Tenth item on the agenda

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF WORKING CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENT

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INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF WORKING CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The conditions under which men and women perform their daily work lie at the heart of the ILO's mandate. The Constitution of the ILO proclaims in its Preamble: "And whereas conditions of labour exist involving such injustice, hardship and privation to large numbers of people ... an improvement of those conditions is urgently required".

2. In spite of the progress made over more than 50 years, to which the ILO has greatly contributed through all its activities, the conditions of work of a very large number of workers are appalling or pose new problems as a result of technical progress whose solution requires action on many fronts.

3. This was re-emphasised by the resolution on the working environment adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 59th Session (1974), which asserts that "the improvement of the working environment should be considered a global problem" and requested the preparation, as a matter of urgency, of a "coherent and integrated programme of ILO action designed to contribute effectively to the improvement of the working environment under all its aspects".

4. Pursuant to this resolution, the Director-General submitted to the Conference at its 60th Session (1975) a report on working conditions and environment entitled "Making Work More Human". The discussion on the Director-General's Report was particularly extensive. It demonstrated widespread support for strengthened ILO action across a broad spectrum of working conditions and environment issues.

5. After this debate the Conference unanimously adopted a resolution concerning future action of the International Labour Organisation in the field of working conditions and environment, which "solemnly reaffirms that the improvement of working conditions and environment and the well-being of workers remains the first and permanent mission of the ILO". This resolution invites member States -

(1) to promote the objectives of an improvement of working conditions and environment with all aspects of their economic, educational and social policy;

(2) to set periodically for themselves a number of definite objectives designed to reduce certain industrial accidents and occupational diseases or the most unpleasant and tedious of jobs; and

1 The text of the resolution is reproduced as Appendix I.
(3) to normalise the application of scientific research so that it is carried out for man, and not against him and against his environment.

6. The resolution further endorses the proposal of the Director-General to launch an international programme for the improvement of working conditions and environment designed to promote or support activities of member States in this field.

II. CONSULTATIONS ON THE PREPARATION OF THE PROGRAMME

7. As requested in the resolution (paragraph 4(1)), and in accordance with a decision taken by the Governing Body at its 198th Session (November 1975), extensive consultations have been undertaken concerning the preparation of this programme.

8. First, in December 1975 the Director-General transmitted the resolution to governments of member States and, through them, to national organisations of employers and workers. After calling the attention of governments to paragraph 2 of the resolution, the Director-General in his letter asked them to inform him of their objectives in this field and of the principal measures by which they intended to implement their policies. It also requested advice concerning the best measures through which the ILO could aid them in implementing their policies in this field. The letter addressed to developing countries called attention to the setting up in 1976 of an inter-regional multi-disciplinary team of specialists in working conditions and the working environment and asked governments whether they wished to receive a pilot mission of this team.

9. A parallel letter was sent in January 1976 to international organisations of employers and workers and to the various intergovernmental organisations concerned.

10. On 7 May 1976, 53 replies had been received from the following governments: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, France, German Democratic Republic, Federal Republic of Germany, Ghana, Greece, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Malawi, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Senegal, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Yemen.


12. All the replies received, many accompanied by extensive documentation, are being closely examined by the Office. They contain valuable information, notably on trends in national programmes and policies. The suggestions for the orientation of ILO activities contained in these replies have been taken into consideration in formulating the proposed programme.

13. These official consultations were supplemented by a series of informal meetings of consultants in Geneva (December 1975 and March 1976), Bangkok (February 1976), Yaoundé (February 1976), Lima (April 1976) and Moscow (April 1976), at which information on national problems and programmes and advice on ILO action were obtained. Some 60 specialists were consulted from government, employer, worker and academic circles in 41 countries of the various regions. These informal world-wide

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1 On the same date, the resolution had been communicated through these governments to 85 national organisations of employers and 110 national organisations of workers.
consultations aroused keen interest and so have already served to draw attention to the Conference resolution.

14. Finally, officials of the Working Conditions and Environment Department and an outside consultant consulted government authorities and employers and workers during missions to various countries (Afghanistan, Bolivia, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Philippines, Tunisia, Turkey, United States).

15. In the light of these consultations and the discussion on the Director-General's Report to the 1975 Session of the Conference, four general considerations emerge - apart from the special problems mentioned below relating to the technical content of the proposed programme - concerning the nature of the problem of working conditions and environment throughout the world.

A. Wider awareness of the problem of working conditions and environment

16. Solid support was given to the fundamental thesis of the Director-General's Report: to neglect the problem of working conditions and environment "is likely, far sooner than we realise, to lead to disruption and disorder in social systems on a scale quite out of proportion with the economic cost of any lucid measures to improve conditions of work taken at an earlier stage".2

17. The fact that three times in recent years, in 1972, 1974 and 1975, the Conference adopted a resolution on the problem of work and its environment had already marked international awareness of the seriousness of this problem.

18. The multiplication in recent years of national and regional programmes and meetings for the study of working conditions, the working environment or the quality of working life, as well as the substantial reforms carried out by many industrially developed States in their relevant institutions and administrative structures, attests to such awareness. In some of these countries the problem of working conditions and environment has even become a political and economic issue. Some have recently passed important laws on conditions of work and occupational safety and health, both to combat traditional diseases and hazards and to define the new worker protection standards required by modern technology.

19. In developing countries, a growing number consider that the setting up of an adequate safety and health infrastructure "must accompany and not follow the industrialisation process".3 In addition to occupational safety and health measures, a national policy for the improvement of working conditions appears more and more as a necessary integral part of any well-designed development policy. "Turning a blind eye to poor conditions of work merely because the country is in an economic strait-jacket is to condone conditions of semi-slavery."4

20. The international organisations of employers and workers are also unanimous in stressing the need to pay greater heed to working conditions and environment.

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1 See Part III C.


B. This problem is posed, however, in conditions which differ profoundly among countries according to their level of development and especially according to their situation with respect to employment.

21. In developing countries it is commonly emphasised that improvements in working conditions and environment must not be accomplished at the cost of efforts to create employment. "The masses of the developing countries need work; they have no time to be choosy about the content of the work", said the Union Minister of Labour of India at the International Labour Conference. But at the same time the need to improve basic working conditions is absolutely vital in the developing countries, even if the policies adopted do not emphasise certain problems which are usually restricted to advanced countries. As the President of the Conference said: "Precisely because mass unemployment tends to leave the employer all-powerful and the worker defenceless, there must be stronger safeguards against the exploitation of labour." Other delegates from developing countries showed a willingness to draw lessons from the experience of advanced countries and avoid their errors.

22. In advanced countries the relation between policy for improving working conditions and environment and employment policy is posed in different terms since "it is now being realised that an organic link exists between the volume and quality of employment". It is often said, for example, that not only the reduction of hours of work but also the improvement of other working conditions can help to re-absorb unemployment, either because available jobs do not match the qualifications of job-seekers (especially the young) or because older workers can no longer hold down certain jobs.

23. The Report of the Director-General to the Tripartite World Conference on Employment, Income Distribution and Social Progress and the International Division of Labour underlines that improving the quality of employment or conditions of work is an important aspect of a basic needs strategy.

C. The approach to the problem of working conditions and environment is also very different depending on whether the industrial and services sector or the rural sector is concerned.

24. The problems of working conditions and environment have clearly acquired a new dimension in the industrial and services sectors.

25. It is no longer just a matter of ensuring worker protection by regulating general conditions of work (for example, hours of work, minimum age, paid leave); it is the organisation of work that is now in question and has sometimes been the cause of sharp social conflicts.

26. In addition, the traditionally separate domains of occupational safety and health and conditions of work are tending to join closely within the framework of larger concepts, such as the protection of workers, the working environment or the quality of working life. The adaptation of installations and work processes to the physical and mental aptitudes of the worker through the application of ergonomic principles concerns both the health and safety of the worker and his conditions of work. Similarly, mental stress due to the pace and monotony of work is a health problem concerning which the prevention or cure lies frequently in measures relating to conditions of work and the organisation of work.

2 Ibid., p. 58.
27. Finally, the improvement of the quality of working life is related to two larger problems: that of industrial democracy, which tends to give workers greater influence over decisions affecting their working life, and that of the quality of life in general, which has become a fundamental demand of the present generation.

28. In the rural sector the problems of working conditions and environment are posed in completely different terms. The degree of awareness and of organisation of rural workers, still quite insufficient, does not permit them to express their aspirations collectively. The necessity for action does not come from any fragmentation of tasks or lack of autonomy in work due to the introduction of advanced technology. A rural craftsman or small farmer often has more autonomy in his work than the unskilled worker in a large modern factory. It comes instead from the fact that in the rural sector the major part of the world's working population lives in wretched conditions owing to the insufficient income gained from productive activities and to the frequently heavy nature of working conditions - inseparable from general living conditions in view of the fusion of the working and living environments in this sector - and to the lack of social services. It comes as well from the emergence of new risks due to mechanisation, electrification and the use of chemicals.

29. Although knowledge of the problems and trends concerning rural working conditions as such is much less developed than in other sectors, and though these problems are but an aspect of a global situation in which the questions of growth of income and creation of employment play the predominant roles, action is imperative, particularly with respect to occupational safety and health, the improvement of the most primitive implements of production in order to render agricultural work less burdensome and more efficient and the conditions of life of the workers (especially a better habitat, better equipment, better health and better nourishment).

D. An essential condition of improving working conditions and environment is the solidity of mechanisms assuring the free exercise of the right to organise and the participation of employers and workers as well as the reinforcement of labour administration, especially labour inspection.

30. Any policy of improving working conditions and environment must therefore rest on a solid industrial relations system and aim at promoting full participation in its implementation by the persons and groups concerned. It rests as well on a public and private institutional framework qualified to assure the development, implementation, supervision and evaluation of the over-all labour policy. Although the content of the international programme described below is limited to working conditions and environment, it is essential to emphasise in the first place that the measures to be undertaken in this field cannot be fully successful unless these basic conditions are met.

III. THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME (PIACT)

31. In paragraphs 3 and 4 of the resolution adopted in 1975 the Conference indicated certain factors to be taken into consideration in the preparation of the international programme, which was requested "as soon as resources permit".

32. The proposals which follow have been prepared with due regard to these general factors, as well as the examination of the ILO Medium-Term Plan by the Governing Body at its 199th Session (February-March 1976) and the suggestions contained in the replies of governments and international organisations or obtained during informal consultations.

