

**Tripartite Meeting on Challenges and Opportunities
Facing Public Utilities**Geneva
19-23 May 2003

**Resolution concerning future ILO work
programme and future action for the
public utilities sector**

The Tripartite Meeting on Challenges and Opportunities Facing Public Utilities,

Having met in Geneva from 19 to 23 May 2003,

Given the central role of water, electricity and gas in meeting basic human needs and contributing to socio-economic development of societies;

Given that governments are responsible for ensuring the provision of utilities in such a way as to guarantee quality and quantity, especially to poor and peri-urban and rural communities;

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the primary focus on water and energy services;

Recalling the United Nations General Assembly resolution 55/196 which proclaimed the year 2003 as the International Year of Freshwater;

Taking into account the conclusions of the 1999 ILO Tripartite Meeting on Managing the Privatization and Restructuring of Public Utilities with special reference to the consensus reached regarding future ILO action;

Noting that the restructuring of public utilities gives rise to potential benefits as well as potential undesirable effects on employment;

Noting the increasing deregulation, liberalization and privatization of utility services, and the increasing participation of multinational enterprises in this process;

Adopts this twenty-third day of May 2003 the following resolution¹:

The Tripartite Meeting on Challenges and Opportunities Facing Public Utilities calls upon the Governing Body of the ILO to:

- (1) encourage governments, and employers' and workers' organizations to:

¹ This resolution has not yet been examined by the Governing Body of the ILO in accordance with established procedures and therefore cannot be considered as definitive.

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- (a) respect and defend the right of workers and their representatives to timely information and consultation;
 - (b) ensure that the provision of public utilities respect and promote the rights and principles enshrined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work;
 - (c) promote good employment practices regarding retention and separation of workers in the utilities sector through training and retraining, proper social security and redeployment mechanisms for workers within the utility sector;
 - (d) ensure that a variety of restructuring options are provided to countries.
- (2) request the Director-General to:
- (a) facilitate national, regional and subregional meetings of the social partners to promote social dialogue in responding to the current challenges to public utilities in order to meet basic human needs in water and energy, and implement the UN Millennium Declaration;
 - (b) facilitate social dialogue by:
 - (i) including municipal utility operators and local authorities in appropriate forums;
 - (ii) facilitating the dissemination of best practices and guidelines on the restructuring of utilities regarding:
 - respect and implementation of the rights and principles of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work;
 - the responsibility of governments to regulate and ensure that utilities which meet human needs are provided;
 - (iii) promoting knowledge and application of the ILO's Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy in the public utilities sector; and
 - (iv) involving social partners in the design and implementation of any follow-up action undertaken by the ILO in the public utilities sector.