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Discussion Paper

DECENT WORK: Towards a trade union agenda for socio-economic development

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DECENT WORK: Towards a trade union agenda for socio-economic development¹

In the work of putting together a common trade union agenda for socio-economic development for this year and beyond, it has been proposed to use the decent work concept as the integrating framework of the submissions made by the various trade union organizations.

What precisely is the concept of decent work? And how can it be used as the integrating framework for shaping a trade union agenda for socio-economic development?

Decent work concept

The decent work (DW) concept has been defined as one providing “opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.”² It has six dimensions (See *Box 1*) and stands on four pillars.

. These four pillars are:

1. Work, which includes employment, self-employment and unpaid work in economic activities undertaken by families;
2. Fundamental principles and rights at work, which are derived from commonly accepted international instruments that define these rights and principles, at the very least of which is the recognition, respect and promotion of Core International Labour Standards (CILS)³
3. Social Protection, which the International Labour Organization (ILO) in its *World Labour Report 2000* defines as “to include not only public social security programmes but also private or non-statutory schemes with a similar objective to

¹ By Antonio C. Asper, for RPDAO-FFW (September 15, 2004) Contributed to the forum organized by the Socio-Economic Development Program of the FFW on September 24, 2004, Sulo Hotel, Quezon City;

² The quotation is lifted verbatim from: ILO, *Decent Work: Report of the Director General, International Labour Conference, 87th Session*.

³ The ILO lists eight core-labour standards as composing the CILS: 1) Convention 87: Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize; 2) Convention 98: Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining; 3) Convention 105: Abolition of Forced Labour; 4) Convention 138: Minimum Age for Employment; 5) Convention 182: Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention; 6) Convention 100: Equal Remuneration for Work of Equal Value; 7) Convention 29: Forced Labour ; 8) Convention 111: Discrimination in Employment and Occupation. The Philippines is signatory to 7 of these conventions, except 1: Convention 29 on Forced Labour.

- social security schemes, including publicly financed social assistance programmes.”⁴
4. Social Dialogue, a term that denotes peoples’ participation in decision-making, the mechanisms of which range from mere provision of information to co-decision, co-management and co-determination.

Box 1

Six plus one conceptual dimensions of decent work

“The definition ‘opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity’ explicitly includes six dimensions.

1. “Opportunities for work refer to the need for all persons (men and women) who want work to be able to find work, since decent work is not possible without work itself. The underlying concept of work is a broad one, encompassing all forms of economic activity, including self-employment, economic unpaid family work and wage employment in both the informal and formal sectors.
2. “Work in condition of freedom underscores the fact that work should be freely chosen and not forced on individuals and that certain forms of work are not acceptable in the 21st century. It means that bonded labour and slave labour as well as unacceptable forms of child labour should be eliminated as agreed by governments in international declarations and labour standards. It also means that workers are free to join workers’ organizations.
3. “Productive work is essential for workers to have acceptable livelihoods for themselves and their families, as well as to ensure sustainable development and competitiveness of enterprises and countries.
4. “Equity in work represents workers’ need to have fair and equitable treatment and opportunity in work. It encompasses absence of discrimination at work and in access to work and ability to balance work with family life.
5. “security at work is mindful of the need to help safeguard health, pensions and livelihoods, and to provide adequate financial and other protection in the event of health and other contingencies. It also recognises workers’ need to limit insecurity associated with the possible loss of work and livelihood.
6. “Dignity at work requires that workers be treated with respect at work, and be able to voice concerns and participate in decision-making about working conditions. An essential ingredient is workers’ freedom to represent their interests collectively”¹

⁴ “Social Protection is broadly understood by the United Nations as a set of public and private policies and programmes undertaken by societies in response to various contingencies in order to offset the absence or substantial reduction of income from work, provide assistance for families with children, and provide people with health care and housing. It embodies society’s responses to levels of either risk or deprivation that are deemed unacceptable. The existence of social protection systems also promotes more humane societies, although they are now under threat. It should be seen not simply as a residual function of assuring the welfare of the poorest but as a foundation at a societal level for promoting social justice and social cohesion, developing human capabilities and promoting economic dynamism and creativity” says Gloria Kahn, Chief, Intergovernmental Policy Branch, Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, New York

The first two dimensions are concerned with availability and acceptable scope of work. The last four relates to the quality of employment or the extent to which work is decent.

