



TWELFTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Reports of the Programme, Financial
and Administrative Committee**
Second report: Personnel questions**Contents**

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1. The Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee met from 10 to 14 March 2003 and was chaired by Lord Brett (Workers' group). Mr. Blondel (spokesperson, Workers' group) was the Reporter.

I. Statement by the staff representative

2. The statement by the staff representative is appended to the present report.

II. Composition and structure of the staff

Composition and structure of the staff (Discussion paper)

(Twelfth item on the agenda)

3. The Committee considered two reports,¹ presented for information only, on the composition and structure of the staff. The Chairperson stated that the Office would like guidance from the Committee on whether it would wish to have the revised presentation used as the basis for future editions of the composition and structure paper.
4. Mr. Botha, speaking on behalf of the Employer members, noted the paper. He had no comments about it, was pleased with the new format and felt that the information could well be used in other discussions outside of this meeting.
5. Speaking on behalf of the Worker members, Mr. Blondel welcomed the spirit of negotiation and dialogue that seemed to prevail in both the Staff Union and the Human Resources Development Department and endorsed the directions taken by the Staff Union in examining existing agreements or striving for equality between headquarters and the field. He supported the decision to reduce the volume of publications, although its repercussions on staff members would have to be examined. Regarding the composition and structure of staff, greater emphasis should be placed on work experience as opposed to higher education qualifications. There was also room for improvement as regards the representation of women in senior positions. The Workers agreed with the revised presentation of the document, provided that it reflected the same type of information as that contained in the previous version. They also expected information regarding the types and length of contracts of external collaborators. They were concerned at the number of fixed-term contracts; the increase in extra-budgetary resources must not lead to precarious work situations. It might be an idea to hire nationals of member States that appeared to have lost interest in the ILO in order to encourage them to re-engage in its activities. Mr. Blondel stated that at midday, in response to the appeal of the European Trade Union Confederation and the world trade union movement as a whole, the Workers' group wished to demonstrate its commitment to peace. He therefore asked that the sitting be suspended so that the Workers' group could leave the room for five minutes.
6. The Chairperson indicated that there would be a suspension at 12 noon for five minutes so that the Workers' group, and anyone who wished to join it, would have the opportunity to demonstrate for peace.
7. The representative of the Government of Japan thanked the Office for these precise documents, as they contained much information on the composition and structure of the

¹ GB.286/PFA/12 and GB.286/PFA/12/1.

staff and were very helpful. He noted that the geographical distribution of staff in the ILO still needed to be drastically improved and requested that each member State's "desirable range" be indicated in the paper. There were a number of nationalities that were not represented in the Office at all and some that were represented with less than half the quota. He indicated that his country would make every effort to cooperate with the Office to promote the recruitment of competent staff. He hoped that the Office would continue to pay due attention to the problem of under-representation and take practical measures for drastic improvement.

8. The representative of the Government of the Russian Federation thanked the secretariat for the two documents presented. He proposed that at the next session of the Committee an additional table be included showing the distribution of posts in the Professional and higher category by grade and nationality. This was already provided by the Office to the secretariats of other organizations for publications by the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination and he hoped that the Committee could also have this information.
9. The representative of the Government of New Zealand supported all initiatives undertaken to ensure a diverse make-up of staff within the ILO, which was representative of its constituents, both in terms of gender and nationality. She also supported the appointment of the best person for the job and considered that these were two key principles that should guide ILO staffing policy.
10. The representative of the Government of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya noted that there were at least 60 non-represented countries. Amongst those countries, 40 per cent were Arab and African countries. He hoped that the Office would give close consideration to this issue to ensure adequate representation amongst countries – by country, gender and post.
11. The representative of the Government of Saudi Arabia also stressed the importance of geographical distribution, indicating that Saudi Arabia was not represented. He had attached high hopes to the visit undertaken by HRD officials to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Council countries. He added that in the Gulf States, which was an important regional group for the Organization, only one country was represented in the Organization. He indicated that his Government was ready to cooperate with the Organization to help recruit highly qualified staff. He also hoped that the Office would look into certain fields of specialization, particularly in those areas relating to standards, as there was only one consultant who provided advice to Arab States. Recruitment of additional highly qualified personnel in certain areas of specialization would help the Arab countries meet their needs.
12. The representative of the Government of Germany found the new presentation of document GB.286/PFA/12/1 clear enough and would be happy with this type of presentation in the future. He added that it would be very useful to have information on consultants, although perhaps there should be a cut-off so that those consultants employed for only a very short period of time need not be included.
13. The representative of the Director-General (Mr. Ng, Director, Human Resources Development Department) thanked the Committee for the comments made. He indicated that a database of personnel in the Office would be put in place; but it was even more important was to examine trends with a view to understanding change. On technical cooperation personnel, such a database existed already. Additional tables could be made available to show the nationality and the regions of origin. There would be, however, some difficulty in terms of external collaboration contracts; in 2002 alone, the Office issued about 2,400 contracts, which covered approximately 68,000 days. Once the IRIS system becomes operational, the Office would be better equipped to provide more information. Mr. Ng stressed that the questions on geographical representation and diversity were a

matter of concern. In the document on progress on the implementation of the ILO Human Resources Strategy,² the Office had highlighted additional measures that it would like to introduce during the years ahead in order to improve diversity. He further informed the Committee of corrigenda to document GB.286/PFA/12, page 16: the number of P.5 posts under the Executive Director, Social Dialogue, should read one instead of three. There should have been four at P.5 in the InFocus Programme for Social Dialogue, and eight at P.5 in the Sectoral Activities Department. He apologized for this error.

