

The International Labor Organization

DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

"The failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labor is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve conditions in their own countries." Written into the constitution of the International Labor Organization at the time of its founding in 1919, this declaration expressed the fundamental thinking of the founders who were planning concerted action to improve the standards for workers on an international basis.

The representatives of the founding countries then decided that the most effective way to translate such a policy into action was to adopt standards and put them in the form of international treaties (conventions) binding on all member countries ratifying them. Thus began the standard-setting operation, which, for the next three decades, was to be the primary task of this unique tripartite Organization composed of government, worker and employer representatives.

Activities Much Expanded

This year, as the ILO moves into its second half-century of existence, its scope of activity is much broader than that envisaged by its founders. While still carrying out the important functions of formulating and administering international labor standards, it has become an "operational" body standing ready to take direct action to improve the social and working conditions of people anywhere in the world.

The most significant aspect of this change in direction is the ILO's participation in what are known as technical-assistance programs, designed, for the most part, to promote economic and social development in the underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.

Numerous Projects

Today, ILO experts are at work on a wide variety of projects: operating vocational-training schemes in India and Morocco; starting rural co-operatives in Bolivia and Afghanistan; improving manpower-planning methods in Somalia and Brazil; developing small-scale industries in the Solomon Islands and Jamaica; reorganizing the social security systems in Iran and Libya, and applying modern management techniques to industrial development in Pakistan and Tanzania.

More than 600 ILO officials are involved in some 250 assistance programs in over 90 countries and, in fact, these activities account for more than half the work of the Organization. Some idea of the extent of these operations can be gained by noting the financial outlays they require. In 1968, for example, more than \$20 million was allocated to these programs, while the figure for this