



## TENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Reports of the Programme, Financial  
and Administrative Committee****Second report: Personnel questions****Contents**

	<i>Page</i>
I. Statement by the staff representative .....	1
II. Amendments to the Staff Regulations: Amendments approved by the Director-General .....	1
III. Exceptions to the Staff Regulations .....	1
IV. Composition and structure of the staff .....	1
V. Decisions of the United Nations General Assembly on the report of the International Civil Service Commission .....	4
VI. ILO Human Resources Strategy: A review of progress and impact .....	4
VII. Pensions questions .....	13
VIII. Matters relating to the Administrative Tribunal of the ILO .....	14
(a) Composition of the Tribunal.....	14
(b) Statute of the Tribunal .....	14
IX. Other personnel questions .....	15

**Appendix**

Statement by the staff representative.....	17
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1. The Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee met from 16 to 18 March 2004 and was chaired by Mr. Chung (Government, Republic of Korea). Mr. Kettledas (Government, South Africa) was the Reporter.
2. Mr. Blondel, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, said that, before turning to personnel questions and the technical and associated problems, the Committee should listen to the statement by the staff representative. If Mr. Gruat was not in a position to make his statement at that stage, the Committee could return to item 8 on the agenda.

**I. Statement by the staff representative**  
(Thirteenth item on the agenda)

3. The statement by the staff representative is appended to the present report. The Chairperson thanked the staff representative and indicated that his statement would be circulated and a record of it included in the PFA report.

**II. Amendments to the Staff Regulations:  
Amendments approved by  
the Director-General**  
(Fourteenth item on the agenda)

4. The Chairperson noted that there was no separate paper under this item, as amendments to the Staff Regulations were being proposed under a resolution in agenda item 18, so discussions could be held on the relevant issues under that agenda item.

**III. Exceptions to the Staff Regulations**  
(Fifteenth item on the agenda)

5. The Chairperson informed the Committee that, as there had been no exceptions to the Staff Regulations, there was no paper submitted for the fifteenth item on the agenda.

**IV. Composition and structure of the staff**  
(Sixteenth item on the agenda)

6. The Chairperson noted that there was no point for decision under that item and that document GB.289/PFA/16 was submitted for information.
7. Mr. Blondel, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, expressed the group's concern at the number of officials (1,426) still employed on fixed-term contracts. The Office should make an effort to remedy that unusual situation. It should set an example in terms of employee relations, and avoid the controversial "recommendation" mechanism which would turn officials within the United Nations system into temporary workers on three-, five- or seven-year contracts. What may be good for diplomats was not good for employees carrying out a defined and specialized professional activity, whose services the Office needed and who, for their own peace of mind, should enjoy a certain level of job security. Furthermore, that new trend would make any attempt at modernization difficult. In particular, the Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS) project seemed to be viewed as a risk to job security. Employees were favourably disposed towards the project,

but thought that it would have a better chance of success in an atmosphere in which officials were not worrying about the security of their jobs.

8. Furthermore, it needed to be borne in mind that the African countries would see many of their officials depart in the next few years and were concerned about the question of succession, although Africa now had universities which were in a position to train students capable of becoming ILO officials.
9. The speaker had already inquired as to whether the ILO should take measures such as employing at least one person from each member State, including those that had not paid their dues to the Organization, since that would be one way of maintaining contact with them. Steps also needed to be taken to make progress with regard to the list of nationalities not represented in non-linguistic posts, with a view to better integration.
10. Finally, bearing in mind the number of officials aged over 55, and the considerable number of P5 staff who would probably retire soon, the speaker recalled that the grade represented a level of skill and knowledge which was indispensable to the smooth running of the Organization. It would therefore be beneficial to devise a succession strategy.
11. Mr. Botha, on behalf of the Employer members, noted that the Office seemed to be employing more Professional and higher category staff than in the previous ten years and indicated that, although he understood that more people would be moving to the field, there was no evidence in that regard. He noted the paper.
12. The representative of the Government of the Russian Federation personally welcomed the information about the number of women working at the ILO; his Government was particularly interested in the distribution of staff by nationality at each level and wished to see that kind of breakdown in similar documents in the future. He supported the principle of geographical representation, but it must not be allowed to infringe upon a second principle, that of selecting personnel by professional ability. He noted that ILO vacancy notices included a list of States the nationals of which could apply. That infringed upon the principle of the selection of staff members by professional ability, which should also be taken into account when selecting personnel. Violation of that principle may have an adverse effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the Organization. He recommended that in future that principle not be infringed and that a more flexible mechanism be used when selecting staff, to ensure a more just and equitable geographical distribution.
13. The representative of the Government of Saudi Arabia thanked the Office for the extremely useful document but expressed concern regarding the Arab staff members and their opportunities to participate in the work of the ILO. While he was convinced that the Director-General had made every effort to increase the recruitment of Arab members of staff, there had been no significant improvement. The document showed that there were only 27 members of staff representing 11 Arab States at the ILO, of a total of 21 Arab member States. There should be at least one staff member for each of the member States of the Organization. Eight out of 11 Arab member States in western Asia are not represented. The representative requested the Office to announce vacancies to all member States promptly so that qualified persons may then contact the ILO and take the necessary action with a view to potential recruitment.
14. The representative of the Government of Canada fully understood the importance of adequate representation but stressed that the first criterion must be to employ the best person for the job. There should be a merit-based system to find the best candidate, in parallel with identifying mechanisms to have an inflow of candidates that would meet the qualifications. It was unfair to exclude candidates merely because they were from

over-represented countries. If people had equal merit, preference should be given to the candidate from the country that was non-represented or under-represented. The representative reiterated that Canada gave high and first preference to an open and transparent merit system to attract the best possible candidates to the Office.

15. The representative of the Director-General thanked all the members of the Committee for their comments. Awarding permanent contracts at the Office was a very serious matter and involved a very thorough procedure. There were a fixed number of permanent contracts to be awarded and on each occasion the Office examined all the staff who met the conditions of good performance and years of service before submitting a recommendation to the Director-General for his final approval.
16. He recognized the issue about IRIS and possible implications for the future employment of ILO staff; preparations were already under way. There was a need for training and redeployment of staff to ensure that IRIS would not lead to a threat to job security for those colleagues working in areas that had been affected by the introduction of new technology.
17. Regarding recruitment, the Office was reviewing succession plans to ensure that national diversity continued to be monitored. The Human Resources Department (HRD) would also make intensified prospection efforts to find qualified candidates, including seeking assistance from staff in the field offices to help identify suitably qualified people. Recruitment would necessarily involve a merit-based approach while continuing to pay attention to the need to deal with geographic distribution. The Director-General had decided to decentralize posts to the regions. The decision had been made for about 20 posts, and those were currently being filled.
18. More staff were being recruited at a lower grade. Grading was being addressed systematically, but the situation could not change overnight.
19. The representative of the Government of Pakistan asked for an explanation of how the quota for each country was calculated.
20. Mr. Blondel, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, asked what the criteria were which allowed an official to move from a fixed-term to a permanent contract. Did the ILO have a certain number of permanent contracts to offer (10, 15 or 20 per year, for example) or was obtaining a permanent contract dependent on the post and its job description?
21. The representative of the Director-General explained that geographical distribution was based on the regular budget contribution of each country. The Office had a fixed number of permanent contracts and they were awarded on the basis of two very important criteria: years of service and performance of staff.
22. The Chairperson proposed that discussions under this item be noted, which was agreed.

