

**FOR DECISION**

## SEVENTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Report of the Director-General****Obituary****Mr Sukesada Ito**

1. The Director-General announces with deep regret the death of Mr Sukesada Ito on Thursday, 6 December 2007, in Yokosuka, Japan. Mr Ito was a former Worker member of the Governing Body.
2. Mr Ito was born on 31 October 1935 in Osaka, Japan. His early education was at Kitano Senior High School in Osaka City. In 1954 he entered the Department of Shipbuilding Engineering at Osaka University – one of the most renowned shipbuilding engineering schools in the world. After graduating in 1958, he joined the Uraga Shipbuilding Corporation, where he worked as a ship designer. In 1971, following a vocational calling, he left the company to pursue a full-time trade union career.
3. Mr Ito's involvement in the trade union movement began in 1958 when he joined the Uraga Branch of the All Nippon Shipbuilding Workers' Union. His strong leadership and tireless dedication in promoting free and democratic trade unionism led to his appointment in 1971 as President of Sumitomo Heavy Industry Workers' Union, a nationwide enterprise-based union. Over the following years Mr Ito was to hold many senior posts within the Sumitomo Group's unions, including the presidency of the Federation of Sumitomo Heavy Industries Workers' Unions. His achievements in trade union circles were recognized in 1984, when he was elected as the Executive Committee Member of the Domei (then one of Japan's national trade union confederations). From 1987 to 1988 he served as the Executive Committee Member of the unified Japanese national trade union confederation (JTUC-RENGO), and from 1990 to 1994, as Vice-President of the JTUC-RENGO.
4. In June 1993 Mr Ito was elected as Worker member of the Governing Body, a position he held for ten years until November 2003. In 1996 he was elected as the Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Employment and Social Policy (ESP). During the 32 sessions that he served the Governing Body, he proved to be an enthusiastic promoter of the ILO's principles and core Conventions and was known as an advocate of international labour standards at the global level. In December 1997 and August 2001 he served as Worker Vice-Chairperson at the 12th and 13th ILO Asian Regional Meetings in Bangkok, Thailand. From 1993 to 2003 Mr Ito attended 12 Sessions of the International

Labour Conference, most often as a Workers' delegate. In June 1998 he was elected Worker Vice-President of the 86th Session of the Conference.

5. Mr Ito dedicated much of his spare time to promoting the education of workers, sharing his experience and knowledge with his colleagues and with young trade union leaders. Between 1997 and 2003 he inaugurated a series of seminars and training programmes on productivity, international labour standards and trade unionism in Africa, which were jointly organized by the Bureau for Workers' Activities of the ILO, JTUC-RENGO and the Japan International Labour Foundation (JILAF).
6. Mr Ito will be recalled as a truly exceptional person by all those who had the privilege of knowing him and working with him in the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference. Though called upon to carry out high-level trade union missions requiring remarkable negotiation ability and great political tact, he nevertheless remained close to the people at the workplace and to those without a voice. His friends and colleagues will remember him as a great and genuine trade union leader, someone respected not only for his authority but also for his profound humanity.
7. *The Governing Body may wish to invite the Director-General to transmit its condolences to Mr Ito's family, and to the JTUC-RENGO.*

Geneva, 12 March 2008.

*Point for decision:* Paragraph 7.