV. THE 2010s: MOBILIZING FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

There exists today a widespread and accelerating keenness towards rural issues, triggered in turns by environmental concerns, the global food security and economic crises, pressing poverty reduction and job creation goals (particularly MDGs), and greater attention to “social responsibility” among corporations as well as individual consumers. The ILO is riding on this momentum by stepping up its rural initiatives and by regaining its rich rural work legacy. It is now ready to include rural employment and decent work in its in-House “re-prioritization”, and to prompt a similar move more globally, within the efforts to reshape economic growth strategies.

The rich legacy of approaches, tools and lessons from decades of the ILO’s work related to rural development provide a solid foundation on which the Organization can build its current renewed commitment to achieve human resource-based rural development for global growth and poverty reduction.

IV.1. The new rural setting

IV.1.1. Key new features

Rural contexts are changing fast and are increasingly complex. Modern, productive, and high-return agricultural and non-farm rural businesses, small and large, may coexist in the same areas as traditional, subsistence-level activities and chronically poor households. Now more than ever, rural people do not represent a single, undifferentiated group. Livelihoods are far more diversified, blurring distinctions as more small farmers engage in wage work on other farms or in non-farm activities; as contract farming and intermediary categories such as tenants and share-croppers becomes more frequent; and as challenges faced by men, women, youth, children and indigenous peoples, as well as those faced by farmers (as opposed to pastoralists or fisher-people for instance), differ more widely.

Connectivity to urban and foreign markets is a second major new feature that is rapidly changing the situation and lifestyle of rural inhabitants, as well as the role of rural areas. Socio-economic linkages between urban and rural areas have vastly increased as a result of technological advancements, increased migration and trade processes. An oft-cited technological success story is the mobile phone

that has revolutionized rural life by giving speedy access to information such as latest crop prices, crop diseases; by reducing the cost of money transfers, and overall transforming communications services for inhabitants of remote, rural localities. Mobile technology has also enabled M-learning (learning through mobile phones), which allows awareness-raising and training to reach even isolated villages and illiterate groups.

Rural-urban-rural migration has also been intensifying. Traditionally, rural workers would move to urban areas for employment purposes and send remittances back home to rural areas.³³¹ Now, with improved modes of transportation workers may opt to return home more frequently or in times of crises. Urban companies meanwhile are actively seeking out new locations in rural areas, as a new source of labour, of agricultural and other raw materials, or to escape urban overcrowding. These and other processes are facilitating the expansion of peri-urban areas into the countryside.

Value chain connections deserve special attention in light of their potential to open markets to rural activities and to modernize and diversify them. However the range of possible repercussions posed by these systems needs better grasping, such as bargaining power which seems to be moving into the hands of a few, very large global buyers, as opposed to producers.³³² Among the consequences is a downward pressure on production costs, reflected for instance in harder employment and working conditions. In such an environment, small farmers are also increasingly disadvantaged as they face higher transaction costs linked to insufficient communication, storage and other facilities, poor organization and limited attractiveness for policy makers who more readily support exporters, all of which limit outreach to local and regional markets that remain underdeveloped. Among the tools proposed to tackle these challenges are farmers' cooperatives, grain boards, marketing arrangements and public procurement programmes (e.g. Brazil's programme for the Purchase of Food from Family Agriculture). Additional measures include the adaptation of competition law to protect suppliers against abusive practices by large purchasers, and collaboration among States to allow suppliers from one country to dispute abusive practices by purchasers of another country.

³³¹ Although saturation of [urban] destination cities and countries and the ongoing economic crisis have somewhat slowed the process and led to growing return migration.

³³² In the food system for instance, there is an increase in the size and concentration of commodity buyers; vertical integration as global retailers are seeking to tighten control over suppliers; an expansion of supermarkets fast-food chains as far as in East Asia, East and Southern Africa; sourcing by large wholesalers and retailers from entire regions or globally, sharpening competition among producers. UN, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier De Schutter*, Human Rights Council, 13th session (New York: UN General Assembly, 22 December 2009).

“Fair trade” is also promising and deserves greater attention. While in 2008 it only represented USD 6 billion (less than 1 percent of worldwide trade), its potential for growth is impressive, supported in particular by rapidly growing corporate and consumer social responsibility.³³³

Today’s rural contexts are further impacted by bio-fuels, so-called “land-grabs”, water issues and climate-change. Bio-fuels have been attracting considerable interest in view of their potential as a greener and cheaper substitute for fossil fuels, and thus their capacity to simultaneously address concerns about energy security, oil prices and climate change. Information and debates about the environmental and economic costs and benefits of bio-fuel crop production, processing and distribution are growing, but those regarding impact on rural enterprises and the quantity and quality of employment still remain sparse and call for specific research.³³⁴

Large-scale land acquisitions (often referred to as “land grabs”) whereby mainly wealthy food-importing countries and private investors acquire land to farm overseas, are now increasingly frequent and complex. Their scale is unprecedented, and it is estimated 15-20 million hectares have been involved in sales and negotiation since 2006, equalling one fifth of all farmland in the European Union (EU).³³⁵ In 2009 China alone had signed 30 deals covering two million hectares and had one million Chinese farm labourers working in Africa.³³⁶ Proponents of these large-scale land acquisitions argue that these deals could reduce poverty by bringing much needed rural investment, infrastructure, better access to technology and markets, as well as improved productivity. However, it seems that most of the deals fail to deliver on these opportunities, contributing instead to the displacement of local populations, sales of land below its potential price, and endangerment of environmental and social development.³³⁷ Paradoxically, many countries selling their farmland are themselves food insecure. In Ethiopia for example, Saudi Arabian investors bought up USD 100 million worth of land to grow food, 100 per cent of which they are permitted to export. Meanwhile the WFP is to spend a similar amount over 2007-2011 on food aid to 4.6 million Ethiopians.³³⁸ Also worrying is the case of Sudan,

³³³ Ibid

³³⁴ The ILO launched a research on this issue in mid-2010, to prepare a report providing general guidance, based on basic information and best practice worldwide.

³³⁵ Joachim von Braun and Ruth Meinzen-Dick, “‘Land Grabbing’ by Foreign Investors in Developing Countries: Risks and Opportunities,” International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) Policy Brief 13, April 2009.

³³⁶ “Outsourcing’s Third Wave,” *Economist*, May 21, 2009, Available at www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13692889 Accessed 15th Nov. 2010.

³³⁷ WB, *Rising Global Interest in Farmland: Can It Yield Sustainable and Equitable Benefits?* (Washington D.C.: WB, September 2010).

³³⁸ Michael Kugleman and Susan Levenstein: *Introduction,* in *‘Land Grab? The Race for the World’s Farmland.* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Asia Program: 2009), 10.

the largest recipient of food aid worldwide that is also following suite in selling off its farmland.³³⁹ The consequences for local communities remain ambiguous and call for caution and further investigation. At a minimum, to achieve win-win outcomes, international agencies such as the FAO, IFAD, UNCTAD and the World Bank call for an International Code of Conduct emphasizing transparency, land rights, participatory practices, and social and economic sustainability.³⁴⁰ At present contracts remain “strikingly short and simple”,³⁴¹ and with minimal monitoring.

As for the increasingly reduced availability of water resources, both for human needs and agriculture, and climate change, rural areas feature both as contributors, through the unregulated use of pesticides, fertilizers and deforestation practices for instance; as well as victims, subject in particular to more frequent and severe weather phenomena, such as droughts and flooding, reduction in crop yields and available land. The “green jobs” response, which proposes methods to mitigate the impact of climate change on economic activities, as well as new, “greener” practices and economic activities are a valuable approach. Although green jobs cover both rural and urban settings, their relevance to rural areas is noteworthy as they can be an important stimulus for rural economic diversification, modernization, and provide higher value added and productive jobs.

Intervention in rural areas is also prompted by the need to tackle an expanding informal economy. Rural areas are simultaneously host to large numbers of informal activities, as well as a source of migratory flows that mostly join and swell the urban informal economy. These, combined with the related phenomenon of saturation in cities and countries receiving migrants, are an additional impetus for creating productive, attractive livelihoods and centres of growth in rural areas.

In light of these and other major developments the “new” rural of the 21st century warrants a change in perception and strategy. Firstly there has to be a fundamental change in the view that equates rural with “backwardness”, “out-datedness”, and “immobility”. Secondly, rural areas call for increased

³³⁹ A *New York Times* article indicates that this land is being used among others to grow, ‘wheat for Saudi Arabia, tomatoes for the Jordanian Army, and sorghum (a Sudanese staple) for camels in the United Arab Emirates. Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Op. Cit. WB, *Rising Global Interest in Farmland: Can It Yield Sustainable and Equitable Benefits?* (2010), ix. Also see UN Human Rights Council, *Large Scale Land Acquisitions and Leases: A Set of Minimum Principles and Measures to Address the Human Rights Challenge*. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food Olivier de Schutter (New York: UN General Assembly, 28 September 2009).

³⁴¹ Cotula L. Vermeulen, R.S. Leonard, and J. Keeley, *Land Grab or Development Opportunity? Agricultural Investment and International Land Deals in Africa* (Rome: FAO, IFAD and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IEED), 2009).

policy support, and for context-specific interventions to address the local mix of challenges and potentialities.

Increasingly, many developed countries associate “rural” with positive connotations, as it connotes leisure, nature, healthy foods, and generally an alternative to the stresses of urban living. Notable examples of appreciation for rural activities and acknowledgement of their productivity and creativity are emerging in developing countries too, through initiatives such as Terra Madre, an international network of food producers, cooks, educators and activists from over 150 countries founded in 2004. This worldwide network supports innovative production and marketing solutions aimed at ensuring quality food, sustainable livelihoods for small-scale producers, and a place and voice for them in the global economy. These and similar initiatives merit attention by national policy makers and the international development community alike.

IV.1.2. Persisting rural structural gaps

“Traditional” rural-specific structural challenges such as low productivity, poverty and development gaps persist in rural economies of many developing countries to this day. They are widely acknowledged as being linked to factors such as inequitable access to land and other assets; insufficient credit, investment and incentives, low levels of technology, poor economic infrastructure; weak support to agricultural prices and local industries linked to agriculture, and in general, a lack of vision and strategies for rural areas and their integration into national development strategies. Consequently, inefficiency, wastage, and lack of capacity are perpetuated in a vicious cycle of “missed opportunities” further entrenching rural areas in poverty.

Important decent work deficits exacerbate these conditions by stifling opportunities for positive change. These deficits include poorly developed or ill-adapted labour market institutions, limited access to education and training; high unemployment, underemployment and unpaid work, especially among youth and women; traditional gender divisions of labour that limit women’s access to productive jobs and entrepreneurship; high rates of child labour in dangerous agricultural occupations (that further endanger skills acquisition by these children); high incidences of disability; difficulty in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment; widespread work in temporary and casual wage jobs in informal and small survival-type activities; and poor working and living conditions, including exiguous social security coverage. Many groups also fall outside the scope of national labour laws, due to their

employment status, the economic sector or small size of the enterprise where they operate; while those protected in theory may not be so in practice due to weak rural labour inspection among others. Lastly, rural workers' and farmers' organizations are generally weak; and national social partners lack rural outreach, making it difficult to defend local interests and sway national strategic decision-making (and resource allocation) towards rural areas. This adds to the difficulties experienced by rural men and women to express their potential, and to allow their communities and countries to break out of the low productivity, poverty, and vulnerability trap.³⁴²

Rural areas and labour markets are thus undoubtedly more complex, harder to access physically and in some cases culturally and linguistically, and have more profound problems, which explain why national and international actors seeking quick returns are more inclined to target urban areas. Nevertheless, rural areas do host three quarters of the world's poor, and they are where capital and human resources are underused and underdeveloped the most. Further, industrial development and economic growth are limited in the rural population, the majority in most developing countries, is lacking purchasing power. This also points to the need to expand the domestic market through increased use of locally available resources and increased inter-sectoral linkages with agricultural and other, largely rural sectors of production, processing and services. Consequently, *rural areas possess the greatest potential for returns, and this is where investment can "make a difference", for rural communities as well as globally.*

IV.1.3. Crisis boosters

The major global food security and economic crises of the late 2000s are boosting interest in rural development. Rural areas are among the hardest-hit victims of these crises;³⁴³ but there is also a growing realization that they can play a protagonistic role in the solution. The first of these, the 2007-08 food crisis, led the UN to create a High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis (HLTF) to coordinate the international response. Shortly thereafter, the ILO convened a Tripartite Technical

³⁴² These gaps are well captured in the report to the 2008 ILC, ILO, *Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction*. International Labour Conference, 97th session (Geneva: ILO, 2008), and were confirmed by ILO interviewees.

³⁴³ Paradoxically, over three quarters of the one billion food insecure people are directly involved in food production: over 500 million are from smallholder farming households, 200 million are landless, and 100 million are pastoralists, fisherfolk and forest users. UN General Assembly: *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food: Agribusiness and the Right to Food*. Delivered at the 13th Session of the Human Rights Council (Geneva, 2009).

Workshop on the Global Food Price Crisis³⁴⁴ and its Impact on Decent Work (5-6 March 2009).³⁴⁵ Its discussions, enriched by the participation of various agencies, the HLTF management, and scholars,³⁴⁶ highlighted some major causes that needed remedying, among which were insufficient investment in rural areas; lack of employment and social protection programmes to provide rural populations sufficient income to access food; and insufficient social dialogue to give rural employers and workers a “voice”.³⁴⁷ They also highlighted the keenness of the ILO constituents and others that the Organization join the HLTF (which it did that same year, see section IV.2.4.) and contribute to it work in “areas where [ILO’s] unique mandate and specific expertise can strengthen existing UN efforts”,³⁴⁸ such as job creation, entrepreneurship, occupational safety and health, child labour, and gender issues, with help from the ILO’s network of employers’ and workers’ organizations at international and national levels.³⁴⁹

The global economic crisis declared in mid- to late-2008 is providing a second unlikely boost to rural work by showcasing the resilience of rural areas in the face of adversity. In this case too rural inhabitants have suffered from the crisis, particularly in terms of reduced remittances, coupled with increased numbers of unemployed migrants returning to their rural communities from cities and abroad due to a lack of work. Nevertheless rural areas are emerging as potential sources of livelihoods, producers of food, and overall engines of growth. Support to rural farm and non-farm activities, to invest in more effective and profitable crops and farming techniques, and to build local economic and social infrastructure, including social protection, skills development and enterprise services, and to local development in general are viewed as important parts of a solution to the crisis.

