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ILO Contribution

Introduction

1. This note briefly outlines the ILO's possible contribution in assisting governments and other relevant national and regional bodies in the achievement of the objectives of the World Population Plan of Action regarding fields of ILO competence which are considered to rank high in priority in the region.
2. Since its inception the ILO has been active in its fields of competence affected by population trends: employment, migration, human resources development and social security for example. In planning and implementing its substantive action in these fields the ILO has long had occasion to study and take account of population variables. Consequently, when rapid population growth became generally recognized during the 1960s as a high priority for concerted action by the world community culminating in the establishment of the UNFPA, the ILO found itself well placed to make a useful contribution through its tripartite structure and established programmes in certain relevant sectors.
3. As a first step towards active participation in the efforts of the United Nations family in the population field, the International Labour Conference in 1967 unanimously adopted a resolution expressing deep concern at the influence of rapid population growth on the development, training and welfare of workers. In November 1968 the Governing Body laid down practical lines for action. The approach is two-fold. First, the ILO seeks to consolidate and expand its knowledge base of the relationships between population and development factors in the ILO's fields of competence, and secondly, to create awareness and

understanding of population problems leading to a programme of debate and action by the ILO's constituents and related institutions. The ILO takes full account of the fact that population problems are complex and raise sensitive issues, varying in nature and severity from country to country; its activities in the field of population, as in many other fields, being designed to respond to the needs and wishes of its constituents and planned and implemented with their close collaboration.

ILO Activities relevant to the World
Population Plan of Action

Social Security

4. The recommendation contained in the World Population Plan of Action that family planning services be included in social insurance systems has especial relevance for Latin America where social insurance institutions providing medical care services are particularly well developed. Indeed, the ILO's main emphasis in the region has been upon family welfare in this context. Through its links with social security institutions, the ILO can give assistance with a view to incorporating family planning care in the health services programmes of such national institutions. ILO activities in this field in Latin America began in 1972 with the appointment of a Regional Adviser on Social Security and Family Planning. By 1974 it had been possible to provide relevant technical co-operation in eight Latin American countries and to prepare draft projects for submission to the UNFPA. In each of the countries concerned different policies have been developed in relation to national conditions and policies and the attitude of the social security institutions to family planning.

5. The Plan further recommends the establishment of income security and in particular, old age benefits, under social security. The ILO, through its Latin American technical co-operation programme, is assisting governments to develop income security benefits schemes. Also, research is being undertaken to assess the influence of such schemes on reproductive behaviour.

ILO Standards

6. Measures advocated under the Plan in which the adoption and application of relevant ILO standards could be helpful are (a) measures to eliminate discrimination in and removal of obstacles to the education training, employment and career advancement of women, and (b) the elimination of child labour.

Population and Employment

7. The World Population Plan of Action stresses that population questions should not be viewed in isolation but should be set firmly and squarely in the framework of development effects. With respect to this recommendation, it should be recalled that the ILO launched, in 1972, a comprehensive research project on the interrelationships between population and employment growth and income distribution under the World Employment Programme.^{1/} The project comprises two mutually supporting components: modelling activities in a comprehensive framework of demographic and economic inter-actions and research on specific topics in this field, covering the study of the determinants of fertility, migration, labour force participation rates, etc. The main emphasis of these research activities lies in undertaking country case studies, carried out by local individuals and institutions in developing countries. The economic-demographic modelling activities of the ILO have evolved into country-specific applications of a comprehensive model called BACHUE, attempting to describe the essentials of interrelationships between economic and demographic variables in the real world. This model is being applied in various parts of the world, including one Latin American country. The major purpose is to ensure that population factors are adequately taken into account in elaborating development policies, identifying these policies and strategies which most effectively mobilize productive manpower,

^{1/} It may be noted that attention is drawn to the World Employment Programme in the first paragraph of the World Population Plan of Action as being among several important strategies and programmes already existing at the international level whose explicit aim is to affect variables in fields other than population.

which prevent or reduce disparities between population growth and the growth of employment opportunities, and which ensure income growth is both rapid and equitable.