14. The Committee took note of these documents for information.

III. Human Resources Strategy: A review of progress and impact (Thirteenth item on the agenda)

IV. A review of the implementation of the ILO's Human Resources Strategy: Report by the External Auditor (Fourteenth item on the agenda)

15. The Committee had before it two papers³ on the Human Resources Strategy. Although both dealt with separate items on the agenda, the Chairperson felt it would be preferable to deal with them together. With the agreement of the Committee, he invited Mr. Miller, Director of the United Kingdom National Audit Office and representative of the External Auditor, to present his report under agenda item 14.

16. Mr. Miller noted that the External Auditor, Sir John Bourn, was unable to attend the meeting personally. He informed the Committee that this independent review had been undertaken at the request of the Director-General in September 2002, to assess the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy and the associated resource implications for the ILO. He was pleased to note that the Director-General had accepted all of the recommendations made in the report. He was also very pleased to note that the Director-General had reviewed the recommendations made and identified the actions to be taken by his staff as set out in the secretariat's own paper.

17. The introduction of the Human Resources Strategy was a significant event for the ILO and was fundamental to the Organization, in that it dealt with an area – staff costs – that consumed 70 per cent of the Organization's resources. It was also fundamental to the very nature of this particular Organization. At the time of the review, there had been progress in the basic development work necessary for the support of the Strategy. However, progress in the implementation of the Strategy's concepts had been inconsistent across areas – and this was compounded by a lack of integrated resources planning. This meant that the implementation and introduction of the various elements of the Strategy to the Organization were staggered. This lack of cohesiveness meant that many difficulties were encountered at an early stage, which further impeded progress. One of the main findings of the review was that the cost implications of fully implementing the Strategy had not been established at the outset and that even on a conservative estimate basis these costs could be

² GB.286/PFA/13.

³ GB.286/PFA/13 and GB.286/PFA/14.

substantial to the Organization. Mr. Miller was pleased to note that the recommendation to undertake a comprehensive review of the future resource implications of the Strategy had been accepted by the Director-General and he looked forward to seeing the results. Since the review, the Human Resources Development Department had been restructured to help clarify the roles and responsibilities within the department with a view to making the Human Resources Strategy more cohesive. This should also help in tackling some of the particular problems identified during the review, such as poor internal communication, and the lack of management and staff training.

- 18.** Mr. Miller was pleased to note that the Human Resources Development Department had started to identify performance indicators to measure the impact of the Strategy on the Organization. The proposed indicators would be measurable, both within the Organization and against other United Nations organizations. This should assist in establishing a framework for the future progress and success of the Strategy. Mr. Miller concluded by suggesting that it was important now to secure prompt action and demonstrable progress if the potential benefits of the Strategy and the intellectual investment that it represented were to be realized. He ended by reminding the Committee that the External Auditor would be following up on progress made by the Organization in the end-of-biennium report in June 2004. On behalf of Sir John Bourn, Mr. Miller expressed his appreciation for the open and constructive cooperation provided to his staff by the Director-General, the Director of the Human Resources Development Department and staff of the ILO.
- 19.** The Chairperson thanked Mr. Miller for the report.
- 20.** Mr. Botha, on behalf of the Employer members, first of all thanked the Chairperson of the Staff Union for his presentation. He felt that the future of collective bargaining in the ILO was looking healthy. He thanked Mr. Miller for his statement and also for an excellent audit report. He was very satisfied with the advice that had been given on indicators and on improving the human resources function as a whole. He considered that paragraph 4 of the document summarized in a couple of sentences the areas of greatest concern, which had arisen from poor communications, lack of management and staff training, limited Professional resources within the Human Resources Development Department and operational agreements which restricted operational efficiency and effectiveness and, of course, the very important point of cost. He expressed the Employer members' full support of the human resources function in doing its utmost to meet these concerns. Although all of the recommendations were accepted he was disappointed that the summary of reactions to the Auditor's report did not provide more detail about future action.
- 21.** Mr. Botha considered that the recruitment period was still too long, and that it was difficult to discipline and remove poor performers. He also expressed concerns about the cost of the job-grading exercise. An element missing still from the Human Resources Strategy paper was a timetable for its implementation and a full cost analysis.
- 22.** Mr. Botha commented on the Young Professionals Career Entrance Programme, which was important in helping to improve gender balance, reduce the average age and broaden geographic representation. The Office should continue this scheme. Another issue he raised was whether the Office was dedicating sufficient resources to training activities. The Employers' group felt that it would have been preferable to have included the timetable and cost of such training. Mr. Botha finished by requesting additional information on the functions of the Office of the Ombudsperson.
- 23.** Applauding the quality of the External Auditor's report, Mr. Blondel said it attested to the new direction taken by the Office as regards human resources, to which the Workers' group on the whole subscribed. The report described the progress made in the Human Resources Strategy and underlined three trends (an increase in extra-budgetary staff, an

