



Decp

Dutch Employers  
Cooperation Programme

# DECP Annual report 2008



*In-depth Lobbying and advocacy' held at ITC Turin for English speaking African countries*



*Visit Bernard Wientjes to GEA Ghana*



*Jannes van der Velde holding a presentation on Communication to the ZFE, Zambia*



*Signing of PA between DECP and Mr. Cerescu, president of the CNPM Moldova*



*Workshop on Strengthening Lobbying, Advocacy and Service Capacities of APNDO in Five Indonesian Regencies (12-14 March 2020 - Santika Hotel, Jakarta)*



*Mr. Mugo Kibati of FKE Kenya and Jan Karel Bout on signing the PA*



*Trainers of the Communication workshop at CNPM Mali*



*Visit to the Board of PSF Rwanda*



*Founding meeting of the KPK – Kosovo Employers' Confederation*

# Foreword



This is DECP's third annual report since its foundation at the end of 2005.

In the three years of its existence the number of advisory projects carried out by DECP has grown from five in 2006 to twenty-one in 2008 and the number of training programmes from one in 2006 to twenty-three in 2008.

DECP entered into nine partnership agreements with the major employers' organisations in nine developing countries and three more will be signed in the first quarter of 2009. We have built a close working relationship with PUM Netherlands Senior Experts and the ILO Training Centre in Turin. And we have made ourselves known to similar organisations in Norway, Sweden and Denmark and taken the initiative to come to a regular exchange of information including organisations from other European countries. Looking to this fast growth, one can say that in just three years time DECP is well on its way to maturity.

Demand for DECP's advice is strong and growing rapidly among our partner-organisations. Looking for ways to improve the business climate, governments almost always and continuously need a firm employers' hand to help set the right course, stay on the right track and pick up enough speed. Not a job for any single employer. It needs a strong, independent, well founded and well governed employers' organisation.

However, employers' organisations in developing countries often face serious problems. Apart from an often difficult financial situation, they frequently lack experience in developing a strategic plan in close cooperation with their members, setting priorities and building up effective communication with the government and with their members. Services to members are underdeveloped or insufficiently visible. All this creates a vicious circle of poor reputation, failing membership and thus insufficient revenues to raise the employer's voice and develop appealing activities. DECP often starts with actions to get employers' organisations on an escape route out of this circle and the reactions of partner organisations show that this is highly appreciated.

It is with great pleasure that I have become member of DECP's team in October 2008 and I am impressed by the results already achieved. Since January 1st I am in charge of DECP and I thank my predecessor, Jan Karel Bout, for giving DECP a flying start. I am glad he will for some time still provide assistance to DECP's mission as a special advisor. Our course is set, we are on the right track and picking up speed .....but more and more needs to be done!

Ronald de Leij  
Director

Jan Karel Bout, country manager DECP

# 'We provide knowledge, not money'

"With hindsight one might wonder why we did not start many years ago. After its founding in 2006 DECP quickly established itself in the NGO world as a specialist in developing employers' organisations and in improving their position in economic debates and social dialogue. In a way DECP is unique. We clearly found a gap in the market, so to say."



"It is vital to improve the environment in which companies operate. The private sector is the engine for economic growth, a precondition for the reduction of poverty. Employers' organisations have an important role to play in creating better conditions for business; by influencing government policies. In general one

can say that the stronger employers' organisations are, the more they are likely and able to effectively influence the business climate."

"I think we managed to develop excellent and stable relationships with key players in the field we are operating in: governments, the International Labour Organisation, European employers' organisation Business Europe. All pretty important, for their network, influence and expertise."

"One important challenge we faced at the start was to convince partners about our approach. We offer knowledge and expertise, not money. An employers' organisation should strive to establish itself as an independent body. A body supported by the members and not dependent on money from governments or donors. Only then will they have maximum liberty to set their own agenda and the freedom to speak out. The danger of financial support by outsiders is that

when they stop providing money, the organisation may have trouble surviving. An important question is: if there are not enough member-companies willing to pay, why should a sponsor put money in?"

"The relationship with governments is key. Despite the current financial and economic crisis, it is clear that in general the market economy is the best system to generate wealth for the people. Countries where governments have focussed on creating the right market conditions have prospered. Countries with directive bureaucratic governments have lagged behind. The "Doing Business reports" of the World Bank provide ample evidence of this."

"We try to convince our partners that the best strategy to create a better business environment is to set clear priorities and to focus on them. Formulate clear objectives and keep repeating them. I truly believe that important items like environment, emancipation, and other social themes will be boosted by economic development. Therefore employers' organisations should focus as much as possible on that."

"I recently retired as Director of DECP. I will also turn my attention to other activities, although in the next few years I will still be working for DECP on a part-time basis. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to meet all those great people in countries far away from my own over the last years. And I love to be able to continue with this work, all be it less intensively."

# 1. Mission and strategy of DECP

## *Mission*

The prosperity of a nation is founded on the entrepreneurial spirit of its people. Natural resources, as well as a favourable location can help, but without that spirit even diamonds stay simply carbon. It is the entrepreneurial spirit that continuously replaces old products with new products, old processes with new ones and old ways of organising with new ways. Ever more effective, ever more efficient.

Consequently, the entrepreneurial spirit also brings about perpetual change to social structures and institutions. That is where entrepreneurship meets government. Government has to set clear and consistent rules to make society work. These rules cannot and should not change on a daily basis. But on the other hand they should not be carved in stone. New products, new processes, new ways of organising are often in desperate need of new rules.

