



## FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Review of sectoral activities****Contents**

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## I. Introduction

1. The purpose of this document is to explore possible approaches to ensure greater effectiveness and visibility of the sectoral activities programme. A holistic approach, making appropriate use of all ILO means of action and fully integrating responses to the needs of sectoral constituents into the Organization's objectives, is proposed. In this manner, the sectoral activities programme would become an effective platform for addressing all aspects of the ILO's work as it deals with real-life issues facing employers and workers in the workplace.

## II. Background

2. The founders of the industrial and analogous committees – the precursors of the sectoral meetings – had hoped that the industrial committees would: (a) provide a continuous forum to encourage open dialogue between the social partners; (b) nurture their collaboration on sector-specific labour and social issues; and (c) be crafted with a view to domestic impact and practical usefulness for workers and employers in industry throughout the world economy. The basic premise was that this would be conducive to worker protection and economic productivity.
3. Over the years, the operations of established and regular sectoral committees generated calls for renovation and reform, resulting in six such reform exercises.<sup>1</sup> This present review is the seventh. These exercises have all had the objective of rendering sectoral committees and meetings: (i) more effective, especially with respect to follow-up and to impact at the national level; (ii) more relevant to member States, recognizing the diversity of industrial conditions among them, as well as to workers and employers in specific industries and occupations; and (iii) more efficient in terms of time, cost and procedure. These objectives did not fully materialize. The reforms resulted more in procedural changes than in substantive innovations. In addition, the programme experienced at various stages significant budgetary limitations particularly as regards the development and implementation of follow-up activities. The 1995 reforms were in fact the most far-reaching in that the sectors were redefined (22 sectors selected for continued attention with 12 meetings per biennium) and the parameters for sectoral meetings were revised.<sup>2</sup> Meetings however have been and remain the core of the programme.

<sup>1</sup> These took place in 1961-63, 1965-69, 1970-72, 1980-82, 1988-91 and 1994-95.

<sup>2</sup> The 1995 evaluation promised smaller, more frequent and shorter meetings; a single Governing Body representative; the adoption of resolutions and conclusions (except where otherwise decided); a limit on the time devoted to resolutions; and possibilities to have symposia with no specific output and for meetings of experts for the preparation of guidelines and codes of practice.

**Sectoral meetings: Room for greater flexibility**

The purpose of sectoral meetings is to foster a better understanding of the social and labour issues in various industries, to promote consensus among ILO constituents on the nature of the problems and how to tackle them, and to provide guidance for effective national and international policy and industry practice. Sectoral meetings provide a forum for social dialogue, *par excellence*, allowing the tripartite and bipartite constituents to engage in discussions and to exchange information. The present Standing Orders enable sectoral meetings to adopt conclusions and resolutions or, depending on the subject matter, permits sectoral constituents to engage in open and in-depth discussion of the issues and problems in order to pave the way for moving forward without necessarily resulting in the adoption of conclusions or resolutions. Depending on the objective to be achieved, or indeed the subject matter, flexible use could be made of either format. Another type of meeting provided for is one of experts that could be convened for the development and adoption, or revision or evaluation of codes of practice, guidelines, manuals, etc. It is also possible to provide for smaller meetings (regional or national) as appropriate.

4. Throughout each reform process, there were conflicting expectations of different constituents concerning the programme. For instance, the 1994-95 reform exercise which took effect in 1996, identified as anomalies the facts that sectoral committees and meetings: (i) are supposed to provide for an open dialogue but concentrate on negotiations over formal texts, in particular conclusions and resolutions; (ii) reaffirm the universal coverage of resolutions and conclusions but expect them to be relevant and to be implemented in very diverse national circumstances; (iii) demand direct national impact, but function without any national mechanisms to promote local or regional impact; (iv) seek flexibility, but focus upon operational as well as budgetary uniformity across sectoral committees and technical meetings; and (v) generate requests for action, but without reference to the organizational and budgetary implications of such requests.
5. The Office, at the 277th Session of the Governing Body (March 2000),<sup>3</sup> presented a paper assessing the extent to which the expectations of the 1995 reforms had been met and identifying possible improvements in the programme in terms of relevance, timeliness, impact, flexibility and integration with other ILO programmes. This was in response to the Programme and Budget proposals for 2000-01 which had foreseen the preparation of a paper reviewing the sectoral activities programme “bearing in mind the operational objectives under Strategic Objective No. 4 and the need to provide more efficient servicing and focusing of sectoral activities and other sectoral meetings in the context of the ILO’s strategic objectives”.<sup>4</sup> The Committee, following a discussion of the paper, had requested a revised version for its further consideration. The Director-General, however, felt that the present review provided an opportunity to engage in even greater consultations with the constituents for a better integration of the programme into the Decent Work Agenda, the strategic and operational objectives of the Organization and its strategic budgeting process.

