

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ILO TO THE SECOND DEVELOPMENT DECADE: ELABORATING AND IMPLEMENTING A WORLD EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME(*)

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The ILO's fiftieth anniversary year has been dominated by two major concerns : on the one hand, a concern with the course to be followed by national and international action for development as the world stands on the threshold of the Second Development Decade; and on the other, growing out of the first, concern for the explosive growth of the world's population (...).

The first Development Decade saw quite substantial economic progress in the developing countries. But its shortcomings were very serious.

By far the most disturbing of these is the fact that its social gains have been negligible for most of the world's population. For the peasants, for the landless agricultural workers, for the millions of inhabitants of the shanty-towns and the slum areas of the large cities of the developing world — for these categories of people who constitute the large majority of the population of developing countries, the Development Decade has brought no perceptible improvement in incomes and standards of living. Thus, the most important lesson we have learned from the experience of the first Development Decade is that social progress does not result automatically from economic development : rather it has to be consciously aimed at as part of an over-all strategy for development. We must translate this lesson into effective programmes of action for the Second Decade.

(*) This text is composed of extracts of the discourse of the Director-General at the International Labour Conference of June 1969. The editors used the traditional sign (...) to indicate that passages were left out. They used italics for minor changes, they brought to the the original text.

On the question of population, *I have sometimes been accused* of propounding discredited, alarmist Malthusian theories. This, of course, I do not accept. I do not see how it is possible to view with complacency a doubling of the world's population within the next thirty to thirty-five years when there is already such a vast sea of human suffering and misery in the world today. Surely it is a matter of the utmost urgency, for economic, social and humanitarian reasons, to take steps to reduce the „population explosion” to manageable proportions. (...)

Nevertheless, I fully agree that population policies will not by themselves bring about economic and social progress. Clearly such policies cannot create wealth and ensure its equitable distribution; they cannot be a substitute for vigorous programmes and policies for economic and social development, which alone can eliminate the poverty and want that still persist in the world today after years of national and international effort. Inevitably they take time and the forthcoming decade will not see any significant relief for the rising tide of population.

Thus the two conclusions about the strategy for the Second Development Decade that I would draw are : first that it should consciously aim to bring about significant improvements in the standards of living of the millions of poverty-stricken people in the developing world; and secondly, that, even with the most effective measures of population planning, we must face the reality that the world's population will continue to grow rapidly in the years immediately ahead.

That is why I have proposed that there should be a World Employment Programme, and that it should occupy a pre-eminent place in the strategy for the Second Development Decade. *Nobody doubts* that if the Second Development Decade is to lead to far greater and more effective social advancement than did the first, if it is to cope with the enormous increases in population that can be expected in the years to come, if it is, in short, to be anything but a total failure, it is essential that one of its central goals should be a vast increase in remunerative and productive employment in the developing world.

Having thus stated the problem I must admit that there is no easy solution to it; were the solution so easy, it would have been found long ago. Basically, the massive unemployment and underemployment are due to the fact that we have not yet learned

to organise our life on this planet in such a way that all can contribute to and benefit from efforts to make human existence something more than a perpetual struggle for survival. The World Employment Programme should be seen as an attempt to bring about a better, more humane way of organising production and distributing its benefits throughout the world. It should in the long run have a significance and an impact on employment and production in the developing countries comparable to the revolution which took place in the 1930s in policies and thinking on unemployment in the industrialised countries.

It was found that, in the conditions prevailing at that time in the industrialised countries, measures for increasing effective demand and production were the best method of tackling unemployment. Sometimes we appear to have become prisoners of this major discovery; we still seem to think that, in order to provide adequate employment in the less developed countries, it will suffice to increase their national product. But it will not. It is now clear that the goal of employment creation in these countries must be an integral element of development policies, in addition to objectives concerning production; and that a major focus of national and international development policies must be the closing of what I would call the "employment gap" as well as the savings gap and the foreign exchange gap.

I will now briefly discuss essential ingredients of a strategy to close this gap. There seems to be general agreement on the need to devote special attention to raising the volume of employment, and hence the standards of living, of workers and their families in rural areas to bring them in from the periphery to the mainstream of the economic, social and political life of their countries.

The education, training and vocational guidance of young people are also of fundamental importance in this strategy. The existence of millions of young people entering the labour market with little or no education or training, of large numbers of "educated unemployed" and of the many in whom education has instilled values and attitudes which are irrelevant to the world in which they live and work — all these are manifestations of a tragic waste of human productive potential and are the source of much of the frustration, the unrest and the discontent among the youth of the world which we are witnessing today. We must give them hope for the future and opportunities to acquire the skills and

the employment that alone can enable them to contribute to the building of the world of tomorrow in which they, after all, will have to live. (...)

