CHAPTER I

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Before 1914, there had been some awareness of the possibilities of international action in the field of labour. But it was not until 1919 that measures were taken to provide a mechanism to give life to the idea.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, governments had gained some experience in dealing with the problems of labour through international negotiation. The first steps in the field of labour were taken by the non-official organizations. The International Association for Labour Legislation was established in 1900. In 1906, the association persuaded the Swiss government to convene a conference. At this conference, representatives from twenty countries adopted a resolution for limiting the nightwork of women in factories. Another factor which led to the establishment of the ILO was the pressure exerted by the organized labour movement.

Resolutions were adopted by several national trade unions on this subject. At the close of World War I, international meetings of national labour groups became increasingly insistent in their demands for action.

The Paris Peace Conference of 1919, which met only two months after the end of the First World War, agreed to set up a Commission on International Labour Legislation. Later on, a recommendation was made by this Commission that an International Organization should be formed in order to examine new problems of labour and industry and to assist in finding solutions to them.

The proposals of the Commission were accepted by the Peace Conference on April 28, 1919. A draft of a Constitution for the ILO was incorporated as part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles by the Peace Conference. In this way the ILO came into existence.

Social justice to the working peoples of the world is recognized as a basic condition of a durable peace. The ILO was founded in 1919 to work for social justice. It became the first specialized agency of the UN in 1946.

The ILO is the only major organization originally part of the League of Nations system that has existed from the founding of the League in 1919 down to the present day.

Its aim is to promote social justice in all the countries of the world. It carries out this mandate by promoting decent living standards, satisfactory conditions of work and pay and adequate employment opportunities.

The activities of ILO were continued at reduced scale throughout World War II. During the years between its establishment and the outbreak of the Second World War, ILO played a leading role in promoting the improvement of labour conditions throughout the world.

In 1944, after an interval of five years, regular sessions of the General Conference were resumed, with the 26th session held in Philadelphia. At this session, the ILO considered its post-war status, policy and programme. It also adopted the Declaration of Philadelphia which redefined the aims and purposes of ILO.

An agreement bringing ILO into relationship with the UN, in accordance with Article 63 of the UN Charter came into force on December 14, 1946 upon its approval by the 2 General Assembly of the UN.


AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the ILO were originally set forth in the preamble to its Constitution written in 1919. The preamble declares that "Universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice." Hence the basic task of ILO is to promote social justice by improving conditions of work in all parts of the world. ILO sets itself certain goals, such as: regulation of the hours of work; prevention of unemployment; provision of an adequate living wage; provision of old age; assurance of equal pay for work of equal value etc.

The Declaration of Philadelphia, which was adopted by the 1944 International Labour Conference, rephrased and broadened the "aims and purposes" of the ILO and the principles which should inspire the policy of its members. President Roosevelt stated "that the declaration summed up the aspirations of an epoch that had known two world wars and that it might well acquire a historical significance comparable to that of the U.S. Declaration of Independence."

The functions and responsibilities of ILO were redefined by the declaration. The declaration reaffirms the fundamental principle upon which ILO is based, in particular,

it affirms that labour is not a commodity; freedom of expression and of association are essential to sustained progress; and poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere.

The Declaration of Philadelphia recognizes the solemn obligation of ILO to promote programmes to achieve full employment and the raising of standards of living, recognition of the right of collective bargaining, extension of social security, etc. The Declaration embodies a pledge that ILO will cooperate with other international bodies in the achievement of the objectives it sets forth in the promotion of the health, education and well being of all people.

In October 1948, the 28th session of the Conference adopted an amendment to the constitution by which the objects which were set forth in the Philadelphia Declaration were included among those to be promoted by ILO. The text of the Declaration was also annexed to the Constitution of ILO.

**STURCTURE & ORGANIZATION OF ILO**

The International Labour Conference, the Governing Body, and the International Labour Office are the principal Organs of the ILO.