### III. The consultation process

6. Informal consultations were held with the employers and workers through the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and representatives of the International Trade Secretariats (ITS), the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and members of the Employers’ group of the Conference, and governments during the Governing Body session and the International Labour Conference, in March and June 2001, respectively. The Committee was provided with a progress report at the 280th Session (March 2001) of

<sup>3</sup> GB.277/STM/1, pp. 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> GB.276/PFA/9, pp. 43-49.

the Governing Body. The consultations, which had the benefit of an informal background paper prepared by the Office, centred on how best to respond to the needs of the sectoral constituents and at the same time achieve the integration of the ILO's sectoral work in the overall strategic policy framework of the Organization. The following reflects the views expressed by the sectoral constituents.

7. The workers were of the view that the central objective of ILO sectoral activities should be promotion of social dialogue and tripartism both at the national and, increasingly, at the regional and global levels. Implementing this objective would require strong social partners and more effective sectoral structures. They expressed interest in more regular tripartite forums for dialogue on global developments in their respective sectors. Meetings should, however, not necessarily be the primary focus of sectoral work: it was important, for instance, to put in place an institutional framework to address further the issue of information and communication technologies. They considered that sectoral activities should contribute to the realization of the ILO's strategic objectives and, in particular, the operationalization of the Decent Work Agenda in ways that maximized the effect of ILO responses to constituents' needs.
8. The IOE employers considered the sectoral meetings and activities programme a solid component of the social dialogue pillar. They felt that while certain improvements were possible, including taking greater account of the ILO's strategic objectives, these should avoid prejudicing the unique opportunity which sectoral meetings and other sectoral activities provided to meet and discuss issues identified as relevant to employers and workers in their everyday reality. They saw possibilities for the sectoral activities programme to be more proactive in responding to the expressed priority needs of constituents, such as on sectoral skills training and productivity. Moreover, meetings should not always focus on the adoption of conclusions and resolutions: they could, for instance, also be used to have an open dialogue on potentially difficult issues, or to adopt, review, and assess the impact of codes of practice and guidelines. It was not considered appropriate for sectoral meetings to be redirected towards international or regional sectoral bargaining.
9. The governments were in general favourable to integrating sectoral activities into mainstream activities and examining how sectoral activities could add value to the Decent Work Agenda and contribute to the strategic objectives, in particular social dialogue. Some governments considered that it was important to give attention to outcomes, which implied that an important component of integration should be evaluation in order to assess and measure the use and usefulness of outputs in promoting decent work. They saw it as necessary to examine the reasons for the low level of government participation in sectoral meetings and to develop ways to enhance government interest and participation.

#### **IV. Integration into mainstream activities**

10. In the course of the consultations, the Office sought to place the present review exercise within the context of the new strategic policy framework of the Organization that had received the endorsement of the tripartite constituents in both the Governing Body and the Conference, namely: the Decent Work Agenda and its implementation via the ILO's strategic and operational objectives and through its strategic budgeting process. It was conscious of the importance of taking into account the specific needs of different sectoral constituents. The ideas put forward by the Office were for integrating sectoral activities with mainstream activities, not only in programme design which already brings together all

economic sectors of activity within its frame,<sup>5</sup> but indeed an integrated programme designed around all ILO means of action to further the objectives of the sectoral dimension of ILO work. This would provide platforms to integrate key components of knowledge, advocacy and service.