Decent work is not a static concept and must be realized within the dynamics of the political economy in a country and the global community. Thus, a seventh dimension may be added: the macro socio-economic context and politico-economic environment. This seventh dimension should create the enabling environment within which the six main dimensions are to be concretized and realized.

To illustrate: work generation proceeds from investments, which is a function of savings; savings require a level of income to provide for their basic needs, and above which people and businesses start to save, which in turn require that people should have productive jobs or livelihood or businesses and equipped with qualifications and competencies to work productively. Above all these, the managers and regulators of the political economy need to practice good governance and to ensure peace and order to create the appropriate climate for investments that will build the necessary business confidence for a virtuous economic cycle to continue. (See also Attachment 1)

Measuring Decent Work: The Philippine Labor Index

ILO has embarked on a global project⁵ to measure decent work with statistical indicators. It aims to come out with a global index in much the same manner as the UNDP's Human Development Index does. Initially, the ILO proposes 30 statistical indicators grouped into 11 headings (see Box 2) that are available in global statistical reports, from which the Index can eventually be constructed.

The Decent Work indicators aim to serve the purpose of initiating policy, effective advocacy and policy making about employment and its quality. Additionally, it seeks to shed new light in four areas related to decent work: poverty reduction, social dimensions of globalization and sustainable development; better jobs leading to better lives; and counting decent jobs and decent establishments.

While ambitious in aim, the beginnings of the global project are modest: four pilot projects in an equal number of countries. The Philippines is one of the pilot countries.

Box 2

11 Groups of Statistical Indicators for Decent Work

1. Employment Opportunities
2. Unacceptable Work
3. Adequate earnings and productive work
4. Decent hours
5. Stability and security at work
6. Combining work and family life
7. Fair treatment in employment
8. Safe work environment
9. Social protection
10. Social dialogue and workplace relations
11. Economic and social context of decent work

Source: Anker, et.al., op.cit.

⁵ Anker, et.al., *ibid.*

Box 3

The Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (2004-2010)

The basic task of our Medium Term Development Plan for the period 2004-2010 is to fight poverty and build prosperity for the greatest number of the Filipino people. We must open up economic opportunities, maintain socio-political stability, and promote good stewardship – all to ensure better quality of life for our citizens. We will focus on strategic measures and activities which will spur economic growth and create jobs. This can only be done with a common purpose to put our economic house back in working order

By 2010, this will be (the) 10-point legacy of the Arroyo Administration:

LIVELIHOOD

1. We shall have created 10 million jobs. We shall have supported three million entrepreneurs by giving them loans and helping them become good managers, thereby establishing a deep foundation for a broad middle class. We shall have developed two million of agribusiness land by making them productive and transporting their products to the market efficiently.

EDUCATION

2. Everyone of school age will be in school, in an uncrowded classroom, in surroundings conducive to learning. We shall build 3,000 school buildings a year and put a computer in every high school.

FISCAL STRENGTH

3. We shall have balanced the budget by collecting the right revenues and spending on the right things.

DECENTRALIZED DEVELOPMENT

4. The network of transport and digital infrastructure on which the Arroyo government embarked in 2002 will have linked the entire country.
5. Power and water will be regularly provided to the entire country.
6. Metro Manila will be decongested, with economic activity growing and spreading to new centers of government, business and community in Luzon, in the Visayas and in Mindanao.
7. The Subic-Clark corridor will be the most competitive international service and logistics center in the Southeast Asian region.

NATIONAL HARMONY

8. Elections will no longer raise a doubt about their integrity. The electoral process will be completely computerized.
9. Peace will have come to Mindanao and all insurgency areas.
10. The divisive issues generated by EDSA 1, 2 and 3 will have a just closure.

Source: Draft MTPDP, 2004-2010, (work in progress as of August 31, 2004.

An activity under the tripartite Decent Work Programme for the Philippines⁶ is the construction of the Philippine Labor Index (PLI), one that is much like the Philippine Human Development Index in purpose, construction and limitations.

