



TWELFTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Report of the Committee on
Employment and Social Policy**

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Employability by improving knowledge and skills (Second item on the agenda).....	1
II. Occupational safety and health: Synergies between security and productivity (Third item on the agenda).....	9
III. Global Employment Agenda implementation (First item on the agenda).....	15

1. The Committee on Employment and Social Policy (ESP) met on 20 and 21 March 2006. The Chairperson was Ambassador Fernando, Permanent Representative of the Government of Sri Lanka. The Employer and Worker Vice-Chairpersons were Ms. Goldberg and Mr. Patel, respectively.
2. The Chairperson acknowledged the concerns expressed earlier by some governments regarding the need for predictability in the scheduling of agenda items; however, for various reasons, it had become unavoidable again and a revised schedule had been circulated.
3. The Chairperson welcomed the Committee to its first meeting of 2006. She noted that the final discussions on the individual core elements of the Global Employment Agenda (GEA) would conclude deliberations on the, Strategic Policy Framework, 2002-05. She welcomed the consideration of the “vision” document to be presented to the Executive Director of the Employment Sector on operationalizing work for the 2006-07 biennium. She noted that the employment deficit had become one of the most daunting challenges facing societies. That illustrated the importance of the Decent Work Agenda, affirmed at the 2005 United Nations World Summit. The Committee’s discussions were timely, in view of the 2006 high-level segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which had chosen as its theme “sustainable employment and decent work for all”. The work of the ESP Committee should be conveyed to the ECOSOC meeting in Geneva in July.

I. Employability by improving knowledge and skills
(Second item on the agenda)

4. The discussion of core element six on “employability for improving knowledge and skills” was opened for debate and guidance by the Committee.

5. A representative of the Director-General (Mr. Kabundi, Director, Skills and Employability Department) introduced the Office paper.¹ He welcomed the opportunity to work closely with the Committee. The Office had benefited greatly from the Committee's guidance on developing the linkages between the core elements of the GEA. The work of the Office in the area of skills and employability was also influenced by the discussions at the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) on promoting youth employment, as well as the earlier discussions that had culminated in the adoption of the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195).

6. A representative of the Director-General (Ms. Nübler, Technical Specialist, Employment Sector) presented the Office paper. She described the Office's concept of employability and how it was linked to other elements of the GEA, providing an analytical framework to define key policy areas in order to enhance employability and employment. She outlined the Office strategy for improved employability, and summarized recent key achievements. She concluded by proposing future priorities for work in the context of major trends such as globalization, rapid technological change and an expanding informal economy.

7. The Employer Vice-Chairperson emphasized the importance the Employers' group placed on the topic of employability. She called on Mr. Renique (Employer member), who had served as Employer spokesperson in the ILC discussions of Recommendation No. 195, to address the topic.

8. Mr. Renique remarked that the skills issue was of prime concern to employers and that investment in skills development was a key factor for innovation, growth and employment in all sectors. He would have preferred the Office to be more explicit in the conceptual framework about the fundamental concept of shared responsibility for skills development among the social partners. Shared responsibility among the three partners was essential for a good skills agenda. That required good education and incentives for training, and the

¹ GB.295/ESP/2(Rev.).

commitment of individuals to developing their own competencies and of employers to offering training facilities. The ILO's work should focus on the connection between the world of education and training and the world of enterprise. Social dialogue at all levels was key. He highlighted the role employers' organizations could play, for instance, in the analysis of technological and organizational change and its translation into educational programmes. Recognition of prior learning was a key concern, as were labour law and regulation. He noted that the Office paper had not sufficiently drawn on the discussions at the last session of the ILC concerning youth employment, in particular the smooth transition from school to work and different models such as apprenticeships, career guidance, public and private employment agencies and youth entrepreneurship. It was crucial to strengthen skills networks such as CINTERFOR and to strengthen the ILO's fund-raising capacities. The paper's mention of a "rights-based approach" to skills development was questioned. There could be no guarantee of a job, and therefore clarification by the Office on paragraph 31 was requested.

9. The Worker Vice-Chairperson stated that human resource development was recognized as a vital part of the tool kit to promote economic growth and development, as evidenced by the three recent discussions on the topic at the ILC. The paper was a generic discussion of the issues, and a more coherent and focused exploration showing the benefits to individuals, firms and the economy would have been useful, for example providing the economic arguments for promoting the portability of skills. He welcomed the discussion in paragraph 8 on the importance of sound economic policies to stimulate aggregate demand for employment and enhancement of skills. The significance of that was illustrated by the paper's mention of the fast growing share of young people entering the labour market. At the same time, jobs with rights were a crucial concern, as demonstrated by the recent events in France concerning relaxed labour regulations for young people. The Workers' group supported the statements concerning national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and the interface between technology and skills. However, the paper fell short of describing the

significance of basic education in providing a foundation for skills development and social benefits. Furthermore, the role of workers' organizations in promoting skills acquisition should have been more fully addressed, and the Office could benefit from the lessons learned. He expressed concern that the Office's work in skills development had not fully lived up to the needs of the constituents; the Office should become a leading source of knowledge and expertise.

10. To illustrate the significance of human resources development, the Worker Vice-Chairperson remarked on the health sector as a case in point. Three of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals related directly to health: reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and disease reduction. Those required an underpinning human resources strategy. At the same time, there was a shift of health-care workers from the developing world to the developed, so a more sustainable model was required, including addressing supply of skills, compensation for developing countries for loss of skilled persons and cross-border skills recognition. Cooperation with the World Health Organization in that area should be envisaged. He stressed the role of skills development in mainstreaming the informal economy, and said that training and education needed to be included in broad industrial policies to address the skill mismatches created under global markets.

11. The representative of the Government of Mexico welcomed the Office paper, remarking on the importance of developing professional skills to improve the functioning of the labour market and enterprises. She affirmed the need to strengthen the Office's knowledge and information base, particularly in the area of skills and technology, to promote innovation and improved employability. The Office could greatly benefit from drawing on country experiences. She welcomed the digital guide to Recommendation No. 195 and noted its importance for private employment agencies.

- 12.** The representative of the Government of Pakistan remarked that his Government had placed human resources development at the heart of its development strategy. He appreciated the ILO's assistance in improving labour market information to provide reliable statistics on skills needs. He acknowledged the ILO's efforts in establishing emergency public employment services to assist those affected by the recent earthquake in Pakistan, as well as the introduction of skills and labour-intensive public works programmes. He welcomed the introduction of the Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) project for skills development, as well as the establishment of an Asia-Pacific skills network and the forthcoming employment forum to be held in Pakistan.
- 13.** The representative of the Government of Finland stressed that strong links between educational institutions and enterprises should be established, and that workplace learning should form an integral part of vocational training programmes. Young people were among the most important target groups for skills development, but lifelong learning was also crucial to help adults upgrade their skills. She concluded by remarking on the need to share research tools and methods among member States.
- 14.** The representative of the Government of Japan emphasized the role of public employment security offices in providing labour market information, career counselling and employment services to support skills development. He welcomed the establishment of the Regional Skills and Employability Programme (SKILLS-AP). His Government had provided financial support to the previous programme, the Asian and Pacific Skill Development Programme (APSDEP), and was willing to support future activities of the regional network. He asked the Office to continue making its activities and contributions widely known.
- 15.** The representative of the Government of Cuba stated that Recommendation No. 195 was the main reference point in the discussion of that core element. Strong primary and secondary education was an essential foundation for the enhancement of skills. In Cuba,

free education was offered at even the highest levels, and that had contributed greatly to the country's development. The Office should use its wide knowledge of national experiences to support skills enhancement. She noted that labour market institutions, employment services and career guidance were important factors in that regard, as was the ability to use information and communication technologies (ICE).