Which rules are stifling or cumbersome to entrepreneurship – making the formal type wither away and promoting the informal type that is of little benefit to society? What rules are absolutely necessary to protect property rights, to protect free entrance to markets, prevent cartels and protect – among many, many other issues – occupational safety and health?

There is neither an absolute nor a timeless answer to these questions. Striking the right, dynamic balance between freedom and regulation requires a permanent dialogue between partners that are independent of one another yet heavily depending on each other to continuously strike that balance.

*DECP's mission is to support and strengthen employers' organisations in developing countries mainly by offering expertise and knowledge and exchange of good practices.*

*Employers' organisations, as the voice of private enterprise,*

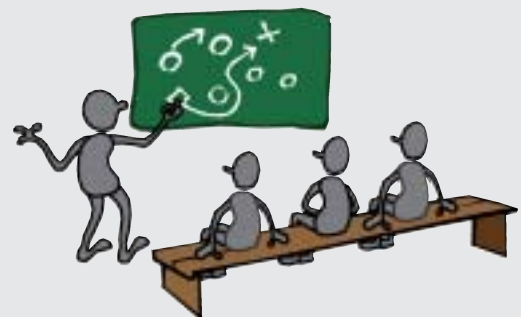
*should act as an independent dialogue partner in striking and maintaining the right balance between freedom of enterprise and rules that are and have to be set by government.*

## *Strategy*

DECP promotes the use of objective data and uses data provided, among others, by the World Bank especially in its impressive annual 'Doing Business' report. Being a work in progress of constant refining, it uses multiple resources from within each country to rank that country among all other nations on the ease of doing business – an elegant proxy for free enterprise.

This ranking is in constant motion. Even if all nations move forward towards a better balance between freedom and regulation, some move at greater, some at lesser speed than others. So, in the global economy making progress is not enough. In order to move up the rank nations have to work harder, do better and make more progress than others. Not only does a higher position in the ranking attract more foreign investment, it also helps a nation to retain in a proper way the more entrepreneurial and the better educated.

*DECP promotes the use of the 'Doing Business' data by employers' organisations in building a strategy and setting priorities and to do so in the closest cooperation and perma-*



Andrew Moore, country manager DECP

# 'We don't bring hundreds of forms to fill in'

"We don't have money to offer, but knowledge. One of the many things we offer employers organisations is to help them develop new services to support their members. By doing so we help them raise membership loyalty and create a stronger base for success."



Andrew Moore is DECP's country coordinator for 5 African countries: Ghana, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. His vast experience with employers' organisations was gained with British CBI (Confederation of British Industry's), whom he served both in London and Brussels for some twenty years.

"I try to translate my own experience in order to teach others how to be more efficient as employers' organisation," Moore says. "The employers' organisations I visit are at very different stages of development. So to some I have increasingly become a kind of mentor for their directors."

"I advise our partners both at a tactical level as well as at a strategic level. So for instance we try to find ways of funding a congress or another activity."

"One of the major challenges for employers' organisations is to ensure they are the voice of business. They must work closely with governments and trade unions, but they must also ensure they are the clear

voice of the business community they represent in their respective countries. This may often mean taking a strong position on a particular issue which may not be popular with government or the trade unions, but this is what the membership want to see and indeed why they pay a subscription to the organisation."

"The easy – but not necessarily the best - way out of this dilemma for the employers' organisations is the aid that many Western NGO's offer. A clear disadvantage of these NGO's is the dependency that grows from their funding and the paper work necessary to meet all the requirements of these sponsors. That's where DECP comes in, where we found a gap in the market."

"We believe ours is the way forward: efficient exchange of knowledge with very little bureaucracy. Luckily our message is increasingly accepted. Not having money to offer makes it difficult for DECP to enforce commitment. Nevertheless we have good projects going in most African countries and our partners keep asking us to come back."



Participants to the ITC-DECP workshop 'In-depth Services' held in Senegal for French speaking African countries

ment communication with their members. DECP offers guidance, knowledge and experience.

It is impossible to strike and /or maintain the right balance if the very existence of any dialogue partner is dependent on an other partner or other partners. To speak freely, one has to be independent. That is why DECP urges its partners and potential partners to get their financial house in order. Membership fees and paid services to members are the one and only proper way of being structurally funded as an employers organisation. So one has to perform well, be clearly visible, do the right things, communicate, help members with knowledge of doing business. Donor funds can surely help and may be needed to get on the right track and pick up speed, but employers' organisations should avoid longer term dependence on outside funding. Organisations that are funded in the wrong way, are risking alienation from their members and will lose them in the end. They are neither a help to their members, nor a help to dialogue partners in striking and maintaining the right balance.

DECP advocates the independence of employers' organisations. Independent from government, independent from donors – from inside and outside the country. They should depend on their members only. An employers' organisation must be able to depend on its members, so their members can depend on their organisation doing the right things in the right way at the right time.

DECP is a donor organisation too, but it is not a donor of money. It is a donor of knowledge and experience. 'Donations' are made on the basis of a (prospected) alliance, formalised in a partnership agreement and consist firstly of regular visits being made by a senior expert who acts as a trustworthy and trusted coach to the senior staff of the partner organisation. Secondly, it consists of training – general and in depth – of staff of the employers' organisation on topics like e.g. lobbying, advocacy, setting up services. Training is also being offered and organised for senior staff and board members on topics like e.g. governance, finance and strategy of an employers organisation.

