

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



International
Labour Office

The
Elimination of Discrimination at Work: Key to Poverty-
Reduction
by
Manuela Tomei
IFP/DECLARATION



The link between discrimination at work and poverty

- **The social groups subject to discrimination: over-represented among the poor**
- **People experiencing multiple forms of discrimination suffer from chronic poverty**
- **Discrimination underpins child labor and forced labour**
- **Members of discriminated groups: “voiceless” and unorganized**
- ***Discrimination aggravates poverty while poverty reinforces discrimination: a vicious cycle***



Discrimination: a structural and relational phenomenon

- Discrimination: entrenched in families, communities, markets and State institutions
- Discrimination operates through:
 - explicit legal inequalities in status and entitlements;
 - policies, rules and practices of indirect discrimination, and
 - social norms and deeply rooted social exclusions
- *A human rights-based approach to poverty recognizes the economic, political and cultural dimensions of discrimination and permits to develop strategies to address it*



How to combat poverty by addressing discrimination?

- Context-specific strategies for removing barriers other than class –e.g. gender, ethnicity, caste, disability, etc.

- Elements of such a strategy usually comprise:
 - Universal equality policies cum targeted or special measures
 - Consistent regulatory frameworks and effective law enforcement
 - Meaningful set of equality indicators and effective monitoring
 - Non-discriminatory active labour market policies
 - Empowerment and participation of discriminated groups in policy-making and programme development
 - Active involvement of employers' and workers' organization
 - Awareness-raising and sensitization programmes for the wide public



How to introduce a human- rights perspective in PRSPs?

- “Disaggregating” the poor and identifying discriminatory institutions and processes
- Tripartite plus forums to set priorities, identify and sequence policy interventions in main areas identified
- Explicit reference to ILO’s relevant Conventions and relevant UN Covenants in PRSPs
- A section on rights at work, while mainstreaming discrimination /equality concerns in the other chapters of the PRSPs
- Equality indicators for the different chapters of the PRSPs
- Human rights education for people subject to discrimination



The challenges for the ILO

- Linking anti-discrimination action in the formal economy with similar efforts in the informal economy and the rural sector
- Tackling coherently forms of discrimination other than gender-based, while addressing relevant gender dimensions