- 16.** The representative of the Government of South Africa welcomed the paper. He agreed that to meet the challenge of high unemployment, especially youth unemployment, employability must be addressed. To do so required a well-defined and adequately funded skills development strategy at the national level, which clearly spelled out priority areas such as eradicating poverty, and reducing unemployment and inequalities. He recommended that the Office draw on examples of best practices.
- 17.** The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom particularly welcomed paragraphs 5, 13, 14, 26 and 27 of the paper, which were very much in line with current initiatives in her country. She noted that, despite improvements in recent years, there still remains a significant number of workers in the United Kingdom with low skills, including poor basic literacy and numeracy skills. In response, the Government was creating a flexible, demand-led training system with the involvement of all social and economic partners. That included government action to tackle market failures in the provision of training. In that framework, information, advice and guidance services were available to all adults. Partnership through shared contribution by employers, trade unions, individuals and the State was an integral part of the national skills strategy. At the same time, appropriate measures should be taken to address exclusion issues. ILO priorities in terms of adult skills for employability should be (i) promoting the importance of partnership working, (ii) supporting governments in their attempts to foster a culture of individual responsibility.
- 18.** The representative of the Government of Germany thanked the Office for its comprehensive paper. She particularly welcomed the integration of social and economic

aspects. Skills development was not an end in itself. Promoting productivity, economic growth and technology transfer along with skills training generated synergies. The Office should develop a strategy or policy on the question of employability, technology transfer and employment. In that context, she requested further information on the pilot project in Ethiopia and Madagascar mentioned in paragraph 44.

- 19.** Mr. Nakajima (Worker member) explained that many companies in Japan organized skills development, through bipartite committees, in particular on-the-job training and career development. That model was quite successful because the trade unions were fully involved from the start, and through to implementation and evaluation. However, he noted that the trade union movement was facing a challenge since that model was jeopardized.
- 20.** The representative of the Government of the United States noted with satisfaction the explicit acknowledgement that training for employability required a demand-driven training system. He stated that the most important issue and the number one priority for the ILO was simply to ensure that those without skills acquired skills.
- 21.** The representative of the Government of Kenya agreed that skills acquisition, whether related to pre-employment or on-the-job training, was key to employability. She noted that, while public employment services should provide crucial services to match supply and demand for jobs, they were underdeveloped in most African countries. Their capacities should be strengthened so as to promote the employability of young people, women and persons with disabilities. On the challenges and strategies, she suggested going beyond policies and programmes and developing mechanisms to assess their impact on employment. Kenya supported paragraphs 21, 34, 39 and 50 of the paper. Finally, she expressed her appreciation for the Office's assistance in promoting youth employment initiatives for young people in Kenya engaged in income-generating activities in the informal economy.

- 22.** The representative of the Government of the Philippines welcomed the document and expressed her Government's support for the four future priorities identified. She commended the recent creation of the regional skills network in Asia and the Pacific. She expressed hope that the Office would further strengthen its support for technical cooperation programmes in the field of skills training.
- 23.** In her response to the debate, Ms. Nübler emphasized that the principle of shared responsibility was an essential element of the conceptual framework outlined in the paper. On youth employment, she indicated that the Office was working on school-to-work transition issues, such as apprenticeship systems, active labour market policies, core work skills and career guidance. Regarding a rights-based approach to employment for people with disabilities, she clarified that that did not mean that disabled persons should be guaranteed a job, but rather, the recognition of disabled persons' rights to equal access to all sectors of society. The link between education, skills training and lifelong learning, including the link and the synergies between skills and technology in the process of economic and social development, would be a focus area. A regional approach to qualification frameworks would be applied in Asia and the Pacific. Collaboration with CINTERFOR was planned on developing training technologies and ICTs. Lastly, she noted that the project referred to in paragraph 44 would focus on developing policies and programmes for skills development that targeted the poor.
- 24.** Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs (Executive Director, Employment Sector) emphasized the need to strengthen the Office's work on skills development and employability since it was key for employment creation. The ILO should be the leading agency on those issues. That should be done by addressing policy issues, specifically the financing of the training system, developing national skills development strategies, building linkages between vocational and educational systems and their interaction with the world of work, the role of skills in upgrading the informal economy, and the relationship between the skills profile of the

labour force and the investment climate. He highlighted the importance of working closely with the constituents in order to bring together knowledge and best practices.

25. The Worker Vice-Chairperson remarked that there was considerable consensus between all three groups. Tripartism should be strengthened in training. He shared the view of the Executive Director that investment in training should be a priority and the ILO needed to make progress in the funding mechanisms identified in the GEA. He expressed his satisfaction that the debate on skills involved education, highlighting the role of public education for skills development but also for promoting citizenship rights. He stressed that the Conclusions of the general discussion on youth employment at the 93rd Session of the ILC should be implemented in a balanced and comprehensive manner, called for more collaboration with the WHO and noted that skills advocacy should be part of the wider GEA package of tools.
26. Mr. Renique expressed his appreciation that the Committee connected social and economic development with skills development. He underlined the link between skills development and technology development. He was pleased to note the emphasis put on social dialogue at all levels and reiterated the necessity for private-sector involvement in skills development so that training and education could be demand driven. The Employers' group was eager to cooperate in the identification of best practices around the world.
27. *The Committee took note of the Office paper.*

II. Occupational safety and health: Synergies between security and productivity (Third item on the agenda)

28. A representative of the Director-General (Mr. Diop, Executive Director of the Social Protection Sector) introduced the Office paper.²

² GB.295/ESP/3.

