



International  
Labour  
Office

Geneva

## Recommendation 195



Recommendation concerning  
Human Resources Development:  
Education, Training  
and Lifelong Learning

## Recommendation 195

# Recommendation concerning Human Resources Development: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning

---

The designations employed in the ILO publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Labour Office concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the International Labour Office, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

ILO publications can be obtained through major booksellers or ILO local offices in many countries, or direct from ILO Publications, International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. Catalogue or list of new publications are available free of charge from the above address.

---

## **PREFACE BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL<sup>1</sup>**

Human resources development and, in particular, education and training are critical to the ILO goal of creating greater opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Education and training are therefore a central pillar of the Decent Work Agenda. This year we have adopted a new, dynamic instrument on human resources development with a strong focus on education, training and lifelong learning. This Recommendation is a forward-looking and policy-oriented instrument that addresses the enormous challenges we face in developing the knowledge, skills and employability of all people in the twenty-first century.

It provides, for the first time in an ILO instrument, definitions of contemporary training issues including lifelong learning, competencies and employability. Education and skills facilitate the application of new technologies, increase individuals' employability and enterprises' productivity and competitiveness. Women and men need broad-based skills that can be adapted to rapidly changing economic requirements. Sound education and training policy also provides an important instrument to offset the negative impacts of globalization, while at the same time equipping people with the knowledge and skills to take advantage of the emerging opportunities. They thus make labour markets operate better. But education and training by themselves are insufficient. To be fully effective, they need to form part of integrated policies directed at economic and employment growth.

A number of delegates commented on the analysis of the report by the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, which highlighted that countries which have benefited from globalization most have invested significantly in their education and training systems. For example, Mr. Fong, Minister of Human Resources of Malaysia, in his address to the Conference, noted that "in the present context of liberalization, globalization and a changed economic scenario, the emphasis needs to be on upgrading the skills of the labour force". Mr. Dowla, Employers' delegate from Bangladesh, while noting that most countries in South Asia had "taken up major economic reforms to reduce poverty", stressed that the basic problem is that the poor are without assets, and unskilled and hence not able to take advantage of the new opportunities.

The new Recommendation deals with many of the challenges posed by globalization, such as the issue of "brain drain", which is causing concern in many developing countries. It calls for international mechanisms that would mitigate the adverse impact on developing countries of the loss of skilled people. It also recognizes that education and training strategies and creating the right enabling conditions – economic growth, investment, creation of decent jobs and human

---

<sup>1</sup> The Director General's reply to the discussion of his report – Provisional Record 25, ninety-second session of the International Labour Conference, 2004.

development – will help these countries retain their skilled labour. The new instrument calls for innovative approaches to release additional resources for education, training and lifelong learning to assist these countries. Making the most of the positive links between knowledge and skills on the one hand and productivity improvement, poverty reduction and social inclusion on the other is central to the new human resources development Recommendation.

The Office is preparing a number of measures to support and promote the new Recommendation. They will include developing the present web site into a digital practical guide to implementing the Recommendation, as called for in the general discussion on human resources development at the 88th Session of the Conference in 2000. We believe that a digital guide is a more innovative and creative way of supporting our constituents. It will link the text of the Recommendation to all international instruments on education and training and to the over 500 examples of national training policy and programme initiatives that we have collected. Your new Recommendation presented in this new digital guide will provide a very useful platform for promoting cooperation between countries on sharing good practices and thus in giving full effect to more than four years' hard work.

Juan Somavia  
*Director General*

## INTRODUCTION

The new ILO Recommendation on *Human resources development: Education, training and lifelong learning* (No. 195) was adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2004. The Recommendation is a dynamic and comprehensive ILO international labour standard that will assist governments, employers and workers put into effect education, training and lifelong learning policies and programmes for the 21st century. It places people at the centre of economic and social development.

The Recommendation calls on member States to develop and implement education, training and lifelong learning policies that promote people's employability throughout their lives. These policies are best developed through a process of social dialogue. For these policies to be effective, they must form an integral part of comprehensive economic, social and labour market policies and programmes for economic and employment growth. Quality education, pre-employment training and learning throughout life are the three pillars for building and maintaining individuals' employability. When supported by transparent and fair mechanisms for skills assessment, certification and recognition, education and training policies will ensure that skills developed are portable across enterprises, industries, sectors and educational institutions.

