



The Future, and Praxis of Decent Work

14 – 15 February 2013

*International Center for Development and Decent Work, Kassel University,
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Call for papers. The *Financial and Economic Crisis: A Decent Work Response* report prepared by the International Institute for Labour Studies and the Employment Sector and Policy Integration and Statistics Department Geneva in 2009 indicates that the Decent Work Agenda should provide a policy framework to stem crises by placing employment and social protection at the heart of ‘extraordinary fiscal stimulus measures’ which can both protect vulnerable people, and reactivate investment and demand in economies.

The International Labour Organisation’s World of Work Report 2012 forecasts a global unemployment rate of 6.1 per cent in 2012, with total world unemployment rising from 196 million in 2011 to 202 million in 2012. In this context, and with the rise in austerity measures which cannot guarantee growth but which have already triggered social disruption and harm, this conference will explore the concept of decent work and search for a praxis of decent work in all countries, all contexts, and for all people.

Guy Ryder, an experienced trade unionist, was elected as the ILO’s new Director General on 28th May 2012 to take office in September, and he has stated his commitment to prioritise

people and the world of work (Ryder, 2012). In June 2012, India, Brazil and South African signed a long term Declaration of Intent in a number of areas including development and cooperation, and labour, which is explicitly designed to further the Decent Work Agenda aiming toward creating jobs, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection and promoting social dialogue, with gender equality as a core objective. These types of initiatives indicate a continuation of the relevance of a concept that was coined by Juan Somavia, Director General 1999 – September 2012, but the global climate of strained governance continues to challenge the possibilities for decent work in developed and developing countries alike.

The ILO's new Director General faces a Eurozone crisis, rising unemployment, a spate of emergency crisis-driven labour policy deregulation that has often not been passed with consent from relevant social partners, and the dramatic rise in precarity and nonstandard employment which impacts lives in all corners of the world. Several governments across the European Union, including Portugal, Spain, Hungary, and the United Kingdom, have recently passed emergency labour motions and reforms using the rationale of austerity to decentralise collective bargaining, disempower temporary workers, and increase working time for less remuneration, in many cases via Memoranda of Understanding passed in consultation and consent with the Troika (the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the IMF) (Clauwaert and Schomann, 2012). Nonetheless the 'international consensus' remains committed to securing ongoing decent work, and labour law is expected to provide the theatre for appropriate labour standards and rights despite labour law modernisation (Faioli, 2010).

The conference invites papers around these issues which may involve questions around the workings and structure of the International Labour Organisation, the world of work in the current context of global recession, issues surrounding social unrest as linked to rising unemployment, and the future of international labour standards. The concept of decent work is in crisis and this conference is a call for praxis around these issues.

Invited and confirmed participants include delegates from the ICDD, the International Labour Organisation, and the Global Labour Institute.

Paper abstract deadline: 15 November 2012

Send 200 word abstracts, with complete affiliation details to

decentworkconference@gmail.com

Notification/programme: early December 2012

Paper deadline (if available): 1 February 2013

Organisers: Dr Phoebe Moore-Carter (Salford University, IPEG Convenor); Dr Charles Dannreuther (COST and University of Leeds); Christian Möllmann (ICDD Kassel University).

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