



FIFTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Report of the Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues

1. The Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues (STM) met on 6 November 2006.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr L. Héthy (Hungary). The Employer and Worker Vice-Chairpersons were Mr G. Trogen and Mr J. Zellhoefer, respectively.
3. Mr Zellhoefer congratulated Ms Tinoco on her first meeting as Chief of the Sectoral Activities Branch. He also announced the recent creation of a new trade union body, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) formed out of the former International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), World Confederation of Labour (WCL) and eight previously non-aligned national unions.
4. Mr Trogen congratulated the ITUC on their new venture as a result of the merger, and likewise welcomed Ms Tinoco.

I. Purpose, duration and composition of sectoral meetings to be held in 2007**(a) Tripartite Meeting to examine the Impact of Global Food Chains on Employment**

5. In introducing the paper¹ on the item, Ms Jo Walgrave, Acting Executive Director of the Social Dialogue Sector, indicated that the social partners had agreed to shorten the title of the Meeting to read: "Tripartite Meeting to examine the Impact of Global Food Chains on Employment". The purpose of the Meeting would be to put emphasis on the need to strengthen social dialogue in order to achieve better policy coherence.
6. Mr Trogen raised the question of budget constraints and proposed that the Meeting be reduced from five to three or four days. He also explained that it was difficult to have Employer representatives released for a full week. In addition, he pointed out that longer meetings did not necessarily guarantee that a meeting would achieve its objectives. Recent experience showed that shorter meetings could well serve the objectives set for a meeting.

¹ GB.297/STM/2.

7. Some Government representatives (Australia, United Kingdom and Canada) supported the Employers' proposal for shorter meetings. Despite earlier discussions, the representative of the Government of Canada thought it was legitimate for the Committee to discuss the dates and composition of this Meeting and the one on the chemical industry.
8. Mr Zellhoefer expressed considerable disappointment at the proposal for a shorter meeting, indicating that the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) was in favour of a five-day meeting, which would guarantee a proper outcome. He appealed to Governments and Employers to reconsider their proposal for a shorter meeting, which would have serious implications for the structure of the Meeting, including the workload on the Office.
9. Despite the positive experience with shorter meetings in recent years, the Office explained that a shorter meeting meant an added burden for the secretariat in terms of the production of reports and translations.
10. The Workers requested that the Legal Adviser provide advice on how the Committee was to proceed, since his group was of the opinion that the length of the Meeting may have already been decided.
11. The Deputy Legal Adviser, Mr Raimondi, confirmed the capacity of the Committee to decide on the duration and purpose of the two meetings under consideration.
12. In view of the above, Mr Trogen then stated that the Employers had reached a consensus with the Workers and that the Tripartite Meeting to examine the Impact of Global Food Chains on Employment would be of four days' duration and any savings made would be used for follow-up activities within the same sector before the end of the biennium.
13. The Meeting would be held in the week beginning 24 September.

(b) 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

14. Ms Walgrave indicated that the correct title of the Meeting of Experts in English should read: "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" in accordance with the decision taken by the 292nd Session of the Governing Body (March 2005). She introduced the purpose, duration and composition of the Meeting and stated that it would be held for four days from 10 to 13 December 2007, instead of in October, because of other activities scheduled at that time. The Office would invite 12 experts each from governments, and workers' and employers' organizations. A reduction of the duration from five to four calendar days would result in some savings. Provisions for contingencies in SECTOR's budget or other savings could cover the shortfall created by increasing the total number of experts invited by 12.
15. Mr Trogen stated that the Employers' group could accept the changes proposed by the Office concerning the Meeting of Experts.
16. Mr Zellhoefer welcomed the Office's proposed programme of organizing the Meeting of Experts on the chemical industry. He stated that the International Federation of Chemical,

Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM) was pleased that the chemical industry would discuss and develop programmes related to the UN-wide Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and that the ICEM anticipated the opportunity of exploring global social dialogue in the chemical sector at the Meeting of Experts. However, he questioned why Brazil, as one of the largest chemical-producing countries in Latin America, was only on the reserve list.

