

FIFTY YEARS OF ILO

"Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere." This is the motto of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) which in June this year was celebrating the 50th anniversary of its foundation. It was initiated to advance the cause of social justice as a way of contributing to peace.

When ILO was established in 1919 its original Constitution formed part of the Treaty of Versailles. In 1946 it became the first specialized agency of the United Nations. One of its distinctive features is that not only governments, but representatives of employers and workers have a free voice and vote in its deliberations.

In its Constitution ILO declares that "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".

One of the Organisation's primary functions is to raise standards by building up a code of international law and practice. Its conventions and recommendations adopted during the 50 years form in combination the International Labour Code. One of the earliest conventions related to hours of work in industry and one of the more recent decisions was a recommendation on improvement of conditions for agricultural workers. There is also a programme of technical co-operation in rural development, modern management techniques and training for productivity.

A relationship agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency entered into force in November 1958. Co-operation has been mainly in the domain of radiation protection and in training technicians. With other interested organizations, ILO has been associated with the Agency's work in preparing health and safety codes and manuals of practice. The Agency has also participated in preparing recommendations such as the convention concerning the protection of workers against ionizing radiations adopted in 1960 and a revision of the section dealing with ionizing radiations of ILO's "Model Code of Safety Regulations for Industrial Establishments" prepared for the guidance of governments and industry. Joint undertakings have included the elaboration of a code of practice on radiation protection in the milling and mining of radioactive ores and recently a manual on the handling of radiation accidents. There have also been symposia dealing with protection against radioactivity in which ILO, together with other UN organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization, has co-operated, as well as training courses, including one in 1965 on radiation protection in industry. This type of work



Most of the world's workers are still engaged on the land and their living conditions are one of the major interests of the International Labour Organisation. This picture on a Malay rubber plantation shows women carrying rubber tree plants. Photo: International Labour Office.

is expected to continue because of the need to keep manuals and codes of practice abreast of technological developments. The Agency's General Conference in 1966 approved a resolution recommending close co-operation with ILO and with UNESCO, particularly concerning the training of technicians and the teaching of nuclear science in developing countries. As an initial step, the facilities of ILO's International Centre for Advanced Technical and Vocational Training, set up in Turin, were made available in 1968 for the Agency's three-month training course in maintenance of nuclear electronic equipment. A similar course at the Centre is planned for 1970.

At meetings in June to mark the 50th anniversary, at which speakers included Pope Paul VI, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia (whose first visit to ILO was in 1924) and U Thant, Secretary-General of the UN, a message was received on behalf of the Agency's Board of Governors from the Director General, Dr. Sigvard Eklund. He said:

"The Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency, at its meeting on 27 February 1969, requested me to convey to the International Labour Organisation, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation, the warm congratulations of the Agency on the past achievements of its senior sister organization in the United Nations family and its best wishes for future success.

"The Agency looks forward to continuing the cordial and fruitful co-operation which it has always had with ILO."

NUCLEAR LAW FOR A DEVELOPING WORLD

In April 1968 the Agency organized in Vienna the first international course for training lawyers and administrators associated with the development and management of national programmes on nuclear energy. Lectures were given by invited experts and staff members on the legal issues involved. As a result of many requests for the related literature, the whole series of lectures will be published in volume No. 5 of the Agency's Legal Series under the title "Nuclear Law for a Developing World". This book is expected to be available by the end of July 1969. It will be divided into seven chapters: International Organizations; Basic Legislation on Atomic Energy; Third Party Liability and Insurance; Reactor Licensing and Supply of Nuclear Materials; Safety Regulations; Technical Assistance, Food Irradiation, Nuclear Power, and Training in Nuclear Law; and Safeguards.

This is the first publication to cover all main topics in nuclear law that could provide guidance for the drafting of appropriate legislation in many developing countries.