



The Bahamas ratifies major new ILO Maritime Labour Convention

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas on 11 February 2008 handed over its instrument of ratification of the historic Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Ratification makes the Bahamas the third major shipping country in the world, after Liberia and the Republic of Marshall Islands, to ratify the Convention

adopted by the 94th International Labour Conference (Maritime) in Geneva in February 2006. The Bahamas is the third largest flag State in the world.

The Convention sets out a seafarers' "bill of rights" and is intended to be the "third pillar" in the international shipping regulation complementing the major maritime



Dr. Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry, Director, International Labour Standards Department, ILO, Geneva receives ratification instruments from Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Brent Symonette (right) and Minister of Maritime Affairs and Labour, Senator the Honourable Dion Foulkes, The Bahamas.

Conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on environmental protection and ship safety and security. Aimed at protecting the world's 1.2 million or more seafarers, it addresses the evolving realities and needs of an industry that handles 90 per cent of the world's trade.

"The Bahamas had an important role in the development and final adoption of this super Convention," said Senator the Honourable Dion A. Foulkes, Minister of Maritime Affairs and Labour, "and I am personally proud that as Minister with responsibility for both portfolios, we are able to ratify this Convention at this time. The Bahamas has a demonstrated commitment to ensuring that ships flying the Bahamas flag are high quality shipping operations. This necessarily includes ensuring conditions of decent work for those who work on Bahamas registered ships."

The Convention also contains provisions allowing it to keep in step with the needs of the industry and help secure universal application and enforcement. It sets minimum requirements for seafarers to work on a ship and contains provisions on conditions of employment, hours of work and rest, accommodation, recreational facilities, food and catering, health protection, medical care, welfare and social security.

Ratification by the Bahamas now brings the ILO even closer to meeting the requirement for entry into force of the Convention, namely its ratification by at least 30 ILO member States with a total share of at least 33 percent of world gross tonnage.

For further information on the ILO Maritime Convention, please visit: http://www.ilo.org/global/What_we_do/InternationalLabourStandards/MaritimeLabourConvention/lang--en/index.htm

Promoting Decent Work for all

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the United Nations agency devoted to advancing opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

Its main aims are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue in handling work-related issues.

The ILO works through its tripartite membership in 181 countries - governments, employers and workers, all of whom jointly shape its policies and programmes. ILO is the global body responsible for drawing up and overseeing international labour standards.

The ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean, based in Trinidad and Tobago, serves 13 ILO member States and 8 non-metropolitan territories of the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. The Office works closely with United Nations agencies and regional organizations such as CARICOM.

Member States:

Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago

Non-metropolitan territories:

Anguilla, Aruba, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Turks and Caicos Islands.

ILO Caribbean Newslink is produced by the Information Unit of the ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean. Please email all enquiries to ilocarib@ilocarib.org.tt



World Day for Safety and Health at Work - April 28

Theme: Managing risks in the work environment
Slogan: My life, my work, my safe work

For more information, please visit <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/worldday/index.htm>

Harmonizing labour force surveys for regional integration

Five countries of the region have embarked on an ILO project to produce a harmonized series of key labour market indicators from their Labour Force Surveys (LFS). The Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago are the beneficiaries. The project aims to generate comparable labour market information which can assist policymakers in the design and monitoring of policies in the regional integration process.

The ILO will work closely with the National Statistical Offices in the five countries to enhance the quality of their labour force surveys as well as establish a harmonized series of six indicators. In addition, the surveys will be expanded to include the measurement of the informal sector, informal employment and underemployment - a relatively new area of measurement for the region.

The ILO will collaborate with UNECLAC on harmonizing an approach for measuring informality in the labour market. UNECLAC is implementing the global pilot project of the United Nations Statistical Division on the measurement of the informal sector and informal employment.



32nd. CARICOM Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians held in Paramaribo, Suriname

Harmonization of labour force statistics requires that comparable concepts, definitions and classifications are used for data collection and that comparable outputs are produced.

The ILO project on the harmonization of Labour Force Surveys received the endorsement of the 32nd. CARICOM Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians held in Paramaribo, Suriname on 5-7 November 2007. During the meeting, the

Directors of the National Statistical Offices of the five countries had a "side-meeting" and decided to advance the project using the report prepared by ILO consultant, Robert Pember, as a basis for harmonizing the labour force surveys. A technical working session, recommended by the Directors, was held on 29-30 November 2007 in Jamaica for Labour Force Survey coordinators, and officials responsible for data collection.