increase in the percentage of women in the Professional grade and above and the high average age of officials) which would have a considerable bearing on any policy taken. The Young Professional Career Entrance Programme was encountering a number of problems particularly with regard to placement and it would perhaps be possible to assign the young people to posts where the incumbent was approaching retirement and which they could subsequently fill. The Workers' group noted that the implementation of the seven Collective Agreements appeared difficult and that some amendments would have to be made in consultation with the Staff Union. Mr. Blondel welcomed the emphasis placed on training, which should promote tripartism and the ILO's fundamental values and he also supported the principle that service in the field should be a "must". The Workers supported the point for decision, whilst requesting information on the disagreements dealt with by the Ombudsperson and on the notion of interns set out in the document.

24. The representative of the Government of the Russian Federation thanked the Office and the External Auditor for the documents provided but still hoped to see a cost-benefit analysis comparing the amounts spent and the gains achieved by the Strategy. He asked the External Auditor to clarify whether his estimates included indirect costs. He also asked the secretariat how much had already been actually spent (including on reclassification of posts) and proposed that the secretariat carry out an analysis of the impact of the Strategy on labour productivity of the staff of the Office. He understood that the secretariat was intending to reorganize priorities and supported that suggestion. The first priority should be to recruit the best candidates by ensuring that all vacancies were filled on the basis of open competition. Secondly, particular attention should be also given to performance appraisal on the basis of specific criteria and indicators. On the other hand, he did not see a justification for any increase of the formal training budget because after appointment people mostly learn in the process of work, by watching and following others. He also did not entirely understand what the Organization might gain from further investment in the process of handling grievances as the administration – well before the development of the Strategy – had an excellent record in terms of a very limited number of cases lost in the ILO Administrative Tribunal.
25. The representative of the Government of the Republic of Korea, speaking on behalf of the Asia-Pacific group, expressed his appreciation to the Office for its attempts to improve all areas of human resources management in the ILO since the implementation of the Strategy in November 1999. He also thanked the External Auditor for his presentation and excellent report. Despite the commitment of the Office, the Asia-Pacific group drew attention to certain levels of inefficiency within the structure of the ILO. It was concerned that 55 per cent of Professional staff were graded P.5 or above. In this context the group would like to ask why a further study on possible savings was not carried out through reclassification of posts and active review of the staffing structure and looked forward to receiving details of measures taken by the Office to address this problem. Another issue of concern to the Asia-Pacific group was national diversity, where there was a need to improve the numbers of Professional staff from the Asia and Pacific region. The group believed that the Office should devote more attention to overcoming such a demographical distortion and should provide an account of the latest information and concrete measures taken to the November session of the Committee.
26. The Asia-Pacific group strongly supported the statement delivered by both the Employer and Worker spokespersons concerning the young professionals scheme and encouraged the Office to allocate the necessary resources to this important programme. The representative felt that the average time to recruit staff was too long. In conclusion, the Asia-Pacific group was pleased to see the progress made in the Human Resource Strategy and looked forward to news of further developments.

27. The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom made a statement on behalf of the IMEC group. IMEC recognized that the Human Resource Strategy rightly aimed at fundamentally improving ways in which the ILO recruited, retained and managed its most important resource – its staff. Human resource management must be an Office-wide responsibility and could not be implemented by the Human Resources Development Department alone. She thanked the Department for the update on the Strategy and welcomed the Director-General's decision to ask the External Auditor to prepare an independent evaluation of the Strategy. She also welcomed the External Auditor's presentation. On personal and career development, IMEC hoped that the Office would decide to proceed with this system. Whilst noting the positive potential of the Personal Development Plan (PDP) system, she requested that the Office confirm that a system was in place to improve unsatisfactory performance and, if necessary, to terminate employment after a period of unsatisfactory performance.
28. The IMEC group recognized the value of the Young Professionals Career Entrance Programme in addressing resource policy issues, including gender, national diversity, grade and age structure. The group hoped that this year's review of the programme would include a cost-benefit analysis. The representative urged that, whatever the results of this review, the Office make greater efforts to increase its recruitment of younger members of staff and of women, particularly at the Professional level. The statistics for the age profile and gender of senior staff showed very disappointing progress in this area. Priority should be given to the urgent need to recruit younger personnel to fill posts which became vacant when Professional staff retired. This might require further restructuring of the Professional grades to ensure that there were sufficient P.2 and P.3 posts for younger recruits.
29. On recruitment and selection of staff, IMEC encouraged the Office to take measures urgently to simplify the recruitment process and to cut down the administrative stages involved. IMEC also supported the Auditor's recommendation that the Assessment Centre be used more selectively. On classification, the representative looked forward to hearing the results of the relevant reviews and remained concerned about both the estimated annual cost of the baseline grading exercise itself and the cost and structural implications of increasing numbers of P.5 posts. She noted the discrepancy in the number of the positions being upgraded compared to the number downgraded and the apparent grade imbalance thus created. In this regard, she welcomed the Office's commitment to making appropriate grade adjustments when positions became vacant to address the imbalances in the grade structure. She also welcomed the work undertaken by the Human Resources Development Department to review the contract system and to eliminate the inappropriate use of short-term contracts and looked forward to further progress in this area.
30. On people-management skills, IMEC was pleased that the Office was developing an overall training strategy – including calculating the anticipated cost – and urged the Office to carefully prioritize the Strategy, including measurable and realistic objectives, indicators and expected outcomes, which should help to build capacity where it was most needed. The representative noted the Auditor's recommendation that priority be given to a management training programme and that this was being addressed under the management challenges component of the 2000-01 surplus proposals. IMEC queried the estimated figures for the management training programme as set out in the Auditor's report. On employee relations, IMEC remained very concerned about the problems identified by the Auditor in relation to the new grievance procedures. The representative noted that the Office would consider these as it reviewed the collective agreements and hoped that this review would revisit the timescales and details of the procedures, with the aim of achieving a more streamlined system with an increased role for local managers. IMEC supported the Office's plans to review, with line managers and the Staff Union, the feasibility and priority of particular initiatives and to prepare a revised, prioritized cost estimate and implementation timetable. IMEC also was in favour of the Office's intention to implement

