



FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Review of the Sectoral Activities Programme

I. Introduction

1. At its 283rd Session (March 2002), the Governing Body, on the recommendation of its Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues,¹ decided to reconvene the Working Party on the Review of the Sectoral Activities Programme (with a new composition of two titular members representing the Employers, two titular members representing the Workers and five titular members representing the Governments) during the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) in June 2002. The mandate of the Working Party was to:
 - consider how the new approach to the Sectoral Activities Programme was to be implemented;
 - make recommendations regarding the programme for the economic sectors in 2003, including meetings;
 - provide overall guidance to the Office for the preparation of a document for the consideration of the Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues at the 285th Session (November 2002) of the Governing Body covering the following issues:
 - (i) the mechanism and process for consultations on the implementation of the new approach as well as on the substance of the consultations which would take into account the question of broader flexibility for the 2004-05 biennium, the flexibility for 2002-03, and an elaboration of non-meetings activities to be undertaken in specific sectors;
 - (ii) improving government participation in sectoral meetings and in particular the participation of developing countries;
 - (iii) the implementation of the “one-stop window”.

¹ GB.283/13, paras. 22, 23 and 36.

2. The Working Party met twice during the 90th Session of the ILC. Prior to these meetings, two informal consultation meetings were held with the Government regional coordinators (Government members of the Working Party), as well as an informal consultation meeting for all Geneva-based Permanent Missions. In addition, a questionnaire was designed and – together with background information on the Sectoral Activities Programme – was sent to the Government regional coordinators for transmission to governments, as well as to the Permanent Missions. An informal tripartite consultation meeting was also held with the secretariats of the Employers’ and Workers’ groups and the Government regional coordinators.
3. The first meeting of the Working Party took place on 4 June 2002 and dealt exclusively with the programme for the economic sectors in 2003. At a second meeting on 17 June 2002, the Working Party initiated a discussion on the other issues within its mandate. The Governing Body, at its 284th Session (June 2002), approved the programme for the economic sectors in 2003 on the basis of the recommendations of the Working Party,² but decided to extend the mandate of the tripartite meeting for the tobacco sector to cover “tobacco growing”. In addition, it recommended that the Committee consider in November 2002 the problems related to the internal group arrangements of the Joint Meeting on Public Emergency Services, to be held in January 2003³ (see paragraph 19 below).
4. The following sections focus on the new approach and its implementation as of the 2004-05 biennium, including the consultation procedure and the need for further information and guidance. The paper also provides information on the status of the development of the one-stop window. The final section deals with the question of the internal group arrangements for the Joint Meeting on Public Emergency Services to be held in January 2003.

II. The new approach

5. At its last meeting in March 2002, the Committee approved “a new approach to the Sectoral Activities Programme which would be geared to maximizing impact within the limit of available resources and which could contain both a meeting and non-meeting component as appropriate”.⁴ Prior to this, the Working Party, at its meeting in January 2002,⁵ provided the following guidance:
 - all aspects of sectoral activities undertaken by the ILO should be constituent-driven;
 - the present focus on 22 sectors should, for the time being, be maintained;
 - the need for flexibility in respect of sectoral meetings as regards the approach, size and duration, as well as the rules by which they are governed, and in respect of non-meeting activities as regards their choice in maximizing impact;
 - the need for follow-up and continuity of activities in order to avoid the stop-start approach that characterized the present cycle of activities;

² GB.284/7.

³ GB.284/PV, pp. 10-12 and p. 16.

⁴ GB.283/13, para. 22(a).

⁵ GB.283/STM/1.

-
- respect for the autonomy of the groups concerning the selection of their participants to sectoral meetings;
 - the need for mechanisms to strengthen consultation to ensure that it was meaningful, transparent and ongoing;
 - the importance of strengthening government participation in sectoral meetings;
 - the need to integrate sectoral activities throughout the work of the other sectors in the ILO.
6. At the same meeting, the Working Party sought clarification on how the regular budget allocations for sectoral meetings would be used in the future. The Office confirmed the understanding of the Working Party that any savings realized from a reorientation of the programme of sectoral activities would remain within the programme and be used to strengthen follow-up or other activities in one or more sectors or on a sector-by-sector basis.
 7. Concerning the procedure for the implementation of the new approach, the Working Party recommended that for each of the sectors selected for a particular biennium, consultations would be held to identify the issues of critical importance to the sector and to determine the means of action (meetings and non-meeting activities) that would best benefit the sector concerned. This could, for instance, take the form of action programmes for some sectors, which could open options for extra-budgetary funding.
 8. The discussions in the Committee and the consultations held to date have stressed the importance of sectoral activities of the ILO since sectoral activities provide a window on the world of work. This presents both challenges and opportunities. The challenge is that ILO action must be timely, relevant and targeted. Being able to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves would help to maximize impact. The means of action chosen must therefore be the best that would:
 - (a) achieve the impact desired by the constituents; and
 - (b) contribute at the same time to the implementation of the strategic policy framework approved by the Governing Body, the Conference, the Decent Work Agenda and to integrating to the maximum extent possible sectoral activities into the work of the Office.
 9. The meeting component approach to sectoral activities is well understood and continued improvements to the workings of sectoral meetings need to be pursued. The non-meeting component however requires further elaboration. Due to the limited time available for consultations during the ILC in June, the Working Party was not able to adequately discuss the non-meeting component of the new approach and to draw conclusions.
 10. The Office therefore considers it useful to provide the Committee with further ideas on this component. For the non-meeting component to have an attractive character and to be considered as a suitable alternative or have added value to a pure meetings option, it must be strategic in its conception, objective and implementation. Possible suggestions for a non-meetings approach are contained in a further elaboration of action programmes in three selected sectors. For three of the sectors (agriculture; education; and textiles, clothing, leather, footwear), the Office has prepared proposals for action programmes with a strategy in each case based on an identification of the key issues and the main problem(s) in the sector concerned and possible means of addressing these issues/problems with the objective of achieving maximum impact. The comprehensive strategy proposed for these