But it will also be necessary to revise drastically many of our notions of education, the role it has to fill in society and its relationship to employment. Next year is being designated as the International Education Year, and this should provide us with an opportunity to examine these very fundamental questions.

The ILO has often advocated the use of labour-intensive methods of production. There is sometimes disagreement — or perhaps misunderstanding — on this matter. I would make it clear that I do not advocate the total abandonment of highly modern methods where these are indispensable for the development of industries of vital importance for a country's development strategy.

I am not proposing that employment should be provided at the expense of economic growth; clearly that would be self-defeating. But I am proposing that economic growth should not take place at the expense of wasted opportunities for employment, and this means that every opportunity should be sought of spreading available capital more widely, wherever this is feasible and rational, in order to foster labourintensive industries (...).

I believe that the time has now come for action. We all know the urgency, the magnitude and complexity of the employment problem. Unfortunately, over the years the world has become too accustomed to poverty and unemployment. Now, however, we are apparently all convinced of the need to do something about it, and we have some ideas of the kind of action that has to be undertaken. But we have now to proceed to put our ideas and theories into action and into practice. Governments will have to take a number of very difficult decisions, often including a complete reappraisal of their economic and social policies, their policies for investment, for rural development, for industrial development, for educational and training, so as to orient them to the expansion of employment. This will make new demands on the machinery of government and on the wise management of resources.

Employers will have to support dynamically national employment policies by applying techniques, wherever appropriate, which will enable them to employ more labour.

Trade unions, for their part, will also have to make an important contribution to the success of employment policies, since they must play a key role in engendering enthusiasm and support for such policies and in developing constructive popular attitudes to the very concept of work and of social change. Moreover, the climate of industrial relations can be a decisive factor in the level of investment, in the choice of techniques for industrial production and thus in the over-all level of employment. (...)

For the advanced countries, it now is the time to prove not only by expressions of good intention but by deeds that they are concerned with the employment situation not only at home but in all parts of the world. The developing countries need the help of their more fortunate neighbours. These outstretched hands must be grasped. The developing countries need financial and technical assistance, of which at least a large part must be directed at closing the employment gap. But they expect the more advanced countries to be aware of their role not only as providers of aid but also as partners in trade. They expect fair prices for their raw materials; they expect to find an outlet for their manufactured products and raw materials in the markets of all industrialised countries, both of East and of West. Unless these expectations are met, I believe that the prospects of any significant improvement in the world employment situation are very remote indeed.

Finally, it seems to me it is up to us, the organisations of the international community, to show that we really mean business with our World Employment Programme. The ILO has to channel a large portion of its resources to assisting and advising its member States in the formulation of policies for the development of human resources which can lead to the highest possible level of employment. Already there is a team of experts assisting our member States in the American region in preparing their plans and policies for employment; a similar team is being constituted for Asia, and I am now giving consideration to the arrangements that would be most appropriate for Africa. We must pursue this objective, with a single-mindedness of purpose, through research, through tripartite discussion at our major policy-making and advisory meetings, through our publications and through our standard-setting activities. (...)

The ILO is not, however, the only organisation that will have responsibility for implementing the Programme. I would like to underscore and emphasise this point. Just as, at national governmental administration level, the implementation of employment policies goes well beyond the competence and spheres of interest of ministries of labour, so too, internationally, the ILO will need the support of the United Nations family as a whole, and of organisations outside the United Nations system. *Representatives of many international and regional organisations have pledged their support for, and contribution to, the World Employment Programme.* I am most heartened by the co-operation the ILO is already receiving in this venture from the Inter-American Development Bank and from UNESCO, the Food and Agriculture Organisation and other organisations whose technical competence in fields such as education and rural development is extremely relevant to the creation and expansion of employment.

The essential condition for the success of this Programme is, however, that its objectives should be recognised by all the nations of the world, and by all the organisations of the world community, as one of the central objectives of the strategy for development in the next decade. (...)

Let us not now, after thus airing and ventilating this tremendous problem, sit back mesmerised by the spectre of unemployment and population explosion. Let us not adopt an attitude of just hoping that something will turn up to save the situation, because that will not happen. So let us harness the same instinct of self-preservation which now so effectively channels vast amounts of resources into armaments to meet the common threat of poverty(...).

Let us make the World Employment Programme a world programme indeed. Let us ensure the commitment of the nations of the world and of the international institutions in which they are represented to a search for the means of raising levels of employment everywhere. Let us make it the most vivid example to date of world-wide solidarity for the attainment of social progress. Above all, let us make it a real exercise for genuine partnership : partnership between governments, employers and workers; partnership between the developed and the developing nations; partnership between the ILO and its member States; and partnership among all the organisations that make up the international community.

Let us make it possible for future generations to look back on this great fiftieth anniversary Conference as marking the beginning of an era — an era when the instincts of solidarity among the peoples of the world were effectively mobilised in a concerted, world-wide attack on poverty.