



Inter-American Network for Labor Administration

Newsletter



What is the RIAL?

The Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL, by its Spanish acronym) is the mechanism for cooperation and technical assistance of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML) of the OAS.

It was created by the Ministries of Labor of the Americas after the XIV IACML in 2005, to strengthen their institutional and human capacities, through an integrating mechanism for dissemination of knowledge and experience.

The RIAL is coordinated by the OAS Department of Social Development and Employment (DSDE), as Technical Secretariat of the IACML, and has the collaboration of the International Labor Organization (ILO).

The IACML Advisory Bodies, CEATAL (employers) and COSATE (workers), have an active part in the RIAL, and their members can also benefit through its activities.

RIAL was created to reinforce the labor administrations of the Americas

The RIAL's first activity took place in May 2006 marking the beginning of a new pathway for joint cooperation in the Hemisphere. This pathway seeks to strengthen the capacities of the Ministries of Labor to attend the vast challenges that they currently face, those emanating from the economic, social and political transformations of the region.

The RIAL was created by the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML) of the OAS and it represents the most important advancement of

this conference in the last few years. The IACML is now able to rely on a permanent cooperation and technical assistance mechanism which will allow for the exchange of experiences, a deeper analysis of key issues, the reinforcement of its links with international agencies and the enhancement of the tripartite dialogue on a hemispheric level.

This newsletter is the first of many to come and portrays not only the activities performed by the RIAL in its short existence, but its enormous potential.

Five Hemispheric Workshops Page 2



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Hemispheric Workshops

In just one year of operation, the RIAL has executed five hemispheric workshops

More than 200 officers from the Ministries of Labor and 20 members of worker and employer organizations, representing COSATE and CEATAL, accompanied by representatives from the ILO, PAHO, IDB, AECI, amongst others, have participated in five hemispheric workshops organized by the RIAL between May 2006 and July 2007.

The subject matters of these workshops were discussed by the IACML authorities during the Planning Meeting in December 2005. The issues chosen respond to the priorities expressed by the Ministries of Labor and the mandates of the XIV IACML and the IV Summit of the Americas.

Presentations by experts, dialogues, discussions of emerging issues, definition of strategic guidelines and future actions were some of the components of these interesting workshops. A spirit of commitment to hemispheric dialogue in labor matters was present throughout the workshops. In the next section, a brief description of each of the workshops is presented.





San Salvador, El Salvador

May 16 – 17, 2006

Workshop “The Challenges of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) in relation to the IV Summit of the Americas mandates and subregional experiences”

Inaugurated by the President of El Salvador, Elías Antonio Saca, and demonstrating an authentic interagency coordination, this Workshop was co-organized by the OAS, PAHO, ILO, the Ministries of Labor of El Salvador and Canada and Fundacereso.

The Workshop gathered more than 80 OHS experts coming from more than 20 Ministries of Labor of the Region, OHS centers from Chile, Central America, Brazil and Canada, international organizations, and COSATE and CEATAL.



President of El Salvador, Elías Antonio Saca, Minister of Labor of El Salvador, José Roberto Espinal, Vice-Minister Salamin of Panama, Vice-Minister Cardona of Honduras and Vice-Minister Sosa de Callejas of El Salvador

The main outcome of this Workshop was the approval of strategic guidelines on three topics: OHS management systems; information systems in OHS and HIV in the workplace. These guidelines will serve to promote and guide the work of governments, OHS centers and international agencies in each of the topics, through activities at the national, subregional and hemispheric levels.

<http://www.sedi.oas.org/ddse/fundacersso>



Cocoyoc, Morelos, Mexico

November 7, 2006

Workshop “Employment Services and Labor Market Observatories: Opportunities and Challenges in the Hemisphere”

Hosted by Mexico’s Secretariat for Labor and Social Welfare as Chair pro tempore of the XIV IACML, this workshop allowed for the analysis and sharing of the experiences of Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, the United States and Europe in labor market observatories and employment services. Representatives from the IDB, ILO, WAPES, OAS, COSATE and CEATAL participated in the workshop.

This is the first RIAL Workshop involving experts from countries outside the Americas, including Austria and Belgium. This proved to be very interesting for the participants, considering the advancements accomplished in Europe regarding labor intermediation and professional training.