**V. Decisions of the United Nations General Assembly on the report of the International Civil Service Commission (Seventeenth item on the agenda)**

23. The Committee noted the report<sup>1</sup> before it; there was no point for decision nor were there any comments.

**VI. ILO Human Resources Strategy: A review of progress and impact (Eighteenth item on the agenda)**

24. The Committee had before it a document<sup>2</sup> on the Human Resources Strategy (HR Strategy).

25. The representative of the Director-General explained how the HR Strategy had evolved in recent years. Firstly, it had become more coherent in terms of its design and implementation to address the various policies more effectively.

26. Secondly, there had been more systematic involvement of the senior management team and line managers at different levels in the elaboration of policies and procedures affecting implementation of the Strategy. Line managers, the Staff Union and staff, both at headquarters and in the field, were being systematically consulted through open sessions on major policy issues. That was being reinforced through the mechanism of staffing reviews in order to improve planning and thereby implementation of business plans and processes. Steps had been taken and would continue to be taken to improve communication and to strengthen the competency of line managers through a more effective learning and development programme.

27. Thirdly, the Strategy had become more practical, with goals being set that were feasible within available resources. The Office had analysed more carefully what changes were needed and what would be the optimum period of time required to achieve those goals.

28. Finally, on monitoring evaluation, the remarks by the members of the Committee had been noted and related to the recommendations of the External Auditor to develop a more robust system of monitoring and impact assessment. For the current biennium, targets had been set regarding recruitment time, gender equity and grievance resolution. Other targets to be achieved in the future were currently under consideration, which may include age and grade averages, recruitment of young staff and staff training needs.

29. The representative for the administration on the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) made a brief statement on the section of the document dealing with employee relations, particularly on the new Collective Agreement on Conflict Prevention and Resolution and the associated amendments to the Staff Regulations. The Collective Agreement, concluded and signed by the parties, represented the outcome of six months of negotiations. The negotiations had been conducted in an open, constructive and participatory manner, due mainly to the fact that there had been a clear joint objective to establish an efficient and

<sup>1</sup> GB.289/PFA/17.

<sup>2</sup> GB.289/PFA/18.

effective conflict prevention and resolution system which had the confidence of both staff and management, and which took account of the very specific needs of field staff. They were satisfied that the new agreement met that objective. The negotiations had been also greatly assisted by the fact that both management and the Staff Union conducted surveys among staff on the existing system to identify from the users the problems with the current system and also those aspects of the current system which worked well. The JNC was also greatly assisted by inputs from the Joint Panel and from the Ombudsperson. As a result of those inputs and wider consultations with staff and management, the JNC had been able to focus on the problems which were clearly identified by both staff and management, and also on reinforcing those aspects of the current system which were effective.

- 30.** The Collective Agreement was designed to replace two existing agreements on grievances. It had three basic components. It focused on the question of prevention, which was the most efficient way to ensure a workplace environment that did not generate grievances. The Agreement then provided for informal conflict resolution, focusing resources on creating as many options as possible for informal conflict resolution, thereby avoiding lengthy formal grievance procedures. However, as there would inevitably be grievances which could not be resolved through informal processes, the Agreement provided for a systematic system of moving a grievance formally through different stages.
- 31.** The representative noted that the Agreement specifically provided for a fast-track procedure for sexual harassment grievances. Both the Staff Union and management had agreed that it was more effective to have an integrated grievance procedure dealing with sexual harassment cases, but recognized that there was a need to have a specific fast-track procedure that would enable sexual harassment grievances to be addressed quickly and in strict confidence. Annex II of the Agreement contained a new policy statement on sexual harassment that set out very clearly and concisely that there was a commitment in the Office to a harassment-free work environment, and that sexual harassment cases would be treated seriously and dealt with efficiently. The policy statement updated a sexual harassment circular issued in the mid-1990s.
- 32.** The representative of the Director-General drew the attention of the members of the Committee to article 6 of the Agreement, which set out the final provisions that envisaged a transitional period for implementation. It was clearly not possible to move to a new system from one day to the next and a transition period of at least four to five months would be needed to establish the new system. That would give both management and the Staff Union the opportunity to provide information, clarification and training to both staff and management to familiarize them with the new procedures before they came into operation.
- 33.** Finally, the representative of the Director-General stated that the current system had many problems, as confirmed in the surveys of both management and staff. It was clear that there was a level of dissatisfaction with the system. Neither management nor staff considered it to be efficient or to respond effectively to issues. The Office was, therefore, very keen to establish the new system as soon as possible. It wanted to be able to train people to undertake the various functions provided for in the new Agreement. That would take time and the sooner the process could begin, the sooner the ILO would have an effective and efficient grievance procedure in place.
- 34.** Mr. Blondel, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, expressed some annoyance at learning that sexual harassment was one of the most pressing problems in terms of internal conflicts within the ILO. He was disappointed and concerned at the behaviour of officials.
- 35.** With regard to the text of the draft amendment to the Staff Regulations, the Workers were not in a position to approve that, since the staff representative had said that the text gave

rise to some concern which could justify re-examination by the Committee in November. The Workers were not questioning any substantive aspects of the text but, given the reservations regarding the wording expressed by one of the negotiators, they thought it wiser to discuss its approval again at the following session.