an effective monitoring and evaluation strategy and looked forward to a further update on these and other human resources issues at the November 2003 Governing Body session. The IMEC representative concluded by asking the Office to produce a more detailed ILO organization chart.

- 31.** The representative of the Government of Italy supported the statement made by the United Kingdom on behalf of IMEC and the comments therein on the various issues raised in the Auditor's report. He particularly emphasized the importance of the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy and the recruitment of young professionals and especially the recruitment of young women. He requested a more complete evaluation of the results of the Young Professionals Career Entrance Programme to address the risk of creating a group of staff who might be undeservedly privileged in comparison with other recruits. As for recruitment and selection, he believed that the time involved was still too long; there did not appear to be any justification for requiring 97 days to accomplish only the first three stages of the procedure. He endorsed the Office's decision to increase its efforts to improve staff mobility between headquarters and the field, and also encouraged horizontal mobility at headquarters, including efforts to facilitate mobility between the Office and the Turin Centre. Italy still had confidence that the Office would be able to overcome these difficulties and supported the future approach of the Strategy. He also emphasized the need to intensify exchanges with the outside world, through officials of the Office being detached to governments and workers' and employers' organizations, and indeed other international organizations. The representative concluded by urging the Office to maintain its commitment to implement a strategy to monitor and evaluate the implementation of these measures and requested that an update on the Strategy's implementation be presented to the November 2003 Governing Body session.
- 32.** The representative of the Government of South Africa welcomed the documents on the Human Resources Strategy, and congratulated the representative of the External Auditor on his report. She requested more information on the geographical scope of the Young Professionals Career Entrance Programme, and would like to see more done in terms of popularizing this programme in developing countries. Another issue related to non-represented nationalities: she wished to hear the Office's plans to redress the balance. She also requested more information on the latest list of quotas for each country. With regard to the issue of unsatisfactory performance, she shared the sentiment expressed by IMEC.
- 33.** The representative of the Government of Japan welcomed the documents and supported the Asia-Pacific and the IMEC groups' statements. The Human Resources Strategy was an essential factor for the ILO's implementation of its mandate and he strongly supported the direction it was taking. He underlined the importance of the review of the unbalanced staff structure of the Organization by promoting gender equality, geographical distribution and revitalizing the Organization. In the next few years many high-level officials were expected to retire and this should be a good opportunity to review the grading structure. He urged the Office to develop a concrete plan, which should be presented to members of the Governing Body as soon as possible. Another priority was the Young Professionals Career Entrance Programme and he asked if any additional funds for strengthening the programme were included in the Programme and Budget proposals for 2004-05. He also wished to see an increase in the number of P.2 and P.3 graded posts.
- 34.** The representative of the Government of the United States thanked the Director-General and the secretariat for the progress report and the External Auditor for the comprehensive review. The United States also wished to associate itself with the statement made by the United Kingdom on behalf of IMEC. The United States had concerns about the collective Agreement on Arrangements for the Establishment of a Baseline Classification and Grading signed between the Office and the Staff Union in March 2001. She suggested that

responsibility for classifying jobs be returned to the Human Resources Development Department. In addition, the Office should take steps to make staff and managers more aware of the requirements of classifications and ensure that they received appropriate training. The representative of the Government of the United States was aware of the high percentage of P.5, D.1 and D.2 staff retiring within the next four to five years. As these posts become vacant the Office should realign the numbers of Professionals at these levels to ensure that appropriate organizational grade profiles were in place in all sectors, at both headquarters and in the regional offices. She concluded by commending the Director-General for his success in raising the percentage of women in the Professional and higher grades. This was vital to promoting a diverse leadership.