1 The acronym PIACT comes from the French initials of the programme.

2 GB.199/PPA/8/1 and GB.199/9/32.
33. In view of the very short period between the receipt of government replies and the preparation of this paper, it has not been possible to evaluate the cost of these proposals. The purpose of this paper is merely to show the guiding principles of the programme requested by the Conference. It is, however, necessary to stress that, as indicated in the 1975 Conference resolution, the implementation of the proposed programme presupposes "the increase of ILO resources devoted to working conditions and environment" (paragraph 4(1)(b)).

34. After a review of the objectives and general characteristics of the proposed programme, the technical content is briefly indicated and what is new about the programme relative to earlier ILO action is brought out. Supplementary information is given in Appendix II on the components of the programme with reference to the means of action at the ILO's disposal. The Director-General intends to base himself on this in the preparation of his programme and budget proposals for 1978-79 and of projects for extra-budgetary financing.

A. Objectives

35. The objectives of PIACT may be defined firstly in general terms related to ILO action for the promotion of improved social policies. From this point of view, the essential goal of PIACT is, as its name indicates, "the improvement of working conditions and environment and the well-being of workers". This point was developed by the Director-General in his Report to the Conference last year. On the basis of the resolution adopted by the Conference in 1974 concerning the working environment, the Director-General divided this general objective under three main heads, namely:

- work should respect the worker's life and health;
- work should leave free time for rest and leisure;
- work should enable the worker to serve society and achieve self-fulfilment by developing his personal capacities.

36. Full participation by employers and workers and their organisations in the preparation and implementation of new policies for the improvement of work and its environment was also emphasised as an essential instrument for attaining these three objectives.

37. These general objectives acquire both greater precision and greater diversity in two ways: first, through the objectives which member States were invited by the Conference to set and promote; and, secondly, in the objectives which the ILO gives to its action concerning the specific elements of its own programme in this field.

38. In this respect the replies hitherto received from governments show that though many have developed policies and programmes to promote an improvement in working conditions and environment - either in general or in relation to certain particular problems for which priority action is necessary - these policies and programmes do not generally find expression in the periodical setting of specific objectives, such as the reduction of certain industrial accidents or diseases or the most arduous or monotonous jobs, as is proposed in the resolution adopted by the Conference in 1975. Certain governments indicated in their replies on this point that the setting of such objectives could only be arbitrary so long as reliable statistical information was unavailable, which it usually is. One of the tasks of PIACT throughout its execution should be to determine to what extent it is possible to aid in the formulation of national objectives, defined in such a way that the results obtained may be measured.

39. Should not the function of an international organisation such as the ILO, with all the facilities at its command and in the framework of concerted international action, consist of encouraging member States to set themselves a number of precise objectives designed to improve working conditions and environment? Examples of such objectives might include the substantial reduction of the number of especially hazardous or tedious jobs, or the introduction of more stringent safety and health standards in small enterprises, particularly in the developing countries. Setting such objectives would not only offer incentives to all countries but would also enable progress to be regularly assessed.

1 Making Work More Human, op. cit., p. 3.
40. Within the limits of the resources available to the ILO, the Organisation's objectives will thus be:

(a) to encourage member States to set definite objectives designed to improve working conditions and environment;

(b) to promote the adoption by member States of the objectives already set in existing international labour standards by encouraging their effective application;

(c) to define, if need be, new objectives to be proposed for national action;

(d) to provide governments, employers' and workers' organisations and research and training institutions with the necessary assistance for the preparation and implementation of programmes for the improvement of working conditions and environment corresponding to their potential; and

(e) to evaluate periodically progress in the implementation of the international programme and of the national programmes as necessary to permit the attainment of previously defined objectives.

B. General features

41. PIACT is in the first place a programme "designed to promote or support activities of member States". As the attached chart brings out, PIACT must not only concern ILO activities (represented by the centre of the chart), but bring within its influence the activities conducted in all the member States of the Organisation (represented by the dots on the outer circle). In this connection, it is not merely a question of activities conducted by the States, but of all activities conducted within the States, especially by employers, workers and their organisations. In fact, activities conducted in the member States - whether at the national level, or concerning a particular sector or branch of economic activity, or at the level of an employer's or workers' organisation, or of a research, education or training institution, or even concerning a particular enterprise - should be considered as constituent elements of PIACT. The originality of the programme will be to endeavour to relate these different activities within an international framework designed to orient them, to stimulate them and to support them by appropriate means. The competent institutional and human resources of member States must be fully used.

42. PIACT aims at using in a co-ordinated fashion the various means of action available to the Organisation. The four arrows in the chart reflect the four essential means of action of the ILO: standard setting, operational activities, studies and tripartite meetings, and clearing-house activities. The arrows point both inward and outward to illustrate, first, that the ILO must determine its action in response to the needs of member States and, secondly, that such action will be meaningful only if its influence becomes concretely felt in all member States.

43. PIACT action must be diversified according to regions and to sectors of economic activity. This is what the second and third circles of the chart aim at underlining. Regional conferences and advisory committee sessions should provide opportunities for reviewing the objectives which member States in a given region have set, examining progress and the difficulties encountered in attaining these objectives, proceeding to exchanges of information among countries with similar problems and indicating the measures to be taken by the ILO to assist member States in the region. The various ILO sectoral activities - among which a special mention

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1 See ILO Medium-Term Plan: GB.199/PFA/8/1, paragraph 69.
2 See Appendix II, sections A, B, C and D.
3 See Appendix II, section E.
may be made of the work of Industrial and analogous Committees to play an extremely important role in this aspect of the programme, since the problems posed by conditions of work and life and occupational safety and health vary considerably from one sector to another. To meet the request of the Conference (paragraph 4(1)(b) of the 1975 resolution), PIACT must undertake activities which directly concern the rural sector and small enterprises. Finally problems concerning special groups of workers should receive particular attention.

44. As the innermost circle of the chart illustrates, PIACT will be related to the programmes of other intergovernmental organisations and will aim systematically at the co-ordination of efforts or at the joint execution of projects. The improvement of working conditions and environment cannot be pursued as an isolated goal. The resolution adopted by the Conference underlines this when it invites member States to promote the objectives of an improvement of working conditions and environment with all aspects of their economic, educational and social policy. It must be the same at the regional and international level. And it is often within the framework of projects conducted under the auspices of other organisations, for example industrialisation or rural development projects, that the best opportunities can be seized for promoting action to improve working conditions and environment in these two major economic sectors.

45. PIACT must remain flexible and seek constantly to adapt in its execution to new needs which become apparent or to new requests from the ILO constituency.

46. After a first phase of limited duration, PIACT must be systematically evaluated. The resolution adopted by the Conference asks that there be a study of "the possibility of organising an international tripartite meeting which would treat various aspects of working conditions and environment and whose results would later be submitted to the International Labour Conference in order to allow it to take stock of ILO action and to decide on a future programme of activities". It is already proposed that this international tripartite meeting be scheduled for the second half of 1981, which would coincide with the end of the current Medium-Term Plan and with the end of a five-year period since the adoption of PIACT. Five years seems an appropriate period over which to evaluate on an international scale not only ILO activities but above all progress achieved within member States, possibly with ILO assistance.

C. Technical content

47. The problems on which PIACT action will concentrate are the following.

48. Safety and health of the working environment. The high incidence and gravity of occupational accidents and diseases remains disturbing. Apart from the human tragedy, occupational accidents bear heavily on the economy. In certain countries this is less and less accepted by public opinion as inevitable.

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1 The industries on the chart appear only as examples.
2 See Appendix II, section F.
3 See Appendix II, section G.
4 See Appendix II, section H.
5 See Appendix II, section I.
6 The organisations given on the chart are only examples. Collaboration is also necessary with a large number of international non-governmental organisations.
7 See Appendix II, section J.
8 Clause 4(2).
9 This meeting could be preceded by regional meetings if this should prove useful.
49. The principal causes of this state of affairs have been reviewed in the Medium-Term Plan 1976-81.¹

50. The efforts to improve this situation must be carried out within a general or sectoral framework, as appropriate, especially concerning:

(i) harmonisation of occupational accident statistics, in respect of which the Conference requested an in-depth study in the resolution adopted in 1975.² The action to be undertaken should be carried out in harmony with the recommendations of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (1962) and should take into account WHO work in this field;

(ii) the cost of occupational accidents and diseases, the study of which is also requested by the Conference.³ This is a controversial matter in that the cost varies with different authors in a proportion of 1 to 10. It would be desirable to establish criteria for a sufficiently precise evaluation of the cost and for establishing the cost of preventive measures in relation with various parameters;

(iii) policies for the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases, which appear to be necessary due to the weak interest sometimes accorded to occupational safety and health, not only at all levels within an enterprise but also amongst equipment construction circles;

(iv) the application of regulations determining responsibility and sanctions in respect of occupational accidents. In recent years this has been an issue of major controversy in certain countries;

(v) the organisation of safety and health within an enterprise, including methods of workers' participation in decision making regarding the healthiness and safety of the working environment, particularly through the use of safety and health committees. At its last session, the Chemical Industries Committee extensively discussed the role and functions of these committees and, considering the divergence of opinion expressed in this respect, requested that the Governing Body refer the examination of this question to a tripartite meeting of experts. At its last session (September 1975) the Iron and Steel Committee requested that particular attention be accorded to the operation of various systems associating workers in matters of safety and health;

(vi) problems related to mental stress and psychosomatic disorders due to the evolution of industrial technology;

(vii) permissible limits of exposure of workers to airborne toxic substances, in terms of basic criteria for these limits and practical measures for their application⁴;

(viii) measures to combat the harmful effects of dusts in the industrial environment. Modern technology has much influenced the nature and forms of workers' exposure to this risk. There is an increase in the range of products dispersed in the form of dusts or fibres in the workplace and in their harmful effects on health. The world energy crisis has renewed interest in coal mining in which the risks of pneumoconiosis are significant. Industrial Committees have repeatedly requested the ILO to establish, in collaboration with the WHO, internationally acceptable standards limiting the concentration of dust at the workplace. This subject might be reviewed in depth at the Fifth International Conference on Pneumoconiosis which might be held by the ILO during the 1978-79 biennium;

¹ GB.199/PPA/8/1, paragraph 84.
² Paragraph 4.1.h.
³ Paragraph 4.1.h.
⁴ The Conference resolution (1975) requests the in-depth study of "the definition of criteria and limits for exposure to dangerous substances" (paragraph 4(h)). A study of these problems and their review by a tripartite committee is included in the 1976-77 programme, and should be pursued in collaboration with the WHO.
(ix) risks of exposure to non-ionising radiation and their prevention, a matter of concern in the telecommunications sector and in certain industries; and

(x) occupational safety and health problems related to the transfer of technology from advanced countries to developing ones, (e.g. the importation of dangerous products or machines lacking safety devices) (see paragraphs 59-61 below).

