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WORKING PARTY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE GOVERNING BODY

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... So far, Governments have expressed themselves along the same lines, but I would like to make a few comments.

Employers consider that modernisation of the Governing Body must build on initiatives such as the 2008 Declaration and the Global Jobs Pact, that have made the ILO more responsive and relevant to its constituents. However it is also essential that it can be responsive to situations such as the global crisis.

This presupposes two different types of change.

The first deals with the practicalities that we have often discussed but have not yet seen implemented. It is about the efficient and effective organisation of meetings; timetables that are agreed and delivered, documents presented in good time, interventions that are timely, succinct and relevant. To sum up these are good practices that do not require “reforms” but need to be implemented as urgently.

Secondly, there is a need for structural change to make both the GB and the ILC able to react to an urgent need. We showed that the tripartite structure enabled the delivery of a Global Jobs Pact which received unanimous international support. However, effective tripartism must include and involve the stakeholders equally. No one party should feel marginalised. We are ready to discuss the necessary mechanisms to improve the process and to react at the appropriate moment.

We believe there are some useful steps that we can take and I list them now.

Because governments’ representatives and social partners are not always available for such long periods as has become common in GB meetings, it is essential that the GB identifies priorities and provides direction on key strategic policy issues and not aspects of administrative detail.

The GB should also provide governance and oversight of the outcome and impact of their policy decisions. For this there is a need for more effective coordination and follow up with the office and the field.

Because of the time constraints there are certain issues that are never fully debated and decided because they are not central, nor fundamental to the ILO core mandate. Inter-sessional meetings would offer opportunities to deal with such issues, but these meetings must be

convened on a tripartite basis. The deliberations from these meetings could then be brought to the attention of the GB plenary for decision.

There are issues on which we need to reach a consensus and we agree with governments that we should be able to complete this exercise by November next year.

Addressing first the reorganisation of the GB, we should start with a broad perspective and not try to preserve a particular committee for one reason or another. We should recognise that the reorganisation is centred round the two main functions of determining policies and ensuring supervision of the activities that support the policy objectives. The frequency, duration and agendas of GB committee meetings should reflect the need to satisfy these functions. Agendas should not simply fill a predetermined time slot.

As has been proposed by IMEC, the scope and mandate of committees should be clearly defined to prevent duplication of effort. To manage the duration of the GB it will be necessary to coordinate better the interventions to prevent repetition of the same point.

We agree with the representative from GRULAC that the document should be ready by March 2010, and that the GB should be the forum where fundamental issues are debated. Supporting documents on both political questions and points of information should be concise and well targeted.

We agree with Africa that our work should be transparent.

We also agree with Asia-Pacific that the reform should start from the top. Firstly for the GB, then at Conference level.

The representative from Singapore mentioned that we should be innovative and bold. That does not mean we should dismantle everything for the sake of change but on the contrary we should build on the many successful initiatives that make the ILO more pertinent, as evidenced by the 2008 Declaration and the Global Jobs Pact.

Today, we must respond to the new challenges and take this opportunity to correct any structural imbalances, to ensure access to information and to reaffirm the tripartite nature of this Organisation.

As to other committees, we should be inspired by this innovation that was mentioned. We must analyse each committee in detail and find out whether their existence and debates are necessary. Then take decisions on their future based on need and relevance.

The Employers are ready to listen to new proposals for the structure and number of committees that will support the four ILO strategic objectives and the two essential functions. I believe that the GB, when reorganized, will be able to effectively to fulfil its role.