11. Integration with the mainstream of ILO activities requires an examination of all ILO means of action as they may be relevant to the various sectors of economic activity in order to identify which means – and ultimately what particular strategy – would best respond to the needs of the constituents and contribute to the achievement of the Organization’s objectives. It aims at enhancing the relevance, coherence and impact of sectoral activities.
12. Improving the relevance of sectoral activities means increasing their ability to respond to the needs of sectoral constituents, taking account of varying circumstances in different countries, while, at the same time, promoting ILO objectives in real terms. The relevance and coherence of sectoral activities may be reinforced through in-depth analyses of the situations, issues and problems of the sectors concerned in different countries or regions. The examination of these through reports and studies and a discussion of them through meetings permit the sectoral constituents and the Office to elaborate strategies to address them as well as to provide guidance both to the constituents and to the ILO. Consensus among sectoral constituents on the utility of any proposed activity is the best guarantee of relevance.
13. Impact, if it can be demonstrated to be a result of the Organization’s deliberate action in response to constituents’ needs and that it contributes to the attainment of predetermined objectives, is an important indicator of organizational effectiveness. Mechanisms for impact assessment have, as a general rule, been incorporated in the design of all sectoral activities to facilitate feedback and appropriate programme readjustment. This should be further strengthened. Evaluation would also serve to validate policies and programmes which respond satisfactorily to constituents’ needs, highlighting, among other things, the requisite criteria for success. It would allow a refinement of the choice of means, for example, meetings (global, regional or national as appropriate), research, publications, advisory services. It would take into account impact at all levels and in particular impact at the regional and national levels. The role of ILO field offices in this regard would be crucial. At present, however, except for one or two cases, field structures rarely contain sectoral expertise.

## **V. The means to give effect to integrating sectoral activities**

14. To give effect to the integration concept outlined above, various means of action are available to the Organization. These include meetings, promotional activities, technical cooperation, research and publications, action programmes, “one-stop shop” facilities, and partnerships. Sectoral meetings have been the primary, and indeed the traditional, means

<sup>5</sup> The sectoral activities programme currently reflects the integration of all ILO activities for specific branches of economic activity. Its primary functions are threefold: (a) to enable an exchange of information on developments in each of the industries concerned; (b) to evaluate the progress made in various countries in the implementation of guidance resulting from the programme; and (c) to assess the impact of the various activities of the Office under the programme. The Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings plays an important role in linking these three processes by: (a) assisting in the planning of the programme’s content; (b) supervising programme implementation; and (c) reviewing and evaluating its activities.

used to implement the sectoral activities programme. These meetings provide an impetus for research, advocacy and a forum for social dialogue. An action programme might better respond to the needs of a particular sector where the constituents were in agreement. The Committee would assist in planning, reviewing and evaluating such a programme. It might also be possible to consider a combination of the above means which best correspond to the needs of constituents in specific sectors. This could be pursued in a flexible manner and reviewed at regular intervals to determine whether and what type of adjustments should be made. Some of these means are reviewed below.

**(a) Sectoral meetings: Promoting sectoral social dialogue**

- 15.** An important continuing need identified by sectoral constituents is for an opportunity and a forum for social dialogue. Sectoral activities are seen as a solid component of the social dialogue pillar. They provide an opportunity for dialogue on current sectoral issues which can result in practical advice and guidance to the tripartite constituents, in the form of best practices, training packages, codes of practice and guidelines. Sectoral social dialogue, through the opportunities for networking and the exchange of experiences, strengthens the parties thereby directly contributing to the realization of the social dialogue objective of the Organization. Reports for sectoral meetings and a number of complementary studies published within the same context, mostly in the form of working papers, provide up-to-date information on the sectors concerned. Such reports and related meetings have, of late, provided higher visibility to ILO action in the relevant sectors through increased media coverage. The meetings provide an important channel for dissemination, and are also an essential means for advocacy, for example, on the application of not only ILO fundamental principles and rights at work but also on other relevant international labour standards, codes of practice and guidelines as well as other ILO policy objectives such as decent work. They are, in addition, instrumental in identifying constituents' needs to guide ILO action.
- 16.** As far as the meetings themselves are concerned, there seems to be a widely shared view that further improvements can and should be made to ensure that they meet their intended goals. Critical among the elements for improvement are those relating to the need for the enhanced participation of constituents in meetings, as contained in an earlier document submitted to this Committee.<sup>6</sup> It was particularly important to find ways of enhancing government interest and participation in sectoral meetings (in recent years rather weak). One such proposal would be for the employers' and workers' groups, while maintaining their autonomy, to come to an agreement to select their participants mainly from the countries invited to send government representatives. This could also facilitate tripartite follow-up action at the national level. Another proposal could consist of the adoption of guidelines to govern the selection of participants to sectoral meetings. With due regard to the need to maintain the autonomy of the groups, criteria should be included to ensure that participants are knowledgeable of and active in the industry concerned and are representative of their sectors.
- 17.** While to date meetings have been the primary vehicle for implementing the sectoral activities programme, within the framework of the mainstreaming sectoral activities, the assumption would be that in a particular context, a global meeting may not necessarily be the best means of achieving a particular objective.

<sup>6</sup> See GB.277/STM/1, pp. 8-9 and 13.