- 29.** The Social Protection Sector contributed to the GEA through programmes aimed at ensuring and creating more and better jobs. The purpose of the Office paper was to review the effects of safe and healthy working conditions on productivity and competitiveness and to illustrate with successful experiences that “Good safety and health is good business” in industrialized countries as well as in developing ones. It was hoped that the paper would encourage governments, employers and workers to strengthen their commitment on occupational safety and health (OSH) issues. Lastly, he requested the Committee to propose policy objectives for the Office’s future action in that respect.
- 30.** A representative of the Director-General (Mr. Takala, Director, InFocus Programme on Safety and Health at Work and the Environment) recalled the latest estimate on work-related fatalities worldwide: 2.2 million people. He highlighted some of the examples in the report that demonstrated that good safety was good business, both at the national and the enterprise level and even in the informal economy. He underlined the savings that could be made in terms of lost working time; enterprises or countries applying safe and healthy working conditions had a lower number of accidents and were more competitive. He focused on the need to ensure that national legislation conformed to international labour standards (ILS) and stressed the importance of the promotional framework for occupational safety and health to be discussed at the next session of the ILC in June, which encouraged national action to be taken to develop a “preventative safety and health culture” in particular.
- 31.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson noted that the scale of annual fatalities required urgent action. He referred to the useful data on the economic benefits of OSH investment. The subject should not be restricted to the economic benefits of OSH but should also refer to the social and human rights case. Regarding corporate social responsibility (CSR), that should be seen as complementary to ratifying OSH standards and enforcement thereof, not as a replacement. OSH legislation should be in conformity with ILS, and it would be desirable to have a special promotional ratification programme for them, similar to that

used for core labour standards, in particular Conventions Nos. 81, 129 and 155. He noted market failures in allocating resources to OSH, caused by short-run commercial calculation, a tendency reinforced by pressures of globalization, including outsourcing of production. OSH standards were equally applicable to developed and developing countries and should be applicable to all workers without distinction. Referring to the enforcement of those standards and national legislation, he emphasized the need for employers to comply with regulations, for labour inspection systems to be reinforced, for OSH committees to be more widely established and for the media to disseminate more information on OSH issues and the costs of accidents. Collective bargaining and trade union involvement were vital in that context. He noted areas of OSH where the ILO could provide information, skills and resources to trade unions and called on the Office to strengthen such work. In concluding, he referred to 28 April as the Global Day on OSH which the trade union movement would highlight that year as the Day of Dead and Injured Workers, in the hope that the stark and painful images could build support for good standards and effective enforcement.

- 32.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson expressed support for the paper, agreeing that good safety and health was good business. She welcomed the acknowledgement that practices and expectations regarding OSH could not be the same in all countries. She looked forward to the discussion on the promotional framework for OSH at the June 2006 session of the ILC, which involved a non-prescriptive and preventative approach. Each country was to find a level of implementation appropriate to its level of development. She expressed concern about OSH being a matter of CSR since OSH was a fundamental aspect of good business management. As for multinational enterprises (MNEs), they had an important role to play in promoting best practices; however, the bulk of the problem lay outside MNEs as they only employed a limited number of workers. In addition, the informal economy not being covered by OSH action remained an area to be dealt with. The labour standards referred to by the Workers' group had relatively low ratification rates. Rather than promoting

ratification, it was more effective to promote frameworks that helped countries at different levels of development find the appropriate level of regulation. She asked for the ILO's support in helping the social partners to promote a preventative safety and health culture in their countries.

- 33.** The representative of the Government of Honduras, speaking on behalf of the Latin America and Caribbean group (GRULAC), shared the Office's view about incorporating OSH into the GEA and fully supported the paper. She considered it necessary to evaluate the economic costs of accidents and for the ILO to develop appropriate methods, taking into account factors such as lost working time, psychosocial issues, infectious diseases, HIV/AIDS, etc. As rightly indicated in paragraph 35, the social partners and governments ought to promote OSH at the enterprise level. Some GRULAC countries had already adopted OSH management systems and were expecting the ILO's support in that context.
- 34.** The representative of the Government of Japan welcomed the Office paper and supported the ILO's guidelines on OSH management systems that significantly contributed to improving productivity. However, he pointed out that specific guidance regarding management systems should be formulated for enterprises in developing countries, and that the ILO should play the leading role in that respect. Considering the importance of the issue, he drew attention to a Governing Body side event on collaboration between the ILO and the International Organization for Standardization on OSH management systems.
- 35.** The representative of the Government of France, speaking on behalf of IMEC, supported the document's approach, in particular the strong link between OSH and productivity. He encouraged the Office to pursue its efforts in implementing work improvements in small enterprises (WISE) and work improvement in neighbourhood development (WIND) programmes and to include OSH aspects into decent work country programmes (DWCPs). He shared the objective of promoting a safety culture as part of an integrated approach and agreed with the future action proposed in section 5 of the document.

- 36.** Ms. Byers (Worker member) emphasized the importance of OSH for all workers and underlined initiatives taken by Canadian trade unions in implementing good OSH practices which had resulted in reduced accident rates. She expanded on the specific needs of women and young workers, which trade unions addressed, and highlighted that unionized workplaces had a higher level of OSH.
- 37.** Ms. Pandeni (Worker member) reported on Namibia's experience in the mining and energy sectors, where collective bargaining had successfully reduced accidents. She referred to the National Labour Act, 2004, which recognized the existence of safety representatives within establishments and laid down sanctions for enterprises found violating its provisions.
- 38.** The representative of the Government of Malawi welcomed the paper and reiterated the need for improving OSH legislation. He shared Malawi's experiences of poor OSH standards and gave an example of workers being locked in at night which had resulted in fatalities and injuries. Often, workers could not read instructions due to the high level of illiteracy. During the current year, for the first time, Malawi was to commemorate the World Day for Safety and Health at Work to raise awareness of OSH.
- 39.** Mr. Suzuki (Employer member) emphasized that OSH was a shared responsibility. He regretted that paragraph 45, on international collaboration, focused only on economic benefits, and suggested that the words "and social" be included before the word "benefits".
- 40.** Mr. Takala thanked the members of the Committee for their useful comments. He underlined the importance of standards as defined in the Global Strategy, but he pointed out that ILO and national standards were not being enforced and that complementary measures were required to facilitate progress. In that context he noted that a paper on labour inspection was to be submitted to the November sitting of the ESP Committee. He agreed with the comments made by the Workers and Employers on the issue of CSR and underlined the links between the United Nations Global Compact and OSH. On the subject of MNEs, he indicated that the Office sought to bring OSH to smaller companies in the

supply chain through their largest contractors and in collaboration with labour inspectorates. He mentioned an ongoing OSH/supply-chain project carried out jointly with Volkswagen. The role of OSH labour standards was indeed critical, as was the role of the promotional framework instrument. Safety culture related not only to the behaviour of workers; it also encompassed the culture of the whole enterprise and the whole of society. He appealed for a higher commitment at enterprise and national levels and for tools to measure outputs. Women workers in particular suffered specific health problems, especially in the agricultural sector. Finally, he welcomed the suggestion that DWCPs should include an OSH component and concluded that economic benefits also meant social benefits.

41. The Employer Vice-Chairperson expressed her concern about certain choices of wording in the paper with regard to OSH, such as stress, public health and HIV/AIDS. Those were not work-related diseases as such; they only affected the climate at the workplace. Such terminology therefore had to be used with caution. OSH management systems were important for achieving good results in OSH and for creating a climate of prevention. However, it was important to understand that, while large companies had resources, small companies required additional support from the ILO. She was not in favour of international certification schemes.