³⁴⁴ From March 2007 to March 2008 the price of staple foods surged, with rice increasing by 74 percent, corn by 87 percent, and wheat 130 percent. While the food price index then declined due to the global economic crisis, food prices increased again to surpass their 2008 peak by early 2011. FAO: *Food Price Index*.

³⁴⁵ At the request of ILO: *Resolution Concerning ILO’s and Tripartite Constituents’ Role in Addressing the Global Food Crisis*. International Labour Conference, 97th session (Geneva: ILO, 2008).

³⁴⁶ Key participants included Dr. David Nabarro, UN Coordinator of the HLTF, Dr. Olivier de Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, and representatives of FAO, OCHA, UNCTAD, UNEP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WB, WFP, WTO and ITC.

³⁴⁷ Employment, social protection and social dialogue in particular now feature in the HLTF, *Updated Comprehensive Framework for Action* (2010).

³⁴⁸ The Tripartite Technical Workshop agreed in particular that “The ILO has a range of expertise in the world of work in areas such as employment creation, occupational safety and health, entrepreneurship, child labour and gender issues which will clearly contribute to improved food security”. ILO: Report on the Tripartite Technical Workshop on the Global Food Price Crisis and its Impact on Decent Work”, Geneva, 5-6 March 2009, p. 10.

³⁴⁹ HLTF, *Outline of Progress Against the July 2008 CFA*, Draft Report, (New York: UN, 8 July 2009), 8. That same month the L’Aquila joint statement on Global Food Security confirmed the urgency for action and for a comprehensive approach to food security that includes among others, expansion of employment and decent work opportunities, knowledge and training, increased trade flows and support for good governance and policy reform. “L’Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security (*L’Aquila Food Security Initiative*)”, G8 Summit, July 2009.

The role of rural areas as “shock absorbers” is increasingly acknowledged, whether in crises of food insecurity or economic downturns, and also wars and natural disasters. Focusing on rural areas to prompt integrated and participatory reconstruction offers the greatest chances of reviving economies, restoring the social fabric, and ensuring sustainable and resilient livelihoods and development.

Accordingly, the Director-General’s Report to the 2009 ILC on tackling the global jobs crisis calls for “Investing in food security and rural development”.³⁵⁰ The ensuing Global Jobs Pact (GJP) features the rural dimension in its call for job-rich infrastructure projects, cooperatives and public employment guarantee schemes, for instance. It also calls for addressing a set of structural challenges exacerbating the global recession, among which is the need to “...recognize the value of agriculture in developing economies and the need for rural infrastructure, industry and employment”.³⁵¹ More recently the ILO pointed to “rural employment and community development” as one of the areas of the UN CEB Global Jobs Pact Initiative where inputs from various agencies would be especially relevant.³⁵²

These crises should be viewed also as a stimulus to rethink strategies, re-orient priorities, and muster the global political will and resources to implement them. The “crisis” context offers opportunities to set employment and decent work as integral parts of macro-economic policies (as opposed to being their derivatives), as actively advocated by the Director-General in key international fora responsible for shaping the new economic growth architecture. Similarly, and in a complementary way, this context could also be an opportunity to set rural areas as a strategic component of this new architecture; and to dedicate to them the focused, sustained political attention and resources needed to tackle its chronic challenges as well as its new ones, and thereby unleash the potential of these areas and their populations.

It is now also openly acknowledged that governments in developed countries of North America and Europe, as well as some transition economies³⁵³ that actively supported selected rural industries as a growth strategy for the economy (and not only as a survival strategy for their rural poor), succeeded in

³⁵⁰ ILO, *Tackling the Global Jobs Crisis; Recovery through Decent Work Policies*. Report I (A) of the Director General to International Labour Conference, 98th session (Geneva: ILO, 2009), chapter III on “Components of an ILO Global Jobs Pact”, 17-18.

³⁵¹ Op. Cit. ILO, *Recovering From the Crisis: A Global Jobs Pact*, (2009).

³⁵² *Global Financial and Economic Crisis*, UN System Joint Crisis Initiatives, CEB for Coordination, September 2009. Available at <http://www.undg.org/docs/10783/UN-System-Joint-Crisis-Initiatives,-16-Sept-2009.pdf> accessed on 25th Feb. 2011

³⁵³ Economies in the process of moving away from being a controlled economy to an open one are called “Transition economies,” and include Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs), Balkans, Baltic States, and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

curbing poverty in their rural areas and in setting off a process of modernization and growth.³⁵⁴ Today's governance trends are "pushing" in that direction, driven by a greater acceptance of government involvement to regulate and stimulate economic growth (compared to the '90s). This now allows for much needed state support and active policies and investment to pursue rural poverty reduction and development; to empower rural areas through social-economic infrastructure, institutional development, subsidies and other stimuli to promising sectors and groups; and to develop individual capacities and opportunities. The current trend towards political democratization, entailing decentralization in governance, greater local voice in national decision-making, and broad inclusion of civil society in local economic development, are important complementary developments.

IV.2. ILO's strong recent mandate

IV.2.1. A clear turning point - The ILC 2008

Debates at the ILC 2008 Committee on Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction, and particularly the ensuing Plan of Action for the Office, approved unanimously as part of a Resolution,³⁵⁵ constitute a major turning point. They set a clear mandate, as well as guidelines for ILO rural work in the present context. As shown in Table 2.a (page 152), the Plan of Action identifies a set of priority areas of intervention spanning all four of the ILO's strategic objectives. Equally important, it spells out the type of work needed: a mutually reinforcing combination of analytical, TC, policy advice, capacity building and advocacy work. It also indicates an appropriate work methodology, one based on select interventions in the ILO's areas of comparative advantage, rapid reaction and practical interventions, with coordination Office-wide, as well as externally with relevant international agencies.

The ILO's current rural work mandate also solidly builds on the *Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization* (2008), which calls for policy coherence and integrated action among ILO technical fields throughout its structure as well as with outside actors. It calls for the ILO's constituents to be in the "driver's seat" of development work in their countries and establish capacity building as a strong component of initiatives. Further support is found in the *Declaration of Philadelphia* (1944), affirming that "poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere"; and the *Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* (1998), as decent

³⁵⁴ See for example J. Davis: "Rural non-farm livelihoods in transition economies: emerging issues and policies," *Journal of Agricultural and Development Economics* (FAO), Vol. 3, No. 2, 2006, pp. 180–224.

³⁵⁵ Op. Cit. ILO, *Report of the Committee on Rural Employment*, (2008).

work gaps in terms of freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, forced labour, child labour, employment and occupational discrimination are particularly manifest in rural areas, stifling progress and entrenching people in poverty.

Strong support for the ILO's work in rural areas also comes from the General Survey on employment instruments (2010),³⁵⁶ in which the CEACR highlighted the importance of rural employment when national authorities prepare, adopt and implement national employment plans and poverty reduction strategies in view of the concentration of unemployment, underemployment and poverty in those areas. Based on reports from 108 governments, the CEACR pointed to three policy options: 1) identify and adopt measures to increase the labour intensity of economic growth; 2) devote increased attention to employment promotion in rural areas; and 3) encourage entrepreneurship among youth and women. Similarly, at the 2010 ILC Committee for the Recurrent Discussion of Employment, governments, employers and workers alike called for increased ILO support to work in rural areas.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁶ ILO, *General Survey concerning instruments in light of the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization*, Report III (Part 1B), International Labour Conference, 99th Session, June 2010.

³⁵⁷ ILO, *Report of the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment*, Provisional Record, ILC, 99th Session, June 2010.

Table 2.a. Plan of Action for the Office, as outlined in the 2008 ILC Conclusions on Promoting Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction

Plan of action for the Office as Outlined in ILC 2008 Conclusion on Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction	
➤ Employment-related action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare a comprehensive report analysing the impact of prior ILO rural employment work ▪ Ensure that national employment policies and DWCPs include the promotion of productive employment in rural areas in accordance with ILC 2008 Conclusions on Rural Employment ▪ Encourage countries to adopt gender- and family-sensitive national rural employment policies ▪ Promote entrepreneurship and sustainable MSEs, cooperatives and other community-based organizations, along the lines of the ILC 2007 Conclusions on the Promotion of Sustainable Enterprises, with special attention to smallholders, youth, women and indigenous peoples ▪ Strengthen rural data-collection systems ▪ Study the employment implications of bio-fuel production ▪ Identify employment strategies which have been helpful in creating decent rural employment ▪ Promote effective labour market institutions, and employment programmes for rural workers such as employment guarantee schemes ▪ Develop territorial approaches to employment and poverty reduction ▪ Help extend and make accessible education, training and retraining matching the local economy
➤ Standards-related action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyse gaps in coverage and barriers to ratification and implementation of international standards in rural areas ▪ Promote the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work ▪ Promote the ratification and implementation of relevant Standards ▪ Promote the extension of national labour laws to all rural workers
➤ Social Protection-related action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote the extension of social protection to all, and explore the concept of a global social floor ▪ Promote Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) in rural enterprises and communities ▪ Promote adequately staffed and resourced labour inspection to ensure OSH in rural enterprises ▪ Promote the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work in rural areas
➤ Social Dialogue-related action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the development and strengthen rural employers' and workers' organizations ▪ Encourage links between rural employers' and workers' organizations and their national and international counterparts ▪ Promote effective social dialogue in rural areas ▪ Build the capacity of labour administration in rural areas, including labour inspection
➤ Means of delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use and articulate analytical work, TC, policy advice, capacity building, advocacy
➤ Work methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on selected interventions, within ILO's core mandate and comparative advantage ▪ Take action rapidly and efficiently ▪ Focus on practical interventions ▪ Operate in a coordinated manner as concerns the various Units involved ▪ Cooperate with the relevant international bodies at national and international level

Table 2.b. Roles of governments, employers and workers in rural work as outlined in the 2008 ILC Conclusions on Promoting Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction

Roles of governments, employers and workers in rural work following on the Resolution on Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction, ILC 2008	
➤ Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include rural employment in national development policies ▪ Invest adequately in agriculture and rural development ▪ Encourage a coherent and integrated approach to employment promotion and poverty reduction in rural areas, among all governments ministries and agencies, at all levels of government ▪ Consult representative organizations of rural employers and workers at national and local levels to in formulating and implementing national and local rural development policies ▪ Collect and make available reliable, gender-disaggregated data on rural livelihoods ▪ Promote gender equality and women empowerment ▪ Support skills development for farm and non-farm activities ▪ Create an enabling environment for sustainable rural enterprises ▪ Promote formalization of work in rural areas ▪ Encourage the effective use of public-private partnerships ▪ Develop social protection for all ▪ Ensure national legislation guaranteed and defends the freedom of workers and employers ▪ Review legislation to extend its labour rights to all ▪ Better inform employers and workers of their rights and responsibilities at work, OSH, HIV/AIDS at the workplace, fundamental principles and rights at work ▪ Improve access to basic services in rural areas, including on health, education, energy, transport, technology and communication ▪ Ensure adequately staffed and resourced labour inspection
➤ Employers' organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocate for effective rural economic and social development policies that produce an enabling environment for enterprises ▪ Extend representation to rural areas to gain the benefits of cooperative action ▪ Act as a coordinator or broker among value chain actors from rural and urban areas ▪ Provide direct services to help rural enterprises develop ▪ Ensure adequate attention to rural employment and poverty reduction at all stages of DWCP
➤ Workers' organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organize and represent rural workers, including at sectoral level ▪ Extend representation to rural areas, including in the informal economy ▪ Assist workers with information services and education ▪ Strengthen participation of women and youth in workers' organizations in rural areas ▪ Promote youth employment ▪ Promote OSH in rural enterprises and communities ▪ Ensure adequate attention to rural employment and poverty reduction at all stages of DWCP

IV.2.2. Initial follow up work

The ILO's rural work has stepped up markedly since the ILC 2008 Discussion on Promoting Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction. Efforts were led by the Director-General to establish rural work as an "emerging area" in the P&B 2010-11, allocating regular budget seed resources to launch activities, and soliciting work in basic areas such as rural statistics. In that same P&B, rural work is set as first priority for the Africa Region, and it also features, as such or in terms of local development, in a variety of outcomes and indicators.

A post dedicated to ensure proper follow-up Office-wide was established which, coupled with seed resources, allowed for a small core team that developed communication and coordination through a network of over 60 rural focal points Office-wide; established mechanisms to ensure systematic monitoring of follow-up to the conclusions of the above-mentioned ILC 2008 discussion; stimulated rural initiatives and rural components in ongoing work; and prepared knowledge sharing and capacity building tools such as this stocktaking review itself, a set of some 20 policy briefs on rural-relevant technical areas, economic sectors and target groups,³⁵⁸ a package of information sheets synthesizing the main characteristics of some 50 key ILO rural-relevant tools, to help constituents, practitioners, ILO partners and ILO officials themselves grasp the vast array of instruments available, and training modules on labour inspection; and developed external partnerships and "joint ventures".

Rural-related work at Headquarters on the select rural priorities featured in the ILC's 2008 Plan of Action for the Office (See table 2.a), has included the compilation of data on rural dimensions from available labour statistics;³⁵⁹ the launching of a report on the impact of bio-fuels on enterprises and employment to become a reference for decision-makers and practitioners; leadership with WHO in the UN CEB Social Protection Floor Initiative, which started with an ILO tripartite meeting in September 2009 to review policies and strategies to extend social security coverage, including to rural areas; the publication of a Generic Manual on Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) in 2009 accompanied by the launch of projects in Benin, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Vietnam and Zimbabwe using this approach; a guide entitled *Value chain development for decent work*; a review of entrepreneurship development projects and tools to check their fit for rural settings; the publication finalization of a *Code of practice on safety and health in agriculture*, to be authorized by the GB in

³⁵⁸Each policy brief sketches potentialities and challenges, appropriate policies, the ILO work approach, main initiatives and tools, and illustrations of good practice on the specific topic.

³⁵⁹ Work started with employment and unemployment data, and should extend progressively to include income, working time, informal employment, and related variables.