36. With regard to the HR Strategy, he noted the progress made, while regretting that the document had not been revised and corrected in the light of the recommendations made by the External Auditor. Moreover, he recalled that the implementation of the Strategy had been authorized in 1999, and warned against seeking too many improvements, as that might cause confusion and overshadow the purpose of the original Strategy.
37. Taking advantage of the presence of the Director-General, Mr. Blondel expressed a concern of the Workers' group, namely that a number of managers in the Organization – despite being highly competent – did not know what was meant by a trade union organization, tripartism, the Governing Body or even a Convention. The Workers wanted a commitment to be made to set up a programme of induction into the culture and policies of the Organization, which might even be put to use before a person was recruited.
38. Mr. Botha, on behalf of the Employer members, noted that the HR Strategy document was in three parts. He took Mr. Blondel's point about deferring the decision to approve the Collective Agreement until November, but sought clarification as to whether the Staff Union representative had indeed made such a request. He considered that the revised Agreement would make it easier to manage the conflicts in the house; however, he would go along with Mr. Blondel's proposal.
39. Mr. Botha indicated that he had expected the paper to provide more of a policy framework covering all elements of human resources policy, particularly where it diverged from the 1999 ILO HR Strategy paper, as well as a strategy for achieving it with a time programme or plan and anticipated costs and cost savings. The current paper was more tentative than that, more a description of activities undertaken in the previous few years, and intentions and planned activities in a general sense.
40. The summary of action taken to address external audit recommendations was felt to be inadequately stated. The External Auditor made proposals that were not always fully responded to. The one of most concern was the response in paragraph 20 where the External Auditor recommended that the ILO carry out a comprehensive review of resource implications and the likely costs of the full implementation of the HR Strategy for future years. The Employers considered that either that had not been done or that they had not seen it, and thought it was important for the Committee to know. They would have liked to have seen a more comprehensive set of responses to those problems.
41. Significant progress had been made on some very important issues. On the whole issue of assessment centres and their utilization, there had been considerable progress; that was also the case for contract rationalization. The renegotiation of agreements had been important, and contact between human resources and managers had greatly improved. However, certain problems remained, some of which were mentioned in the paper, and the Employers believed that the appropriate action should be taken.
42. There was the issue of the treatment of prospective candidates. Mr. Botha understood that candidates who applied for jobs at the ILO did not routinely receive a reply confirming receipt of their application, which gave the ILO an extremely poor name.
43. The Employers' group stressed the need to strengthen management and had spoken often about skills training and training and development. They were extremely concerned about management and their involvement in appointments in their own departments, in career

development, in the issue of transfers, in the issue of dismissals and about the apparent lack of authority of management at the Office.

44. Concern remained about the length of time taken for appointments, which was still considered to be too long. Part of the problem was due to poor administration, because contracts were sometimes signed after people had already been employed. Other areas for concern included late finalization of contracts, the issue of overgrading, lack of mobility and the issue of political appointments. The Employers' group was aware that political appointments did take place – and had to take place – in the house, but would like to see a policy developed on that matter.
45. The Employers' group was also worried about the lack of clear policies on succession planning and about the procedures for the staffing of regional offices, which should be done in consultation with tripartite constituents. There were many fundamentals that needed to be addressed, and accountability had to be given to managers.
46. The Employers' group would have liked to have seen more on the planning of personal development plans (PDPs) throughout the ILO, for example, and had expected more on that matter in the paper, plus an outline of costs. They had expected performance appraisal to be examined, analysed and implemented more vigorously, and noted that that remained to be done in the future. The group wished to know what would be happening with the Young Professionals Career Entrance Programme.
47. It was felt that more information could have been provided on staffing reviews, mobility and performance appraisal review. On job classification and grading, paragraph 25 of the paper, it was not clear if a new grading system was being considered. Training must be based on needs, with a focus on people-management skills. It was mentioned that a comprehensive proposal was being prepared by HRD to build management capacity, strengthen methodologies and prepare training manuals. The Employers' group would be interested in more information on that and supported strongly the development of programme and budget proposals which would include explicit earmarking of resources for staff development purposes. It was surprising to note that it had taken three years for the Joint Training Council (JTC) to be established.
48. The Employers' group also requested clarification on the issue of marriages and domestic partnerships recognized as valid under law.
49. It supported the section on the way ahead, outlined in paragraphs 37-52; however, it was unclear why reference was made in the document to links between HRD and PROGRAM and what their role was in the development of human resources policies.
50. The representative of the Asia-Pacific group welcomed the Office report on the current status of the ILO's HR Strategy and noted the additional progress that had been made in implementing the Strategy. He welcomed the fact that the Senior Management Team had given the Strategy special emphasis in 2003 and supported the focus on line managers taking more responsibility for human resource management activities. The group was pleased to see that the Office was aiming to ensure that long-term funding was found to support its staff training and development activities. That was central to the ILO's future performance. There should be continuous efforts to improve the number of staff from the countries which to date had been either non-represented or under-represented at the ILO, particularly Arab States. The Asia-Pacific group believed that there was still a long way to go and sought assurance that the Strategy adopted would begin to deliver more significant results in the not-too-distant future.

- 51.** The Asia-Pacific group commended recent improvements in the Office performance in increasing the number of women in management positions as well as initiatives to increase the number of people with disabilities working at the Office. He noted work to develop more performance indicators and asked that they be shared with the Governing Body. The Office needed to pursue further the process of regrading and should accelerate its efforts to recruit younger staff. That was particularly urgent as a large number of staff were approaching retirement.
- 52.** The representative of the IMEC group thanked the Director of HRD and his team for the review and noted that it took into account some of the follow-up to the External Auditor's recommendations on which the IMEC group had offered a number of comments 12 months previously. She agreed that the key to the success of the Strategy was support from management at all levels. On personal and career development, the report stated that the Office had taken note of the recommendations arising from the PDP evaluation, bearing in mind financial limits and the need to consider other areas of HR Strategy, and the IMEC group wished to know what the intentions were regarding the continuation of the PDP scheme. The report also noted that, contrary to the recommendation of the External Auditor, the Office had concluded that the PDP scheme should be kept separate from the appraisal system. The IMEC group had previously asked for an explanation of the systems in place to improve unsatisfactory performance and, if necessary, to terminate employment, and that information had still not been included in the current report.
- 53.** On workforce rejuvenation, she welcomed the Office's stated commitment to the recruitment of younger officials as a key HR policy objective and noted that a report of an external evaluation of the Young Professionals Career Entrance Programme had still to be finalized. The IMEC group continued to encourage the ILO to make greater efforts to urgently establish a more appropriate grade distribution, especially at the P2/P3 levels, and to facilitate the recruitment of younger members of staff. The representative also requested that the Office provide information on Professional category staff working on technical cooperation.
- 54.** On recruitment and selection, she welcomed the review of the use of assessment centres to reduce the delays in filling vacancies. It was encouraging to see that using present methodology, the duration required to process competitions had been halved between early 2001 and the end of 2003, but she wondered what the average time required for the final stage of the process was, i.e. for the Director-General to approve recommendations. On training, the representative noted that a comprehensive training proposal had been prepared and asked if it was still on track. On employee relations, she was pleased to see the completion of the review of the two collective agreements on grievances and their replacement with a single, fair and transparent system and its focus on the importance of prevention, and welcomed the additional explanation given during the meeting on the differences between the previous system and its replacement.
- 55.** On gender, the IMEC group welcomed the Director-General's commitment to increase female representation at senior levels from 25 per cent to 33 per cent by the end of 2005 as a first step towards a more equitable gender balance within the Organization, and strongly supported HRD's efforts to implement that target. On the amendments to the Staff Regulations, the IMEC group supported the proposed amendments, subject to confirmation by the Office that they were, where appropriate, in line with the United Nations common system and provided that any resulting additional costs could be absorbed within existing budget levels.
- 56.** The representative of the Government of the Russian Federation indicated that it had been five years since the ILO HR Strategy had been adopted and that was one of the rare documents on which the Government representatives of the Russian Federation did not