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One of the most distinctive features is its tripartite structure. It is an inter-governmental agency, but employers and workers as well as governments take part in its work. Discussing this system of tripartite representation in 1969, the Director General noted that the ILO is "the only inter-governmental agency in whose work non-government delegates take part on an equal footing with government representatives as a matter of constitutional right. Representatives of employers and workers' organizations are included in its policy-making, standard setting, and executive machinery and participate, with full voting rights in all these aspects of its work." In the democratic forum of ILO, employers' and workers' delegates have a free voice. They can and often do, disagree with the governments and with each other. The supreme deliberative body of ILO is the International Labour Conference. It is composed of 4 representatives of each Member-State. Each national delegation is composed of two government delegates, one employers' delegate and one workers' delegate. It meets annually at ILO headquarters in Geneva and is attended by more than 1,000 delegates, technical advisers and observers. The Conference elects the Governing Body and adopts the budget and International Labour Conventions and Recommendations.


The executive council of ILO is the Governing Body. It normally meets three or four times a year at Geneva to decide policy and programmes. It is composed of 48 members, 12 representing employers, 12 representing workers, and 24 representing governments. The Governing Body appoints the Director General of the International Labour Office. It examines the proposed budget submitted to it each year by the Director General and approves it for adoption by the Conference. Elections to the Governing Body take place after every three years.

The International Labour Office in Geneva is headed by the ILO Director General. It is the Organization's Secretariat, research centre, operational headquarter and publishing house. Its staff consists of about 3000 people of some 100 nationalities.

ILO consists of the Conference, the Governing Body and the Office. ILO also acts through regional conferences, industrial committees and other subsidiary bodies.

According to the Constitution of ILO, a member of the UN may become a member of ILO by communicating to the Director

General "its acceptance of the obligations of the Constitution of ILO." Countries not members of the UN may be admitted to ILO by a two thirds vote of the International Labour Conference.

The International Labour Organization's budget adopted each year by the Conference, is based on the contributions from member countries. These contributions are made according to a scale determined by the Conference.

ACTIVITIES

The activities of the ILO can be broadly classified into two categories, namely those relating to adoption of International Labour Standards and those relating to the provision of assistance in improving such Standards. These Standards take the form of Conventions and Recommendations.

In order to strengthen its actions in all parts of the world, it has decentralized its activities. A regional office has been established in each major region, with a resident director and a team of regional experts and advisors.

A. International Labour Standards

International Labour organization's principal achievement has been the formulation of an extensive International

Labour Code through the drafting and adoption of various standard-setting Conventions and Recommendations.

Through ratification by member states, Conventions create binding obligations to make the provisions effective. Recommendations provide guidance to policy and practice. The first International Convention which was adopted in 1919 was the "Hours of Work Convention." It established an eight-hour day and the six-day week in industry. The International Labour Conference had adopted 280 International Labour Standards by the end of 1971. These standards range over a wide field of social and labour matters including basic human rights such as freedom of association, abolition of forced labour and elimination of discrimination in employment. Together they constitute the International Labour Code.

Each Convention is a legal instrument regulating some aspects of labour administration, social welfare or human rights. Each Convention is conceived as a model for national legislation. Member Countries, even though they may have voted for their adoption are not bound to ratify the Conventions.

But under the Constitution of ILO, they are obliged to bring all Conventions adopted by the Conference to the attention of their legislative authorities. Once a Convention or Recommendation is adopted by the Conference, every member government of the ILO is bound to bring it before its appropriate legislative authorities within twelve to eighteen months. Member governments must report back to the ILO on measures taken to bring the ILO Convention or recommendation before their competent legislative authorities and the decisions made by the authorities. For the adoption of a Convention at least two thirds of the votes of the government, employers' and workers' delegates of all countries which are represented in the International Labour Conference are required.

Once a Convention is ratified and has come into force, every country that has ratified it, is obliged to take all necessary measures to make its provisions effective. By ratifying a Convention, the ratifying country has to report periodically to ILO on its implementation in its territory.

Unlike the Conventions that the International Labour Conference adopts, the adopted recommendations are not international treaties and therefore not subject to ratification. These recommendations can never be binding on a member government.

in the sense that the provisions of a ratified Convention are binding. Nevertheless, the Recommendations constitute an important part of the International Labour Code. Since 1948 the Governing Body of ILO has the right to ask the member governments periodically to what extent they have given or intend to give effect to Conventions not ratified and to Recommendations. The International Labour Code is continually being revised and extended not only to broaden its scope but to keep pace with advancing concepts of social and economic welfare.