DECP visited the following countries on a fact-finding mission in 2008:

- Congo
- Kosovo
- Ethiopia
- Mongolia
- Nicaragua
- Vietnam

DECP's strategy is focused towards building structural capacity on a cooperative semi-permanent basis. The efforts DECP is willing to make have to be matched by efforts from the employers' organisation itself. It is DECP's firm opinion that this is perhaps not the only, but at least one of the best and one of the most effective ways to build structural capacity that is actually used. For the benefit of members and the benefit of society.

Thieu Korten, deputy director and country manager DECP

# "The financial situation is a universal problem..."

"What has struck me in the three years I have been involved with DECP is the almost universal nature of the problems employers' organisations in developing countries are facing. The patterns are always the same."



Before joining DECP Thieu Korten spent almost 30 years with leading Dutch employers' organisation VNO-NCW, one of the founders of DECP, as a senior lobbyist and as head of membership affairs. He is now deputy director of DECP and country manager for various countries like Suriname, Nicaragua,

Bolivia, Zambia, Vietnam and Mongolia. He concentrates on advising employers' organisations worldwide on how to attract more members, how to improve their lobbying and how to communicate more effectively with governments, labour unions and – especially – their own members.

"Probably the most common area where employers' organisations worldwide can make big improvements is with regards to their membership base", Korten reckons. "Attracting new members is an area where many struggle, but having many members not only means sound finances, but also representativeness. In practice DECP very often finds EOs caught in a vicious circle: members complain that the employer organisation does not do enough to advocate their interests and does not offer adequate services. As a result, they do not pay their membership fees and the organisation fails to attract more members and its representativeness shrinks. As a consequence their revenues stay at a low level which means that they cannot develop either advocacy or service activities which would satis-

fy the members and attract non-members.

So our advice mostly aims at getting out of this vicious circle. It often starts with improving the governance and the image of the organisation. To increase visibility, communication with both members and other stakeholders like the government, trade unions and other NGOs should be improved. A periodical news bulletin, a website, information meetings and workshops can be effective tools to strengthen relations with members and show the added value of the membership of an employer organisation".

"In the lobbying process the main question is how to increase the influence of the employers' voice in the dialogue with government. The assistance we provide is very practical. How to make a bigger impression during talks with governments and unions. How to achieve your goals during those meetings and in the long run. It is almost a matter of improving your technique rather than of developing big strategies."

"The same is true in the field of communications. It is not difficult to develop and execute an effective communications strategy. Effective communication with your target groups can do a lot to support your lobby efforts and in attracting and keeping members. Sounds complicated? A well-made newsletter published on a regular basis can be very effective, even at low costs. And for many employers' organisations there are gains to be made in this area."



## 2. Developments in 2008

### *Expansion of the work area*

At the start of its operations DECP was limited to working in the partner countries of the Minister for Development Cooperation, a limited number of countries on which Dutch development aid is focused. This limitation of its work area turned out to be rather inconvenient for DECP. On the one hand, for a variety of reasons, DECP could not or did not want to develop activities in some of the partner countries. On the other hand, some non-partner countries explicitly asked for support of DECP, while DECP was formally not allowed to give a positive response to such requests.

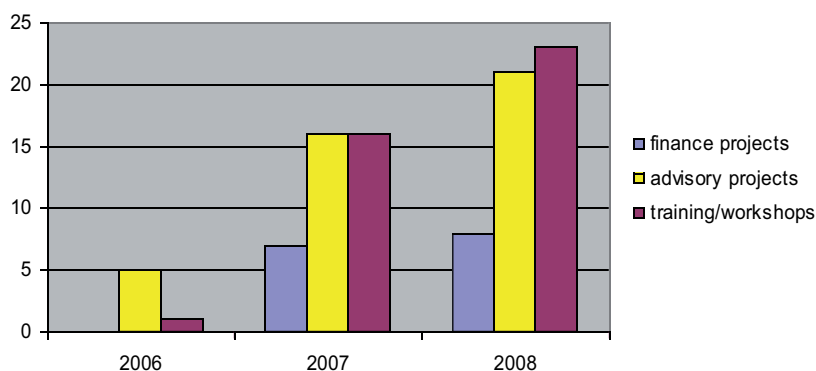
Recently, the Minister for Development Cooperation decided to allow DECP to expand its activities to the Least Developed Countries (LDC's) under the condition that there will be synergy with other instruments or organisations. DECP welcomed this change of policy, because it makes it possible to cooperate with organisations which were already allowed to work in other countries. In this way there will be more synergy between organisations working in developing countries in more or less the same field and therefore the effectiveness of their efforts will be increased.

### *Further professionalisation of the working method*

After the early years 2006 and 2007 DECP started in 2008 with a further professionalisation of its working methods. We continued our practice of getting to know our partner organisations through a 'fact-finding mission'. In a fact-finding mission discussions are held with the employers' organisation but also with Ministers and/or Ministries of Economic and Social Affairs, international organisations such as the World Bank and other relevant organisations, the trade union movement and the Dutch embassy. This wide variety of meetings provides a picture of the country's economic situation as well as the role and significance of the employers' organisation. Towards the end of the visit, these exchanges are talked through with the partner organisation and we identify possible areas for future cooperation.