42. The Worker Vice-Chairperson welcomed the suggestion of the Employers to consider both economic and social benefits, as the economic case should not be separated from the social dimension and loss of life could not be justified. The right to life was fundamental and, therefore, every DWCP should include an OSH component. He emphasized the need for companies to have a sustainable approach and to focus not only on short-term profits, which would result in a lack of protection. He called for the promotion of a general OSH standard and emphasized that CSR should not be promoted at the expense of standards but should be a supplementary, supporting component. MNEs could play a constructive role by modelling best practices, but he noted that MNEs often shifted cost pressures into their

subcontracting supply chains resulting in poor OSH. The low ratification rate of ILO OSH Conventions made a promotional campaign even more important. Further collaborative efforts were necessary to promote a preventative culture. However, the aim should be a culture of zero tolerance, underpinned by effective enforcement.

43. *The Committee took note of the report.*

III. Global Employment Agenda implementation (First item on the agenda)

(a) Employment strategies for decent work country programmes: Concepts, approaches and tools for implementing the Global Employment Agenda

44. A representative of the Director-General, Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs (Executive Director, Employment Sector), introduced the paper.³

45. Following the offer made by the new Executive Director during the 294th Session of the Governing Body, the document presented a vision statement on the work of the Office in the area of employment. It was a response to the keen interest of the Committee in the way the Office was implementing the GEA and the need to operationalize the Agenda, and it offered some suggestions concerning the possible future work of the Committee. The document took the concept of decent work as the framework for making the GEA operational as the employment component of DWCPs.

46. Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs elaborated on the challenges posed by globalization. They placed an increasing demand on ILO services in a world where the decent work deficit was daunting. Today decent work was not an abstract idea but a very concrete need for people throughout the world. That meant promoting the various components of DWCPs, providing technical support, improving cooperation between sectors and with the field, and strengthening the momentum of decent work as a global goal.

³ GB.295/ESP/1/1.

47. He outlined the concrete steps that had already been taken to increase the operational value of the GEA's policy framework. They included the creation of a one-page employment policy framework, the development of a checklist of key policy areas and sub-areas, the setting up of an inventory of ILO tools and instruments, and the preparation of a substantive technical document containing employment policy knowledge and information. He also explained the main strategic orientations, which included the following: (i) increase the operational level of the GEA; (ii) define the priorities and focus of the work of the Employment Sector; (iii) improve knowledge management; (iv) identify and strengthen core competencies; and (v) develop a strategic view of the operationally useful research priorities.
48. He identified four priorities for the work of the Employment Sector for the 2006-07 biennium. Those were ensuring support of the constituents in placing employment at the centre of economic and social policies; promoting youth employment; addressing the informal economy; and responding to the special needs of Africa. Practical steps to enhance knowledge management included extracting know-how from country and project experiences, developing global and regional specialist teams, mobilizing resources, and adopting modern technologies and management practices to enhance delivery. He also underlined the importance of creating alliances with academics and research institutions and developing the capacity to measure the employment impact of policy interventions both quantitatively and qualitatively.
49. The implementation of national DWCPs required high-level dialogue on a wide spectrum of policies. It also required the cutting-edge expertise of the Office. Countries' needs could vary according to circumstances, resources and the technical expertise needed to place employment at the centre of economic and social policies. Focus countries would be those where a critical mass of instruments could be applied and evaluated with the direct support of the Office. A focal point system with regional and subregional coverage had been set up

to assist the constituents and improve coordination between the field offices and the Employment Sector.

- 50.** Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs announced the reorganization of the Sector into four departments, as detailed in Circular No. 243 issued by the Director-General on 17 March 2006, namely the Economic and Labour Markets Analysis Department (EMP/ELM), the Employment Policy Department (EMP/POLICY), the Job Creation and Enterprise Development Department (EMP/ENTERPRISE) and the Skills and Employability Department (EMP/SKILLS). Finally, he suggested three possible sets of subjects for the future work of the Committee. The first was to continue the review of national employment policies under an improved assessment system. The second was to analyse the operationalization of the GEA and review the implementation of policies and instruments in specific areas. The third was to continue to define and review policy approaches in specific thematic areas, including the ten core elements of the GEA.
- 51.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson thanked the Office for the paper. She emphasized that the process was a valuable one towards better focused work between the Sector and the Committee and wondered whether a similar approach was envisaged by the Social Protection Sector. The document was a practical tool in the implementation of the GEA. She agreed with the statement that the GEA implementation policies came under both global and national goals where national actions could provide tangible impact. She was, however, disappointed by the notion that the international community was only now discovering the employment route to poverty reduction, while the Employers had been consistently advocating that for a long time.
- 52.** The Office should now focus on creating opportunities for enterprise creation by developing tools and methodologies and by aiming to remove emasculating legislation and bureaucracy. A real added value for the Employment Sector was in working with the

private sector, where the Office had a comparative advantage over other multilateral organizations.

- 53.** While participation was a key element in achieving national economic and social development outcomes, it was governments that, in the end, would have to make decisions and take responsibility for them. She queried the term “good quality growth” in paragraph 30. Growth should create productive employment, and that should be the criterion applied. She supported the focus on national employment strategies (NES) in achieving measurable outcomes and commended the paper for advocating a flexible approach. The checklist in table 1 was a “menu” for constituents where they could pick and choose priorities, in line with the demand-driven approach. In refocusing its efforts, the Office had to listen to and work more closely with the constituents in order to respond to their requirements, and it was reassuring to see that commitment reflected in the paper. Regarding the key policy areas, the Employers’ view was that macroeconomic policies were not within the mandate of the Employment Sector. The Sector’s core competencies were more in the area of labour market institutions, skills and employability and enterprise development. Labour market institutions deserved to be strengthened, and more work was needed to understand the functioning of labour markets in developing countries. Skills and employability required renewed emphasis since the ILO had lost leadership in that field and should work more closely with employers. Enterprise development was a top priority for the Employers, particularly with regard to the value-chain approach for MNEs and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and to increased interaction with the private sector.
- 54.** Governance, empowerment and organizational capital formed a key policy domain for the ILO, and cooperation with the Social Dialogue Sector was crucial. Social protection was also an important policy area and component of the GEA, and the Office should have made an effort to present a more integrated vision in that regard.

- 55.** Three of the four priorities defined in the paper were operational ones – youth employment, the informal economy and meeting the needs of Africa – while making employment central to economic and social policies was an advocacy issue. The real work of the Sector was in operations, not advocacy. The emphasis on youth employment was welcome; the development of national action plans and of tools for employers’ organizations were two tracks to that work. In the area of the informal economy, the Office had a clear mandate from the 2002 session of the ILC. It should have a focused and action-oriented approach, working with employers’ organizations to develop their capacity to influence the creation or reform of legislation and policies in order to create an enabling environment, and allowing them to extend their representation and services throughout the informal economy. The Employers supported the emphasis on Africa, but advised realism in light of limited resources. They also supported a more focused research agenda based on empirical findings.
- 56.** Turning to the future of the Committee, she stressed that the paper provided an excellent basis for improved cooperation between the Sector and the Committee. She mentioned three areas of concern: agenda setting, decision-making and accountability. While there was an overemphasis on policy debates, outcomes were lacking, and she asked to see a better balance between analysis and debate. The presentation of country cases should be continued because it would allow the practical, evaluative role of the Committee to come into play. There should be a better balance between papers on guidance and those for decision, with more emphasis on the latter, especially for evaluation papers. In the area of accountability, she stressed the importance of a follow-up mechanism and an improved information flow.
- 57.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson welcomed the paper and complimented Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs on his presentation. He commended him for setting out a coherent Office vision in the Sector and confirmed its great value; informal consultations had benefited the process and he recommended that they be used more frequently.