The Recommendation is built on a number of core principles that reflect the ILO's values: that education, training and lifelong learning contribute significantly to promoting the interests of people, enterprises, the economy and society as a whole; that lifelong learning contributes to personal development, access to culture and active citizenship; that the social partners have roles to play and commitments to fulfil in support of lifelong learning; that many developing countries should be assisted to design, fund and implement education and training policies for economic and employment growth, and the eradication of poverty; and that the realization of decent work for workers everywhere is a primary objective of the International Labour Organization.

The instrument recognizes that education and training are a right for all people. Policies that ensure people with special needs access to education, training and lifelong learning will be a powerful tool to liberate them economically and socially. The promotion of equal education and training opportunities for women and men, and overcoming gender bias, is also a major principle in the instrument. There is recognition that enterprises play an increasingly central role in enhancing investment in training and in providing workplace-based learning and training programmes, for example by using high-performance work practices that improve skills. It also stresses the importance of individuals making use of the education, training and lifelong learning opportunities offered. Member States are urged to formally recognize such learning, including formal and non-formal learning, and work experience.

The instrument also recognizes that globalization has important implications for education and training policies in many countries, particularly those that are poor and highly indebted, and those that lose skilled labour through migration. The new instrument advocates the development of innovative approaches to raise additional funds for education, training and lifelong learning to assist poor, indebted countries. Likewise, it calls for international mechanisms, including human resources development strategies, to mitigate the negative effects that migration of skilled labour have on the countries of origin. Increased technical and financial assistance is essential if these countries are to be able to place education, training and lifelong learning at the centre of development policies.

The Recommendation also places considerable importance on the informal economy and calls on member States to develop policies and programmes which address the challenge of transforming activities in the informal economy. It stresses that these policies and programmes should contribute to the creation of decent jobs and opportunities for education and training to assist employers and workers to move into the formal economy.

Putting into practice education, training and lifelong learning policies that reach out to all people will be a formidable undertaking in all countries, both rich and poor. The Recommendation, supported by a digital guide on implementing the provisions of the instrument, together with a set of guides on specific aspects of the instrument, will be invaluable tools for ILO constituents as they go about designing and putting into effect education, training and lifelong learning policies and programmes.

Jane Stewart  
*Director*  
*Skills and Employability Department*

## INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE

### Recommendation 195

#### **Recommendation concerning human resources development: Education, training and lifelong learning**

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization,  
Having been convened at Geneva by the Governing Body of the International  
Labour Office, and having met in its 92nd Session on 1 June 2004, and

Recognizing that education, training and lifelong learning contribute significantly  
to promoting the interests of individuals, enterprises, the economy and society  
as a whole, especially considering the critical challenge of attaining full  
employment, poverty eradication, social inclusion and sustained economic  
growth in the global economy, and

Calling on governments, employers and workers to renew their commitment to  
lifelong learning: governments by investing and creating the conditions to  
enhance education and training at all levels; enterprises by training their  
employees; and individuals by making use of the education, training and life-  
long learning opportunities, and

Recognizing that education, training and lifelong learning are fundamental and  
should form an integral part of, and be consistent with, comprehensive eco-  
nomic, fiscal, social and labour market policies and programmes that are  
important for sustainable economic growth and employment creation and  
social development, and

Recognizing that many developing countries need support in the design, funding  
and implementation of appropriate education and training policies to attain  
human development, economic and employment growth, and poverty eradic-  
ation, and

Recognizing that education, training and lifelong learning are contributing factors  
to personal development, access to culture and active citizenship, and

Recalling that the realization of decent work for workers everywhere is a primary  
objective of the International Labour Organization, and

Noting the rights and principles embodied in the relevant instruments of the Inter-  
national Labour Organization, and in particular:

- (a) the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975; the Employment  
Policy Convention and Recommendation, 1964; the Employment Policy  
(Supplementary Provisions) Recommendation, 1984; and the Paid Educa-  
tional Leave Convention and Recommendation, 1974;
- (b) the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work;



- (c) the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy;
- (d) the conclusions concerning human resources training and development, adopted at the 88th Session (2000) of the International Labour Conference, and

Having decided upon the adoption of certain proposals with regard to human resources development and training, which is the fourth item on the agenda of the session, and

Having determined that these proposals shall take the form of a Recommendation; adopts this seventeenth day of June of the year two thousand and four the following Recommendation, which may be cited as the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004.

