

International Labour Organization (ILO):[Reaffirming the Need of Social Dimension of Globalization]

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Abstract: International Labour Organization (ILO) is one of the specialized agencies of the United Nations (U.N) which deals with labour and human rights. It was founded on the assumption that durable world peace cannot be established if it is not based upon social justice. ILO since the last 90 years is working for social justice and thereby contributing to world peace. Today as economic globalization advanced, many considerable benefits and opportunities emerged at one hand, and several disparities and inequalities took place at the same time on the other, the ILO highlighted the need to pay attention to the social dimension of globalization in order to address the prevailing imbalances of growing economic inequalities, to help break the depraved cycle of unemployment and poverty.

Keywords: UN, ILO, Social Justice, Globalization, Economic Development, Inequality

INTRODUCTION

International Labour Organization (ILO) is the first and the oldest specialized agency of the United Nations (U.N.). It is a functional international agency which deals with labour issues. It was created in 1919 as a functional international organization working in cooperation with the League of Nations. It was established as an autonomous body of the League of Nations under the Treaty of Versailles and is the only major surviving creation of this Treaty. In 1946, after the end of the League of Nations, it became the first specialized agency of the League of Nations [1].

ILO was created to improve living and working conditions of working class throughout the world. It formulates international labour standards in the form of conventions and recommendations which have grown during the past 90 years into real 'International Labour Code'. The key feature of this organization is its unique tripartite structure which emphasizes on social dialogue among the key economic actors as a means of promoting social progress and economic development all over the world and thereby contributing to social justice and world peace. "ILO is only organization or body in the U.N. family that includes Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) namely, employers, and workers organizations (but only those organization) as the full participant in all its activities" [2].

Social Justice - a defining struggle of ILO

ILO is working for social justice and peace for the last 90 years. The Preamble to the Constitution of ILO declares that "universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice" [3]. It grew out of many social, economic, political and humanitarian reasons. There was a keen applause of the value of social justice and world peace against the atmosphere of exploitation of working class of industrialized nations at that time. The conditions of workers, more and more numerous and exploited with no consideration of their health, their family lives and their advancement, was less and less acceptable [4]. Without an improvement in their condition, the workers, whose numbers were ever increasing as a result of industrialization, would create social unrest, even revolution [5]. Furthermore, ILO's Constitution states that "the conditions of labours exist involving such injustice, hardship and, privation to large numbers of peoples as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperiled" [6]. The founders of ILO recognized that world economy needed clear precepts for ensuring that economic growth would go hand in hand with social justice, prosperity and peace for all.

In 1944, International Labour Conference (ILC), the supreme policy making body of the ILO adopted the Declaration of Philadelphia which redefined and expanded its aims and principles. The declaration recommends that the central aim of national and international policies should be the attainment of

conditions under which "all human beings, irrespective of race, creed, or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity" [7].

The Declaration also enumerates a number of principles as guidelines to achieve the goal of social ends. They include: labour is not commodity; freedom of expression and association are necessary for sustained progress, poverty constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere, and the principle of ensuring a just share of the fruits of progress to all [8]. The Declaration of Philadelphia stressed the need for national and international actions for universal social progress and economic development.

The contribution of ILO to peace building through its effort to promote social justice was officially recognized in 1969 on its 50th anniversary, when it was awarded the Noble Prize for Peace [9].

ILO: Reaffirming the Need of Social Dimension of Globalization

Today, the world of work entered an era which is truly anomalous in history. Economic globalization has created clear benefits and opportunities for many, yet at the same time millions of workers and employers throughout the world are facing new challenges, pressure and problems [10]. Supported by new technologies, peoples, goods and capital are moving between the countries with an ease and a speed that have created an interdependent global economic network affecting virtually every person on the earth [11]. "The globalized economy has displaced workers and enterprises to new locations, resulted in the sudden accumulation or flight of capital, and caused financial instability which in turn led to the 2008 global economic crisis" [12]. "Despite the clear benefits, globalization has not ushered in an era of prosperity for all" [13]. Veritably, "in spite of strong economic growth that produced millions of new jobs since the early 90s until the 2008 crisis, income inequality also grew dramatically in most regions of the world" [14]. Likewise "The personal distribution of wages has become more unequal, with a growing gap between the top 10 per cent and the bottom 10 per cent of wage earners" [15]. Economic inequality within many countries and between the world's wealthiest and poorest countries has also grown exponentially [16]. And this "inequality leads to a decline in productivity, breeds poverty, unemployment social instability and even conflict [17]. Considering these challenges ILO has recognized the need to pay attention to the social dimension of economic globalization in order to address the prevailing imbalances of growing inequalities to help break the depraved cycle of unemployment, underemployment, poor wages, and breeds poverty. It has highlighted the need to set some fundamentals to

ensure that globalization offers a fair chance of prosperity to all.