58. The document set out a number of useful ideas and tools and supported the focus on macroeconomic policies, skills and enterprise development as interdependent. The labour market was where demand and supply elements of policy intersected, with wages being an instrument of expanding demand for goods and services, and skills being an input into efficient production. It retained the crucial aspect of the GEA, namely the interconnectedness of the policy agenda, and should not become a rewritten GEA which remained the litmus test for programmes. He welcomed the fact that the values of the ILO, including the right to organize and bargain collectively, were mainstreamed and used as the starting point for all work and looked forward to future reports that elaborated how they were mainstreamed into country programmes.

59. He welcomed the checklist as an expanding tool kit for decent work and stressed the need for the ILO to tackle challenges to strengthen its work, advice and resources in order to avoid a slide in many countries into low standards. That was not helped by the often inappropriate advice from the international financial institutions that simplistically called for fewer rights and greater flexibility in labour market policies. The document, in contrast, had a more mature treatment of the role of the State and the limitations of market fundamentalism. Its implementation should take account of the tendency by companies to outsource, casualize their workforce or disguise the employment relationship to bypass the rights which workers had.

60. He welcomed the reference to the work on MNEs and stressed that it should be given prominence. He noted the tendency by some MNEs to push cost pressures into their supply chains, often with the result of wage reductions, unhealthy working environments and poor working conditions. He supported the four priority areas identified in paragraph 54, but asked that the list in paragraph 31 of the five main sources of economic growth be expanded to include aggregate demand, as a crucial driver and source of growth. Recognizing both the national and global dimensions of the GEA, he felt there was a need to have a coherent implementation plan for the global policy dimension. Youth

employment and the work on the informal economy must be guided by the comprehensive implementation of the ILC Conclusions on the two areas. Africa was a priority and needed resources, urgency and focus.

- 61.** He welcomed the partnership between the Sector and the Committee, but also shared the Workers' frustrations about the limited resources invested in GEA priorities in the past and the relabelling of old programmes. That had frequently resulted in a gap between rhetoric and reality. He welcomed the new structure of the Sector and supported its proposed partnership with other sectors. The Policy Integration Department also had an important role to play in that respect.
- 62.** He agreed that the Committee should play a strong governance role; discussions should have a practical impact; the GEA should be used as the basis to set the agenda of the Office and the GEA should be promoted as an interconnected package. As for the checklist, he underlined the importance of ILO expertise being available for all the areas listed, including on economic policy issues.
- 63.** He took note of the proposal by the Office for national case studies, thematic reviews and reviews of policy approaches, but suggested that further thought be given to the list of themes, which could include trade and economic policy instruments and collective bargaining, and to having a regular overview of the implementation of the GEA that covered all the core elements.
- 64.** The representative of the Government of Argentina, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, thanked the Office for the excellent document and presentation. The document was very comprehensive, translating the GEA into concrete action, and took into account other important documents such as the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization and the discussions of the present Committee. He regretted that the consultations on the document had not taken place earlier and with the benefit of having a draft in Spanish.

- 65.** He highlighted the interdependence of national policies and international processes mentioned in paragraph 4, and stressed that the Sector should actively be involved in the debates on the international dimension and outline possible solutions. He welcomed the distinction between “values and principles”, “basic concepts”, “key policy areas” and “tools”, but emphasized that the elements of graph 1 had to be adapted to individual country situations. He sought clarification on the criteria used in the graph to categorize countries and requested that the documents mentioned in paragraphs 46 and 49 be made available. He supported the criteria for the selection of focus countries; they should reflect various stages of development, with an emphasis on developing countries. Finally, he reiterated the importance of cooperation and communication between the ILO and other international organizations, and of coordination with other sectors.
- 66.** The representative of the Government of the Philippines, speaking on behalf of the Asia-Pacific group, commended the Office on a very timely and persuasive paper. Her group supported the four priority areas of focus and suggested further developing the checklist of policy areas into national employment strategies. In order to achieve greater understanding on employment creation, lessons needed to be learnt from selected countries, including what worked and what did not work. Increasing evaluation and monitoring would help measure outcomes.
- 67.** The representative of the Government of France, speaking on behalf of IMEC, lauded the fact that the ILO had made decent work a global goal. The “vision” document provided guidance on implementing the GEA. IMEC supported the four priority areas indicated. With regard to paragraphs 65, 66 and 67, he requested more details on the modalities for territorial and sectoral coordination. His group encouraged greater cooperation with organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank and other United Nations agencies.
- 68.** The representative of the Government of Morocco, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, congratulated the Office on the high-quality “vision” document. She underlined that while

DWCPs constituted an excellent approach, subregional programmes also needed to be developed, taking into account the effects of intra-regional conflict and migration.

- 69.** The representative of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela thanked the Office for the “vision” document. He stated that while national policies were important, international policies were too. He noted that the high rates of global military spending flew in the face of decent work creation and improvement of workers’ standards of living. He emphasized his country’s achievements, in the framework of large-scale tripartite dialogue, the best economic growth rates in the Americas combined with reduced inflation, unemployment and poverty. In addition, the speaker mentioned dynamic cooperation that his country promoted in the region and cooperation with Cuba to cure 6 million workers in the region afflicted with eyesight problems.
- 70.** The representative of the Government of Finland congratulated the Office on the “vision” document. She suggested that lessons could be learnt from the Lisbon Strategy of the European Union (EU), which set employment targets. The idea in the document of decent work as a productive factor rather than a residual outcome of economic growth was most interesting. The Office should further elaborate on the preconditions for decent work as a productive factor, how to make distribution more equal, and on the role of the labour market and the social partners in that area. Finally, she underlined the importance of monitoring and evaluation.
- 71.** The representative of the Government of Pakistan congratulated the Office on the paper. He believed the forthcoming ECOSOC discussion on full employment was a result of the ILO’s work in promoting decent work. His Government would welcome advice on Part E of the document related to growth and economic efficiency. The checklist needed to be developed further, and it was important to evaluate successful and unsuccessful experiences. He noted his country’s efforts in promoting SMEs, skills development and extending social protection to vulnerable groups. The ILO’s advice had been incorporated

into Pakistan's ten-year development plan, and he also noted successful ongoing initiatives such as the TREE project.