#### I. OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

1. Members should, based on social dialogue, formulate, apply and review national human resources development, education, training and lifelong learning policies which are consistent with economic, fiscal and social policies.

2. For the purpose of this Recommendation:

- (a) the term “lifelong learning” encompasses all learning activities undertaken throughout life for the development of competencies and qualifications;
- (b) the term “competencies” covers the knowledge, skills and know-how applied and mastered in a specific context;
- (c) the term “qualifications” means a formal expression of the vocational or professional abilities of a worker which is recognized at international, national or sectoral levels;
- (d) the term “employability” relates to portable competencies and qualifications that enhance an individual’s capacity to make use of the education and training opportunities available in order to secure and retain decent work, to progress within the enterprise and between jobs, and to cope with changing technology and labour market conditions.

3. Members should identify human resources development, education, training and lifelong learning policies which:

- (a) facilitate lifelong learning and employability as part of a range of policy measures designed to create decent jobs, as well as to achieve sustainable economic and social development;
- (b) give equal consideration to economic and social objectives, emphasize sustainable economic development in the context of the globalizing economy and the knowledge- and skills-based society, as well as the development of competencies, promotion of decent work, job retention, social development, social inclusion and poverty reduction;
- (c) stress the importance of innovation, competitiveness, productivity, growth of the economy, the creation of decent jobs and the employability of people, considering that innovation creates new employment opportunities and also

requires new approaches to education and training to meet the demand for new skills;

- (d) address the challenge of transforming activities in the informal economy into decent work fully integrated into mainstream economic life; policies and programmes should be developed with the aim of creating decent jobs and opportunities for education and training, as well as validating prior learning and skills gained to assist workers and employers to move into the formal economy;
- (e) promote and sustain public and private investment in the infrastructure needed for the use of information and communication technology in education and training, as well as in the training of teachers and trainers, using local, national and international collaborative networks;
- (f) reduce inequality in the participation in education and training.

4. Members should:

- (a) recognize that education and training are a right for all and, in cooperation with the social partners, work towards ensuring access for all to lifelong learning;
- (b) recognize that the realization of lifelong learning should be based on the explicit commitment: by governments by investing and creating the conditions to enhance education and training at all levels; by enterprises in training their employees; and by individuals in developing their competencies and careers.

## II. DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICIES

5. Members should:

- (a) define, with the involvement of the social partners, a national strategy for education and training, as well as establish a guiding framework for training policies at national, regional, local, and sectoral and enterprise levels;
- (b) develop supportive social and other policies, and create an economic environment and incentives, to encourage enterprises to invest in education and training, individuals to develop their competencies and careers, and to enable and motivate all to participate in education and training programmes;
- (c) facilitate the development of an education and training delivery system consistent with national conditions and practices;
- (d) assume the primary responsibility for investing in quality education and pre-employment training, recognizing that qualified teachers and trainers working under decent conditions, are of fundamental importance;
- (e) develop a national qualifications framework to facilitate lifelong learning, assist enterprises and employment agencies to match skill demand with supply, guide individuals in their choice of training and career and facilitate the recognition of prior learning and previously acquired skills, competencies and experience; this framework should be responsive to changing technology and trends in the labour market and recognize regional and local differences, without losing transparency at the national level;

- (f) strengthen social dialogue and collective bargaining on training at international, national, regional, local, and sectoral and enterprise levels as a basic principle for systems development, programme relevance, quality and cost-effectiveness;
- (g) promote equal opportunities for women and men in education, training and lifelong learning;
- (h) promote access to education, training and lifelong learning for people with nationally identified special needs, such as youth, low-skilled people, people with disabilities, migrants, older workers, indigenous people, ethnic minority groups and the socially excluded; and for workers in small and medium-sized enterprises, in the informal economy, in the rural sector and in self-employment;
- (i) provide support to the social partners to enable them to participate in social dialogue on training;
- (j) support and assist individuals through education, training and lifelong learning, and other policies and programmes, to develop and apply entrepreneurial skills to create decent work for themselves and others.