**Going further?**

18. The question arises as to what role the social partners and the ILO should play in the development of more effective sectoral structures in order to enhance the capacities of sectoral constituents to deal with global issues confronting their sectors. Reference is made in this regard to the increase in and growing importance of regional and global social dialogue, framework agreements, voluntary initiatives and codes of conduct arising from increasingly globalized sectoral and corporate outlooks. These are among the important challenges of today. They provide opportunities and present major challenges to the ILO's tripartite constituents as well as to the Office. A number of recent sectoral meetings have called for smaller forums for reviewing trends in their sectors. Increasingly advice and assistance are being sought from the Office by global unions as well as multinational enterprises in certain sectors wishing to mainstream labour and social issues in their management processes. The Committee may wish to express its views on these developments, the new instruments of sectoral social dialogue and the role of sectoral social dialogue on these controversial, but highly topical, issues as well as on the respective roles of the social partners and of the Office.

**(b) Action programmes**

19. As indicated above, constituents may consider that the needs of a given sector for a particular period could best be served by an action programme, on whose content and design the Committee would be closely consulted. This could permit a wide range of means to be pursued so that clearly defined objectives can be met. For example, a combination of seminars, workshops, symposia, technical advisory services and targeted technical cooperation research and publications could offer a more systematic approach for the implementation of follow-up activities requested by sectoral meetings. Such an action programme could, within the overall objectives of the Organization, represent a strategic response to the needs of constituents. Appendix 1 contains two examples of action programmes which the Committee may wish to consider. While the text is solely for illustrative purposes, needing to be expanded and refined to the level required of ILO programmes, it nevertheless provides an idea of the nature of objectives action programmes would aim for. While their full implementation would require extra-budgetary resources, initial activities of the action programmes could be funded through seed money from the regular budget if the Committee would, for instance, agree to postpone one sectoral meeting scheduled in 2003 and use the savings for this purpose instead. Seed funding for entire action programmes in future biennia could also be provided through a similar approach.

**Action programme proposals open up new possibilities for sectoral work**

In addition to the proposals contained in Appendix 1, another proposal might be in the area of education and training for enhanced labour competence. The sectoral dimension of the ILO's work lends itself very well to the development of methodologies for creating frameworks for skills development. A pilot programme could, for instance, be launched in one sector for the development of such a methodology and for the elaboration of human resource guidelines for creating minimum skill level requirements towards certification for specific job categories. The purpose would be to train workers to levels set by a certification authority. This would encourage the migration of workers within similar job categories from one sector to another depending on the evolution of the industries concerned. The benefit for enterprises would be in increased productivity and efficiency, promoting safety and minimizing the cost of retraining.

**(c) The “one-stop sectoral shop”**

20. One-stop shops are becoming an ever more popular means of making services and information efficiently accessible. Their aim is to provide a single point of contact from which clients can access information, advice, and services from different units within an organization. This function has always been one of the important responsibilities of the sectoral activities programme.
21. The programme has the task of promoting the exchange of information on labour and social developments concerning particular economic sectors among the ILO's tripartite constituents. Such exchanges are facilitated by practically oriented research by the Office on topical sectoral issues and technical assistance to help solve labour problems. At the same time, different units within the Office carry out work which is of relevance to particular sectors or which has sectoral dimensions and ramifications. The sectoral activities programme should systematically track these activities to ensure information about them is easily accessible to sectoral constituents. Such a one-stop sectoral shop should be web-based and, as an added service to sectoral constituents, include links to related information and services available on other sites.
22. The “one-stop shop” facility would greatly strengthen the mainstreaming of sectoral activities. It could, depending on the availability of resources, be one of the main channels for the dissemination of information on: problems and issues specific to each sector; sectoral innovations of ILO interest; action by governments and the social partners to improve working conditions and employment prospects; social protection in a given sector; the way in which general policy objectives might be working in a particular sector; and, if they do not work, the type of flexibility required, etc. The “shop” could provide direct access to an array of products, such as codes of practice, guidelines, best practices, training packages and ILO publications for use by constituents.