51. In respect of occupational cancer the ILO Panel of Consultants will be asked to carry out a systematic review of the situation, in collaboration with the WHO, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the International Union against Cancer (IUOC), as suggested in the 1974 Conference resolution.

52. Ergonomics. Ergonomics, a multi-disciplinary science concerning the adaptation of work to man, is gaining recognition as an effective method of reducing workload, work place and stress, and increasing the safety and comfort of people at work. To the man-machine relationship, it is necessary to add environmental factors which in turn become important elements for consideration in the context of systems ergonomics. The ILO has accorded particular attention to ergonomics since its inception and initiated many activities, including meetings and studies.

53. In advanced countries there is increasing interest in ergonomics and a progressive shift of emphasis from corrective ergonomics to conceptual ergonomics. The subjects which merit special attention are:

(i) factors to be taken into consideration in the organisation of the working environment at the stage of planning industrial buildings;
(ii) means to give practical effect to the results of the considerable research work so that they can be directly used by factory managers, engineers, physicians or workers' representatives;
(iii) ergonomics and the safety of workplaces; and
(iv) the role and means of action of trade unions in the application of ergonomics at the enterprise level, etc.

54. Many developing countries have shown interest in action in the field of ergonomics (Algeria, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Venezuela and others). Much remains to be done to adapt the knowledge acquired to actual conditions in these countries. Two problems are of special interest:

(i) the adjustment of the workload to the temperature and humidity of the workplace and certain general biométrie characteristics of workers; and
(ii) the characteristics of ergonomic specifications in connection with the importation of modern technical equipment and installations. (See paragraphs 59-61 below.)

55. Working time. In spite of significant progress made, working time continues to raise serious problems. The following subjects call for particular attention:

(i) Hours of work. They are still excessive for a very large number of workers, with harmful effects on their health, safety and productivity. Three aspects of this problem remain particularly urgent: high legal maxima in agriculture, construction industry and certain services; excessive overtime in many other sectors; and insufficient reductions in working time for especially arduous work, for older workers and for certain special groups.

(ii) The relation between hours of work and employment. Since employment-creating policies are a major goal both in advanced countries, because of the recent growth in unemployment, and in developing countries, the various aspects of reduction of hours of work, whose beneficial nature from the social point of view is obvious, must also be studied from the point of view of employment creation.

(iii) Shift and night work. The extent of these forms of organising working time appears to have significantly grown in industrialised countries and there is a trend towards expansion in developing countries. In view of the opposition between economic considerations in favour of the use of shift and night work (maximum capital utilisation and employment creation) and the adverse medical and social effects highlighted in recent studies, it is essential to continue to give these questions attention. A symposium provided for in the current Programme and Budget will examine these problems in advanced countries. More particularly concerning night work, the Governing Body at its 198th (November 1975) Session asked that the documentation available be supplemented in the light of recent studies and developments in member States and that proposals be submitted for holding a tripartite meeting of experts.

(iv) Arrangement of working time. Better adaptation of work schedules to individual preferences and to the needs of special groups of workers is being pursued in many different ways. Following discussion of new trends in advanced countries at the symposium provided for in the 1976-77 Programme, it will be necessary to pursue the study of various aspects of this problem: arrangement of the working day, the work week or the work year (staggered holidays) in relation with a policy towards leisure, part-time work and relations among the work schedules in effect in different sectors (for example between retail trade and industry).

(v) Career work patterns and increasing individual choice. Parallel to the trend towards more flexible work schedules is that towards more flexible arrangement of life-long working patterns. There is a need for systematic study of various means (e.g. paid educational leave, gradual retirement) to give workers greater freedom to take up, interrupt or leave work, and to enlarge the choices available between education and training, and work and leisure.

56. Work organisation and content. In advanced countries a rapidly growing segment of the labour force is having to accept employment which does not allow full utilisation of abilities and qualifications. Deep dissatisfaction with certain forms of work has been increasing, as evidenced by a growing number of labour disputes motivated by demands related to working conditions and work organisation and as well by negative attitudes of workers (turnover, absenteeism, lowered productivity, social unrest). This situation is explained in part by a widening gap between the higher level of education and culture and the fact that certain forms of work have become more and more limited and uninteresting (repetitive, fragmented and monotonous tasks).

57. In parallel and in response to this situation has been the appearance of a series of new experiments in the organisation of industrial work. Though different in nature and scope, what the experiments have in common is the view they take of technology, not so much as an unchangeable fact to which the worker must submit, but rather as a variable capable of being managed for the human optimisation of work organisation without endangering the economic efficiency of the enterprise. These experiments are to be evaluated on the basis of previously defined human and economic criteria, especially from the viewpoint of the resulting workload for the workers.

58. Independently of the themes highlighted in the research programme for 1976-77, the following suggestions require particular attention, within a general or sectoral framework as appropriate:

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1 See Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1976-77, paragraphs 186 and following.
(i) national policies and programmes for the improvement of working conditions and environment and measures to encourage enterprises to undertake or develop action in this field;

(ii) the establishment of "social reviews" or "social development programmes" in enterprises. This is a new tool in experimental use in some countries for establishing the factual situation concerning such matters as working conditions, occupational safety and health, remuneration, social relations, etc., and to evaluate progress. The subject is a new one, and serious research is needed into ways of determining the jobs to be covered by such reviews and programmes;

(iii) the reduction or upgrading of the most unpleasant or tedious jobs. The Conference resolution stresses this point. It is necessary to study which criteria are most generally used to describe such jobs, to locate the occupations and sectors where they are found most frequently and to consider possible action either to reduce the number of such jobs or to make them more meaningful or to improve the status or remuneration of the workers involved or finally to arrange that tenure of such jobs be fairly short and lead to promotion to more interesting work;

(iv) repetitive and fragmented industrial work. Assembly line work is under attack as a form of work organisation because the work cycle is short and the worker has to keep pace with a machine;

(v) the organisation of work in offices. In offices, banks, the public service and commerce, there is an increasing number of repetitive, fragmented jobs with no real responsibility or initiative. The rapid growth of computerised work poses special problems for working conditions.

(vi) the reassessment of payment by results. Piecework and other incentive systems have been challenged because of their effects on the safety and health of workers, especially accident rates and work pace. Recourse to new forms of work organisation has led to greater use of various forms of group incentive plans. A comparative study of the appropriate role of both new and older forms of payment by results might promote wage payment systems which afford greater worker protection and enforce productivity and job satisfaction.

59. Conditions of work and transfers of technology. In developing countries, where industrialisation is regarded as a prerequisite to higher living standards, particular problems arise concerning safety and health and conditions of work with respect to transfers of technology. The Minister of Labour and Social Services of Zambia and the Government delegate of Ghana particularly emphasised in their speeches at the 1975 Session of the International Labour Conference the necessity of preventing the export of machines not equipped with adequate protective devices. The Conference, in its 1975 resolution, requested the in-depth study of "the effects of transfers of technology on working conditions and environment". The Committee on Science and Technology for Development recommended to the Economic and Social Council a resolution also requesting that the ILO strengthen its activities concerning choice of technology, especially from the point of view of improving working conditions and environment.

60. There is already a demand for assistance to purchasing countries in analysing particular climatic, sociological and anthropological conditions and to formulate at the time of signature of industrialisation contracts specifications relating to working conditions and environment. There is also a similar demand from exporting enterprises to enable them to analyse the special conditions in importing countries and to have available proven means of adaptation. In addition to the research already provided for in the Programme and Budget for 1976-77, the Office could take

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1 Paragraph 2(2).
3 Ibid., p. 287.
4 E/0.8/L.65, 17 February 1976.
5 Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1976-77, paragraph 185.
certain action to facilitate the introduction of worthwhile improvements in working conditions and environment with a view to promoting economic development. It seems necessary to schedule - in liaison with other intergovernmental organisations concerned such as UNCTAD, UNIDO, the World Bank and the UNDP - a meeting to examine ways of ensuring that factors of safety and health and conditions of work are taken into consideration in the specifications of technical and financial co-operation projects for industrialisation.

61. Working and living environment. Action to improve the living environment of workers (in particular their housing, standards of nutrition, health and education) provides vital support for, or may create a prerequisite of, action to promote better conditions of work, especially in the rural sector in developing countries. Thus measures to prevent occupational accidents or introduce new forms of work organisation may not have the desired effect if applied to workers arriving at work in an unsatisfactory state due to being badly housed, poorly fed or in ill health. These measures should therefore be integrated into a global policy aimed at meeting basic needs. In addition, working and living environments are inter-related for many workers in developing countries (craftsmen, family enterprises and independent farmers); when the work is done at home or nearby the improvement in working conditions depends largely on measures to assure that these workers have a better habitat.

62. In this field it would be useful to give special attention to:
   (i) action by employers' and workers' organisations concerning housing and social services, their modalities of organisation and financing and the co-ordination of this action with that undertaken by public authorities;
   (ii) action of co-operatives for the improvement of conditions of life and work, especially in the rural environment, for example by encouraging saving and the use of credit, the distribution of consumer goods and equipment, the organisation of social and health services, the promotion of cultural activities, etc.;
   (iii) low-cost housing programmes in urban and rural areas, especially from the point of view of participation by informal sector workers in the benefits of those programmes, the training of the workers involved, the choice of appropriate construction methods, the optimal use of locally available materials and the adoption of adequate construction standards concerning safety and health, etc.

63. Links between PIACT and other ILO programmes. PIACT must be closely linked with many other ILO programmes. Certain parts of the programmes concerning industrial relations and labour administration, workers' education, employment, training, social security (including certain activities of ISSA) and statistics can furnish an essential contribution to PIACT. In addition, certain activities undertaken within the framework of the Institute or the Turin Centre can reinforce PIACT action. This is summarised in the attached diagram.

64. It is important to stress the complementary relationship between the World Employment Programme and PIACT. The former concentrates on the creation of employment, the latter - by trying to improve conditions of work - on the quality of the employment created. "This improvement - far from hampering the aim of employment development - strengthens it."

