

The two-monthly CO-Suva publication features a collection of news items from our website <http://www.ilo.org/suva>. Hyperlinks have been added for further reading online.

Your feedback and comments are appreciated.

For more information please contact: Peter Blumel, peterb@ilo.org,
(679) 3313 866 ext.127

Message

Welcome to the first edition of our News Brief for 2012

During this year we intend to publish six editions and with a special edition prior to the annual International Labour Conference (ILC) which is to be held in Geneva (Switzerland) from 30 May to 15 June 2012. This year the topics at the Conference include the youth employment crisis and the possible adoption of a recommendation on the Social Protection Floor. These topics are of particular relevance to Pacific Island Countries, and we will keep you informed as more information is made available. We also hope that you start planning your participation at this important Conference.

During the first half of this year, in each of the eight member States covered by the ILO Country Office for the Pacific Island Countries, we will conduct, with our tripartite constituents, a review of the on-going Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). These reviews will be participatory and will be conducted with a view to improving our existing service to constituents, and clarifying our work plans for the remainder of 2012, and beyond. As all these DWCPs end in 2012, in the second half of this year, in each country we will be working with our constituents to define new DWCPs. In doing this, it is my expectation that we will build on our past experiences and aspirations to more clearly defined priority outputs that we can jointly focus on in the years ahead. These plans all need to be integrated with the newly developing **United National Development Assistance Framework** (UNDAF) for the Pacific Island Countries. This is why the ILO has been active in the developing the UNDAF and why we have been keeping constituents informed and encouraging their participation in the UNDAF country consultations.

I look forward to working in each and every country covered by this office this year and on behalf of the ILO Team supporting Pacific Island Countries, we wish you a prosperous and productive 2012.

David Lamotte, Director, ILO Country Office for the South Pacific Island Countries

Highlight

Tuvalu ratifies the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006)

Tuvalu is the fifth member State from the Asia-Pacific region – after Australia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands and Singapore – to have ratified the landmark Convention.

http://www.ilo.org/suva/information-resources/public-information/press-releases/WCMS_174988/lang--en/index.htm



Global Employment Trends 2012: World faces a 600 million jobs challenge, warns ILO

The world faces the “urgent challenge” of creating 600 million productive jobs over the next decade in order to generate sustainable growth and maintain social cohesion, according to the annual report on global employment by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

<http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/global-employment-trends/lang--en/index.htm>

Youth employment

The ILO has warned of a “scarred” generation of young workers facing a dangerous mix of high unemployment, increased inactivity and precarious work in developed countries, as well as persistently high working poverty in the developing world. The world is facing a worsening youth employment crisis. The ILO’s programme on youth employment operates through a global network of technical teams at its headquarters in Geneva and in more than 60 offices around the world. It provides assistance to countries in developing coherent and coordinated interventions on youth employment.

<http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/lang--en/index.htm>

Watch a new video “Voices of Youth on Social Justice” and, share your voice on our YouTube channel ILOTV and engage with the youth employment issue at Facebook.com/youth.ilo



News round up

Pacific unions call for faster progress on the implementation of core conventions

Getting the most out of the Decent Work Country Programme was a key theme of the ILO Pacific Trade Union Workshop on International Labour Standards and Capacity Building held in Auckland, New Zealand, in December 2011. Senior union representatives from Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands met for two days to look at progress on how their respective countries were implementing the core ILO conventions around freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, along with the current labour law reform processes in their own countries.

http://www.ilo.org/suva/WCMS_173600/lang--en/index.htm



Emerging Pacific Women's Leadership Program

For several months in 2011, Strategies for Decent Work Specialist for the ILO Office for Pacific Island Countries Ms. Laila Harre has been in communication with management staff from Vital Voices Global Partnership. This resulted in the ILO Office for Pacific Island Countries being invited to make a presentation and to discuss opportunities for women to influence Decent Work at a Emerging Pacific Women's Leadership Program workshop hosted by Vital Voices Global Partnership and held in Le Lagon Hotel, Port Vila, Vanuatu from 7th – 9th December 2011. http://www.ilo.org/suva/WCMS_173603/lang--en/index.htm



Gender Specialist starts work at ILO Office for South Pacific Island Countries

Line Begby is a 32 years-old Norwegian who has joined ILO Suva as the new Gender Specialist. Before moving to Fiji she worked for two years at the Bureau for Gender Equality unit at ILO's headquarter in Geneva, where she (among other things) managed a global gender mainstreaming project. She has a masters' degree in Comparative Religions, and has also studied French, Human Rights and International Women's Rights. Before starting in ILO she worked for an NGO in Norway and Tanzania to inform the public about the UN . She also has experience from Amnesty International in Norway and its campaign to end violence against women. http://www.ilo.org/suva/areas-of-work/WCMS_173602/