- 35.** The representative of the Government of China fully supported the comments made by the representative of the Government of the Republic of Korea on behalf of the Asia-Pacific group and considered the review of the External Auditor to be objective and comprehensive with very practical proposals. She was also pleased to note that the Office had made timely and positive responses in line with those proposals. She urged the Office to pay more attention to the issue of national representation and to work out more practical ways to recruit people and change the staff composition and structure. In terms of mobility she hoped that the Office could make more efforts to enhance and promote staff mobility. The Office could also do more to redress the gender imbalance.
- 36.** The representative of the Government of Norway supported the statement made by the United Kingdom on behalf of IMEC and also appreciated all the interesting and useful information in these documents. He strongly supported the secretariat's efforts to improve staff mobility, as well as efforts to recruit female Professionals and to promote female leaders in the ILO, which was a priority for the Director-General. He welcomed the review of the Young Professionals Career Entrance Programme, foreseen for this year. The External Auditor's report, which he found to be excellent, presented a number of concrete proposals for improvements. He welcomed these proposals and hoped they would be implemented as soon as possible.
- 37.** The representative of the Director-General, Mr. Ng, began by thanking all the members of the Committee for the very rich and valuable comments on the ILO's Human Resources Strategy; he also thanked Mr. Miller for his presentation of the External Auditor's report. As regards recruitment, there had been a careful review of recruitment practices; indeed in the Programme and Budget proposals for 2004-05, the Human Resources Development Department aimed to reduce the period of recruitment to 150 days, i.e. a reduction of 40 per cent. Another issue that had raised much interest among Committee members was national diversity. Mr. Ng took note of the work that had been suggested by the Asia-Pacific group and also by the representative of the Government of South Africa. As regards gender balance, there had been some improvements: for instance in 1998 the number of women at the P.5 level had been 18.7 per cent and five years later this had increased to 24.7 per cent. The Programme and Budget proposals for 2004-05 aimed to increase female representation to about one-third by the end of 2005. Mr. Ng informed the Committee that the Office was working on a very promising foundation, as more than half the staff below 45 years of age were women.
- 38.** Mr. Ng thanked those members of the Committee who had raised the subject of mobility; the Office would be undertaking much more work on this issue. On young professionals, he agreed that the Office needed to increase the number of posts at the P.2 and P.3 levels. The Office must have a strategy to recruit more young people into the secretariat. On the grading structure, Mr. Ng expressed his appreciation for what had been said by the representative of the Government of the United States. The Office needed to work on this with line managers very carefully, to make sure that the Office's future structure was appropriate.

39. On indicators, productivity gains and evaluation, Mr. Ng agreed that the Human Resources Strategy would require certain specific indicators and a monitoring and evaluation system to make sure that the Strategy remained on track. As far as grievance issues were concerned, Mr. Ng explained that the Office needed to review the roles and responsibilities of the Ombudsperson. The 2004-05 programme and budget proposals aimed to reduce the number of work-related grievances by 40 per cent, which would require improved communication with staff and streamlining existing procedures. Mr. Ng assured the members of the Committee that the thrust of the original Human Resources Strategy was still very valid and the Office had developed a more proactive human resources management review mechanism to prepare human resources management plans for each sector and regional department on the important issues of succession planning, mobility, gender, balance and grading structure. Finally, on the cost of training, the Office was in the process of revisiting its plans for the management and leadership training programme, which would aim to target 200 to 250 staff.
40. The representative of the External Auditor, Mr. Miller, thanked the members of the Committee for their comments. The training budget at present represented 0.7 per cent of the total ILO salary budget and he considered that to be low. To put this into context, in other organizations the benchmark could be anywhere between 3 and 5 per cent of the salary budget of an organization, depending on the countries in which staff were based. The figures quoted in the audit report did not include indirect expenditure. As regards the cost of management training, Mr. Miller explained that the US\$1.8 million referred to in the audit report was the figure provided by the Human Resources Development Department, representing the next three years' budget for management training.
41. *The Committee:*
- (a) *noted progress made in implementing the Human Resources Strategy, taking note of the difficulties that have been encountered;*
 - (b) *endorsed the future direction of the Strategy outline in paragraphs 34-38 of document GB.286/PFA/13 and, in this context, noted the Office's intention to implement an effective monitoring and evaluation strategy;*
 - (c) *requested a further report on implementation of the Strategy for its March 2004 meeting.*
42. The Committee also duly noted the audit report, GB.286/PFA/14.

V. Decisions of the United Nations General Assembly on the report of the International Civil Service Commission (Fifteenth item on the agenda)

43. The Committee took note of a document⁴ on decisions of the United Nations General Assembly on the report of the International Civil Service Commission.
44. Speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, Mr. Blondel took note of the decisions of the United Nations General Assembly and the document submitted for information.

⁴ GB.286/PFA/15.

VI. Pensions questions
(Sixteenth item on the agenda)

(a) Decisions of the United Nations General Assembly on the report of the Board of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund

45. The Committee took note of a document⁵ on the decisions of the United Nations General Assembly on the report of the Board of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, submitted for information.

46. Mr. Blondel took note of the document, while expressing the Workers' group's dissatisfaction with the situation of retired officials from the former USSR.