sectors would require improved partnership within the Office and continuous consultation with constituents. The three proposed action programmes are contained in Appendix 1. The implementation of any of these action programmes would require the resources necessary to enable leveraging with other units at headquarters and in the field offices, as well as for attracting extra-budgetary resources.

III. Implementing the new approach

- 11.** Since 1995, the selection of economic sectors has been on a rotating basis, taking a four-year cycle to cover all 22 sectors and to reserve one meeting in a biennium to cover a multi-sectoral issue or for some other purpose. The 2004-05 biennium will provide the first opportunity to fully implement the new approach to sectoral activities. The Committee will need to take into account the resources available, the need to maximize impact and the criteria that should be used for the selection of the sectors on which attention should be focused. The criteria for selection could be: the needs in a particular sector (urgency and magnitude of problems encountered), and the impact which ILO action can have to address these needs. The Committee could, for instance, consider focusing attention on a limited number of sectors at a time either over one or two biennia, while the Office continued to be an observatory of trends in the 22 sectors.
- 12.** Before the Committee can make final recommendations to the Governing Body on how the new approach should be implemented in 2004-05, it would need at least to have before it a comprehensive overview of the main issues in the sectors; the priorities to be attributed to them; those sectors on which attention should be focused on a priority basis; and the choice of means of action best suited to achieving the identified objectives and impact. The Office therefore proposes to elaborate a short questionnaire and to invite the tripartite constituents to comment on and provide information on the issues and priorities in each of the 22 sectors, based on indications tentatively included in Appendix 2 to this document and any comments made by the Committee thereon. The questionnaire would also solicit comments on the action programmes included in Appendix 1. The Office would compile the responses received and submit a document to the next session of the Governing Body (March 2003) for the Committee's consideration.

IV. The consultation mechanism

- 13.** As the Working Party indicated that all aspects of sectoral activities should be constituent-driven, this means that there must be in place effective consultation mechanisms to enable the views of the tripartite constituents to be taken into account. The Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues provides the forum par excellence for such consultation. However, for this consultation to be effective, the Committee must have before it all the elements to enable it to make the best recommendations to the Governing Body. Where, as in the case of sectoral constituents, the sectors on which attention is to be focused fall outside of the purview of the ministries of labour, and requires consultations with sectoral employers' and workers' organizations, new ways of reaching these constituents must be explored to ensure the Committee has all the relevant information before it.
- 14.** The experience with the informal consultations held after the Governing Body session in March 2002 in preparation for the meetings of the Working Party has shown the information gap which exists between the secretariats of the Employers' and Workers' groups and (some of) the Government regional coordinators as regards the sectoral dimension of the ILO's work. This is probably unavoidable since the internal consultation mechanisms of the Employers' and Workers' groups are much more developed than would

be feasible for governments. Nevertheless, most members of the Working Party felt that the consultations, both informal and in the Working Party, had been fruitful and were a distinct improvement over the previous arrangement, which relied on individual contacts with the Employers' and Workers' secretariats and decision-making in the Committee.

15. It is therefore proposed to establish a system of informal consultations between committee sessions to deal in particular with the planning of sectoral activities for a new biennial cycle and any other issues related to the overall direction of the programme. The informal consultations, to be held as often as necessary, would take place between the Office, the secretariats of the Employers' and Workers' groups, and the Government regional coordinators. It would be helpful if these coordinators could be selected from among members of the Committee. Another option as regards governments would be that following the selection of the economic sectors on which action in a particular biennium would be focused, governments would be asked to designate focal points for these sectors who could be involved in the informal tripartite consultations between sittings of the Committee.

