Promoting decent work for all

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This report on the EU contribution to the promotion of decent work in the world backs up the Commission's commitment to promote the internationally-agreed decent work agenda through cooperation with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and other partners, and the mobilisation of all relevant policies. It highlights ongoing efforts and challenges in mobilising the EU's internal and external policies and all relevant stakeholders to promote decent work for all – by supporting the setting of policy agendas and standards at multilateral level, developing bilateral relations and exchange on these issues with partner countries and regions, as well as integrating decent work objectives into the EU's trade and development policies.

The report also underlines that the EU Member States can set an example by ratifying and applying up-to-date conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The EU contribution to decent work throughout the world is part of its efforts to strengthen the social dimension of globalisation, both in the EU and outside, and builds on existing EU initiatives in this regard. It is driven by mutually reinforcing economic, employment, social and environmental policies, in line with the internal and external dimensions of the EU Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs and the 2005 European Consensus on Development.

In particular, the report addresses the following elements:

- decent work as an EU commitment;
- the mobilisation of non-state actors;
- the EU contribution at international, multilateral and regional level;
- the mobilisation of EU internal and external policies;
- the ratification and implementation of ILO conventions by EU Member States.

It contains an assessment of progress made since 2006 as well as proposals where further headway could can be made as part of the strategies outlined in the 2006 Communication on "Decent Work", taking into account new developments. The report proposes reviewing progress made at EU level and by the Member States in a report to be prepared in 2011.

The report concludes that the overview of progress made since 2006 clearly demonstrates that a **number of important achievements have been made in both internal and external EU policies**. The EU actively contributed to international, regional and national initiatives, with a view to move from words to action. The added value of the EU contribution and the leadership of the Commission in this have been widely recognised and appreciated. The mobilisation of EU institutions, EU Member States and stakeholders is on track. There is consensus, both in the EU and internationally, that decent work is a factor in development, governance and performance and that its implementation calls for sustained, coherent and integrated policies and close involvement of social partners and wider civil society.

The international campaign for a worldwide ratification of the eight core labour standards (CLS) Conventions has contributed to a significant increase in the global ratification level. All 27 EU have ratified the CLS Conventions since 2007. The EU's GSP plus scheme has for instance contributed to these efforts in a number of third countries. Ratification of other ILO conventions, classified by ILO as up to date, is also improving. Decent work instruments, tools and programmes are being elaborated and implemented. The objective of decent work for all is now part of mainstream international development goals and frameworks and poverty reduction strategies. Promoting decent work is part of EU development

and external assistance cooperation, of a number of EU partnership agreements and cooperation with third countries and regions and of ongoing discussions on EU bilateral trade agreements with third countries. Decent work is an element of the internal and external dimension of the EU Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs.

However many challenges lie ahead as:

- recognition of decent work as part of key international development goals and national poverty reduction strategies is a recent evolution; therefore the effective implementation of decent work in development policies and poverty reduction strategies, programmes and frameworks is often still at an embryonic phase in many developing countries and in many donor operations;
- decent work operates in an increasingly complex international context such as the intensification of globalisation and its relationship with issues such as climate change, trade and higher food prices; all this provides both opportunities such as the employment potential of climate change, as illustrated by the ILO green jobs strategy discussion, and challenges such as labour market transitions to a low carbon economy;
- decent work as a factor of governance directly relates to the persisting deficits in effective global governance and in labour market governance at national and regional level. This is illustrated by the lack of effective application of ILO Conventions, including CLS, in too many countries and the existence of a large informal economy in most of the developing and emerging economies.

The proposals on "further progress to make" as included in the different sections of this report are intended to improve further the effective implementation of the orientations and strategies made in the 2006 decent work Communication.

All EU institutions have been called upon to ensure an effective and regular follow-up and coordination of the initiatives and actions to promote decent work both by the EU institutions, the EU Member states and stakeholders. As a response to this call, and in view to strengthening synergies and cooperation, it would be appropriate that the EU reports in 2011 on efforts, both by EU institutions, Member States and stakeholders, on promoting decent work throughout the world.