6. (1) Members should establish, maintain and improve a coordinated education and training system within the concept of lifelong learning, taking into account the primary responsibility of government for education and pre-employment training and for training the unemployed, as well as recognizing the role of the social partners in further training, in particular the vital role of employers in providing work experience opportunities.

(2) Education and pre-employment training include compulsory basic education incorporating basic knowledge, literacy and numeracy skills and the appropriate use of information and communication technology.

7. Members should consider benchmarks in relation to comparable countries, regions and sectors when making decisions about investment in education and training.

### III. EDUCATION AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

8. Members should:

- (a) recognize their responsibility for education and pre-employment training and, in cooperation with the social partners, improve access for all to enhance employability and to facilitate social inclusion;
- (b) develop approaches for non-formal education and training, especially for adults who were denied education and training opportunities when young;
- (c) encourage the use of new information and communication technology in learning and training, to the extent possible;
- (d) ensure provision of vocational, labour market and career information and guidance and employment counselling, supplemented by information on the rights and obligations of all concerned under labour-related laws and other forms of labour regulation;
- (e) ensure that education and pre-employment training programmes are relevant and that their quality is maintained;

- (f) ensure that vocational education and training systems are developed and strengthened to provide appropriate opportunities for the development and certification of skills relevant to the labour market.

#### IV. DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCIES

##### 9. Members should:

- (a) promote, with the involvement of the social partners, the ongoing identification of trends in the competencies needed by individuals, enterprises, the economy and society as a whole;
- (b) recognize the role of the social partners, enterprises and workers in training;
- (c) support initiatives by the social partners in the field of training in bipartite dialogue, including collective bargaining;
- (d) provide positive measures to stimulate investment and participation in training;
- (e) recognize workplace learning, including formal and non-formal learning, and work experience;
- (f) promote the expansion of workplace learning and training through:
  - (i) the utilization of high-performance work practices that improve skills;
  - (ii) the organization of on- and off-the-job training with public and private training providers, and making greater use of information and communication technology; and
  - (iii) the use of new forms of learning together with appropriate social policies and measures to facilitate participation in training;
- (g) urge private and public employers to adopt best practices in human resources development;
- (h) develop equal opportunity strategies, measures and programmes to promote and implement training for women, as well as for specific groups and economic sectors, and for people with special needs, with the objective of reducing inequalities;
- (i) promote equal opportunities for, and access to, career guidance and skill upgrading for all workers, as well as support for retraining employees whose jobs are at risk;
- (j) call upon multinational enterprises to provide training for all levels of their employees in home and host countries, to meet the needs of the enterprises and contribute to the development of the country;
- (k) promote the development of equitable training policies and opportunities for all public sector employees, recognizing the role of the social partners in this sector;
- (l) promote supportive policies to enable individuals to balance their work, family and lifelong learning interests.

## V. TRAINING FOR DECENT WORK AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

10. Members should recognize:

- (a) the primary responsibility of government for the training of the unemployed, those seeking to enter or re-enter the labour market and people with special needs, to develop and enhance their employability to secure decent work, in the private and public sectors, through such measures as incentives and assistance;
- (b) the role of the social partners to support, through human resources development policies and other measures, the integration of the unemployed and people with special needs in jobs;
- (c) the role of local authorities and communities and other interested parties in implementing programmes for people with special needs.

## VI. FRAMEWORK FOR RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION OF SKILLS

11. (1) Measures should be adopted, in consultation with the social partners and using a national qualifications framework, to promote the development, implementation and financing of a transparent mechanism for the assessment, certification and recognition of skills, including prior learning and previous experience, irrespective of the countries where they were acquired and whether acquired formally or informally.

(2) Such an assessment methodology should be objective, non-discriminatory and linked to standards.

(3) The national framework should include a credible system of certification which will ensure that skills are portable and recognized across sectors, industries, enterprises and educational institutions.

12. Special provisions should be designed to ensure recognition and certification of skills and qualifications for migrant workers.

## VII. TRAINING PROVIDERS

13. Members should, in cooperation with the social partners, promote diversity of training provision to meet the different needs of individuals and enterprises and to ensure high- quality standards, recognition and portability of competencies and qualifications within a national quality assurance framework.

