



FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Review of the Sectoral Activities Programme: Towards greater flexibility and impact in 2004-05**Introduction**

1. Since the Committee last met in November 2002, the ongoing review of the Sectoral Activities Programme has included consultations with the Global Union Federations (GUFs), the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and, after consultations with the Working Party on the Review of the Sectoral Activities Programme, the dispatch of a questionnaire in December 2002 to all member States and the secretariats of the Employers' and Workers' groups of the Governing Body.
2. The purpose of the questionnaire was to identify: a strategic approach to the implementation of sectoral activities in the ILO; labour and social issues in economic sectors; and the establishment of a consultation mechanism. A summary of the 28 responses received by 5 February 2003¹ can be found in paragraphs 6-15 below. Further information on replies received after this date will be provided during the sitting of the Committee.
3. The outcomes of the consultations and the views expressed in the responses to the questionnaire have, as far as possible, been taken into account in preparing this paper. The purpose of the paper is to propose a mix of firm and tentative proposals for the ILO's Sectoral Activities Programme in 2004-05 that would implement the findings of the review and bring it to a close. Decisions on these proposals are required at this sitting of the Committee, by the Officers in June and at the next two sittings of the Committee if a

¹ Replies were received from the Governments of Austria, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Nepal, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Portugal, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and the United States, and the secretariats of the Employers' and Workers' groups of the Governing Body. Copies of responses were also received from several national employers' and workers' organizations. A number of governments sought an extension of the deadline beyond that for the preparation of this document.

programme for 2004-05 is to be developed and implemented in a timely manner (see paragraphs 33-35).

4. The objective throughout the review has been to confirm the ILO's commitment to the Sectoral Activities Programme and realize its potential by developing, through increased consultation, a programme that, using existing resources, has greater impact for the sectoral constituents concerned and, more generally, for the ILO. To this end, the Office will commence work towards the development of a means to undertake sector-based assessments of priority labour and social issues so that the Committee will be better able to recommend the most appropriate programme of sectoral activities in future biennia.
5. The programme proposed for 2004-05 is also designed to be more flexible, better integrated with the broader work of the ILO and vice versa – at headquarters and, particularly, in the field – and have greater and lasting interaction with relevant international organizations. Moreover, it is expected that an innovative and successful Sectoral Activities Programme would attract additional resources.

Responses to the questionnaire

General

6. The responses to the questionnaire reiterated the widespread tripartite support for a Sectoral Activities Programme. The secretariat of the Workers' group emphasized that "sectoral work is fundamental to making the work of the ILO fully understood and accepted by workers, employers and government officials, and that this should be central to virtually every aspect of the mainstream activity of the ILO". In addition, the Workers' group would oppose any attempt to focus solely on research and sought greater links between SECTOR and ILO departments and other international agencies. The secretariat of the Employers' group reiterated its support for sectoral activities in general, and sectoral meetings in particular, possibly in a different form. Both emphasized that constituents' needs should be paramount when sectoral activities were planned and undertaken. They also underlined the importance of continuing to respect the autonomy of the groups.
7. Of the 26 governments that had responded by 5 February, most focused on the specific questions and did not make general comments. The Government of Egypt, however, recognized the value of a sectoral approach and said that the sectoral meetings were important international forums for dialogue and exchange of views on the terms, circumstances and employer/worker issues in particular industries. The contributions from the Governments of Finland and New Zealand emphasized their agreement to a strategic approach to integrating sectoral activities into the mainstream of ILO activities, thereby leading towards a more coordinated and productive organization of work. The Governments of Canada, Sweden and the United States welcomed greater emphasis on non-meeting activities. Moreover, the Government of the United States believed that the practice of automatic rotation in treating the 22 sectors should stop. The Government of Canada, pointing out the need for flexibility in identifying sectors of key importance in the context of current realities of declining or emerging sectors, proposed that the ILO field structure be contacted to assist in the identification of sectors in specific countries or regions.