After one or two visits to the partner organisation we decide whether a longstanding relationship with the partner is feasible. If the answer is positive this may lead to the conclusion of a Partnership Agreement (PA). Such an agreement is a framework in which DECP and the partner formalise their cooperation and describe in general terms the activities they will deve-

**Number of advisory and finance projects and training/workshops for partner countries**



Jean-Marie Standaert, country manager DECP

# "It takes a lot to stand up to governments"

"Chambers of Commerce get a bad press in Eastern Europe. Membership is compulsory, they are linked to the governments and not independent and thus don't always defend the interests of business. New federations form a welcome alternative."



Before joining DECP Jean-Marie Standaert worked for 20 years with the Belgian employers' federations VBO and FEBIAC, a sector association of the automotive industry. After a decade as a self-employed consultant, working for employer organisations in Eastern Europe, he joined the regional office of the International Labour Organisation ILO in Budapest as Senior Specialist for Employers' Activities. With DECP he focuses on the Balkan-states and the Caucasus.

"Eastern European countries are still getting used to the market economy. It's no surprise that organisations of employers – many of whom have only recently been formed - are still learning to operate in a market economy. They always have to learn to keep the interests of their members in mind and to stand up for their members when dealing with labour unions and governments. Governments in those countries are traditionally very strong and authoritarian. They don't like negative comments while employers fear for retaliation through excessive fiscal and social controls. So it takes quite a lot to stand up and say 'no' to such governments and to be firm in following one's own direction."

"The main weakness I recognize in Eastern Europe is the ability to follow up long term agreements. Organising a good conference, for instance, is no problem. But to follow it up and turn it into a long term success is often a real problem. Long term, strategic thinking has always been a matter for the government, and is not yet strongly developed in the employers' federations. This, by the way, affects DECP's operations. Since we do not bring money to our partners, it is often very tempting to go ahead with other donors that do bring money and therefore solve short term problems. It actually keeps us at DECP sharp: we have to deliver quality otherwise we're out."

"Still, a lot of progress has been made in many countries. Many employers' federations in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus have been recognized by their governments as important partners and have been given official status. We have developed a lot of new services, providing the federations with a much stronger financial base and helping them to attract members. For example, the health of employees is a major focal point for new services: most states have to comply with European Union guidelines that give employers huge responsibilities when it comes to the health and safety of their employees. Their employers' federation may be able to provide assistance."

#### Partnership Agreements in 2008:

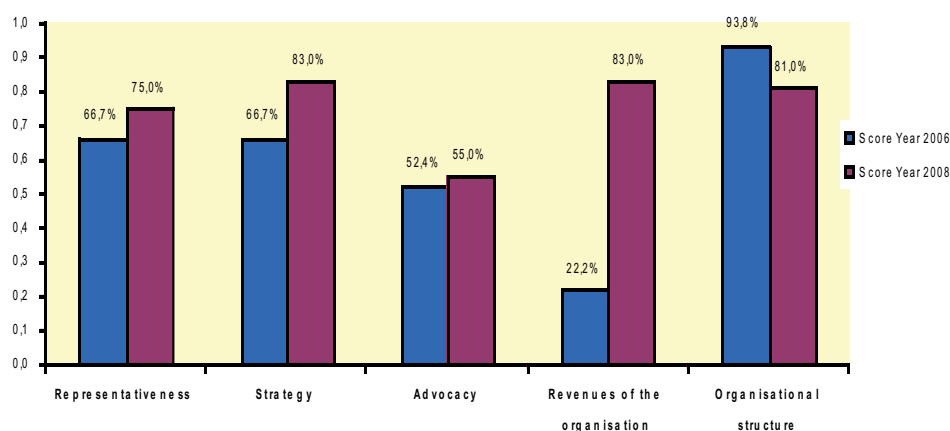
- Mongolian Employers Federation (MONEF)
- National Confederation of Employers of the Republic of Moldova (CNPM)
- Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE)
- Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE)
- Association of Tanzania Employers (ATE)

lop in the short and the long run. For such partners DECP appoints a country manager. The country manager –an expert in the field of business organisations – is more than 'just' the liaison officer between DECP and the partner organisation. He will also and foremost act as a special advisor to the partner organisation, examine its proposals to DECP and propose initiatives to strengthen the partner's capacity. Providing training is often one of the first contributions that DECP can make.

Accountability and transparency of its activities is of great importance to DECP. In close cooperation with the partner we analyse the most urgent problems the partner is facing and formulate key objectives. We describe the activities needed to achieve these objectives, including a time schedule, the accompanying costs

and external factors which are relevant in order to be successful. All this is laid down by the country manager in a PME-model (programming, monitoring and evaluation). DECP started with the PME-model in Suriname and Mongolia in 2008 and will expand this further to the other partners in 2009. The country manager also makes a zero scan of the partner organisation with an auditing model which DECP has developed to benchmark employers' organisations. A second audit will be made after a couple of years, so that the results of DECP's activities can be measured. The first partner with which we could carry out this method of measuring was Suriname and the results showed that especially on revenues the employers organisation VSB improved considerably. Zero scans were made until now in Bolivia, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Suriname and Zambia. But very often improvements will not be shown in a graph which is often a simplification of reality. Examples of such improvement in 2008 were: in Macedonia the communication with the members was improved by issuing a newsletter and making a website and thanks to a workshop about Occupational Safety and Health a staff member responsible for OSH was appointed.