D. What is new about the approach

65. What is new about PIACT in comparison with earlier ILO action in the field of working conditions and environment consists principally in the following:
   (i) the invitation addressed to member States by the Conference to set for themselves definite objectives, to be communicated to the ILO, whose action will in turn be designed to help member States to attain those objectives;

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(ii) the fact that problems of working conditions and environment should be approached globally within the framework of all aspects of economic, educational and social policy;

(iii) a systematic priority given to the field of working conditions and environment in the use of the various ILO means of action during a five-year period in order to assure a maximum of coherence and effectiveness;

(iv) the establishment of a detailed plan for a general inquiry into the protection of workers and conditions of work, according to a uniform methodology permitting the development of national case studies during the next two biennia (see Appendix II, paragraph 53);

(v) the setting up of multidisciplinary teams of specialists in working conditions and environment (see Appendix II, paragraphs 40-51);

(vi) the mandate given to the ILO to assume the role of co-ordinator of research into working conditions and environment by holding special meetings for the purpose every two years (see Appendix II, paragraph 53);

(vii) the establishment of an early warning system in the field of occupational safety and health (see Appendix II, paragraph 60);

(viii) the organisation of a meeting on the factors concerning safety and health and conditions of work to be taken into account in industrialisation contracts concluded under technical and financial assistance programmes (see paragraph 60 above);

(ix) the setting up of basic safety and health systems in the rural sector in developing countries (see Appendix II, paragraph 38);

(x) evaluation of international activities and national progress at a tripartite meeting scheduled for the second half of 1981 (see paragraph 46 above).

IV. PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

66. The Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee may wish to recommend to the Governing Body:

(i) to take note of the measures already taken to ensure adequate consultation of governments, the competent international organisations and the national, regional and international institutions specialised in the field of working conditions and environment, as described in paragraphs 7 to 14 above;

(ii) to approve the general design of the International Programme for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment (PIACT) as set out in paragraphs 31 to 65 above; and

(iii) to take note of the Director-General's intention to refer to the proposals in those paragraphs and in Appendix II to this paper in preparing his programme and budget proposals for 1978-79, with due regard to the resources available, and in preparing projects to be submitted to sources of extra-budgetary financing.


POINT FOR DECISION:

Paragraph 66.
1. Taking into account of working conditions and environment in employment promotion policies and projects, especially rural development projects, projects concerning transfers of technology and those concerning the informal sector.


3. Integration of the "working conditions and environment factor" into training programmes, especially safety questions into vocational training programmes. Policies for productivity and for the organisation of production.

4. Labour inspection. Participation of workers in decisions concerning safety and health, working conditions and the organisation of work. Utilisation of the mechanisms of industrial relations for improving working conditions. Relations between methods of remuneration and organisation of work. Consideration of the working conditions and environment factor in workers' education programmes and labour administration programmes.

Resolution concerning Future Action of the International Labour Organisation in the Field of Working Conditions and Environment

The General Conference of the International Labour Organisation,
Considering that the improvement of working conditions and the protection of the physical and mental health of workers constitute an essential and permanent mission of the International Labour Organisation,
Considering the slow and uneven progress realised concerning hours of work and associated problems concerning work safety and health primarily because of the absence of a general strategy relating to an improvement of working conditions and environment,
Noting that the utilisation of scientific research and technology, without taking into account considerations of a social nature, could not only create dangers at the workplace but could also have an adverse effect on the human environment generally,
Considering that changes in techniques, production methods and the importance of transfers of technology and the evolution of human society and of social aspirations place the improvement of working conditions and environment in a new and sometimes different context according to the countries, branches, occupations and categories of workers,
Referring to the resolutions adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1972 and 1974 relating to the working environment,
Having noted the activities anticipated in the ILO's Programme and Budget for 1976-77,
Having received with satisfaction the Report submitted by the Director-General of the International Labour Office to the 60th Session of the International Labour Conference and the determination indicated therein to reinforce and renew ILO action in the field of working conditions and environment,
Considering that ILO action concerning working conditions and environment should, in taking into account aspirations for a better quality of life, be closely joined with other activities relating to the protection of the human environment;
1. Solemnly reaffirms that the improvement of working conditions and environment and the well-being of workers remains the first and permanent mission of the ILO.
2. Earnestly invites member States—
   (1) to promote the objectives of an improvement of working conditions and environment with all aspects of their economic, educational and social policy;
   (2) to set periodically for themselves a number of definite objectives designed to reduce as far as possible certain industrial accidents and occupational diseases or the most unpleasant and tedious jobs;
   (3) to normalise the application of scientific research so that it is carried out for man, and not against him and against his environment.
3. Supports the world-wide action suggested by the Director-General of the International Labour Office in his Report with a view to reconsidering the current activities of the ILO and to launching an international programme for the improvement of working conditions and environment which is designed to promote or support activities of member States in this field.
4. Invites the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to instruct the Director-General, as soon as resources permit—
   (1) to prepare and submit to it such a programme based on the general discussion of his Report to the 60th Session of the International Labour Conference and after consultation with the competent international organisations as well as with the national, regional and international bodies specialised in working conditions and environment, it being understood that, during the preparation of such a programme, the following should be taken into consideration:

*Adopted on 24 June 1975.*
(a) the intention announced by the Director-General during the 59th Session of the International Labour Conference of initiating a general inquiry into work whose purpose is to reinforce the effectiveness of action by the International Labour Organisation at all levels;

(b) the increase of ILO resources devoted to working conditions and environment and the improvement of its technical co-operation methods in this field, especially in rural areas and in small undertakings;

(c) the continuing examination of international labour standards relating to working conditions and environment with a view to revising existing standards which are no longer up to date and the adoption of basic standards designed to guide national policies concerning work safety and health and the pollution of the human environment caused by industrial and agricultural techniques;

(d) the systematic use of meetings of Industrial Committees and analogous bodies to carry out an evaluation of situations concerning working conditions and environment in different countries and industries and the formulation of all appropriate recommendations for their improvement; the full utilisation of the services, in particular through the convening of meetings at regular intervals, of the Panel of Consultants on Safety in Mines;

(e) the preparation and publication of guides, statute books and teaching materials in the field of safety and health, hours of work, organisation of work, job content and ergonomics;

(f) the preparation of guides which allow the best use of the workers' free time with a view to promoting their self-fulfilment and facilitating their access to culture and vocational training;

(g) the placement, in different regions, of multidisciplinary teams made up of specialists in working conditions and environment whose job should be

(ii) to assist governments, employers' and workers' organisations and research and training institutions and bodies in the preparation and carrying out of programmes for the improvement of working conditions and environment which correspond to their needs and potential;

(iii) to undertake studies on national and regional situations, gather and disseminate information and examine progress made in the application of relevant international labour standards;

(iv) to organise and conduct symposia, seminars and other specialised meetings, especially within the framework of industries or particular branches of activity;

(iv) to participate in United Nations Development Programme national and regional programming;

(h) the in-depth study of

(i) the costs of industrial accidents and problems related to the harmonisation of relevant statistics, and of the definition of criteria and limits for exposure to dangerous substances;

(ii) methods for determining the costs and economic and social advantages of various measures referring to the improvement of working conditions;

(iii) experiences relating to work organisation and the effects of transfers of technology on working conditions and environment;

(2) to study the possibility of organising an international tripartite meeting which would treat various aspects of working conditions and environment and whose results would later be submitted to the International Labour Conference in order to allow it to take stock of ILO action and to decide on a future programme of activities;

(3) to undertake, in collaboration with and with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme, a coherent programme of ILO action concerning the environment which provides especially for educational and training activities in this field, as well as studies on the economic and social consequences of environmental policies.
APPENDIX II

Supplementary information on the proposed programme
in relation to means of ILO action

1. Part III C of this paper gives an account of the technical content of
PIACT and of the problems on which it will concentrate. The type of action
envisioned to deal with those problems has already sometimes been indicated.

2. However, it appeared necessary to give some supplementary information on
the elements of the proposed programme.1 This information is presented within
the framework of the various means of action at the disposal of the ILO, in order
to permit appropriate reference to the Conference resolution.

A. Standard setting

3. Paragraph 4.1(c) of the resolution asks that a programme be submitted to
the Governing Body taking into consideration "the continuing examination of inter-
national labour standards relating to working conditions and environment with a
view to revising existing standards which are no longer up to date and the adoption
of basic standards designed to guide national policies concerning work safety and
health and the pollution of the human environment caused by industrial and agricul-
tural techniques". International labour standards are a valuable instrument to
help member States to set their objectives or develop programmes for attaining them.
This was emphasised by many governments and employers' and workers' organisations
during the consultations undertaken within the framework of the launching of PIACT.
The ILO already has a considerable body of some 60 Conventions and nearly as many
Recommendations concerning working conditions and safety and health.

4. Application of standards. In the first place, special attention should be
given to the ratification and application of the most important instruments. It is
proposed to establish a list of instruments whose ratification and/or application
could be considered as having priority in the framework of PIACT and concerning
which a special promotional effort should be undertaken in member States, especially
with the help of consultative procedures designed to promote the implementation of
international labour standards.2

5. Among the instruments which could be considered in this connection, some
of which should also be considered for the preparation of reports under article 19
of the Constitution, the following may be mentioned:

(i) instruments of general scope -

- the Medical Examination of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1946 (No. 77)
  and the Medical Examination of Young Persons Recommendation, 1946 (No. 79);
- the Labour Inspection Convention (No. 81) and Recommendation (No. 81), 1947 and
  the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention (No. 129) and Recommendation
  (No. 133), 1969;
- the Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention (Revised), 1948 (No. 90);
- the Guarding of Machinery Convention (No. 119) and Recommendation (No. 118), 1963;
- the Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Convention (No. 120) and Recommendation
  (No. 120), 1964;
- the Employment Injury Benefits Convention (No. 121) and Recommendation (No. 121),
  1964;

1 The Programme and Budget for 1976-77 already contains substantial elements of
a programme of action aimed at improving working conditions and environment, to
which references are occasionally made.

the Holidays with Pay Convention (Revised), 1970 (No. 132) and the Holidays with Pay (Agriculture) Convention, 1952 (No. 101);
- the Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) and Recommendation (No. 146), 1973;
- the Paid Educational Leave Convention (No. 140) and Recommendation (No. 148), 1974;
- the Protection of Workers' Health Recommendation, 1953 (No. 97);
- the Welfare Facilities Recommendation, 1956 (No. 102);
- the Occupational Health Services Recommendation, 1959 (No. 112);
- the Reduction of Hours of Work Recommendation, 1962 (No. 116); and
- the Tenants and Sharecroppers Recommendation, 1968 (No. 132);
(ii) instruments of limited scope -
- the Maximum Weight Convention (No. 127) and Recommendation (No. 128), 1967;
- the Benzene Convention (No. 136) and Recommendation (No. 144), 1971; and
- the Occupational Cancer Convention (No. 139) and Recommendation (No. 147), 1974.

