

## **International Labour Organisation: Its Mission and Objectives with Global Reference**

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### **I. Introduction:**

The International Labour Organisation is one of the oldest specialised agencies associated with United Nations. It was set up in 1919 after the First World War. Its head quarters are at Geneva in Switzerland. The ILO is devoted to promoting social justice and internationally recognised human and labour rights, pursuing its founding mission that labour peace is essential to prosperity. Today, the ILO helps in creation of decent work and the economic and working conditions that give working people and business people a stake in lasting peace, prosperity and progress. Its tripartite structure provides a unique platform for promoting decent work for all women and men. The unique tripartite structure of the ILO gives an equal voice to workers, employers and governments to ensure that the views of social partners are closely reflected in labour standards and in shaping policies and programmes. Its main aims are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work related issues.

ILO is a United Nations agency dealing with labour issues, particularly labour standards and decent work for all. 185 of the 193 UN member's states are members of the ILO. In support of its goals, the ILO offers unmatched expertise and knowledge about the world of work acquired over more than 94 years of responding to the needs of people everywhere for decent work, livelihoods and dignity. It serves its tripartite constituents and society as a whole, in a variety of ways including- (i) formation of international policies and programmes to promote basic human rights, improve working and living conditions and enhance employment opportunities. (II) Creation of international labour standards backed by a unique system to supervise their application. (iii) An extensive programme of international technical co-operation formulated and implemented in an active partnership with constituents, to help countries put these policies in to practice in an effective manner (iv) Turning education and research activities to help advance all these efforts<sup>2</sup>. This research paper want to discuss a lot more on its growth and how ILO works with its key issues including, mission and objective and its role in modern industrial age.

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<sup>2</sup> Constitution of the ILO, created under Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles 1919

## II. Mission and Objectives:

The main aims of the ILO are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work related issues.<sup>3</sup>

### II. I. The main aims and objectives of the ILO are-

- (i) To regulate hours of work and prevent unemployment;
- (ii) To maintain just and fair conditions of work;
- (iii) To provide an adequate living wage;
- (iv) To promote the social, moral, political and cultural well-being of the workers;
- (v) To protect the workers against disease, sickness and injury;
- (vi) To protect children and the female labour from exploitation;
- (vii) To provide for social security benefits; and
- (viii) To organise professional and technical education.

The Principles on which ILO is based are (a) labour is not commodity, (b) poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere, (c) freedom of expression and of association are essentials to sustained progress, (d) the war against want requires to be carried on with unrelenting vigour within nation. Hundreds of millions of people suffer from discrimination in the world of work. This not only violates a most basic human right, but has wider social and economic programmes, and accentuates social tensions and inequalities. Combating discrimination is an essential part of promoting decent work, and success on this front is felt well beyond the workplace. Issues linked to discrimination are present throughout the ILO's sphere of work. By bolstering freedom of association, for example, the ILO seeks to prevent discrimination against trade union members and officials. Programmes to fight forced labour and child labour include helping girls and women trapped in prostitution or coercive domestic labour. Non-discrimination is a main principle in the ILO's code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work. ILO guidelines on labour law include provisions on discrimination, and in countries such as Namibia and South Africa, the ILO has provided advice on legislative change in this area.

### II. II. Governance, organisation and membership-

Unlike the other United Nations specialised agencies, the International Labour Organisation has a tripartite governing structure- representing governments, employers and workers ( usually with a ratio of 2:1:1 ). The rationale behind the tripartite structure is creation of free and open debate

<sup>3</sup> The Constitution of ILO was amended in 1945 & 1946 and the Economic and Social Council retained it.

among governments and social partners. The ILO secretariat (staff) is referred to as the International Labour Office.<sup>4</sup>

**Governing Body:** The Governing Body decides the agenda of the International Labour Conference adopts the draft programme and budget of the organisation for submission to the conference, elects the director-general, requests information from member states concerning labour matters, appoints commissions of inquiry and supervises the work of the International Labour Office. Juan Somavia was the ILO's director-general since 1999 until October 2012, when Guy Ryder was elected as his replacement. The **guiding body** is composed of 28 government representatives, and 14 employer's representatives. Ten of the government seats are held by member states that are nations of "chief industrial importance," as first considered by an "impartial committee". The nations are Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States. The terms of office are of three years.

**Membership:** The constitution of the ILO offers that any nation which has a membership in the UN can become a member of the ILO. To gain membership, a nation must inform the Director General that it accepts all the obligations of the ILO constitution. Members from the ILO under the League of Nations were automatically added when the organisation's new constitution came in to effect after Second World War. In addition, any original member of the United Nations and any state admitted to the UN thereafter may join. Other states can be admitted by a two-thirds vote of all delegates, including a two-thirds vote of government delegates, at any ILO General Conference.