V. Improving government participation in sectoral meetings

16. At the 283rd Session (March 2002) of the Governing Body, it was decided⁶ to invite henceforth all interested governments to participate in future sectoral meetings to which the Standing Orders for such meetings apply (this excludes experts' meetings, as well as national, subregional and regional sectoral seminars). This new system has already been applied to the three sectoral meetings to be held in last quarter-2002 (mechanical and electrical engineering, mining and health services). The Committee will have a paper before it in March 2003 indicating the first experiences gained with the new system and its administrative and financial implications.
17. As regards the possible funding of Government delegates, in particular from (some) developing countries, to participate in sectoral meetings, the Working Party recognized that, even if this were desirable, the financial constraints of the regular budget resources for sectoral activities would not make it possible. Moreover, obtaining extra-budgetary resources for such a purpose would be most unlikely considering donor priorities at present. The exceptions are experts' meetings (for instance, for the development of sectoral codes of practice), where funding for Government experts is borne by the Office; this is because they, as much as the experts from the Employers' and Workers' sides, are invited to these meetings in their individual capacity. The other possibility would be to switch some resources from global sectoral meetings towards subregional and regional seminars, where the costs of government participation, as for the employers' and workers' participants, are generally covered by the ILO.

VI. Implementation of the "one-stop window"

18. The "one-stop window" is a portal web site that is intended to serve as an entry point to various sources of relevant sectoral information inside and outside the ILO. Since the presentation of the "one-stop window" at the Committee meeting in March 2002, the web site has been further developed. It was presented both at the informal consultation of the Government group in May and the second meeting of the Working Party on 17 June 2002.

⁶ GB.283/13, para. 22(b).

The official launch of the “one-stop window” prototype was on 12 June 2002, as a side event to the ILC. On that occasion, entries for eight out of the 22 sectors covered by the Sectoral Activities Programme had been developed in English. The new facility has also been shown at recent sectoral meetings. Since the launch of the “one-stop window” the following additional services have been implemented: a bulletin board for the Portworker Development Programme (PDP), a bulletin board for the discussion of the maritime labour standards consolidation process and a SECTOR web site LISTSERVER, providing subscribers with a monthly update of what’s new on the SECTOR web site. To date, the “one-stop window” has been designed and developed using regular budget resources. Its full development in all three official ILO languages and covering all 22 sectors would require extra-budgetary resources, which are actively solicited.

VII. Internal arrangements for the Joint Meeting on Public Emergency Services

19. In view of the specific nature of the Joint Meeting on Public Emergency Services to be held in January 2003, the IMEC group, supported by the GRULAC group, proposed at the 284th Session (June 2002) of the Governing Body that the joint Government/Employer group should meet “under the presidency of a Government representative and that the Office should have access to the meetings of the group and be able to assist it”. The Employers’ group of the Governing Body expressed its willingness to have further consultations on these issues prior to the present session of the Governing Body. At the time of writing, these consultations were still continuing. The Committee will be informed orally of the outcome of these consultations so that it can make an appropriate recommendation to the Governing Body taking into account the implications this may have for other joint meetings.

20. *The Committee may wish to:*

- (a) invite the Office to consult further with the tripartite constituents on the issues contained in paragraphs 5 to 12 and Appendix 2 and to submit a report to the Committee at the 286th Session of the Governing Body to enable it to make recommendations for the implementation of the new approach in the 2004-05 biennium;*
- (b) indicate which of the consultation mechanism options it would recommend to be used between sessions of the Governing Body as set out in paragraph 15;*
- (c) consider the tentative proposals for action programmes referred to in paragraph 11 and contained in Appendix 1 and the possible other sectors for which such action programmes might be elaborated;*
- (d) taking account of the outcome of consultations on the issue raised in paragraph 19 concerning the forthcoming joint meeting on public emergency services, make an appropriate recommendation to the Governing Body.*

Geneva, 14 October 2002.

Point for decision: Paragraph 20.

Appendix 1

Three proposed action programmes

I. Decent Work in Agriculture

The issues

There is no economic sector more ridden with decent work deficits than agriculture. Approximately half the world's workforce is engaged in this sector. Poverty and social insecurity are rife. Yet ILO efforts to strengthen the voice of rural workers, their earning power, the social services available to them and their participation in decision-making have been too dispersed to achieve lasting impact. If the ILO is to contribute effectively to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals – to halve the number of people living in poverty by the year 2015 – far greater attention needs to be directed to rural workers, those most afflicted with poverty. Indeed, poverty eradication was considered by the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development to be the greatest challenge facing the world today, and agriculture was seen as inextricably linked to poverty eradication.