Results of the audit of the VSB, Suriname



Arie Pronk (PUM, DECP's sister-organisation)

# "Partners of PUM and those of DECP will profit"

Arie Pronk served over 30 years at Dutch giant Philips Electronics, a world player in consumer and business to business markets. He is currently country co-ordinator at PUM Netherlands senior experts, a Dutch NGO that sends volunteer managers and specialists as consultants to companies worldwide.



Last year DECP and PUM formalised an agreement to closely cooperate in assisting companies and employers' organisations in those countries where they are both active. Synergies in the services they provide was the main motive behind this move. Pronk was one of first country co-ordinators to put it into action.

## *What happened?*

"PUM has extensive operations in Latin America serving companies. We also provide services to employers' organisations, very much in the line of the consultancy work DECP does, but less specialised. In Bolivia I had contacts with the local employers' organisation that in my opinion could benefit from an audit by DECP. It seemed to me that it might be more efficient and effective to put them on this job. So I proposed it, both to the employers' organisation and to Thieu Korten of DECP. And bingo, we had a deal..."

## *How can DECP and PUM support each other?*

"There is a strong synergy in what we are doing. We - DECP and PUM - share the same philosophy: the exchange of knowledge, not money. We operate along the same lines. PUM has a bigger network with many local representatives in the countries where we operate, so we can provide DECP with leads about employers' organisations. At the same time we believe that through the operations of DECP we, PUM, will get many new contacts amongst the members of DECP's partners - local companies. It is reciprocal. And both our partners and those of DECP will profit from the availability of a far bigger network and much more expertise than either PUM or DECP could mobilise on its own."

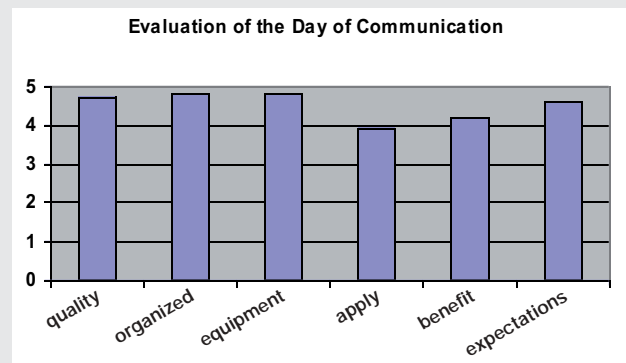
# 3. Special projects

## *Communication Day for Employers' Organisations in Eastern Europe*

DECP organised a "Day of Communication" for staff members of EO's in Eastern Europe responsible for communication and public relations in the premises of DECP in The Hague in May 2008. Fourteen staff members of Armenia, Albania, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Georgia, Macedonia and Moldova participated in the 2-day workshop. After a presentation of the country manager for Eastern Europe, Jean-Marie Standaert, about the importance of communication for Employers' Organisations the participants were instructed how to draft a newsletter and a website and this was followed by an exercise in which the participants drafted a newsletter and made a homepage for their website. Also the existing newsletters and websites were evaluated.

## *Twinning facility Suriname-Nederland*

DECP advised the Suriname Trade and Industry Association (VSB) in August 2008 to improve its communication policy. Roel Smit, former director of com-



munication of the Dutch employers' organisation VNO-NCW, drafted an extensive advice with concrete measures to improve the communication of the VSB and hence its image among its members and other stakeholders. To give the implementation of this advice a flying start DECP and VSB applied for the Twinning facility Suriname-Nederland by UTSN for the appointment of a communication staff member for one year. Both organisations were very pleased that this application was granted and that they could nominate Mrs. Nel Engelman as communication staff member at the VSB office in Paramaribo. This project will be carried out as of March 2009.

## *Women's Entrepreneurs Organisation*

By improving the business climate and promoting economic growth DECP indirectly also contributes to other issues like Corporate Social Responsibility, HIV/Aids and Gender. A better business environment is beneficial to SME's in particular and thus to the position of women. DECP has noticed that almost every partner country has a "Women's Entrepreneurs Organisation". Such organisations are generally quite influential given that e.g. in 2008 in 60 % of our African counterpart organisations, the Director-General is a woman. Also, the number of women trained by DECP is increasing year by year and the overall total is now some 300.

## *Afghan Employers trained in Turin*

In November 2008 DECP, in cooperation with the

### DECP publications in 2008:

1. "Occupational Safety and Health".  
Bob Koning (VNO-NCW)  
Theo-Jan Heesen (TrajectPlus)  
Jean-Marie Standaert (DECP)  
September 2008
2. "Governance of Employers' Organisations, practical guidelines."  
Jean-Marie Standaert (DECP)  
July 2008
3. "Business Sounding Board"  
Hans Klooster  
June 2008

Country : Nicaragua  
Organisation : Cámara de Industrias de Nicaragua  
Name : Ana Cecilia Vega, executive director

## Increasing the number of members

"Just a few weeks ago we closed a partnership agreement with DECP. They are going to assist us for another 3 years in 2 of our top priority issues: improving the social dialogue in Nicaragua and especially our role in it and secondly, attracting and keeping members."



"Increasing the number of members is one of the areas where DECP provides assistance. It is a top priority for obvious reasons. We are a private organisation and depend completely on the contributions of our member companies. I assume that this is the case with many of our fellow employers'

organisations around the world. So we have to work hard at delivering top class services, and at demonstrating to current and potential members the value they get for their membership fees."

