The Second Session of the Annual General Meeting opened at 1:30 p.m.

1. **Election of the Chairperson**
   Ghassan Harmoush was unanimously elected as Chairperson of the Annual General Meeting.

2. **Adoption of the Agenda (doc. SU/AGM/2006/2/D.1)**
   The agenda of the meeting was adopted through unanimous consent.

   3.1 The results of the referendum, conducted in July 2006, were presented to the meeting. The referendum proposed the suppression of the Contingency Fund as it was no longer required due to the Staff Union’s affiliation to the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations. The referendum passed, with 380 votes in favour, 28 against, and 48 ballots indicating no opinion.
   3.2 The results of the referendum were recorded.

4. **Report of the Staff Union Committee (doc. SU/AGM/2006/2/D.3)**
   4.1 Pierre Sayour, chairperson of the Staff Union Committee, presented the document submitted by the Committee on activities undertaken during its 2005-06 mandate. He highlighted the Committee’s efforts to make the union stronger and more effective, noting that the Union was now a union of the Organization, not simply the Office, following the merger with the Staff Union in Turin. The Committee continued to develop and implement training for members, both
in headquarters and in the field. Through the tireless work of its legal adviser, the Union had provided a very high level of individual assistance to numerous colleagues.

4.2 Improving communication was seen as a high priority for the Committee. Regular meetings with union stewards, including their participation in the Staff Union retreat, were an integral part of achieving this objective. The Committee placed great importance on translating documents into the three working languages. “1st Tuesday of the Month” meetings also enabled the Union to bring together staff to address specific issues of importance. Meetings were periodically organized with specific work units, often at the initiative of union stewards.

4.3 The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee briefed the meeting on the work undertaken by the Joint Negotiating Committee. Three working groups had been established, to address precarious contracts, recruitment and selection, and work-life balance. The working group dealing with precarious contracts will simplify the organization of contracts, and to ensure that the new contracts policy is correctly applied by managers. Management accountability was at the centre of the Staff Union’s concerns with regard to recruitment and selection, as the current approach did not favour career development, mobility or oversight of some of the global objectives of the Organization related to gender equality, geographical balance and the employment of people with disabilities. Finally, while considerable progress had been made in the working group on work-life balance, including the development of a questionnaire to gauge staff needs in this area, the Staff Union expressed its strong concern with the Adoption Leave Policy paper that had been placed on the agenda of the 297th session of the Governing Body.

4.4 The Staff Union had been involved in ongoing efforts to implement the collective agreement on conflict prevention and resolution. It had been actively supporting the work of the mediator, both with her efforts at conciliation, and with the nomination of conciliators both in headquarters and in field offices.

4.5 The SUC Chairperson lamented the Office’s weakness in implementing a career development policy. He outlined problems with the recruitment and selection process, management of careers and the non-application of the collective agreement on personal development plans. Staff motivation for promotion could only be brought about by a permanent commitment from management.

4.6 He noted the numerous documents produced throughout the year, on such subjects as technical cooperation, ethics and pensions. He remarked that the ILO was the only Organization in Common System that opposed the position of its Staff Union on this subject, a particularly striking fact given the nature of this Organization.

4.7 Given the high levels of membership in the field, the SUC recognized the importance of improved communication between headquarters and field.

4.8 The Regional Titular Member for the Americas reflected on the impacts that the changes in regional management had on continuity of relations with the Staff Union in the region. He highlighted the significant loss of purchasing power among local staff, and considerable disparities in salaries between duty stations, due to methodological problems in implementing the salary survey. Staff Union representatives had mentioned these problems on different occasions
and at different levels of the regional hierarchy. Recently, a letter was sent by regional Staff Union representatives to the Director General, requesting a change in the methodology. The Member was pleased to report that a response had been received from administration, recognizing the problem, and committing itself to find a solution within the framework of the UN Common System. He argued that it was due to good coordination, through the newly established regional Staff Union council, which was able to bring about such positive results.

4.9 The Regional Titular Member for Asia and the Pacific announced that three new union chapters had been established in Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar, resulting in over 60 new members. She reflected on the biennial Regional Committee Meeting which took place in Hanoi, providing an opportunity to raise issues, share information and train Staff Union representatives on a number of technical subjects. Following negotiations with regional management, one facilitator will be appointed in each office. A new Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health was established in Bangkok, and the Union would seek to set up similar committees in each office. She reported on problems that were arising due to the lack of decision on the PSI allocation for 2007. The vacant SHRO post in Bangkok was making it difficult to resolve any HR issues. Further cost cutting was a preoccupation for staff in the region, giving rise to fears that difficulties faced by Tokyo staff in this biennium, would spread further in the next biennium. She also voiced concerns for the improper use of Service Agreements in Cambodia, China and Pakistan. She encouraged the Staff Union to build its own capacity in training on the UN methodology for local salary surveys, rather than relying on FICSA for training.

4.10 The Regional Titular Member for Africa affirmed that there was a great deal of work to be done by the Staff Union in Africa, in particular to follow-up on the issues raised during the Regional Committee Meeting which took place earlier in the year in Dakar. Among the subjects requiring attention were: harmonization of grades in relation to function, revision of Circular (Circular Series 5, No. 65, *Salary Advances to Locally Recruited Staff Members serving in the Field*) due to problems in banking conditions in the region, expansion of social protection, and the revision of local salary survey methodologies. He also raised questions on the effectiveness of social dialogue within the House, noting a deterioration of what had been an effective partnership. He proposed that a global assembly of Staff Union representatives assess the status of collective bargaining in the Office, with regional meetings being held simultaneously to reduce costs.