The PLI seeks to measure in a single index constructed from a variety of labor market indicators and statistics the state of decent work in the Philippines. While the index is only as good as the aptness of its various components, nonetheless, it is a useful indicator on how far or near the country is from the goal of decent work. For example, preliminary estimates show that overall the Philippines is above mid-point in the scale index of 1 to 100. It is below the average in the dimensions of freely chosen employment and dignity in work but much above the average in the rest of the dimensions.

Decent Work: Shaping National Directions, Policies and Programs⁷

The six plus one conceptual dimensions of decent work should be translated into acceptable and doable directions, policies and programs, which are shaped, in the context of the Philippines, by four sets of policy instruments. These are:

⁶ See “Decent Work Program for the Philippines, 2002”. The document was drawn up by the social partners with support from the International Labour Organization (ILO). The document is now in the process of review and revision by the social partners.

⁷ Refer to Attachment 1 of this paper for the matrix of the framework

1. the policies and programs that are discussed, adopted and implemented by tripartite bodies;
2. the social and economic policies to be adopted and implemented by the executive branch of government and enacted into law by the legislative branch, that is usually put together in the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP); (See Box 3)
3. the national budget (General Appropriations Act) and laws to be deliberated on and enacted by the bi-cameral Congress, as well as administrative laws, which originate from the executive branch; and,
4. the bilateral and multilateral agreements or instruments arrived at by the Global Economic and Social Order, principally: the bilateral trading agreements as well as the WTO and the Regional Trading Arrangements (RTA); the letter of intent, policies and project documents of the Inter-national Financial Institutions (IFIs); and the instruments adopted by the different UNO Bodies.

Advocacy

In turn, these sets of directions and policies should be translated into concrete public programs such as:

- encouraging investments in economic sectors where Philippines can be most competitive, or in higher value-added economic activities that will generate more productive, permanent and regular jobs, accompanied by active labor market policies and programs that will match the supply and demand of labor efficiently;
- programs that will provide globally competitive qualifications and competencies for the workforce in order to improve the employability and mobility of workers and the productivity and competitiveness of enterprises and the country;
- laws and arrangements to prevent, rescue and rehabilitate child labor and eliminate its worst forms as well as victims of forced labour and trafficking; as well as policies and programs that promote balancing of work and family responsibilities
- legal and institutional arrangements that will prevent, punish and abolish all types of discrimination at work based on sex, religion, or political affiliation; and promote work-life balancing
- social programs to improve the quality and access of all peoples to livelihood, food, housing, education and health services and respond to their individual and social risks and vulnerabilities, or social protection in general; and
- bi-partite, tripartite or multipartite arrangements or schemes that will govern the relations of employers and workers as well as promote and respect their rights, encourage full participation of peoples in decision-making that affects their interests, and generally confer dignity to work that befits a human person.

The expansiveness of these, directions, policies and programs and the urgency of forging a common socio-economic agenda for the country create conflicts of rights and interests between, within and among the social forces, partners and actors. One such example is the current debate and social dialogue on the fiscal problems.⁸ These are real, their consequences are dangerous, and solutions to these problems have to be

⁸ For more details on this current issue, see, e.g. “Asper, A.C., “Taxing Solutions to the Fiscal Problem”, September 2004, RPDAO-FFW

found urgently, if a full-blown fiscal crisis is to be avoided. Likewise, the ensuing social dialogues are opportunities for the various sectors and forces to shape a common agenda for fiscal reforms that should result in macroeconomic stability and growth in order to win the fight against poverty and move the country to more lasting progress.

It is equally important that directions, policies and programs are designed within a broader model of development to provide the vision, mission and goals from which the various social actors can mould their roles. One such model is the social market economy adapted to Philippine realities.⁹

Thus, the objective should be to find commonalities within these groups of actors and among themselves in order to forge a national consensus or majority opinion on which development model to adopt or adapt, what directions to follow, which policies to ensconce and which programs to implement and prioritize for the common good.¹⁰

These call for continuing and permanent social dialogue, which entail creating more, and strengthening existing, mechanisms for rational debate and productive social dialogue. In turn, these require freedom of information, association and expression to be guaranteed by law and respected in practice.