"Improving the social dialogue and our role in it, is of a somewhat different nature. Nicaragua has a structured, three-party social dialogue in that employers, unions and government meet every six months to renegotiate the minimum wages. This is compulsory by law, because of the constant devaluation of our currency and the wish to keep buying power for the workers at a constant level."

"DECP did a workshop to improve our position in the social dialogue. We believe that an improved and broader social dialogue will eventually create a better business environment, a better economy and will also lead to better working conditions. So the outcome should be in everyone's interest. We are literally looking for win-win situations, but it requires a lot of skill, of course, to convince the other parties - unions and government."

"As an employers' organisation we have a pretty strong position in Nicaragua. We are the main representative of the formal economy, the bigger firms; although I must say that a large proportion of the Nicaraguan economy is still informal. We want to strengthen our position. Focusing on membership issues will give us a wider base, and improving the social dialogue will definitely also give us a stronger voice."

The following Dutch companies and organisations supported the work of DECP in 2008:

1. Staff members of VNO-NCW assisted in a workshop on Communication for Eastern European EO's, advised the Suriname VSB on communication, assisted in a workshop on OSH in Moldova, Macedonia and Suriname, advised the Mongolian MONEF on their labour code and gave a workshop on social dialogue in Nicaragua
2. OSH-services Claris and TrajectPlus assisted in a workshop in Moldova, Suriname and Macedonia
3. AWWN assisted in a workshop on negotiation techniques in Uganda and Kenya
4. Communication bureau Kimmunication assisted in a workshop on communication in Zambia
5. The Chamber of Commerce of The Hague supported a project on Business Linkage in South Africa
6. Royal van Zanten assisted in the purchase of ICT equipment for the Fed. of Uganda Employers
7. Unilever assisted in the purchase of ICT equipment for the Ghana Employers' Association
8. PUM Neth. Senior Experts assisted in the establishment of Food and Agrcult. Assistance in the Balkan states and projects in Nicaragua and Vietnam

International Training Centre (ITC) of ILO, organised a training course for a group of members and experts from the Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. DECP normally tries to organise these kinds of trainings in the region or the country of its partner. For security reasons it was decided to ask the Afghan partners to travel to Turin. The training was focussed on setting up an effective and efficient employers' organisation. This proved to be very useful. Especially because it created the possibility to discuss how an employers' organisation could operate in the difficult environment of such a fragile state. The Afghan employers showed determination in improving the business climate. This as an essential precondition to alleviate poverty and create wealth and prosperity and a vital way to promote democracy and to diminish violence. The role of women entrepreneurs in Afghanistan is quite remarkable: despite the recent past they have started to organise themselves and they seem very determined and courageous. DECP agreed to assist the Afghan colleagues wherever possible in order to further strengthen an employers' organisation that is functioning quite remarkably in a very difficult environment.

#### *Negotiation training in Nairobi and Kampala*

One important aspect of employers organisations is to assist members with negotiations with the trade unions. In The Netherlands the employers organisation AWWN has been training employers and entrepreneurs for over 20 years in order to improve their bargaining skills. These trainings have been very successful and are an important part of the services provided

to members.

Therefore, DECP has decided to investigate whether it would be possible to offer this training concept to partners in developing countries. In the summer of 2008 two experienced Dutch trainers from AWWN travelled to Nairobi and Kampala to provide training in each country through a three-day course for some twenty people. The evaluation and the reports of the trainers indicated that the trainings were seen as extremely successful. It was evident that such training could be a very useful component in the service package of employers organisations in Kenya and Uganda. After these successful try-outs DECP has decided to develop a program to train trainers in a couple of African countries. The idea is that Dutch trainers will provide a number of training sessions for African colleagues so that after about a year colleagues in partner countries can give the trainings themselves. This can be a very important tool for employers' federations. It enhances the negotiation skills of members and strengthens the relationship. And it generates additional income for the federations.

#### *Establishment of sector associations on the Balkan*

DECP supported the establishment and the strengthening of sector associations for the Food and Agricultural Industry in Macedonia and Moldova. Country Manager Jean-Marie Standaert and PUM experts attended several meetings to stimulate the establishment of these sector associations. DECP assisted also in the establishment of a Temporary Work Agency in Macedonia.

Country : Suriname  
Organisation : Vereniging Surinaams Bedrijfsleven VSB  
Name : Rene van Essen, director

## Big advances

"Recently we have made some big advances. It all started in October 2006 when Jan Karel Bout and Thieu Korten visited Suriname to investigate the possibilities for a cooperation with the VSB. Suriname used to be a part of the Kingdom of The Netherlands for over three centuries and the connections are still strong. The visit of DECP resulted, amongst other things, in talks and eventually in an agreement with DECP to improve the quality of our organisation."



"Everything went swiftly from then on. In the course of 2007, we redesigned our whole organisation with the help of DECP. We reevaluated all functions and improved our computer systems."

"One area we wanted to pay attention to was communication with our target groups. In fact we did not have a clear policy in this field. VSB is a small organisation, but nevertheless it's quite busy and effective. However... our members hardly knew what we were doing - we just forgot to tell them. In 2008 DECP sent a communications expert who assessed our situation, wrote a communications plan and put parts of it in place - an upgraded website and a magazine. After that, with the help of DECP we hired a communications expert for the duration of one year to implement the other aspects of the communications plan and to train our own staff. That way we hope to make durable improvements."