Fiji Police Officers trained on child labour issues

Preventing the abuse and exploitation of children in Fiji is a priority for the Ministry of Labour. In this regard, the Ministry of Labour's Child Labour Unit which has been established with assistance from the EU through the ILO TACKLE project, conducted a two-day training for community policing officers in January 2012, to assist the officers recognise issues related to child abuse, child labour, child protection, rights of children and responsibilities of parents and guardians as well as the role of the government and civil society organisations.

http://www.ilo.org/suva/WCMS_172939/lang--en/index.htm

Employment Relations Service & Guide to Industrial Relations in Fiji launched

Strong, representative and independent employers and workers organisations are necessary for the practice of genuine social dialogue amongst representatives of governments, employers and workers. Working towards this goal, the Fiji Commerce and Employers' Federation (FCEF) in partnership with the ILO's Employers' Bureau, ACT/EMP, launched its Employment Relations Service in December 2011. The service involves the employment of an Industrial Relations (IR) officer based in FCEF to assist employers with their IR queries or cases. In addition, FCEF launched an Employer's Guide to Employment Relations in Fiji.

http://www.ilo.org/suva/WCMS_172938/lang--en/index.htm

Other Recent Events

Promoting Decent Work for People with Disabilities in Fiji

ILO facilitated a National Stakeholders information sharing meeting for promoting Decent Work for people with disabilities in Nadi in December 2011. Fiji is the only Pacific Island country to have ratified ILO Convention 159 and is an emerging leader on disability issues in the Pacific Region, particularly relating to the vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities in this region. In June 2010 Fiji signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons (UNCRPD) and its optional protocol. Fiji has progressed in the implementation of legislative initiatives, and at the moment is the only country in the Pacific that has labour legislation with a provision [ERP sect 84(4)] for employment of disabled persons.

http://www.ilo.org/suva/WCMS_173606/lang--en/index.htm

Tripartite Consultation on the Employment Relations Bill of Vanuatu

The ILO contributed to further discussions on proposed revisions to Vanuatu's Employment Relations Bill. In December 2011, a meeting of tripartite constituents agreed on key areas where changes are needed to progress the Bill. A key area of agreement is that new provisions need to be developed to ensure that workers and employers have access to a simple, timely and low cost system for resolving employment disputes. The ILO has since been preparing a revised draft to reflect workers, employers and Government discussions. Further consultations took place in February 2012 to discuss amendments made to the Employment Relations Bill as a result of the December consultation and to reach tripartite agreement around certain outstanding issues for reform.

These issues included coverage of the Bill, termination entitlements, maternity leave, powers of labour inspectors and the definition of 'essential services.' Workers' and employers' representatives, along with Government officials, participated in the meeting. Workers and employers were supported at the consultation by expert mentors from the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions and Business New Zealand.



Look ahead

International Women's Day, 8 March 2012

To commemorate the International Women's Day, 8 March, ILO will this year organise focus group discussions in Fiji and Vanuatu for women workers with care responsibilities. The ILO wants to hear about the issues women face in relation to their work and their care roles. Their experiences and opinions will help to form policy advice and the development of ILO programmes in the Pacific. The discussions will be organised jointly with FTUC in Fiji and the Pacific Institute of Public Policy in Vanuatu. http://www.ilo.org/suva/WCMS_173605/lang--en/index.htm

Social Protection Floor Initiatives update

Investigations thus far confirm that both Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands are making progress in terms of access to, and delivery of, basic health and education services. There is more to be done, however, to ensure basic protections such as access to drinking water and sanitation, as well as good nutrition. Large proportions of the working age population are in subsistence and informal work. The draft assessments, commissioned by the ILO, for both countries will be available for more public feedback at the end of March. Also in March, the assessment of progress on the social protection elements of the Decent Work Country Plans (DWCPs) will inform the development of a new programme of work for the 2012-2017 DWCPs which will aim to make social security provisions for workers more certain, and to smooth costs for employers. Discussions with social partners, national planning agencies, the provident funds as well as development partners aim to prepare the ground for a future where there are more supports (cash or in kind) for the wider population that complement the Kastom supports in both countries. http://www.ilo.org/suva/WCMS_173604/lang--en/index.htm

Samoa identified for ILO-MasterCard Foundation partnership

The ILO has recently had the opportunity to enter into a partnership with the MasterCard Foundation called the "Work4Youth" (W4Y) Project. The project, which began in June 2011 and will run through May 2016, will be instrumental in strengthening the capacity of the ILO to deliver services to constituents in the priority area of youth employment. Samoa has been identified as one of 28 target countries – five countries across four regions and eight countries in sub-Saharan Africa – to be invited to engage in the programme. The immediate objective of the project is to "strengthen knowledge of the youth employment challenge at global, regional and national levels supports the shaping of evidence-based policies and programmes". The topic that interests us most specifically is the transition of young people from school to the labour market. One of the core outputs that will help to meet the objective is the running of the ILO's school-to-work transition survey (SWTS) in Samoa. In collaboration with the ILO tripartite constituents and the National Statistics Office in Samoa, the project plans to conduct 2 surveys in 2012 and 2014.