Subsidiarity

The submissions of the organizations participating in the Labor Agenda Group¹¹ show the diversity, even conflicts, of interests and positions within and among the participating groups. Placing all the details of these submissions in the suggested framework will produce an incoherent labor agenda, even when used only as a discussion paper or as an advocacy material.

Much has to be done, therefore, to determine what are common issues and concerns to all and what are specific for particular sectors, what are doable by government given existing constraints in policy and resources and what the groups can do for and by themselves.

The process of negotiation or social dialogue among the participating organizations should be continued in order to shape a common labor agenda to be incorporated across the span of the four basic policy instruments, that is, the decisions of tripartite bodies; the MTPDP, Legislative Program and Global Advocacy Agenda; at the same time, the organizations should determine what they can do best for and by themselves and what they can advocate for government and other civil society groups to do because these can do it better or best. This is the principle of subsidiarity.

Moreover, it is illusory for citizens to expect their government or any government, to do most everything for them. Subsidiary groups should do what they are most competent to do for and by themselves and not pass it on at higher level of government. For example, the detailed proposals to reform the dispute settlement machinery under the labor code

⁹ A draft of this economic development model was written by the Angelo King Institute of the De La Salle University from a series of roundtable discussions held by it in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, entitled "Solving the Philippine Puzzle: towards an RP-style social market economy", September 2004. The draft is about to be finalized.

¹⁰ For example, the NEDANEDA has circulated a (August 31, 2004) of the MTPDP, detailing a medium term development plan and fleshing out the 10-point Legacy Program of the Arroyo Administration. The draft is "a work in progress" that is now being discussed by government agencies and social sectors.

¹¹ See, _____ "Towards A Joint Policy Agenda For Labor: managing the social impact of globalization through stronger state adherence to decent work" (Process documentation, April to July 2004), printed July 2004, Manila, Philippines. The series of meetings and the resulting document were undertaken with the support of the Freidrich Eibert Stiftung, the Labor Organization of Norway and the Solidarity Center of the AFL-CIO.

may result in making it too legalistic and confrontational that it becomes impossible for non-lawyers and ordinary workers as well as employers to resolve the disputes themselves.

Organizations of employers and workers are the most competent in adjusting their disputes without having to refer most to compulsory arbitration. However, bi-partite resolution of disputes including voluntary arbitration rests on the principle that the partners deal with each other as equals, which presently they are not. In this case, the better policy advocacy may be to strengthen unionism and other forms of workers' organizations such that both employers and workers achieve parity in their relations.

The arena of collective bargaining is one other fora where the principle of subsidiarity can function in promoting decent work. Most collective bargaining agreements (CBA) already strengthen union recognition and security; likewise these agreements have installed mechanisms for continuing social dialogue on issues directly related to the improvement of working conditions in workplaces, such as labor-management committees, health and safety committees, sports and social welfare committees. Depending on the financial capability of specific firms for their amount or extent of benefits, provisions for social assistance and insurance over and above what law provides have become standard clauses in CBAs.

It can be a plausible strategy of trade unions that some components of decent work are better negotiated in workplaces rather than enacted into law by Congress, in order, in the meantime, to set the practice in order to become the basis of making it into statutory or administrative law; or to improve on existing laws which are often too general and may not fit well for certain firms; or the benefits provided by existing law can even be improved at the level of firms or among groups of companies, since the standards set by law are considered the minimum, which collective bargaining or unilateral grant by employers can raise.

Moreover, rather than just focusing collective bargaining on wage determination, long standing unions can initiate the negotiation and inclusion of decent work clauses in CBAs. For example, much neglected provisions in CBAs relate to health and safety at work, workplace training and productivity, combining work and family responsibility, career development and high-performance work practices, gender equality and eliminating forms of discrimination at work directed at non-regular and non-permanent employees and protection of unions and workers in cases of mergers and acquisitions.¹²

While law and policy may provide for general standards relating to their exercise or practice, the nitty-gritty of implementing the purpose of law and policy can often be better realized when negotiated in workplaces and adjusted to their micro-conditions.

