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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF EMPLOYERS

REPRESENTING 146 NATIONAL EMPLOYER FEDERATIONS IN 139 COUNTRIES ACROSS THE WORLD

JULY 2008



INTERNATIONAL
ORGANISATION OF EMPLOYERS

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A message from the new IOE President

Dear Members, this editorial is my first contribution to the IOE.net and also my first message to the membership since my election as IOE President at the General Council in May. I am of course extremely honoured to have been asked to assume this role and excited about the challenges it entails.

While I am new to this particular environment, I am not new to business, having spent most of my career in private business, managing companies. My first task, on taking the helm of a new company was to first take a hard and critical

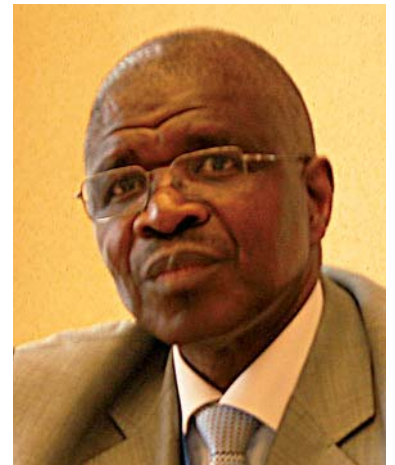
look at its state of affairs. Let me start by saying as I commence my Presidency, I find this Organisation to be in robust health.

A clear vision of what employers expect from the ILO has been set out and endorsed by the General Council; the IOE is increasing its visibility and effectiveness in a broader range of organizations where social and labour policy issues impact; it is producing more and better products and tools for the employer community; and most importantly, it continues to promote (and where necessary defend vigorously) employer interests at all levels. This solid foundation can be attributed to the leadership of my predecessor Abe Katz and of course Executive Vice-President Daniel Funes de Rioja and Secretary-General Antonio Peñalosa.

Let me briefly reflect on the first of these issues for a moment – the Employers' Vision of the ILO. This is an excellent document which clearly sets out what employers expect from the ILO. But more significantly, it is a call for a renewed partnership between the IOE and the ILO. A partnership based on the new realities of a globalized economy, where labour and social policies are perhaps of even greater importance than they were in the past. I find this to be a very exciting proposition.

I was fortunate to meet many of you at the International Labour Conference in June and this afforded me a chance to get a better sense of the issues and concerns facing national business communities around the world.

My feeling from these discussions is that although there is a certain anxiety about the future, this is contrasted with a strong sense of optimism for the opportunities that a globalized economy can bring.



Professor Wiseman Nkuhlu

The overall concern that I gleaned from our discussions, however, was the need to better prepare employer organizations for the future at the national and international levels. Some of the issues raised that I noted particularly include: getting the right skills into the labour market to ensure our enterprises can compete in the global marketplace; working with governments to ensure that regulations and legislation facilitate business growth – not hamper it; developing partnerships with other actors that lead to smooth running labour markets; promoting national cultures of entrepreneurship; and tackling HIV/AIDS through workplace initiatives.

These are significant issues that will require major efforts. For the IOE, I see four main elements to channel our response.

First, in terms of its policy role, the IOE needs to continue forcefully advocating in international policy for the need

for an environment conducive to enterprise development and growth.

Second, working with multi-lateral organizations to connect their work to the needs of national business communities – with regard to the issues I spelt out above.

Third, as an umbrella organization, acting as a platform to share information and best practice on what is happening in labour markets across the globe. Fourth, facilitating relationships both amongst the membership (be they of a commercial or philanthropic nature) and between member organizations and other actors of importance.

It is my firm objective during this mandate to ensure that the IOE is member-driven and firmly focused on providing member federations with ‘added-value’. In this respect, the IOE’s Strategic Framework for the period 2009–2014 is a timely development. This document will set out

how the Organisation intends to implement its objectives in the short to medium term. It raises, however, a number of issues we will need to grapple with before finalizing the strategy, such as: how to best reflect the objectives of our members in setting our priorities? How to ensure the delivery of these objectives? Which key organizations should we engage with and how? How to better promote the values that we stand for? How to build stronger more effective organizations?