Strategic approach and suggested action programmes

8. The governments' responses to the suggested action programmes were overwhelmingly positive. The three sectors selected (agriculture, education, and textiles, clothing and footwear) were endorsed by practically all governments that responded, although some had specific suggestions that as far as possible have been taken into account. These sectors were seen as a good starting point for a new approach. The action programmes were likely to contribute to poverty eradication, the promotion of decent work and improved employment. None of the respondents indicated that the selection of the three sectors was inappropriate. The Government of Portugal felt that the proposals could be more wide-ranging so as to cover areas of strategic interest to different countries. The Government of Sweden said that a timely action programme in agriculture could bolster the ratification of the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184). The tourism sector and the information and communication technologies (ICT) sector were cited by several governments as worthy of action programmes in the future. Many governments were willing to contribute human resources at the national level to assist in the development and implementation of action programmes in their countries.
9. The Workers' group's support for the principle of a strategic approach in the three sectors identified for action programmes was based on the clear understanding that it would not take resources from other sectors. They were concerned that identifying certain "strategic" sectors would marginalize those that were not considered strategic. There was therefore a need to develop a strategic approach to labour and social issues for each sector that led to a programme of ongoing work. Hence the need for 22 sector-specific tripartite working parties that would be funded by resources from the Sectoral Activities Programme. Like the Employers' group and several governments, they sought clarification on aspects of the three proposals for action programmes. The Workers' group reiterated their concern about the lack of follow-up to sectoral meetings and suggested that the action programme approach did not necessarily meet their expectations for more concrete follow-up action. Any regional or subregional activities should be coordinated and agreed at the global level in order to maintain efficiency and transparency. Sufficient resources should be ensured to enable a quick and efficient response to issues that arose on an emergency basis. There was considerable scope for flexibility as far as meetings were concerned.
10. The Employers' group had a number of questions on several aspects of each proposed action programme that it felt needed to be resolved before the programmes could be finalized. Resources for the Sectoral Activities Programme should be discussed with the group secretariats in the context of preparing the programme and budget.

Labour and social issues in economic sectors

11. Excluding the three sectors selected for action programmes, and the Maritime sector, to which the Office is already devoting considerable other resources, replies from governments emphasized the following five sectors (some of which are not included in the proposals below because of the principle of rotation; see paragraph 17), in order of importance: construction; utilities; hotels, catering and tourism; health services; and the commerce sector. But most of the 22 sectors were highlighted by one or more governments. One government recommended that the Office prepare short, standard papers that would outline current activities and issues and suggest options for future activities. While the key social and labour issues in the sectors considered most important varied, the five areas most frequently mentioned for improvement were: working conditions; occupational safety and health; social security systems; education and training; and labour

relations. Governments were generally in favour of an approach that included: regional meetings; programmes of research by the Office and the dissemination of the results; and the development of sector-specific guidelines or codes of practice on a particular topic. Since different sectors needed different types of follow-up action, a combination of the abovementioned tools was considered to provide the most flexibility. One response suggested that a tripartite advisory council be set up to assist in developing a research agenda for specific sectors and review the results with a view to identifying future action.

12. The Employers' group identified the hotels, catering and tourism and the transport sectors as two of the 22 existing sectors that were particularly important, as was the additional ICT "sector" in view of its growing relevance in the modern economy. Key issues in these sectors included economic rationalization, environment, education and training, and the need to develop new forms of work. This group stressed that issues should be developed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the group secretariats and repeated their opposition to the adoption of new sector-specific instruments.
13. The Workers' group was not prepared to rank sectors in the light of the concerns of each GUF for its constituents. There was, however, scope for reviewing the rotation of meetings in order to avoid having all meetings for similar sectors in the same biennium. But any discussion on reordering or reducing meetings had to be based on clear criteria. Key sectoral issues for consideration included union rights, collective bargaining, social dialogue, global framework agreements, concentration of business power, employment development, equality, health and safety, intellectual property rights, privatization and structural adjustment, export processing zones, violence, stress and mobbing, and migrant workers. These issues should be addressed through the means best suited to the sector concerned. These means include regional and international meetings and meetings of experts, research, the development of sector-specific guidelines and the promotion of existing ones.

Consultation mechanism

14. Most governments indicated that sector-related focal points could be identified.
15. The secretariats of the Employers' and Workers' groups would be the focus for consultations with, in the case of the latter, the general secretary of the relevant GUF.