- 72.** The representative of the Government of Cuba commended the “vision” document as a step forward. She requested that summaries of documents be made available so that there could be a fuller understanding of the checklist, internal organization of the ILO and regional focal points structure. There should be greater links between ILO headquarters and field offices so that country-level information could feed into the evaluation of employment policies.
- 73.** The representative the Government of Sri Lanka congratulated Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs on an excellent presentation. He thanked the ILO for the “vision” document and stressed that effective implementation required the strengthening of ILO field offices through optimum use of resources. He further stressed the need for the sustainability of implementation.
- 74.** The representative of the Government of the Republic of Korea commended the Office on the comprehensive paper. He pointed out that the informal economy was also a challenge for developed countries and requested information on whether a common definition existed. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) had been redrafting its ten-year-old Jobs Strategy, which included the informal economy. He hoped the ILO would collaborate with the OECD on that matter.
- 75.** The representative of the Government of South Africa acknowledged the conceptual and practical challenges in the “vision” document. He suggested that specific time frames be identified to measure progress in implementation. He highlighted a number of concerns: youth employment's long-term and society-wide costs; respect for fundamental principles and rights at work; the need to reverse inequalities and discrimination in the labour market; and access to finance by entrepreneurs for sustained business ventures. He lauded the efforts in developing a checklist of key policy areas.

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- 76.** The representative of the Government of Ethiopia thanked Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs for the “vision” document. He welcomed the priorities of youth employment and the special needs of Africa, and underscored the need for resources, given the magnitude of those challenges. He believed the ILO could benefit from the work of the Commission for Africa, which had developed strategies addressing unemployment and poverty reduction.
- 77.** The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom congratulated the Office on its efforts to make decent work a global goal. He acknowledged the operational framework, the detailed checklist as a user-friendly tool articulating the ILO’s approach, and the need for strategic orientations to reposition the ILO’s work on DWCPs to coincide with the reforms taking place across the United Nations system. He proposed a stronger relationship between the present Committee and the Committee on Technical Cooperation. He supported implementation with a limited number of focus countries and suggested that progress be effectively monitored. He hoped that the broader vision of the document be conveyed to the wider United Nations and international community and the forthcoming ECOSOC meeting.
- 78.** The representative of the Government of Mexico congratulated the Office on the document. She agreed that the list of key policy areas would be useful for countries to identify their priorities and adapt it to their own contexts. The checklist could be further refined to include decentralization and transparency in reforms, social responsibility in the labour market, recruitment agencies and workers’ and employers’ organizations.
- 79.** The representative of the Government of Cameroon noted his country had revised its employment strategy following an employment forum the previous November. He emphasized the important role of public and private employment agencies and stressed the importance of ILO assistance in strengthening their existing weak structures. He also emphasized the importance of labour market information and the need for the ILO and the World Bank to work together with the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF),

which was working on comparative labour market indicators for Cameroon, Mali, Nigeria, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. He hoped that the project could also be implemented in sub-Saharan Africa.

- 80.** The representative of the Government of Nigeria congratulated the Office on the document. She lauded the ILO's work on the social dimensions of globalization. She believed that the ILO should build on the capacities of the social partners at national level to better engage them on the economic and social policy debates. She agreed on the targeted groups and endorsed the four priority areas, in particular the special needs of Africa.
- 81.** The representative of the Government of Kenya emphasized that employment was a daunting challenge. Most planners were not ready to accept a paradigm shift, turning employment from a residual to a critical production factor, so the ILO needed to help its constituents and the ministries of planning and finance. Capacity building and advocacy were required to help constituents address the informal economy. She emphasized the importance of the values listed in paragraph 28 of the document as a means of developing decent work for the informal economy. Improvements in labour market information systems and research and evaluation were needed to enhance the policy-making process.
- 82.** The representative of the Government of Peru commended the Office on the paper and its presentation. She stressed that employment had become a central concern in Latin America and listed the numerous initiatives carried out at the regional level. She hoped that the topic of decent work as a global goal would be further discussed at the American Regional Meeting to be held in May 2006. The methodological framework for the integration of the GEA into DWCPs as proposed by the Office was of great importance for her delegation.
- 83.** The representative of the Government of the United States welcomed the Office paper. He supported the recommendations made by the Employer and Worker Vice-Chairpersons that the discussions of the Committee should ultimately lead to decisions, although a

formal point for decision was not necessarily required; and that such decisions should be followed up by reports on their implementation and a subsequent discussion in the Committee.

- 84.** The representative of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago suggested that the checklist of key policy areas could be expanded through dialogue among the social partners. Gender equality and equal opportunity should be included under social policies, and retraining should be included under the skills section. He highlighted the importance of disseminating case studies and best practices.
- 85.** The representative of the Government of Mozambique pointed out that his country accorded high priority to employment and had only the previous week adopted an employment and vocational training strategy with the help of the ILO. However, poverty and AIDS restricted the implementation of decent work.
- 86.** In his response to the debate, Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs said that he was very encouraged by the good reception that the “vision” document had received from the Committee. He noted that there was broad consensus on the usefulness of the vision as to how to operationalize the GEA and the employment component of DWCPs. He welcomed the broad consensus about the practical steps undertaken to increase the operational value of the framework of the GEA, the strategic orientations and the priorities listed therein. He agreed that the checklist was for guidance and was not exhaustive. It was also consistent with the Ouagadougou priorities. One of the aims of the “vision” document was to close the gaps between the expectations of the Committee and implementation by the ILO. Work on youth unemployment and the informal economy would be carried out in accordance with the ILC discussions on those matters. He noted no dissenting voices on the other strategic orientations, including knowledge management and research priorities. The Committee had also welcomed the ILO’s efforts to enhance cooperation with other sectors within the Office, with the field structure and with its constituents.

87. He indicated that the international development community had only recently accepted the centrality of employment as a poverty reduction tool. The role and responsibilities of the State were referred to on several occasions in the document. Citing a few examples, he assured the Committee that the international dimension was taken into account in the work of the Sector. Regarding the issue of good quality growth, that referred to the employment intensity of growth as well as to growth embedded in the other components of the vision, namely distribution, equity, social inclusion and empowerment. Aggregate demand was indeed another source of economic growth. He agreed that work should also be carried out at the subregional and regional levels, and that it was important to learn from successes and failures. The regional focal points had been set up to improve coordination between the field and headquarters. The work of the Sector was organized under a matrix where outcomes were coordinated with regional and national needs, making extensive use of the regional focal points.

88. The GEA had similarities to the Lisbon Strategy; indeed, another paper⁴ before the Committee suggested having similar guidelines for evaluation. Strengthening partnerships with IMEC countries was important to enhance resource mobilization efforts and to strengthen expertise. In response to an observation about the absence of time frames, he noted that they were more appropriately placed in work plans. As for regular budget resources, the envelope for the current biennium was already fixed, and the only way of obtaining additional funds was through mobilizing external resources. He emphasized the close collaboration between the ILO and the African Union. As for the proposed inclusion of international labour standards in the checklist, he suggested that that matter would be more appropriately covered through a similar exercise envisaged for the other areas of the Decent Work Agenda.

⁴ GB.295/ESP/1/3.