During the dialogue, participants highlighted the recent advancements in employment services regarding the incorporation of a demand-driven approach and the increasing use of new technologies (ICTs). They also mentioned that the most important challenge that these services are facing is the need to better address two new realities of the labor market: the expansion of the informal sector and the increase in migration flows.

<http://www.sedi.oas.org/ddse/servempleo>



Ottawa, Canada

November 28 – 29, 2006

Workshop “Migrant Workers: Protection of Labour Rights and Labour Market Programs”

This is the RIAL’s most popular workshop so far with 28 participating Ministries of Labor and representatives from the ILO, Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR), Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), North-South Institute, OAS, COSATE and CEATAL.

This workshop facilitated dialogue and cooperation among Ministries of Labor on strategies for the promotion of labor rights for migrant workers and labor market programs, emphasizing the Canadian temporary migrant workers program. This workshop provided follow-up to IACML and Summit mandates and to the Inter-American Program approved by the OAS General Assembly in 2005.



The Ministers of Labor of Canada, Jean-Pierre Blackburn and Paraguay, Derlis Cespedes, together with Francisco Pilotti of the OAS, Virgilio Levaggi of the ILO and delegates from Paraguay at the Workshop

The conclusions of the Workshop highlight the importance of designing and implementing national programs to work towards orderly management of labor migration, the support to bilateral and multilateral agreements on social security, and the recognition that information dissemination and communication strategies are effective means to inform migrant workers of their rights and responsibilities, among other issues. Participants also recognized the important roles that Ministries of Labor play in the development of national migration policies: provide information on the labor market thereby enabling informed policy choices; promote the participation of social actors in the formulation of national migration policy; and enforce labor laws and application of labor standards for migrant workers, among others.

<http://www.sedi.oas.org/ddse/migrantes>



San José, Costa Rica

May 8, 2007

Workshop on Technical Assistance for the IACML

This workshop responds to a request reiterated by several members of the IACML on their need to become better acquainted with the channels and priorities for technical assistance as well as identifying the difficulties faced by the executing institutions when interacting with donors.

During the workshop, several countries and donor institutions (Canada, USA, AECI, IDB) and several technical assistance executing agencies commented on their experiences, and participants received

training on the fundamental components of a successful proposal. In the conclusions and lessons learned emerging from the workshop, emphasis was placed on the evolution of technical assistance towards capacity building, the need to respond to sustainability and strategic planning challenges within assistance projects and the fact that these projects should be part of more comprehensive national and regional strategies in order for them to achieve a broader impact.

The participants agreed that the RIAL needs to continue working on this subject, integrating the efforts and results of south-south cooperation, given that it has been significant among the region's Ministries of Labor. Further training for the personnel of these Ministries in the areas of project planning and management, and grant-proposal writing was also proposed.

<http://www.sedi.oas.org/ddse/asistec>



Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

July 10, 2007

Workshop on Labor Dimension of FTAs and Regional Integration Processes

Coinciding with the Preparatory Meeting for the XV IACML this workshop focused on two subject matters: 1) the specific components of the labor provisions (chapters, parallel agreements, memorandums of understanding, declarations) that have been incorporated in various bilateral and multilateral Free Trade Agreements; and 2) the labor provisions and advancements of diverse sub-regional integration processes. Representatives from different governments, COSATE, CEATAL and CARICOM gave presentations during this workshop.

On the first topic, presentations from Canada, United States, Mexico, Chile and El Salvador provided reference to the labor provisions of NAFTA, CAFTA-DR and various bilateral FTAs, particularly regarding their dispute settlement mechanisms, labor standards and labor cooperation provisions. On the second topic, the important advancements of the labor dimension of regional integration processes were considered, particularly in MERCOSUR, the Andean Community and CARICOM; emphasizing their institutions, social dialogue mechanisms, normative harmonization and development processes, certification of competencies and occupations, migration and actions towards the free movement of workers.

<http://www.sedi.oas.org/ddse/dimension>



The RIAL Cooperation Fund: strengthening bilateral relations within IACML

Created in January 2007, the Cooperation Fund is one of the RIAL's components whose aim is to finance bilateral cooperation activities among the Ministries of Labor of the Americas, permitting the analysis and exchange of experiences, technical assistance and the support for initiatives and programs relevant to labor issues. The Fund finances in situ visits and expert visits, which differ in terms of the location of the capacity building activity, whether in the beneficiary country or the providing country.