Similarly, higher level organization of workers, such as Federations and Labor Centers can and should design and implement decent work programs for their respective constituencies, with or without the aid of government, in order to complement or supplement collective bargaining as well as other public programs in realizing the decent work agenda.¹³

¹² For example, under the FFW-CNV Programme for Result-oriented planning, monitoring and evaluation, FFW leaders have discussed and shaped model CBA provisions on gender equality and clauses to mitigate the negative impact of mergers and acquisitions and counter labor-only contracting.

¹³ Since May 2001 until the end of its policy and programme cycle in 2006, the FFW has adopted in its PPOA the theme, "Promoting Decent Work in a Borderless World" that proposes external and internal policies and programs to bring this about.

Globalism

Whether to promote decent work or in support of other policies, there is the truism that national governance and policy-making is no longer the sole and sovereign domain of national governments. In a globalized environment, national policy is now being shaped also by global developments and multilateral agreements. This is particularly felt when assessing the impact on national policies and programs of the WTO Agreements and Regional Trading Arrangements, the programs of International Financial Institutions and the rules made as well as decisions taken by other UNO bodies about various aspects of international cooperation.

In the Philippines as in other countries that are similarly situated, certain laws and even their constitutions may have to be amended to conform to the rules and disciplines that were and still are multilaterally negotiated in the WTO.

Certain policies, too, to reform the economy and governance of countries are negotiated by governments with IFIs in order to access to loans and other financial instruments from the latter that the former needs in order to pursue their development efforts.

While reform policies are, indeed, made as conditionalities by IFIs to certain types of loans which they lend to countries, governments from their end also use these conditionalities to “lock-in” the reforms they want to initiate in their respective countries.

Box 4

“An open economy, high public debt, fiscal risks from contingent liabilities, banking and corporate stress, and substantial external financing requirements make the Philippines vulnerable to both external shocks and policy slippage. Bank-financed operations face additional project risks with regard to procurement, financial management, and safeguard issues due to capacity constraints, plus additional security risks in Mindanao. The strength of the Philippine government’s policy actions will determine the scope of Bank interventions. In the most likely base case lending scenario, the IBRD’s exposure in the Philippines is expected to decline slightly. Close monitoring of risks and project performance is a key feature of this CAS. So, too, are close supervision and up-front assessment of institutional capacity, as well as assistance to strengthen capacity where needed.

Source: Concluding paragraph of the Executive Summary to the WB Group CAS for the Philippines 2003-2005.

What really matters most are not that conditionalities are made *sine qua non* to loans; rather, it is the content of these conditionalities and the process by which these were arrived at or formulated that is under question. Often enough, both process and content are opaque, dictated by vested interests both from the side of lenders and debtors as well who are often unaccountable for the negative consequences on peoples and workers of their policies, programs and projects.

As important as advocating for a labor agenda in the national front, therefore, is the reality of globalism that impels the trade union movement to carry out their advocacy on a global scale as well, which they are doing.

At the global level, unions and civil society groups are active in lobbying the global institutions to reform their structures, policies and programs. Promoting multinational codes of conduct and social labelling are two such efforts. Campaigns, such as the Clean Clothes Campaign, seek to ensure that multinational corporations in garments, textile and apparel industry align their corporate practice more closely to accepted

international labor and social standards, or face the pressure of public opinion or a worldwide boycott of their branded products.

Lobbying the WTO and the IFIs by these groups to reform these international bodies are also carried over in the IFIs' annual assemblies as well as on the ground, where IFI projects and WTO Agreements are being implemented. Global Unions and trade secretariats or their affiliates in specific countries engage the WTO, IFIs and national governments in all types of social dialogues to sensitize these institutions on the deleterious impact of their policies in support of liberalization, deregulation and privatization. (See Box 5)

Box 5

The Asian Labor Network on IFIs/Philippine Chapter (ALNI/P)

ALNI/P

...is a network of trade unions, peoples' organizations, non-government organizations and the academe committed to engage international financial and trade institutions and the Philippine Government in constructive dialogue on policies, programs and projects that have direct impact on Filipino workers and society at large.

Framework for Engagement

Policies, programs and projects on Liberalization, Deregulation and Privatization (LDP) have adversely affected employment which: resulted in unemployment and in the exodus of workers to precarious overseas work; and promoted precarious flexible employment arrangements.