join the consensus in the Committee. First, there were elements that favoured the interests of staff members over those of the Organization as a whole. Second, there were elements that violated the prerogatives of the administrative bodies because of collective agreements that were internal to the secretariat. And, third, there was a lack of cost-benefit analysis. There was still too much emphasis being put on the social protection of officials already working. There was an increase in the share of the staff that had permanent contracts which were, in fact, contracts for life, and quite independent from labour productivity indicators. There was no objective system of service appreciation or attestation, just an extension of the practice of promotion in the service without holding competitions and within the bands of duties, and currently even outside them. That held back competition by officials within the Organization and was prejudicial to external candidates. It did not provide the possibility of assessing whether the Organization was really recruiting and promoting the best of the best.

- 57.** He felt that numerous collective agreements entered into by the Director-General with the Staff Union periodically interfered with the authority of the administrative bodies, such as the Governing Body, even the new versions of those agreements. For example, the one contained in Annex II mentioned staff regulations worked out by the parties to the collective agreements and the new article to the Staff Regulations. The Russian Federation strongly urged the Office to develop a cost-benefit analysis for all of the human resources policies, which it had been requesting for years. He stated that the development and implementation of the collective agreements had led to considerable expenditure. The HR Strategy had one-off costs, but it also incurred annual financial costs, for example, in the top-heavy grading structure. There was no information provided on the benefits of the Strategy, and he felt it was difficult to justify the need for the Collective Agreement on a Procedure for the Resolution of Grievances given that the administration had almost never lost a case before the ILO Administrative Tribunal. Taking all that into account, he asked the Office when a cost-benefit analysis for the whole of the HR Strategy would be presented to the Governing Body. He wanted to receive a straight answer before the adoption of the point for decision in paragraph 54(c).
- 58.** The representative of the Africa group strongly supported moves to improve national diversity, particularly at senior management level, especially given the pending retirement of senior Africans within the Organization. He also expressed concern about the lack of financial resources in 2003 that had prevented the recruitment of a new intake of young professionals and he urged the ILO to mobilize additional resources to ensure the continuation of that programme.
- 59.** Furthermore, the Africa group requested the Office to explore better ways to ensure that young professionals from the developing world were absorbed into the ILO system.
- 60.** The Africa group noted the progress made on issues such as recruitment and selection, contract policy reforms and staff development, but was concerned about the courses designed by outside consultants that did not yield the desired spin-offs adapted to ILO needs. Therefore, the ILO should consider using the available resources for the development of training modules in order to ensure that the manuals were in line with the ILO's Decent Work Agenda. The Africa group welcomed the developments relating to gender issues and supported the proposal in paragraph 42. Gender balance should be reflected in the higher echelons of the ILO. He also attached great importance to national diversity. He concluded by sharing the concerns raised by both the Workers' and the Employers' groups and looked forward to further discussion of those matters during the November session of the Governing Body.
- 61.** The representative of the Government of Japan endorsed the statement of the IMEC group and the Asia-Pacific group; he appreciated the efforts of the Office and strongly supported

the direction of the Office Strategy. However, more work was required. In terms of promoting gender equality, he appreciated the concrete target; however, for equitable geographical distribution, it was disappointing to note that newly admitted officials from under-represented countries had decreased from about 40 per cent in 2001 to 23.1 per cent in 2002. He urged the Office to make more concrete plans for that matter, including setting numerical targets and implementing them. As for the top-heavy grading structure, the representative requested more concrete proposals, including numerical targets, on how to address that, and the implementation of those targets.

- 62.** He reiterated that the Office should make more effort to improve gender balance between P5 and D2 levels. Second, in order to realize equitable geographical distribution, the Office should present and implement a concrete action plan, including the setting of numerical targets. And, third, in order to rectify the top-heavy staffing structure, the Office should prepare and implement a concrete action plan including the setting of numerical targets. Finally, and in addition, the Office should submit an explicit explanation of why the rate of newly recruited officials from under-represented countries had decreased in 2003.
- 63.** The representative of the Government of China expressed great interest in the Office HR Strategy, and highlighted certain elements that were particularly important. Staff mobility was important and it was hoped that the policy could be implemented as soon as possible. Second, it was important to develop performance appraisal systems. National diversity remained a key issue. The development and training of staff should be strengthened and the idea of lifelong learning pursued. Finally, succession planning would be important to ensure that, when staff retired, replacements were identified that enabled the Office to meet its policy targets on gender and diversity.
- 64.** The representative of the Government of Canada welcomed the report and the dialogue that had taken place. Priorities and choices had to be made. Among those seen as priorities were elements such as job descriptions that accurately reflected current tasks and a good performance appraisal system, which should have as its basis ongoing regular review with staff. Appraisals needed to tie in with PDPs. Recruitment went hand in hand with job reclassification and also fitted directly into the programme to rejuvenate the workforce. Regarding compliance with the External Audit recommendations, the chart provided in the Annex should be maintained so that, when the next audit took place, the same comments were not made.
- 65.** Finally, on the question of approving changes to the Staff Regulations related to the Collective Agreement on Conflict Prevention and Resolution, the Canadian preference would be to move ahead and, if necessary, make an amendment at the November session. In conclusion, therefore, Canada welcomed the report, the commitment being put on precise policy goals and an integrated approach and, finally, the use of systematic consultation, both internally and with the membership.
- 66.** The representative of the Government of the Republic of Korea thanked the Office for its timely presentation of the updated report on the HR Strategy, although progress in some areas was needed, particularly to review the grading structure. The Government of the Republic of Korea urged the Office to address that urgent situation by drawing up a desirable grade structure in a future Governing Body session and by introducing a more systematic mechanism to recruit younger people, as the current Young Professionals Career Entrance Programme was nearly suspended. Staff mobility, especially for senior posts, was also important. The Government of the Republic of Korea requested the Office, and especially the Senior Management Team, to review the mobility policy framework and to introduce adequate measures to improve mobility from headquarters to the regions. In terms of national diversity, more work was needed, and the Office was requested to report on regional distribution by grade in future reports.

