INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

MINUTES
OF THE
178TH SESSION
OF
THE GOVERNING BODY

GENEVA, 3-6 MARCH 1970
Subject to the amendment to paragraph 5(b) proposed by Mr. Vilanes Ramos, the Governing Body adopted the proposal in paragraph 5 of the Office paper.

The sitting closed at 12.55 p.m.

Approved by the Governing Body at the first sitting of its 180th Session, held on 29 May 1970.

Héctor GROS ESPIEL, Chairman.

ANNEX

Director-General's Statement of 9 February 1970
Announcing His Resignation

I have decided to resign from the office of Director-General of the International Labour Office, effective 31 May 1970.

I have served as Director-General of the ILO for well over 21 years, my first term of office having begun in the fall of 1948. My present term has 3 1/2 years more to run, expiring in September 1973.

The ILO, having just concluded the celebration of its 50th Anniversary, has entered the second half-century of its activity. At this turning point in the life of the Organisation, I have come to the view that the time has come to place the responsibility for the new period which lies ahead in the hands of a new chief executive officer. I say this for three basic reasons:

Firstly, I would clearly not seek a new term of office upon the completion of my present term and therefore believe it in the long-term best interest of the Organisation that it face up to a change at this time would be healthy. It would open up the possibilities of new and fresh approaches to our existing programmes, including in particular those which have been recently launched, like the World Employment Programme. They establish new vistas for organisational and policy development, and could benefit by the administration of a newly committed leader.

Secondly, 21-plus years of service as Director-General is a very long period - the longest that any person has ever served as an executive head of an international organisation - and I therefore believe that a change at this time would be healthy. It would open up the possibilities of new and fresh approaches to our existing programmes, including in particular those which have been recently launched, like the World Employment Programme. They establish new vistas for organisational and policy development, and could benefit by the administration of a newly committed leader.

Thirdly, it is now my personal desire and that of my wife to return to our country, the United States. There I will hope to use such experience as I have acquired in continuing to serve the public interest, whether that service shall be in the international, national or local areas.

So you see, I believe that I have "run my race" here and that I should now turn our "colours" over to whomever my Governing Body shall elect as my successor to continue our great mission. I am happy to be able to say that I shall be turning over a clean flag - one which waves more proudly today than ever before and which, during this last year, has been honoured by spiritual leaders of the world, notably Pope Paul VI when he accepted our invitation to attend and address the International Labour Conference in Geneva on 10 June 1969; by political, industrial and trade union leaders; by Heads of State from all parts of the world; and finally by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize, which I had the honour to accept on behalf of the ILO on 10 December last in Oslo. All of this demonstrates that the
message of the ILO, "Peace based upon social justice", has been finally heard and understood, and that our future role will be central to the world's most important preoccupations.

In announcing this decision, I also want to express publicly my thanks and appreciation to U Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and to each of the executive heads of the specialised international organisations, which together compose the United Nations system, as well as to the heads of the various regional international organisations, for the co-operation and help which they have always extended to me. To U Thant my special mark of respect and admiration for the leadership that he exercises within the UN system as a whole in concerting our efforts toward our common objective of peace and security.

The UN system is constantly buffeted by an angry sea but is surviving and will continue to survive and will emerge one day into more quiet waters, intact and strengthened. It is to this end that all people of good will must continue to work and bend their every effort. The UN system still remains man's principal hope for survival and fulfilment, and for the identification and eventual effective advancement and protection of his human and civil rights.

I also want to thank the Governing Body of the ILO and our constituency of 121 member States and the worker and employer representatives from these States for the honour and confidence that they have reposed in me in having asked me to lead this Organisation since 1948. To this I must add my sincere thanks to my staff. They have worked with me patiently, loyally, devotedly and competently in carrying out our official obligations. They have worked with me in the best tradition of the International Civil Service. Without their untiring efforts, my mandate would have remained unfulfilled. For this I shall remain forever grateful.

Now I would like to make a rather personal observation or comment. On occasion, government, worker and employer representatives have stated that it has meant a personal sacrifice on my part to remain as Director-General for so many years. It is only correct that I should now affirm that my service with the ILO has never been a sacrifice, but rather an unforgettable honour, experience and more. I can best express what I mean by more by quoting what I said in 1967 when I thanked the Governing Body for my re-election:

"It is a very great honour, for which I thank you, and not a sacrifice. It gives me an opportunity not only for official performance but also for personal satisfaction.

"Why personal satisfaction? Because those things in which we are engaged here coincide with my deepest personal convictions. In the first place, I hate discrimination from the bottom of my toes; in the second place, I am made ill by the vistas of poverty to be seen in the world; in the third place, I am overwhelmed by the problems of sickness that exist everywhere and especially among the less fortunate peoples. Next, I hate war and I realise that if we are going to make some impact on the problem of war and peace we must deal with its causes. I feel that in this Organisation we are at grips more than many people think with the causes which underlie the continuing generation of war. Finally, I believe profoundly in the brotherhood of man and in the necessity for love as the basic ingredient, the basic cement of this brotherhood.

"I believe that these are the elements for which we all work in this Organisation. This is why we are here - the workers, the employers and the governments. So what more could a man ask than to do his official duty, which coincides so completely with his personal convictions?"

So, as I announce my decision to resign, I would repeat: What more could a man have ever asked than to have done his official duty and to have had it coincide so completely with his personal convictions?

David A. Morse, Director-General.