17. The representative of the Government of Nigeria stated that his Government supported the Office proposal.
18. The representative of the Government of Malaysia stated that because of the continuously changing nature of the industry, changes in the labour market were inevitable to keep these industries competitive. In this connection, tripartite social dialogue played an important role. Therefore, his Government would support inviting more participants to the Meeting of Experts.
19. The representatives of the Governments of Canada and the United Kingdom noted that the proposal of the Meeting of Experts was acceptable, but emphasized the importance of staying within the budget, especially as there was a proposed increase in the number of experts to be invited.
20. The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom said his Government welcomed the opportunity to participate.
21. The representative of the Government of Australia, supporting the views of the Governments of Canada and the United Kingdom, indicated the need for the Office to consider options for the sharing of information and development of policy that did not rely solely on convening meetings of experts, such as correspondence groups and making greater use of the expertise in the Office. He stated that the Office needed to reconsider the cost of such meetings in times of fiscal constraint.
22. In response to the questions raised by the Committee, Ms Walgrave stated that Brazil was on the reserve list because of geographical distribution: Mexico was already on the list of countries to be invited; Brazil could be invited if another country invited declined to attend.
23. *The Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues recommends to the Governing Body that:*
 - (a) *in respect of the Meeting to examine the Impact of Global Food Chains on Employment, it would be held for four days in the week beginning 24 September, and the purpose of the Meeting would be to put emphasis on the need to strengthen social dialogue in order to achieve better policy coherence;*
 - (b) *the purpose of the 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 be to discuss how ILO instruments and other tools concerning occupational safety and health and hazardous substances could be best incorporated into a new policy framework and action plan. The Meeting of Experts could also examine best practices and appropriate national legal frameworks to promote safe and healthy working environments; review the roles of governments, and employers' and workers' organizations; and examine*

ways of establishing tripartite consultation mechanisms on occupational safety and health, and of ensuring that workers and their organizations participate in the consultation mechanisms and thereby build a preventative safety and health culture at work. The Meeting of Experts should also consider the impact of new and ongoing initiatives related to hazardous substances, including the UN-wide Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). The Meeting could adopt recommendations that would be the basis of subsequent ILO action;

- (c) the duration of the Meeting of Experts be for four calendar days from 10 to 13 December 2007;*
- (d) after consultation with the groups of the Governing Body, a knowledgeable chairperson from outside the Meeting of Experts be appointed to chair the Meeting;*
- (e) the Governments of Australia, China, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States be invited to nominate experts to participate in the Meeting of Experts in their personal capacity, and the Governments of Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland or Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela be placed on a reserve list to nominate an expert, if any of the abovementioned Governments declines to do so;*
- (f) twelve experts be nominated after consultation with the Employers' group and 12 after consultation with the Workers' group of the Governing Body; and*
- (g) experts from other member States may take part as observers if they wish.*

II. Effect to be given to the recommendations of sectoral and technical meetings

(a) Meeting of Experts on Safety and Health in Coal Mines (Geneva, 8-13 May 2006)

24. Ms Walgrave introduced the paper² and the related documents adopted by the Meeting of Experts.³ The Meeting had been very constructive, in particular thanks to its Chairperson, Ms May Hermanus (South Africa). It had successfully adopted a code of practice that would be of great importance to the ILO's further work in China, as well as provide an opportunity to further open up decent work country programmes (DWCPs) to the sectoral dimension.

² GB.297/STM/3/1.

³ MESHCM/2006/8, MESHCM/2006/9 and MESHCM/2006/10.

25. Mr Trogen fully endorsed the point for decision in paragraph 4 of the paper.
26. Mr Zellhoefer pointed out that the Meeting of Experts had been convened to revise a code of practice on this subject that had been developed in 1985 and which had become obsolete owing to the changes in technology in the industry. Since national industries were developing at different paces, however, developing countries in particular still needed to catch up. The code of practice adopted by the Meeting would form the cornerstone of a joint ILO/ICEM/ICMM initiative to improve coalmining safety and health in China and should be translated into as many languages as possible. In addition to the languages suggested by the Meeting (Chinese, German, Hindi, Portuguese and Russian), a translation into Arabic should also be commissioned. His group supported the recommendations and the point for decision.
27. The representative of the Government of the United States supported the point for decision. The Government expert who had participated in the meeting also shared Ms Walgrave's positive view of the Meeting. The Chairperson had done a superb job in keeping the Meeting focused on the task at hand.