67. The representative of the Government of the United States endorsed the comments made by the IMEC representative and expressed concern with the serious overgrading problem. He also strongly supported the goal of improving gender representation and considered external recruitment to be one way to achieve that.
68. The representative of the Government of Malawi supported the statement made on behalf of the African Government group and was quite pleased with the Office's efforts to achieve gender balance and national diversity. The Malawi delegation had also taken note of the reforms regarding the prospection, recruitment and selection of candidates. In Malawi, the experience tended to be to receive vacancy announcements either on the closing date for applicants to submit their applications or when it had already passed. Such practices were quite frustrating to prospective applicants.
69. Mr. Blondel, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, said that he had no wish to take the place of the staff representative or to speak as if he were putting forward one of the latter's demands. However, all the members of the Committee would do well to observe the same kind of self-restraint and some should avoid acting like the most intransigent of bosses. It was not just a question of the savings that might be generated by a collective agreement, short of denying all the principles of social dialogue and collective bargaining. Nor was it a question of making officials compete with each other or of providing for bonuses or penalties, since the ILO was not in the business of selling. What was at issue, however, was the need to ensure that the ILO applied to itself the Conventions adopted by the Organization, which were supposed to be applied universally.
70. He also recalled that he had stated clearly that the Workers were unable to approve paragraph 54(c) of the document at that stage, as the staff representative had confirmed to him that he was indeed recommending deferral of a decision on the matter until the November session. On the other hand, the Workers had approved the remainder of paragraph 54.
71. The representative of the Director-General thanked all the members for their comments. The HR Strategy was a very important and ambitious strategy. The audit recommendations were all fully accepted; however, they could not be implemented at the same time because of resource constraints.
72. He stated that PDPs dealt with what staff were going to do in the future and appraisal performance reports reflected what staff had done. It was possible that there was some overlap, but HRD had decided to go ahead with a pilot scheme precisely because of lack of funding. Each PDP would usually cost approximately US\$250,000, and ten of those would amount to US\$2.5 million. It was important to learn from the pilot cases and to perform PDPs more effectively in the future.
73. With regard to dealing with unsatisfactory performance, HRD was undertaking a very serious review of its performance appraisal system, and appropriate measures would be proposed as a result. With regard to young professionals, the Office remained committed to recruiting as many young people as possible, taking into account availability of funds and vacancies. That was also linked to the issues of grading, age average and mobility. In reply to the IMEC group, the average time required for the final stage of the recruitment process was not a source of delay as it took usually only a few days.
74. The Office would continue its efforts on prospection, especially for under- and non-represented countries. Six of the contracts awarded in 2003 were to address the issue of staff employed under inappropriate or precarious contracts. There were currently only three cases, compared to over 30 inappropriate contracts two years ago. Contracts were also awarded to national staff in order to recognize their qualifications and contributions to

the work of the Office. A few contracts were also awarded to long-serving technical cooperation staff whose experience and knowledge had been extremely beneficial to the ILO. The information on technical cooperation staff could be provided at a later date.

75. With regard to job classification and grading, the average grade in the Office had been reduced; however, it was not possible to achieve a desired structure quickly, given the low turnover of staff and the need to maintain some posts at senior levels upon retirement. The New Master Standard was a new grading policy advanced by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), which would be introduced into the ILO after proper preparation.
76. The HRD training proposal was on track and included modules that dealt with tripartism, including good practice. Induction courses would be held more frequently.
77. The new approach to employee relations focused on prevention. The Joint Panel mechanism would also be expanded to three chairpersons in order to process cases more rapidly and to allow different cultural backgrounds and linguistic qualifications.
78. Between 1999 and 2003, the total share of female staff increased from 31.56 per cent to 37.26 per cent. In 1999, 18.7 per cent of senior appointments at P5 level were female. In 2003, 26.4 per cent were female. Between 1999 and 2003, there was an increase in the percentage of female appointments at D1 level from 11.7 per cent to 26.5 per cent. In 1999, at D2 level, 9.1 per cent of appointments were female; currently that figure was 22.7 per cent. That reflected a consistent policy of the Director-General to improve, as rapidly as possible, the gender balance at the P5 level and above.
79. The Director-General requested the Committee to delay its decision on paragraph 54(c). It had until Friday of the following week, when the Governing Body was to receive the report of the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee, as it had become evident that there was no problem with the texts that were being submitted. There was agreement that the texts were the result of very serious preparation: six months of negotiation and surveys to identify the main problems and strengths of the current system, and the Governing Body did not dispute that the revised agreement was an improvement. The Director-General remained committed to the idea of collective bargaining and informed the Committee that, in other organizations, the decision would have been made unilaterally. The staff representative had shared the problems that had emerged within his constituency; that was part of the negotiation process and the Director-General was very sensitive to those views. However, as there was still some time during the current Governing Body session to seek to resolve those issues, he requested that the Committee delay its decision on paragraph 54(c).
80. The Chairperson thanked the Director-General and requested comments.
81. Mr. Blondel, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, said that if the Staff Union found the Director-General's proposal acceptable, he was also willing to accept it and to wait until the end of the Governing Body session. If, after consultation, he then observed that the Staff Union's position on the text in question was unanimous, the Workers would be in a position to approve it.
82. The Chairperson concluded the agenda item by confirming that paragraph 54(a), (b) and (d) were approved and that the decision on paragraph 54(c) could be delayed until Wednesday, 24 March.

**83. The Committee:**

- (a) noted progress made in implementing and adapting the HR Strategy, taking account of the challenges encountered;*
- (b) endorsed the future direction of the HR Strategy outlined in paragraphs 37-52 of the paper and, in that context, noted the Office's steps to implement an effective monitoring and evaluation HR Strategy;*
- (c) agreed to delay any decision on the text of the draft Staff Regulations contained in Annex I to Appendix II, as well as those set out in Appendix III, until Wednesday, 24 March;*
- (d) requested a further report on implementation of the HR Strategy for its March 2005 meeting.*

**VII. Pensions questions: Report of the 186th Meeting (July 2003) of the Standing Committee of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board (UNJSPB)**  
(Nineteenth item on the agenda)

