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International Action on Discrimination

InFocus Programme on Promoting the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

International Labour Organization

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International Action on Discrimination

Abstract

Timeline of action in support of fundamental right to non discrimination in the workplace, taken by international organizations such as the ILO and the United Nations between 1919 and 2001.

Keywords

action, Catherwood, convention, Cornell, declaration, disability, discrimination employment, fundamental, gender, global, globalization, human, ILR, implementation, international, labor, labour, law, legislation, nations organization, organization, pay, portal, principles, programme, race, racial rights, united, university, work, workers, workplace

Comments

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International Action on Discrimination

- 1919** The ILO Constitution is written in the aftermath of the First World War, by a Labour Commission established by the Paris Peace Conference. It recognizes that social justice is essential for lasting and universal peace and aims to enable people to claim freely and equitably their fair share of the wealth that they have helped to generate.
- 1930** The ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), is adopted in response to the ongoing practice of colonial administrations exacting forced labour from native populations in the 1920s. Even though outright slavery and the slave trade had been outlawed in the 1880s, this practice was still widespread in the 1920s.
- 1944** The ILO Declaration of Philadelphia expands the reach of the ILO Constitution. It moves beyond the improvement of working conditions to take in promoting more equitable growth in the post-War economy, and the expansion of full employment with respect for dignity, security and equal opportunity.
- 1945** The United Nations is founded, to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations and promote social progress, better living standards and human rights. The ILO becomes a UN specialized agency.
- 1946** The ILO appoints a Committee of Experts to survey living and working conditions among indigenous people throughout the world - which paves the way for the establishment of an interagency programme in 1954.
- 1948** The United Nations General Assembly adopts and proclaims the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- 1949** The ILO Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) addresses key issues concerning migrant workers including protection against discrimination, demonstrating the ILO's continuing concern for vulnerable groups.
- 1951** The ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), is adopted - the first of two standards specifically designed to promote equality and eliminate discrimination at work. It takes a forward-looking approach to equality between men and women, calling for equal pay for work of equal value. It recognizes that the concept of equal pay for the same work does not go far enough, as women and men tend to take jobs in different areas of the economy.
- 1955** The ILO Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955 (No. 99) is adopted, covering issues ranging from access to training to employment placement services for people with disabilities.

- 1957** The ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105) is adopted, drawing clear links between forced labour and racial, social or religious discrimination.
- The ILO Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, 1957 (No. 107) is adopted (replaced and updated in 1989).
- 1958** The ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), protects all workers against discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction and social origin. It also leaves the way open for member States to add other criteria, after consulting with employers' and workers' organizations.
- 1964** The ILO Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), provides a framework for policies for discrimination-free employment showing that poverty and discrimination can be tackled together. It is based on the understanding that no society can afford to waste the talents and abilities of any of its members. The Convention reflects growing concern about poverty, especially in countries that had recently emerged from colonial rule.
- 1965** The United Nations Convention Against All Forms of Racial Discrimination is adopted.
- 1975** The ILO Migrant Workers' (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143) is adopted, as the ILO again turns its attention to the difficulties faced by workers who are outside their country of citizenship.
- The International Labour Conference also adopts a Declaration on Equality of Opportunity and Treatment for Women Workers.
- 1979** The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women is adopted.
- 1980** The ILO Older Workers Recommendation, 1980 (No. 162), becomes the first ILO instrument to focus specifically on the needs of older workers, building on references in earlier recommendations and other instruments.
- 1983** The ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), and accompanying Recommendation, (No. 168) turn the spotlight on the huge disadvantages that people with disabilities face in the labour market.
- 1989** The ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Convention, 1989 (No. 169), adopted with the participation of the entire United Nations system, builds on the foundations laid by its earlier instrument in 1957. These are still the only international legal instruments dealing directly with the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples.
- 1990** The United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families is adopted, entering into force in 2003.

1993 The United Nations World Conference on Human Rights focuses on human rights-based approaches to development - as these begin to win more acceptance and commitment worldwide. The UN General Assembly creates a new post, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

1995 The United Nations World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen declares that rights in four categories are fundamental - including freedom from discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. This helps pave the way for the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing affirms that gender equality is a development goal in its own right, and adopts a Declaration and Platform of Action.

1998 The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work is adopted, covering rights in four areas, including freedom from discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. ILO member States commit themselves to respect these principles, even if they have not ratified the specific Conventions.

2000 The Millennium Development Goals are adopted by the UN General Assembly with targets for poverty reduction. Women's share of wage employment in the non-agricultural sector is named as one indicator.

2001 The United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance is held in Durban. The Action Plan and the Declaration highlight the need to combat discrimination in the world of work.

The ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS in the World of Work aims to protect the fundamental rights of those with HIV or suffering from AIDS and prevent transmission of the disease.

The ILO Code of Practice on the Management of Disability at the Workplace offers guidance on the management of disability issues in recruitment, employment, advancement, job retention and return to work for people with disabilities.