ALNI/P thus:

- Advocates to stop LDP as it is being pursued by international financial and trade institutions until the following are met:
 1. Past policies are assessed as to their impact on employment;
 2. Future policies, programs and projects must include measures to help displaced workers;
 3. Tripartite negotiations and social dialogue are undertaken about acceptable economic and social targets that will provide more quality jobs, improve social protection and guarantee core international labor standards.
- Undertakes to raise awareness among its members and the public about these adverse effects and how these can be mitigated and prevented.
- Supports the efforts of the Labor Solidarity Movement to unite trade unions and other workers' organizations and become the voice of labor.
- Seeks partnerships with NGO and civil society groups with the same aims and purposes

ALNI/P Advocacy Agenda

...centers on three key issues: (1) the integration of core labor standards; (2) employment protection and generation; (3) social protection

...in key economic sectors: (1) food; (2) energy; (3) water

...that are being hit by globalization's policy triad: (1) liberalization; (2) deregulation; (3) privatization

ALNI: The Regional Network

ALNI/P and its allies across Southeast Asia advocated that all IFIs must respect and promote the following labor rights and standards: (1) freedom of association; (2) right to collectively bargain; (3) right to strike; (4) international occupational health and safety standards; (5) no use of child labor; (6) no use of forced labor; (7) no discrimination; (8) provision of a living wage; and (9) employment security – no loss of jobs

Source: ALNI/P Brochure: Advancing labor and people centered initiatives

In a more recent development, as a result of an ADB-ILO RETA on Implementing Labour Standards in Developing Member Countries, the Asian Development (ADB) has decided to come out with a distinct and separate policy on Labour Standards. The initial draft contains explicit recognition of the role of labour standards in development and provisions on how these may be incorporated in the Bank's policies, projects and activities. Likewise, the Bank acknowledges the role of ILO and its programme of promoting decent work as its contribution to global economic and social development and to the over-arching goal of the ADB on poverty reduction.

In implementing the RETA, extensive consultations were conducted with government, trade unions, employers' groups and civil society on Child Labour, Health and Safety and Gender Issues. The results were used to draw up the ADB's draft Manual on Labour Standards.¹⁴ When finally adopted, the Manual aims to guide the Bank staff in their work of helping countries draw up policies, programs and projects for social and economic development, which in turn, is expected to result, among others, in promoting recognition and respect by member-countries' governments and employers of at least the core international labour standards.

Within the World Bank, a facility and fund once provided by a developed-country government was used to organize a world-wide dialogue between the World Bank and Civil Society. As a result, not only has the World Bank changed some of its policies and programs and recognized the invaluable contribution that civil society can make in implementing Bank-financed projects in countries accessing its facilities but also the World Bank continues to improve its social development policy in consultation with civil society and other stakeholders. Its triennial multi-sectoral consultation in making the Bank's Country Assistance Strategy (CAS)¹⁵ is one such result. The engagement of NGOs in certain areas and phases of Bank-financed projects is another,

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is yet another example of global policy-making. Billed as the unified program of the United Nations, and monitored by the UNDP, the 8 Millennium Development Goals with its 18 targets and 48 indicators become the framework in which the United Nations Development Assistance Fund (UNDAF) operates in countries like the Philippines.¹⁶ Country performance is assessed against the goals and targets and country assistance is then determined along the frame. The importance of the MDG and its framework is that it permeates national policy concerning social and economic development and, while it does not explicitly acknowledge decent work as a distinct goal, nevertheless the 8 goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators are expected to promote decent work in the process as much as ultimately, and reduce poverty as well.

¹⁴ The draft Manual as of this writing is still being discussed at staff level. The final draft will be subjected to consultations, which is expected to be held in the months of September or October.

¹⁵ The present CAS for the Philippines is for the period of 2003-2005. As early as July, 2004, the WB has been holding regional consultations on a new CAS for the period 2006-2008. The results of the consultations and stakeholders recommendations preceding the adoption of the present CAS were appended as Annex G, indicating therein what recommendations were or were not included and the reasons therefore.