- 84.** The Committee examined the Office paper<sup>3</sup> that had been submitted for information on a summary of the meeting of the Standing Committee and its report to the United Nations General Assembly.
- 85.** Mr. Botha (Employer spokesperson) requested clarification on three issues: survivors' benefits; the absence of a partial invalidity benefit and the possibility of working part time; and the secretariat's ability to ensure access and accessibility by participants of the ILO Pensions secretariat in light of its staffing constraints.
- 86.** Mr. Blondel, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, explained that, at the proposal of the Staff Union, the Workers had decided to examine the way in which the technical work was carried out. Moreover, it would appear that implementation of the IRIS project would result in more prompt payment of pensions.
- 87.** He recalled the difficult situation of pensioners from the former Soviet Union, and found the reaction of both the ILO and the United Nations rather unseemly and spineless, consisting as it did in waiting for the dossier to close naturally with the passage of time as those former officials died off.
- 88.** Mr. Botha (Employer spokesperson) reiterated his support for Mr. Blondel on the last issue. He felt very strongly about the issue of the beneficiaries from the former USSR.
- 89.** A representative of the Office, Mr. MacDonald, responded to the questions raised by Mr. Botha and Mr. Blondel. As to the issue of survivors' benefits for non-married partners, the ILO delegation to the most recent meetings of the Pension Board and Standing Committee had been concerned to keep debate going on the issue as there appeared to be a

<sup>3</sup> GB.289/PFA/19.

mood within certain quarters of the General Assembly to discontinue discussion on what was a critical issue for each beneficiary, namely, to choose his or her own survivor beneficiary. This was an issue that was still evolving within the common system in the context of other issues affecting non-married partners. The ILO delegation at the Standing Committee meeting had prepared a paper to continue discussion on related pensions' issues at the next meeting of the Board in July 2004. The ILO tripartite delegation to recent meetings of the Pension Fund had also been concerned to press hard on granting recognition to partial invalidity claims, which were now recognized under other modern pension systems. The issue had been the subject of discussions at the recent ILO Staff Pension Committee meeting and the Office would be collaborating to seek to prepare a paper for the July meeting of the Board. Turning to the issue of the ILO Pensions secretariat, there had been additional staff appointments recently. There would be one further staff appointment shortly. That should improve the overall level of service to staff members. In relation to the situation of pensioners from the former USSR, the ILO delegation continued to be concerned about the way in which that issue was being treated within the Pension Fund and through resulting discussions at the level of the Fifth Committee. The ILO's views would continue to be pressed. Internally, for some years, both the Staff Union and the Office had paid what amounted to a supplementary pension to ILO retirees from the former USSR to seek to provide a limited remedy to their difficult financial situation.

90. There being no other interventions, the report was noted.

## **VIII. Matters relating to the Administrative Tribunal of the ILO** (Twentieth item on the agenda)

### **(a) Composition of the Tribunal**

91. The Committee took note of a document<sup>4</sup> on the composition of the Tribunal. The Chairperson informed the Committee that a short document was being drafted following the consultations that had been held by the Officers the previous day. It was agreed to examine that document on Wednesday, 24 March.

### **(b) Statute of the Tribunal**

92. The Committee had before it a paper<sup>5</sup> on the Statute of the Tribunal.

93. Mr. Blondel, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, deduced from the analysis before him that, notwithstanding the feeling of pride when 40 or 42 international institutions had conferred jurisdiction on the Administrative Tribunal of the ILO, attempts were being made to merge the ILO Tribunal with that of the United Nations. Recalling that the last attempt to that effect had failed, he asked that the powers of the Tribunal be restored as soon as possible, in order to stabilize it; otherwise the ILO's reputation would suffer. At times some reforms were tantamount to counter-reforms.

<sup>4</sup> GB.289/PFA/20/1/Inf.

<sup>5</sup> GB.289/PFA/20/2.

94. Mr. Botha (Employer spokesperson) noted the proposal in paragraph 4 to establish an open and informal working group to study the issue and examine the possible ways ahead and maintained that the Governing Body should definitely consider being represented.
95. The representative of the Government of the United States thanked the Office for the report, and requested that the Office keep them informed of the ongoing process to amend the Tribunal's Statute and of how decisions would be taken. He would appreciate that information.
96. The Chairperson, noting the comments of the members, concluded deliberations on the item.
97. The Committee noted the report.

## **IX. Other personnel questions** (Twenty-first item on the agenda)

98. The Chairperson informed the Committee that no separate paper had been prepared and that there had been no indication of any points to be raised.

Geneva, 22 March 2004.

*Point for decision:* Paragraph 83.

## Appendix

### Statement by the staff representative

On behalf of the new Staff Union team, both at headquarters and in the field, and on behalf of all ILO staff (over two-thirds of whom, you may be interested to know, are union members, taking all categories and duty stations into account), it is my duty to begin this statement on a grave note.

There is growing concern within our Organization about job security. We have shared this concern with the Director-General's representatives on several occasions in recent months and expressed it to the Joint Negotiating Committee. With the authority vested in me by our General Meeting and by the direct discussions we have had over the past two weeks with hundreds of our members at sectoral assemblies, I am here to give you a brief outline of the reasons for our concern. The Director-General was informed of this in a letter dated 2 February and signed, exceptionally, by the Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee and our four regional representatives. In speaking to you today on this same theme of job security, I am not, of course, prejudging the content of the Director-General's reply, which we have yet to receive.

When the staff became aware of the increasing threats to their jobs at the ILO, their initial response was a strong solidarity and protest movement against the circumstances surrounding the dismissal of one of our colleagues after over 20 years' service with the ILO, solely on the ground of unsatisfactory service – which is incongruous after so many years.

As the case is being investigated by the ILO Administrative Tribunal, I will not dwell any further here on the case of our colleague, who is now unemployed without receiving any allowances or child benefits despite having six dependent children, whose means of existence will largely depend on the financial solidarity of staff.

We firmly trust that the Tribunal will do him justice, as it has in four out of the six cases involving our Organization at its last session. These four exemplary Judgments (which were costly for the Organization) signal serious deficiencies in the way our Organization handles individual labour relations – which I drew to your attention last November.

Be that as it may, after considering the circumstances surrounding this dismissal, our General Meeting adopted a motion on 29 January mandating the Staff Union Committee that I have the honour of chairing to convey to the Director-General and your Committee, and I quote:

... the deep concern of staff about job security within the United Nations system and the ILO, as well as their readiness to react, including through industrial action, to any attempt to further jeopardize job security at the common system level or in the ILO, and to mobilize in favour of colleagues who are at risk of unfair separation from service.

In short, what ILO staff are no longer willing to accept can be summarized in eight reasons for concern, as follows:

- First, the fact that the ILO is not taking a clear position, and is not really making its voice heard within the common system, to the effect that it opposes and will continue to oppose the intention expressed by the International Civil Service Commission, some governments and certain agencies experiencing difficulties, which hold that a job within the United Nations system should no longer be a career, and that permanent contracts should be abolished. Such intervention by the ILO is all the more necessary since, at a major inter-union symposium held in New York in December 2003, all of the delegations represented expressed their grave concern about this in a statement of agreed principles, which the ILO Staff Union actively supports.
- Second, the fact that performance appraisals at the ILO still rely on subjective and sporadic exercises without set criteria, individual objectives or ongoing monitoring mechanisms, so that any appraisal can become a source of conflict between any official and his or her supervisor. This is the situation four years – yes, four years – after the Governing Body noted<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> GB.277/PFA/10 (Mar. 2000), paras. 14 and 16.

that “the current appraisal system would be replaced by an annual personal development planning system”, whereby “performance management [would] ... become a day-to-day issue rather than an event occurring only once every two years and at times disassociated from the measurement of achievement against Office, department, team and individual objectives”.