(b) Report of the Board of the Special Payments Fund

47. The Committee took note of a document⁶ on the Report of the Board of the Special Payments Fund.

VII. Matters relating to the Administrative Tribunal of the ILO

(a) Composition of the Tribunal
(Seventeenth item on the agenda)

48. The Committee had before it a paper⁷ on matters relating to the Administrative Tribunal of the ILO. The Chairperson informed the Committee that this was a paper for information and apologized on behalf of the Office for its late arrival. It was agreed that examination of this paper would be deferred until Thursday, 20 March.

(b) Statute of the Tribunal

49. The Committee had before it a paper⁸ on the Statute of the Tribunal.

50. Mr. Botha, on behalf of the Employer members, thanked the Office for all of its efforts in trying to resolve the problems that had been raised; he considered the paper to be a good one, as it gave a clear presentation of where the problems lay.

⁵ GB.286/PFA/16/1.

⁶ GB.286/PFA/16/2.

⁷ GB.286/PFA/17/1(Inf.).

⁸ GB.286/PFA/17/2.

51. *The Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee recommends that the Governing Body instruct the Office to prepare, at an appropriate time and taking into account the results of appropriate consultations, a set of proposed amendments with a view to further consideration of this item by the Governing Body and the submission of such proposed amendments to the 92nd (June 2004) Session of the International Labour Conference.*

(c) Recognition of the Tribunal's jurisdiction by the International Criminal Court

52. The Committee had before it a document⁹ on the recognition of the Tribunal's jurisdiction by the International Criminal Court.

53. Mr. Blondel supported paragraph 5 of the document concerning the Tribunal's Statute and was pleased that the International Criminal Court had decided to recognize the jurisdiction of the ILO Administrative Tribunal.

54. *The Committee recommends that the Governing Body approve the recognition of the Tribunal's jurisdiction by the International Labour Conference, with effect from the date of such approval.*

**VIII. Other personnel questions
(Eighteenth item on the agenda)**

55. The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of the IMEC group, raised an item under "Other personnel questions". She noted that the length of term of office of any Director-General of the ILO and the possibility of renewal of that term were covered by article 4.6(a) of the Staff Regulations. The group understood that this article had previously been amended directly by the Governing Body. The United Nations General Assembly resolution 51/241 of 31 July 1997 recommended that a two-term limit be applied in all United Nations organizations. Recognizing the important role that the ILO played as part of the United Nations system, the group felt that the ILO should align itself with the majority of specialized agencies and introduce term limits. She therefore asked that this item be included on the agenda of the PFAC in November 2003. She also asked the secretariat to produce a paper in advance of that meeting, setting out the latest situation in other organizations of the United Nations system. In doing so, the IMEC spokesperson stressed that this issue was in no way linked to the present electoral process or to the current Director-General. IMEC has demonstrated its strong confidence in the continuing leadership of the Director-General. IMEC countries had for several years adopted a United Nations system-wide approach to this issue.

56. The representative of the Government of the Republic of Korea, speaking on behalf of the Asia-Pacific group, fully supported the statement made on behalf of the IMEC group.

⁹ GB.286/PFA/17/3(Rev.).

57. The Chairperson indicated that the Office had noted the request of the Committee and would prepare a paper for consideration in November as requested.

Geneva, 24 March 2003.

Points for decision: Paragraph 41;
Paragraph 51;
Paragraph 54.

Appendix

Statement by the Staff Union representative

It is according to well-established tradition that I address the Governing Body today on behalf of the Committee and the Staff Union of the International Labour Office, at a time of great difficulty in international affairs.

Our Committee cannot stand by in the light of events that are once again threatening the world. We are therefore proud to be the source of an initiative by the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA), which unanimously adopted at its recent annual council meeting a resolution by means of which the staff union organizations of the United Nations agencies declare their absolute support for the Secretary-General and the efforts that he continues to make to safeguard the opportunity for lasting peace. We also support, as does FICSA, the related efforts of the European Trade Union Confederation, including for today.

Still at the international level and with regard to the serious political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire and our colleagues in the Abidjan Office, you are, of course, aware of the special measures that the Director-General decided to take for the protection of our colleagues, particularly those recruited locally, when Phase IV of the United Nations security plan – programme suspension – was announced.

The Staff Union in Geneva and staff representatives at the ILO Office in Abidjan – a Regional and Area Office – have played an active role in planning and implementing this security plan, which is decidedly more “progressive” than the standard plan still retained by the United Nations, whereby locally recruited staff are left to fend for themselves in a state of emergency – sometimes with tragic consequences, such as those we have seen in Rwanda in the sadly not-so-distant past.

We obviously do not know how and when the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire will be resolved and we can only hope that the measures taken will allow its most negative consequences for all staff to be averted.

It was useful, however, to draw your attention to the new and constructive way in which collaboration between all the sectors concerned was set up and the quality of solidarity with our colleagues that was elicited by this crisis. We are, of course, convinced that when new crises arise, as seems unfortunately inevitable, the Abidjan situation will be used to illustrate what the Office can and must do, particularly for its local staff.

The Staff Union, which I am proud to chair, is a new team that espouses the concerns of those teams that have preceded it. A new team often means new working methods, new approaches and new priorities. A new team does not mean an inexperienced team, and the practical approach that we intend to bring to our activities will be solidly anchored in the traditions that are the pride of this house.