Developing the framework is an exercise of vital importance to all members – it is your organization – and I appeal to you to play an active role in this process.

Finally, let me thank all those who have sent me their best wishes, I look forward to working with you all in achieving our collective goals.

Yours sincerely,

Wiseman NKUHLU

*** REMINDER ***

The questions for the *2009 Trends in the Workplace* survey are on-line at the following address:

English: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=6Dy4s54uiGHXvE7bDijUw_3d_3d

French: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=7D_2bLP1pQ_2bPOq_2fdwskDI9NA_3d_3d

Spanish: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=dLTyeTAzvzuejLdp85_2bMBg_3d_3d

Would ALL members please complete this survey as soon as possible (a ‘hard copy’ version of the questionnaire is also available upon request).

The 2009 survey consists of only 25 questions (half the number asked last year) and allows responding organizations to simply tick boxes – it can therefore be completed in a very short period of time.

In addition to asking some of the same questions as last year – so as to identify trends year on year – our intention for 2009 is to probe a little deeper into some of the issues raised in the 2008 survey. These relate specifically to: demographic changes; women and migrants in the labour market; and skills.

As was the case last year, some of the questions asked will require a subjective answer. However, an attempt has been made – as far as possible – to ask the type of questions that employers’ organizations would either have surveyed their members on already or for which there is national data readily available.

The report of the *2008 Trends in the Workplace* survey is currently available on the IOE website (in English only) though there are summaries of the survey results available in English, French and Spanish.

IOE and Member Activities

World Congress on Safety and Health at Work

The IOE welcomed a declaration signed in Seoul in early July which supports a preventive safety and health culture promoted at the national level.

The IOE, represented by Antonio Peñalosa, Secretary-General, the IOE Asian Vice President, Toshio Suzuki, along with the CEO of the Korean Employers Federation (KEF), Young-Vae Kim, have warmly welcomed the Seoul Declaration on Safety and Health at Work. The Declaration was adopted at the World Congress on Safety and Health at Work which took place in early July in Seoul, Korea.

The Declaration underpins long-standing employer policies, such as creating a culture of prevention; OSH as a broader societal responsibility;

and recognizes that improving safety and health at work has a positive impact on working conditions, productivity and economic and social development.

The Declaration states that workers should follow safety and health instructions and procedures – including those on the use of personal protective equipment; participate in safety and health training and awareness-raising activities; and cooperate with their employer in adhering to measures related to their safety and health at work.

Through the Declaration, the signatories have committed

to taking the lead in promoting a preventive safety and health culture placing occupational safety and health high on their national agendas. They have also agreed to review progress made at the next World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in 2011.

The Congress, which is organized every three years, brought together more than 3'000 representatives of employers, trade unions, OSH specialists and professional associations, Ministries of Labour and national agencies responsible for OSH and other stakeholders to deliberate on emerging issues and strategies with which to address them.

Contact muia@ioe-emp.org



The Workplace implications of Climate Change

The IOE will be releasing an Employer Guide on climate change later this month which will inform members on key workplace policy implications thereby facilitating policy development.

The IOE Guide, along with a Statement, and a further Technical Paper dealing with trade union and labour relations issues, have been developed by a Working Group consisting of a representative selection of IOE members around the world.

The Guide is intended to first inform members about the key issues around the workplace policy implications of climate change and second to facilitate policy development and advocacy. The IOE believes that government initiatives to meet their internation-

al commitments to greenhouse gas reductions will impact on all workplaces – policy development should therefore be cognizant of employers' views. In its own advocacy on the issue, the IOE message is consistent and clear:

- government policy must be long term and sustainable;
- policy must facilitate economic growth;

- policy must allow business to be viable, and encourage private sector investment;
- skills policy must plan for the next generation; and
- governments have a financial responsibility.