(b) Tripartite Meeting on the Social and Labour Implications of the Increased Use of Advanced Retail Technologies
(Geneva, 18-20 September 2006)

28. The Committee had before it a paper on this item.⁴ Introducing the discussion, Ms Walgrave paid tribute to the Meeting's Chairperson, Ms Perlita Velasco. The Meeting, which had brought together Employers', Workers' and Government delegates with real and direct involvement in the sector, had been extremely interesting and resulted in very valuable discussions. Participants had expressed particular satisfaction with the timing, as this allowed ILO constituents to anticipate and formulate a response on an issue some of whose chief impacts might be felt in the medium and long terms. The Meeting had, among other conclusions, called for continued social dialogue on new technologies and their employment impact. Ms Walgrave drew attention to paragraphs 4 and 5 of the paper requiring the Committee's decision.
29. Mr Zellhoefer thanked the Office for the document, underlining the fact that this was the first time that advanced retail technologies had been discussed at the ILO. He was particularly appreciative of the Meeting's timing, which sought to proactively influence how ILO constituents addressed future consequences of technological innovation rather than remaining reactive. He welcomed the balanced nature of the conclusions of the Meeting and their acknowledgement of the value of international framework agreements. The Meeting's recognition of the ILO as a valuable forum for social dialogue in retail was welcome. He also drew attention to point 29 of the conclusions,⁵ which reaffirmed the validity and called for the revival of the small tripartite forum agreed unanimously in a resolution of the ILO Tripartite Meeting on Human Resource Implications of Globalization and Restructuring in Commerce. The Workers' group agreed with the point for decision in paragraph 4.
30. Mr Trogen agreed with his Worker counterpart with regard to the balanced nature of the Meeting's outcome. He noted the important point recognized by the Meeting: that the

⁴ GB.297/STM/3/2.

⁵ TMART/2006/11.

development of modern retail technologies was consumer-driven. His group fully endorsed the points for decision.

31. The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom stated that his Government was pleased to have sent an expert to participate in the Meeting. His report on this very constructive Meeting was exceedingly positive. He had been particularly pleased with the wide range of participants' backgrounds and experiences and the quality of the background report for the Meeting. The *Note on the proceedings* very comprehensively reflected the Meeting's discussion.
32. *The Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues recommends that the Governing Body:*
- (a) *take note of the report of the Meeting of Experts on Safety and Health in Coal Mines and authorize the Director-General to publish the code of practice on safety and health in underground coalmines;*
 - (b) *request the Director-General to bear in mind, when drawing up proposals for the future work of the Office, the wishes expressed by the Meeting in the recommendations for follow-up action by the ILO;*
 - (c) *communicate the Note on the proceedings of the Tripartite Meeting on the Social and Labour Implications of the Increased Use of Advanced Retail Technologies:*
 - (i) *to governments, requesting them to communicate this text to the employers' and workers' organizations concerned;*
 - (ii) *to the international employers' and workers' organizations concerned;*
and
 - (iii) *to the international organizations concerned;*
 - (d) *request the Director-General to bear in mind, when drawing up proposals for the future work of the Office, the wishes expressed by the Meeting in paragraphs 26-32 of the conclusions concerning future ILO activities.*

III. Tripartite Meeting on Labour and Social Issues Arising from Problems of Cross-border Mobility of International Drivers in the Road Transport Sector (Geneva, 23-26 October 2006)

33. A representative of the Office, Mr Meletiou, made a brief oral presentation of the Tripartite Meeting on Labour and Social Issues Arising from Problems of Cross-border Mobility of International Drivers in the Road Transport Sector that was held at the ILO in Geneva from 23 to 26 October 2006 and which was very well attended. The Meeting addressed topical labour and social issues (including various deficiencies at border crossings, visa processes and controls and HIV/AIDS).
34. The objectives decided by the Governing Body had been achieved, including the adoption of proposals for follow-up activity by the ILO. In response to a question by a

representative of the Government of Canada, it was indicated that the ICFTU (now ITUC), the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) had been invited to attend a technical meeting on follow-up activities on 21 November and that the Government Regional Coordinators in Geneva would then be briefed and consulted on the way forward.