The first session of our annual general meeting has just taken place. The Staff Union Programme and Strategy for 2003 was adopted, and this can be summarized in a few key words: activism, communication, effective implementation of “good” collective agreements, equality of treatment between headquarters and the field, development of career policies, improvement of employment and working conditions, international solidarity and solidarity among organizations, openly and systematically taking into account gender issues.

Some of these areas support those that are addressed in the documents submitted to you at this session of the Governing Body, a session that is particularly rich with regard to issues that directly concern the staff.

The programme and budget proposals inevitably have important implications for every employee of the ILO, as much in what is said as in what is not said.

The documents submitted to you on the composition and structure of the staff accurately reflect the house and its perspectives for the future. The study of the Human Resources Strategy, which must continue, clearly shows the major axes around which Union representatives and representatives of the Director-General, under your supervision, will be able to work together so that a motivated staff may work even more effectively in the promotion of our common objectives.

The foundations of the Human Resources Strategy bear witness, as it says in document GB.286/PFA/13, to, and I quote, “the Director-General’s continuing commitment to collective bargaining and to working in close partnership with the Staff Union and staff in implementing the Strategy”.

In this regard, I am pleased to inform you that the first sitting of our Joint Negotiating Committee for 2003 took place in a very positive atmosphere – and even took place in the Staff Union meeting room. This sitting of the Joint Negotiating Committee had mainly to decide on the priorities for the work of the committee over the current year. The parties, it should be said, had hardly any difficulty in coming to an agreement. The meeting had been well prepared and it was short.

For our part, we informed the representatives of the Director-General of our determination that the subject of equality of treatment and solidarity with the weakest, the least well protected, which are in fact related, be visible as the common theme of Union participation in the Joint Negotiating Committee.

We believe, in particular, that there are still too many difficulties in the field, where moreover the majority of staff work, for there to be real equality of opportunity and treatment with headquarters, whether we speak of security, trade union rights, training, career prospects, access to social security benefits or quite simply the right to respect as an individual. This will be a key element of union action during the mandate of our team and the first meeting of our Working Group on Equality of Treatment between the Field and Headquarters has shown the importance that should be given to these issues.

We also believe that gender issues, as regards equal opportunity between men and women, need still to make considerable progress so that objectives of parity are achieved. To confine ourselves to professionals and higher categories, how can we not see that the percentage of women is inversely proportional to the level of responsibility? This is certainly not a reflection of competence. How can we also not see that the jobs where women are most numerous are also those where career prospects are least certain. Our Union held a special assembly on these issues, which it has made one of its highest priorities, on the eve of International Women’s Day.

We believe finally that it is more than time that the ILO defined its own policy with regard to employment and working conditions for disabled people. We have therefore launched an initiative in this area and we have noted, with great satisfaction, the positive reverberations that this has had throughout the building.

On the subject of this building, we have noted with interest the comment in the programme and budget proposals that have been submitted to you, and I quote from paragraph 80 of Information Annex I, “The examination of the desirability of establishing an internal occupational safety and health unit, as part of the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy which would also incorporate the existing medical services functions, has reached an advanced stage”.

Such an advance would provide an answer to a long-standing claim of our Union, one that has been shown to be well founded as a result of events, conclusions for which have not yet been satisfactorily drawn, a little more than a year ago – I speak, of course, of the fire that seriously damaged the first floor of our building. This building, as indeed unfortunately some of the civil servants that occupy it, is growing older. This also affects working conditions and I am happy to hear that the decision has been taken to organize henceforth, on a monthly basis, regular meetings between representatives of the Staff Union committee and internal administration.

Unfortunately, the willingness to engage in consultation and dialogue which that decision reflects is not yet the reflex reaction of those in the International Labour Office who hold or believe they hold power. The simple, common-sense arrangements that ought to prevail are not systematically applied at every level of management, though management is at the service of social dialogue and its ideals.

You have examined the Programme and Budget proposals for 2004-05 and will have noted that some of them involve restructuring that has implications for the budgetary credits allocated to one or another unit – I am thinking in particular of our colleagues in the Publications Branch, the very people who spent many months in deplorable working conditions when fire wreaked havoc in their offices. Misfortunes never come singly, as the saying goes.

The programme and budget proposals provide for the credits allocated to the Publications Branch to be cut by some 25 per cent – a sizeable amount signifying a major change of the kind that

has consequences for staff management which, I am sure you know full well, needs to be discussed constructively with the people most affected.

We hope that this will be the case at the ILO and we have asked that the implications for staff of the budget cuts that will affect the Publications Branch be discussed without delay with their representatives and the Staff Union. We have been told that the appeal for dialogue that we launched to those responsible for implementing budgetary decisions has been heard.

We hope that it will be acted on even though we have the odd impression that with the myriad of budgetary allocations envisaged at the ILO, the human implications of administrative decisions are sometimes masked by bureaucracy.

I nevertheless continue to hope that common sense will prevail and that the structural adjustments will be carried out as painlessly as possible for each and every staff member they may affect.

Likewise, I hope that the matter of the so-called “precarious contracts” will continue to be set right at the same rate of progress as hitherto, so as to eliminate conditions of employment insecurity which by definition are far removed from the concept of decent work.