March 2011; the finalization and publication of a *Practical manual on ergonomic checkpoints in agriculture*; the development of a tool to enhance the capacity of the ILO's constituents to promote freedom of association and collective bargaining in rural areas, including a review of gaps in law and practice in those fundamental rights, and of a manual on freedom of association and collective bargaining rights for women workers in rural areas; an international conference, held in Kyrgyzstan in October 2008, to exchange experiences among WIND programmes in Africa, Asia, Central Asia and Latin America; work on the food security crisis since 2009 (mentioned earlier); inter-agency work such as an FAO-IFAD-ILO workshop in 2009 leading to an analytical publication and policy briefs on gender in rural areas to guide decision-makers; and an IFAD-ILO initiative launched in 2010 to review youth rural programmes through the lens of decent work. Rural components also appear in policy advisory work, for instance when supporting employment policy development and implementation, employment-intensive investment methodologies in public works and community-based infrastructure programmes, policies and programmes related to occupational safety and health, extension of social security, and child labour.

At country level the need for rural interventions has been more readily apparent. Currently 60 percent of the ILO's DWCPs feature rural dimensions and over 60 TC projects wholly or partially target rural areas, mostly in Africa and Asia. The ILO's rural-relevant projects support in particular entrepreneurship, including cooperatives, skills development, employment intensive investment, local economic development, youth and women employment, occupational safety and health, child labour; and to some extent empowerment of workers and employers. They still usually emerge on an "ad hoc" basis, mainly from specific requests by constituents or to seize opportunities offered by donors, other agencies and programmes for instance, and tend to develop "independently", though they increasingly remain within the major programming frameworks such as UNDAFs and especially DWCPs.

Initiatives typically involve one main decent work technical area, along with aspects from one or more complementary ones. Upon closer inspection, it appears that discussing a project in its early stages in group meetings with colleagues from all potentially relevant technical Units, for example, to identify logical links and synergies with existing tools, experiences and other initiatives is not a systematic practice. Inclusion of other technical areas is more often "fortuitous", as a result of an official's personal contacts rather than the result of ILO operating procedures. Likewise, a good experience or a setback or hurdle in a given initiative are not shared very broadly either. Such a system of knowledge sharing and communication is even rarer between regions. Analytical work and advisory services to help develop employment policies or social security systems, for example, while technically solid in

their specific area, tend to follow a similar pattern of “missed linkages” that may limit their overall effectiveness. *Interconnectivity Office-wide is a prerequisite and a priority to support the new role ILO aspires to play and is otherwise equipped to play to unleash rural potential.*

IV.3. Towards a strategy for ILO rural work

A strategy for the ILO’s work in rural areas should take shape based on the 2008 ILO Resolution on Rural Employment and Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, the findings of this stocktaking exercise, as well as on discussions at the March 2011 session of the Government Body’s Employment and Social Policy Committee. This strategy is to provide an agreed common vision or goal, and a common direction to the ILO’s rural initiatives. It also is to help achieve a reasonable level of coordination and synergies among those initiatives, establish a logical division of labour within the Organization; and stimulate work on the priorities established in the Resolution, as well as on upcoming challenges and opportunities so as to advance more effectively in that common direction. Its main profile has been sketched in a report to be discussed in March 2011 at the ILO Governing Body’s Committee on Employment and social Policy.³⁶⁰

³⁶⁰ ILO, *Unleashing rural development through productive employment and decent work: Building on 40 years of ILO work in rural areas*, March 2001, GB.310/ESP/1.

Box 4

Example: Turning rural assets into business in Nepal

The Employment Creation and Peace Building through Local Economic Development (EmPLED) project in rural Nepal (2007-2010) is an innovative attempt to promote peace through economic growth and job creation. The project targets two relatively poor agricultural districts (Danusha and Ramechhap) that had long suffered from conflict, had significant shares of landless and other marginalized groups, strong emigration, and weak capacity for planning, coordination and implementation of pro-poor development initiatives.

EmPLED tackled these challenges with a locally-driven, participatory and integrated approach which included:

- Helping first establish an inclusive Local Economic Development (LED) Forum in each district that would champion a local public-private dialogue to design, coordinate, facilitate and monitor a pro-poor strategy and initiatives implementing it
- Skills development for targeted beneficiaries to participate in social dialogue and to access productive jobs
- Developing and maintaining productive local infrastructure to facilitate market access
- Establishing and institutionalizing effective market linkages for local tourism and agriculture enterprises

Coordination among stakeholders, social inclusion, empowerment of women (who constitute 40 percent of beneficiaries) and other previously excluded groups, and mutually reinforcing interventions have been key aspects. Those interventions include:

- The development of two community-based tourism trails, for which the project created 27 home-stays, organized cultural festivals, and strengthened 10 Village Tourism Committees to help maintain shared infrastructure and coordinate joint marketing activities
- Infrastructure works, that created temporary jobs for 1,500 persons and nearly 90,000 paid workdays; while the improved transportation infrastructure now provides all-weather accessibility and lower transportation costs. Better rural-rural and urban-rural linkages have resulted in greater business opportunities in agriculture and tourism and increased agricultural output.
- Wetland and water catchment protection, agriculture irrigation, and solid waste management initiatives that help preserve the local environment for eco-tourism and sustainable agriculture.
- Strengthening of local business service providers, that has led to improved business development services to micro and small enterprises
- Holistic value chain upgrading, that have improved value chain effectiveness in different sectors (tourism, various crops, and traditional art), and have benefited hundreds of entrepreneurs and workers. Training to enhance cultivation and storage practices, for instance, have improved crop yields and quality, resulting in higher overall market prices.

Close work with the Ministry of Local Development and a range of district stakeholders, and the strong public-private partnerships created, allow for continued collaboration between residents, the private sector and local government. They also allow for developing and implementing an integrated approach to local development. Together, these elements largely explain the success of this project, and its positive results in terms of profits for enterprises, socially responsible business behaviour, quality jobs and improved socio-economic conditions for the communities.

Box 5**Example: Good jobs and poverty reduction through productive rural entrepreneurship in Senegal**

The Rural Entrepreneurship Promotion project (PROMER) launched in 2006 is using a well integrated approach to generate more and better jobs in rural areas. Its support to non-farm processing and service activities creates practical income-generating alternatives, especially for young people and for women (who constitute 50 percent of beneficiaries), thereby decreasing rural out-migration and increasing opportunities to engage in productive and paid activities and acquire new knowledge and skills.

PROMER's main objective is to combat rural poverty through the creation and/or consolidation of non-farm micro- and small enterprises, leading to productive, sustainable jobs that increase and diversify income of poor rural families. The project uses ILO enterprise management capacity building tools such as "Know about Business" (KAB), "Generate Your Business Idea" (GYBI),¹ and "Start and Improve your Business" (SIYB)² and Package to strengthen small entrepreneur associations' key functions and member services (PACTE), a tool that develops the capacity of professional organizations, from internal management to marketing, lobbying, and servicing affiliates in general.

The project has thus far reached over 15 value chains (including cereals, textiles, agriculture, milk, mechanics and woodwork) in four provinces. Its achievements range from helping create or consolidate over 1100 MSEs (two-thirds of which are owned or managed by youth); helping some 300 existing micro-enterprises increase their turnover by 60 percent (on average); to helping set up and build capacity to use two electronic databases on markets and equipment; to signing protocols with local and regional radio networks to exchange information on entrepreneurship opportunities.

The novelty of the PROMER approach is its emphasis on synergies with other ILO tools and approaches, to achieve a stronger and more sustainable impact on target beneficiaries and local economic (and social) development. The project includes support to training and apprenticeship; access to social protection; micro-finance; and tripartite social dialogue systems for enhanced support to rural micro- and small enterprises. It also links up with the Women Entrepreneurship Development (WED) programme, to build SIYB trainers' capacity to support rural women entrepreneurs; IPEC, to help socio-economic integration of apprentices and to develop qualified master craftsmen for professional training centres; the STEP programme, for information activities on health micro-insurance, and to improve professional organizations' capacity to offer social protection services to members; the WIND programme, to build SIYB trainers' capacity on its techniques; the PRODIAF programme (promotion of social dialogue in francophone Africa), to build producer organizations' ability to position themselves in public debate; and the ADMITRA programme (for the modernization of the labour administration and inspectorate) to sensitize tax inspectors to the special needs of rural enterprises and to build the SYIB trainers' skills in diverse national and international tax laws. Further, PROMER integrates sensitization of local actors to crosscutting issues such as gender equality and HIV/AIDS.

This comprehensive approach reinforces capacities and opportunities of Senegalese rural entrepreneurs and local actors to realize in-depth rural socio-economic development, affording capacities that go well beyond the mere enterprise sphere.

V. CONCLUSIONS: UNLEASHING RURAL POTENTIAL FOR GLOBAL GROWTH

The time for unleashing the growth and development potential of rural areas is now. The “MDG acceleration” framework, along with the food security and economic crises, and environmental challenges all point to rural areas as an integral part of a more solid and resilient economic growth and development “architecture”. Indeed, rural areas contain considerable underdeveloped and underused resources, ranging from large numbers of un-employed and under-employed men and women; to child labourers missing out on valuable skills acquisition; to wastage of crops for lack of processing, storage and transportation capacity; to environmental degradation. The current context presents a momentous opportunity for the ILO to set human resource-based rural development as central to that new economic growth and development architecture that is taking shape.

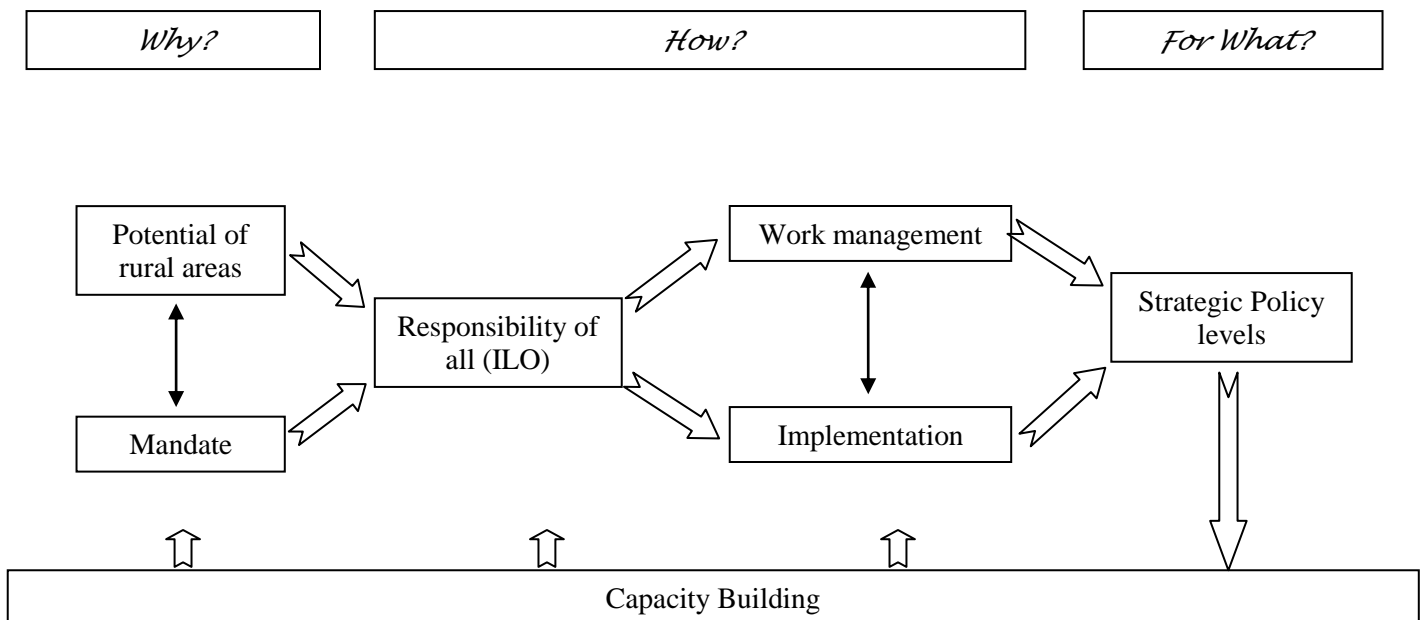
Targeting rural areas first calls for recognition that these areas, their inhabitants, and their communities can be engines of growth and resilience. Investing in them, in an integrated and sustained way, to fill their decent work and other structural gaps and build up their ability to fulfil their potential is not just morally correct, but it is a sound business decision. *Investing in rural areas, through a human resource-based, decent work approach is in the best interest of all; and it is also the responsibility of all.*

Rural development remains a large, wide and complex topic; one that requires policies that go beyond general prescriptions or “blanket policies”. The strategy of addressing rural development as a side-note has thus far proven ineffective. Rural development calls for explicit political commitment and investment to overcome traditional biases that favour urban areas. It also calls for a positive attitude that views rural areas as potentially dynamic. Meaningful rural policies will have to be innovative, yet informed by past failures and successes, to address the array of interdependent challenges of the current rural context. Without a doubt this effort demands unprecedented coordination: among technical areas, between farm and non-farm, rural and urban activities, local, national and international levels of intervention, and among a diversity of private and public, local, national and global actors, to capitalize on each others’ expertise and experience in order to implement articulated, mutually supporting approaches.

This stocktaking review has shown that the ILO clearly has the tools, the knowledge, and the experience from lessons reaped over more than four decades to make a real impact on rural development. These ILO assets need to be acknowledged, re-appropriated, adapted if needed and actively applied within the new rural context. The ILO also has a strong mandate and commitment from the Organization as a whole to take action, based in particular on the ILC 2008 Resolution on Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction. It can now also count on the powerful framework of Decent Work (which is even stronger than the “Basic Needs” concept that emerged during the ILO’s rural work heydays of the 1970s and 1980s), as it is better focused and fully within the ILO mandate, involving all four ILO strategic objectives, the whole Office and the whole Organization. The decent work concept and its agenda are now also widely accepted nationally as well as throughout the international development community.

Besides revealing the ILO’s important legacy consisting of approaches, tools, rich experiences related to rural development, this review has unearthed strengths, achievements; and invariably, limitations in certain ILO initiatives. This should allow sketching the main elements of an ILO rural employment and decent work strategy for the years ahead. *The main objective guiding this work is to set rural areas, and particularly their employment and other decent work dimensions, as integral parts (and possibly priorities) of development strategies.* More than a “specialization” in rural development, the idea is to stress that development policies cannot be successful without proper inclusion of rural areas into national strategy and planning, through closer consideration of rural potential, needs, and specificities.

Unleashing rural development potential through Decent Work



Why?