6. To these instruments should be added any instrument or instruments on the working environment (noise and vibration and atmospheric pollution) and on employment and conditions of work and life of nursing personnel, which will be examined in first discussion at the 61st Session (1976) of the Conference.

7. Revision of existing standards and possible preparation of new standards. As may be recalled, the Governing Body has decided, within the framework of the In-Depth Review of International Labour Standards, to instruct the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee to carry out a systematic study of all existing standards, by examining them in the light of the social needs of our time and evaluating the extent to which existing standards meet these needs and by identifying future needs concerning standard setting and the ways to satisfy such needs.¹

8. In a paper on this subject submitted to the Governing Body at the current session, it is proposed that the review of existing international standards begin with the group of Conventions and Recommendations concerning general conditions of work and the safety, health and welfare of workers.

9. In the review of existing standards, the following points could be taken into consideration:

(i) The revision of the Convention (No. 32) concerning the Protection against Accidents of Workers Employed in Loading or Unloading Ships (Revised), 1932, and the revision of the Convention (No. 67) concerning the Regulation of Hours of Work and Rest Periods in Road Transport, 1939, have been examined by committees of experts. They are submitted to the Governing Body at its 200th Session for possible inclusion on the agenda of the 63rd Session of the International Labour Conference (1978).


(iii) The Convention (No. 115) and Recommendation (No. 114) concerning the Protection of Workers against Ionising Radiations, 1960, should also be revised concerning several specific points such as the categories of workers exposed.

¹ GB.199/9/22 Rev., paragraph 12, and Appendix (paragraph 4).
² GB.200/PPA/11/4.
(iv) The list of occupational diseases appended to the Convention (No. 121) concerning Benefits in the Case of Employment Injury, 1964, has for some time needed a complete revision.

(v) Concerning Recommendations, the Recommendation (No. 31) concerning the Prevention of Industrial Accidents, 1929, - the only comprehensive instrument in this area and one containing many provisions which are still fully valid today - merits revision. It may be opportune to embody the essentials of it in a new Convention laying the basis of national safety and health programmes (see paragraph 15 below).

10. With regard to the advisability of new international standards concerning working conditions and environment, opinions are divided.

11. Some take the view that standard setting does not appear at all adapted to these problems and may lead to instruments which would either be inapplicable because of the variety of national conditions or be little more than an assemblage of truisms.1

12. Others believe that standard setting is vital2 to guide national policies concerning safety and health or other aspects of working conditions and environment.

13. Opinion is also divided concerning the nature of the standards which could be envisaged.

14. In the first place, the Conference could be asked to continue to adopt standards concerning specific hazards of the working environment, as it did concerning radiation in 1960 and benzene in 1971, and as it is called upon to do, in first discussion, at its 61st Session (1976) for the item on the working environment (noise and vibration and atmospheric pollution). New instruments on other specific hazards of the working environment could be envisaged (for example concerning the use of asbestos, the use of pesticides and herbicides in agriculture, etc.).

15. Secondly, in addition to specific subjects, a global standard could be adopted by the Conference which would serve as a general framework and would set forth the fundamental objectives of coherent national and international action designed to reduce occupational accidents and diseases and to improve the working environment. Several governments declared themselves in favour of the elaboration of such a global instrument which would define the basic principles of policy for the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases and the improvement of the working environment; would emphasise that technology and the organisation of work should be adapted to the physical, mental and social aptitudes and needs of workers; and would also provide for the participation of workers in decisions concerning safety and health and improvement of the working environment. Some of these governments even asked that the adoption of such a standard be the point of departure for the new international programme. If the elaboration of such an instrument is decided, its adoption towards the end of the first phase of the present programme (1980-81) would permit the taking into account of the first lessons from the action launched within the framework of PIACT and could consolidate its effects.

16. Thirdly, certain problems such as the various aspects of the arrangement of working time or part-time work could perhaps lend themselves to international standards.

17. It may also be noted that two Resolutions adopted by the Conference (48th and 51st Sessions, 1959 and 1967) called for the adoption of a Convention concerning occupational health services designed to supplement Recommendation No. 112 on the same subject.


2 Speech of Mr. Plant, Workers' delegate of the United Kingdom, during the same discussion. Record of Proceedings, p. 478.
18. Model codes and codes of practice. The Office has published in the last 20 years a series of model codes and codes of practice on occupational safety and health, relating to various sectors of economic activity and to dangerous equipment or dangerous substances. Drafted in the form of detailed regulatory texts, they place no obligation on member States; they are designed to serve as a guide for governments and employers' and workers' organisations in the drafting of national regulations and guidelines, work rules and collective agreements. They likewise suggest solutions for the effective implementation of various ILO standards. This series of recommendations is for the most part established and approved by tripartite meetings of experts or by tripartite panels of ILO consultants on occupational safety and health.

19. The Model Code of Safety Regulations for Industrial Establishments is in the process of being revised in order to take account of a resolution of the Conference (1970). It is foreseen that the revised version of this important work which will concern in particular safety and health and the improvement of the working environment in manufacturing industries will be completed during the 1978-79 biennium.

20. New codes of practice concerning safety and health should be prepared on such topics as offshore drilling platforms, the use of pesticides (with the FAO), various specific aspects of work done in certain sectors such as mines, the iron and steel industry, commerce and offices, etc. The standardisation of certificates relating to the testing of lifting machinery used in dock work should be pursued.

21. The Office also publishes illustrated explanatory guides which provide instructions for the implementation of the main provisions of the model codes and the codes of practice. The existing series of guides should be supplemented.

B. Operational activities

22. The advice and assistance provided by the ILO to its member States, whether through official technical co-operation or technical advisory services placed at their disposal, should become a more important means of action of the Organisation in order to enable it to assist in the attainment of the objectives set within the framework of PIACT.

23. The ILO has launched over many years a substantial technical co-operation programme, particularly in the field of occupational safety, industrial health and industrial medicine. On the other hand, with the exception of several seminars, the placement of fellows and the assignment of a few regional advisers, it has not yet proved possible to develop a genuine programme of operational activities in the area of general conditions of work. It is therefore essential to lend new and vigorous impetus to future ILO action in the field of working conditions and environment and to integrate the various facets of the programme better. There is still a great need to increase awareness in order to convince the governments and organisations concerned of the bearing which operational activities in this field have on economic and social development.

24. First, it must be seen to what degree member States are disposed to call upon the ILO to help them adopt and put into operation a general strategy for the improvement of working conditions and environment based on all aspects of their economic, educational and social policy.

25. It is also a question of ensuring that the ILO responds to member States promptly and with maximum effectiveness. To accomplish this it will be necessary to undertake a thorough examination of the priorities within the Organisation and to choose - with a view to obtaining a higher return on available resources - a number of main points on which to concentrate practical action in developing countries. Yet beyond these measures, the implementation of the provisions contained in this document requires that the Organisation provide the necessary funds without which it would be illusory to think that serious and effective practical action could be undertaken in this field.

26. Given the objectives and characteristics of the envisaged programme, the intensification of practical activities should first of all be reflected in the ILO's regular programme of technical co-operation. This is the recommendation contained in paragraph 4(1)(b) of the Conference resolution which requests that the programme to be submitted to the Governing Body take into consideration the
need to increase the resources which the Organisation devoted to working conditions and environment, and the improvement of its technical co-operation methods in this field, especially in rural areas and in small undertakings. There would thus be a minimum of resources from which it would be possible to widen the Organisation's practical action by mobilising other possible means of financing such as the United Nations Development Programme, multi-bilateral programmes, non-governmental organisations, etc.

27. It is necessary to assure that international action, in order to achieve maximum effectiveness, be systematically linked at the regional and international levels. The ILO's practical action in the field of working conditions and environment will aim accordingly to promote, by every means at its disposal, the reinforcement of technical co-operation between developing countries which would permit better adaptation to national needs and facilitate the mobilisation of local resources. The multi-disciplinary teams (to be discussed below) will undertake their activities on this basis. In another connection, in conformity with the decentralisation policy proposed by the Director-General and supported by the Governing Body during its last session, the services of existing regional centres and projects will be called upon as a means of linking international action; first and foremost among these are the labour administration centres (CIAT, CRADAT, ARLAC and ARPLA) and, to a certain extent, those operating in other fields such as vocational training and employment. There is nothing to prevent, moreover, that at a later date action taken by the multi-disciplinary teams and that of the existing regional centres is supplemented by the setting up, if necessary, of permanent regional programmes in the field of working conditions and environment, financed by funds provided, at least in part by the countries themselves. Such a formula of co-operation which the Office uses in other fields with good results would have the advantage of giving rise to numerous initiatives at the country level and mobilising human and technical resources which far outstrip financing possibilities from international resources.

28. Finally, the national occupational safety and health centres and the national labour institutes and centres will be useful as direct links for ILO action at the national level. They should be given sustained support. With respect to occupational safety and health institutes, several of these have already been created in different countries with ILO assistance (Algeria, Brazil, Arab Republic of Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria and Turkey). The same is true for certain specialised training and research institutes in the field of labour and social policy (Argentina, Costa Rica, Iran, Lebanon, Mexico and Tunisia). It is essential, with the aid of these different centres and institutes, that the promotion of inter-country co-operation be strengthened through the exchange of experiences and personnel, through meetings of directors and of specialists in selected fields, the exchange of fellows, etc. It is likewise necessary to assist these centres to consolidate their training programmes, widen the scope of their research and improve their work methodology and tools. Finally, new centres or institutes should be set up - in particular with the help of the multi-disciplinary teams - after consultation with regional institutions and using the experience of existing institutes.

29. The nature and the content of the practical activities to be undertaken in the field of working conditions and environment are clearly evident in the other sections of the present document which are devoted to an analysis of the main problems. It will therefore be sufficient to recall here the broad outlines of the proposed practical action.

30. First, it is necessary to follow up and increase traditional forms of assistance, for example, the preparation or revision of national legislation concerning working conditions and occupational safety and health, the reinforcement of administrative structures in this area - particularly as regards inspection services - or the creation of training programmes, plant safety and health committees, enterprise or inter-enterprise medical services, etc.

31. Action should also be undertaken to urge countries to apply to a greater degree the recommendations concerning labour statistics providing them, if need be, with direct or indirect assistance. For example, one might consider the preparation of standard forms for the annual reports of departments of labour, for the presentation of occupational accident and disease statistics and possibly for other key statistics, especially those listed in the Labour Inspection Convention (No. 81), using as a model the minimum programme of social security statistics formulated by the Office.
32. Study courses and regional and sub-regional symposia could be organised to improve national programmes and inter-country co-operation.