Again in the interests of stability and broader horizons, we hope that a real start will at last be made on the integration with the staff of the Turin Centre, much desired by our staff unions at both headquarters and at Turin.

We have embarked on consultations on all fronts to secure progress in this area.

The Turin Centre, we all know, exists first and foremost for training – seen for so long as the poor relation of employment conditions at the ILO. The measures taken to set up Personal Development Plans, or PDPs, as a result of a collective agreement concluded in August 2001, appear to us to be a step in the right direction.

In particular, our Committee is following closely the operations under way or planned in the social protection sector at headquarters and in the Americas region, and we have noticed with great interest the hopes that have been placed in this exercise by the staff concerned: their involvement or willingness to participate actively reflects attachment to the principle underlying the arrangement.

It should be said in this connection that such participation would not have been possible without the very conscientious and effective preparatory work done by the staff concerned in the Human Resources Development Department and without the full collaboration of those in charge of the units selected to test the arrangements in real-life conditions.

It was therefore with some surprise that we thought we read, in the session document on Human Resources Strategy, that what is known as the “PDP initiative” but which in fact arose from a shared wish of the Staff Union and the Director-General, might be called into question. To our mind, that would be a mistake and we trust that these doubts will be allayed by the outcome of the pilot projects under way.

Yet Personal Development Plans will be meaningless and the contribution they can make to improving the overall quality of work by enhancing staff satisfaction will not be realized unless significant resources are finally devoted to training and unless careers policy is finally based not on random criteria but on the content of the Plans and the potential of all members of staff.

A careers policy begins with recruitment. It involves honest assessment of jobs, assigning an appropriate rank to each function and developing individual capacities. That in turn means that clear rules must be established and honestly applied.

The tasks at hand are enormous, and staff representatives have agreed with representatives of the administration to tackle them in the course of this year.

Clear rules and compliance with them do not preclude all risk of individual or collective labour disputes. September 2000 saw the introduction of an entirely renovated system, established by agreement, for handling grievances. Although there have been some good results – I mean results deemed by both sides to be honest – because of the system’s complexity implementation has met with a number of difficulties, such as understanding the new procedures and the roles to be played by all involved.

In short, the arrangements need to be reviewed, but that was anticipated. The Staff Union and the administration have agreed to make this matter one of their priority concerns and are in the

process of seeking the best way to achieve tangible and lasting results as quickly yet as calmly as possible.

Mr. Chairperson, there is one area in which your Committee and the Governing Body can already help us to make significant progress. I refer to the reform of the ILO Administrative Tribunal, a process which, it should be recalled, has its origins in the very content of one of the first collective agreements concluded at the International Labour Office, which the Governing Body has already had occasion to examine.

Last year, I mean in 2002, the Joint Negotiating Committee reached an agreement on a number of improvements that might be envisaged for the functioning of the Tribunal. Having consulted both the Tribunal and the other organizations that recognize its jurisdiction – of which there are 40 – the Office has submitted to you a paper containing its proposals on the matter (GB.286/PFA/17/2). In short, it plans to carry out further consultations with a view to proposing amendments to the Conference at its session in June 2004.

The Staff Union is keen to see prompt implementation of the agreement concluded on this matter. There is one facet of the reform which we feel very strongly about: recognition of the Staff Union's right to bring action before the Tribunal in certain instances. I accordingly launch an urgent appeal to you today for this matter to be brought before the Conference at its next session and for a decision on your part to place it on the agenda for June 2003.

You will no doubt also wish to ask the administration to pursue its dialogue with the Staff Union with a view to identifying possible areas of agreement for improving the functioning of the ILO Administrative Tribunal.

We all know the mote and beam parable and are aware that the circumstances in which the United Nations Administrative Tribunal operates leave much to be desired. But we also believe that one must pay attention to one's own shortcomings. The worth of an institution is judged among other things on its ability to reform, and well beyond the circle of the United Nations a large sector of the international community will be looking at what happens – or does not happen – at the ILO.

Mr. Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Director-General, I could have taken up many other subjects with you, including the conditions in which the so-called "common" system operates, the progress we wish to see in the area of social protection, the qualities that staff sometimes have difficulty in perceiving in some managers, our attachment to tripartism, even our doubts about a certain logo that was submitted to you.

There is no lack of subjects for the chairperson of the committee of a staff union which is in full expansion and stronger for its involvement in day-to-day matters and its representation among the officers of all bodies of the Governing Body and the Organization. A choice had to be made as to the issues we wished to bring to your attention and for which we seek your support and intervention. I know that I can thank you in advance for the action you will be kind enough to take in response to my statement and in order, inter alia, to promote throughout this house a far-reaching policy of social dialogue.

In conclusion, since the Director-General is present I should like to reiterate what I said at the beginning of my statement, to thank you for what you have done for Abidjan and to welcome the fact that we engage in dialogue with you and with the Human Resources Development Department. There are problems and difficulties, and we are aware of them. We each have our work programme and the issues we raise enable us to engage in substantive discussion. I look to the future with confidence and have no reason to doubt that I have put that confidence in the right place. Thank you.