**(d) Mainstreaming sectoral work in the ILO**

23. Although sectoral activities' most important contribution is towards promotion of social dialogue, it can also significantly contribute to all the ILO's strategic objectives. Given that all work is performed in a particular sector, the conditions, experience and views in each sector are relevant for the improvement, refinement and assessment of global action and policies in the world of work. Sectoral meetings and other activities thus provide a means to address substantive issues falling within the ambit of other strategic objectives and in this they have enormous potential for impact. There is, for instance, an important sectoral dimension to the Decent Work Agenda, which has, in addition, much scope for intersectoral collaboration on issues of important concern to sectoral constituents such as safety and health, HIV/AIDS, child labour, the promotion of fundamental principles and rights at work and multinational enterprises. Since, for instance, the conclusions and

resolutions adopted by sectoral meetings when they are directed at ILO action concern the entire Office and not just the Sectoral Activities Department, the Office could explore the setting up of intersectoral task forces to ensure proper mainstreaming and more effective follow-up action of meetings both at headquarters and in the field. Appendix 2 contains an inventory of ILO action and outputs of various programmes and units of the Office addressing sectoral issues or which have a sectoral dimension. It demonstrates not only the potential for linkages but also for the scope of the “one-stop shop”.

**(e) Enhancing partnerships**

24. There has already been well-established cooperation between the Office and a number of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system in relevant sectors. The sectoral activities programme presents an excellent opportunity to enhance partnership with the multilateral system in order to ensure that account is taken of labour and social dimensions in the programmes of individual organizations of the system. A striking example is in the area of sustainable development on which ILO sectoral constituents need guidance with criteria and indicators to ensure that labour aspects are integrated with the economic and environmental dimensions. Partnerships are already being pursued with the FAO, IMO, UNCTAD, UNESCO, and the WHO, for example. There is also a potential for the programme to extend its outreach and alliances in ways which bolster tripartism, enhance social dialogue and influence these organizations to incorporate labour and social issues into their agendas. A prime example is the IMO which in recent times has begun to focus firmly on the human element as an integral component of safety and the environment.

**(f) Proposing a package**

25. The Office is of the view that taking into account the elements set out above, a way forward could be to present a set of specific options, with each option containing a package combining meetings, action programmes and other means of action on the basis of the present budgetary allocation. The Committee could review each package and consider which of them could be the basis for a consensus. The Office is preparing these options and will orally present them to the Committee. In terms of procedure, the Committee may wish to consider whether it would want to set up a small tripartite working party to meet at the latest in January 2002 to prepare a final proposal on sectoral activities for the next session of the Governing Body.

## **VI. Sectoral meetings for 2003**

26. At the 279th Session of the Governing Body (November 2000), the Committee selected 12 sectors and topics to comprise the programme of sectoral meetings for 2002-03, but the meetings selected for 2003 and their agendas were to be subject to confirmation at this session of the Governing Body (see Appendix 3). In light of the above and in particular paragraphs 19 and 25, the Committee may wish to postpone its recommendation to the next session of the Governing Body.

27. *The Committee may wish to express its views on:*

- (a) *the approach presented in Part IV of the document or on any other approaches which it considers more appropriate;*
- (b) *the potential for action programmes referred to in paragraph 19 above;*

- (c) the concept of the “one-stop sectoral shop” set out in paragraph 20 above; and*
- (d) the questions raised in paragraph 18 above.*

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

- (a) set up a small working party to prepare a document on the above issues for the consideration of the Committee at the 283rd Session of the Governing Body in March 2002; and*
- (b) postpone to the 283rd Session of the Governing Body, a decision on the meetings and agenda which have been provisionally selected for 2003.*

Geneva, 29 October 2001.

*Points for decision:* Paragraph 27;  
Paragraph 28.



## Appendix 1

### I. Decent work in agriculture: A programme of action

#### *Identification of needs/issues*

Agriculture has a critical role to play in reducing decent work deficits in developing countries, where approximately two-thirds of the labour force are engaged in agricultural work. Decent work deficits in agriculture contribute to the high overall level of deficits in such countries. Fundamental principles and rights at work are in general ignored; employment is often precarious and incomes low; social protection and social security are largely absent, except at best for plantation workers; social dialogue, when it exists, is too often confined to the minority plantation sector. Indeed, all conditions of work tend to be worse in agriculture than in other sectors. Poverty is more prevalent in agriculture than elsewhere, with incomes typically less than half those in urban areas. Accident rates place agriculture amongst the three most hazardous occupations. Three-quarters of children who work are found on farms. Women in rural areas suffer even greater poverty than men and are less able to exercise their basic rights, despite their high levels of labour force participation. Agricultural workers' access to secure, sustainable employment and decent working and living conditions form an inherent part of sustainable agricultural development. Strengthening the capacity of governments and the social partners to address the complex social and labour issues facing the agriculture sector is critical to overall progress in improving the productivity of agriculture and the health and well-being of those working in the sector.