ILO to take an active role in engaging and coordinating youth related activities in the Pacific

The United Nations Resident Coordinator has formalised ILO's Chair of the UN Working Group for Youth (UNWGY). The efforts of CO-Suva and with the support of Regional Office through the Youth Employment Specialist has allowed the ILO to now take an active role in engaging and coordinating youth related activities in the Pacific. Youth, including youth employment, is featured in the 3rd Outcome area "Poverty reduction and inclusive economic growth" in the draft UNDAF 2013-17. In addition to that, ILO has taken the lead role in the development of a Youth Employment Framework/Strategy as follow up from the endorsement by the Pacific Island Forum Leaders late last year.

David Lamotte (Director) will chair the UN Working Group for Youth with the assistance of Edward Bernard. While ensuring that other youth related issues continue to be sufficiently addressed, this leadership will allow ILO to mobilise support to raise and maintain the profile of youth employment as one of a number of priority issues in the Pacific.

Key Resources

Pacific related video productions available on YOUTUBE - ILO TV Channel

Labour Law Reforms in Vanuatu

Provides a glimpse of an ILO initiative in Vanuatu; improving labour market governance by promoting the rule of law through a fair legal framework and full protection of human rights is fundamental to good governance. <http://youtu.be/NbQL-3036lg>

South South Cooperation (PNG-Fiji)

Provides a glimpse into the initiatives of the Government of Fiji and the Government of Papua New Guinea to improved practices and shared learning between their respective Ministries of Labour. Captures the interviews of Minister's of Labour and illustrate cooperation initiatives. <http://youtu.be/2kMJJBpZnQs>

Youth Employment Advocacy in the Pacific

The Pacific Youth Council through its Youth Employment Advocacy project conducts national-level consultations (Tonga, Vanuatu, Samoa, Solomon Islands) and regional-level advocacy events. Through this project, the youth-led steering group were successful in getting the issue of "Youth Employment" raised at the highest level at the 42nd Pacific Islands Leaders Forum in Auckland, New Zealand in September, 2011 <http://youtu.be/NbQL-3036lg>



The Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The ILO's Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006 provides comprehensive rights and protection at work for the world's more than 1.2 million seafarers. The Convention aims to achieve both decent work for seafarers and secure economic interests in fair competition for quality shipowners. An estimated 90% of world trade is carried on ships and seafarers are in this sense essential to international trade and the international economic and trade system. The new labour standard consolidates and updates more than 68 international labour standards related to the Maritime sector adopted over the last 80 years. The Convention sets out seafarers' rights to decent conditions of work on a wide range of subjects, and aims to be globally applicable, easily understandable, readily updatable and uniformly enforced. It has been designed to become a global instrument known as the "fourth pillar" of the international regulatory regime for quality shipping, complementing the key Conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The decision by the ILO to move forward to create this major new maritime labour Convention was the result of a joint resolution in 2001 by the international seafarers' and ship owners' organizations, also supported by governments. They pointed out that the shipping industry is "the world's first genuinely global industry" which "requires an international regulatory response of an appropriate kind – global standards applicable to the entire industry".

A screenshot of the ILO website page for the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006. The page includes a navigation menu, a main heading "Maritime Labour Convention", and several sections: "Introduction to the International Labour Standards", "Subjects covered by International Labour Standards", "Applying and promoting International Labour Standards", "Information resources and publications", "International Labour Standards Policy", "Ratifications of the MLC", "Ratification and Implementation", "MLC News", "Text of the convention", "Resources for States", and "Training". A circular graphic shows the number of ratifications as 22.

http://www.ilo.org/global/standards/maritime-labour-convention/WCMS_CON_TXT_ILS_MAR_FAQ_EN/lang--en/index.htm

News@ILO, February 2012; The February 2012 e-newsletter of the ILO in Asia and the Pacific contains the latest news from the regional office, a feature on green jobs, a selection of the latest publications, and details of forthcoming events and meetings. http://www.ilo.org/asia/info/public/newsletters/WCMS_172350/lang--en/index.htm

DECENT WORK

A better world starts here.