- 89.** Regarding future agendas of the Committee, he welcomed the positive comments made on the three sets of topics proposed for consideration. They would not necessarily have to be standing items for each session, unless so desired by the Committee. The Office would provide whatever support was required to the Committee in that regard, and would work to improve the information flow. He noted a fourth option put forward by the Workers, namely an overview of the GEA implementation.
- 90.** Mr. Diop, in response to a question raised by the Employer Vice-Chairperson, indicated that the Director-General had requested the other sectors to prepare checklists comprising the tools available in other areas. Emphasizing the important role of social protection for the informal economy and its relevance for productivity, he pointed out its close link with employment. He indicated his readiness to prepare a relevant document if the Committee so desired.
- 91.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson congratulated Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs on his excellent response to the various concerns of the Committee. He was struck by GRULAC's comment on how each of the three baskets should have a national and global dimension and believed that was a constructive way forward. He supported the idea of a broader checklist by all sectors, and noted it would provide a more comprehensive "development tool kit" to constituents.
- 92.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson lauded Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs for his impressive response. She felt that boded well for improvement of the relationship between work of the Sector and the Committee. Inserting a global dimension in every agenda item would be inappropriate, as one of the strengths of the paper was that it focused on its particular mandate and mostly at the national level. Given resource constraints, priorities had to be chosen very carefully.
- 93.** *The Committee took note of the Office paper.*

(b) Implementation

(c) Suggested modalities for the evaluation of the GEA in the context of decent work country programmes

94. A representative of the Director-General, Mr. Amjad (Director, Policy Planning, Employment Sector) introduced the Office papers ⁵ jointly.

95. He drew attention to the GEA web site which provided information on each of the ten core elements. All ten core elements had now been discussed and the process had provided a rigorous and systematic discussion of key aspects of employment policies under different economic conditions and stages of development. Key issues for further work had been identified, and the discussions in the Committee had provided guidance to the Office on future work. The real test of the GEA framework was in its application to real-life situations. The challenge here was threefold: (1) reporting on the global, regional and national perspective of the GEA; (2) the wide range of programmes assisted by the ILO that needed to be aligned with the GEA; and (3) the development of policy tools to make the GEA operational. The “vision” document filled that gap and led to the next stage of the implementation of the GEA through DWCPs.

96. The reports presented so far had concentrated on sharing country experiences in the implementation of the GEA and the ILO’s support of that process. At the request of the Committee, tripartite representatives of Argentina, Ghana and the Philippines had made presentations on making employment central to policy-setting in March and November 2005.

97. The present implementation report included the ILO’s support to China and Pakistan. The GEA framework had been used to draw up respective employment policies in a sustained

⁵ GB.295/ESP/1/2 and GB.295/ESP/1/3.

manner. He then described in detail how the Office supported the implementation of the core elements of the GEA, and follow-up action on discussions of core elements.

98. Referring to the evaluation paper, he outlined the three options suggested: (1) continuing country presentations; (2) evaluating ILO support by tripartite delegations; and (3) discussing the evaluation of the two DWCPs that would be conducted by the Office's Evaluation Unit each biennium to assess the employment component and how the DWCPs have benefited from the GEA. Finally, he sought guidance from the Committee on the format of future implementation reports and on modalities for evaluation.

99. The Worker Vice-Chairperson indicated that the evaluation paper was an excellent complement to the "vision" document, since it would help measure the implementation of the GEA. Country presentations were valuable as they showed quantifiable results, and they could be summarized in a synthesis report. He supported the five proposals set out in paragraph 8. Of particular value was the proposed tripartite review of the impact of ILO technical cooperation on employment. He emphasized that both good and weak country experiences should be selected, and both global and national dimensions covered. The Evaluation Unit would enhance the work of the Committee by looking at the cost benefit of ILO programmes. He noted that the proposal was for four countries to be selected over the next biennium, two through the procedure proposed and two through the work of the Evaluation Unit. He asked the Office to consider whether a country review under the new procedure could already be done for the November 2006 session of the Committee. Ideally, a single session of the Committee could consider one report of the Evaluation Unit and another session could use the process outlined in paragraph 8, allowing the Committee to consider GEA implementation from a number of angles. One ESP meeting a year would focus on the experiences of two countries and the other meeting could then look at the update on the GEA as a whole. He also supported the proposal to assess specific instruments. He welcomed the impact assessment tool and the proposals in paragraph 19 on the use of a "checklist of key policy areas" to identify qualitative and quantitative

indicators to measure progress. The Office should consider developing tools to measure the effectiveness of the GEA at the global level.

100. The Employer Vice-Chairperson requested clarification on what the Worker Vice-Chairperson meant by assessing the GEA at the global level. She liked the idea of assessing two countries and two instruments and supported the Workers' proposal to receive an ILO report in November. She endorsed that as a good governance tool. In her view the modality paper provided a good practical framework. The methodology section of paragraph 8 needed more thought to avoid duplication, confusion or high costs. She quoted from paragraph 59 of the "vision" document on learning from projects, and hoped that the Committee would create a constructive atmosphere where experiences of what worked and what did not work could be discussed. She suggested that some of the presentations could be presented as information papers. Not every paper presented to the Committee had been of equal value. For example, the paper on sustainable development had been unsatisfactory. Lastly, she commended the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development Cairo Conference, which had set priorities for donors to link with the private sector.

101. The Worker Vice-Chairperson clarified what he had meant by assessing GEA at the global level, quoting from Part IV of the GEA ⁶ on the need for alliances for policy coordination. The ILO should be searching for common ground with other agencies on the Decent Work Agenda and could take on a coordinating role for an inter-agency meeting on employment-related issues or schedule a series of meetings with one or more agencies.

102. Mr. Oshiomhole (Worker member) queried the ILO's input into the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development Cairo Conference. He noted the World Bank's position that lack of labour flexibility was an obstacle to job creation through SMEs. The Workers' group had provided evidence to counter that argument during the March 2004 session and he hoped that the ILO had used that to counteract the view of the Bank. He voiced his concern

⁶ GB.286/ESP/1(Rev.).

that the World Bank would use the ILO to legitimize its position on labour market flexibility. With regard to the follow-up to the African Union Extraordinary Summit, he noted that a number of countries had declared their intention to prioritize employment. However, the ILO needed to look beyond rhetoric to see whether there had actually been progress. The ILO needed a strategy to institutionalize linkages between growth, employment and poverty reduction.