#### *ILO objective*

A major programme entitled “decent work in agriculture” should be implemented to redirect attention to this much-neglected sector. The programme would have as its main objective to promote the practice of social dialogue in areas of particular concern in agriculture, notably respect for fundamental rights at work and the improvement of conditions of work, particularly with respect to safety and health. Building the capacity of constituents to work together for improvements in these areas will be the key component of the programme.

The proposed action programme will be framed within the context of the Office-wide strategy on decent work. Operational and substantive linkages across sectors as well as between headquarters and the field will ensure that the various dimensions of decent work are integrated, although the main thrust of specific activities will vary according to national contexts. Coordination will be ensured with relevant units and programmes of the Office both at headquarters and in the field.

Given that decent work deficits are most acute in developing countries and that deficits in the agricultural sector are at the core of this, the suggested programme of work will focus on a small number of developing countries in which agriculture plays a major role in the economy. Among the criteria of importance in the selection of countries are the following: (a) the government's and the social partners' desire and willingness to establish a culture of social dialogue in the agricultural sector in order to achieve conditions of decent work; (b) the size, structure and composition of the agricultural sector; (c) the existence of a rural development policy involving both commercial and small-scale farming; (d) the existence of functioning workers' and employers' organizations in the agricultural sector; (e) the extent of trade union representation and/or rural workers' organizations; (f) the presence of agricultural cooperatives; (g) the availability of statistical information; and (h) the presence of ILO field representation. At least one medium-income country in transition should be included to demonstrate the relevance of social dialogue with regard to decent work and the improvement of safety and health for agricultural workers at a time of rapid economic change. The decent work pilot programme exercise offers an opportunity to demonstrate the practical relevance and utility of the decent work concept for agriculture at the national level in countries with a large rural sector.

## **Activities and outputs**

The methods used to promote the development of social dialogue processes and institutions in the field of agriculture will vary according to national circumstances. The ILO will work together with national tripartite partners to determine the main thrust of each programme and the specific activities which will contribute to achieving national goals. The ILO and national constituents will publish and disseminate information and training materials and conduct seminars and training workshops. Upon request, the ILO will provide technical advisory services and carry out targeted technical cooperation in line with national priorities. Most activities will be carried out at national or subregional level to ensure the widest participation of the tripartite constituents and to strengthen their capacity for social dialogue on issues central to the Decent Work Agenda, such as basic rights at work and the improvement of working conditions (safety and health).

## **Impact**

As a result of these interventions, the member States will have: (a) established or improved tripartite consultation in the field of agriculture; (b) initiated changes to national legislation, regulations or policies regarding social and labour issues in agriculture in line with the principles of ILO core and sectoral standards; (c) established or improved mechanisms for intersectoral cooperation among partners such as the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Agriculture, rural employers' organizations, rural workers' organizations, rural women's organizations; (d) established or improved processes for social dialogue on specific issues of concern to agriculture; (e) improved integration of decent work principles into national rural development policies; (f) strengthened labour inspection in agriculture; and (g) established or strengthened tripartite participation in rural institutions. In addition, the internal capacities of agricultural employers' and workers' organizations to engage in social dialogue on specific issues of concern to agriculture will have been strengthened.

## **II. Action programme to promote decent work and social dialogue in technology-based service industries**

### ***Identification of needs/issues***

The digital revolution has dramatically altered the economic structure of many service sectors, changed the way their work is organized, and helped to create online employment opportunities of all kinds. Existing occupations have been transformed or made obsolete, and new types of work, mostly online and sometimes by telework, have mushroomed in banking, commerce, telecommunications, travel, media and entertainment, consultancy and other services, in such professions as webmasters and ICT specialists. While such work can pay well and be highly satisfying for some, others may find that their employment and working conditions fall far short of the standards recognized under the ILO's Decent Work Agenda. Concurrently, certain labour and industrial relations characteristics developed over decades as a response to conditions specific to the above sectors may have been weakened by the very same technological developments and other processes such as globalization and casualization. In addition, sectoral convergence, intersectoral mergers of firms and of workers' organizations, and the increasingly global enterprises in these sectors call for new forms of social dialogue that cut across sectors, occupational groups and frontiers.

The share of electronic commerce and other online enterprises in their respective sectors is expected by some observers to grow exponentially, thus fundamentally changing work organization and processes, skills requirements, product or service delivery methods, workforce composition and labour utilization. This will alter the roles and the balance of power and influence of different actors in the service industries. Reductions in barriers to new entrants as a result of technological advances are accentuating market competition, while increasing instability in employment relationships.