"The Suriname government regards us as an important player: the voice of Suriname business. We are involved in all aspects of social dialogue. We believe ourselves that it is important to cooperate with the government. Our shared goal is strengthening the economy. Like us, the current government are very active, but also like us they struggle with the visibility of their policies with the general public. In the spring of 2009, we are therefore organising - with the support of DECP - a workshop on communication for our staff and business people."

"And a second congress is on a completely different topic - a new law on investment. We have to increase foreign investment in Suriname, starting in mining and basic materials. A new law should give guarantees to investors about their property and the costs involved. Such a law is a typical example of the shared interests of business and government. And eventually it is in the interest of the citizen. If investments grow, the economy will grow, wages will rise and everybody will be happy."



## 4. Cooperation with national and international partners

Right from the start DECP has paid attention to cooperation with like-minded organisations. This cooperation, both with international and national institutions, should avoid overlapping activities being carried out in partner countries, and also lead to synergy while using each others strengths.

At the national level sharing the same premises and chairman, cooperation with PUM Netherlands Senior Experts is only natural. DECP makes use of the logistical support of PUM and also contacts the country coordinators of PUM for exchange of information. During DECP missions we frequently inform our counterpart employers' organisations about PUM's activities and potential and vice versa. Sometimes DECP calls in PUM experts to consult them or even to carry out one of its projects. PUM food experts for instance supported DECP in the establishment of sector associations for the food and agricultural sector in some Balkan states. On the other hand DECP audited, on request of PUM, the Cámara de Industria in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Initiatives are taken to set up new joint projects with PUM in Vietnam, Bolivia and Nicaragua.

An expert of the Chamber of Commerce The Hague carried out a project in Middelburg, South Africa, to set up a Business Linkage Centre by which SME's are supported to apply for orders of the larger companies. DECP regularly exchanges information with the Netherlands' trade union federations FNV and CNV. With the latter we co-financed the production of 13 explanatory booklets on Ghana's new Labour Law. This resulted in a unique four-way project with the Ghana Employers Association and the Ghana trade unions, the Ghana Federation of Labour and the Trades Union Congress Ghana.



*The VNO-NCW building where also DECP is situated*

At the international level we have established relations with the Norwegian NHO, with the Danish DI International Business Development, and with the Confederation of

Swedish Enterprise. The objective is an exchange of information on our work, possible coordination of our activities, avoiding overlap and exploring possible areas of cooperation. In the case of Denmark we have developed a tripartite working relationship in Tanzania where we provide DECP's expertise to the Association of Tanzanian Employers requested and (partly) paid for by DANIDA.

The cooperation with the ILO International Training Centre in Turin was also in 2008 very successful. The basic training programme "The efficient and effective employers' organisation" was held in Afghanistan, Ghana, Mongolia and Uganda. This training comprises modules on Governance, Strategic planning, Attracting members, Lobbying and Services. In depth training programmes on lobbying and advocacy were held at the training facilities in Turin for eight English speaking African countries and in depth training on services was held in Senegal for nine French speaking African countries. In Indonesia two trainings were given to the EO APINDO and one to HIPMI, the Young Entrepreneurs in Indonesia.

We continued to work closely with ILO/ACTEMP and the International Organisation of Employers in Geneva.

Country : Indonesia  
Organisation : INA  
Name : Elmar Bouma, director INA

## "We all want and need a better business environment"

APINDO (the Employers' Association of Indonesia), KADIN (the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and INA (the Indonesian Netherlands Association) in 2006 closed a four-party agreement with DECP to improve the organisational structures of Indonesian business federations on all levels.



Bouma: "There is a clear shared interest for the organisations involved: we all want and need a better business environment. APINDO looks mainly at issues concerning labour. KADIN looks especially into issues concerning the economy, competitiveness, taxation, finance, etc. And as INA, we try to bring

investment to Indonesia and to help Indonesian companies to do business in Belgium and The Netherlands. All three organisations also share some common problems, mainly connected to the low level of organisation of Indonesian business. On paper everything is in place, but in reality many business organisations are nothing more than a telephone list and a mail box. There is hardly a structured effort on policy making, let alone on lobbying."

"The good news is that there is a growing awareness of the need to be organised as a business community. Companies of all sectors have many shared interests when it comes to business climate, legislation etc. Better organisation for confederations of businesses means a more effective lobby, more members and therefore more income; in turn we can provide improved services and a stronger lobbying force. An upward spiral. That exactly is what we wanted to get going

through this agreement."

"DECP enforces the business organisations and it provides specialists who know how to get them going at the grass roots as well as on the central level. What do you need to get going as a business organisation? A board of influential and committed business men or women. Good staff at the office. Means of communication to let your members know what is going on and to let governments or third parties know what you want. You also need a structure to let members give their input on policy making. DECP has provided assistance to KADIN in economic analyses. This effort is aimed at improving the competitiveness of Indonesia."

"With APINDO, in a common effort DECP, ILO and INA concentrated on the organisation. The work was aimed at the regional and local level and that worked very well. It's amazing how quickly you can get the ball rolling. Take the joint ITC-ILO and DECP workshop "The effective and efficient employers' organisation" as an example. Creating awareness of the importance of formulating shared policy, combined with how to communicate that policy to the authorities can really get things going for a business organisation. For APINDO it was successful because it helped to increase membership."