Setting the boundaries

16. The following criteria, that were identified during the review process, have been taken into account when developing the proposals for 2004-05:
 - (a) availability of resources to the Sectoral Activities Department (cash and work months) at 95 per cent of the 2002-03 level in accordance with Office-wide budgeting;
 - (b) maintaining for now the existing 22 sectors and the process of rotation, with appropriate flexibility;
 - (c) keeping open the possibility of multi-sectoral activities and/or ad hoc activities for subsectors or new sectors as needs develop;

- (d) developing programmes and activities with a view to attracting additional resources, from within ILO or elsewhere, as well as better integrating sectoral work within the ILO;
- (e) choosing an action programme would not preclude returning to an international sectoral meeting in the next cycle, and vice versa;
- (f) having a mix of two-year action programmes in 2004-05, small consultative meetings in 2004 that led to one-year action programmes in 2005, and sectoral meetings held in late 2004 and throughout 2005;
- (g) maximizing consultation, particularly with governments, in developing the one-year action programmes and finalizing the two-year action programmes;
- (h) selecting the topic, size, type and purpose of each sectoral meeting as close to the meeting as practicable and having a flexible approach to each criterion;
- (i) continuing to give attention to the sectors for which meetings were held in 2002-03;
- (j) limiting the number of action programmes, large and small, to three of each in accordance with the Office's capacity at this first stage of a more flexible sectoral activities programme;
- (k) continuing to invite all governments of all member States to sectoral meetings for which the Standing Orders apply.

The sectors

17. The ten sectors that, on the basis of rotation, would normally be and are proposed to be the focus of action in 2004-05 are:

- Agriculture;
- Basic metals;
- Construction;
- Education;
- Financial and professional services;
- Forestry and wood;
- Hotels, catering and tourism ;
- Media, cultural, graphical;
- Textiles, clothing, footwear; and
- Transport equipment manufacture.

18. This list of sectors is based on the existing list of 22 sectors and the agreed process of rotation. There is therefore some built-in flexibility because there are fewer sectors (22) than resources traditionally allocated for meetings or other activities (24) in a biennium. To meet calls for greater flexibility while not impinging on the relevant sector's "turn" for a

meeting or other activity, other sectors or subsectors that are covered by the GUFs responsible for the sectors in paragraph 17 could be substituted for the one listed, provided agreement was reached with the Government and Employers' groups well in advance of the planned activity. Moreover, up to two additional activities involving one or more sectors could be added to arrive at 12 for the biennium. Thus, new sectors, subsectors or combinations of sectors could be considered on their merits. The Committee might prefer this approach for the time being rather than reopening the debate on the number of sectors to be considered on a regular basis.

19. In the light of the continuing special series of meetings for the Maritime sector, which are fully occupying the ILO officials responsible for maritime activity, the sector has not been included in the list for 2004-05.

A range of sectoral activities: From action programmes to meetings

20. This section of the paper makes proposals for three different types of sectoral activity in 2004-05, ranging from action programmes in three sectors, the details of which would be finalized in 2003 and which would take place throughout the biennium, to three combined meeting-shorter action programmes that would be developed in 2004 and take place in 2005, and six international tripartite sectoral meetings, one of which would be held in the last quarter of 2004 and the rest in 2005. In principle, unless they were part of a multi-sectoral activity, activities for each sector would either comprise an action programme, a combined meeting-action programme, or an international tripartite sectoral meeting.

Major action programmes

21. Three draft proposals for action programmes – for the Agriculture, Education and Footwear, Textile and Clothing sectors – were developed for the November 2002 sitting of the Committee.² These proposals (Appendix I) have been refined in the light of the discussions at that time,³ subsequent consultations with constituents, and the responses to the questionnaire.
22. The activities that comprise these three programmes would be finalized through consultations – with constituents and within the Office – in 2003, start in 2004 and last until the end of the biennium in 2005. Each programme would be guided throughout by a small tripartite steering group and would initially be funded at the same level as sectors included in the meetings programme for 2004-05. If, however, they were supported by extra-budgetary resources, the action programmes could be expanded and/or extended.

Small planning meetings leading to short action programmes

23. From the remaining seven sectors, and from any new ones that might be considered, a year-long action programme in three sectors or groups of sectors that would be developed and finalized in small tripartite planning meetings is proposed. The consultative role of

² GB.285/STM/1, Appendix I.