Aligning labour laws in the CSME

Representatives of Ministries of Labour and employers' and workers' organizations of seven Caribbean countries gathered from 3-6 December 2007 in Freeport, The Bahamas for an ILO capacity-building workshop on labour legislation. Participants learnt of participatory labour law-making processes and gained a better understanding of the provisions of the

in the regional integration process.

CARICOM adopted Model Labour Laws in 1995 and 1997. With the implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), there is heightened concern about equality of treatment throughout CARICOM and the level of protection offered under national labour law. It was recognized by the tripartite partners that harmonization of

labour laws within the CSME did not entail making each country's labour law the same but rather aligning the laws to localize the main principles contained in ILO Conventions, the CARICOM Model Labour Laws as well as the jurisprudence established by the ILO's Committee of Experts on the



Tripartite representatives from Jamaica at ILO workshop - (Left to right) Dr. Trevor Murray, (employer), Lambert Brown, (trade union) and Netricia Miller (Government).

CARICOM Model Labour Laws, their linkages to ILO Conventions and to their national labour laws. The workshop provided an opportunity for participants to learn first hand about variations in legislation across countries and the need to align labour legislation

Application of Conventions and Recommendations.

The workshop is one of the activities of the Canadian-funded ILO project for the harmonization of labour legislation being implemented by the ILO.

ILO receives US\$34 million Gates Foundation Grant for microinsurance

The ILO and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have partnered to create the Microinsurance Innovation Facility, an initiative that will provide grants and technical assistance in developing new kinds of insurance to assist those in the lower income bracket. Over the next three years, the facility will issue bi-annual requests for proposals and provide funding and technical support to organizations serving the poor. The facility is being funded by a US\$34 million grant from the Gates Foundation and is led by the ILO's Social Finance Programme. Microfinance, including microinsurance, is an important aspect of the ILO's work.

For more information, please visit:
http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Press_releases/lang--en/WCMS_088398/index.htm

The Bahamas resumes TRIFOR - national tripartite forum and initiates work on its Decent Work Country Programme

On 22 October 2007, The Bahamas resumed its national tripartite forum, TRIFOR, under the theme "The Importance of Social Dialogue in Achieving and Maintaining Industrial Harmony." Attended by more than 300 persons from various government

institutions and ministries, the representative employers' and workers' organizations, and major non-governmental organizations, the forum focused on proposals for amending the Employment Act. In delivering the keynote address at the British Colonial Hilton, Senator the Honourable Dion Foulkes, Minister of Maritime Affairs and Labour, pledged "an open door policy" with trade unions and employer associations in order to maintain industrial harmony. Dr. Ana Teresa Romero, Director, ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean, addressed the forum.

Following the TRIFOR, a two-day tripartite programming workshop and consultation was held to develop a Decent Work Country Programme for The Bahamas. The Bahamas is one of the first countries of the Caribbean to initiate work on the development of a Decent Work Country Programme.



Dr. Ana Teresa Romero, Director, ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean addresses TRIFOR in The Bahamas. Sitting is Harcourt Brown, Director of Labour, Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Labour.



Participants of the two-day tripartite programming workshop on the Decent Work Country Programme.

What are Decent Work Country Programmes?

Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) have been established as the main vehicle for delivery of ILO support to countries. They promote decent work as a key component of national development strategies. At the same time they organize ILO advocacy and cooperation at the service of tripartite constituents in a results-based framework to advance the Decent Work Agenda.

Tripartism and social dialogue are central to the planning and implementation of a coherent and integrated ILO programme of assistance to constituents in member States.

Each DWCP is organized around a limited number of country programme priorities and outcomes. These are further detailed in an implementation plan. Monitoring and evaluation guidelines complement this approach.

For more, please visit www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/program/dwcp/index.htm

Tripartite discussion initiated on DWCP for the Netherlands Antilles

An ILO team, accompanied by Mrs. Louise de Bode-Olton, Counsellor in the Mission of The Netherlands with responsibility for the Netherlands Antilles, Trinidad and Tobago, met with tripartite constituents on 19-21 November 2007 in Curacao to discuss the elements of a Decent Work Country Programme. The team also paid a courtesy visit to the Honourable Emily de Jongh-Elhage, Prime Minister and H.E. Adele van der Pluim-Vrede, Acting Governor General, both of whom expressed great interest in fostering strong social dialogue.

