

SPEECH FOR THE HON'BLE MOS(IC) (L&E)
FOR ILO'S HIGH-LEVEL TRIPARTITE
DIALOGUE ON THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL
MODEL IN THE CONTEXT OF
GLOBALISATION (1-3 JULY 2008 – TURIN,
ITALY)

At the outset, I would like to compliment the ILO on convening a Special Ministerial Session to share the views on the “European Union Social Model” and also welcome all my counter-parts both from the EU and Non-EU nations.

India attaches considerable importance to the Decent Work Agenda which reflects our belief in promoting the social dimensions of globalization. Our Eleventh Five Year Plan, which is underway, aims at faster and inclusive growth. The environment for inclusive growth has been crafted by a few flagship schemes of the Government already in operation, namely, the Bharat Nirman for building infrastructure and providing basic amenities in rural areas, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme with the objective of providing 100 days of guaranteed

unskilled wage employment to each rural households opting for it, the National rural Health Mission to provide effective and reliable primary health care facilities, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for making available free and compulsory education to all the children in the age group of 6-14 years, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission to provide basic services to the urban poor and integrated houses to slum dwellers. These measures are operated through active involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), which constitute our grass root level democratic institutions, and help in generation of employment and reduction of poverty, which are the ultimate objective.

Vocational Training with a view to create a world class skilled labour force is being given maximum importance. India has the advantage of a predominantly young population vis-à-vis the rest of the world. To help the youth building their career, the Ministry of Labour and Employment has evolved various training programmes. At present (as on 01/04/2008), training courses are offered through a network of 6079

Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and Industrial Training Centres (ITCs) located all over the country with total seating capacity of 8.29 lakh.

Government has embarked on strategic objective of modernizing the ITIs and improving the quality of training in Government run ITIs, with involvement of stakeholders. Action has been initiated for upgradation of 100 ITIs from domestic resources and 400 ITIs through World Bank assistance so as to create “Centres of Excellence” for producing the multi-skilled workforce of world standard.

1396 Government ITIs are being upgraded into “Centres of Excellence” in specific trades and skills under public private partnership. Under the proposed scheme, Central Government is providing interest-free loans upto 2.5 crore per ITI through Institute Management Committees (IMCs) which are registered societies.

Under Skill Development Initiative (SDI) Scheme, the Ministry of Labour & Employment has developed demand-driven short term training courses based on Modular

Employable Skills (MES) framework for skill development of the school-leavers and drop-outs and existing workers especially in the informal sector in close consultation with industry, micro enterprises in the informal sector, State Governments, experts and academia. This scheme targets to train or test and certify skills of one million persons in the first five years and then one million every year.

The Ministry has also initiated action for opening 1500 new it is under PPP mode in blocks having no ITIs as yet, to ensure that skill development is inclusive in terms of gender, social divide (SC/ST/OBC, minorities and others), the location (rural-urban), economic divide, difficult regions like border areas, etc.

India has always had a Joint Family system that took care of the social security needs of all the members. In the Indian context, Social Security is a comprehensive approach designed to prevent deprivation, assure the individual of a basic minimum income for himself and his dependents and to protect the individual from any uncertainties.

The State bears the primary responsibility for developing appropriate system for providing protection and assistance to its workforce. Social Security is increasingly viewed as an integral part of the development process. True to the spirit of the Constitution of India Social Security Benefits are identified as need-based i.e. the component of social assistance is more important in the publicly-managed scheme. Accordingly, multilayer social security mechanisms are employed.

Social Security to the workers in the **Organized Sector** is provided through five Central Acts: Employee's Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provident Act, 1952 and Employees State Insurance Act, 1948 provide social security based on contribution made by both employees and employers. There are 3 acts namely, the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972, the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 and the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923 which are primarily the responsibility of the Employers without any contribution from employees.

The Employees State Insurance Scheme is operating almost all over India. It is mainly financed by contributions from the employers and employees. The Scheme provides for health care and cash benefits payments in the case of sickness, maternity and employment injury. As on 31.03.2008, about 10.8 million insured persons and about more than 40 million beneficiaries are covered under the Scheme.

The Employees Pension Scheme, 1995 provides for the Permanent Total Disablement Pension under the Employees Provident Fund & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952. At present, there are about 45 million members of the Fund.

Maternity Benefits to workers and compensation for accidents arising out of and in course of employment are provided by the employers as per mandatory provisions of the respective Acts in the covered establishments. These Acts are applicable all over India.

So far as workers belonging to the unorganized sector are concerned, social security is available in some form through

operation of various Welfare Funds, provisions for minimum wages, etc. Besides, the Government has introduced the 'Unorganised Sector Social Security Bill, 2007' in Parliament. It provides for formulating suitable welfare schemes on matters relating to life and disability cover, health and maternity benefits, old age protection etc. Accordingly, a Health Insurance Scheme titled "Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) has been launched and made operative w.e.f. 01/04/2008. Under the Scheme, all the Below Poverty Line (BPL) families will be covered in the next five years. The scheme envisages provision of issuance of a smart card to the beneficiary. This card will facilitate cashless transaction up to Rs.30,000/- so that the worker does not have to pay anything for seeking medical treatment. Besides, another new scheme called 'Aam Admi Bima Yojana' (AABY) providing insurance to landless rural labour households against natural death as well as accidental death and partial/permanent disability has been launched. A National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS) is also in operation for those above the age of 65 years.

India has always played a pro-active role in implementing various programmes formulated by the ILO for augmenting decent work and would continue to do so in future.