- 103.** Ms. Burrow (Worker member) voiced her concern about the China Employment Forum. While it was important to engage with China, she stressed that the ILO should push for better working conditions for Chinese workers. She detailed many of the poor working conditions, OSH issues and lack of freedom of association facing Chinese workers. She requested information from the ILO on four questions: (i) beyond the Forum, how closely was the ILO working with the Chinese constituents; (ii) what was the framework of advice being provided by the ILO; (iii) were ACTRAV and ACT/EMP involved in the process; (iv) what role could the ILO play in China to promote core labour standards? Furthermore, could the parent structures of MNEs promote better working conditions both directly and through the supply chain?
- 104.** Mr. Ahmed (Worker member) expressed his gratitude to the ILO for its work in earthquake relief in Pakistan. He welcomed the “cash-for-work” schemes and the “rapid income support through employment” project provided by the ILO and requested further support to rebuild livelihoods in the affected regions.
- 105.** The representative of the Government of France, speaking on behalf of IMEC, noted that the evaluation document responded to the request made at the 294th Session of the Governing Body to better understand how countries took the GEA into account and how to assess its national impact. IMEC maintained its support for the country presentations and agreed with suggestions made in paragraph 8, except for subparagraph (iii). He considered it more practical to allow the social partners to learn from assessments carried out by

experts. He supported the suggestion to evaluate each biennium the application of one or two key tools or instruments included in paragraph 13, which could help in the development of future standards-related work. IMEC was interested in the suggestions made in paragraphs 17, 18 and 19 to carry out comparative studies resulting from regular evaluation exercises based on pre-established criteria. Finally, he requested information about the linkages between the proposal contained in document GB.295/ESP/1/3 and the strategic framework for evaluation adopted in 2004.

106. The representative of the Government of China noted that employment was an extremely serious problem in his country and that measures were being adopted to generate decent work for all. Achieving harmonious sustainable economic growth was a significant challenge given the size of the population and the impact of globalization. The Government, with the assistance of the ILO and tripartite participation, had adopted a plan to improve employment services, enhance training and ensure social protection for all.

107. Noting the absence of an established evaluation methodology, the representative of the Government of Cuba suggested the use of alternative information sources. The reports presented by member States on the application of standards, as well as specific country-level research, provided one such source. She hoped that the proposals made in the evaluation paper did not lead to the development of cumbersome procedures. She considered critical the intervention of the Office's Evaluation Unit in setting timetables and evaluation methodologies, avoiding the extrapolation of tools used in developed economies which might not be suitable in less favourable circumstances.

108. The representative of the Government of the Republic of Korea suggested the inclusion of an ILO expert in the tripartite delegation suggested in paragraph 8(iii). Such expertise would ensure coherence between assessment exercises.

109. The representative of the Government of Pakistan enumerated the challenges posed by the effects of the natural disaster that had affected his country, noted the critical importance of

human resource development and job creation, and explained how his Government wished to turn the tragedy into an opportunity. He invited the ILO to continue providing assistance to the victims.

- 110.** Suggesting that, instead of developing new initiatives, efforts be deployed to assess why existing strategies were not working, the representative of the Government of South Africa emphasized the need to determine the status of implementation of the African Union Action Plan in respect of employment. He requested the Office to work closely with the African Union in that regard. Moreover, a communication strategy needed to be developed to report on achievements in the implementation of the Ouagadougou Declaration. Turning to the evaluation paper, he noted that the efforts in employment creation had not been comprehensively assessed due to the lack of standardized reporting formats including both quantitative and qualitative data. Such reporting, however, required capacity building for the countries concerned at all stages of the reporting. That had not been mentioned in the Office paper. Finally, he endorsed paragraph 8 in its entirety.
- 111.** An observer from the European Commission (Mr. Delarue) suggested that the EU's open method of coordination be used to assess the GEA. The Commission, which was already cooperating with the ILO in a number of fields, would consider further cooperation in that specific field, if so required.
- 112.** In his response to the debate, Mr. Amjad noted that the evaluation paper had been well received by the Committee. Quantifiable country presentations demonstrating more clearly the role played by the GEA should continue. There was, however, no consensus on subparagraph 8(iii), which should be the subject of further debate. Both a synthesis on the three country reports already presented to the Committee and a list of actions and issues identified by the Committee could be prepared for its November 2006 session. There was broad support for the idea of designing impact assessment tools, provided they took into account each country's situation and that capacity and institution building accompanied

such actions. Efforts had been deployed to ensure complementarities between the assessments suggested in document GB.295/ESP/1/3 and the work being undertaken by the ILO's Evaluation Unit. That would result in the presentation of two assessments of DWCP by that Unit and two country presentations based on the GEA over the following biennium. More coordinated action could be undertaken in future programme and budget cycles. It was further agreed that policy tools and instruments developed by the ILO should be assessed. In that context, both positive and negative experiences should be used to enhance advisory services and scale up resulting activities. Some thought should be given to the way such experiences should be disseminated.

113. In turning to the implementation report, Mr. Amjad strongly emphasized that any activity undertaken by the ILO in all countries and with all partners would have the imprint of the Organization's values and priorities. All the ILO's work would underline both the quantity, but more importantly the quality, of generated employment. Respect for workers' rights, working conditions and social protection were integral to the Sector's approach to employment creation. That had been reflected, in particular, in the ILO's work on the draft National Employment Promotion Law of China, which examined, with the involvement of ACT/EMP and ACTRAV, labour legislation and labour market measures for meeting the quantitative and qualitative employment challenges confronted by that country. Efforts were being made by the Office as a whole to assist in the implementation of the African Union Action Plan. That, however, rested critically on progress in implementation at the national level and the decisions made by economic policy-makers about the centrality of decent work. He agreed that it was necessary to examine why some existing policies did not achieve the expected results and to explore how to strengthen those that did.

114. Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs emphasized the importance that the Office attached to the African Union Action Plan at its three implementation levels and to the efforts now being made to determine how best to provide practical support to constituents and to identify focus countries.

- 115.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson wondered whether the efforts to assess the macroeconomic perspective of the GEA as understood by the Worker Vice-Chairperson would not duplicate the efforts made under the Policy Coherence Initiative. She indicated that consensus had been achieved on a great number of matters and that the Employers were feeling very positive about the work of both the Sector and the Committee.
- 116.** Recalling the reservations expressed by the IMEC group on a review by tripartite delegations, the Worker Vice-Chairperson suggested adopting the proposals made by the representative of the Government of the Republic of Korea. If that were not supported, he suggested a meeting of the Officers of the Committee and the regional coordinators to work out the differences concerning subparagraph 8(iii) of the evaluation paper.
- 117.** The representative of the Government of the United States indicated that his Government was not willing to support a tripartite evaluation mission. Establishing such a tripartite delegation should be submitted to the Committee for decision, but there was little chance his Government would agree to it.
- 118.** The Chairperson suggested further considering that issue for decision with the Officers of the Committee and the regional coordinators and said the United States objection would be noted in the record.
- 119.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson congratulated members on the degree of agreement reached at the Committee and the degree of focus and commitment achieved. Referring to the concerns raised by Employers regarding ILO focus and expertise on economic policy issues, he quoted the Declaration of Philadelphia and recalled the ILO's responsibility vis-à-vis international economic policies concerning the world of work. His group looked forward to the strengthening of the ILO's work and capacity in that area.
- 120.** *The Committee took note of the Office paper.*

121. The Chairperson concluded the debate by emphasizing the sense of ownership emerging from the discussions and requested members to explore in the following months how best to contribute to the Committee's future work. She thanked the delegations for their inputs and cooperation and expressed her gratitude to the secretariat as well as the interpreters and translators.