14. Members should:

- (a) develop a framework for the certification of qualifications of training providers;
- (b) identify the roles of government and the social partners in promoting the expansion and diversification of training;
- (c) include quality assurance in the public system and promote its development within the private training market and evaluate the outcomes of education and training;

- (d) develop quality standards for trainers and create the opportunities for trainers to meet such standards.

#### VIII. CAREER GUIDANCE AND TRAINING SUPPORT SERVICES

15. Members should:

- (a) assure and facilitate, throughout an individual's life, participation in, and access to, vocational and career information and guidance, job placement services and job search techniques and training support services;
- (b) promote and facilitate the use of information and communication technology, as well as traditional best practices in career information and guidance and training support services;
- (c) identify, in consultation with the social partners, roles and responsibilities of employment services, training providers and other relevant service providers with respect to vocational and career information and guidance;
- (d) provide information and guidance on entrepreneurship, promote entrepreneurial skills, and raise awareness among educators and trainers of the important role of enterprises, among others, in creating growth and decent jobs.

#### IX. RESEARCH IN HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LIFELONG LEARNING

16. Members should evaluate the impact of their education, training and lifelong learning policies on the progress made towards achieving broader human development goals, such as the creation of decent jobs and poverty eradication.

17. Members should develop their national capacity, as well as facilitate and assist in developing that of the social partners, to analyse trends in labour markets and human resources development and training.

18. Members should:

- (a) collect information, disaggregated by gender, age, and other specific socio-economic characteristics, on educational levels, qualifications, training activities, and employment and incomes, especially when organizing regular surveys of the population, so that trends can be established and comparative analysis undertaken to guide policy development;
- (b) establish databases and quantitative and qualitative indicators, disaggregated by gender, age and other characteristics, on the national training system and gather data on training in the private sector, taking into account the impact of data collection on enterprises;
- (c) collect information on competencies and emerging trends in the labour market from a variety of sources, including longitudinal studies, and not confined to traditional occupational classifications.

19. Members should, in consultation with the social partners, and taking into account the impact of data collection on enterprises, support and facilitate research on human resources development and training, which could include:

- (a) learning and training methodologies, including the use of information and communication technology in training;
- (b) skills recognition and qualifications frameworks;
- (c) policies, strategies and frameworks for human resources development and training;
- (d) investment in training, as well as the effectiveness and impact of training;
- (e) identifying, measuring and forecasting the trends in supply and demand for competencies and qualifications in the labour market;
- (f) identifying and overcoming barriers to accessing training and education;
- (g) identifying and overcoming gender bias in the assessment of competencies;
- (h) preparing, publishing and disseminating reports and documentation on policies, surveys and available data.

20. Members should use the information obtained through research to guide planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes.

#### X. INTERNATIONAL AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION

21. International and technical cooperation in human resources development, education, training and lifelong learning should:

- (a) develop mechanisms that mitigate the adverse impact on developing countries of the loss of skilled people through migration, including strategies to strengthen the human resources development systems in the countries of origin, recognizing that creating enabling conditions for economic growth, investment, creation of decent jobs and human development will have a positive effect on retaining skilled labour;
- (b) promote greater opportunities for women and men to obtain decent work;
- (c) promote national capacity building to reform and develop training policies and programmes, including developing the capacity for social dialogue and partnership building in training;
- (d) promote the development of entrepreneurship and decent employment and share experiences on international best practices;
- (e) strengthen the capacity of the social partners to contribute to dynamic lifelong learning policies, in particular in relation to the new dimensions of regional economic integration, migration and the emerging multicultural society;
- (f) promote recognition and portability of skills, competencies and qualifications nationally and internationally;
- (g) increase technical and financial assistance for developing countries and promote, at the level of the international financial institutions and funding agencies, coherent policies and programmes which place education, training and lifelong learning at the centre of development policies;
- (h) taking into account the specific problems of the indebted developing countries, explore and apply innovative approaches to provide additional resources for human resources development;

- (i) promote cooperation between and among governments, the social partners, the private sector and international organizations on all other issues and strategies encompassed in this instrument.

#### XI. FINAL PROVISION

22. The present Recommendation revises and replaces the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 1975.