

**Bureau of International Labor Affairs
United States Department of Labor, Washington, DC**

International Cooperation and Programs in the Western Hemisphere

Overview of the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB)

ILAB carries out the international responsibilities of the Department of Labor (DOL) under the direction of the Deputy Under Secretary for International Affairs. ILAB conducts research on and formulates international economic, trade, and labor policies in collaboration with other U.S. government agencies and provides international technical assistance in support of U.S. foreign labor policy objectives. ILAB is working together with other U.S. government agencies to create a more stable, secure, and prosperous international economic system in which all workers can achieve greater economic security, share in the benefits of increased international trade, and have safer and healthier workplaces.

Representing the United States in Hemispheric Forums

ILAB plays a lead role within the U.S. government for employment and labor-related policy and programs related to the Organization of American States (OAS), the Summit of the Americas, and the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML). The IACML is a meeting of the western hemisphere's Labor Ministers, held about every two years under the auspices of the OAS, to promote hemispheric cooperation on labor issues of mutual interest. The XV IACML meeting took place in 2007 in Trinidad and Tobago, and the XVI meeting will take place in Argentina. The next Summit of the Americas will take place in 2009 in Trinidad and Tobago.

Trade Policy and Economic and Labor Research

ILAB participates in the negotiation of the labor components of bilateral and regional trade agreements and helps administer U.S. obligations pertaining to labor under these agreements. The United States currently has Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in the hemisphere with Canada, Chile, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua. In addition to ILAB's work on trade-related labor policy, the Bureau conducts economic and labor research and publishes congressionally mandated reports related to labor rights, child labor, and the impact of FTAs on U.S. employment. To review ILAB's reports please visit: <http://www.dol.gov/ILAB/media/reports/main.htm>.

Current Technical Assistance Projects and Labor Cooperation in the Western Hemisphere

ILAB currently has more than 30 technical assistance projects in the region in support of the Administration's trade agenda, labor capacity building, and HIV/AIDS workplace education. ILAB also has projects to combat child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking.

Combating Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking - ILAB supports projects in Latin America and the Caribbean in areas and sectors with a high incidence of exploitive child labor. ILAB projects aim to abolish the worst forms of child labor, including forced labor, trafficking, children affected by armed conflicts, commercial sexual exploitation, and hazardous work. ILAB initiatives worldwide have benefited over one million children by preventing their involvement in, or withdrawing them from, exploitive child labor.

Capacity Building - ILAB has received State Department funding to launch projects in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. ILAB also partners with the ILO and other organizations to support these capacity building efforts which includes strengthening inspection and mediation systems, increasing public awareness of national labor laws, worker support centers, training as part of the ILO's International Standards Program, reducing discrimination, improving compliance in the agricultural sector, and strengthening the civil service.

HIV/AIDS Workplace Education - ILAB has implemented HIV/AIDS projects in Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Jamaica, and Haiti to provide accurate information to employers and workers, and to support the development of national and enterprise level workplace policy to address workplace discrimination against HIV/AIDS infected people. ILAB also coordinates with the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief and the State Department's Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator.

International Visitors

Each year, ILAB hosts hundreds of international visitors, representing ministries of labor, the public and private sectors, and academia to discuss topics of mutual interest, including workforce development, occupational safety and health, pensions, and retirement security. Recent information exchanges have included the participation of officials from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Haiti, Jamaica, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago.

U.S. DOL 2007 Labor Profile Report (Foreign Labor Trends Series)

The report, available in English and Spanish upon request, provides an overview of U.S. labor laws, institutions, practices, and other related issues.

For additional information about our programs, or to visit us, please contact us at (202) 693-4906 or visit:
<http://www.dol.gov/ilab/map/countries/americas.htm>.