The first call for proposals of the Cooperation Fund took place between January and March 2007 and almost 30 application forms were received. According to the available resources, 5 activities were initially selected and they were executed between May and August 2007 with excellent results.



In situ visit of the Dominican Republic to Argentina on Labor Conciliation, May 29-31, 2007.

Three officers from the Ministry of Labor of the Dominican Republic traveled to Buenos Aires to learn first hand the operation of the Service of Obligatory Labor Conciliation (SECLO) of Argentina, the system of mediation and mediator training activities.



In situ visit of Costa Rica to Argentina on Alternative Dispute Resolution in labor matters, June 4-6, 2007.

Two officers from the Ministry of Labor of Costa Rica participated in a capacity building activity on conflict management techniques, communication strategies and negotiation, while they were able to familiarize themselves with SECLO's functioning.





In situ visit of Paraguay to Brazil to support organizational and functional restructuring of the Ministry of Justice and Labor of Paraguay, July 23-27, 2007.

Six officers from the Ministry of Justice and Labor of Paraguay, with planning and decision-making responsibilities, visited the Ministry of Labor and Employment of Brazil to get to know the functioning of their units of inspection, health in the workplace, labor relations, employment policies, training and planning. This was a very pertinent visit considering the restructuring process currently taking place in the Ministry of Justice and Labor of Paraguay.



In situ visit of Argentina to Brazil in the area of labor inspection of maritime fluvial navigation, August 6-10, 2007.

Ten Argentine officers participated in a training provided by experts and inspectors from the Ministry of Labor and Employment of Brazil on harbor and maritime labor inspection. The officers also participated as observers in maritime inspections in Rio de Janeiro. This visit was very relevant considering that the vessels inspected in Brazil are often inspected in Argentina; therefore, the homogenization of standards and practices is highly commendable.



Expert visit of Argentina to Peru on the National Labor Regulation Plan, August 6-10, 2007.

Two Argentine experts traveled to Peru to deliver training on this Plan developed by the Argentine government aiming to: combat unregistered labor; reach a higher efficiency in the detection and correction of non-compliance to labor norms; and guarantee social security coverage for excluded workers; among others.

In this first call for proposals the Cooperation Fund counted on two sources of funding: The Ministry of Labor of Canada, through resources assigned to the OAS for the RIAL, and the United States Department of Labor, through resources provided to the ILO for the project to support the IACML.

A new call for proposals for the RIAL Cooperation Fund will be opened and new activities will be funded. We invite all the members of the IACML to take advantage of this Fund, created exclusively to fortify their collaboration and exchange activities.

Various images from activities undertaken in the framework of the RIAL Cooperation Fund



Newsletter

The RIAL in numbers

227 officers from the Ministries of Labor participated

20 representatives from COSATE and CEATAL participated

5 Hemispheric Exchange Workshops undertaken

5 bilateral cooperation activities implemented

10 international organizations participated

11 research centres and NGOs involved

33 Member States of the OAS participated



Gender and Decent Work: A new line of action for the RIAL

The study "Gender Equality for Decent Work" was prepared under the RIAL, in order to provide hemispheric strategic guidelines for action to build the capacities of Ministries of Labor for mainstreaming a gender perspective in their institutional action and contributing to the reduction of the gap between women and men in the world of work. These guidelines will be discussed during the XV IACML and

they form the bases of a gender project in the framework of the RIAL.

The ILO and the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) participated in the preparation of the study, even defining its terms of reference jointly with the OAS, and they have pledged their interest and commitment to support the strategic guidelines proposed.

The study is available at www.sedi.oas.org/ddse

The RIAL funding

The Labor Program of the Ministry of Labor and Human Resources of Canada has granted financial resources to start up the RIAL and execute the majority of the activities that are reported in this Newsletter.

The Secretariat gives special acknowledgement to the Government of Canada for this financing, as well as to the Governments of the United States, Mexico, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Trinidad & Tobago, Argentina and Brazil, for their financial or in-kind contributions to the activities of the RIAL.

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