33. Education and training in occupational safety and health is a fundamental means of action on which depends, in the final analysis, the success of a large programme of prevention at the national level. The Office could undertake effectively the preparation of model teaching programmes (with audio-visual materials) for trainers concerning occupational safety and health. Their task would be to teach the basic elements of this subject to supervisory personnel and employees holding key positions in undertakings (foremen, members of works' committees, safety delegates, etc.). Basic training given to such individuals would contribute effectively to the promotion of their constructive participation in the design and management of safety and health in the undertaking. Workers and their organisations should be closely associated in the realisation of these programmes. A pilot project should be set up in a selected country with a view to adapting the experience of certain industrialised countries to the conditions of developing countries.

34. Regional or sub-regional educational and training projects at all levels would supplement action undertaken at the national level with priority being given to the training of foremen and worker safety delegates.

35. As regards conditions of work, there will be above all, the introduction of elements relating to the improvement of conditions of work in various national and regional training projects under way (vocational training, management development training or workers' education). In addition, PIACT should benefit as far as possible from the experiments conducted by other ILO programmes. This is, for example, the case with projects undertaken by the World Employment Programme in Iran and Tanzania, at the request of the respective governments, whose objective is a progressive improvement (using local resources) in agricultural tools and implements. The Management Development Programme, for its part, intends next year in certain enterprises of an African and an Asian country to begin various experiments in organising jobs without reducing productivity.

36. The preparation of instruction manuals, practical guides and popular brochures on specific aspects of working conditions and occupational safety and health, for the use of foremen and workers, should be expanded.

37. It would be useful to develop projects in particular sectors such as mining, dock work and small enterprises.

38. Special projects on behalf of rural workers could be set up with a view to aiding them to adapt the technology used to their conditions and their needs and laying the foundation for elementary systems of safety and health in rural areas. Further, it would be useful to seek the establishment of a fund permitting the granting of timely and appropriate support (for example, in the form of equipment or educational materials) for pilot experiments in the improvement of workers' conditions of work and life in rural areas which are felt to be particularly worthwhile; and the financing of projects whose aim was the development of safety and health action in rural areas, in particular providing elementary training for certain workers.

39. As emphasised above PIACT will be linked to the programmes of other governmental organisations and systematically aim at the co-ordination of efforts or the conducting of joint projects. It is essential, in fact, that the action of PIACT not be limited only to the technical co-operation activities undertaken by the ILO. It is essential, for example, that the sectoral projects undertaken by UNIDO include a component which aims at the improvement of working conditions in the industrial sectors in question. The same holds true for certain agricultural projects of FAO, the health programmes of WHO and the educational programmes of UNESCO. The existing internal co-ordinating bodies will be used for this purpose, in particular between the ILO, UNESCO, FAO, UNIDO and WHO.

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1 The Conference resolution (1975) refers to the preparation and publication of guides, statute books and teaching materials in the field of safety and health, hours of work, organisation of work, job content and ergonomics; and the preparation of guides which allow the best use of the workers' free time with a view to promoting their self-fulfilment and facilitating their access to culture and vocational training (paragraphs 4(1)(e) and (f)).
Multi-disciplinary teams. Multi-disciplinary teams - whose creation was foreseen in the Conference resolution and which should assist member States at their request in improving working conditions and environment - constitute a new form of action called to play a central role in the assistance brought to member States in this field.

The number of member States which have requested to be able to benefit as soon as possible from the services of a multi-disciplinary team (Afghanistan, Bolivia, Chile, Egypt, El Salvador, Ghana, India, Kuwait, Mexico, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia, Uruguay and Yemen) clearly indicates the importance attached to this aspect of technical co-operation provided for within the PIACT framework.

Resources were made available in the 1976-77 regular budget to provide for the setting up of an inter-regional team which will be able to undertake a number of pilot missions during the biennium. Regional teams should also be set up later in order to enlarge the action of the inter-regional team at the regional level. The financing of these teams should normally be included within the framework of ILO regular budget technical co-operation. It is, however, already foreseen to propose as well to UNDP and to multi-bilateral programme donor countries to participate in the financing of these teams. The pilot missions would be scheduled taking into account the UNDP country programming cycle in order that action recommended on the basis of the results of these missions may attain the necessary national priority to be included in the UNDP programme.

The multi-disciplinary teams will be composed of specialists in working conditions and environment. Truly "institutes without walls", the teams could include, for example, a safety engineer, an occupational health physician, a specialist in work organisation or a labour inspector. The composition of each team would be decided according to the problems to be resolved and the needs of each country.

Paragraph 4.1(g) of the Conference resolution defines the job of the multi-disciplinary teams as follows:

(i) to assist governments, employers' and workers' organisations and research and training institutions and bodies in the preparation and carrying out of programmes for the improvement of working conditions and environment which correspond to their needs and potential;

(ii) to undertake studies on national and regional situations, gather and disseminate information and examine progress made in the application of relevant international labour standards;

(iii) to organise and conduct symposia, seminars and other specialised meetings, especially within the framework of industries or particular branches of activity;

(iv) to participate in United Nations Development Programme national and regional programming.

The multi-disciplinary teams will thus be in a position as much to establish a truly global and up-to-date diagnosis of the factual situation as to assist in the setting up of permanent national structures assuring the co-ordination of efforts in this field or the solution of concrete problems.

The consequences of this foreseeable evolution in the activities and composition of multi-disciplinary teams are important. It is thereby possible to envisage a case in which a government requests the ILO to designate a high-level specialist who, through brief but repeated visits, guides a team of local techni-cians who are responsible for establishing a diagnosis and for defining the most appropriate objectives, priorities and programmes under existing circumstances.

It is within the general framework so defined (and after examination on a tripartite basis) that the authorities, if need be, would request the ILO to assist with more specialised sectoral or technical aspects, either by sending an expert or by providing a number of fellowships or by organising a seminar or national training course on a given subject.

To the greatest extent possible, an effort would be made to finance long-term experts (for example for establishing or improving the effectiveness of an institution) through funds other than those reserved for multi-disciplinary teams.
49. It may be noted that such missions would not go exclusively to developing countries. It is entirely conceivable that the authorities of an industrialized country could request the ILO to designate one or several high-level consultants who would serve as catalysts during the preparation of national or sectoral programmes (or even provincial in the case of a federal state), or one for an industrial or mining area.

50. Tripartite missions to evaluate the effectiveness of labour inspection systems should also be put at the disposal of governments which request them. The Programme and Budget for the biennium 1976–77 already foresees the principle of such missions whose role would be to objectively evaluate the organisation and functioning of labour inspection, the obstacles which inspection faces in performing its mission, practices concerning co-operation with employers' and workers' organisations, the procedures for starting legal action, the level of penal sanctions, the status of inspectors, their training, etc.

51. Finally, joint missions composed of a representative from employer circles and one from worker circles - often accompanied by an independent specialist - could go to a country at its request to undertake a task similar to that of the mobile teams. In the opposite direction, joint missions composed of representatives of one or more developing countries could carry out study tours in one or several countries of the same region or a different region to observe the operation of other national systems and to exchange views and experience with their colleagues in the host country. Such missions and study tours could take place in connection with different Industrial Committee meetings, regional advisory committees, regional conferences, or on the occasion of another meeting (seminar, symposium, etc.) organised under ILO auspices.

C. Studies, research and tripartite meetings

52. **General considerations.** Studies, research and meetings constitute the essential element which will permit the ILO to aid member States and the Organization itself to obtain the fundamental information indispensable to the satisfactory carrying out of their programmes. In many cases research and studies will lead to reports to be examined by tripartite meetings called upon to draw from them conclusions concerning future ILO action.

53. In view of the number of governmental institutions, regional and international organisations and national research institutions which are engaged in practical studies of the working environment, the ILO programme of research and studies concerning working conditions and environment will rest on a triple concern:

(i) First, there should be strengthening of national labour institutes or centres - whether they be government or academic institutions or those created by professional associations - which undertake studies in the field of working conditions and environment. Already many national institutes benefit from ILO technical assistance, notably in the framework of UNDP activities. These activities should be increased in coming years in order to permit these institutes to enlarge the scope of their investigations, to improve their methodology and their working tools - for example, by improving the labour statistics at their disposal - and to enlarge their number.

(ii) Secondly - and this is a point emphasised during all the consultations and in several government replies (Denmark, Norway, Sweden) - it falls to the ILO to assure better co-ordination of research undertaken at the national, regional and international levels. It should be an essential ILO function to assist all institutions which undertake research in the field of working conditions and environment to be mutually informed about the programmes and trends in research undertaken in other countries or by other organisations, to evaluate the results of their work, to indicate the gaps in research under way, etc.

It was pointed out in this connection that far from declining during the international economic recession as some observers had predicted, interest in the field of working conditions and environment has considerably grown in the last three or four years. Numerous institutions, both public and private, have devoted increasing resources to the reinforcement of measures for the protection of workers, the reduction or elimination of

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1 Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1976–77, paragraph 200.
assembly line work, the development and spread of new forms of work organisation and the participation of workers in the design of jobs and more generally in decisions concerning their conditions of work. One direct consequence of these initiatives has been an information explosion consisting of an enormous volume of documents of varying quality and interest characterised by numerous gaps and overlaps. There is thus a growing difficulty faced by interested parties to obtain the information they need. The ILO is well situated to serve as a catalyst in this field by playing an active role in co-ordinating research and serving as an information clearing house on experiments in progress.

In view of the importance given to this aspect, it is proposed that the ILO organise every two years meetings for co-ordinating research in the field of working conditions and environment. Such meetings at the regional or international level could be planned so that the lessons drawn from their work could be taken into consideration in the preparation of ILO medium-term plans. Travel expenses of the participants at the meetings should normally be charged to the institutions invited to participate, with the ILO only paying per diem. Certain participants coming from employers' and workers' circles should be invited at ILO expense to these co-ordination meetings, in order that the evaluation of research would not be done only by specialists but would benefit from a tripartite approach. Through these meetings, the comparison of research would permit the advancement of knowledge and research on a co-ordinated basis at the lowest cost.

