



FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Purpose, duration and composition of sectoral meetings to be held in 2006-07

1. There will be six tripartite sectoral meetings in 2006-07. The sectors concerned and the topics for each meeting were agreed by the Committee at its 292nd Session (March 2005) and by the Governing Body, on the basis of proposals made by the Officers of the Committee, at its 293rd Session (June 2005).
2. The Committee normally determines the length, size, purpose and output of each meeting. Since there will only be one meeting in the first half of 2006, the Committee may wish to limit its decision to this one at its present sitting, addressing the others closer to the dates on which the Office proposes they be held (March and November 2006). The title of each meeting and the week in which they are proposed to be held are in the appendix.

Meeting of Experts on Coal Mine Safety

3. As indicated in the proposal to hold this meeting,¹ the changes in the coalmining industry in the 20 years since the adoption of the existing *Code of practice on safety and health in coal mines* – privatization, consolidation, compensation for “modern” illness and disease, mechanization and a much smaller, multiskilled workforce, and in moves to a “systems approach” to safety and health management, an updating of this important code would be a timely activity in focusing on improving safety and health in this most basic and hazardous of industries. A new code of practice will also be a modern, practical companion to Convention No. 176 and could assist countries to ratify and implement it.
4. The Director-General proposes that 24 experts in safety and health in underground coal mines be invited to participate in this meeting, which would last six calendar days (8-13 May 2006). Experience has shown that the size and time allotted are appropriate for examining and approving a revised draft code of practice. Since the Standing Orders for sectoral meetings do not apply to meetings of experts, this meeting would be held in accordance with existing procedures for similar types of meeting held previously under the Sectoral Activities Programme and meetings organized by other departments. In accordance with the usual practice for meetings of experts, the Office would cover the travel and subsistence costs of all experts nominated to participate.

¹ GB.292/STM/1.

5. As has been the practice in the recent past, the Director-General proposes to appoint, after consultation with the Employers' and Workers' groups of the Governing Body, a knowledgeable chairperson from outside the meeting, thereby enabling all the invited experts to play a full part in the meeting.
6. The Director-General also proposes that the governments of the following countries be invited to nominate experts who would participate in the meeting in their personal capacity: Australia, China, Germany, India, Poland, Russian Federation, South Africa, United States. These countries account for over 85 per cent of the world's coal production, much of it from underground mines. It is also proposed that the meeting be attended by eight experts nominated after consultations with the Employers' group, and eight after consultations with the Workers' group of the Governing Body.
7. It is further proposed that, should any of the governments in paragraph 6 decline to nominate an expert, one of the following governments would be invited to do so: Colombia, Romania, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Viet Nam.
8. The Committee will recall that the Office proposed that a draft code of practice would be prepared and submitted to the meeting for consideration, review and adoption. The Committee may therefore wish to recommend that the purpose of the meeting be to consider and review a draft and adopt a code of practice on safety and health in coal mines. Moreover, the Committee may wish to recommend that the meeting propose a programme of follow-up activities to promote the new code during the rest of the biennium and beyond.
9. Following a discussion on prior consultation among experts by the Committee at its 289th Session (March 2004)² and, more particularly, following a strong recommendation from a recent meeting of experts that this be facilitated, the Office would appreciate having the names of all the experts in good time (1 March 2006) so that preliminary (electronic) discussions among them can take place once the draft code of practice is ready.
10. ***The Committee may wish to make recommendations to the Governing Body in respect of the Meeting of Experts on Coal Mine Safety to be held in 2006, concerning the duration of the meeting, the appointment of a chairperson, the size of the meeting and the governments to be invited to nominate an expert, the countries to be included on the reserve list, and the purpose of the meeting, as proposed in paragraphs 4-8.***

Geneva, 19 September 2005.

Point for decision: Paragraph 10.

² GB.289/14.

Appendix

Sectoral meetings in 2006-07

- Meeting of experts on safety and health in coal mines – week commencing 8 May 2006.
- Tripartite meeting on the social and labour implications of the increased use of advanced retail technologies – week commencing 18 September 2006.
- Tripartite meeting on the labour and social issues arising from problems of cross-border mobility of international drivers in the road transport sector – week commencing 16 October 2006.
- Meeting of experts to examine instruments, knowledge, advocacy, technical cooperation and international collaboration as tools with a view to developing a policy framework for hazardous substances – week commencing 5 February 2007.
- Tripartite meeting on the production of electronic components for the IT industries: Changing labour force requirements in a global economy – week commencing 16 April 2007.
- Tripartite meeting on the impact of global food chains on employment – week commencing 24 September 2007.