Potential (positive/progressive view of rural areas)

- Acquire a more dynamic and “forward looking” view of rural areas to recognize their opportunities and potentialities to be progressive and drive growth.
- Recognize the challenges that need to be addressed to unleash rural potential (moving from a “protective, welfare-oriented” perspective, to an “enabling, business-oriented approach).
- Develop interest in investing in rural empowerment, leading to wide political and economic commitment to mobilize necessary human and financial resources.

Mandate/Interest of all

- Recognize the centrality of the ILO’s work in rural areas to effectively implement decent work, MDGs and GJP agendas.
- Recognize the centrality of work to empower rural areas among international agencies, donors and the development community to achieve MDG, GJP, Donors’ platform for rural development goals.

For what?

Set “rural” as priority in strategic policy

- Reach national and global policy levels, to sway them towards (human resource- and decent work-based rural take off) and set this as the ultimate objective/vision of ILO rural work.
- Seeking strategic, long-term impact with emphasis on monitoring, evaluation and lessons learned.

How?

Responsibility of all – Within the ILO:

ILO Office

- Advance from considering rural areas as an “emerging issue” (P&B 2010-11) to that of a “crosscutting priority”, similar to gender.
- Ingrain within the ILO a sense of common purpose and shared responsibility in rural work.
- Establish accountability of management at various levels Office-wide to adopt a rural perspective in their work (reflecting the priorities set in the ILC 2008 Plan of Action for the Office), work jointly on rural initiatives, and advance in a mutually supporting and coordinated way.
- Set up a “Coordination Team” to stimulate, facilitate, coordinate and monitor rural work; providing it with the needed mandate and means to function.

ILO Constituents

- Strengthen governments', employers', and workers' rural outreach and representation (along the lines of the ILC 2008 Resolution) with Office support.
- Strengthen governments', employers', and workers' support to the Office's rural work.

Work organization

- Coordinate (one vision/objective, but multifaceted approach) to move in sync and in the same direction.
- Achieve and articulate cooperation among technical facets and tools, as well as among Office structures.
- Develop communication (internal as well as external).
- Deepen and extend external partnerships, based on common values and complementarity of expertise in rural work.
- Deepen and extend dialogue with (public and private) donors, to develop mutual support.
- Develop broad partnerships in rural areas, including all three ILO constituents at national and local levels, private and public interest, interest groups including youth and women organizations, NGOs, media, think tanks, etc.

Implementation

- Encourage and build skills and mechanisms for broad participation from rural areas in rural development decision-making and implementation.
- Promote a balanced focus between farm and non-farm activities.
- Adopt an integrated approach among technical components.
- Remain flexible, using whatever technical entry point available, then supplement it as appropriate with other decent work agenda components.
- Take into account and take advantage of linkages between dimensions, e.g. rural-urban; local-national-international.
- Ensure continuity in rural programmes and initiatives to give time for capacity building, sense of commitment, and to achieve structural changes at operational level and policy level.

Capacity Building

- Re-appropriate, re-adapt and re0use the legacy of the ILO’s rural approaches, tools and lessons from the last 40 years.
- Establish mechanisms for impact monitoring and stocktaking to ensure a solid legacy on which to build future work.
- Build capacity within the Office, among the ILO constituents, and the development community at large to work in rural areas through the decent work approach and its technical components, and to operate in an integrated, coordinated way.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Methodology of the Review

Objective

This stocktaking of ILO's rural development work is to serve as a "trampoline" for future work. In particular, it is meant to:

- Identify valuable approaches and tools that fit (or can be easily adapted to) current rural contexts and their global environment;
- Extract lessons learned to give the Office as well as its constituents and partners effective instruments;
- Identify gaps and find mechanisms to bridge them;
- Provide broad knowledge and a "common language" on ILO rural approaches, tools and lessons to facilitate collaboration ILO-wide and encourage joint ventures;
- Identify comparative advantages to stimulate external partnerships;
- Ascertain work priorities (beginning with those identified in the Conclusions of the 2008 ILC Committee on Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction); and
- Help shape a rural employment and decent work strategy and programme for work.

Methodology

Scope

This review explores the impact of ILO initiatives on rural employment and development since the 1970s, when work in this area intensified markedly. Special attention is also given to the current context; to recent and ongoing work, as well as to the needs, challenges and opportunities in the coming years.

Impact is reviewed at 360° as concerns ILO's strategic objectives.³⁶¹ It thus covers job creation and income generation, with an emphasis on women, youth and disadvantaged groups, access to skills, sustainable entrepreneurship, extension of social protection and improved occupational safety and health and working conditions, basic labour standards,³⁶² strengthened rural organizations, rural voice and social dialogue.

The concept of "impact" has broadened in recent years, as international agencies strive to promote project ownership and build up country capacity. Within this context, the ILO understands its impact to be at multiple levels, ranging from projects to national institutions, global knowledge, policies and agenda setting (e.g. decent work). It also recognizes the relevance of processes are also recognized as having impact (e.g. broad participation, social dialogue) and of specific modalities for ILO support (e.g. integrated approaches, advisory versus direct action, multi-sectoral work).³⁶³ This study seeks as much as possible to reviews evidence of impact at these different levels.

³⁶¹ This comprehensive scope reflects the IIMS principle calling ILO to view its four strategic objectives – employment, social protection, social dialogue and rights at work – as Inseparable, Interrelated and Mutually Supportive; spelled out in the *ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalisation* (Geneva: ILO, 2008); as well as the Conclusions of the 2008 ILC Committee on Rural Employment.

³⁶² A report dedicated to analyzing the gaps in coverage and barriers to ratification and implementation of international labour standards in rural areas is to be presented separately.

³⁶³ For a discussion about impact, see WB Independent Evaluation Group: *Impact Evaluations and Development, NONIE Guidance on Impact Evaluation*. Network of Networks on Impact Evaluation (NONIE), Frans Leeuw and Jos Vaessen (Washington D.C.: WB, 2009).

The structures, working arrangements and processes considered in this review are those particularly prized nowadays; namely in ILO's *Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization* and the Conclusions of the 2008 ILC Committee on Rural Employment. They include putting countries as well as local authorities and social partners in the driver's seat (including strengthening rural organizations); participatory approaches; capacity building of constituents and stakeholders; gender equality and mainstreaming; inter-disciplinary, inter-departmental and Field-HQ-Turin Centre coordination for mutual reinforcement; external partnerships, in areas where ILO does not have leadership but that are complementary to ILO work; policy/strategic indenting; and sustainability.

Although this is not an impact assessment as such,³⁶⁴ it does consider impact at these different levels to the extent possible, in order to identify good practice and lessons. This will aid in developing realistic, strategic priorities, and make available to ILO, its constituents and partners a set of effective approaches and tools.

Challenges

A number of challenges encountered are worth noting:

- Locating impact evidence has been at times arduous. In many cases evaluations did not exist. Data from a base-line survey and surveys at project completion are usually exceptional, as ILO projects have been generally too small to justify such data collection costs. Employment Intensive Investment projects are those where impact calculations have been the most developed, in terms of increase in income, volume of employment created, and economic rates of return.
- In some instances impact cannot be measured as certain dimensions were not considered worth measuring at the time, or dimensions were less tangible, such as a change in attitude.
- A second challenge has been that full impact of rural initiatives may only appear well after the completion of the project, but ex-post evaluations are even rarer.
- Furthermore, even when impact evaluations existed, as in the case of technical cooperation projects, they followed established guidelines and were mainly concerned with determining whether individual projects had been carried out as planned and had met the objectives indicated in the project document. They typically missed the deeper and wider question of the socio-economic impact of the initiative, in terms of ILO's larger goals, that constitutes the focus of this review.
- Reviews of work in certain documents came closer to descriptions of activities and products, than to analyses from which to extract lessons.
- An even more basic challenge has been in some cases a limited oral and written "memory" for initiatives conducted in the past, including 10-15 years ago. This necessitated resorting to various

³⁶⁴ A thorough impact assessment of ILO's rural employment promotion work since the 1970s would require a large set of human and financial resources. It would also require other investigative methods and processes, including extensive field visits, and thorough consultations with ILO constituents, stakeholders and beneficiaries at country level.

means and sources to gather needed information on specific initiatives, and even more on their results, impact, follow up and lessons learned, and to “tell a story”.

Work arrangements

This stocktaking is the result of an Office-wide mobilization. A small team at HQ conceived and coordinated the exercise, supplied with information from a variety of ILO materials, often dating back several decades, developed and administered questionnaires, and prepared the review itself. However, it was able to count on the support and active collaboration of many colleagues and ex-colleagues, including over 30 rural focal points in ILO’s Units at HQ, the Field Structure and the Turin Centre, who in turn mobilized relevant colleagues and external respondents for various parts of the exercise.

The review was preceded by the preparation of a “Thinkpiece” on ILO rural work, aimed at gathering basic information about technical areas, programmatic priorities, structures and processes. This preliminary document identified the main axes of inquiry and priorities of the review; and provided impetus for a network of rural focal points and informants Office-wide.

Regular meetings and exchanges with Workers’ and Employers’ representatives at critical points of the exercise allowed reflecting their main concerns and expectations.

Information gathering

Information was collected using qualitative methods, and draws heavily on secondary sources such as available ILO materials from past years and other relevant documents and data. The primary sources of information were former ILO colleagues who held key positions during the periods under review and ILO officials with specific technical knowledge and direct experience. Beneficiaries and officials from other organizations were consulted to the extent possible. Triangulation was applied in gathering information, to double check or triple check results if needed.

The principal means used to obtain information were:

- Reviewing ILO current and past publications
- Drawing out information from ILO department and programme files,³⁶⁵ files of the ICRD and ACRD,³⁶⁶ ILO Programmes and Budgets (P&Bs), Strategic Policy Frameworks (SPFs), ILC and GB documents, Regional Labour Conferences documents, *World Employment Report* and *Global Employment Trends* issues, DWCPs, Departmental and Technical Cooperation Evaluation reports, Assessment Reports, Reviews, Project and Programme Documents, Progress Reports and Evaluations, Agreements with other organizations e.g. Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), guidelines, manuals and training packages, and recent reports;³⁶⁷

³⁶⁵ Documentation/files from, for example, the former units EMP/RU, PROG/EVAL, COMBI (later named CODEV, and currently PARDEV), EMP/INFRA, EMP/INVEST, and Bureau for Gender Equality (GENDER) among others will be located and scrutinized. For example:

³⁶⁶ Considerable information was extracted from the reports presented and discussed at the ACRD, set up to advise the Governing Body of the ILO on major trends and problems in rural contexts to help the Office deploy its financial and human resources in the most effective way, that carried out various reviews of ILO rural development activities.

³⁶⁷ Op. Cit. ILO: *Report of the Committee on Rural Employment*, (2008); ILO: *World employment report 2004-05: employment, productivity and poverty reduction* (Geneva: ILO, 2004); and ILO: *Report of the Committee on*

- Holding extensive interviews with 20 “Privileged Informants”; that is, present and former ILO senior staff selected on the basis of having worked, researched and/or driven issues related to rural development during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, hence named “privileged”. These interviews used a semi-structured questionnaire with open-ended questions to minimize “influence” and bias on the part of the interviewer/s.³⁶⁸
- Consulting and interviewing over 30 ILO Rural Focal Points, as well as Programme Officers and technical specialists/experts, with specific experience and knowledge about rural development programmes or issues.
- A field survey among some 50 ILO Programme Officers and Technical Experts; and two others involving some 40 beneficiaries (organizations/stakeholders and target groups) of ILO projects/programmes, and technical experts of other relevant organizations, selected on the basis of having worked extensively with ILO on rural employment/development.³⁶⁹
- A Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) involving 13 selected ILO technical specialists/experts at Headquarters.³⁷⁰

Questions in oral and written consultations:

- Covered to the extent possible impact related to multiple fields of employment promotion, social protection, international labour standards, and social dialogue, as well as multidisciplinary itself.
- Focused on past achievements, impact, challenges encountered and lessons learned from ILO’s past work.
- Attempted to capture interviewees’ *vision* for the future, especially regarding how ILO can effectively tackle rural employment, including ILO-wide collaboration and partnerships with relevant stakeholders.
- Treated gender mainstreaming and gender equality concerns as a crosscutting theme, as well as issues related to youth employment, child labour, disabled persons, indigenous peoples and other disadvantaged groups.

Although this review is based on qualitative evidence, the use of set issues in surveys, interviews and document analyses, coupled with a triangular approach, allowed for double and triple verification, thus strengthening the reliability of its results.

Rural Employment. Provisional Record, International Labour Conference, 75th Session (Geneva: ILO, 1988); and the Report discussed by that Committee, ILO: *Rural Employment Promotion*, Report to the International Labour Conference (Geneva: ILO, 1988).

³⁶⁸ Questionnaire available upon request.

³⁶⁹ Questionnaire available upon request.

³⁷⁰ Questionnaire available upon request.

Annex 2: ILO instruments

ILO instruments relevant to Rural Development through Decent Work

I. Core Conventions

Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29); **174**³⁷¹
 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); **150**
 Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98); **160**
 Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); **168**
 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105); **169**
 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111); **169**
 Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138); **157**
 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182); **173**

II. Priority Conventions

Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81); **141**
 Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122); **104**
 Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129); **50**
 Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144); **128**

III. Other relevant instruments

A. Conventions

Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921 (No.11); **122**
 Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention, 1928 (No. 26); **103**
 Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95); **96**
 Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97); **49**
 Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery (Agriculture) Convention, 1951 (No. 99); **52**
 Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102); **46**
 Plantations Convention, 1958 (No. 110); **10**
 Protocol of 1982 to the Plantations Convention, 1958 (No. 110); **2**
 Minimum Age (fishermen) Convention, 1959 (No.112); **8**
 Medical Examination (Fishermen) Convention, 1959 (No.113); **29**
 Fishermen's Articles of Agreement Convention, 1959 (No.114); **22**
 Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118); **37**
 Employment Injury Benefits Convention, 1964 [Schedule I amended in 1980] (No. 121); **24**
 Fishermen's Competency Certificates Convention, 1966 (No.125); **10**
 Accommodation of Crews (Fishermen) Convention, 1966 (No.126); **22**
 Invalidity, Old-Age and Survivors' Benefits Convention, 1967 (No. 128); **16**
 Medical Care and Sickness Benefits Convention, 1969 (No. 130); **15**
 Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131); **51**
 Rural Workers' Organisations Convention, 1975 (No. 141); **40**
 Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142); **67**
 Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143); **23**
 Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150); **70**

³⁷¹ Text in bold indicates number of ratifications.

Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156); **41**
 Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159); **82**
 Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168); **7**
 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169); **22**
 Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177); **7**
 Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183); **18**
 Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184); **13**
 Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187); **16**
 Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188); **1**

*Conventions with interim status*⁵⁷

Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921 (No. 11); **122**
 Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention, 1928 (No. 26); **103**
 Forty-Hour Week Convention, 1935 (No. 47); **14**
 Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery (Agriculture) Convention, 1951 (No. 99); **52**
 Holidays with Pay Convention (Revised), 1970 (No. 132); **36**

B. Recommendations

Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised), 1949 (No. 86)
 Equal Remuneration Recommendation, 1951 (No. 90)
 Indigenous and Tribal Populations Recommendation, 1957 (No. 104)
 Plantations Recommendation, 1958 (No. 110)
 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Recommendation, 1958 (No. 111)
 Employment Policy Recommendation, 1964 (No. 122)
 Vocational Training (Fishermen) Recommendation, 1966 (No.126)
 Tenants and Share-croppers Recommendation, 1968 (No. 132)
 Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Recommendation, 1969 (No.133)
 Rural Workers' Organisations Recommendation, 1975 (No. 149)
 Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975 (No. 151)
 Tripartite Consultation (Activities of the International Labour Organisation) Recommendation, 1976 (No. 152)
 Workers with Family Responsibilities Recommendation, 1981 (No. 165)
 Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Recommendation, 1983 (No. 168)
 Employment Policy (Supplementary Provisions) Recommendation, 1984 (No. 169)
 Home Work Recommendation, 1996 (No. 184)
 Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998 (No. 189)
 Maternity Protection Recommendation, 2000 (No. 191)
 Safety and Health in Agriculture Recommendation, 2001 (No. 192)
 Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193)
 Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195)
 Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Recommendation, 2006 (No. 197)
 Work in Fishing Recommendation, 2007 (No. 199)

*Recommendations with interim status*³⁷²

Social Insurance (Agriculture) Recommendation, 1921 (No. 17)
 Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery (Agriculture) Recommendation, 1951 (No. 89)

³⁷² Interim Status refers to a category of instruments which are no longer fully up to date, but remain relevant in certain aspects.

Annex 3: List of ILO Rural-Related Tools

International Labour Standards	Tools
Indigenous people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidelines for combating child labour among Indigenous and Tribal Peoples ▪ Guide to ILO Convention No 169
Child Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How-to guide on economic reintegration of children and youth formerly associated with armed forces and groups ▪ Tackling hazardous child labour in agriculture: Guidance on policy and practice, Toolkit ▪ Training resource pack on the elimination of hazardous child labour in agriculture ▪ SCREAM: Supporting children’s rights through education, the arts and the media
Employment	
Employment Intensive Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IRAP, Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning ▪ Community Contracts ▪ Employment-Intensive Infrastructure Programmes: Labour Policies and Practices ▪ Employment-Intensive Infrastructure Programmes: Capacity Building for Contracting in the Construction Sector
Enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Value Chain Development for Decent Work ▪ Local Economic Development Sensitizing Package ▪ Operational Guide to Local Value Chain Development ▪ Participative Value Chain Analysis ▪ Know About Business (KAB) ▪ SIYB / GERME Rural ▪ SIYB Family ▪ Improve Your Work Environment and Business (IWEB)
Cooperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MATCOM, Training for the management of cooperatives ▪ ACOPAM, Cooperative and Organizational Support to Grassroots’ Initiatives (Appui Coopératif et Associatif aux Initiatives de Développement à la base) ▪ Let’s organize! A SYNDICOOP handbook for trade unions and cooperatives about organizing workers in the informal economy ▪ Training resource pack for agricultural cooperatives in the elimination of child labour
Social Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rural Microfinance (in “Making Microfinance Work: Managing Product Diversification”) ▪ Financial Education: Trainers’ manual ▪ Village Banking and the Ledger Guide ▪ Business Group Formation: Empowering women and men in developing communities trainers’

	<p>manual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidelines on the formation of self-help groups – for families of working children
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) ▪ Career Guidance: a resource book for low-and middle-income countries
Crises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Livelihood Assessment Toolkit ▪ Local Economic Recovery in Post Conflict Guidelines ▪ ILO’s Role in Conflict and Disaster Settings ▪ Socio-economic Reintegration of Ex-combatants Guidelines
Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender and Entrepreneurship Together: GET Ahead for Women in Enterprise ▪ Making the strongest links: A practical guide to mainstreaming gender analysis in value chain development
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidelines for the preparation of national action plans on youth employment ▪ Juventud y empleo. Guía sindical ▪ Biz-up Self-employment skills for young people, Facilitator’s Guide and Toolkit/ User’s Guide ▪ Meeting the youth employment challenge. A guide for Employers ▪ Youth Employment: Making it Happen an electronic resource tool for employers ▪ Improving prospects for young women and men in the world of work: A Guide to Youth Employment ▪ Minute Guide for Young Jobseekers ▪ Guiding Youth Careers, a Handbook for those who help young jobseekers
Disabled persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Count Us In! How to make sure that women with disabilities can participate effectively in mainstream women’s entrepreneurship development activities ▪ Skills development through Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR): A good practice guide ▪ ILO Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace ▪ Replicating Success Toolkit.
Social Protection	
Social security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extending social security to all. A guide through challenges and options ▪ Set of tools on health micro-insurance (STEP) ▪ Social Protection Floor Initiative - Manual and strategic framework for joint UN country operations ▪ Guide DEL risks management
Labour protection and Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practical manual on ergonomic checkpoints in agriculture ▪ WIND, Work Improvement in neighbourhood Development ▪ WISE, Work Improvements in Small Enterprises ▪ Maternity policy package

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety (4th edition) ▪ Ergonomic Checkpoints in Agriculture ▪ Tackling hazardous child labour in agriculture: Guidance on policy and practice (toolkit) (see Child Labour section) ▪ Health, Safety and Environment: A series of Trade Union Education Manuals for Agricultural workers ▪ Safety and health in the use of agrochemicals: A guide ▪ Your Health and Safety at Work (series) ▪ Chemical safety training modules
Migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration
HIV/AIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HIV/AIDS Education and Counselling manual in Cooperatives and Informal Sector Economy, ILO/AIDS ▪ HIV/AIDS Peer Educators' Manual ▪ Jeu de cartes « Mieux connaître les IST/VIH/SIDA » ▪ ILO/FHI HIV/AIDS Behaviour Change Communication Toolkit for the Workplace ▪ The ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work
Social Dialogue	
Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trade Unions and Environmentally sustainable development ▪ Structure and function of rural workers' organizations: a workers' education manual, (1978). ▪ Getting together: a workers' education visual aid kit for use among Asian rural workers, (1979). ▪ Special services of rural workers' organizations: a workers' education manual, (1994) with companion volume, Structure and functions of rural workers' organizations, (1990). ▪ Training modules for rural workers education, (1994). ▪ ILO standards to promote environmentally sustainable development (TBF)
Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training material on "The effective employers' organization"
Labour Inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Global code of integrity for labour inspection ▪ A Tool Kit for Labour Inspectors: A model enforcement policy, a training and operations manual, a code of ethical behaviour

Annex 4: Approaches

Special Services Approach for Workers' (& Employers') Organizations

Rural workers remain the least organized, and consequently the most disadvantaged labourers. The 1975 Rural Workers' Organizations Convention (No. 141) and Recommendation (No. 149),¹ "affirmed [the rural workers' right] to freedom of association, set out the conditions necessary for the development of their organizations, outlined the roles that they might undertake, and suggested ways and means by which their development might be furthered."¹

Guided by these two legal instruments in the mid-1970s the rural activities section of the ILO Workers' Education Programme (EDUC) initiated a sub-programme for strengthening and developing rural workers' organizations via the provision of "special services" to groups of workers. These services complement traditional union initiatives such as negotiation, pressure-group activities and representation, by providing:

- Home-grown solutions to locally identified problems;
- Employment generation possibilities and thereby income for beneficiaries;
- Support to the organization's economic and social foundations;
- A voice to beneficiaries, including with local government; and
- A stronger participatory approach to union operations with emphasis on self-identification of needs and self-reliance.²

The dual objectives of this approach are to: 1) assist rural workers' organizations and groups in fulfilling the immediate needs of their members; and 2) in the longer run provide socio-economic empowerment for members, while helping workers' organizations strengthen ties with their affiliates and increase membership. Special services are primarily intended for trade union members, but can also be provided to more informal groups, to help them resolve a problem and/or achieve a goal collectively; the expectation being that once people experience the empowerment of working together, they will seek membership with an organization, or formalize their own.

In the late 1970s EDUC launched a variety of experimental projects throughout Central America³ to observe the effects of special services. The adaptability of these services allowed them to be used for a variety of needs ranging from legal services, child care centers, health care schemes, education services, technical agrarian services, community development, housing schemes, consumer cooperative schemes, purchasing and marketing schemes, to savings and loan schemes.⁴ Working in conjunction with several international trade union organizations,⁵ EDUC was able to introduce the approach to smaller affiliates located in rural areas. Evaluation missions confirmed that participating rural workers' organizations became better equipped to implement solutions to problems they themselves had identified.⁶

¹ILO, *Special Services of Rural Workers' Organizations. A workers' Education Manual*. Second edition, (Geneva: ILO, 1994), v.

²Giusti, Jorge. *Special Services: A Real Instrument to Strengthen the Economic Basis of the Rural Workers' Organizations and to Promote Peoples' Participation*. Workers' Education for the Strengthening and Development of Rural Workers' Organizations and their Participation in Rural Development. (Geneva: ILO, 1987), 1-8.

³Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, and Panama were some of the earliest targets.

⁴ILO, *Special Services of Rural Workers' Organizations. A workers' Education Manual*. First edition, (Geneva: ILO, 1978).

⁵Such as the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco, and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) previously known as the International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural, and Allied Workers (IFPAAW), and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

⁶Op. cit., Giusti, 1987, 3.

Special Services Approach for Workers' (& Employers') Organizations (... Continued)

This initial success led in the 1980s to replications in Asia and Africa via seminars and projects organized by EDUC. Several agricultural trade unions in India participated in training of trainer sessions, which enabled them to increase membership in their respective villages while helping identify and resolve problems such as setting up cooperative schemes to give poorer farmers access to fertilizers, forming local quality control centers for agricultural produce and setting up vocational training centers for union members' children.⁷ In Africa, special services projects also aimed at increasing rural women's participation in workers' organizations. Various training of trainer courses in Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Ghana, for instance, trained women on their rights and roles within trade unions. Trainers would then work in their respective regions to sensitize unions to the needs of their women constituents. In one instance, women from a local trade union created a communal farm whose produce was sold to raise money to build a child-care center, which they had identified as a necessity to work more effectively and efficiently.⁸

This direct, participatory approach is especially well-suited for rural contexts characterized by physical or psychological barriers to the creation of formal workers' groups such as low literacy rates, lack of resources, large distances and lack of reliable access routes, which make it harder to, for instance, organize regular union gatherings. With little resources, little voice, and no real form of assistance, the dire situation of many rural workers could worsen. The *ad hoc* nature of special services provides a simple yet effective means to identify and satisfy collectively pressing needs while encouraging organization.

The special services approach waned in the mid-1990s as ILO switched focus from rural to other priorities. Its two decades of operation however indicates capacity to enable rural workers everywhere to identify and tackle as a group their specific needs and be protagonists in social and economic development. It is also a valuable entry point for the Decent Work Agenda, since it can be easily combined with other "rural-ready" ILO tools and approaches like micro-insurance schemes, cooperatives, occupational safety and health, working conditions, training and business skills.

The added appeal of special services is its usability by employers' organizations to help strengthen and develop rural affiliates.

⁷ Op. cit., Special Service of rural workers' organizations. 1994, 7-16.

⁸ Ibid, 30.

Cooperatives Approach

Today's cooperative enterprises provide over 100 million jobs; and rural areas are host to the vast majority of these owing to the fact that such organizations are more common in the agricultural sector.¹ Their organizational model, characterized by division of risk, pooling of resources, and member-ownership, embody and disseminate the very values of the Decent Work paradigm, namely: secure jobs, fair wages, social protection, voice, participation and equality of opportunity, and can integrate a variety of ILO concerns, from HIV/AIDS to child labour. Being managed by the same people who benefit from their services, they empower members and communities and grow *with* them.

In recognition of the economic and social impact of genuine cooperatives, ILO's Recommendation 193 on the Promotion of Cooperatives (2002) mandates the Office to assist with their development. Early work concentrated mainly on legal issues and policy advice, while economic and social aspects were addressed as ILO began responding to the development needs of newly independent member States, particularly following the food security crisis of the 1970s.

It was in this context that ILO launched the ACOPAM² programme in five countries³ of the drought-stricken Sahel region, to help prevent the spread of famine and improve the impact and effectiveness of food aid. ACOPAM aimed to improve the self-sufficiency of Sahelian men and women farmers and increase food security by: 1) enhancing the organizational capacities of grassroots organizations; and 2) helping diversify economic activities of local organizations and constituent members. Main areas of intervention included: cereal banks, small-scale irrigation, gender and micro-finance, land management, and cotton marketing. ACOPAM activities also spawned health mutual benefit schemes, further demonstrating the multidisciplinary reach of the programme. When the programme ended in 2000, after 21 years in operation, it left behind a variety of important tools and a network of 188 programme partners in 8 countries that to this day are fully operational.

At its peak in the 1980s and early-1990s ILO's cooperative approach inspired various projects in over 50 ILO member States, ranging from the development of agricultural producer cooperatives, cooperative food banks, handicraft and manufacturing cooperatives, to transport, housing, consumer and savings societies. Around this time ILO launched MATCOM,⁴ an ILO multi-regional programme, developing and implementing over 40 trainers' manuals and 60 learning elements—some of which were translated into over forty languages—to be used by different types of cooperatives in several economic sectors, by various target groups and levels of cooperative management. Training manuals targeting consumer and agricultural cooperatives, for instance, offer practical and detailed advice on how to improve business operations, ranging from budgeting practices to storage methods. The high demand for MATCOM training materials for instance, prompted an ILO review (in 2008) of their relevance with an eye towards adaptation to the current context.

¹ "Cooperatives & Rural Employment," COOP Fact Sheet No. 1, (Geneva: ILO, Aug. 2007).

² Appui Coopératif au Programme Alimentaire Mondial" (ACOPAM), in English "Cooperative and Organizational Support to Grassroots Initiatives"

³ For the full program period ACOPAM worked in Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal. ACOPAM also briefly conducted activities in The Gambia and Cap Verde.