The background and status of international discussions

explained in the additional Technical Paper creates a solid foundation for employer organizations' policy development.

Trade Unions in some countries have already sought to discuss the recognition of climate change in collective agreements. Our view is that,

generally, climate change does not create a special case requiring the negotiation of new measures for worker protection and reward.

These issues, among others, are discussed in depth in the Technical Paper. ■

Contact peter.glynn@ioe-emp.org

International Labour and Social Policy Review 2008

The 2008 edition of the IOE's International Labour and Social Policy Review was launched earlier last month at the International Labour Conference.

This year's Review offers a mixture of articles covering diverse subjects representing the contrasting perspectives and approaches of members from across the Organisation. It is hoped that the publication will provide the reader with a useful insight into different countries' approaches and perspectives to economic and social development.

This year, the following themes have been explored: the impact of labour market reforms on the wider economy; tackling youth employment and creating conditions for youth entrepreneurship; a comparative analysis of

Islamic and western industrial relations models; trends in collective bargaining; approaches to social dialogue in different



regions; and HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

In some cases, long-standing global employer positions are questioned. It is our firm belief that articles that seek to challenge and ask questions of existing views and orthodoxies is a very healthy development – this we feel is a particular strength of this year's publication.

We hope that this Review will continue to be an important and useful reference for all those engaged in social and labour policies and strongly encourage its wide dissemination. An online version of the Review is currently available at the following address (the Secretariat also has a number of hard copies available):

www.ioe-emp.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents_pdf/papers/ilspr/International_Labour_and_Social_Policy_Review_2008.pdf

Employers' Executive Management Programme

The IOE has been supporting the work of the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) in its development of an Association Executive Management Programme. It is expected that the programme will take place at the University of Zurich with successful participants being awarded a credit for one unit in the University's MBA programme. The IOE is working with ACT/EMP and this University on the development of a full MBA programme for employer organization executives. It is hoped a pilot programme will be conducted early next year.

Contact peter.glynn@ioe-emp.org

Addressing forced labour: The role of business

Until recently it is fair to say that many enterprises within the business community believed that forced labour was simply an illegal issue which was not relevant to them.

For multinational companies (MNEs) the idea of forced labour occurring in their supply chains was considered of such a low risk that it did not warrant significant attention.

This perception however is changing and the reality – at least for forced labour within operations and supply chains – has been brought into greater focus by some recent well-publicized examples. Consequently, in recent months, the IOE has stepped-up its work in this area. While the ILO has remained a key partner, the IOE has also actively engaged with a number of other actors working in this field.

In February – with the support of Coca-Cola, the United States Council for International Business (USCIB), the US Chamber of Commerce

and the ILO – the IOE had the first meeting focused directly on forced labour with some sixty US MNEs along with the US Government, socially responsible investment funds and NGOs (*see the report in the April issue of the IOE.net*). This meeting occurred immediately after a major UN meeting on forced labour and trafficking in Vienna, which the IOE also addressed.

In developing work in this area, the IOE is producing a Guide which is a first attempt to clarify some of the questions surrounding the issue. It draws the attention of employers and their members to the risks forced labour represent within their operations, giving guidance on how to identify and prevent situations of forced labour and providing some direction on what em-

ployers can do to address the matter. The Guide has been developed in the context of a global strategy to engage employers and their organizations on the issue and it is expected to be a useful tool for employers' organizations and their members.

In this connection the IOE and the ILO held an initial regional workshop in Bangkok from the end of June to early July. The objective of the workshop was to provide a space for employer representatives to develop strategies and action plans to address forced labour, exchange information and experiences, as well as for the IOE and ILO to present the tools they are currently developing. The meeting was attended by representatives from employer organizations in the region as well as companies, the ILO and a number of NGOs. ■

Contact leon@ioe-emp.org

Cooperation with the European Commission

On the 30th June and 1st July, the European Commission (EC) organized the inaugural Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) Forum for social partners.