Effective social dialogue is required to ensure that the employment benefits of technological advances in the above sectors are maximized and extended to as wide a number of workers as

possible, while also minimizing their disruptive effects on workers, working conditions and relations and enterprise productivity.

### ***Objectives, outputs and activities***

The action programme would aim at increasing the recognition of social dialogue as an essential instrument for building consensus between workers and employers in technology-based service industries, where social dialogue is currently weak and individual bargaining the norm. It would also contribute towards the achievement of the ILO's strategic objectives related to the realization of standards and fundamental principles and rights at work; greater opportunities for decent employment; and enhanced social protection, while increasing the Organization's visibility in a dynamic and topical area of activity.

The action programme would undertake practical research and collate information on experience related to social dialogue in these sectors. It could help to identify ways in which the application of Conventions Nos. 87, 98, 100, 111 and 144 can be extended to technology-based workers in these sectors, and foster social dialogue at the national – and possibly regional and sectoral – levels through workshops and seminars.

Research would identify general and sector-specific features and best practices in telework/online work, also examining the gender dimension of this issue and building on work already carried out in the ILO on the subject. This would be the basis for the development of guidelines (covering safety and health, social security, training, working conditions, privacy, intellectual property, etc.), in consultation with governments, employers' and workers' organizations.

The action programme would examine current employment and employment practices in electronic and other technology-based services, and these industries' potential to generate new jobs over the next few years; the number and types of jobs created, transformed or destroyed; the educational and training requirements for such employment; effects of new technologies in the evolution in work organization, and working time; and comparative remuneration levels and labour-management relations in traditional and technology-based service enterprises as a result of these developments. Aspects that maximize employment benefits and those that might have negative job outcomes in different occupations would be highlighted. Conclusions would be used to develop the guidelines referred to above on best policies and practices on human resource development, as well as to guide future ILO action.

### ***Indicators of impact***

An assessment of impact could be based on the number of additional technology-based enterprises in the concerned sectors that make use of social dialogue, as well as the number of institutions for social dialogue at the sectoral, local and enterprise levels of technology-based service industries. In addition, the action programme's impact would be ascertained through the number of ratifications or steps towards ratification of Conventions Nos. 87, 98 and 144 and ILO instruments covering or extending coverage to homework and part-time work. The number of employers' and workers' organizations that adopt policies or initiatives to increase their capacity to promote and participate in social dialogue, such as employers' organizations undertaking consultations with technology sector workers or their needs, or trade unions increasing their capacity to organize technology-based workers in different service sectors would be a clear indication of impact.

## Appendix 2

### Inventory of ongoing and planned ILO activities with a sectoral dimension

This inventory covers all types of ILO activities with a sectoral dimension currently undertaken or planned by different units at headquarters and in the field. Some of these activities are being carried out in cooperation with the Sectoral Activities Department, while there have been consultations on many others. They show the potential for mainstreaming of sectoral work in the Office. Because of space limitations, this appendix only provides very general indications about the type of activity, the sector and the country(ies) in which they take place. More detailed information can be provided on request. The inventory follows the organizational structure of the Office.

### Standards and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Sector

*NORMES*: Regular supervision of sectoral standards and assistance, technical cooperation and other action for their promotion; matters discussed by the regular supervisory mechanism and special procedures (such as the Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA)) with a sectoral dimension.

*DECLARATION*: Annual and global reports paid particular attention to public service, agriculture, teachers and domestic work; joint project with Public Services International (PSI) on pay equity in public service; information seminar with Education International (EI).

*IPEC*: Technical cooperation projects in agriculture (Central America, selected African countries, Indonesia and Cambodia), Cocoa (Côte d'Ivoire) construction (Bangladesh and India), fishing (selected countries in Asia and El Salvador), textile, footwear and leather (Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and Turkey), hotels and tourism (Philippines), mining (selected Latin American and Asian countries and Kenya), informal restaurant services (Bangladesh, India and Nepal), tobacco processing (Bangladesh and India), fireworks manufacturing (El Salvador, Guatemala and India), surgical instrument manufacturing (Pakistan), matches (India), and brass and glass (India).

### Employment Sector

*EMP/STRAT*: Some Country Employment Policy Reviews include sectoral emphasis: tourism (Barbados), agriculture (Kenya and Nepal).

*EMP/INVEST*: Technical cooperation in employment-intensive investment activities in agriculture (Guinea, India, Madagascar, Nepal and Nicaragua), construction (23 African countries, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal and Haiti), forestry (Burundi and Mali), transport (Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania) and utilities (Madagascar, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda).

