INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

GB.283/LILS/10
283rd Session

Governing Body

Geneva, March 2002

Committee on Legal Issues and International Labour Standards

LILS

TENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Follow-up to ILO co-sponsorship of UNAIDS

1. Following the signing of a "Cooperation Framework Agreement" with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in June 2000, the ILO formally became the eighth co-sponsor of UNAIDS on 25 October 2001, when the Director-General signed the Memorandum of Understanding with UNAIDS. As a co-sponsor, the ILO brings UNAIDS direct access to the world of work, where HIV/AIDS prevention and care and support programmes are urgently needed for those infected and affected by the epidemic.

2. In preparation for co-sponsorship status, an ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work had been established within the Social Protection Sector in November 2000. This is in accordance with the resolution concerning HIV/AIDS and the world of work adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2000, which emphasized that HIV/AIDS is having a profound impact on workers and their families, enterprises and employers, and national economies, and called for intensified action by the ILO.

3. The ILO also developed a code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work, which was adopted by the Governing Body at its 281st Session in June 2001. The code was launched in New York during the UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS), 25-27 June 2001. The code recognizes HIV/AIDS as a workplace issue, and provides practical guidelines for addressing discrimination, promoting prevention, and mitigating the impact of the epidemic on workers and their families through care and support. As a contribution to the global efforts to fight HIV/AIDS, the ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS has received a high level of support and political commitment worldwide. The code has so far been translated into over 20 languages, covering all regions of the world, in response to local demand.

4. The Declaration of Commitment adopted by Heads of State and Government and their representatives at the UNGASS called for measures to protect "in the workplace the rights and dignity of persons living with and affected by HIV/AIDS ... in consultation with representatives of employers and workers, taking account of established international guidelines on HIV/AIDS in the workplace" (paragraph 69). The ILO code is widely regarded as an important instrument for meeting this challenge.

5. ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council), at its July 2001 Session, adopted a Resolution (2001/23) urging all UN organizations and agencies, especially co-sponsors of UNAIDS, to give priority to the full implementation of the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment on

HIV/AIDS. The implementation of the ILO code, as an ongoing process of advocacy and action in member States, would give effect to this resolution and ensure that the ILO fulfils its major obligation as a UNAIDS co-sponsor by raising awareness and promoting prevention and care and support in the workplace, based on its historic force of tripartism. Through the ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS, technical resources and support will be provided to the ILO's tripartite constituents in all regions to ensure that they contribute to and benefit from national action plans and workplace policies and programmes to combat HIV/AIDS.

6. Finally, as a co-sponsor, the ILO now contributes directly to policy development and programming priorities of UNAIDS, through the Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations (CCO) which meets regularly at technical and heads of agency levels. The ILO is the current chair of the UN Inter-Agency Advisory Group on AIDS (IAAG), and in this connection is playing a leading role in the development of UN system-wide personnel policy guidelines on HIV/AIDS, based on the ILO code of practice. Within the framework of UNAIDS, ILO will ensure that workplace policy and programme issues feature prominently in the global report being prepared under the aegis of UNAIDS for the XIVth International AIDS Conference (Barcelona, 7-12 July 2002), and will participate effectively in this event.

Submitted for information

Geneva, 23 January 2002.