³ GB.285/14.

such planning meetings would in large measure meet requests for small global pilot or guidance teams in that they would be closely involved in the development and undertaking of the short action programmes. Small tripartite groups would be reconstituted in accordance with sectors and their issues as the cycle of activities continued.

24. Multi-sectoral activities and/or activities for sectors not normally covered could also be considered for combined meetings-action programmes, such as: HIV/AIDS in key sectors; promoting gender equality in several sectors; export processing zones (see paragraph 27).
25. In order to stimulate broad consideration of the relevant issues that would be the basis for combined meetings-action programmes, the Office would, in consultation with relevant GUFs, employers' organizations and governments, prepare a brief issues paper for each programme on a topic agreed by the Committee. This paper would be circulated widely for comment. Following any revision to take comments into account, a small, short tripartite planning meeting in 2004 (say four or five participants from each of the three groups for two days) would be convened to draw up a year-long action programme for 2005 using the remaining resources earmarked for the sector concerned. Such action could include: one or more regional activities, such as training; implementation of existing sectoral guidelines; the development of new guidelines. Wherever possible, additional resources would be sought to augment SECTOR's input. Members of the planning meeting would be kept informed and consulted throughout the life of the action programme.
26. Ensuring increased consultation with relevant bodies throughout the cycle of sectoral activities for each sector in this way would be cost-effective and more flexible than setting up a formal system of permanent tripartite working parties, at least in the first biennium of new types of activity.
27. The following proposals for combined meetings-action programmes have been made either in consultation with the social partners, on the basis of recent meetings, taking into account responses from the questionnaire, or to meet perceived needs:
 - *Basic metals.* Promotion of the implementation of the code of practice on safety and health in the non-ferrous metals industries, in small-scale foundries and recycling operations, and its implementation into regulations and collective agreements in several developing and transition countries.
 - *Financial and professional services.* The effect of sectoral restructuring on employment and working conditions in financial services.
 - *Forestry.* Decent work and socially sustainable small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the forestry industries. Building on the work of SECTOR and IFP/SEED, develop a knowledge base, promote good practices, provide advisory services, and develop a source book, a directory of experts and policy guidelines for the sector, including bringing informal activity into SME activity.
 - *Hotel, tourism and catering.* Develop, through consultations and expert meetings, a manual on good policies and practices for increasing employment in the sector at the enterprise, community and national levels. Build on the improved concepts currently being developed to measure employment in order to provide advisory services on increasing the attractiveness of work in the sector while developing modalities for flexibility.
 - *Transport equipment manufacture.* Develop, set up and manage a database of social and economic statistics on the transport equipment manufacturing industry (and the mechanical and electrical engineering and basic metals industries).

- *HIV/AIDS in the agriculture, education, health, hotel and tourism, mining and transport sectors.* The development of sector-specific programmes to promote and implement the code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work (in conjunction with ILO-AIDS).
- *Promoting gender equality.* Following the collection and analysis of sector-specific data in two or three sectors (e.g. forestry and wood industries, hotels, catering and tourism) on issues such as the role and situation of women as wage employees and corporate initiatives on gender equality, strategies to promote gender equality would be developed for each sector and implemented in a number of target countries.
- *Export processing zones.* In the light of the outcome of the discussions in the Committee on Employment and Social Policy, the Office (SECTOR in conjunction with other departments) would collect and analyse, on a sectoral basis, information on developments in export processing zones (EPZs) and convene a small tripartite meeting in 2005 to discuss the results with a view to establishing a programme of action in 2006-07 on maximizing the economic benefits of EPZs while ensuring that all aspects of decent work are recognized and practiced.

28. From the perspective of the Sectoral Activities Department, for staffing and scheduling purposes, it would be preferable to have one of the above activities from each of the “industry” and “service” sectors and one multi-sectoral activity.

Sectoral meetings

29. In order to maintain continuity in addressing issues in various sectors, in the light of the outcome of previous sectoral meetings, and in view of the current and likely issues affecting them, it is proposed that six international sectoral meetings be held for the sectors in paragraph 17 that have not been selected for an action programme. Further consideration through tripartite consultation would be given to the topics suggested below on a preliminary basis as examples for each sector and to any other relevant topics before proposing one, and to the inputs and outcomes desired for each meeting to continue to improve their effectiveness, with a view to taking a decision at subsequent sessions of the Committee (see below). If five sectors were selected, however, one meeting slot could be left vacant until March 2004 pending the development of a multi-sectoral proposal or to take account of unforeseen developments.