While for most of its life the ILO had been dominated by a Western liberal consensus on welfare-state economics and free trade, it now is a more open organization which slowly becomes the advocate of a managed and controlled globalization process [18]. In 1998, The ILC has adopted a benchmark Declaration on fundamental Principles and Rights at work."This instrument has been hailed by some as a victory for the universalization of fundamental labour standards, providing a sort of labour equivalent to the universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration was clearly adopted in the context of a discussion of redefining the purpose of labour standards in a rapidly globalizing world" [19]. The Declaration on fundamental Principles and Rights at work obligates all ILO member states to respect, promote and realize in 'good faith' the concerning fundamental rights which are the subject of these conventions namely: freedom of association, protection of right to organize and collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced labour; abolition of unfair discrimination in employment and occupation and conventions on elimination of worst forms of child labour [20]. "The key feature of this instrument was its universality-it laid-down principles and rights that all countries were to respect by virtue of their membership of the ILO, irrespective of whether they had ratified the standards concerned" [21].

In 1999, Mr. Juan Somavia the then coming Director General of ILO introduced the concept of decent work. He launched the 'The Decent Work Agenda' which takes up many of the same challenges that the organization faced at its inception. The Decent work Agenda aims to achieve decent working conditions to all by promoting social dialogue, social protection and employment creation as well as respect for international labour standards [22]. Mr. Somavia said that "[t]he ILO is concerned with decent work. The goal is not just the creation of jobs, but the creation of jobs of acceptable quality. The quantity of employment cannot be divorced from its quality. All societies have a notion of decent work, but the quality of employment can mean many things. It could relate to different forms of work, and also to different conditions of work, as well as feelings of value and satisfaction. The need today is to devise social and economic system which ensure basic security and employment while remaining capable of adaptation to rapidly changing circumstances in a highly competitive global market" [23].

To meet the challenges lugged by the globalization, ILO established the 'World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization' in February 2002. The Commission was an independent body. It was initiated to respond to the needs of people as they

cope with unusual changes that the globalization has made to their lives, their family and the societies in which they live. The Commission found the various aspects of globalization, the diversity of public perceptions of the process [24]. The Commission searched for innovative ways of bringing together economic, social and environmental objectives, based on global expertise. It has made its recommendations seeking to establish upon a wide understanding among all key economic actors [25].

Commission's groundbreaking Report (2004) says, "There are deep seated persistent imbalances in the current working of the global economy, which are ethically unacceptable and politically unsustainable... Seen through the eyes of vast majority of men and women throughout the world, globalization have not met their simple and legitimate aspiration for decent jobs, livelihoods and a better future for their children" [26].

Many of above mentioned concerns are incorporated in the organizations' landmark Declaration on 'Social Justice for a fair globalization. The Declaration affirms the contemporary vision of its objectives in the age of globalization. This benchmark Declaration is a strong restatement of its fundamental values [27]. The ILO constituted This Declaration to advocate "Decent work" policies in response to the increasing precarious nature of labour in the globalized economy [28]. With the Declaration on Social justice for a fair globalization, the ILO regulated its Decent work Agenda', mandating that all member countries promote policies that advance "Opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity [29].

In building the Declaration around the Decent work Agenda; the ILO adopted four strategic objectives seen as necessary requirements for the safeguarding of labour in a globalized world [30]. The four strategic objectives are: the creation of greater employment and income opportunities for women and men everywhere; the extension of social protection measures; social dialogue and tripartism; fundamental principles and rights at work [31].

"The Declaration also provides leader and decision makers with a balanced approach that connects with people and productive solutions at homes, while also offering a common platform for governance at the international level" [32]. Furthermore, "the Declaration also calls for developing new partnerships with non-state entities and economic factors such as multinational enterprises and trade unions operating at the global sectoral level, in order to enhance the effectiveness of ILO operational programmed and activities" [33].

In 2009, on its 90th anniversary, responding to the economic and job crisis, the International Labour Conference adopted a 'Global Job Pact'. This global policy instruments promotes a recovery centered on investments, employment and social protection with the objective of providing an internationally agreed basis for policy making outlined to reduce the time lag between economic recovery and a recovery with decent work opportunities [34].

In the aftermath of the global economic and social crisis, the Pact presents a portfolio of practical, tried and tested social and economic policies that have worked well in many countries, and can be tailored to each national situation. This Pact is a recall for immediate rethink for action at national, regional and global level [35]. The Pact recalls that generating employment, extending social protection, respecting international standards, gender equality, social dialogue, encouraging voice and participation is pivotal for economic development, social progress, and recovery [36]. This will contribute to economic revitalization, fair globalization, prosperity and social justice for all.

CONCLUSION

ILO is working for social justice and world peace for the last 90 years. The world of work today entered an era which is truly unparalleled in history. Globalized economy has created clear benefits and opportunities for many, yet at the same time million of workers and employers are facing new problems and pressures. There is a need of coordinated and combined national and international actions to confront these crises. ILO, as an international agency charged with the duty to protect and promote labour and human rights, responding well to the widespread demand of social dimension of economic globalization. It provides a policy framework to meet the challenges brought by globalization. Its four major global policy instruments namely: the 'Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work', 'Decent Work Agenda', the 'Declaration on Social Justice for a fair Globalization', the 'Global jobs Pact' and its independent institution, the 'World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization' provides a set of policies which ensure that globalization offers a fair chance of prosperity and social justice for everyone on the earth.

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