*EMP/ENT*: Case studies on management systems and practices (or particular subjects) in TCF, construction, telecommunications and mechanical and electrical engineering.

*IFP/SEED*: SME development in culture sector (selected African countries), forestry (China, Malaysia, Philippines, Brazil and Chile) and tourism (Andean countries and Mongolia).

*MULTI*: Ongoing studies in plantations (Kenya), postal and telecommunications (Argentina) and automobile manufacturing (Poland); promotional activities in several sectors.

*GENPROM*: Gender-related studies and/or technical cooperation in agriculture (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania), commerce (Burkina Faso and the United Republic of Tanzania), construction (Bangladesh and the United Republic of Tanzania),

mining (the United Republic of Tanzania), TCF (Bangladesh, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania), tobacco (Bangladesh and India) and domestic work (Nicaragua).

## Social Protection Sector

*SafeWork*: OSH activities in agriculture, construction, chemicals, ship breaking and nuclear energy.

*CONDIT*: Technical cooperation in agriculture (Viet Nam and the Philippines) and clothing industry (Haiti).

*ILO/AIDS*: Studies and/or technical cooperation in education (Botswana), public health (South Africa), public service (global, together with PSI), transport (South Africa), agriculture (Swaziland) and ports/maritime transport (English-speaking African countries).

## Social Dialogue Sector

*ACT/EMP*: Survey on child labour in small mines and garages (Ghana); technical advisory services in plantations (Sri Lanka).

*ACTRAV*: Support to different activities of International Trade Secretariats (ITS) covering many economic sectors.

*GLLAD*: Studies and seminar on civil service statutes and dialogue and bargaining in the public service.

*IFP/DIALOGUE*: Joint conference with EU on sectoral social dialogue in accession countries.

*SECTOR*: A detailed survey on follow-up action on sectoral meetings held in 2000-01 will be prepared for the Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues (STM) in March 2002.

## Turin

Workers' education in several sectors; training activities in tourism, construction, public service and maritime sectors.

## Action in the field

### Africa

*Antananarivo*: Maritime seminars in Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles.

*Cairo*: Seminars on OSH in agriculture (Sudan and Tunisia), OSH in chemicals (Egypt) and on women entrepreneurs in small-scale textile enterprises (Morocco); preparation of background files on human resources development (HRD) in textiles (Algeria and Egypt).

*Lusaka*: Technical cooperation projects on child labour in cotton production (Malawi and Zambia) and on road construction (Mozambique and Zambia).

*Yaounde*: Project preparation on forestry (Gabon); study on cotton industry in CAEMC countries.

### Americas

*Brasilia*: Seminars and/or technical advisory services in hotels, catering and tourism (HCT), ports and agriculture (Brazil).

*Buenos Aires:* Seminars and/or technical advisory services in construction (Uruguay), civil aviation (Uruguay), public service (Argentina) and forestry (Uruguay).

*Mexico:* Port worker training (Mexico).

*Port of Spain:* OSH regulations in mining and forestry (Guyana) and technical cooperation on HCT (Caribbean countries).

*Santiago de Chile:* Seminars and technical advisory services in public service (Argentina, Brazil and Chile), ports (Southern Cone countries) and financial services (Argentina and Chile).

## **Asia**

*Beijing:* Forestry (China and Mongolia), HCT (Mongolia) and port worker training (China).

*Colombo:* Component on ecotourism in larger project on area-based development (Sri Lanka).

*Jakarta:* Workers' education activities in 13 sectors; study covering also plantations sector; training in ports and maritime transport (Indonesia).

*Kathmandu:* Studies and seminars in TCF and HCT; technical cooperation on child labour involving the education sector, media, health services and mining (Nepal).

*New Delhi:* Seminars, studies and translations of ILO material in agriculture, basic metals, chemical industry, construction, education, financial services, tobacco, maritime sector, mining, ship breaking and TCF (India).

## Appendix 3

### **Sectoral meetings selected for 2003, subject to confirmation by the Governing Body in November 2001**

- *Chemical industries:* Best practices in work flexibility schemes and their impact on the quality of working life in the chemical industries.
- *Commerce:* Employment effects of mergers and acquisitions in commerce.
- *Food, drink and tobacco:* The future of employment in the tobacco sector.
- *Public service:* National social dialogue in public service reform.
- *Utilities:* Restructuring and regulation of public utilities – consequences for employment, wages and working conditions.
- *Other industries and topics – Service sector:* Meeting of experts to develop a code of practice on violence and stress – a threat to productivity and decent work.