- *Basic metals.* (a) Meeting of experts to revise the 1981 code of practice on safety and health in the iron and steel industry; (b) tripartite meeting on maximizing the contribution of the steel industry in sustainable development: The roles of the social partners.
- *Construction.* (a) Tripartite meeting to discuss and agree approaches to optimizing employment and improving the implementation of key labour standards in construction projects, with a view to building on current ILO work directed towards policies to maximize productive employment and decent work in construction, thereby contributing to poverty alleviation in many countries; (b) tripartite meeting on the achievement of sustainable economic and social development in the construction industry through social dialogue.
- *Financial and professional services.* Tripartite meeting on working and employment conditions in new channels of banking: The role of social dialogue.
- *Forestry.* (a) Meeting of experts to develop a guide to best practices in the use of contractors in the forestry industry, to ensure the link between decent work and

sustainable development; (b) tripartite meeting on sustainable development and social dialogue as a means to promote the application of the principles and rights enshrined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

- *Hotels, catering and tourism.* Tripartite meeting on how to improve the employability and working conditions of migrant workers in the hotel, tourism and catering sector, and develop recommendations for policies and practices.
- *Media, cultural, graphical.* (a) Tripartite meeting on the evolution of the information and communication industries and its impact; (b) tripartite meeting on the challenges of the new economy for the graphical industry.
- *Transport equipment manufacture.* (a) Tripartite meeting on the evolution of employment and working conditions in the manufacture of automotive components; (b) tripartite meeting on the evolving composition of the workforce, changing employment relations and skill requirements in the transport equipment manufacturing industries.

Participation in sectoral meetings

30. In the light of the significant and continuing increase in the participation by representatives of governments of member States in the five meetings to which the governments of all member States were invited in 2002-03 (an average of 30 compared with 15 for seven similar sectoral meetings), the Office proposes to maintain the practice of inviting governments of all member States to participate in sectoral meetings in 2004-05 that are covered by the Standing Orders. Further information on government participation in sectoral meetings in 2001-03 is in Appendix II. In most cases the additional participants are from capitals rather than the missions in Geneva.
31. The additional cost of ensuring interpretation in all seven ILO languages for each of these meetings would be offset by the fact that, if the proposals in this paper were adopted, there would be only six meetings during the biennium, plus a number of small, short meetings, rather than 12 sectoral meetings as in the past.

Ongoing follow-up activities

32. Activity in the sectors for meetings in 2002-03 will continue to focus on the proposals for follow-up contained in the conclusions and resolutions that were adopted, and take account of specific areas, such as improving the implementation and application of sectoral Conventions, Recommendations and codes of practice. Every effort will be made to supplement SECTOR's resources for follow-up with contributions from other ILO units, notably in the field. The Office will consult with and inform constituents when follow-up activities are being developed or undertaken.

The road to decisions

33. Agreement in principle on the three two-year action programmes is necessary at this sitting of the Committee if final consultations are to be held, the programmes finalized and activity commenced in 2004.
34. All sectors for which a year-long action programme would be developed should be agreed at this sitting. Because the identification of each topic, the preparation of an issues paper

and its circulation for comment would have to take place well before each meeting, at least one topic for an issues paper should also be decided at this sitting. The remaining two topics should be agreed within three months. To meet this deadline, they could be finalized by the Officers on the advice of the Working Party following sector-wide consultations and submitted to the Governing Body at its sitting in June 2003.

35. As the first of the international sectoral meetings would take place towards the end of 2004 and the rest in 2005, it is not essential to finalize the topics for discussion now. But the sectors for which international tripartite sectoral meetings would be held would need to be identified at this sitting so that consultations on topics and consideration of the meeting schedule could take place. The sectors, topics and type of meeting for the first three meetings would have to be agreed at the November 2003 sitting of the Committee at the latest, and the remaining three at the March 2004 sitting. The fact that some ILO specialists deal with more than one sector would have to be taken into account when the schedule of the meetings is decided. Depending on the topic and outcome sought, each meeting would be a version of the tripartite sectoral meetings that are currently held – there being no traditional “public” sector with a joint meeting in the rotation, except Education which is proposed for an action programme – with an average of 19 Employer and 19 Worker participants and take place, in principle, in Geneva.