The meeting brought together social partners from the European Union and from the seventeen Asian countries which have signed the ASEM Declaration. The Commission requested the IOE to coordinate the participation of employers from Asia and asked the IOE Secretariat to chair the panel on 'employment creation and flexicurity'.

This is a role the IOE has been asked to play by the Commission in other regions – notably Africa and Latin America. Most recently the Commission requested the IOE to coordinate, with BusinessMed, the participation of employers' organizations from the Mediterranean region in a Ministerial conference on employment. This Conference

will be held in Marrakech in November.

While such forums can be useful exercises in exchanging information and knowledge, they are not without concern. At the ASEM forum, for instance, it was clear that the examples used for social dialogue and industrial relations were in the main those of a European nature. While these examples are certainly of interest, they are not particularly relevant to Asians who have different regional

structures. Perhaps the greater concern would be the perception that the 'European Social model' is being promoted as 'the model' for other regions. The Commissions'

enthusiastic embrace of the ILO's 'Decent Work Agenda' for example is seen by some as further evidence of this. This approach is also supported by European trade unions and

many EU governments. This is a development that employers need to monitor carefully both at the European and international levels. ■

Contact oechslin@ioe-emp.org

IOE Meeting of European Members

The annual meeting of IOE European members will be hosted this year by the Norwegian Confederation of Enterprise (NHO) in Oslo (18–19 September).

This year's agenda will include debates on the following issues: the role of employers' organizations in meeting the changing needs and expectations of companies; the strategic response of the IOE to European member federations; equality in the labour market; energy and climate change; business and human rights (with the participation of the UN Special representative, Mr John Ruggie); and the future of the ILO (with the IOE Executive Vice-President, Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja) and the role of the ILO for European countries.

For further information and for those who have not yet registered, please contact oechslin@ioe-emp.org

New IOE publications – Now available !

A number of new IOE publications are now available on the IOE website (all under "IOE Papers/Information Documents" except for Child Labour found under "IOE Papers/Guides"). You will require your password to access the "IOE Papers/Information Documents" section.

Export Processing Zones

This document provides a brief overview of some of the issues and trends surrounding Export Processing Zones (EPZs). It draws heavily from recent research by the ILO and reflects the views of employers as expressed in the ILO's Employment and Social Policy Committee (March 2008).

Guides for Employers on Child Labour

The guides (launched last year) designed to assist employers in tackling Child Labour are now available in French and Spanish. These guides which are a joint effort of the IOE and the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities, provide strategies along with illustrative examples for the prevention of child labour; the withdrawal of children from work; and the protection of those children who are under the minimum age for employment. The first guide provides some definitions to help better comprehend the issues involved. The two subsequent guides explain what can be practically done (by both individual companies and EOs) to combat child labour.

International Labour Standards and Companies

Increasingly today, companies in their codes of conduct, international framework agreements (IFAs) or other policies, are referencing ILO Standards – most specifically those related to core Labour Standards. Similarly, references are also commonly made to the principles of the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. In both instances such references often result in questions being asked as to what is the effect of such a reference and what it obliges a company to do.

Consequently, the IOE has developed a paper to explain how Standards are created, their purpose and what it can mean for companies who reference them. The paper also explores alternative language that may help companies better manage the expectations that may come from the use of international instruments.

International Framework Agreements: Common Trends

The IOE has developed a new paper (for members only) outlining common trends in International Framework Agreements (IFAs). The paper identifies the common trends on the substantive and procedural provisions of IFAs and it gives some points for reflection about the scope of these agreements and their future. This document builds on the IOE's Guide to IFAs (August 2007).



International Labour Organization

International Labour Conference 2008

The 2008 International Labour Conference (ILC) was in many ways one of the most successful conferences, from an employer perspective, in recent years.