⁴ Materials and Techniques for the Training of Cooperative Members and Managers (MATCOM)

Cooperatives Approach (... Continued)

Cooperative initiatives and tools from the 1970s and '80s remain relevant and have also been incorporated into ILO programmes such as Social Finance and Enterprise. The concept of health mutual benefit schemes started under ACOPAM provided the basis in 1998 for the STEP⁵ programme aimed at fighting poverty and social exclusion through the extension of social protection and health to unprotected men and women workers. STEP achieves this by providing technical assistance, experience and training to various mutual health organizations on issues such as feasibility, management, follow-up, monitoring, coverage, health packages, law and linkages with national institutions, in over 40 countries in the regions of West and Lusophone Africa, Latin America, South Asia, and Europe. STEP initiatives funded by Portugal (STEP-Portugal) for instance has provided assistance to over 131,000 individuals.

ILO's cooperative initiative has entered a new phase based on a more community-driven approach that puts beneficiaries in the "driver's seat," with a focus on strengthening existing cooperatives (and institutions supporting cooperatives) so they may reach self-help and self-sustainability. This trend, exemplified by the COOP^{AFRICA} programme, has the ILO playing more of a supportive role by helping to promote an enabling legal framework for cooperatives, provide legal and technical advice, train, fund and establish local support networks, and "centers of competence". The new strategy is based on the promotion of R193 to create a strong legal environment for genuine cooperatives. In the last 15 years the Unit has assisted over 65 countries to reform their cooperative policies and laws. These include the *Ley Marco para las cooperativas de America Latina*; the Uniform Cooperative Act for the *Organisation pour l'Harmonisation en Afrique du Droit des Affaires* (OHADA); and conducting an implementation assessment of the 2003 European Union Regulation on cooperatives in 27 EU member states and three European Economic Area (EEA) countries.

The combined (and on-going) food security and economic crises are demonstrating that cooperatives across all sectors and regions are more resilient than capital-centered enterprises—as indicated by a lower number of bankruptcies and relative longevity.⁶ Cooperatives are emerging as real enterprises, presenting opportunities for linkages between ILO cooperative and enterprise tools (such as KAB⁷). Their high success rates and capacity for innovation allows adaptation to an increasingly globalized economy and society.

⁵ Strategies and Tools against Social Exclusion and Poverty (STEP)

⁶ Johnston Birchall and Lou Hammond Ketilson, *Resilience of the Cooperative Business Model in Times of Crisis*, (Geneva: ILO, 2009).

⁷ Know About Business.

Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development Skills Approach

Entrepreneurship and enterprise development have been an integral part of ILO's work since the 1970s. In rural areas farms themselves are agricultural enterprises, and enterprises in related sectors such as food processing, packaging, production of agricultural tools and inputs, as well as others involved in rural economic and social infrastructure complement and support them, allowing for a more diversified and sustainable economy. Entrepreneurs' *ability*, combined with a conducive business environment, is the basis of success.

The ILO has been developing a wide array of management capacity building tools¹ to support the various stages of enterprise development (from sensitization, to business launching, performance improvement and expansion); size of enterprises; target groups, including illiterate people; and a variety of trades, from handicraft to waste management. All these tools and approaches are applicable to rural areas with little or no adaptation; but three are particularly so:

Know About Business (KAB) – This package provides entrepreneurial education and business skills to stimulate young men and women to think about entrepreneurship and the role of businesses in economic and social development. Participants also learn about how to be an enterprising person, a core skill for a variety of work life situations. The KAB programme has been translated into 22 languages and has been introduced to vocational, secondary and higher education in 50 countries of which 17 already integrated it in their national curriculum. Some 4,500 education institutions have tested and have been offering KAB through some 11,000 KAB teachers to over 500,000 trainees and students.²

Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) – This methodology helps start viable businesses and strengthen performance of existing micro and small enterprises. It consists of three joint packages: Generate Your Business Idea (GYBI), Start Your Business (SYB) and Improve Your Business (IYB) – complemented by Enlarge Your Business (EYB), to help small enterprises' growth strategy. SIYB was developed in the 1990s and is today implemented in over 95 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, the Caribbean and Latin America.³ It has developed and licensed almost 300 Master Trainers globally, and evaluations carried out in 2003, 2004 and 2007 indicate that these have in turn trained over 6,000 trainers from 850 partner organisations.⁴ It is estimated that the SIYB programme has trained over 1,200,000 entrepreneurs globally, creating over 300,000 businesses and over 1,400,000 jobs in the last 15 years.⁵ Outreach and impact are particularly notable in China, where in 2003-2004 alone trainings yielded some 116 master trainers, 2,400 trainers, 760,000 potential and existing entrepreneurs, leading to 240,000 business start ups and 1,200,000 new jobs.⁶

Women's Entrepreneurship Development Programme (WED) – This programme aims to support women's entrepreneurship and employment creation potential, still largely untapped, particularly in rural areas.⁷ Combining enterprise development and gender equality, it has developed twelve tools,⁸ from broader ones such as Get Ahead, for low-income women engaged in or wishing to start a small business, to specific tools such as Improve your Exhibiting Skills (IYES) and the Women Entrepreneurs' Association Capacity Building Guide.

¹ See EMP/ENT Tool List: <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/empentrp/docs/F156451343/EMP%20ENT%20%20Tool%20list.doc>

² ILO, *Supporting Entrepreneurship Education, A Report on the Global Outreach of the ILO Know About Business Programme* (Geneva: ILO, 2009).

³ SIYB Factsheet, ILO August 2009.

⁴ Figures from ILO: *Promotion of Sustainable Enterprises, Integrated Think Piece*. EMP/ENT (Geneva: ILO, 8 July 2009). See also ILO: *SIYB Global Outreach Report* (Geneva: ILO, 2003) and ILO: *SIYB China, Evaluation Report 2004-2007* (Geneva: ILO, 2007).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ ILO, *SIYB Final Project Evaluation*. Geneva: ILO, 2005.

⁷ An evaluation conducted in 2007 showed that the design and implementation of projects targeting women entrepreneurs require specialized, dedicated approaches and tools. ILO: *Women's entrepreneurship and the Promotion of Decent Work: A thematic evaluation*. Governing Body 298th Session. Committee on Technical Cooperation. Geneva: ILO, March 2007.

⁸ WEDGE Tools Chart 2009: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---ifp_seed/documents/genericdocument/wcms_111366.pdf

⁹ See ILO WED Strategy, p.11: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_090565.pdf

¹⁰ ILO, *Implementation Report EMP/ENT: Intermediate Outcome – Sustainable Enterprises Generate Productive Jobs, Women's Entrepreneurship Development*. Internal ILO document. Geneva: ILO, October 2009.

¹¹ Despite the accrued importance of supporting women entrepreneurship as stipulated in the ILO strategy (ILO, *ILO Strategy on Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship Development*. Governing Body, 301st Session. Committee on Employment and Social Policy (Geneva: ILO, March 2008), § 41), the required substantial increases in human and financial resources has yet to take place.

Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development Skills Approach (... Continued)

The ILO's three-pronged WED strategy⁹ rests on creating an enabling environment for WED; increasing institutional capacity in WED; and developing tools and approaches targeted at women entrepreneurs and their service providers. The programme also mainstreamed disability and HIV AIDS into all of its tools and approaches. In 2008-09 alone, the programme reached nearly 10,000 entrepreneurs,¹⁰ and since its inception, in 2002, it has expanded operations to 24 countries through various projects, 14 of which are in Africa.¹¹

These tools and approaches offer several key advantages:

- **Diverse**, which allows targeting a variety of groups, trades, enterprise sizes and local realities.
- **Adaptable** to local contexts, through a systematic tailoring of the generic version of the tools to the language and specificities of the country using it.
- **Flexible**, being composed of modules, so trainers can pick the most relevant ones for the local trainees and contexts. They can also add modules on environment, occupational safety and health and working conditions in general, child labour, HIV-AIDS and other situation-specific topics as well as create new ones such as the Improve Your Work Environment and Business (I-WED) tool for micro-entrepreneurs.
- **Set within existing institutions** (schools, universities, training centers, business development service institutions, entrepreneurs' associations, public agencies, institutions, etc.), which formalizes business training and sustains outreach.¹¹
- Based on "**training of trainers**", to assist in capacity building.
- Using highly **interactive approaches** during training as well as subsequently, giving voice to trainees and getting instant feedback from them.
- **Ensuring follow-up**, through an international network of former trainees as well as follow-up mechanisms such as group or individual counseling.

Entrepreneurship and enterprise capacity building has considerable potential to boost Decent Work in rural areas. ILO's management skills tools and approaches can be easily combined with other ILO tools and products to form an integrated approach to productive and job creating entrepreneurship. The ILO-IFAD "PROMER" project supporting rural entrepreneurship and employment in Senegal since 2006,¹² shows the feasibility and effectiveness of an entrepreneurship support basis combining KAB, SIYB, WED and PACTE (a package to strengthen small entrepreneur associations' key functions and member services) with linkages to WIND, STEP, IPEC, HIV/AIDS, COOP, Social Finance and Social Dialogue tools. In East Africa, the 2010-14 "Unleashing African Entrepreneurship" project will use USD 23 million Danish funds to boost entrepreneurship and enterprise development among young men and women in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, using a combination of KAB, SIYB and Get Ahead as well as inputs from ILO social finance, social protection and training tools (TREE) among others. In Lao PDR and Cambodia, WEDGE projects combine Gender Equality, IPEC, Social finance and WED tools and approaches to improve the livelihoods of rural families, while working to remove systemic gender-based barriers.

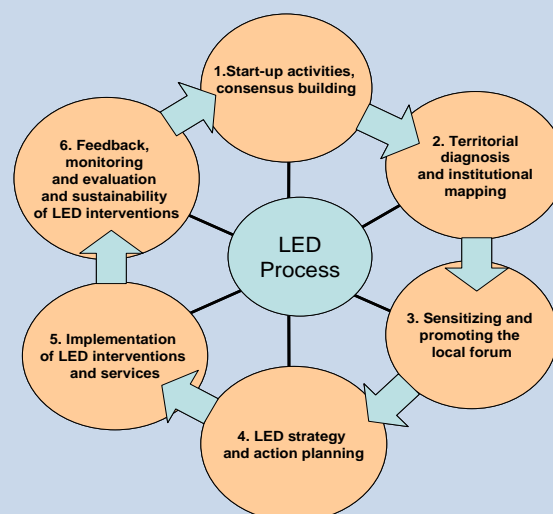
¹¹ Management guidelines for SIYB are available on how to choose these institutions and help their managers. The ILO establishes a MOU with these partner institutions on training curricula to ensure implementation and quality.

¹² In French: *Projet d'appui au développement de l'entrepreneuriat et de l'emploi en zone rurale (2006-2010)*.

Local Economic Development Approach

Local Economic Development (LED) aims at developing local economies and communities via a highly participatory approach that involves fully local public and private agents, with ownership of the process to maximize commitment and sustainability. The approach, tightly linked to local comparative advantages and endogenous resources, consists of carefully chosen priorities and well-integrated initiatives.

The LED process is highly context specific, but is typically a six-step cycle, illustrated below.



The resulting action plan can include a variety of interventions such as: improving the local business environment and promoting investments; upgrading skills and improving access to local labour market information; stimulating entrepreneurship, including cooperatives; strengthening enterprise productivity and competitiveness; promoting infrastructure building and maintenance with high local employment impact; upgrading value chains that bring local employment and income benefits; improving financial services including micro finance; improving working conditions and labour relations in small enterprises and farms; greening local economies; reducing social exclusion (including combating child labour); and strengthening the institutional framework and promoting good local governance.

A LED approach was first used in the 1970s to ease pressures during Europe's transition away from coal mining industries. In the 1990s, the ILO together with other UN agencies adapted and applied it to support peace building processes in post-conflict areas (first in Central America,¹ then spreading to Cambodia, Mozambique, the Balkans and Africa) and to support political transition (e.g. in South Africa).

Over the past decade, experience has revealed many different entry points and motivations to initiate LED, such as focus on a target group (e.g. informal economy workers, indigenous populations, unemployed youth); economic crises (leading to contracting markets and job losses); social problems (e.g. lack of social protection, crime and violence, child labour); and to structure and accelerate job-rich recovery after natural disasters (like the 2004 tsunami in Asia and 2009 earthquake in Haiti).

¹ The ILO developed its LED approach in the inter-agency programme PRODERE (1990-1995), to consolidate the peace process in Central America (Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Belize). The programme moved away from traditional central-level interventions to offer a process based on broad participation and consensus of local actors via the setting up of Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs). Local development strategies emerged that proved effective to provide quick responses to local needs, in terms of business development, employment creation, reconciliation and community building. Many of the LEDAs promoted by PRODERE are still fully operational.

Local Economic Development Approach (... Continued)

While the ILO's LED technical cooperation portfolio now covers some 15 countries worldwide, four important features characterize the approach across the diverse initiatives and countries:

1) A forum gathering local stakeholders: This LED fundamental element can take various forms. Today, some 60 LEDAs operate in over 15 countries. They are gathered into the ILS LEDA (International Links and Services for Local Development Agencies) network,² supporting national and territorial actors and LEDAs to strengthen territorial development processes within the frame of national policies. Many LEDAs set up long ago have been integrated into national policy and still have meaningful impact.

2) Integrated and interrelated support: LED strategies integrate governance components (public-private partnership, local-national relations), strategic components (coordination between planning and action), human development components (social inclusion, instruments of support to vulnerable groups, relations between centre and suburbs of the territory, environmental protection), components of territorial promotion (project financing and international marketing), and of service supply to enterprises (technical assistance, professional training, marketing and loans). LED is in fact becoming increasingly holistic and integrated. In the Nepali Dhanusha and Ramechhap districts, the LED programme (2007-2010) focuses on tourism and agriculture, developing irrigation, road and trekking infrastructure through labour-based technologies, promoting investment in business development services, upgrading food-products value-chains, and enabling local people to access those food products. In Cameroon, a LED initiative (2008-2014) is fighting child trafficking in rural areas through creating decent job opportunities for youth, women, and vulnerable groups (particularly indigenous peoples, such as the Mbororos), as well as vocational training for at-risk children, and is supplemented with alert systems on child trafficking. It also includes aspects of HIV/AIDS, SIYB, and sensitization to child trafficking and gender equality.