36. *The Committee may wish to recommend to the Governing Body:*

- (a) three action programmes that will take place over a two-year period in 2004-05;*
- (b) three sectors for which small tripartite planning meetings will be held in 2004 to develop year-long action programmes to be undertaken in 2005, and at least one topic for consideration;*
- (c) five or six sectors for which international tripartite meetings will be held in 2004-05;*
- (d) that the 22 sectors and the principle of rotation remain for 2004-05, but that greater flexibility is exercised in selecting sectors, subsectors or multiple sectors for one form of sectoral activity or another, depending on need;*
- (e) that governments of all member States continue to be invited to participate in sectoral meetings for which the Standing Orders apply that are held in 2004-05.*

Geneva, 21 February 2003.

Point for decision: Paragraph 36.

Appendix I

Three proposed action programmes

1. *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 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 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-sized enterprises particularly in rural areas, and orient investment toward 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. 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 mean 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, 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 UN 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, 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. 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 would assist ILO member States in their efforts to reduce rural poverty and to achieve more socially sustainable agriculture by focusing attention on the specific concerns of waged agricultural and rural workers in terms of fundamental principles and rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue. It would comprise a programme of research, policy guidance, social dialogue activities and technical assistance.

While based in the Sectoral Activities Department, the action programme would be integrative in nature, serving to galvanize efforts in the four strategic areas. This would be achieved by: (a) ensuring that the specific concerns of waged agricultural and rural workers are highlighted in the work of the Office currently being programmed in the four sectors; (b) encouraging additional cross-sectoral activities through cost-sharing; and (c) developing national and subregional social dialogue activities in substantive areas, such as occupational safety and health in agriculture, or strategies to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS among rural workers.

The global research component would focus on two main topics: freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. Lack of freedom of association has been identified as a key obstacle to improving the livelihoods of agricultural and rural workers, but the specific characteristics of national labour law which prevent full enjoyment of this right have not always been fully elucidated. It is therefore proposed that a comprehensive survey of the law and practice among ILO member States with regard to freedom of association for agricultural and rural workers be undertaken. Complementary to this and also in the field of fundamental rights at work, a comparative study should be carried out of collective bargaining in agriculture with attention to opportunities for improved outcomes for employers and workers.

With regard to employment, at the request of member States, the Office would assist in the development of country-specific rural employment strategies to spur off-farm employment opportunities and to address seasonal fluctuations in employment. These might include, for example, exploring linkages to other forms of land use, such as forestry or small-scale mining, or other activities such as agro-processing or local infrastructure development. 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, community-based irrigation projects, sanitation and rural energy provision, which lay the foundation for economic growth and social well-being. 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.

To improve working conditions in agriculture, ILO would offer technical assistance in the development of a national policy on safety and health in agriculture and capacity-building for 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. Also in the area of social protection, the ILO could facilitate joint efforts by governments and the social partners to extend health care and improve health outcomes for plantation workers and their families, notably in terms of sanitation and hygiene, maternal and child health, and HIV/AIDS.

Social dialogue activities could be envisaged in three main areas: (a) national or subregional meetings on safety and health in agriculture during which participants could discuss specific challenges facing the agriculture sector, review the roles of the social partners in implementing improvements in safety and health since the adoption of Convention No. 184, and identify opportunities for further action at national level; (b) tripartite national meetings during which participants could consider appropriate strategies for implementing improvements at national and enterprise levels with regard to fundamental principles and rights at work for agricultural workers; and (c) capacity building for the social partners to strengthen their participation in the development and implementation of national poverty reduction strategies to ensure that national agricultural policies and rural development objectives meet the needs of agricultural employers and workers. Further consultations with governments and the social partners as well as the outcomes of the Symposium on Decent Work in Agriculture (September 2003) will offer additional guidance on areas of potential tripartite interest.