An Action Programme on Decent Work in Agriculture should be launched to strengthen the ILO's services in support of the 1.1 billion people who are engaged in agriculture. Whether they are small farmers or among the 450 million people employed in waged agricultural work, most rural workers live in poverty. Their incomes are roughly half those of urban workers and tend to fluctuate with the seasons, moving families from feast to famine in the course of the year. The prevalence of casual, temporary and seasonal work underscores the precariousness of rural livelihoods and the lack of alternative employment opportunities undermines efforts to improve working conditions. Approximately 70 per cent of the world's poverty is rural poverty. Unsurprisingly, the poverty of adult workers underpins the high incidence of child labour in agriculture, the highest of any economic sector.

Historically, it is through the growth of agricultural productivity, the production of excess wealth, and the transfer of human resources to other endeavours that economies have grown and people's livelihoods have improved. The economies of most developing countries cannot grow sustainably, nor adequate jobs be generated without investment in the rural sector. This is the challenge facing developing countries where the agricultural sector predominates. Employment policies which promote rural off-farm employment, spur the development of small and medium enterprises, particularly in rural areas, and orient investment towards employment-intensive rural infrastructure development are key factors in easing the transition from a largely agrarian society to one more based on industry and commerce. Also, a sufficiently varied and vibrant rural sector can cushion the impact of rapid economic contraction or volatility on the working population. The ILO's considerable expertise in rural employment strategies needs to be harnessed to greater effect. There is no more direct route out of poverty than a decent job; there is no more appropriate remedy to rural poverty than rural employment strategies.

Sustainable agriculture depends on a healthy workforce able to meet their basic needs and plan for the future. In many countries today, poverty, unsafe working conditions and poor health all contribute to low labour productivity in agriculture, which in turn perpetuates the cycle of rural poverty. Lack of access to basic health care and social safety nets means that illness, disability or death plunges rural families further into poverty. Specific measures are needed to improve rural health services, address the HIV/AIDS pandemic among rural populations, and protect the growing number of AIDS orphans. In addition, the ILO must encourage implementation of the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184), among our constituents, and make it better known among the other United Nations agencies working in the field. As efforts are invested in increasing agricultural outputs, it is vital that employers, waged agricultural workers and small farmers are made more aware of safe work practices that can protect them from occupational accidents and disease, particularly those associated with the misuse of agrochemicals and machinery.

Social dialogue depends on the empowerment of people to effect improvements in their working lives. To this end, the ILO promotes freedom of association, so that peasants, small farmers, waged workers and rural employers can form the cooperatives, trade unions and employers' organizations they need to improve their livelihoods. The ILO should continue to promote this important right, but in a far more active and targeted manner than in the past, so that our rural constituents are better able to participate in the decision-making that affects the future of their sector. Participation of the social partners in the development and implementation of national poverty reduction strategies needs to be strengthened.

ILO means of action

The proposed Action Programme on Decent Work in Agriculture should assist ILO member States engaged in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Process in their efforts to reduce rural poverty and to achieve socially sustainable agriculture. Such a Programme would contribute to the process by focusing attention on the specific concerns of agricultural and rural workers in terms of fundamental principles and rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue. It would be based on a programme of research, policy guidance, social dialogue activities and technical assistance focusing on one or two of the key areas of concern in two to three countries.

Through a national consultation process, the Office would assist in the development of a country-specific rural employment strategy to spur off-farm employment opportunities. The ILO's considerable experience in employment-intensive development schemes, in particular the construction of feeder roads which improve rural mobility and access to market for rural products, has demonstrated the positive economic impact and the comparative advantages of such an employment-intensive approach in terms of cost, job creation, transfer of skills, local maintenance capacity and ongoing economic activity, particularly in terms of the growth of local SMEs. Such an approach could be adapted to other infrastructure needs, for example, those identified in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, notably water management, sanitation, rural energy provision, which lay the foundation for economic growth and social well-being, as well as the country-specific priorities set in national PRSPs, for example, small dams and community-based irrigation projects. Policy guidance on rural employment would be developed within the overall framework of the country-led Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the Decent Work Country Programme, where such exists. Intensive collaboration would be sought with national partners as well as other multilateral agencies engaged in poverty reduction and rural development work. Capacity-building activities for the social partners would be foreseen to strengthen their participation in the development and implementation of national poverty reduction strategies so as to better ensure that national agricultural policies, rural development objectives and social services provision respond to the needs of rural employers and workers.

To improve working conditions in agriculture, the ILO would offer technical assistance to governments in the development of a national policy on safety and health in agriculture and strengthen the capacity of the social partners to implement improvements at the national and enterprise levels. Country-level activities in direct support of constituents could include training of employers' and workers' representatives, members of agricultural cooperatives and agricultural labour inspectors on safe work practices and safety management systems with regard to the major areas of concern, such as machine safety, handling and transport of materials and management of chemicals. Special measures to ensure the health and safety of women workers, young workers and temporary and seasonal workers would be included. Tripartite national meetings on safety and health in agriculture would offer the opportunity to discuss specific challenges facing the sector, identify priority actions to be taken, review the roles of the social partners in implementing improvements and develop a national plan of action.