- Third, the fact that the content of these performance appraisals, which are already structurally deficient, is then submitted to a Reports Board, without any staff representation, the composition of which is not made public, except for the fact that it consists exclusively of senior managers appointed directly by the Director-General, an anonymous committee whose deliberations, moreover, are deemed “secret”. In fact, this outdated body submits increasingly draconian recommendations to the Director-General, which go beyond what is recommended by the managers concerned, thus aggravating the sense of job insecurity felt by a growing number of colleagues. Staff rightly consider that the fact that the Reports Board continues to operate along feudal lines blatantly contradicts the principles of social dialogue, dispute prevention, justice and the right to be heard and defended on an equal footing with one’s line manager – principles that are otherwise characteristic of labour relations in the ILO.
- Fourth, the fact that the ILO still has no officially established mechanism to ensure that restructuring processes affecting staff – which are inevitable in an organization as large and as dynamic as ours – are acknowledged as such and conducted transparently, not as a matter of bureaucratic routine, but with the full involvement of the staff and its representatives at every stage, so as to minimize the social costs and avoid last-minute decisions affecting jobs. The ILO is the competent United Nations agency in this field, and it would be paradoxical if it could not apply the same principles to itself that it preaches elsewhere with so much talent and efficiency, especially since certain recent or current examples have shown that, with a little bit of good will, these restructuring exercises could be carried out “by the book” at the ILO as elsewhere.
- Fifth, the fact that, for lack of a body for regular consultation at the appropriate level between staff representatives and the Human Resources Department, cases referred to as “individual” are handled in isolation, whereas regular meetings could certainly help identify recurring problems and inadequate responses, by enabling the common interests (in the broad sense) of the staff and of the Office to be taken into account, and could even serve to establish a sort of code of good conduct between partners who are used to working together and are concerned to seek solutions before open conflicts arise.
- Sixth, the fact that many line managers are unfamiliar with in-house traditions, the principles of international civil service law and the values and principles of social dialogue as it is applied in practice, which gives rise to confrontational situations (regardless of the existing procedures for the prevention of individual disputes) in which considerations of power, legalistic attitudes and hierarchical arrogance almost invariably prevail over a more human, common-sense approach. This, despite the fact that the ILO Administrative Tribunal recalled, in a Judgment handed down in 2001 against the ILO<sup>2</sup> “the duty incumbent on all international organizations to treat staff members with dignity and avoid causing them undue and unnecessary injury”.
- Seventh, the fact that there has been a prolonged budgetary stagnation in dollar terms, the continued weakness of the reference currency against the Swiss franc in particular, the gradual decentralization of resources from headquarters to the field structure, coupled with a persistent tendency to recruit externally (52 external recruitments for the Professional category in 2003, i.e. 7 per cent of the category’s total workforce in just one year) instead of first seeking candidates among current staff, including technical cooperation experts, staff of ILO branch offices, national correspondents and staff under “associated programmes” (the Turin Centre, the International Social Security Association (ISSA), the International Institute for Labour Studies and the Inter-American Research and Documentation Centre on Vocational Training (CINTERFOR), etc.) and General Service staff at headquarters and in the field – people who, with some additional training, if necessary, would be able to fill new posts or posts which have become vacant. As a result, many colleagues now feel like outsiders in their own

<sup>2</sup> ILO Administrative Tribunal, 91st Session, Judgment 2067, 12 July 2001.

Organization and are worried not only about their careers, which many have already given up on, but also about their futures in the short term.

- Eighth, the fact that precarious employment has come to roost at the Office, despite – or, in a sense, as a result of – the measures that were supposed to combat what was described in a circular of the Director of the Human Resources Department in 2002 as the “inappropriate use of employment contracts”.

The following practices are still all too frequent:

- excessive use of external collaboration contracts (17,000 in the space of 12 months), to such an extent that the Human Resources Department admits that it is no longer able to keep track of them; this includes contracts allowing salary and retirement pension to be paid at the same time, thus evading the applicable rules;
- alternating between “lawful” and “unlawful” contracts in order to bypass recruitment procedures, cut budget costs or evade social security contributions;
- issuing employment contracts for job descriptions which have not gone through the procedure for determining the applicable grades;
- refusing to grant a permanent contract without justification;
- following on a fixed-term contract with a short-term contract, flouting the official’s acquired rights and the applicable rules;
- sending staff who are not covered by statutory protection into dangerous areas on mission;
- “kiting” practices whereby more than one person is recruited under the same budget line without giving a thought to what will happen when their contracts end;
- recruiting staff for non-renewable periods to perform recurrent tasks;
- direct hiring of acquaintances or friends, bypassing internal promotion and flouting the rules.

As I have already mentioned, the Staff Union has expressed the concerns of the staff on these points, which all affect job security at the ILO to varying degrees.

At the same time, we have taken the responsible step of informing the administration of our suggestions as to how these difficulties could be remedied:

- *Reaching a joint position* between representatives of the Director-General and those of the Staff Union in support of job security within the common system, as was recently the case concerning local staff pay.
- *Reforming the Reports Board*, by publishing the names of its members, appointing them after consultation with the Staff Union Committee and limiting its intervention to considering the recommendations made by the line managers concerned, with whom the staff concerned have had the opportunity to discuss the matter.
- *Publishing an in-house guide*, accessible to everyone, on the right way to carry out restructuring – first of all acknowledging what restructuring is.
- *Improving and promoting “employability”* and staff career prospects through the wider use of Personal Development Plans, the quality of which has been amply demonstrated by the pilot exercise recently completed in the Social Protection Sector.
- *In-depth reform of the recruitment and selection procedure*, returning to sounder practices enabling genuine monitoring of the process, so as to ensure transparency in the pursuance of the Office’s objectives in terms of human resources management.
- *Establishing a permanent consultation mechanism* for individual cases so that “problem” units or practices can be identified before impending difficulties become individual or collective disputes.
- *Setting up a new round of incentives to mutually agreed termination* with the aim of achieving overall human resources development objectives, including promotion of women, increasing national diversity, rationalizing grade structure and occupational mobility incentives.

