

## **Resolution concerning HIV/AIDS and the world of work**

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization,

Recalling that HIV/AIDS is at present a universal pandemic that threatens all people, but also recognizing that it disproportionately impacts on economically and socially disadvantaged and excluded groups,

Recognizing that HIV/AIDS is a growing health problem, as well as a developmental crisis with disastrous consequences for the social and economic progress of many countries,

Noting with deep concern that, of the nearly 34 million people worldwide currently living with HIV/AIDS, 95 per cent are in the developing countries; that in African countries development gains of the past 50 years, including the increase in child survival and in life expectancy, are being reversed by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and that HIV infection is increasing rapidly in Asia, particularly in South and South-East Asia, and in the Caribbean, and that it threatens the political, economic and social sustainability of these regions, while recognizing that in the rest of the world a complacent attitude cannot be adopted and efforts on prevention reduced,

Recognizing the effects of HIV/AIDS on the world of work: discrimination in employment, social exclusion of persons living with HIV/AIDS, additional distortion of gender inequalities, increased number of AIDS orphans, increased incidence of child labour, and the retention of older persons in the labour force,

Recognizing that HIV/AIDS threatens decent work in an all-embracing manner, and noting that HIV/AIDS has adversely impacted on economic growth and employment in all sectors of the economy, depleted human resources, challenged social security and health systems, and threatened occupational health and safety systems,

Recognizing that the spread of AIDS can be prevented, including through actions at the level of the workplace, and that it is possible, by a multidimensional, integrated, sustained and coordinated international response, to prevent its spread and protect those who live with it and its consequences, including the families and communities affected,

Noting that a number of important initiatives have already been undertaken, including those by the United Nations organs and specialized agencies,

Recognizing that the non-availability and limited access to HIV/AIDS-related drugs and treatments at affordable costs in developing countries also has further accentuated the spread of the disease in those countries,

Recalling the adoption by the International Labour Conference of relevant and related instruments, including the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No.155) and the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161),

Also recalling the adoption by the International Labour Conference of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, in 1998,

Noting the effect of some structural adjustment programmes on public health structures and services, education and social protection systems,

Recognizing the enormous potential of employers' and workers' organizations, in partnership with governments, to contribute to the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS and to support the needs of workers living with HIV/AIDS;

1. Calls upon the governments of member States and, where applicable, employers' and workers' organizations to:

- (a) raise national awareness, including by involving other concerned groups as appropriate, particularly of the world of work, with a view to eliminating the stigma and discrimination attached to HIV/AIDS, as well as to fight the culture of denial, and thereby preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS;
- (b) strengthen the capacity of the social partners to address the pandemic;
- (c) strengthen occupational safety and health systems to protect groups at risk;
- (d) formulate and implement social and labour policies and programmes that mitigate the effects of AIDS;
- (e) effectively mobilize resources.

2. Requests the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to instruct the Director-General to:

- (a) continue and intensify, where appropriate, research on action to be taken and behaviours to be adopted in dealing with HIV/AIDS at the workplace;
- (b) present, within the framework of the discussion of the Programme and Budget for 2002-03, a proposal regarding a meeting of experts which will develop international guidelines on action to be taken and behaviour to adopt on HIV/AIDS at the workplace;
- (c) collaborate with concerned international organizations in order to avoid duplication of efforts;
- (d) expand its capacity to deal with HIV/AIDS at the workplace, especially in its multidisciplinary teams;

- (e) undertake research and surveys to determine the implications of HIV/AIDS for the world of work;
- (f) document and disseminate all useful information on national experiences including examples of good practices on HIV/AIDS at the workplace;
- (g) engage in advocacy and training on HIV/AIDS and the world of work;
- (h) strengthen the capacity of the social partners to formulate and effectively implement policies, programmes and activities at the national and enterprise levels.

Geneva, June 2000