## 5. New horizons for 2009



*Looking forward to 2009 DECP intends to develop several new activities*

At the request of the Minister for Development Cooperation, we are contacting employers' organisations in so-called fragile states like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, Kosovo and Burundi. Initial contacts have been made in all 4 countries and fact-finding missions were undertaken in the DRC and Kosovo. We are planning a training session on Services and Lobbying for the Fédération des Entreprises du Congo in Kinshasa (DRC) and we are providing some assistance with the founding of the Kosovo Employers Confederation and supported them in organising a dozen promotional conferences which will be held in the largest cities in order to attract members. Given the very difficult socio-economic situation of these countries, it is obvious that working in fragile states will require considerable long-term efforts.

Building on the success of the workshop on negotiating techniques held in Kenya and Uganda in August 2008, DECP intends to expand its activities in this field by setting up a "train the trainers" programme. We think that capacity building through the training of staff members of employers' organisations in negotiation skills and collective bargaining will provide a valuable new service to our counterpart organisations.

At the specific request of a number of East African employers' organisations we also intend to organise a workshop on regional cooperation and the benefits and challenges provided by the East African Union.

Together with ITC/ILO, resource mobilization trainings will be given to several employers' organisations on how to apply for funds at multilateral and bilateral aid agencies and how to design projects and write them successfully.

Country : Macedonia

Organisation : Confederation of Employers of the Republic of Macedonia, CERM

Name : Mile Boskov, executive director

## Big ambitions

"We are a young employers' federation in a country in development. But we are recognized as an official speaking partner of the government and we have a formal role in the permanent social dialogue that is now being installed."



"We have big ambitions – as a country but also as an employers' federation. We want the number of members to grow. We will open new, regional offices to be closer to our members. We want to become more professional and are in the process of developing new services in different areas: human resource

management, management skills, project management, risk assessment. A very important development in Macedonia is the implementation of European Union guidelines. To be able to comply to those guidelines, companies have to develop their skills and that's where we can play a role."

"With DECP we worked on several projects in 2008. We developed a newsletter in order to communicate more effectively with our members. We organized several conferences to generate attention for our opinions and to make more companies aware of our

existence and the good work we do for them. At one of those meetings we founded a federation of companies who supply temporary workers to other companies. This new sectoral federation is now a member of CERM."

"A conference on risk assessment with Mr. Theo-Jan Heesen and with support of DECP was a definite highlight in 2008. Risk management is important to Macedonian companies because of EU labour guidelines that give new responsibilities."

"Our cooperation with DECP will be intensified in the coming years. In February 2009 we will sign a Partnership agreement with DECP's new director, Ronald de Leij."

Country : Uganda  
Organisation : Federation of Uganda Employers, FUE  
Name : Rosemary Ssenabulya, executive director

## "The atmosphere has become more friendly and open"

"FUE is a membership organisation. We don't get any funding from the government. All our revenues are from membership contributions and fees for the services that we provide, e.g. our trainings. Most major companies and sectoral organisations are members. We have extensive training programs for members of FUE. We focus on everything that has to do with the employment relations. This means collective bargaining, labour law, employment issues, Occupational Safety and Health, HIV/AIDS prevention, labour relations, management, etc.



"DECP have been regulars at our office over the last few years and they will continue to be so in the future. They have supported us on a lot of issues, from the development of services to the organisation of hardware. We used to have a lot of power cuts. DECP helped us to get things organised in such a way that

we have our own power supply in case the network goes down."

"The main efforts of DECP lie of course in training our staff in fields like lobbying, communications and collective bargaining. On the latter, for instance, we have made a lot of progress. The labour unions are traditionally quite strong in Uganda and the negotiations were always real battlegrounds. We have managed to change the atmosphere, which has become more friendly and more open. Now there is a much better

understanding of each others interests and points of view. This certainly helps to improve the overall business climate: unions understand that healthy and strong companies mean more employment and better wages."

"A field where we also have learned a lot is communication with target groups. DECP promoted weekly updates for all our members. It works out very well: the members appreciate it enormously and it has helped to increase membership loyalty."

"A very important development for our organisation is the establishment of a financial audit committee consisting of experts from member organizations. The committee looks into all issues regarding the FUE's finances. This not only makes the financial situation transparent, but it's a great stimulus for an atmosphere of trust."

# 6. The DECP organisation

There were no changes in 2008 in the board of DECP which consists of:



Bernard Wientjes,  
Chairman of  
VNO-NCW  
(Chairman)



Loek Hermans,  
Chairman of  
Royal MKB-  
Nederland  
(Vice-chairman)



Cees van  
Woudenberg,  
former Chairman  
of AWWN  
(Treasurer)



Albert Jan Maat,  
Chairman of LTO  
Nederland  
(Member)



Elco Brinkman,  
Chairman of  
Bouwend  
Nederland  
(Member)



Jan Kamminga,  
chairman of  
FME-CWM  
(Member)



Niek Jan van  
Kesteren,  
Director general  
of VNO-NCW  
(Member)



Ronald de Leij joined DECP in October 2008 and took over the directorship of Jan Karel Bout, who retired, as from 1st of January 2009. However, Jan Karel Bout continues his work for DECP as a special advisor. The bureau of DECP consists now of:

From left to right: Andrew Moore, Jean-Marie Standaert, Jan Karel Bout, Thieu Korten, Christine Rehbock, Bram Van Overbeeke, Ronald de Leij.

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