35. The *Note on the proceedings* would be submitted for consideration by the Governing Body at its 298th Session in March 2007. The Employers' and Workers' groups, as well as Government members of the Governing Body, indicated that they would comment on the Meeting at that session.

IV. Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART), Ninth Session (Geneva, 30 October-3 November 2006)

36. Another representative of the Office, Mr Ratteree, presented a brief oral report on the organization and the outcomes of the Ninth Session of the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART), which was hosted by the ILO in Geneva from 30 October to 3 November 2006. The full report of the Ninth Session will be presented to the STM Committee in March 2007, as well as to the Committee on Legal Issues and International Labour Standards (LILS), for examination of the allegations concerning non-observance of the Recommendations' provisions made by teachers' organizations, and regarding a decision to transmit the CEART report to the Committee on the Application of Standards of the International Labour Conference at its 96th Session (May-June 2007). There was no discussion of the Office report, the spokespersons of the Workers' and Employers' groups preferring to comment on the substance of the CEART report at the March 2007 session of the Governing Body.

V. Invitation by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to the ILO to participate in the development of safety standards for small fishing vessels: Further developments

37. Ms Walgrave introduced the paper,⁶ which provided information on developments since the 295th Session (March 2006) of the Governing Body concerning the invitation by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to the ILO to participate in the development of safety standards for small fishing vessels. She recalled that, at that time, the Employers' group had proposed the formation of an ILO tripartite delegation as a means for the Employers to participate in the work of the IMO correspondence group and the Sub-Committee on Stability and Load Lines and on Fishing Vessels' Safety (SLF) in 2007, noting that the Workers were already involved separately by virtue of the consultative status of the ICFTU (now ITUC) at the IMO. The Office and an official of the ICFTU attended the Meeting of the SLF Sub-Committee on 24-28 July 2006; an Employer who

⁶ GB.297/STM/5.

was to attend could not do so due to illness. What was now before the Committee was the proposal for an ILO tripartite delegation to promote the position of the ILO's tripartite constituency in the ongoing IMO work, in particular in the next session of the SLF to be held in 2007.

38. Mr Trogen endorsed the recommendations made in paragraph 7, and confirmed that an Employer would participate in the ILO delegation in the upcoming work.
39. Mr Zellhoefer appreciated the update by the Office. He noted the importance of this work due to the hazardous nature of the fishing sector, particularly on smaller vessels with a reported 24,000 annual fatalities, and the lack of standards in this area. He cited the involvement of the ICFTU and the ITF in the work, and welcomed the participation of the Office. His group supported the participation of the ILO delegation in the correspondence group and in the 2007 SLF session. The Workers expected to be kept informed of the work, and recognized that participation by Employers and Workers would be at no cost to the Office.
40. The point for decision was adopted.
41. *Bearing in mind the decision of the Governing Body at its 295th Session (March 2006), and the decisions taken by the related IMO body (SLF 49) to establish a new correspondence group to submit its report to SLF 50 (London, 30 April-4 May 2007), the Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues invites the Governing Body to:*
- (a) authorize the continued participation by the Office in the development of safety recommendations for decked fishing vessels of less than 12 metres in length and undecked fishing vessels;*
 - (b) invite Governments and the Employers' and Workers' groups of the ILO each to nominate a representative to participate, at no cost to the Office, in the work of the correspondence group and in the ILO delegation to the 50th Session of the IMO's Sub-Committee on Stability and Load Lines and on Fishing Vessels' Safety in 2007;*
 - (c) request the Office to continue to report to the Committee on any new developments concerning this work.*

VI. Joint ILO-IMO-Basel Convention Working Group on Ship Scrapping

42. As indicated in the paper⁷ before the Committee, neither the IMO nor the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention had yet reached a decision to request a Third Session of the Joint ILO-IMO-Basel Convention Working Group. It was noted that there would be a discussion in the Governing Body plenary of work on a draft IMO Convention on ship recycling which would look at the issue from an interorganizational perspective.⁸

⁷ GB.297/STM/6.