The International Labour standards set forth objectives and guidelines for the improvement of working and living conditions of labour. It is up to national governments to attain these standards, they may take years. Lack of resources, shortage of skilled manpower, and social impediments often come in the way. So the fight against poverty cannot be effectively carried on without other forms of assistance. ILO also provides direct assistance to governments to improve economic and social conditions in their countries. These activities are called technical co-operation activities as the ILO itself does the job instead of laying down norms.

(B) **Technical Co-operation activities**

While still carrying out the important functions of formulating and administering International Labour Standards, the ILO has become an 'Operational body'. It stands ready to take direct action to improve the social and working conditions of people anywhere in the world. The most significant aspect of the change in this direction is ILO's participation in what are known as the "Technical-Assistance Programmes." They are designed to promote economic and social development in the under-developed countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

During the first thirty years of its existence, the activities of ILO were mainly confined to considering and investigating labour conditions and legislation throughout the world. It also recommended member governments, to implement new improved legislation, where appropriate.

From 1949, the ILO has become a more operational body. Its activities are not only limited to drawing up international standards, on the other hand it provides expert assistance and advice to help countries translate these standards into

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reality. ILO provides international assistance to increase workers' skill, to make better wages and to raise industrial productivity.

The ILO is concerned with human resources development and the promotion of productive employment. In other words it studies manpower requirements and manpower policies in different countries. It also assists in programmes for vocational training, management development, and productivity improvement. More than half of ILO's technical assistance is in the general field of manpower, including vocational training. It also provides technical assistance in productivity and management development, social security, labour conditions and administration.

Technical Cooperation activities are carried out mainly under financial aid made available by the UNDP and in cooperation with the other specialized agencies like FAO, UNESCO, WHO, and UNICEF. In addition, resources are also earmarked from ILO's regular budget. The assistance is generally in the form of experts, fellowships and equipment.

In 1950, the UN began its Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA). Nine years later it established its

Special Fund. Both Programmes were later merged into the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). ILO carries out the bulk of its technical assistance projects under the aegis of the UNDP. In 1963 the agency spent $10.98 million for technical assistance and the total estimated expenditure for ILO technical assistance programmes amounted to $13.85 million in 1964 as compared with $10.98 million in 1963.

In 1966, ILO spent almost $16 million for technical assistance. During 1967, there was further growth in ILO's technical co-operation activities for the development of human resources, social institutions and the improvement of living and working conditions. During the year the Agency spent almost $17.6 million for technical assistance, compared with $16 million in 1966. During 1968, ILO spent more than $21.4 million for technical assistance compared with $17.6 million in 1967. During the year 1970, the Agency spent more than $24.6 million on technical assistance compared with $20.9 million in 1969.

In 1970, nearly 1,000 experts were at work on more than 300 projects in 100 countries for the development of human

resources and of social institutions, as well as for the improvement of living and working conditions. In 1971, there was further growth in the ILO technical co-operation activities for the development of human resources and social institutions and the improvement of living and working conditions. During 1971, the ILO spent more than $37.8 million on technical assistance, compared with $20.9 million in 1970.

(A) PRODUCTIVITY

Poverty goes hand in hand with low productivity. Increased productivity is the key to higher living standards. After deciding to make technical assistance one of the main concerns, the UN stated that the object of the entire programme was to increase the productivity of material and human resources, to obtain a wide and equitable distribution of the benefits of such increased productivity, and to raise the living standards of the world's people.

The first step in a typical ILO-assisted project to increase productivity is to enlist the interest and cooperation of the employers, workers, and all others concerned in

advanced concepts of management. ILO has assisted in setting up and operating many productivity institutes and pilot projects.

(b) **ILO's Role in Training**

The basic objective of ILO's work in the field of manpower organization is: to give workers the maximum opportunity to find jobs, qualify for promotions, obtain advancement; and to enable employers to find qualified workers in the numbers they need.

ILO may assist a country in assessing its manpower resources and needs. It has also assisted in setting up a net-work of local employment offices as well as in establishing facilities for market analysis, job analysis and the like. Its extensive programme of assistance in the field of vocational training complements these activities.

(c) **ILO's International Institute for Labour Studies**

In 1960, the ILO's International Institute for Labour Studies was established at Geneva. The Institute is an advanced educational and research institution which deals with

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social and labour policy. It brings together international experts representing employers, management, working and government interests. Its activities also include international and regional study courses, and are financed by the grants and an Endowment Fund to which governments and other bodies contribute.