ILO Action Programme for the Barbados tourism sector

An ILO Action Programme has been launched for the tourism sector in Barbados with the support of the ILO's Sectoral Activities Department, Geneva. Entitled "Addressing decent work issues in the tourism sector through social dialogue," the programme was launched on 6 December 2007, at a workshop held for managers, supervisors and employees of the tourism sector.

The Action Programme is intended to sensitize employers and workers to the importance of encouraging decent work in the tourism sector, addressing the decent work deficits, promoting the sector as a viable avenue for employment and enterprise creation, and attracting and retaining workers. The Programme was formulated based on consultations held with the Ministry of Labour and Civil



Vincent Burnett, Deputy Chief Labour Officer addresses hospitality students on decent work

Service, the Ministry of Tourism, representatives of workers' and employers' organizations and the Barbados Hotels and Tourism Association. A workshop for hospitality students and upcoming school leavers was held on 29 January 2008. Other activities are planned.

ILO scales up HIV/AIDS workplace response in Eastern Caribbean

The ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean is scaling up its workplace response to HIV/AIDS in the Eastern Caribbean. It is utilizing a fast-track approach patterned after the HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programmes being implemented in Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname.

The approach includes a mapping exercise on HIV/AIDS and the workplace situation in each of the selected countries; sensitization workshops for representatives of government, employers' and workers' organizations, enterprises and non-governmental organizations; and enterprise-level action with those companies that have expressed an interest.

The fast-track initiative on HIV/AIDS and the workplace has already been introduced in Grenada, Dominica and Saint Lucia. Others will be launched in St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Antigua and Barbuda in 2008.

Suriname launches HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme

On 18 December 2007 the ILO / HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme for Suriname was launched. The Project Advisory Board, which is providing guidance on the implementation of the project, presented its work plan to the Honourable Drs. Joyce Amarello-Williams, Minister of Labour, Technological Development and Environment, Suriname. A sensitization workshop for government representatives, employers and trade union representatives was subsequently held. The project is being funded by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Photo: The Honourable Drs. Joyce Amarello-Williams, Minister of Labour, Technological Development and Environment, Suriname addresses participants at the launch. On the left is Daniella Eiloo-Amadsalipan, Project Co-ordinator.



ILO partners with T&T's Labour and National Security Ministries for HIV/AIDS Public Information Fair

On 6 December 2007, the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, Trinidad and Tobago, in collaboration with the ILO and the Ministry of National Security, mounted

a public information fair on the Brian Lara Promenade, a popular public walkway in Port of Spain. The highlights of the fair included booths by a number of participating enterprises and ministries in the T&T HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme, and the free rapid HIV/AIDS testing provided by the Northwest Regional Health Authority. The event received wide media coverage.

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY



Dr. Charles Douglas, (right) Executive Director, Jamaica Productivity Centre presents a token of appreciation to workshop presenter Mah Lok Abdullah, Consultant and former Director-General, National Productivity Corporation, Malaysia.

Jamaica's National Productivity Awareness Week

The Jamaica Productivity Centre once again successfully hosted its second National Productivity Awareness Week from 18-22 November 2007. The main highlight was a seminar for private and public sector managers on productivity measurement and benchmarking. The main presenter was Mah Lok Abdullah, Consultant and former Director-

General, National Productivity Corporation, Malaysia, who was sponsored by the ILO's Employment Sector, Geneva and the ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean.

ILO support for St. Lucia Trade Union Federation

The St. Lucia Trade Union Federation is receiving technical support from the ILO as it prepares to take on its leadership role in national dialogue on workplace and employment issues. The Federation was established in 2005 and has nine affiliated members. In October 2007, ILO facilitated a three-day capacity-building workshop for its staff and leaders of its member organizations. The General Secretaries of the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados, and the Grenada Trade Union Council were on hand to share their federation's own experiences. The workshop was co-ordinated by ILO Consultant, Hayden Hernandez.

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New Caribbean publication on industrial relations

Dennis de Peiza, General Secretary, Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados has launched a new publication on Caribbean industrial relations. The publication is a collection of articles, speeches and commentaries on Caribbean industrial relations issues. For more information, please visit www.regionalmanagementservices.com