⁸ GB.297/19/3.

VII. Evaluation report of the sectoral action programmes and the future orientation of the Sectoral Activities Programme

43. Ms Walgrave started by noting that both the evaluation report of the sectoral action programmes and the future orientation of the Sectoral Activities Programme were very important subjects and she was pleased to link the two discussions together.
44. She noted that the evaluation report⁹ to the Governing Body recorded some unanimity about the evaluation of the sectoral action programmes that were highlighted during the September evaluation meeting and pointed out some of the achievements of the sectoral action programmes. She explained the process of self-evaluation, with support from the ILO's Evaluation Unit, and noted that now was a good opportunity to follow up with external evaluation.
45. She indicated that linking the sectoral action programmes to the DWCPs was the key to success and sustainability.
46. With regard to the future of the sectoral action programmes, she stressed that they should be demand-driven, focus on fewer countries and fewer topics, and that their management could be improved.
47. She also commented on the need to build a knowledge base of sectoral issues.
48. Turning to the paper¹⁰ on the future orientation of the Sectoral Activities Programme, Ms Walgrave recalled the Programme and Budget proposals for 2008–09, and the need to ensure that the Sectoral Activities Programme could provide an entry point and focus on the DWCPs.
49. She asked the Committee for advice on several questions: how to create a better link between national and international activities; how to define priorities including how to be more proactive, how to discuss issues in a more timely fashion, how to be more flexible, and how to improve our knowledge base. Lastly, she asked what our means of action should be. In addition, it would be interesting to investigate a more flexible forum for dialogue and to find a compromise between international meetings, action programmes, sectoral/expert meetings, training and research.
50. Mr Trogen expressed his appreciation for the evaluation report of the sectoral action programmes. He indicated that results were generally positive, especially in textiles and agriculture. The new sectoral action programmes should be further studied to ensure a more qualitative evaluation. He added that employers' organizations had difficulties in getting feedback from the field due to the lack of employers' sectoral structures, and this made it all the more important to receive timely, accurate and concise reports from the Office in order to provide feedback. Sectoral action programmes should not continue after the normal duration of two years without further Governing Body approval. Sustainability could be facilitated in the long run by the search for extra-budgetary resources. The programmes should be more "constituent-driven".
51. Mr Zellhoefer welcomed this informative report and noted with satisfaction that attendance during the Global Steering Group Meeting was very good and that the Global Union

⁹ GB.297/STM/1.

¹⁰ GB.297/STM/7/1.

Federations (GUFs) made very substantive contributions. He thanked the ILO specialists for their efforts in activities where the ILO was closer to the real world of work through the promotion of effective social dialogue at the sectoral level. As mentioned before, there was a need to enshrine sectoral activities and the action programmes in the Decent Work Agenda and his group welcomed the initiatives taken by sectoral specialists to promote collaboration and synergies with ILO field offices and technical departments. Concerning the cross-sectoral action programme on HIV/AIDS, further synergies should be developed with ILO/AIDS. It was important to ensure the integration of sectoral concerns in the DWCPs, which were the main tool for delivering technical assistance in the field. The ILO also faced the challenge of ensuring tripartite involvement and the incorporation of sectoral concerns in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). It was equally important to safeguard the integrated approach of the decent work concept and mobilize extra-budgetary resources to ensure that the sectoral dimension was fully implemented within the framework of the DWCPs.

