



25 July 2003

Mr Juan Somavía
Director General
International Labour Organisation
4 route des Morillons
1211 Geneva 22

Dear Director-General,

The Office has estimated that 74 million young women and men are unemployed throughout the world today, accounting for 41 per cent of the 180 million unemployed persons globally. The social, economic and political ramifications of this tremendous waste of resources on national societies are enormous.

The UN General Assembly's Resolution on Promoting Youth Employment (December 2002) called on the ILO, within the context of the YEN, to assist, upon request, the efforts of national governments in the elaboration of National Action Plans (NAPs) and national reviews. In response, the 2003 March ILO Governing Body further reinforced this call.

In addition, governments have been invited to submit copies of their national reviews and action plans on youth employment to the United Nations Secretariat no later than March 2004.

A small number of countries have already volunteered to be pilots in the development of NAPs and the ILO has already started some initial work in some of them.

The preparation of such plans and reviews play a central role in the international response to tackling the challenge of youth employment. It is our shared belief that the ILO with its tripartite structure is best placed to be at the vanguard of such a response.

In this regard, we are pleased to inform you that, the IOE and ICFTU are committed to working together to unite our efforts to try and arrive at solutions that will provide young people everywhere with opportunities for decent and productive work as stated by the UN Millennium Development Goals. We feel that the combined reach and global networks of our organisation and their role as social partners could greatly enhance the ability of the ILO to make a success of this critical issue.

The ICFTU and IOE aim to encourage governments in developing and transition countries to take a comprehensive review of their approach to youth employment and explore more effective ways to tackle the challenge by elaborating national action plans with their social partners. As part of our commitment both ICFTU and IOE will explore opportunities to identify joint action programmes. This will be done in partnership with our national members and will look to build on the efforts and initiatives taken to date, but will also at the international level, seek to both increase the profile of the problem as well as looking to increase the resources available to meet the challenge of addressing the issue.

The approach we have devised is a simple one, tripartite in nature and specifically concentrates on youth employment. Our concept is to develop a generic model, which could act as a guide in developing individual approaches to National Action Plans through social dialogue and the social partners. This activity would of course be carried out within the context of the Global Employment Agenda. We feel that this approach offers great potential for the ILO in assisting governments to achieve the development and implementation of national action plans on youth employment.

It is our view that by developing clear and successful examples, through social dialogue and the social partners, of what is possible in terms of actual outcomes, momentum could be built upon and success could be replicated elsewhere.

Providing decent and productive work for young people is indeed an immense challenge. However with our combined commitment to tackling the issue, we believe that the ILO and its constituents can play not only a central but also an essential role in assisting governments to meet this challenge and fulfil the aspirations of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

We look forward to hearing from you on this important issue.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,



Daniel Funes de Rioja
Executive Vice-President
International Organisation of Employers



Guy Ryder
General Secretary
International Confederation of
Free Trade Unions