A number of factors contributed to these positive outcomes. The declaration ‘Strengthening the ILO’s Capacity’, that was agreed by consensus, is potentially a very useful tool in helping the Organization become much more demand driven and more responsive to constituents’ needs. The Resolution which accompanied the Declaration likewise should be useful in bringing about the changes to the Office, long called-for by employers.

There were also positive elements in other technical committees such as the conclusions of the rural employment discussion – in effect ‘bedded down’ and ‘normalized’ concepts essential for an enabling environment for enterprise development (e.g. property rights, culture of entrepreneurship, etc). This is not an insignificant shift in terms of where the ILO and unions have come from. It has also mandated the Office to work further in these areas of importance to employers.

The conclusions of the skills debate provided further evidence of the slow change in the ILO towards a better and positive approach to en-

terprises. The conclusions also recognized the need to adapt to globalization and promote skills development as a key means to do so.

The exception to these positive developments was the Committee on the Application of Standards where worker refusal to acknowledge the concerns of the employers with regard to the ‘list of cases’ to be discussed (which will be eventually resolved) caused major tensions.

There are three main elements that have facilitated better ILC outcomes in recent years.

First are the Conference agendas: employers are being more forceful in proposing agenda items and these topics are getting support from the governments.

Second, the employer view that the ‘standards for the sake of standards’ (a policy pursued for years) was a self-destructive one, is getting resonance. In the last six years just two Conventions and two Recommendations have been adopted. The two Conventions (OSH and Work in the Fishing Sector) were adopted with consensus. One Recommendation (on HRD) failed

to gain consensus only because of one paragraph; and the other Recommendation on Employment Relationship failed to get consensus (although with a little more effort this could have been achieved). This year saw no Standard setting item on the ILC agenda (this contrasts strongly with the 1996 Conference where four Conventions were adopted!).

Third, controversial left-right debates that were a feature of ILO discussions have been consigned to history. A more centrist view – one that accepts the key tenants of the market economy – is now a shared mainstream view in the House.

These are all very positive developments.

The Conference, however, is still unnecessarily long (nearly three weeks!) and tries to do too many things. Its profile could be higher and more thought could be put into both choosing agenda items and in preparing them for discussion.

Having said that, based on evidence from the last few years and with the firm expectation that mechanisms agreed under the new ILO Declaration will assist in reforming what is the ILO’s flagship event, the ILC (albeit slowly) is improving. ■

Sending Comments to the Committee of Experts

Employers' organizations, like trade unions, can influence observations made by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR).

They may do this in addition to influencing the list of individual cases examined in the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS).

According to Article 23 of the ILO Constitution, any employers' or workers' organization – whether or not it has received copies of government reports – may at any time transmit its comments to the ILO regarding the way in which an ILO Member State is applying in law and in practice one or more ratified Conventions. The CEACR and the CAS have emphasized the value of such comments as a means of

assisting them, particularly, in assessing the effective application of ratified Conventions.

It should be recalled that the observations made by the CEACR are published every March in a report which constitute the basis for the work of the CAS in June.

Therefore, if an employer organization is interested in having its Government 'on' or 'off' the list of individual cases that is examined in the CAS, a way of having some influence in the process is by sending comments to the Experts.

In light of the above, the IOE once again invites member federations, *to supply rele-*

vant comments directly to the International Labour Office regarding the manner in which a government is applying in law and in practice one or more ratified Conventions. The comments should highlight not only problems or negative aspects of the application of a Convention but also progress and achievements made in that regard.

These views should be submitted to the International Labour Office *no later than the 1st of September 2008* to the following email address: normes@ilo.org so that the Experts, in their November/December meeting, may consider them when drafting their comments. ■

Contact anzorreguy@ioe-emp.org

Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs)

In an address to the Employers' Group at the International Labour Conference, the Director of ILO Programming, Joe Thurman, underlined the ILO's commitment to engaging the social partners in the development of DWCP's and the objective that the Programmes should help build capacity of constituents.

This declaration came in response to the IOE's oft stated doubts that its members were being adequately consulted, and therefore the relevance and impact of the Programmes could be severely compromised.