52. There was scope for improvement of the evaluation process, but when discussing external evaluation, additional costs had to be taken into consideration. Mr Zellhoefer added some comments on the Construction Action Programme (CAP), on behalf of the Building and Wood Workers' International that could not attend the Global Steering Group Meeting. He indicated in particular that procurement was a priority to focus on as 70 per cent of construction contracts were awarded through public sector bidding, which should include key international labour standards. He also stressed that the ILO Cairo Office was the only ILO office in the field which fully supported the CAP.
53. Mr Trogen, initiating the discussion on the future of the Sectoral Activities Programme, indicated that it was both a window on the world of work and an opportunity to engage in activities with the actual employers and workers. There was therefore a need to discuss the relevant topics with real employers on board. This explained, for example, why there was a preference for shorter meetings, where it was easier to mobilize the real actors, at the sectoral level. To be efficient, international sectoral meetings should not only focus on social dialogue, but also concentrate on very technical and topical subjects. Concerning the format of activities, there were several options, such as traditional meetings and action programmes, but other options, like seminars, should be open for discussion.
54. All meetings should be tripartite. In order to ensure proper recognition of the importance of the sectoral dimension, and provide better products, the STM Committee should call on the Governing Body for an improved budget allocation to the Sectoral Activities Programme.
55. Mr Zellhoefer underlined that the Workers' group had always been supportive of the Sectoral Activities Programme and in so doing had worked in close cooperation with GUFs representing unions in all sectors. The Workers' group was willing to engage in improving the relevance of the Sectoral Activities Programme with concrete proposals on how to achieve this.
56. The Sectoral Activities Programme offered a unique opportunity to promote good industrial relations and to give effect to standards in the relevant sectors and services. The Maritime Labour Convention was a recent example of how relevant and innovative the work of SECTOR could be.
57. Overall, the Workers supported the points outlined in paragraph 3 of the document,¹¹ particularly the need to strengthen the ILO knowledge base on sectoral issues. There was a need to improve the research capacity of the programme, including statistical data

¹¹ GB.297/STM/7/1.

collection, in order to identify emerging trends and anticipate appropriate responses. Furthermore, there was a need to improve the capacity to respond to urgent matters emerging in a given industry, as had already been done, for example, following the events of 9/11/2001, with an ad hoc meeting on civil aviation and another one on the tourism industry. The post-Multifibre Agreement (MFA) meeting was another example of a response to the phasing out of quotas in the textiles and garments industry, as well as the paper before the Governing Body on avian flu¹² (which had a sectoral dimension). Some meetings should remain bipartite.

- 58.** Grouping sectors into clusters was considered a good strategy to identify priority areas for work in the different sectors and to focus resources on the programme's specific nature – i.e. the strengthening of industrial relations at sectoral level based on the core rights to organize and bargain collectively. The identification of clusters should also allow the ILO to facilitate consultations with social partners in order to discuss challenges and priorities for a given sector.
- 59.** The current rotation system was not optimal and therefore the Workers' group was open to discuss a modification which included the consideration of a four-year or longer cycle.
- 60.** It was important to integrate sectoral concerns in the DWCPs. This would require strengthened relations with the ILO field structure while maintaining consistency with policy priorities identified by the STM Committee and by the Governing Body.
- 61.** The Workers' group recommended that the STM Committee should call on the Governing Body to increase resources for the Sectoral Activities Programme. Extra-budgetary resources allocated to SECTOR through technical cooperation should be in addition to the regular budget funding.
- 62.** Concerning the proposed strategy for 2008–09, Mr Zellhoefer reiterated that the promotion of good industrial relations should be a priority for SECTOR. The development of new instruments was expected, alongside the promotion of existing standards and guidelines. Finally, the programme components proposed in paragraph 5 were supported.
- 63.** In commenting on the evaluation report of the sectoral action programmes, the representative of the Government of the United States, speaking on behalf of the industrialized market economy countries (IMEC), in commenting on the evaluation report of the sectoral action programmes, underlined the need to establish an effective evaluation system, including relevant indicators. The speaker strongly encouraged ongoing cooperation with the Evaluation Unit. Effective evaluation provided information not only on the impact but also on the budgetary consequences of decisions taken.
- 64.** The representative of the Government of France underlined the pertinence of SECTOR when looking into social and economic issues at a time of globalization. Sectoral meetings continued to be relevant and operational conclusions needed to be found for facilitating follow-up activities to the meetings. As the various economic sectors became increasingly interconnected, the clustering of sectors should be encouraged, to allow more synergies to be created.
- 65.** Concerning the evaluation report of the sectoral action programmes, the representative of the Government of Australia, speaking on behalf of the Asia-Pacific group (ASPAG), welcomed the cooperation between SECTOR and the Evaluation Unit in monitoring the sectoral action programmes. He suggested that the evaluation could benefit from field-

¹² GB.297/19/5.

based inputs by involving local experts in the programme design who could assist in specifying clear objectives and measurable indicators. Close cooperation with constituents in evaluation would foster their evaluation capacity. ASPAG agreed that there were benefits to be had from using the IRIS system to streamline the process of workplan dissemination to countries. Those workplans should be revised every six months. Future sectoral action programmes should be needs-based with effective programme design and items to be evaluated.