Finally, the ILO should supplement national and regional efforts through a programme of international comparative research. This ILO research programme would be oriented towards practical action and would be closely linked with other studies at the national, regional or international level while utilising to the maximum national resources and talents. It should include the establishment of a detailed plan for a general inquiry into the protection of workers and conditions of work according to a uniform methodology permitting the development of national case studies during the next two biennia. This corresponds to "the intention announced by the Director-General during the 59th Session of the International Labour Conference of initiating a general inquiry into work whose purpose is to reinforce the effectiveness of action by the International Labour Organisation at all levels", specifically referred to in the 1975 resolution of the Conference (paragraph 4.1(a)) and concerning which several governments emphasised interest in their replies (for example Australia, Finland). Certain themes of this programme of comparative research would concern the specific problems which exist concerning the various aspects of working conditions and environment. These problems have been mentioned in part III C above.

D. Dissemination of information and exchanges of experience

54. The dissemination of information - whether concerning occupational safety and health, ergonomics, hours of work or the quality of life at work or outside the workplace - is a function whose importance has been frequently stressed during consultations and in many replies from governments, for example, those of Canada, Denmark, France, Kuwait, New Zealand, Romania, Sweden and the United States.

55. A primary tool at the ILO's disposal in this field is the International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre (CIS). Its usefulness is widely recognised. Linked to the computer of the International Labour Office since 1974, the service lends itself to subsequent research which is both selective and in-depth. At present, it is essentially large and medium-size enterprises, official safety and health services, research institutes and libraries which call upon the services of CIS. It would be advisable on the one hand to be able to add to the Centre's current output information likely to be of greater interest to small undertakings, particularly those in developing countries, and on the other to expand its scope of action with a view to permitting it to include within its activities all of the problems relating to working conditions and environment. This question will be

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1 The co-ordination of specialised research concerning occupational safety and health could also be included on the agendas of the periodic meetings of national occupational safety and health centres affiliated with CIS. In addition, action to this effect should be undertaken jointly with the International Research Committee of ISSA.
placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the CIS national centres (Bucharest, May 1977).

56. A second method of dissemination consists in certain ILO periodic or specialised publications - such as the Social and Labour Bulletin, the International Labour Review, the Legislative Series or Co-operative Information - and those of the International Institute for Labour Studies.

57. The Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety has demonstrated its usefulness for the dissemination of information. It appears to be the only work of its kind in the world, with 11,000 copies having been sold in French and English. It would be desirable to proceed with its up-dating beginning in 1978, possibly on a successive basis. Four other ILO publications correspond to a very widespread need among member States: the Yearbook of Labour Statistics, the International Directory of Occupational Safety and Health Services and Institutions1; the International Directory of Training Courses2 in this field; and the Directory of Labour Institutes.

58. These various means of disseminating information can be reinforced by new measures likely to improve the ILO's effectiveness as a centre of information, particularly in the quality of working life field.

59. It became apparent during the consultations, however, that if there was genuine need for information on a number of points, there was likewise a no less real saturation in this regard given the current explosion of information of varying quality. It was therefore stressed that the ILO's problem was not always to disseminate more but to disseminate better, seeing to it that the right type of information reaches the right person or organisation at the right moment; in other words, in general, when one is confronted with taking a position on a problem.

60. In order to move towards this objective, the policy concerning dissemination of information should place particular emphasis on the following points:

(i) first, it should give preference to the dissemination of information provided in reply to a direct request, particularly if this request comes from a governmental body or an employers' or workers' organisation. Requests for information addressed to the ILO should thus be treated with careful attention either by providing the petitioner, in a way best suited to the needs he has expressed, with information which is at the ILO's disposal, or, possibly, if the ILO has no information when it concerns a field within its competence, by modifying the work programme in order to be able to gather the requested information from the appropriate sources. To respond to a suggestion of the Government of the United States in this respect, it is proposed that the ILO establish an occupational safety and health hazard alert system. When a member State would discover a potential danger for occupational health or safety (such as exposure to vinyl chloride or kepone), the competent authority in this State would issue a "hazard alert" which would be routed to the Director-General of the ILO. The Director-General would provide for translation and transmittal to all other member States on an urgent basis, requesting them to inform him what their national practice is concerning occupational exposure and usages of the substance in question and to provide all technical information available for the Director-General's information and that of the State issuing the alert. Member States would likewise be requested to indicate their readiness to participate in a co-ordinated international research programme on the question if this were deemed necessary. WHO and UNEP should be appropriately associated with the establishment and working of such a system;

(ii) available documentation should be able to be adapted to the needs of different "customers". Apart from public authorities, employers' and workers' organisations, large undertakings, university libraries, etc., it appears that an additional effort in respect of the media arms of national and regional associations of engineers, architects, personnel directors, etc., could greatly assist in the dissemination of information and ideas;

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(iii) A third preferred method for the dissemination of information and experiences is through congresses or symposia which gather specialists who are concerned with particular aspects of working conditions and environment. Several governments stressed this point in their replies. The Office has convened numerous congresses and symposia on occupational safety and health and ergonomics. In a dozen or so years more than 10,000 specialists have been brought together at such meetings and symposia. It is essential that this type of action be continued, the objective being, if possible, to convene two symposia each year. The Eighth World Congress on the Prevention of Occupational Accidents and Diseases will be held in Bucharest in 1977. Similar congresses are organised by ISSA and the ILO every three years. The 1976-77 Programme and Budget provides information concerning other meetings of this nature organised by the ILO and which deal with the improvement of working conditions and environment (for example, the symposium on the role of ergonomics in the optimisation of the working environment and the symposium on the safety and health of migrant workers). But it is not necessary that these symposia are always the result of an initiative taken by the ILO. The ILO should likewise lend support and assistance to initiatives taken at the national level. Since the adoption of the resolution by the Conference in 1975, and taking into account the interest which it has created, the ILO has extended its support to an international seminar to be organised in Turin in 1976 on occupational safety policies and to an international symposium which will be organised in Sweden in 1977 on the problem of control of atmospheric pollution in the working environment. This latter meeting will serve as a means for disseminating the conclusions which the International Labour Conference will most probably have adopted on this point in June 1977. By supporting in this way the meetings organised under other auspices, the ILO has the opportunity to contribute — at little cost — to a more intensive exchange of experiences.

(iv) The dissemination of information should be in simplified form through brochures or brief leaflets which provide both the main points of a subject and the more complete sources of information which the reader can obtain on request. The preparation of data sheets concerning common hazards and their prevention might be considered in the field of occupational safety and health. The subjects requiring treatment are particularly numerous and it would be essential to proceed with a tripartite consultation in order to establish a selection; and

(v) Lastly, audio-visual means should make up a greater part of dissemination of information. The importance which member States attach to these means was once again confirmed during the consultations undertaken within the framework of the launching of PIACT. To have the maximum impact, television programmes and films should be produced as often as possible in the country itself, although foreign films can be useful in certain cases. This is the exchange which an ILO publication seeks to promote. The Office has a film library on safety and health at the disposal of any institution or individual who might be interested. This loan service is in great demand and it is important that the film library be progressively updated and supplemented.

E. Regional activities

61. Exchanges of views and experience on the problems of working conditions and environment should be systematically encouraged in various regions of the world. This is a point on which the participants in the regional consultations placed great emphasis.

62. The Inter-American Advisory Committee, at its Fifth Session (Quito, September-October 1976) will examine the question of policies and practices in the area of working conditions and environment as well as the question of conditions of work and employment of women with a view to a recommendation for their possible inclusion on the agenda of the next Conference of American States Members of the ILO.

63. It is proposed that the same procedure be followed with regard to the agenda of the next session of the Asian Advisory Committee.

64. As regards the European region, taking into account the interest shown in the problems of working conditions and environment by the meeting of the European members of the Governing Body, it will be proposed that "the improvement of working conditions and the protection of the working environment" be placed on the agenda of the Third European Regional Conference.

65. As for Africa, recommendations have already been formulated by the African Advisory Committee for the agenda of the next African Regional Conference. The question should be taken up again, however, at the time of the establishment of the agenda of the next session of the African Advisory Committee.

66. Co-operation between the ILO and regional organisations for economic co-operation should be intensified in the various fields of action defined in the present document. The ILO should in particular encourage the effort to have harmonisation of national legislation and regulations concerning the improvement of working conditions and environment undertaken within the framework of these organisations.

F. Industrial activities

67. The resolution adopted by the Conference in 1975 provides, in paragraph 4(1)(d), for: "the systematic use of Industrial Committees and analogous bodies to carry out an evaluation of situations concerning working conditions and environment in different countries and industries and the formulation of all appropriate recommendations for their improvement". The industrial and analogous Committee meetings should therefore be a basic tool in the carrying out of PIAST.

68. First, the conclusions adopted by these committees in the field of occupational safety and health and working conditions should be the subject of systematic examination and a special effort should be taken to assure their popularisation and their better application. This would be the case in particular for the industrial sectors in which conclusions have been recently adopted on questions relating to working conditions and environment. The same holds true for the Third Tripartite Technical Meeting for Mines other than Coal Mines (May 1975) with regard to workers' welfare; the Joint Committee on the Public Service (April 1976) with regard to conditions of work and employment of personnel in the public service and local, regional or provincial administrations; as well as the Iron and Steel Committee (September 1975) and the Chemical Industries Committee (February 1976) with regard to the working environment.

69. With regard to the meetings of these last two committees, it would be well to emphasise that, while both refer in their conclusions to the resolution of the International Labour Conference concerning future action of the ILO in the field of working conditions and environment, either by recalling (Iron and Steel Committee) the invitation which it contains, addressed to member States, "to set periodically for themselves a number of definite objectives designed to reduce as far as possible certain industrial accidents and occupational diseases", or by inviting (Chemical Industries Committee) governments and organisations of employers and workers "to take all appropriate measures with a view to applying in the chemical industries the recommendations" of this resolution, neither of the two felt in a position to formulate its conclusions with a degree of precision which would go as far as fixing "standards for reducing the accident rate, to be obtained within a stated period of time by means of national tripartite action", according to the wish expressed by the Director-General in his reply to the Conference last year. This should justify promotional measures taken at the national level in the industrial sectors concerned. ILO offices and technical co-operation experts in safety and health and labour administration may be called upon to promote initiatives aimed at a more systematic examination of the conclusions adopted by Industrial Committees especially basing themselves on the provisions contained in the draft Recommendation concerning the establishment of tripartite machinery to promote the implementation of international labour standards (paragraph 6(b)). In case of a mission of a multi-disciplinary team concerning working conditions and environment, such a promotional activity could also fall within its mandate. The publishing, on an experimental basis, of several illustrated brochures which reproduce the main conclusions of the Iron and Steel and Chemical Industries Committees concerning working conditions and environment is foreseen in order to facilitate this promotional activity.
70. Second questions relating to working conditions and environment should appear on the agenda of forthcoming Industrial Committees.