¹⁶ For details, see "A Common View, A Common Journey: a common country assessment of the Philippines", and "The United Nations Development Assistance Framework in the Philippines (2005-2009)". The first document is an assessment undertaken through a participatory process of consultation among UN agencies and their partners in government and civil society as well as with other donor agencies in the Philippines. The second provides the framework for assistance to the Philippines and the outcomes and outputs that the various programs seek to achieve as well as indicators and baselines for monitoring and evaluation as are consistent with the MDGs.

Of recent vintage, the Global Compact Initiative (GCI) was launched by the United Nations which, with its nine principles (see Box 6), is expected to promote voluntary compliance by employers through a process of self-audit.

Of older but recently revised standards governing the operations of multinational enterprises is the *OECD Guidelines on MNEs*, composed of ten headings: (I) concepts and principles; (II) general policies; (III) disclosure of information; (IV) employment and industrial relations; (V) environment; (VI) combating bribery; (VII) consumer interests; (VIII) science and technology; (IX) competition; and (X) taxation. Unlike the GCI, the OECD Guidelines are both voluntary and compulsory in character and contains definite mechanisms (the national contact points) that allow the tripartite review of violations by MNEs of these guidelines upon initiation of interested parties.

Yet another old international instrument to promote social responsibility among multinational corporations was adopted by the ILO in its *Tripartite Declaration on Multinational Corporations and Social Policy*, which, while voluntary in character nevertheless requires government-members to make periodic reports on its implementation by them in their respective countries.

Other international private organizations are also active in developing global standards directly connected to promoting quality products and better operating standards through a process of international certification, such as those provided by the International Standards Organization (ISO) and the Social Accountability 8000 (SA 8000).

The changes that these global institutions and international instruments precipitate in the world of work as well as on the global economic and social order are expected to permeate countries that will shape their national directions, policies and programs as interaction between these countries and the global institutions take place. The ILO's Decent Work Programme can do no less.

Box 6: Nine Principles of the Global Compact Initiative (GCI)

Human rights

1. Business should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.
2. Make sure they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

Labour Standards

3. Business should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
4. The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labor;
5. The effective abolition of child labor;
6. Eliminate discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

Environment

7. Business should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
8. Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility;
9. Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technology

Source: United Nations

Networking, Social Dialogue and Negotiation

Various social actors and forces continually shape the directions, policies, programs and plans for socio-economic development. The National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) is now deep in consultation with stakeholders to flesh out the 10-point Legacy Program of the Arroyo Administration. The final result will be a Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) for 2004-2010. Public hearings and investigation in Congress are conducted by congressional committees in aid to legislation that is

currently focused on fiscal reforms to avert a crisis; at the same time Congress is reviewing the national budget submitted by the executive branch to adopt the General Appropriations Act (GAA) for 2005.

World Bank (WB) in the Philippines is also in the process consulting with its stakeholders to review its previous Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for the Philippines and to define its next triennial CAS. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) amidst an impending change in its top leadership is finalizing its Manual on Labour Standards. Only recently, the IMF under its Article IV mandate has finished reviewing the Philippine performance and has submitted its recommendations to the Philippine government about pending reforms yet to be accomplished and new ones to initiate.

In the World Trade Organization (WTO), continuing negotiations for agreements and disciplines related to trade and investment are undertaken. Whether favourable or not for the country, multilateral agreements on cutting the agricultural subsidy given by developed countries to their agricultural sectors have been reached in exchange for liberalizing trade in services and, to some extent, investments and other non-trade barriers. Similarly, the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) continues to pursue deeper and wider liberalization among its member economies.

Consultations on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the Philippines have recently been concluded and a new framework for funding has been agreed upon, which will define international financial assistance and technical cooperation for the country by the various UNO Agencies. Likewise, the 2002 Decent Work Programme for the Philippines is now going through a review process by the social partners, which is expected to result in focusing the programmes and activities for greater impact.

Promoting decent work in all these fora requires capacity building of trade unions to adequately represent workers and their members and negotiate their interests. Similarly, it requires networking with other stakeholders to gain support for a labor agenda that must be pushed in these social dialogues.