These two major areas of focus could be complemented with targeted interventions on other issues of importance selected by the country concerned, for example, child labour in commercial agriculture or awareness-raising on HIV/AIDS among rural populations.

The outcome of the Symposium on Decent Work in Agriculture (September 2003) will offer additional guidance, as will consultations with governments and the social partners.

The experiences gathered in the development and implementation of each national action programme would be evaluated at regular intervals in order to provide feedback on performance, identify strengths and weaknesses, offer the opportunity to redirect efforts if required and, finally, to synthesize the lessons learned.

The Action Programme on Decent Work in Agriculture, while based in the Sectoral Activities Department, would potentially call on expertise from across the Organization. It would be implemented in close cooperation with ILO field offices and the ILO's tripartite constituents. Strong collaboration with other United Nations agencies, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization, as well as the World Bank, is vital to ensure that the social issues inherent in rural poverty remain high on the international poverty reduction agenda. Every effort would be made to ensure that the specific concerns of agricultural and rural workers in the countries selected were integrated into the work of the Office currently being programmed in the four sectors, so as to use resources as efficiently as possible. Nonetheless, the Programme must be endowed with sufficient additional resources to attract partnerships within the Organization and support from without. Its ultimate aim should be to assist ILO member States engaged in the PRSP process to achieve socially sustainable agriculture – agriculture that is economically viable, ecologically sound and socially just – that is, decent work in agriculture.

II. Teachers for the Future: Meeting Teacher Shortages to Achieve Education for All

Introduction

Teacher shortages are growing worldwide. A survey recently published by the ILO and UNESCO, *A statistical profile of the teaching profession* (2002), shows that despite substantial progress in recruiting new teachers since 1990, demographic pressures and the need to reduce the high out-of-school population are making a chronic situation worse in many developing countries. Ambitious goals to achieve Education for All (EFA) in all countries by 2015 are seriously threatened. In the developed countries, general, subject or geographic-specific shortages (or all three) are growing to the point that education ministries in many OECD countries are cooperating on a special project to share ideas and information on measures to meet the challenges. Moves toward universal lifelong learning systems are dependent on successful resolution of these questions.

Issues and problems

The problems are not the same in all countries. In the developed countries, the teaching profession is ageing significantly at a time when pressures are building for a substantial redefinition of roles and responsibilities so that schools and educational systems become pillars of lifelong learning systems that are inclusive of all citizens. The relative unattractiveness of teaching for young people compared to better paid and less stressful occupations in many of these countries, combined with accelerating rates of departure after three to five years of teaching for those who choose to enter teaching, are major contributors to this phenomenon. Reports of the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts (CEART) have warned of these consequences for many years (cf. 1994, 1997 and 2000 reports). As a result, countries, and regions or localities within countries, have turned to a wide variety of exceptional measures to recruit and retain teachers, including substantial revisions of salary and career structures, relaxing qualifications and competency standards and special recruitment campaigns within and across national borders. Among major issues to be addressed in these countries are teacher training standards, ensuring continual professional development throughout teaching careers, adjusting careers to new expectations, finding resources to make salaries competitive with other professions, work organization, hours, stress and violence in schools and the roles of teachers as information and communications technology (ICT) grows in importance.

In developing countries, chronic teacher shortages combined with lack of basic teaching and learning conditions have for decades led to excessively large classes, high drop-out rates, denial of even minimum access, especially for girls, and generally poor educational quality. High demographic growth rates continue in many of these countries to outstrip the recruitment of teachers, many of whom additionally do not meet minimum qualifications standards, thereby replicating poor teaching and learning conditions in schools. The spread of HIV/AIDS in many sub-Saharan African countries now, and potentially in other poor countries or regions of countries in coming years, further ravages education and the teaching profession. Estimates for some African countries indicate a higher death rate of teachers than the total output of teacher training institutions. At the same time, almost all of these ILO member States have set themselves the goal of achieving universal primary education by 2015, a goal that is increasingly unrealistic as teacher shortages

multiply. Among major issues to be addressed in these countries are levels of initial teacher education, minimum provision of in-service training, raising salaries from poverty levels to attract better teaching candidates and afford alternative income-generating activities in a context of severe budgetary and fiscal constraints, providing for minimum teaching support infrastructure, gender disparities which discourage educational opportunities for girls, and addressing the ravages of HIV/AIDS.

A common issue cutting across countries with differing socio-economic levels is how to institutionalize meaningful social dialogue between educational authorities (public and private) and teachers' unions that facilitates and encourages positive education reform.