71. This is already the case for:
- the Coal Mines Committee (April-May 1976) (occupational safety and health);
- the Metal Trades Committee (April 1977) (safety, health and the working environment);
- the Committee on Work on Plantations (December 1976) (housing, medical care, social services and occupational safety and health);
- the Joint Meeting on Conditions of Work and Employment in the Postal and Telecommunications Services (1977);
- the Tripartite Technical Meeting for Civil Aviation (1977) (occupational safety and health); and

72. Furthermore, it is proposed that the Programme of Industrial Activities for 1978/79 include the placing of questions relating to working conditions and environment on the agenda of several committees. This concerns:
- the Textiles Committee (conditions of work, including problems relating to work organisation);
- the Inland Transport Committee (occupational safety and health on railways);
- the Petroleum Committee (working conditions and environment);
- the Iron and Steel Committee (improvement of working conditions and environment);
- the Chemical Industries Committee (general conditions of work and remuneration regulated by legislation or collective agreements);
- the Advisory Committee of Salaried Employees and Professional Workers (safety and health in commerce and offices);
- the Second Tripartite Technical Meeting for the Leather and Footwear Industry (effects of technological progress on working conditions and environment).

The problems of working conditions and environment would likewise be reviewed in the context of "social and labour problems in developing countries" which is proposed for inclusion on the agenda of the Second Tripartite Technical Meeting for the Printing and Allied Trades.

73. Third, it is envisaged that provision will be made in the 1978-79 biennium for the organisation, on an experimental basis at the end of an Industrial Committee meeting, of a bipartite or tripartite study tour for a few days in a country which would be prepared to receive participants on such a tour for delegates from developing countries (or, at their own expense, those from industrialised countries), in order to permit them to study on the spot the problem of working conditions and environment in their industry.

74. As regards maritime workers, it is likely that new or revised international standards will be adopted by the 62nd (Maritime) Session of the International Labour Conference (October 1976) with regard to holidays with pay for seafarers, the protection of young seafarers and the conditions of maritime workers serving on ships where conditions are below standard, in particular those registered under flags of convenience.

1 See the paper submitted to the Industrial Activities Committee at its May 1976 Session.
75. The Committee on Conditions of Work in the Fishing Industry may be convened in 1978-79 to examine various questions dealing inter alia with hours of work and paid leave of fishermen. The Tripartite Subcommittee on Seafarers' Welfare should also meet during this period.

G. Activities in the rural sector

76. The resolution adopted by the Conference in 1975 indicated that one of the factors which should be taken into account in the preparation of an international programme was "the increase of ILO resources devoted to working conditions and environment and the improvement of its technical co-operation methods in this field, especially in rural areas".1

77. In his reply to the Conference, the Director-General indicated as a first type of urgent action to be included in this programme "the improvement of conditions of work in the rural sector in developing countries, especially in agriculture" by emphasising that the "time has come for the ILO to co-operate more fully with its member States in improving conditions in the rural areas in the Third World, especially in tropical and sub-tropical agriculture".

78. It has been indicated above that knowledge on the facts concerning working conditions in the rural sector are insufficient. A programme change has been made in the Programme and Budget for 1976-77 to provide for a survey, undertaken jointly by the Occupational Safety and Health and Conditions of Work and Life Branches, which aims at a better knowledge of the problems and means of solution as well as a review of the practical accomplishments in various countries to assist rural populations to benefit from technological progress and to improve their conditions of work and safety and health. During the consultations organised within the framework of the launching of PIACT, the Office learned of several experiments, often of a limited character but very concrete, conducted in various countries with a view to reducing the heaviness of the tasks of rural workers, while at the same time increasing their productivity. Such experiments, which certainly are to be found in other countries, deserve closer study in order to draw out useful lessons for laying the foundations of a programme of practical action in this field.

79. The programme of certain pilot missions of multi-disciplinary teams which have been requested by several developing countries should stress or even, if necessary in an initial stage, be exclusively devoted to problems of working conditions and living environment in the rural sector.

80. Apart from what is to be learned from the results of research and missions of multi-disciplinary teams, it is necessary in any case to draw attention to the following three points:

(i) the effort to improve working conditions and occupational safety and health in the rural sector should not be undertaken in isolation. It should fall within the framework of an over-all rural development policy concerning which the Governing Body will be requested to decide when it examines the in-depth review of rural development and should be related to action taken by other organisations, in particular the FAO and WHO;

(ii) this effort should be based on existing international standards, especially the Convention (No. 128) concerning Labour Inspection in Agriculture, 1969; the Recommendation (No. 132) concerning the improvement of conditions of life and work of tenants, sharecroppers and similar categories of agricultural workers, 1969; and the Convention (No. 141) and Recommendation (No. 149) concerning Organisations of Rural Workers and their Role in Economic and Social Development, 1975. It is in fact the role of these organisations, according to the terms of the second Recommendation cited above, to "contribute to the improvement of the working and living conditions of rural workers, including occupational safety and health". In this respect the codes of practice concerning safety and health in agricultural work (1965), forestry work (1969) and the construction and use of tractors (1975) are valuable tools.

1 Paragraph 4(1)(b).
(iii) It should also be linked to action relating to the improvement of living conditions (housing, nutrition, etc.) given the close relationship which exists between the working and living environment.

81. As soon as the information provided by the study undertaken and multidisciplinary missions warrant it, a tripartite inter-regional symposium should be organised in a developing country, in collaboration with FAO and WHO, to permit an exchange of views and experience among developing countries on concrete achievements in the improvement of the working and living conditions of rural populations.

82. In addition, technical co-operation projects aimed at improving working and living conditions in the rural environment should be put into action (see paragraph 36 (Annex 2) above).

83. As regards plantation workers, the conclusions which will be adopted by the Committee on Work on Plantations, at its Seventh Session (December 1976), especially those concerning "housing, medical and welfare facilities" should serve as a basis for promoting national action.

H. Activities concerning small enterprises

84. Just as it stressed the importance of the rural sector in its 1975 resolution, the Conference emphasised small enterprises.

85. In fact it is often in small enterprises - which employ the greater part of the working population in industry - that the most laborious or most tedious tasks are to be found; that the accident rate is high; conditions of work are unfavourable; trade union membership is low; employers are little inclined or financially incapable of carrying out needed improvement; workers, fearing loss of their employment, are less demanding; and the incidence of labour inspection is insufficient.

86. But it is also in this sector that the most simple and least expensive improvements are yet to be introduced, particularly (but not exclusively) in developing countries: guarding of machinery and equipment; better environmental conditions; maintenance of order and cleanliness; better protection from hazards of goods handling; a more rational ordering of the production and maintenance process; providing workers with adequate sanitary facilities; and innumerable other measures.

87. As in the rural sector, an over-all approach is indispensable concerning small enterprises. Member States are therefore invited to define programmes which deal not only with working conditions but also with their economic position (credit facilities, enterprise services). Co-operatives may play an important role in this field.

88. Because of the dispersal of small enterprises, it is through the intervention of professional associations or inter-enterprise bodies - for example, the services concerning occupational medicine and occupational safety and health - that these improvement efforts have been undertaken. It is proposed to undertake a study of the best means used by these inter-enterprise associations or bodies in certain countries for the improvement of working conditions and safety and health in small enterprises. Frequently these associations come to productivity centres to obtain technical assistance in the management field: it is essential to see that these centres, dedicated a part of their efforts to the problems of working conditions and environment and to measures specifically for their improvement.

I. Activities concerning special groups of workers

89. If the problems of working conditions and environment are to be concretely covered, it is necessary that be studied not only generally or in relation to a specific region or economic sector, but also in relation with the specific needs of specific categories of the working population.

See also the resolution concerning the contribution of small and medium undertakings to economic and social progress and to the creation of employment, in particular in developing countries, adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 60th Session (1975).
Concerning women, the improvement of their working conditions should be sought within the framework of the policy described in the Declaration on Equality of Opportunity and Treatment for Women Workers and in the two resolutions which accompanied it, adopted by the Conference in 1975.

The promotion of international labour standards concerning migrant workers — and especially the Convention and Recommendation adopted in 1975 — will guide the action concerning foreign and migrant workers, so that they will benefit from equality of opportunity and treatment with respect to working conditions and environment as in other fields.

Care should be taken that, within the framework of PIACT, specific activities are devoted to the conditions of work of young workers, older workers and handicapped workers.

J. Co-operation with other intergovernmental organisations

The majority of the replies received from the various intergovernmental organisations mentioned in paragraph 11 above show a great interest in the resolution adopted by the Conference in 1975 and state their intention to give their full cooperation to the ILO in this respect. The replies of the FAO, WHO and UNIDO were particularly detailed in the information they contain on the action undertaken by these organisations which could lead to joint action or action related to PIACT. Several governments insisted in their replies on the role of co-ordinator which should belong to the ILO concerning the activities of the various international organisations relative to the working environment.

Special mention must be made of the United Nations Environment Programme since the Conference resolution, in paragraph 4(3), invites the Governing Body to instruct the Director-General "to undertake, in collaboration with and with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme, a coherent programme of ILO action concerning the environment". At its 196th Session (November 1975), the International Organisations Committee of the Governing Body had before it a detailed document on this question", and the Governing Body gave directions concerning the guiding principles which should guide the development of this programme.

A joint UNEP/ ILO programming mission will take place at the end of May 1976. In addition to "educational and training activities" concerning the environment - specifically emphasised by the resolution - which the ILO could undertake within the framework of its various training programmes, it is foreseen that the improvement of working conditions and environment, considered as a particular eco-system, will be the essential element in the discussions with UNEP since it is in this field that cooperation between the ILO and UNEP can be particularly fruitful. This cooperation will extend to certain aspects of human settlements of which the working environment is a part, and to certain aspects of the environment and development, in view of the "economic and social consequences of environmental policies" mentioned in the Conference resolution.

Thus the ILO programme of action concerning the environment, which represents the specific contribution of the ILO to the United Nations Environment Programme and which must be undertaken with the co-operation and support of UNEP, appears as an extension of PIACT, which is thereby related to the larger domains of human settlements, the environment and development. In addition, this programme can represent one of the ways by which working conditions and environment can be incorporated in management of the environment and development planning. This favours co-operation not only with UNEP, but also with other international organisations.

1 Resolution concerning a plan of action with a view to promoting equality of opportunity and treatment for women workers; and resolution concerning equal status and equal opportunity for women and men in occupation and employment.

2 GB.198/10/6/7.

3 GB.198/15/26 and GB.198/10/6/7.