



## **Governing Body**

309th Session, Geneva, November 2010

GB.309/18(Add.)

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**FOR DECISION**

EIGHTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

## **Report of the Director-General**

### *Addendum*

### **Obituaries**

#### **Mr Dietrich Willers**

1. The Director-General announces with deep regret the death, in September 2010, of Mr Dietrich Willers, former Government member of the Governing Body and delegate to the International Labour Conference.
2. After completion of his legal studies in 1968, Mr Willers joined the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Germany, where he was made responsible for protocol. He was subsequently posted to Turkey, serving as Social Counsellor at the German Embassy in Ankara, before his appointment, in 1990, as Head of Division for all matters relating to the International Labour Organization at the Permanent Mission of Germany in Geneva.
3. Mr Willers attended sessions of the Governing Body and of the International Labour Conference between 1991 and 2003. After his retirement in 2004, he fulfilled a three-year mandate on the United Nations Joint Staff Pensions Board. Over his career he acquired a profound knowledge of the work of the ILO, and established himself as the senior expert on the Organization within the German Ministry of Labour. Indeed, his comprehensive expertise, wide experience and always pertinent advice made him a much sought-after source of information not only for his colleagues at the Ministry, but also for his counterparts from other member States. His dedication to social dialogue and to tripartism was particularly marked.
4. Dietrich Willers was an international official whose work was characterized by a high degree of conscientiousness, as well as by a deeply felt commitment to international dialogue and cooperation. He believed profoundly in the ideals and values of the ILO and was particularly active in his efforts to eliminate discrimination of all sorts, as well as working closely with the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). Mr Willers was tireless in his support of the ILO's mandate to promote decent work and in his insistence on the important role of the Organization within the UN family. He will be remembered as a man of clear and certain judgement, great dedication and trustworthiness, whose linguistic abilities made him at ease in an international setting.

***5. The Governing Body will no doubt wish to invite the Director-General to convey its condolences to the Government of Germany and to Mr Willers' family.***

**Mr Charles Gray**

6. The Director-General announces with deep regret the death, in June 2010, of Mr Charles Gray, former Worker member of the Governing Body and delegate to the International Labour Conference.
7. Charles (Chuck) Dean Gray was born in Ohio in 1929 and graduated from Ohio State University in 1951. He began his trade union career in 1954 as a member, then as a local organizer of the Retail Clerks International Union, now called the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union. He subsequently became national staff member and international organizer for the union. In 1959 he moved to Amsterdam, to take a position in the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical and Technical Employees (FIET). His responsibilities involved conducting a detailed regional survey of the Far East, which led to the establishment of the FIET programme in that region. He also monitored the activities of FIET regional offices in Asia, Africa and Latin America. He moved with the FIET to Geneva in 1964 and attended numerous sessions of the International Labour Conference. In 1971 he became Assistant Director, rising to Executive Director in 1985, of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)'s Asian American Free Labor Institute (AAFLI) in Washington, travelling extensively in Asia, the Middle East and the South Pacific to assist and promote free and independent trade unions. In 1992 Mr Gray became Director of the AFL-CIO's International Affairs Department.
8. Mr Gray was appointed United States Worker delegate to the Governing Body in 1991. He retired from the Governing Body and from his union in 1997, after over 30 years' involvement with the ILO. He served on numerous committees of the Governing Body and of the Conference, putting his experience and his negotiating skills to the service of the Organization as Worker spokesperson in the Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues and in the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee. In 1994, on the 75th anniversary of the ILO, he was elected President of the International Labour Conference, an honour awarded exceptionally to a Worker delegate to mark the historic occasion. His opening and closing addresses to the Conference that year were models of clarity, realism and common sense. In one particularly telling section, he brought the work of the ILO into sharp perspective, questioning what "poverty alleviation" meant in "down-to-earth, human terms". He answered his own question thus: "It means doing something for a Juan Morales who lives in a shanty made of tin and scrap wood. It is hotter than hell when it is dry, and it leaks like a sieve when it rains." For the Organization to combat such crippling poverty, he continued: "[The ILO] has to be willing to roll up its sleeves, get its hands dirty, and promote standards to the fullest extent possible, not only in the meeting rooms of our ministries of labour, but also in the homes and workplaces of Juan Morales and his extended family throughout the world".
9. Mr Gray dedicated his own life to improving the lives of workers around the world. He had himself grown up in very humble circumstances and knew both what poverty was and the effect that it could have. However he remained to the end an irrepressible optimist, and while he will of course be remembered for his staunch defence of tripartism, of social justice and of workers' rights, he will also be remembered for his friendliness, his sheer good humour and perhaps above all for his love of a joke.

- 10. *The Governing Body will no doubt wish to invite the Director-General to convey its condolences to the President of the AFL-CIO and to Mr Gray's family.***

Geneva, 15 November 2010

*Points for decision:* Paragraph 5  
Paragraph 10