3) Local capacity building and knowledge management: An important focus of the ILO's LED approach is on building national and local stakeholders' capacity for effective and coherent implementation of policies and initiatives, and to secure ownership and sustainability. ILO's LED projects also carefully document impact and lessons learned. Knowledge sharing among similar projects within the same region is stimulated, for example through study visits and regional knowledge sharing events. At an international level, expert meetings of national and local policy-makers and practitioners are conducted to achieve a more coherent policy and institutional framework for LED promotion. Partnerships with agencies such as UNCDF, UNIDO and OECD's LEED programme are promoted and strengthened, to improve coordination and foster synergies in projects and to enrich the LED knowledge base. Also, a strong triangular ILO HQ-Field offices-Turin Training Centre collaboration has produced among others a multidisciplinary LED course since 2004, training over 100 people each year.³

4) Adaptability and demand-driven orientation: The drive for LED initiatives comes increasingly from constituents and development partners at country level. The focus and technical interventions vary per country. In Namibia and Egypt, LED strategies promote cultural community-based tourism. In Vietnam, LED is used to promote green jobs in rural value chains, and youth employment. In the Philippines, LED aims at supporting the peace process in a conflict-affected area through increased local job opportunities.

LED-based strategies are particularly well adapted to rural areas as they recognize and take advantage of their individual complexities and specificities, reconcile the local, national and international levels and their interconnectedness, and gather the public, private and non-governmental sectors into broad strategic partnerships to decide and implement *together* a development strategy grounded in local comparative advantages to stimulate economic activities and create good, productive jobs.

² See website <http://www.ilsleda.org/home/> accessed on 25 Feb 2011.

³ See the LED Toolbox, which contains tools relevant for the LED process as well as techniques for training. Available at <http://www.ledknowledge.org/index.php?mod=doc&act=detail&id=201&idC=1> accessed on 25 Feb 2011.

Work Improvement in Small Enterprises (WISE) and Work Improvement in Neighborhood Development (WIND) Approaches

Work-related accidents and illnesses still kill an estimated 2.3 million men and women each year and disable many more, translating into an estimated 4 per cent loss in world GDP, as well as severe income and social losses for workers and their families.¹ Workers in rural areas, particularly in developing countries, face the greatest challenges as many operate in informal activities, micro/small enterprises, and in agriculture, one of the three most hazardous sectors, where the probability of work-related accidents, illnesses, and fatalities are more frequent—and also less likely to be reported.

The ILO WISE, launched in 1988, aims to reduce hazards in the workplace by helping small businesses lacking regular access to advisory or inspection services, develop safer and healthier conditions for production. WISE is a participatory and action-oriented training approach that encourages both entrepreneurs and workers to make simple, low- to no-cost improvements in their work environments and behaviour, resulting in noticeable enhancements to both working conditions and enterprise performance.² Its user-friendly and simplified tools and practical applications allow elemental upgrades in basic safety (e.g. lighting and ventilation, tools and workspace organization, waste management, chemicals handling and storage) as well as access to basic services such as clean drinking water and sanitary facilities.

The approach was first implemented in the Philippines, and its success prompted the government to integrate WISE at national policy level.³ More recently, Tanzania's governmental programme, "Improving Job Quality in Africa (IJQA)," embraced WISE and is working with a public vocational training institute to implement the methodology statewide. Thanks to its practical, tangible, and immediate nature (e.g. low cost, rapidly noticeable results, simple Training of Trainer programmes, ease of use with other ILO tools, etc.) WISE is ideal for small, rural enterprises, where a little improvement can go a long way.

WISE training materials have been translated into 12 languages and have contributed to improvements in small-scale industries in over 20 countries throughout Asia, the America, and Africa. Its adaptability has generated several other ILO work improvement tools tailored for: entrepreneurship (WIDE),⁴ environment and business (I-WEB),⁵ and agriculture (WIND). WISE also shares features with ILO's SOLVE,⁶ SIYB,⁷ SCORE,⁸ and WEDGE,⁹ and is highly compatible with other ILO employment creation approaches and tools such as EIIP,¹⁰ TREE,¹¹ and WED,¹² thus creating possibilities for synergies.

¹ ILO, *Facts on Safety and Health at Work*. World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2009 (Geneva: ILO, 2009). Available at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_105146.pdf accessed on 25 Feb 2011.

² ILO, *Defining Strategies for Improving Working and Employment Conditions in Micro and Small Enterprises and the Informal Economy – Overview of the ILO Learning and Research Agenda*. Conditions of Work and Employment Programme (Geneva: ILO, 2003).

³ ILO, *An Introduction to the WISE Programme*. Conditions of Work and Employment Programme (Geneva: ILO, 2007). Available at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/condtrav/pdf/pamphlets/brochure.pdf> accessed on 25 Feb 2011.

⁴ Work Improvement and the Development of Enterprise.

⁵ Improve your Work Environment and Business.

⁶ Addressing Psychosocial Problems at Work - Stress, Tobacco, Alcohol & Drugs, HIV/AIDS, Violence.

⁷ Start and Improve Your Business.

⁸ Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises.

⁹ Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality.

¹⁰ Employment-Intensive Investment Programme.

¹¹ Training for Rural Economic Empowerment.

¹² Women's Entrepreneurship Development.

Work Improvement in Small Enterprises (WISE) and Work Improvement in Neighborhood Development (WIND) Approaches (...Continued)

The adaptation of WISE to agriculture in 1995 through WIND has greatly benefitted a marginalized segment of the population living and working in rural regions. Their work is all the more unsafe as the workplace is often also the family dwelling, thus multiplying risk of injury or illness, and exposing family members too. For small, family farms in rural areas where accessing resources that can improve productivity through better working and living conditions is scarce, WIND provides a locally-grown, affordable support system that responds to farmers' immediate needs through a participatory process, with equal input from both women and men. It helps local farmers find practical solutions they can rapidly implement using locally available materials and skills. It is cheap, effective, and sustainable through a follow-up mechanism consisting of a local support network of trained instructors and volunteer farmers who periodically visit agricultural communities to provide help and maintain communication with participants.

The practicality and self-sustainability of WIND has facilitated its spread to 23 countries.¹³ In Vietnam the success of the approach, which initiated over 100,000 improvements in one province alone, prompted its incorporation into the government framework for OSH in agriculture.¹⁴ As observed in Kyrgyzstan, in addition to promoting safe work, gender equality, and entrepreneurship, WIND encourages social dialogue and tripartite relationships, easing its integration at policy level.¹⁵ In fact, WIND can be an entry point for the Decent Work Agenda as a whole, since it too can be easily combined with other ILO products like micro-insurance and micro-finance schemes, as well as with training and business skills development.

Despite their demonstrated potential, WISE and WIND have been carried out as programme work and not as fully funded and designed project work. The most immediate downside is the lack of evaluative and stocktaking materials, essential to allow strengthening approaches and incorporating them into other ILO products. Efforts are underway to formulate Implementation Guides and identify indicators to gauge impact in future evaluations. More also needs to be done in-House to upscale WIND and WISE so they can reach policy level. Undoubtedly by simultaneously promoting working conditions and productivity in informal, micro-, and agricultural activities, the methodology is particularly relevant to combating rural poverty and stimulating growth.

In October 2008 an international WIND conference hosted by Kyrgyzstan facilitated exchanging experiences among WIND programmes in Africa, Asia, Central Asia and Latin America. It recommended in particular the expansion and replication of the WIND methodology, and the development of a "WIND Plus" concept incorporating in addition to WIND, vocational training, youth employment support, job creation for potential migrants, SIYB, micro-finance, cooperative development, social security, and child labour in a coherent package for rural development and employment.

¹³ WIND has been or will soon be implemented in the following countries: Azerbaijan, Benin, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Honduras, India, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali, Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.

¹⁴ Tsuyoshi Kawakami, Ton That Khai and Kazutaka Kogi: Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Development (Vietnam: Center for Occupational Health and Environment, Department of Health, 2005). In the province of Can Tho alone, where the programme was initiated, farmers have made over 100,000 improvements using WIND.

¹⁵ ILO, *Fair WIND for Safety in Kyrgyzstan*. Institutional Video (Geneva: ILO, 2008). Available at: http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Broadcast_materials/Institutionalvideos/lang--en/docName--WCMS_101324/index.htm accessed on 25 Feb 2011.

Employment Intensive Investment Approach

Infrastructure is a major entry point and a catalyst for pro-poor growth. It is vital to safeguard natural resources and to allow people access to basic social and economic services such as healthcare, potable water, transport and communication, education, and livelihood opportunities. Lack or degradation of infrastructure delays economic development isolates and even discriminates against the poorest communities, especially in rural areas. The ILO is capitalizing on the fact that infrastructure and construction represent 40 to 70 percent of public investment expenditures in developing countries to introduce technologies that can create more employment and reduce poverty in a structural and financially sustainable manner. Comparison studies have demonstrated that labour-based technologies cost 10 to 30 percent less than equipment-intensive methods; reduce foreign exchange requirements by 50 to 60 percent; and create two to five times more employment—all for the same investment.¹

These results make the Employment-Intensive Investment approach particularly suited for rural settings in three types of activities: (i) Productive infrastructure (irrigation, minor dams, drainage and sewerage systems; terraces; land development, feeder roads); (ii) Social infrastructure (schools, health centers, water supply schemes); and (iii) Protection of the resource base (soil and water conservation, environmental protection, erosion control, afforestation, etc).

The ILO's interventions combine work at the **upstream policy level**, advising the ministries in charge of employment, economic planning, and procurement to include employment criteria in the planning and programming work of the line ministries that are main users of public investments in rural areas; with work at the **meso level**, to develop institutional capacity of governments (at national and decentralized levels), private sector, and civil society; and work at **project level**, to provide technical assistance to identify opportunities and formulate employment-intensive investment programmes that enhance economic growth and income distribution, setting up monitoring and evaluation systems to track the amount injected into the local economy, employment created and who benefits from these job opportunities.

The ILO's work in EII began in the mid-'70s and peaked in the '80s and early '90s, when it was operating demonstration projects in over 30 countries² and attracting about half of the ILO's TC resources. To strengthen delivery capacity, the ASIST³ programme was created in the early '90s to provide a link between country level activities, sub-regional backstopping and Headquarters. The demand for EII especially in Africa and Asia resulted in the creation of an ASIST Africa (1991) and an ASIST Asia-Pacific (1998) programme. A biannual international forum, the Regional Seminar for Labour-Based Practitioners, provides for international support and knowledge sharing. After a decline of the EII Programme in the '90s, the recent food security and economic crises as well as environmental concerns, have renewed interest in labour-intensive public works to provide quality local jobs. Since 2000, the ILO has been promoting employment-intensive investment in 52 countries: 26 of which are in Africa, 13 in Asia, 11 in Latin America, along with one each in Iraq and Azerbaijan.⁴

¹ ILO, *Reducing the Decent Work Deficit in the Infrastructure and Construction Sectors* (Geneva: ILO, 2004).

² Kaj Thorndahl, *The DANIDA Support to the Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP)*, (Geneva: ILO, 2002), 10.

³ Advisory Support, Information Services and Training Programme.

⁴ ILO, *Independent Evaluation of the ILO's Strategy for Employment-Intensive Investment*. ILO Governing Body, 297th session, Programme, Financial, and Administrative Committee (Geneva: ILO, November 2006), 4; "Employment Intensive Investment Programme – Countries Covered," Available at, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/recon/eiip/countries/index.htm> accessed on 25 Feb 2011.

Employment Intensive Investment Approach (... Continued)

The EIIP's key tools include:

- **Integrated Rural Infrastructure Planning (IRAP)**

Consisting of a set of local level, participatory, planning tools to identify infrastructure needs at community level. The IRAP process produces ranked priorities for infrastructure investments in various economic and social sectors such as transport, agriculture, health, education, and water. It is an important tool in the democratisation of rural areas.

- **Technology choice and local resource-based approach**

Ensuring that while maintaining cost competitiveness and acceptable engineering quality standards, light equipment is used and employment opportunities optimized in construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of infrastructure. A variety of technical documents and training materials are available.

- **Strategies for private sector development and training courses for SMEs (organisation, business management, technology, etc.)**

Training of local contractors and establishing an efficient contract administration are essential elements of a conducive environment. Training courses designed for local contractors are available in different technical fields

- **Employment friendly procurement systems and contract procedures, and capacity building for local government institutions** Applying employment-intensive technologies calls for participation of local actors and use of local know-how and materials, and EIIP has been instrumental in adjusting procurement procedures, specifications and contract packaging accordingly. Decent work elements are to be reflected in standard contracts, along with transparent procurement procedures.

- **Community Contracting**

Providing an opportunity to develop local governments, small contractors and community groups into effective rural infrastructure construction and maintenance entities

- **Course on Innovations in Public Employment Programmes**

Covering the full spectrum from short-term public work programmes to employment guarantee schemes. It includes, besides public works, activities such as social services and community works. These programmes pursue the twin objectives of providing employment and social protection.

- **Employment Impact Assessments (EIA) of infrastructure investments and projects**

Providing to policy makers analytical tools to facilitate their choice in resource allocation. The methodologies (Input-output models and Social accounting matrices -SAM) evaluate and estimate the actual and potential impact of applying labour-based infrastructure programmes on a variety of macro-economic variables such as forward and backward linkages, employment creation (direct, indirect and induced), GNP, household income and consumption, private investment, public finance deficit and fiscal space, investment spending, fiscal earnings, balance of payments and multiplier effects.

These EII tools are complementary and compatible with other ILO products such as local economic development, micro-finance, business development skills, and training components. One example is "Start and Improve Your Construction Business (SIYCB)", first launched in South Africa, an adaptation of the generic Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) tool, preparing businesses and creating an enabling environment for productive delivery of infrastructure and sustainable practices while promoting job creation and income generation.