The DWCPs are a priority objective for the ILO Regional Offices and the ILO's principal vehicle in delivering its technical cooperation objectives. While the Programme themes and objectives should be specific to the needs of each country, the following issues are emerging as typical areas for work:

- national employment initiatives;
- strengthening dialogue and capacity;
- social protection;
- rights at work;
- combatting the informal economy;
- child labour; and
- labour market governance.

The introduction by the ILO of a system of quality control has tightened the management of the Programmes and the measurability of outcomes. The new generation of Agreements are allowing longer time frames, have tripartite steering committees and are being aligned with other UN frameworks cycles. Feedback from members on any aspect of the Programmes would be greatly appreciated.

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ILO Sectoral activities

For the ILO's 2010–2011 biennium, employers will propose three subjects to be dealt with under the programme of ILO sectoral activities which have been historically 'worker driven'. These proposals will be:

- the status of new forms of employment in the hotel, catering and tourism sector;
- the role of Private employment agencies in the promotion of decent work and improvement of the functioning of the labour markets; and
- the rehabilitation of chrysotile (which is a non-hazardous form of asbestos).

Other proposals, concerning the manufacturing and commercial sectors, are being prepared as we write this article.

If accepted by the tripartite advisory bodies, which will meet in September/October, these same advisory bodies will determine what form each of these activities should take (traditional tripartite meetings, meetings of experts, global dialogue forum).

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Labour Relations Committee Meeting

The annual meeting of the International Chemical Employers' Labour Relations Committee was held in Antalya, Turkey in early July, under the auspices of the Chemical, Petroleum, Rubber and Plastic Industries Employers' Associations of Turkey (KIPLAS).

This annual meeting provides an opportunity for the world's chemical sector to discuss social and labour issues. IOE Sectoral adviser, Jean Dejardin, presented the ILO's sectoral activities and recent developments at the IOE, and Roy Chacko (ACT/EMP) made a report on the ILC, on recent developments in CSR and on the ILO in general.

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UN and other International Organizations

Human rights and enterprises

Professor John Ruggie – who was first appointed at the request of the UN Commissioner on Human Rights as the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises in 2006 – has had his mandate extended for a further three years. This was done at the most recent session of the Human Rights Council on 18 June principally to enable Professor Ruggie to complete the work outlined in his last report to the Council.

In this last report, Professor Ruggie identified a framework based on three principles: first, the State's duty to protect;

second, the corporate responsibility to respect; and third, the need to access effective remedies. The next mandate will explore ways to make this framework operational. Professor Ruggie has been specifically asked to:

- provide views as well as concrete and practical recommendations on ways to strengthen the State's duty to protect all human rights from abuses by involving transnational corporations or other business entities;
- elaborate further on the scope and content of corporate responsibility to respect human rights and to provide concrete guidance

to business and other stakeholders; and

- explore options and make recommendations at the national, regional and international levels for enhancing access to effective remedies.

This work will be done following the consultative process Professor Ruggie has used to date and be reported annually to the Human Rights Council. As with the previous mandates of the Special Representative, the IOE will continue to work with him as he takes the new mandate forward. The SR's reports can be downloaded at the following address:

http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/trans_corporations ■

Evaluation of World Bank's 'Doing Business' Reports

The World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) has recently released a report on the International Finance Corporation's (IFC World Bank Group) annual 'Doing Business' (DB) reports, which measure regulatory reform across 178 countries.

Read in its entirety the IEG Report is fairly balanced with numerous positive findings. It confirms that 'the (DB) indicators have been highly effective in drawing attention to the burdens of business regulation' and that overall the indicators objectively and reliably measure what they set out to measure.

One of the key messages from the IEG report was one that was raised during the presentation by the DB Report's author, Simeon Djankov, at the IOE General Council in 2007, that the real value of the DB indicators was that they acted as a catalyst for

a 'national conversation' on regulatory reform.