Proposed means of action by the ILO

An action programme to address these issues and assist member States and the social partners to improve the attractiveness of teaching and meet educational quality goals would be based on a programme of research, social dialogue forums and a global report to be prepared over the period 2004-06. The programme would begin with research to better understand the obstacles and possible solutions within countries on a regional basis. This research, together with previous policy recommendations from ILO sectoral meetings and the joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART), as well as national analysis and best practices brought by participants, would form the basis for social dialogue forums in each region designed to identify with more precision the principal obstacles and the policy, legislative and other measures necessary to address them. The regional research and dialogue results would be synthesized in a global report prepared by the Office in 2006 for submission to the Governing Body, the CEART and all member States. As part of the action programme, a monitoring and assessment mechanism would be established to evaluate impact of the programme on national policy and action.

Regionally targeted research and information sharing in non-OECD countries

In place of the standard international sectoral meeting, the Office would carry out a number of regional studies using the appropriate methodology (regional surveys, country case studies, elaboration of comparative indicators, etc.), on the principal issues facing most countries in the region as initially indicated above. With a view to greater integration of this work with overall decent work programmes and strategic objectives, within the ILO the research proposals would be the object of consultation with the other components of the Social Dialogue Sector (ACTRAV, ACTEMP, IFP/DIALOGUE) and with a number of ILO units responsible for policy integration and PRSPs (i.e., INTEGRATION), education and training issues (IFP/SKILLS, IPEC) and with the regional offices in view of regionally determined objectives and work programmes. Attempts would be made to integrate work on teacher indicators by the ILO, UNESCO and others in this research so as to maximize resources and avoid duplication.

The background documents resulting from the research would then be presented for discussion to four regionally specific conferences or symposia in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific and Eastern Europe/Central Asia composed of governments of member States, employers and workers' (teachers') representatives invited in proportion to the total regular budgetary and extra-budgetary resources available for this purpose. So as to maximize their utility and work towards integration with other ILO strategic objectives, the exact nature of the regional meetings (conference, symposium or other) would be decided in consultation with regional government coordinators within the STM, with the Employers' and Workers' groups and the ILO regional offices. These would be joint meetings with significant private sector participation based initially on the percentage agreed upon in other joint sectoral meetings for health services and public services in 2003 (one employer representative for every three worker representatives in these sectors which are exclusively or overwhelmingly public services where the government is the sole or primary employer).

The results of previous ILO and ILO/UNESCO meetings relevant to a policy dialogue on the main issues would also be made available to the regional conferences or symposia:

- the conclusions and resolutions of previous ILO education sector meetings (1991, 1996 and 2000);

- the conclusions and recommendations of the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel – CEART (principally the last four reports – 1994, 1997, 2000 and the one to be held in September 2003); and
- the provisions of the two international normative instruments applicable to teaching personnel – the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, 1966, and the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel, 1997.

CEART experts would be invited as resource persons to the meetings within available financial resources. Major institutional players within the EFA campaign (UNESCO in the first place, UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank) would also be invited to contribute their knowledge and experience.

Policy dialogue forums to enhance social dialogue in education

The purpose of the regional meetings would be to reflect on the outcomes of the research and background document(s) prepared by the Office, along with their own research and experiences, and through the process of social dialogue recommend practical steps to address the main issues and problems in countries of the region which could be brought to the attention of governments of member States and the social partners. The outcomes of the regional meetings could be in the form of recommendations, guidelines, conclusions or another form, according to the expressed needs of the region.

The Office would also play a role in following through on meeting outcomes through technical advisory services and/or the creation of an Internet-based network of information and contacts among key actors in the regions at the request of specific countries. This technical support would be subject to the limitations on Office resources to carry out such work. Nevertheless, a small amount of seed money would be programmed for such support within the action plan package, designed to attract matching financial and technical support from member States, the social partners and international governmental or non-governmental organizations interested in supporting these activities.

OECD countries

For OECD countries, the Office would propose to continue and intensify cooperation with the OECD project on recruiting and retaining teachers launched in March 2002, and to carry out appropriate actions to continue that work when it terminates in 2004 in regard to a select number of countries who wish to cooperate on identified priorities within the competence of the ILO. Such cooperation would be done in consultation with regional government coordinators of the STM, Employers' and Workers' groups of the Governing Body, the Business and Advisory Group (BIAC) and the Trade Union Advisory Group (TUAC) of the OECD and ILO units previously indicated above as appropriate.

Assessment and monitoring

As part of its impact analysis, the Office would design a simple monitoring tool to assess the impact of the research, policy dialogue and cooperation with countries on effective change in national policy, legislation and measures to address the key issues and problems. The results of this monitoring analysis would form part of a global report to be prepared in 2006, synthesizing the results of the research, policy dialogue forums and technical cooperation/advisory efforts undertaken in cooperation with countries, as well as observed impact at national and international levels. This would include a summary of lessons learned, positive outcomes and failures.