Clearly, the needs and opportunities outlined above far outstrip the resources available to any single economic sector within the Sectoral Activities Programme. Extra-budgetary resources would need to be sought in order to carry out specific technical cooperation projects. However, an action programme on decent work in agriculture could and should serve as a catalyst for activities in each of the four strategic areas: rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue. In order to achieve this, the programme must be endowed with sufficient resources to attract partnerships within the Organization and support from without. Indeed, strong collaboration with other UN agencies, in particular the FAO as well as the World Bank, is needed to ensure that the social and labour issues inherent in rural poverty remain high on the international poverty reduction agenda. The ultimate aim of the action programme should be to assist ILO member States to achieve socially sustainable agriculture – agriculture that is economically viable, ecologically sound and socially just – that is, decent work in agriculture.

2. *Teachers for the future: Meeting teacher shortages to achieve education for all*

Introduction

At the same time that education's importance for knowledge and information societies is becoming paramount, 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 which 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 that 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 dropout 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 which 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 (CEART), as well as national analysis and good 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 the 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 regional studies in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific and Eastern Europe/Central Asia 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 respectively responsible for policy integration and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) (i.e. INTEGRATION), education and training issues (IFP/SKILLS, IPEC, TURIN) 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 the abovementioned regions – Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, 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. The meetings would be joint 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 in which 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 involving governments and the social partners 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. It is expected that the research and policy dialogue forums would be carried out in all four major regions, it being understood that implementation of such a broad range of activities would require additional budgetary support from regional ILO resources and other partners.

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. The Office would then consult with the OECD secretariat and member States on ways to carry on from 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 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.

3. *Improving competitiveness in the textiles, clothing and footwear (TCF) sectors by promoting decent work*

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

Owing to their global nature, the TCF industries are highly susceptible to the pressures of international competition. Those pressures have increased over recent years, with the gradual dismantling of the Multifibre Arrangement and the total abolition of the associated quota systems by 2004. This general opening up of the TCF markets will particularly affect the most vulnerable developing countries which no longer have quotas and must therefore boost their TCF production, with a greater emphasis on quality and competitiveness. These changes will impact on the long-term viability of enterprises, alter parameters of competitiveness and influence developments in employment and labour practices. In this context, it is important that efforts to improve competitiveness be set within an appropriate framework that takes into account not only economic factors but also the social factors that increasingly determine the competitive position of enterprises at the international level.

An analysis of the changes in the parameters defining competitiveness in the TCF industries makes it clear that the social parameters occupy an increasingly important place. The domestic competitiveness of enterprises is much influenced by the existence of a favourable social climate which itself rests on good labour practices and the existence of constructive social dialogue between the social partners. Where the social climate deteriorates, enterprises lose their ability to satisfy new market requirements (“just in time” and “demand-responsive” production) and workers lose motivation to improve their skills and maintain the necessary levels of quality. This leads to a loss of competitiveness which, in a highly competitive market, can lead to plant closures and job losses.

The external competitiveness of enterprises is also affected by their image in terms of their observance of fundamental labour standards. The world market for TCF products is influenced by the attitudes of consumers, who are increasingly concerned by the conditions in which their clothes or shoes are produced. This explains the proliferation of codes of conduct and other private voluntary initiatives which, in the case of the TCF sectors, refer mainly to observance of the ILO’s core standards.

When international contracting enterprises, whether TCF companies in the industrialized countries or major distribution chains, resort to international subcontracting, respect for the fundamental labour standards and for the national laws of the countries in which they operate is increasingly written into the terms and conditions of the contracts. This practice, which is becoming generalized, influences the strategic decisions of global buyers and consequently the competitive position of enterprises according to their ability to respect national legislation and fundamental labour standards.

Given the growing importance of these social factors in competitiveness in the TCF sectors and the convergence of those factors with the ILO’s strategic objectives, it is proposed that an

overall strategy be developed and tested with our sectoral constituents to improve competitiveness in the TCF sectors by promoting decent work. Once this has been developed the strategy will be tested within the framework of an integrated action programme, comprising a limited number of pilot programmes established in the countries involved, which will be selected in advance by our sectoral constituents after expressing an interest in participating in the exercise.

An initial pilot programme to raise competitiveness in the textiles and clothing sector by promoting decent work was launched recently in Morocco. This pilot programme is part of the Agreement on the programme of cooperation for 2002-05 concluded during the International Labour Conference between the Kingdom of Morocco and the International Labour Office.