Notwithstanding this, the IEG Report also addresses some criticism that has been

levelled at the DB reports and makes suggestions for improvements such as the need for further transparency, increased consultations, and additional topics for consideration.

Many of these recommendations, we understand, are in the process of being implemented. In terms of consultations, the IOE has been working with the IFC to increase local collaboration between IOE members and IFC staff in the preparation and verification of the country information used for the reports.

The full IEG Report along with a response from IFC on the IEG report is available on request from the IOE. ■

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OECD-ILO Roundtable on CSR

Some 200 representatives from governments, NGOs, trade unions and employers' organizations met in Paris at the end of June to discuss the OECD Guidelines for Multinational corporations and the ILO MNE Declaration.

As part of a request from the G8 to explore and bring more clarity to the variety of international CSR instruments, the roundtable was an opportunity for the ILO and its constituents to give profile to its MNE Declaration, a text which is less well-known than the OCED Guidelines.

There is no doubt however that calls for CSR convergence are growing and NGOs in particular are keen to see more 'teeth', by way of complaints' mechanisms, to bolster existing measures in the OECD instrument and to include something similar in the ILO Declaration. Employers oppose such a move

as, unlike the OECD Guidelines which are an obligation on OECD and adhering governments, the MNE Declaration is totally voluntary and therefore unsuited to complaints procedures.

Stress was also placed on the key role of the State in terms of creating and enforcing its own legislation:

companies cannot and should not be expected to replace governments – the current CSR debate was in danger of crossing that line to the detriment of wider society.

No decisions were taken at what was more an information roundtable, but the OECD and ILO will explore the possibility of some joint activities around research

and promotion and put a joint paper to their respective governance bodies in November. ■

Contact wilton@ioe-emp.org

ISO 26000 on Social Responsibility

Members will recall that the International Standardization Organisation (ISO) has been working over the last few years on a Guidance Standard on Social Responsibility for organizations of all kinds.

That work and the IOE's involvement in the industry stakeholders' group continues. However, it has come to our attention that some national standards organizations are already running training courses on ISO 26000 on social responsibility.

Should your federation or your members be contacted to participate in any such training initiatives, we would ask you to bear the following in mind:

ISO 26000 does not yet exist as a final adopted text. It is still in the process of being drafted and any final text may be substantially different from the existing drafts. Furthermore any final text, if adopted, will be a guidance standard only. As the draft text itself says: "This International Standard is not a management system standard. It is not intended or appropriate for certification purposes or regulatory or contractual use". This means that it cannot be the subject of third party audit or verification nor can it be a 'requirement' that companies adhere to it.

Should any training presentations attempt to portray a different view as to the application of the final Standard, we would ask business participants to correct such misconceptions directly.

For information, the next session of the ISO26000 Working Group that will consider a reworked working-draft will take place in Santiago, Chile during the first week of September 2008.

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2008 Calendar

Major Forthcoming Meetings

8–10 September	Tripartite Meeting of Experts on the Measurement of Decent Work	<i>Geneva, Switzerland</i>
18–19 September	IOE European Members Meeting	<i>Oslo, Norway</i>
22–23 September	Iberoamerican Summit of Social Partners	<i>Madrid, Spain</i>
23–24 October	IOE Global Industrial Relations Network	<i>Madrid, Spain</i>
27–28 October	Meeting of Presidents of Iberoamerican Employers' Organizations	<i>San Salvador, El Salvador</i>
6–21 November	303 rd Session of the ILO Governing Body and its Committees	<i>Geneva, Switzerland</i>
14–15 November	IOE Management Board	<i>Geneva, Switzerland</i>
24–25 November	Global Dialogue Forum on Vocational Education and Skills Development for Commerce Workers	<i>Geneva, Switzerland</i>
24-25 November	Symposium on Globalization and the Future of Labour Law	<i>Paris, France</i>
24 Nov–5 Dec.	18 th International Conference of Labour Statisticians	<i>Geneva, Switzerland</i>