**International Labour Conference:**

The ILO organises the International Conference in Geneva every year in June, where conventions and recommendations are crafted and adopted. Also known as the Parliament of Labour, the conference also makes decisions about the ILO's general policy, work programme and budget.

Each member state has four representatives at the conference; two government delegates, an employer delegate and a worker delegate. All of them have individual voting rights, and all votes are equal regardless of the population of the delegate's member state. The employer and worker delegates are normally chosen in agreement with the most representative national organisations of employers and workers. Usually, the workers' delegates coordinate their voting, as do the employers' delegates. All delegates have the same rights, and are not required to vote in blocs.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> General Conference, it is in effect 'World Industrial Parliament'

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*

**Conventions:**

In July 2011, the ILO has adopted as many as 189 Conventions. If these conventions are ratified by more number of the governments, they become in force. However, ILO Conventions are considered international labour standards regardless of ratifications. When a convention comes in to force, it creates a legal obligation for ratifying nations to apply its provisions.

Every year the International Labour Conference's Committee on the Application of Standards examine a number of alleged breaches of International labour standards. Governments are required to submit reports detailing their compliance with the

Obligations of the Conventions they have ratified. Conventions that have not been ratified by member states have the same legal force as to recommendations. In 1998, the 86<sup>th</sup> International Labour Conference adopted the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. This declaration contains four fundamental policies: (a) the right of workers to associate freely and bargain collectively, (b) the end of forced and compulsory labour, (c) the end of child labour, and (d) the end of unfair discrimination among workers.

**III. Recent ILO Committee Report and Recommendations:**

Seeking a process of globalization that is inclusive democratically governed and provides opportunities and tangible benefits for all countries and people. The World Commission on the social dimension of globalisation was established by the ILO Governing Body in February, 2002 at the initiative of the Director-General in response to the fact that there did not appear to be a space within the multilateral system that would cover adequately and comprehensively the social dimension of the various aspects of globalization.

The ILO has several specialized and technical committees that focus on labour relations and trade union rights issues. One of these bodies is the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association. This Committee has successfully issued recommendations in 2010 on 6 anomalous and highly celebrated cases in the labour front.

**Minimum wage law-** To protect the right of labours for fixing minimum wage, ILO has created minimum-wage-fixing machinery convention, 1928, fixing machinery (Agriculture) Convention, 1951, and minimum wage fixing convention 1970 as minimum wage law.

**HIV/AIDS-** The ILO created the code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work as a document providing principles for policy development and practical guidelines for programmes at enterprise community, and national levels including prevention of HIV, management and mitigation of the impact of AIDS on the world of work, care and support of workers

infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and elimination of stigma and discrimination on the basis of real or perceived HIV status<sup>6</sup>.

**Indigenous People-** ILO convention 169 concerns indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries. It has adopted on 27 June 1989 by the general conference of the ILO at its 76<sup>th</sup> session. Its entry in to force was 5<sup>th</sup> September, 1991.

**Migrant Workers-** migrant workers refer to those who move from place to place to do their job. For the right of migrant workers, ILO has adopted conventions, including migrant workers (supplementary) provisions Conventions 1975 and United Nations Conventions on protection of the right of the migrant workers and members of their families in 1990.

**Domestic Workers-** Domestic workers perform a variety of tasks for other people at their home only. For instance, they may cook/clean the house and look after their children. Yet they are often the ones with the least consideration, excluded from labour and social protection. This is mainly due to the fact that women have traditionally carried out the tasks without pay. For the right and decent work of domestic workers including migrant domestic workers, ILO has adopted Convention on domestic workers on 16 June 2011.

#### **IV. Conclusion:**

In 1969, the International Labour Organisation received the Nobel Peace Prize for improving peace among classes, pursuing justice for workers and providing technical assistance to developing nations. The ILO is a specialised agency of the United Nations, working on International Developments with United Nations Development Group. In June 1998, the International Labour Conference adopted on fundamental principles and Rights at Work and its follow-up that obligates member states to respect, promote and realize freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour, the effective abolition of child labour, and elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. The Special Action Programme is combat Forced Labour has spearheaded the ILO's work in this field since early 2002 for raising global awareness and understanding a modern forced labour and assists governments in developing and implementing new laws, policies and action plans.

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<sup>6</sup> Recommendation concerning HIV & AIDS and the world of work adopted in June, 2010