- 66.** The speaker also commented on the paper dealing with the future orientation of the Sectoral Activities Programme and expressed his support for the points in paragraph 3. Furthermore, the speaker added that it was important that the Sectoral Activities Programme remained relevant and responsive to constituents' needs. He supported innovative approaches to the programme's work in moving the focus away from meetings and integrating more input from experts on good practice. Electronic forms of communication, such as correspondence groups, should be used whenever possible rather than meetings. The value of a meeting needed to be considered and assessed in the context of limited resources. The Office should also focus on fewer issues and countries, while maintaining its impact through sharing the outcomes.
- 67.** The representative of the Government of Canada supported the IMEC statement with regard to the evaluation report of the sectoral action programmes. This could be built upon to guide the future orientation of the Sectoral Activities Programme. She welcomed the opportunity to discuss the issues of evaluation and future orientation, and the openness with which the Employers' and Workers' groups were treating new issues. She agreed that existing sectoral demarcations should be re-examined, as some might no longer be valid, others and resource allocations could be realigned, and new sectors might be emerging. SECTOR's activities should be based on the importance of emerging issues, not on rotation. Government participation in sectoral meetings could be enhanced by well-focused subject matter that facilitated the selection of an expert, since identifying an expert for vague and general topics was much more difficult. Experts attending sectoral meetings required a good briefing from the ILO in order to enhance effectiveness. Innovative approaches were required which were responsive to constituents and not always based around meetings. SECTOR's research work was excellent, and should be disseminated even when no meeting was linked to it.
- 68.** Mr Zellhoefer welcomed the Government representatives' comments, but regretted that, apart from the ASPAG statement, nothing had been heard from the developing countries, notably the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC) and the Africa group. Many speakers had referred to paragraph 3 of the paper on "Future orientation of the Sectoral Activities Programme", and the Workers were open to reassessing the sectors, looking again at rotation, new sectors and areas of work and at important emerging trends. He was concerned that the IMEC statement suggested an expensive evaluation process that could cost more than an action programme at the country level. The STM Committee should learn from experience that there was a need for a variety of approaches – traditional sectoral meetings, meetings of experts, research, action programmes and so on. These ideas could be further developed at the March 2007 session of the STM Committee.
- 69.** Mr Trogen appreciated the documents and points presented to the STM Committee, and the useful proposals from all speakers, and noted the suggestions made by Ms Walgrave. He did not approve of them all, but was open to discussion. He was not keen on the idea of clusters, a concept which would need further deliberation and refinement. Within the framework of the Global Steering Group Meeting early next year, a step could be taken to move the debate forward in relation to sectoral activities before the March STM Committee session.

- 70.** The representative of the Government of the United States considered that the IMEC statement did reflect the cost issues, and recognized that there was a dilemma about evaluating small projects, but felt sure that the ILO could use its experience to find effective and relatively inexpensive ways of achieving adequate independent evaluation.
- 71.** Ms Walgrave thanked the participants for their very constructive reactions, and also regretted the lack of comments from developing country governments, and hoped that they would express themselves on those issues at a later stage, either informally or through the next session of the STM Committee. She feared that external evaluators could cost more than the sectoral action programmes they were evaluating. It was for the Governing Body to decide which programmes should be evaluated, and it was up to constituents to request such evaluation. On a separate point raised by Mr Trogen, the speaker remarked that the absolute deadline for texts to be submitted to the Governing Body's next session was the end of January 2007; she therefore suggested that the Global Steering Group Meeting should be held in late January rather than February, so that its report could be presented to the STM Committee in March 2007 in the three languages. Decisions on the future orientation of the Sectoral Activities Programme should not just consider the 2008–09 biennium, but also beyond.
- 72.** The Committee took note of the information provided.

Geneva, 9 November 2006.

Points for decision: Paragraph 23;
Paragraph 32;
Paragraph 41.