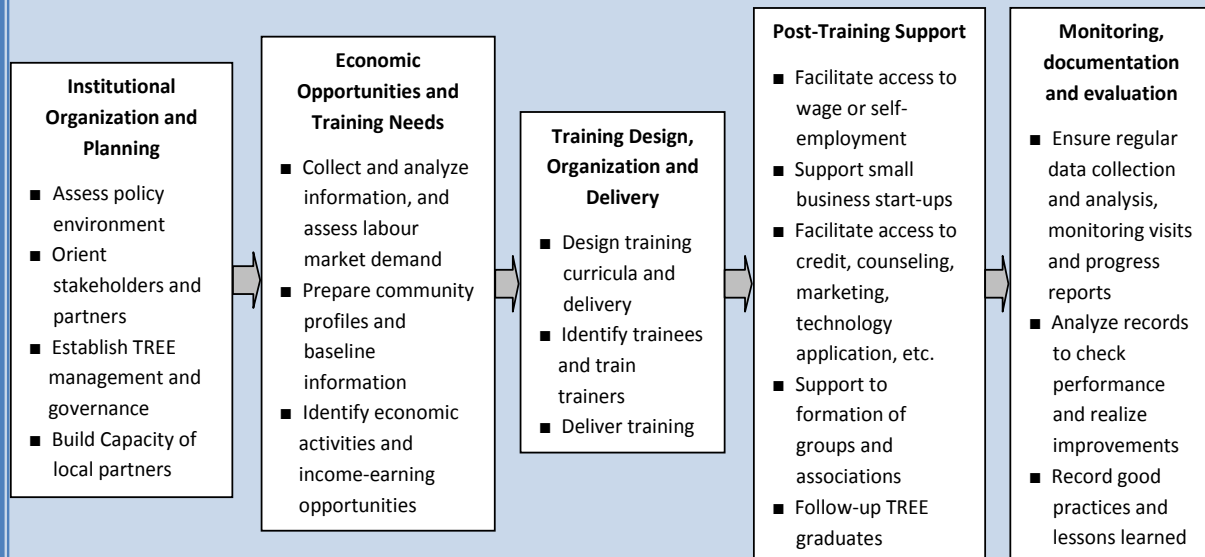
The EII approach is deeply rooted in the Decent Work Agenda. It emphasizes integrating relevant labour standards into contract documents; monitoring and promoting decent work conditions in infrastructure works, including equality of job training and entrepreneurship opportunities as local contractors for instance, for men and women; participation and negotiation; and it actively stimulates people and community empowerment, and democratization at grass-roots level.

Training for Rural Economic Empowerment Approach

Training is a key determinant of sustainable development, empowerment and pro-poor growth. The ILO's Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) methodology, developed over the past decade, is based on a range of ILO rural skills development experiences since the late 1970s.¹

TREE stimulates the creation of local economic and employment opportunities for rural people and disadvantaged groups such as the poor, rural women, youth and disabled persons, by linking training directly to specific opportunities for self and wage employment and increased incomes. It encompasses a wide variety of skills: skills for construction work, maintenance and repair, rural industry and crafts; non-farm skills for agricultural production, processing, storage, distribution and marketing; skills for cooperatives and rural project management, and for entrepreneurial development; skills contributing to home and family improvements; skills related to provision of basic community services and facilities; safety and health skills; and non-vocational skills that help solve social problems, through leadership training, organizational development, group participation and functional literacy.

TREE consists of a sequence of five processes:²



TREE differs from classical vocational training methods by 1) identifying income generating opportunities leading to training design; 2) involving local community and social partners throughout the processes; and 3) facilitating post-training support. It also mainstreams local economic development, gender issues as well as those concerned with disabled persons and other socially excluded groups.

¹ The training for Rural Gainful Activities (TRUGA) – mainly implemented in Asia and Africa - and Skills Development for Self-Reliance (SDSR) - mainly in Anglophone Africa – emerged in the 1970s-early 80s. In the 1990s they were combined into the Community-Based Training (CBT) for (Self-) Employment and Income Generation.

² ILO, *Rural Skills Training: A Generic Manual on TREE* (Geneva: ILO, 2009).

Training for Rural Economic Empowerment Approach (... Continued)

TREE's modular approach allows adaptation to a range of training delivery situations, including in the absence of established training centres in rural communities. It uses short-cycle training courses which are closely related to the actual working environment. It also allows the integration of other ILO tools and approaches, in particular SIYB, Grassroots Management Training, WEDGE, LED, and those concerned with eliminating child labour and occupational safety and health.

TREE has also proven a valuable approach in sensitive areas such as the Pakistani North-West Frontier Province, where in 2002-2007 it trained over 3,000 youth, women and disabled persons, over 93% of whom used the skills learned to secure jobs.³ The project also increased access to information and financial resources by helping beneficiaries form 175 new savings and credit groups and 7 business associations; and it instructed over 4,000 persons in work skills, literacy, or numeracy.⁴ Mainstreaming women into the local economy was a major achievement. The percentage of women able to get a wage or pursue self employment following those training and literacy courses reached 91%, a particularly impressive figure. Results for male youth were also impressive, as 76% obtained wage or self-employment after training and another 12% became apprentices. Encouraged by such economic and social results, in 2008 the national government adopted TREE as its main approach for developing skills and creating employment.⁵ In the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao in the Philippines where poverty levels were high and where communities suffered years of lack of peace and order, TREE had proven an effective tool for employment creation. Of the beneficiaries trained about 95% had some form of employment and monthly incomes increased by over 100%.⁶ TREE proved to be an effective approach in restoring livelihoods to many internally displaced people due to the tsunami in Sri Lanka and was mainstreamed as a key approach to rural development. A TREE project in Niger led to development of a National Policy for Technical, Educational and Vocational Training.⁷ In Burkina Faso the TREE methodology is being integrated into the "10,000 youth" national program for rural training that began in January 2010.

TREE has proven its effectiveness in various settings, being practical and adaptable to diverse situations and areas. It has the potential to contribute to the ILO Decent Work agenda by bringing about pragmatic and relevant skills to people living and working in rural areas, giving them the means to develop, implement and sustain professional as well as personal facets of their lives. In 2009, the Government of Denmark funded a large (USD 16 million) 5-year ILO skills development programme for rural youth, with two entry-points: TREE and upgrading of informal apprenticeships that will allow further dissemination of the approach.

³ Dr. Huxley and Ms. Lazo, *Final Evaluation of TREE project: Pakistan and the Philippines*. (Geneva: ILO/USDOL, 2007)

See also ILO, *Evaluation of the InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability*. Governing Body, 291st Session, Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee (Geneva: ILO, 2004).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Government of Pakistan, Prime Minister's Secretariat: *Skilling Pakistan: A Vision for the National Skills Strategy 2008-2012*. National Vocational and Technical Education Commission (NAVTEC) Available at <http://www.navtec.gov.pk> accessed on 25 Feb 2011.

⁶ Dr. Huxley and Ms. Lazo, *Final Evaluation of TREE project: Pakistan and the Philippines*. (Geneva: ILO/USDOL, 2007)

⁷ ILO project: "Appui à la formation professionnelle et continue et à l'apprentissage". The national policy is financed independently from the ILO support by a Training Fund (2-3% apprenticeship tax).

Annex 5: Rural Focal Points ILO-wide

Units	Full Title of Departments & Offices
➤ EMPLOYMENT	Employment Sector
- COOP	Cooperatives
- ENTERPRISE	Job Creation and Enterprise Development Department
- SEED	Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development
- SFP	Social Finance
- SKILLS	Skills and Employability Department
- POLICY	Employment Policy Department
- ANALYSIS	Policy Analysis and Research
- EIIP	Employment-Intensive Investment Unit
- CRISIS	Crisis Response and Reconstruction
- YEP	Youth Employment Programme
- YEN	Youth Employment Network
➤ PROTECTION	Social Protection Sector
- TRAVAIL	Conditions of Work and Employment Programme
- SAFEWORK	Safety and Health at Work and the Environment
- SECSOC	Social Security Department
- HIV/AIDS	AIDS
- MIGRANT	International Migration
➤ STANDARDS	Standards and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Sector
- NORMES	International Labour Standards
- IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
➤ DIALOGUE	Social Dialogue Sector
- ACT/EMP	Employers' Activities
- ACTRAV	Workers' Activities
- DIALOGUE	Industrial and Employment Relations Department
- LAB/ADMIN	Labour Administration and Labour Inspection Programme
- SECTOR - Agriculture, - Forestry, - Food and Beverages	Sectoral Activities
➤ CABINET	Director-General's Office
➤ INTEGRATION	Policy Integration and Statistics Department
➤ STAT	Bureau of Statistics
➤ GENDER	Bureau for Gender Equality
➤ PARDEV	Partnerships and Development Cooperation Department
- CODEV	Development Cooperation
➤ ED/MAS	Management and Administration
- EVAL	Evaluation Unit
- PROGRAM	Bureau of Programming and Management

➤ TURIN CENTRE	International Training Centre – Turin
➤ CABINET	Director-General’s Office
➤ INTEGRATION	Policy Integration and Statistics Department
➤ STAT	Bureau of Statistics
➤ GENDER	Bureau for Gender Equality
➤ PARDEV	Partnerships and Development Cooperation Department
- CODEV	Development Cooperation
➤ ED/MAS	Management and Administration
- EVAL	Evaluation Unit
- PROGRAM	Bureau of Programming and Management
➤ TURIN CENTRE	International Training Centre – Turin

Field Offices	Countries Covered
➤ NEW YORK OFFICE	<i>United Nations</i>
➤ AFRICA	
- Abuja	Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone
- Addis Ababa	Ethiopia, Somalia
- Algiers	Algeria, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Tunisia
- Antananarivo	Comoros, Djibouti, Madagascar
- Cairo	Egypt, Eritrea, Sudan
- Dakar (and Abidjan)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Togo
- Dar-es-Salaam	Kenya, Tanzania (United Republic of), Uganda
- Harare	Zimbabwe
- Kinshasa	Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon
- Lusaka	Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia
- Pretoria	Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland
- Yaoundé	Angola, Cameroon, São Tomé
➤ AMERICAS	
- Lima	Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
- Port of Spain	Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago
- San José	Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama
- Santiago	Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay
- CINTERFOR	

➤ ARAB STATES	Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Occupied Arab Territories, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen
➤ ASIA & PACIFIC	[Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Korea (Republic of), Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore]
- Bangkok	Cambodia
- Bangkok	Lao People's Democratic Republic
- Bangkok	Thailand
- Beijing	China (including Hong Kong SAR and Macao SAR), Mongolia
- Colombo	Maldives (Republic of), Sri Lanka
- Dhaka	Bangladesh
- Islamabad	Pakistan
- Jakarta	Indonesia, Timor-Leste
- Kathmandu	Nepal
- Manila	Philippines
- New Delhi	India
- Suva	Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tuvalu, Vanuatu
- Hanoi	Viet Nam
➤ EUROPE	
- Budapest	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia (The former Yugoslav Republic of), Moldova (Republic of), Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine
- Moscow	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Annex 6: Examples of rural-related ILO external partnerships³⁷³

Institution (date of formal agreement)	Overlapping goals and core values	Complementary competencies and comparative advantages	
		For ILO	From ILO
Agencies			
➤ FAO (2004)	Fight hunger by helping improve agricultural productivity and the lives of rural populations; Gender equity	Small farmers; Expertise in agricultural technology; Country presence	Employment; Wage workers; Expertise in soft skills (entrepreneurial, etc.) and capacity building; ILS; OSH; Decent work approach; Links with employers and workers
➤ IFAD (1978)	Promote agriculture and rural development; Empower the rural poor to achieve higher incomes and overcome poverty, with emphasis on the poorest, marginalized people, indigenous peoples, gender equity, youth; Capacity building	Small farmers; Links with farmers' organizations, local NGOs and communities; Advanced tools for context assessment, project design and implementation, and for M&E; Funding agency	Technical expertise and tools; Decent work approach; Gender equality; Links with employers and workers
➤ UNDP (1993)	Fight poverty; Human development; MDGs	Coordination among UN agencies and international development actors; Widespread country-level presence and programme operation; Multi-sector partnership within countries; Strategic partnership with national and sub-national planning and budgeting authorities	Technical expertise and tools focusing on employment and other decent work areas; Links with employers and workers; Local implementation capacity
➤ UNWTO* (2008)	Guarantee decent work and respect of fundamental principles and rights at work; Promote coherence between economic, social and environmental dimensions; Sectoral approach	Sectoral technical expertise	Technical expertise and tools; Links with employers and workers; Country presence; Focus on social dimensions of rural tourism (ex. in LDC IV cooperation)
➤ World Bank (various years, including 2006, 2007, 2009)	Support countries improve agriculture's contribution to food security, raise income of the poor; facilitate economic transformation; provide environmental services; empower the ultimate beneficiaries, especially women and including farmers, livestock keepers, fishers	Strong in-country representation; Depth in technical expertise; Demonstrated ability to respond to shocks (e.g. rapid response to global food crisis); Strong links with Ministries of Finance and other sectors; Largest number of country programmes across bilateral and multilateral development partners; Strong policy base; Robust facilitation role with local and national authorities; Strong institutional memory; Solid in local processes; Funding Support and partnership.	Technical expertise; Tested methodologies and tools for capacity building in employment and decent work; Strong links with employers and workers and other social partners, including cooperatives and social economy organizations; Tested partnership in design, supervision and monitoring of methodologies and tools at the neighbourhood, community, local and national levels; Strong in local processes.
NGOs			
➤ ICA (2004)	Cooperative values and principles; Inter-linkage of cooperatives to employers' and workers' organizations (because of it ICA holds one of 7 permanent observers' seats on ILO's GB)	Outreach: ICA has 223 member organisations from 87 countries active in all economic sectors and representing over 800 million people.	Involvement in TC; Link with UN, Policy advice
➤ IFAP (NA)	Develop farmers' capacities to influence decisions and to live decently from their work	Outreach to small farmers. IFAP represents over 600 million farmers grouped in 120 national organizations in 79 countries.	Involvement in TC; Link with UN, Policy advice

³⁷³ This table is not exhaustive, but merely provides an example of partnerships, highlighting respective shared goals and comparative advantages.

➤ Oxfam (NA)	Right to sustainable income generation, and to basic social services; Economic justice; Gender equity; Equality; Labour rights	Links with civil society; Focus on small farmers; High convening power; Presence in numerous organizations, initiatives, and over 100 countries; Advocacy capacity	Links with governments, employers and workers; Focus on wage workers
RESEARCH INSTUTIONS			
➤ IFPRI			
GROUPINGS			
➤ COPAC (1971)			
➤ IPCCCA (2007)	Fight child labour, especially hazardous work; Improve rural livelihoods; Improve safety and health in agriculture	Expertise in agriculture; Expertise on and links to small farmers; Providing a decent work orientation	Technical expertise and tools; Decent work approach; Links with employers and workers
➤ High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (2009)	Fighting poverty	Providing a decent work orientation to a major multilateral initiative	Employment, social protection and other decent work dimensions; Links with employers and workers; Monitoring impact of the economic crisis on purchasing power, hunger, malnutrition

*World Tourism Organization

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