The global report would be submitted for consideration by the Governing Body and form a major input to the 2006 Session of the CEART. Once approved by the Governing Body, it would be submitted to all member States in the usual manner.

III. Improvements in the Competitiveness of the TCF (Textiles, Clothing and Footwear) Sectors through the Promotion of Decent Work

Proposal for an integrated action programme
for the 2004-05 biennium

Owing to their global nature, TCF industries are highly exposed to pressure from international competition. This pressure has increased in recent years with the progressive breaking up of the Multifibre Arrangement and the complete withdrawal of associated quota systems by the year 2004. This widespread opening up of TCF markets will particularly affect the most vulnerable developing countries, which, without quotas, will have to develop TCF production by relying on quality and the social criteria of competitiveness. These changes will have an impact on the long-term viability of enterprises, alter competitive parameters and influence the development of employment and labour practices. Therefore, it is important that the search for improved competitiveness be conducted in an appropriate context which takes into account economic as well as social elements, which increasingly determine the competitive position of enterprises at the international level.

When assessing the development of the competitive parameters of TCF industries, it is clear that social parameters are increasingly important. The internal competitiveness of an enterprise mainly depends on the existence of a favourable social climate, which, in turn, is based on good labour practices and the existence of constructive social dialogue between the social partners. When the social climate deteriorates, enterprises are no longer in a position to meet new market requirements (“just-in-time” and “zero-stock” production) and employees are no longer motivated to improve their skills and ensure the level of quality required. This results in a drop in competitiveness which, in a highly competitive market, can lead to the closure of the enterprises in question and the loss of related jobs.

The external competitiveness of an enterprise is also largely based on the image projected of the respect of human rights at work. The global market of TCF products is influenced by the attitude of end consumers, who are showing increasing concern over the conditions in which the clothing or footwear they purchase has been produced. This explains the proliferation of codes of conduct and other voluntary private initiatives which in TCF sectors mainly refer to the respect of fundamental standards on human rights at work.

International contractors, whether they be TCF enterprises with their headquarters in industrialized countries or large distribution groups, are now adding the respect of the fundamental labour standards and national labour legislation in force in the countries with which they work to their terms and conditions for international subcontracts. This practice, which is becoming widespread, is influencing the strategic decisions of global buyers and, as a result, is affecting the competitive position of enterprises according to their ability to respect national labour legislation and fundamental labour standards.

In view of the growing importance of these social factors of competitiveness in TCF sectors (this could be termed “social competitiveness”), and the convergence of these parameters with the strategic objectives of the ILO, the implementation of an integrated action programme for improvements in the competitiveness of the TCF sectors through the promotion of decent work is being proposed for the 2004-05 biennium. This action programme will initially be tested using a series of pilot programmes carried out in a limited number of countries.

A first pilot programme to align and improve the competitiveness of the textiles-clothing sector through the promotion of decent work was launched recently in Morocco. This pilot programme is an integral part of the Protocol of Agreement on the 2002-05 Cooperation Programme signed during the International Labour Conference between the Kingdom of Morocco and the International Labour Office.

For the 2004-05 biennium, the Office is proposing that this pilot test be expanded to other countries so as to develop the experience gained in Morocco.

With the support of sectoral constituents, the first step of this programme will consist in identifying those countries that wish to participate in this expansion and have TCF industries developed enough to require quality alignment, wherein the parameters of social competitiveness play a determining role.

The approach subsequently developed in each country selected will particularly stress the social elements of competitiveness (social competitiveness) in the light of their interdependent relationship with the economic aspects of development.

The global objective will be to develop, in each country and according to its requirements, a strategic approach to align TCF enterprises which coordinates economic and social aspects with a view to promoting decent work in these industries.

The immediate objectives will be the following:

1. To synthesize and assess the status of knowledge on the TCF sectors with emphasis on the social aspects of competitiveness.
2. To define and implement integrated policies and programmes which help to improve competitiveness through the promotion of decent work.
3. To develop the dialogue skills of sectoral social partners with a view to drawing up and implementing a global strategy for economic and social development in the TCF sectors.

Each country will adopt a concerted and integrated approach to improve productivity and competitiveness through the promotion of decent work.

The main activities will be as follows:

1. The drawing up of an economic and social survey of the TCF industries which identifies the determining factors and social parameters of competitiveness. National consultants would conduct this survey with technical support from the Office.
2. The implementation in each country of a tripartite steering committee responsible for the smooth running of the project. It will lay down the guidelines of the programme, validate the research phase (survey) and, with the support of the Office, draw up the terms of reference and a draft action programme.
3. The draft action programme drawn up by the steering committee, with the support of the Office, will be discussed for approval at a national tripartite seminar on improvements in the competitiveness of the TCF sectors through the promotion of decent work.
4. The final text of the action programme will have two parts:
 - the first part will include the programmes and policies to be implemented at the national level;
 - the second part will define the fields in which the sectoral constituents require specific assistance from the Office.