4.11 The Staff Union Representative from the Annex Regional Office in Abidjan thanked the Staff Union for the special attention and assistance that had been given to the Abidjan situation. He underscored that the transfer of the Regional Office from Abidjan to Addis Ababa was an administrative decision of a temporary nature, due to the security situation in Côte d’Ivoire. He noted that the office had been called a “light structure, then ILO-Abidjan, and was now known as the Regional Annex, which he saw as a positive change. The Regional Annex employed 17 staff, and thanks to the efforts of regional management and the SUC, 8 of the 14 laid-off colleagues had been able to find employment in state offices, as well as in technical cooperation projects organized by UN system in Côte d’Ivoire. In addition, a social package was put together to offset the difficulties associated with the layoffs. He also thanked the Staff Union for its support during the national toxic waste crisis, for which the authorities were seeking solutions.
4.12 Due to the fact that the Regional Titular Member for Europe and the Middle East was newly elected, he was not able to report on developments from Europe, though he looked forward to better understanding the key issues affecting his region. He thanked ILO staff for their support to Beirut colleagues during the recent hostilities – an initiative led by SUC. During the latest unfortunate events, the most important issue was the safety of the staff. He pointed out that through the effective coordination between the SUC and HRD, local colleagues were reassured that there was no scheduled closure of the Beirut Office and that ILO did all it can to ensure the well being of its local staff by applying the same security rules as the rest of the UN common system. However, he suggested that the Office push for equal treatment for local and international staff in times of crisis. The donations collected by the SUC were used to respond to specific emergency needs, to ensure the proper safety for all local staff. He reported that, while the entire country was targeted during the conflict, all local staff were successfully relocated to “safe havens”.

4.13 The General Meeting approved the Annual Report of Activities of the ILO Staff Union Committee for 2005-06 through unanimous consent.


5.1 The Assistant Treasurer of the Staff Union Committee presented the accounts for the current year. The reserve funds, which were released as a result of the referendum, would be used for union activities, with a particular focus on training in the field. It was announced that the auditors had found the financial report to be within the financial regulations.


6. Report on the Staff Union investment in ethical funds (doc. SU/AGM/2006/2/D.5)

6.1 The February 2006 General Assembly directed the Staff Union Committee to request bids from a number of financial institutions with a view to ethical investments, and to report on the process at the October 2006 meeting. The proposals made by various banks were reviewed, with the analysis of the tenders made in the report. Most banks provided vague offers that did not entirely fulfil the established criteria, in particular with respect to freedom of association. The Committee recommended continuing its analysis, which would include approaching various trade union bodies to verify information. The SUC recommendations were approved by the committee of former treasurers.

6.2 The General Meeting adopted the recommendations made in the report through unanimous consent.

7. Election of the Auditing Commission (doc. SU/AGM/2006/2/D.6)

7.1 The chairperson reported that the outgoing auditors presented themselves for another mandate. The thanked them for their professional work.
7.2 The General Meeting renewed the mandate of the Auditing Commission by unanimous consent.

8. Report of the Board of the Staff Assistance Fund (doc. SU/AGM/2006/2/D.7)
8.1 The chairperson introduced the report.
8.2 The report was adopted by unanimous consent.

9. Arrangements for the elections to the Staff Union Committee and Addendum: List of Candidates for Election to the Staff Union Committee 2006-2008 (doc. SU/AGM/2006/2/D.8 and SU/AGM/2006/2/D.8 [Add.])
9.1 The chairperson referred the meeting to the dates listed in the document.
9.2 The General Meeting approved the proposed dates by unanimous consent.
9.3 The chairperson announced the departure on retirement of two Returning Officers, Ms. Carol Rodríguez-Burgess and Mr. Guy Bezou, and thanked them for the quality of their work. The candidacies of Ms. Renate Meyer and Mr. Bertrand Bernaz were proposed to replace the departing Returning Officers.
9.4 The General Meeting endorsed the appointments of Ms. Meyer and Mr. Bernaz as Returning Officers.
9.5 The chairperson thanked the Electoral Commission for their work, and noted that one titular member and one substitute member did not wish to continue. Mr. John Myers, who currently served as a substitute member was proposed to fill the titular vacancy.
9.6 The General Meeting endorsed the appointment.

10. Other Business
10.1 The Regional Titular Member for Asia and the Pacific presented an overview of the training of trainers’ course that took place in Cambodia and Hanoi. She also introduced the meeting to the new Regional Staff Union website, which had begun for Bangkok, but was now expanding to cover other offices.
10.2 A retired official, and former Staff Union Committee chair, congratulated the Committee for the work it had accomplished. He encouraged the Committee to seek new ways to motivate people to participate more actively in the union, providing the example of the threats related to the international civil service as a potential motivating factor.
10.3 The former General Secretary congratulated the Staff Union Committee Chairperson on his leadership, and expressed the satisfaction she had working with him. He was a cornerstone in the work of the Committee, which was often very complex and difficult. She attributed the progress achieved by the Staff Union to his commitment, skills and ongoing efforts.
10.4 The SUC Chairperson thanked the meeting for their support, pledging the Committee to continue to follow the important issues raised. He pointed to the presentation on training activities carried out in the Asia and Pacific region as a real model for what can be done in all duty stations to encourage active participation. He also noted that following the African regional meeting, members were more actively taking up dossiers and getting involved.

10.5 The chair thanked the Secretariat, the legal adviser and the interpreters. Observing that it was the last Annual General Meeting under the current SUC Chairperson, the thanked Pierre for the four years he dedicated to promoting union matters.