- *Reviewing staff rules or administrative practices* affecting the job prospects and mobility of a number of colleagues, local staff in the field, staff of branch offices, national correspondents, technical cooperation experts, staff under associated programmes, and young professionals; the Office apparently finds it hard to see their potential contribution to management renewal and rejuvenation, which it claims to seek.
- *Assessing the competence of managers* to carry out their duties as managers of human resources, and not just of budgetary resources, etc.

Some of the proposals submitted for your consideration by the Director-General at this session will, we hope, provide some partial responses to our concerns.

In particular, we believe that the mechanism arising out of the *review of grievance procedures* will result in greater attention being paid to conflict prevention in the future, given that litigation and a proliferation of unfavourable Judgments by the ILO Administrative Tribunal are no substitute for labour relations policy.

The amendments to the Staff Regulations submitted to you as an Appendix to document GB.289/PFA/18 were the subject of genuine and honest discussion between Union and administration representatives in the Joint Negotiating Committee, which continues to carry out its collective bargaining role effectively – setting the ILO apart from many other members of the United Nations family. The Staff Union Committee considers that this is a good agreement, in particular for conflict prevention, and for the protection of our colleagues in the field. We regret, however, that the extremely short period between the date of its signature and its consideration by your Committee did not allow for us to inform the entire staff as fully as we would have liked. This gave rise to some last-minute concerns among our colleagues, which are unfounded in the Committee's view, and which we still have to dispel. This might justify this subject being re-examined by your Committee at its November session.

Incidentally, as regards the ILO Administrative Tribunal, the Staff Union Committee agrees with the ILO's analysis to the effect that it is necessary at this stage to continue discussions with the Tribunal's other "clients" in order to achieve wider acceptance of the right of direct intervention by staff representatives. We hope that our colleagues in other staff unions and associations will ultimately succeed in convincing their own administrations on the basis of the Heidelberg Resolution that we have all adopted, the text of which is available in this room. We certainly do not want to see partial or hasty decisions being taken at the risk of weakening the Tribunal.

It is clear from the document GB.289/PFA/18 that some of the other concerns which I have noted in this presentation strike a chord with our management. For example, the document refers to:

- reviewing, with department chiefs and the Staff Union, the *performance appraisal* procedure – even if the document refers to a comparative study carried out in 2003 which the Staff Union had never heard of before;
- reviewing the 2002 collective agreement on *recruitment and selection*, for which consultations with the Staff Union were started but abruptly broken off by the Human Resources Development Department, before timidly resuming them just before the present session of the Governing Body;
- *assessment of candidates* for managerial posts; the fact that this is envisaged now suggests that it was not being done before, and it is not clear why this should be restricted to recruitment or why the procedure should not also involve staff;
- reviewing the *different types of contracts* – which might enable us to remedy certain abuses and departures from established procedures, or on the other hand, under pressure from the United Nations common system, become transformed into a move to eliminate the relative protection afforded by without-limit-of-time contracts;
- examining pending cases of "*precarious*" contracts; apart from individual cases, the Staff Union has begun negotiations with representatives of management on the regularization of certain categories equivalent to "seasonal workers" or "intermittent workers" with different employers, with particular focus on social protection. These are colleagues who are hired regularly to ensure the smooth running of the major meetings of this Organization or employed here more or less constantly but by different departments which cannot individually offer a contract on decent terms;

- *raising awareness among line managers* regarding human resources management requirements – a sort of basic initiation which in some cases seems to be coming rather late in the day.

A number of other elements are missing, elements which indicate the scale of the efforts that must be made by the Staff Union and ILO staff with, we hope, your support, to convince management.

I am thinking in particular of:

- *mechanisms to allow regular consultations* on individual cases and working conditions;
- *transparency* in implementing restructuring measures, especially those being introduced on the quiet which affect colleagues working for the promotion of employment and international labour standards;
- *inclusion* of all members of staff – not just some of them, to the exclusion of support or field services – in the overall process of human resources planning;
- *Personal Development Plans* (PDPs), the preferred tool for human resources management, which have unquestionably been successful where they have been tried, in terms of rationalizing training, motivating staff and identifying women and men whose potential, if properly used, would advance the interests of the Organization.

The Staff Union is, I must say, puzzled and worried by the persistent reluctance of senior management to discuss PDPs.

Although the document GB.289/PFA/18 correctly lists the many advantages of this approach, which has undergone an initial independent assessment, it also cites the alleged lengthiness of the process – omitting to mention that the lengthiest phase by far was the pilot phase – and its cost, of which we are told nothing, and leaves open the possibility that the initiative – which has the backing of the staff – may be abandoned.

If this were to happen – and our fears are strengthened by the fact that management, despite our repeated requests, has still not appointed its own representatives to allow a genuine dialogue within the Joint Training Committee set up in August 2001 – the disappointment and demotivation of staff would obviously be all the more keenly felt, given the hopes raised by the PDPs and their pilot implementation in one headquarters sector and one in the field.

Time is too short for me to consider other questions which, nevertheless, merit discussion by this Committee – perhaps they will be raised by later speakers.

These include:

- the confusion that seems to persist with regard to recognition of the entitlements of *non-married couples*, an area where the ILO continues to chart a course somewhere between progressive and conservative;
- the discussions on the functioning of our *Staff Pension Fund*, where the response of the Standing Committee to the General Assembly's attempts at interference have certainly not been "informal", as the document (GB.289/PFA/19) would (for some reason) have us believe;
- the question of *mobility*, from which local staff as well as those at the Turin Centre are excluded because of conditions laid down at a time when in our view creative imagination was sometimes lacking;
- the *employment of disabled people* at the ILO – an area where reasonable progress has been made in recent months;
- treatment of *occupational safety and health questions*, an area in which a constructive relationship of trust is being developed between the Staff Union and management at all levels;
- *career prospects for women*, 60 per cent of lower Professional grades, never mind the General Service grades, who risk becoming the first victims of what the PFA document coyly refers to as a move "to control overgrading and to return the Office to a balanced, rational and justified grading structure"; one more reason for staff to be worried, in addition to the attempts by the International Civil Service Commission to bring about the abandonment of the fundamental principle of remuneration based on grade and seniority, in favour of other supposedly merit-based variants for which the criteria have yet to be defined.

But I think the key point has been made: ILO staff, throughout the Office, are worried about their jobs and their futures. They want something other than the same old promises. They want to see action, commitments undertaken promptly and honoured to the letter.

The staff are proud to work for the International Labour Office, which is the lead agency for the defence and promotion of workers' rights. It is therefore only right that staff here should expect the same rights, principles and values to be applied to their own conditions of work and employment.

I know that the Director-General knows this, and I am convinced that he will want to issue the necessary directives to resolve the situation. With this hope in mind, I thank you for your attention.