For the 2004-05 biennium, the Office proposes to extend this experiment to other countries in order to apply the experience acquired in Morocco.

The first stage of the programme will involve enlisting the support of our constituents to identify the countries that wish to participate in this effort to extend the experiment and have TCF industries at a stage of development requiring qualitative updating in which the social parameters that determine competitiveness play an important role.

The approach that will then be developed in each of the selected countries will emphasize the social factors that are crucial to competitiveness in their interdependence with the economic aspects of development.

The overall objective will be, in each country and in the light of its particular conditions, to develop a strategic approach for bringing TCF enterprises up to date, an approach that will be coordinated in its economic and social dimensions with a view to promoting decent work in these industries.

The immediate goals will be:

- (1) to summarize and evaluate current knowledge on the TCF sectors, identifying the key aspects of competitiveness including social factors;
- (2) to define and implement integrated policies and programmes aimed at boosting competitiveness by promoting decent work;
- (3) to develop capacities for consultation and dialogue with the social partners in the sector with a view to formulating and implementing an overall strategy for economic and social development in the TCF sectors.

The product developed in each country will comprise a coordinated and integrated approach to improving productivity and competitiveness by promoting decent work.

The main activities will be:

- (1) an economic and social "survey" of the TCF industries to identify the key economic and social determinants in competitiveness. This survey would be carried out by national consultants with the technical support of the Office;
- (2) establishing in each country a tripartite steering committee to monitor the project. It will propose the main thrusts of the programme, validate the research phase ("survey") and, with the Office's help, draw up terms of reference for a draft action programme;
- (3) the action programme drawn up by the steering committee with the help of the Office will be discussed for approval at a national tripartite seminar on improving competitiveness in the TCF industries by promoting decent work;
- (4) the final text of the action programme will comprise two main elements, namely:
 - programmes and policies for implementation at national level;
 - action to define the areas in which the sectoral constituents might wish to obtain specific help from the Office.

The steering committee will be responsible for following up and implementing programmes and policies. It will also provide an interface with the support activities and programmes requested from the Office.

It is envisaged that the ILO will also coordinate the work of the steering committees and provide secretariat services.

In each country, the practical arrangements for implementation will be comparable.

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

The programme will be coordinated by the Sectoral Activities Department in close collaboration with the field offices and multidisciplinary teams concerned.

There will also be close collaboration with the Policy Integration Department and with ACTRAV, ACT/EMP, IFP/DIALOGUE and DECLARATION. A small coordination unit can be set up if necessary.

An expanded technical committee will be set up in the Office to ensure appropriate follow-up to requests from each country. The composition of each technical committee will vary in response to the nature of those requests.

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At the end of this series of pilot exercises, there will be an evaluation exercise on the national programmes established. A report summarizing this evaluation exercise will be produced and submitted to all the sectoral constituents.

Appendix II

Government participation in sectoral meetings 2001-03

Meeting	Invited	Present	Regional breakdown				Missions ¹
			Africa	Americas	Asia/Pacific	Europe	
Banking and financial services	20	16	2	4	4	6	5
Hotel, catering and tourism	25	22	4	5	4	9	5
Non-ferrous metals ²	8	8	1	2	2	3	–
Forestry	20	13	1	2	4	6	2
Municipal services	18	11	4	1	2	4	2
Construction	23	12	3	2	3	4	1
Maritime labour standards ³	12/22 ⁴	12/18 ⁴	7	5	4	14	–
Oil and gas	18	12	2	3	4	3	2
Postal and telecommunications	22	10	2	1	4	3	2
Civil aviation	All (20) ⁵	50 (11/20) ⁶	10	9	15	16	16
Mechanical and electrical engineering	All (20) ⁵	20 (8/20) ⁶	7	–	7	6	2
Mining	All (18) ⁵	26 (13/18) ⁶	7	5	6	8	5
Health services	All (18) ⁵	29 (6/18) ⁶	9	8	4	8	5
Public emergency services	All	28	5	5	9	9	12
Tobacco	All	21/2 ⁴	4	6	6	7	11/2 ⁴

¹ Representation solely from Geneva mission (included in regional breakdown). ² Meeting of Experts. ³ High-Level Working Group. ⁴ Participants/Observers. ⁵ Number originally proposed to be invited. ⁶ Number from original list participating.