



About the International Labor Organization (ILO)

THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION (ILO) is a United Nations agency that seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally recognized human and labor rights. Representing 175 member nations, the ILO has a unique structure that gives an equal voice to workers and employers alongside governments.

The ILO formulates international labor standards through its Conventions and Recommendations, which set minimum standards of basic labor rights, including:

- The right to form a union and bargain collectively;
- The right to refuse forced labor;
- The right to reject child labor; and
- The right to work free from discrimination.

The ILO promotes the development of independent employers' and workers' organizations and provides training and advisory services to those organizations. Additionally, the ILO provides technical assistance in a variety of fields, including:

- Vocational training;
- Employment policy;
- Labor law and industrial relations;
- Working conditions;
- Occupational safety and health;
- Social security;
- Cooperatives; and
- Management development.

The ILO was founded in the aftermath of World War I by an international commission headed by American Federation of Labor President Samuel Gompers. The only surviving major creation of the Treaty of Versailles, it became a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1946.

Under the guidance of Director-General Juan Somavia, the ILO remains committed to its original mission of promoting lasting peace through social justice and workers' rights. In 1998, the ILO adopted the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which binds members to respect and promote the four principles mentioned above: the right to form a union and bargain collectively, the right to refuse forced labor, the right to reject child labor and the right to work free from discrimination.

With its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, the ILO has 40 field offices throughout the world and employs a staff of about 1,900 officials from more than 110 nations.

For more information, visit the ILO's website at www.ilo.org.