Migration

8. The rural to urban migration which has caused a veritable urban explosion in recent decades contributing in a major degree to the unemployment, underemployment and the process of marginalization in Latin American cities has already been documented by ECLA ^{2/} together with other migratory patterns in the region. The World Population Plan of Action laid down guidelines to assist governments in formulating and implementing internal migration policies. In this connexion, it will be of interest that the ILO is carrying out, within the framework of the World Employment Programme, a series of studies on migration, covering both internal and external as well as seasonal, temporary and definitive migration. The purpose of these studies is to throw some light on the socio-economic causes of the phenomenon, to try and separate the determinants of migration, which could be directly affected by government policy, from other causes which the government can only affect in more general development. Latin America is one of the regions concerned in these studies.

9. As regards international migration (which is of concern particularly to the English-speaking Caribbean countries in this region), the Plan recommends fair treatment of migrant workers in conformity with the relevant ILO conventions and recommendations and other international instruments. In this context the role of trade unions, co-operative associations, employers' organizations, social security institutions, labour ministries, etc., are all of considerable potential importance.

^{2/} ECLA Population and Development in Latin America, E/CN.12/973, 15 March 1974.

Labour Force Statistics

10. Parallel to the research work under WEP described above, financed as are most of the ILO's population activities by UNFPA, a substantial contribution is being made by the statistical programme financed under the Regular Budget covering compilation and publication of basic manpower data, as well as detailed estimates and projections of the labour force by sex and age groups. The development of these activities in the region could facilitate the planning and implementation of economic and social programmes aimed at full and effective utilization of human resources and, should funds become available, it would be possible to launch on request technical assistance activities in this field.

Population Education and Family Planning in the Organized Sector

11. The World Population Plan of Action recommends the development of appropriate educational programmes to encourage the well-being of the family as well as responsible parenthood. Of interest in this respect are the ILO's activities to promote an intensive integrated population/family welfare programme for workers in the modern or "organized" sector. This programme calls for an enlarged concept of labour welfare, placing the provision of population education and family welfare services alongside fuller employment, social security and occupational health and welfare as essential items of workers' well-being. In initiating field activities, the first objective of the ILO has been to encourage trade unions to promote workers' family welfare. A Latin American Regional Seminar on Workers' Population Education was held in San José in 1974 and a Regional Adviser on Workers' Population Education, based in San José, conducted national seminars in Mexico and Costa Rica in the same year. Further training and motivational activities are envisaged for 1975 covering the organized sector. In the English-speaking Caribbean area emphasis has been upon workers' population education. Seminars and workshops have been held and a country project is operational. Activities also cover employers' orientation and are being expanded to include the co-operative movement.

12. In Latin America, within the same family welfare framework, and with a view to reaching rural population, action to stimulate and support similar educational and motivational activities within co-operatives and related rural institutions is underway in 1975, a Regional Adviser having been appointed late in 1974. The concept of responsible parenthood fits in well with the co-operatives' principle of joint action and self-help and co-operative members constitute a leadership group able to act as a pace-setter and therefore produce a multiplier effect on the rest of the community.

13. In 1975 seminars and workshops are envisaged for ILO's constituents, both singly and jointly with the participation of national population and other appropriate agencies.

14. Not only do these education and training programmes contribute to the goals of improving workers' family welfare, they also contribute in no small measure to the Plan's recommendation that training in population matters should be extended to labour, community and other social leaders to enable them to identify national population problems and help in the formulation of policies relating to them.

15. The services of the Regional Advisers mentioned in this text, who constitute the ILO's Labour and Population Team based at the Area Office, San José, are available on request to governments including social security institutions, employers' and workers' organizations in the region for advice and assistance on these aspects of population and family planning covered by their expertise.

16. Further, there is a Regional Adviser on Labour and Population based at the Area Office, Port of Spain, covering the non-Spanish speaking Caribbean area, available for advice on population and family planning assistance to the organized sector.

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