In late 1962, the first study course was held by the International Institute for Labour Studies. There were 28 participants from 28 countries. The central theme of the course was "The Labour Force and its Employment." Three Study Courses were held in 1966 with a total of 70 participants: the regular study course, an internship study course, and a regional study course held in Ibadan, Nigeria. The subjects taught included characteristics of economic development, the labour force and its employment, labour management relations, wages in economic development and social security.

As a matter of policy, ILO considers that vocational training should be planned on a country-wide level to meet the needs of a given country's employment markets. Training methods should be dynamic and adaptable to changing technological and economic conditions.

ILO assisted vocational training projects emphasize the training of strategic personnel — supervisors, foremen, technicians, instructors — people who, when trained, will train others. ILO helps in setting up institutes to train not only industrial workers but also office workers, handicraftsmen, and agriculturalists.

In 1966, the International Centre for Advanced Technical and Vocational Training was established by ILO at Turin, Italy. Since then the Centre has been providing the latest techniques in management technology and teaching methodology and makes them available to key personnel from all over the world. It fulfills this task by giving advanced training courses to experienced managers, instructors, technicians and directors of training services. Programmes are geared primarily to the needs of the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Since the Centre was opened, a multi-national staff of instructors and visiting lecturers has trained people from more than 120 countries and territories.

The ILO is also devoting substantial efforts to vocational training for indigenous and tribal populations,

especially in agriculture, handicrafts, and small scale industries. The largest and most comprehensive efforts of this kind is the Andean Indian Programme. This programme aimed at bringing 7 million Indians living in the isolated Andean highlands of Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Colombia and Argentina into the mainstream of the modern economic and social life of their countries. Six international organizations — the United Nations itself, UNESCO, FAO, UNICEF and the ILO under the coordinating leadership of the ILO, are helping these Latin American governments in a simultaneous and co-ordinated effort to improve all aspects of Indian living conditions. In addition to coordinating the entire programme, ILO provides experts in vocational training, handicrafts, cooperatives, housing and resettlement. During 1971, thirty three training programmes and twelve seminars were held in the fields of technology and management. These seminars and programmes were attended by more than 1,300 participants.

The need for vocational training is obvious as the basic problem in developing countries is an acute shortage of skilled labour. It was early recognised by ILO that the

raising of industrial productivity is closely connected with the training of a competent managerial staff.

WORLD EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

At its 50th anniversary year in 1969, ILO launched a World Employment Programme. It was designed to help governments provide work opportunities and job training for their mounting populations. The main components of the programme were regional plans for Latin America, Asia and Africa. The aim of this programme was to enable the people of developing countries to share the economic progress through gainful and productive work. During 1970, a number of steps were taken by the ILO to make the promotion of productive employment a mainspring of its activities. Research was initiated on various factors affecting employment, including trade policies, the "Green Revolution" in agriculture, education etc.

Under the World Employment Programme, the first study of an individual country was carried out in Colombia by a team of development specialists made available by ILO and 11 other international and regional organizations. In its report to the Colombian Government, the mission submitted a number of proposals for integrated policies dealing with such matters as industrial advance, health and education etc.

In 1970, an inter-agency team was invited by the national authorities to study the employment situation in Sri Lanka, and a seminar held in Dakar, Senegal, enabled senior officials from eight French-speaking African countries to study employment promotion in relation to human resources planning.

The ILO broadened its efforts under the S.E.F. during 1971. An inter-agency team began its work in Iran and exploratory missions were sent to Madagascar and to Liberia. In Latin America, ILO's regional employment team studied the manpower situation in Chile, Costa Rica, Jamaica and Peru. In Africa, a meeting for the exchange of experience on employment policies was held for government officials from six countries in 1971.

The World Employment Programme was intended to stimulate and coordinate national and international efforts to overcome the growing unemployment which accompanied the rapid population growth in the developing regions of the world.

The ILO has been one of the pioneer bodies of international cooperation. With the belief that "lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice,"

ILO was founded in 1919. It has played a major role in the improvement of living and working conditions all over the world.

In 1969, the ILO was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The prize was awarded for the practical work which the ILO has done during the past fifty years. It raised the dignity of labour of all working men and women throughout the world and enabled them to enjoy the highest standard of living.