The steering committee will be responsible for monitoring and implementing programmes and policies. It will also provide the interface with the support activities and programmes requested of the Office.

It is envisaged that the ILO will also coordinate the work of steering committees as well as their secretariat.

The implementation methods will be similar in each country.

All of the proposed activities will be carried out in continuous consultation with the national tripartite constituents.

The Sectoral Activities Department will coordinate the programme in close collaboration with the relevant external offices and multidisciplinary teams. There will also be close collaboration with the Policy Integration Department and ACTRAV, ACT/EMP and IFP/Dialogue. A small coordinating unit could also be established, if necessary.

Furthermore, an expanded technical committee will be established at the Office to ensure an appropriate follow-up to the requests made in each country. The composition of each technical committee will vary according to the nature of these requests.

* * *

There will be an assessment of the national programmes implemented once this series of pilot exercises has been completed. This assessment will be the subject of a synthesis report to be submitted to all sectoral constituents.

Appendix 2

Tentative list of major issues in the different economic sectors

Agriculture; plantations; other rural sectors

- Decent Work in Agriculture (see proposed action programme).

Basic metal production

- Promotion of the code of practice on safety and health in the non-ferrous metals industries.
- Updating of the code of practice on occupational safety and health in the iron and steel industry.

Chemical industries

- Work flexibility and its impact on the quality of working life (theme of a sectoral meeting in October 2003).

Commerce

- Employment effects of mergers and acquisitions (theme of a sectoral meeting in April 2003).
- Stress and violence (covered in a sectoral meeting in October 2003).
- A manual on social dialogue.

Construction

- Promotion of core labour standards in the context of labour subcontracting.
- OSH in construction.

Education

- Addressing teacher shortages to achieve Education For All (see proposed action programme).
- Stress and violence (covered in a sectoral meeting in October 2003).

Financial services; other professional services

- Social dialogue in mergers and acquisitions.
- Stress and violence (covered in a sectoral meeting in October 2003).

Food, drink, tobacco

- Employment prospects in the tobacco sector (theme of a sectoral meeting in February 2003).
- SME development in food and drink industries.

Forestry, wood, pulp and paper

- Social sustainable development, including protection of vulnerable groups (such as women, indigenous peoples and landless).
- Use of contract labour.

Health services

- Social dialogue (theme of a sectoral meeting in October 2002).
- Stress and violence (covered in a sectoral meeting in October 2003).

Hotels, catering, tourism

- Social impact of 11 September 2001 in the HCT sector.
- OSH, including HIV/AIDS.
- Stress and violence (covered in a sectoral meeting in October 2003).

Maritime, ports, fisheries, inland waterways

- Consolidation of maritime labour standards (meetings in 2002-03, preparatory conference in 2004, Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference in 2005).
- Consolidation of fishing standards (International Labour Conference, 2004 and 2005).
- Maritime and port safety and security (maritime: International Labour Conference 2003; ports: meeting in 2003).

Mechanical and electrical engineering

- Lifelong learning (theme of a sectoral meeting in September 2002).
- Employment impact of technological change and restructuring.

Media, culture, graphical

- Employment and training impact of technological change.
- Contractual status of media and entertainment workers.
- Stress and violence (covered in a sectoral meeting in October 2003).

Mining (coal, other mining)

- Employment, working time and training (theme of a sectoral meeting in October 2002).
- HIV/AIDS (also covered in the report to the sectoral meeting).
- OSH in mining.

Oil and gas production, oil refining

- Employment impact of mergers and acquisitions.
- OSH, including HIV/AIDS.

Postal and other communication services

- Social dialogue.
- Social impact of technological developments and restructuring.
- Stress and violence (covered in a sectoral meeting in October 2003).

Public service

- Social dialogue in public emergency services (theme of a sectoral meeting in January 2003).
- Social dialogue in public service reform.

- Stress and violence (covered in a sectoral meeting in October 2003).

Textiles, clothing, leather, footwear

- Promotion of competitiveness through decent work (see proposed action programme).

Transport (including civil aviation, railways, road transport)

- The employment impact of 11 September 2001 in civil aviation.
- HIV/AIDS in all transport sectors.
- Stress and violence (covered in a sectoral meeting in October 2003).

Transport equipment manufacturing

- Employment impact of overcapacity and restructuring.
- OSH in ship-breaking.

Utilities (water, gas, electricity)

- Social dialogue (covered in a sectoral meeting in May 2003).
- Employment impact of restructuring and privatization (covered in a sectoral meeting in May 2003).
- Stress and violence (covered in a sectoral meeting in October 2003).