The stakeholders are varied and so are their positions and interests. Within and among the various stakeholders and groups, there are varying interests and positions, which can complement or supplement those of the trade unions. The unions should consolidate these efforts by forming or joining networks of like-minded groups and individuals in order to form a common front and a common agenda for advocacy. These individuals and groups can also support and amplify trade union resources as they shape and implement policies and programs to advance decent work in their own organizations and for their constituencies.

In the ensuing social dialogue to advance the goals of decent work, links with all the stakeholders can help trade unions refine their advocacy platform and move their agenda forward.

As in all true social dialogues, open mindedness is as important as interest-based negotiations. No social dialogue can prosper were the groups to close their minds to positions other than theirs. Yet underlying every position are certain interests that define values to be gained by all in the negotiating table, which interest-based or principled negotiation can facilitate, by creating win-win solutions to apparently conflicting positions that are underlined by varying interests. (See Box 7)

Promoting decent work can be no less.

Box 7: PRINCIPLED NEGOTIATIONS		
PROBLEM		SOLUTION
SOFT	HARD	PRINCIPLED
Participants are friends	Participants are adversaries	Participants are problem solvers
The goal is agreement	The goal is victory	The goal is a wise outcome, reached efficiently and amicably
Make concessions to cultivate the relationship	Demand concessions as a condition of the relationship	Separate the people from the problem
Be soft on people and hard on the problem	Be hard on the people and the problem	Be soft on people, hard on the problem
Trust others	Distrust others	Proceed independent of trust
Change your position easily	Dig into your position	Focus on interests, not positions
Make offers	Make threats	Explore interests
Disclose your bottom line	Mislead as to your bottom line	Avoid having a bottom line
Accept one-sided losses to reach agreement	Demand one-sided gains as the price of agreement	Invent options for mutual gain
Search for the single answer: the one they will accept	Search for the single answer: the one you will accept	Develop multiple options to choose from; decide later
Insist on agreement	Insist on your position	Insist on using objective criteria
Try to avoid a contest of will	Try to win a contest of will	Try to reach a result based on standards independent of will
Yield to pressure	Apply pressure	Reason and be open to reasons; yield to principle, not pressure

Source: Roger Fisher and William Ury., Bruce Patton (Ed): "Getting to YES", 2nd edition, Penguin Books, 1991 (as summarized by PHIMCO Industries, Nov. 21, 2001)

**DECENT WORK (DW) AS INTEGRATING FRAMEWORK
FOR TRADE UNION ADVOCACY OF A BETTER LIFE**

Dimensions of DW	Arena for integrating decent work in policies and programs						
	Internal Advocacy			External Advocacy			
	Collective Bargaining	Internal Policy and Program of Action	Local and global networking	Tripartite Bodies	MTPDP	National Legislative Agenda	Reform Agenda for Global Institutions
Opportunities for work	Policies and programs to provide opportunities for work for all who wants to work, whether in wage employment, self-employment, unpaid family work, livelihood or businesses. Such policies and programs should promote a virtuous cycle of investments, savings, income, and employment.						
Freely chosen work	Policies and programs to: eliminate unacceptable forms of work, such as child labor, bonded and forced labor; guarantee the effective exercise of freedom of association; equip workers with qualifications and competencies that will improve their social mobility, enable them to exercise freely chosen occupations or professions and develop their personalities.						
Productive work	Policies and programs that will provide acceptable and adequate livelihood for workers and their families; likewise, to ensure sustainable development and competitiveness of enterprises and countries from which work is derived.						
Equity in work	Policies, programs and arrangements that will promote fair and equitable treatment and opportunity in work, which “encompasses absence of discrimination at work and in access to work and ability to balance work with family life.”						
Security at work	Policies and programs “to help safeguard health, pensions and livelihoods, and to provide adequate financial and other protection in the event of health and other contingencies. It also recognises workers’ need to limit insecurity associated with the possible loss of work and livelihood”						
Dignity at work	Policies and programs that ensure workers are treated with respect at work; and are “able to voice concerns and participate in decision-making about working conditions. An essential ingredient is workers’ freedom to represent their interests collectively”						
Politico-economic environment	This seventh dimension should create the enabling environment within which the six main dimensions are to be concretized and realized.						