



FOURTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Report of the Committee on
Technical Cooperation**

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1. The Committee on Technical Cooperation met on 13 and 14 November, chaired by Ambassador Fisseha Yimer (Government, Ethiopia). The Employer and Worker Vice-Chairpersons were Mr. Sanzouango and Mr. Attigbe, respectively.
2. The Committee had the following agenda items:
 - The ILO's technical cooperation programme for 2002-03;
 - Further developments regarding technical cooperation activities in the United Nations system;
 - Report of the IPEC Steering Committee – Oral presentation;
 - Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: Priorities and action plans for technical cooperation;
 - Other questions.
3. The Officers of the Committee welcomed Mr. Skerrett, who was representing the Director-General at the Committee on Technical Cooperation for the first time, and Mr. Paraiso, who had taken over as the Director of the Development Cooperation Department (CODEV).
4. The Chairperson reported to the Committee that, as was agreed during the March 2003 session of the Governing Body, a meeting of the Officers of the Committee on Technical Cooperation, extended to include the Regional Coordinators, had been held to discuss an IMEC paper. It had been further agreed that he would make an oral presentation on the outcome of that meeting to the Committee, and he proposed that that be done after the conclusion of the second item on the agenda. With agreement from the two Vice-Chairpersons on that proposal, he proceeded with the meeting.

I. The ILO's technical cooperation programme for 2002-03

5. The representative of the Director-General, Mr. Don Skerrett, introducing the Office report,¹ highlighted the important challenges and opportunities that the ILO faced with regard to technical cooperation.
6. He stressed the need for a balance of resources among sectors and regions. Sector One accounted for more than 50 per cent of the ILO's technical cooperation. That was a point for concern as the Decent Work Agenda foresaw work across all sectors and that would require appropriate levels of resources for each of them, and hence the need for balance. Among the regions, there was a declining share of total resources going to Africa, despite the expressed concern among donors about the need to give priority to that region. He was hopeful that the African Heads of State Summit, scheduled for May 2004, would result in a renewed emphasis among donors towards African development. The ILO would actively work to promote the success of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and to help tackle problems of poverty, unemployment and HIV/AIDS in the region.

¹ GB.288/TC/1.

7. The Executive Director spoke of the challenges of interagency cooperation, pointing out, among other issues, the confusing plethora of programming frameworks. Work under way in the United Nations system on the rationalization and harmonization of procedures for the management of technical cooperation, including among multi-bilateral and bilateral donors, was of utmost importance to relieve developing countries of excessive work. There was an increasing demand from donors to conclude partnership agreements with the Office. They provided assurances of funding over periods of two to four years, concentrated on two to four themes, reduced the emphasis on project approval, and supported good reporting and evaluation. The approach ensured greater focus but at the same time implied a challenge for ILO programmes.
8. He informed the Committee that, although during the previous three years extra-budgetary funding had amounted to around US\$155 million annually, there would be an element of uncertainty in the future levels of funding as some donors were contemplating reductions in their contributions to multi-bilateral funding. As many donors were delegating more authority to local offices, he pointed to the need for the Office to work more effectively in mobilizing resources locally.
9. Mr. Skerrett concluded by informing the Committee of the forthcoming signing of a Strategic Partnership Agreement with the European Commission. The latter was expected to become a major partner and donor for the ILO in the coming years.
10. The Employer Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Sanzouango, while expressing appreciation for the report, indicated that his group wished the report had been more analytical, and demonstrated how technical cooperation was contributing to the realization of the four strategic objectives, and how social partners were involved in the process. He hoped that, as well as the Social Dialogue Sector, all other sectors would develop specific programmes for the social partners in accordance with the International Labour Conference's resolution concerning tripartism and social dialogue. He expressed his concern that the share of resources to the Employment Sector had actually declined, as had the resources for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. He was happy to learn about the forthcoming signing of the Strategic Partnership Agreement between the ILO and the European Commission and hoped to see more European Union funding go to the Employers' activities and activities in the African and Caribbean regions and the Pacific countries, which were in urgent need of technical assistance.
11. He went on to comment on the need to mobilize more resources for the Employment Sector, and to improve delivery in Africa. While appreciating the increased voluntary contributions from the United States Government, he regretted the decision of some European countries to decrease their assistance to ILO technical cooperation activities. He was concerned that the priorities of the social partners were being compromised in the process of integration of the funding mechanisms now being established with some of the ILO's principal donors. His group appreciated the collaboration and partnership between the ILO and UNAIDS to fight HIV/AIDS, and the ILO's efforts on youth employment in Latin America. He was of the opinion that the ILO could take a further step in promoting youth employment by assisting its tripartite constituents to put in place national action plans, and he called upon the ILO to take concrete follow-up actions to the summit meetings of francophone Africa which had always been concerned with youth unemployment.
12. The Employer Vice-Chairperson disapproved of linking promotion of the Declaration with ratification. He noted with satisfaction the ILO's support in the establishment of centres for micro- and small enterprises in Latin America and urged the employers' organizations to get involved in such initiatives.

13. The Worker Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Attigbe, congratulated the Office for improved presentation and content of the Office report but felt that, although some results had been shown, there was a lack of information on the achievement of the operational objectives. He reiterated that the report needed to have a special section on the impact of technical cooperation on ILO constituents in the different regions and also sufficiently to cover the activities of the social partners, ACTRAV and ACT/EMP.
14. He reiterated his call for the Office to put in place an efficient mechanism for evaluation of technical cooperation programmes and projects. He strongly advocated more dynamic involvement of ACTRAV and ACT/EMP, not only in project cycle management but also in the resource allocation mechanisms and decision-making process. He emphasized the need to strengthen the social partners' capacities to better participate in the formulation and implementation of the poverty reduction strategies. He congratulated the Turin Centre on the increased involvement of the social partners in its activities and encouraged it to pursue and reinforce this trend.
15. Expressing his concerns on the continued decline in UNDP funding, expenditure for the Africa region, the LDCs, and training and education, he urged the Office to formulate a strategy to reverse the trend. Noting the imbalance in the distribution of resources by sectors and regions resulting from donor preferences, he called for an increase and redistribution of regular budget funding to attain the required balance. The speaker concluded by questioning the contradiction between the reduction of funding to the ILO by some donors and their commitment in Monterrey to increase their ODA.
16. The representative of the Government of Italy spoke on behalf of the Industrialized Market Economy Countries (IMEC). Having noted that the Employment Sector had lost its previous position as the sector with the highest expenditure to the Standards and Fundamental Rights at Work Sector, the group was of the opinion that this showed an increased integration of ILO standards and principles into technical cooperation programmes, and that was to be commended. However, being aware that IPEC alone accounted for a major part of the expenditure in that sector, she wondered how the other sectors could also engage themselves adequately in technical cooperation. IMEC was very concerned about the continuing reduction of the share of LDCs in total technical cooperation expenditure. The group was disappointed to see only a marginal increase in overall delivery rate and a fall in delivery rate for Africa.
17. The IMEC group welcomed ILO participation in the international development debate, and in UNDAF, the PRSP processes and UNDG, as well as its cooperation with other multilateral institutions.
18. She supported efforts made in the Social Protection Sector, in particular in occupational safety and health, and considered that it was important to support countries in formulating national policy and action plans on HIV/AIDS at work. She encouraged the ILO to integrate the work of the Turin Centre in its technical cooperation programme, and concluded by emphasizing the importance of a transparent monitoring, evaluation and reporting system.
19. The representative of the Government of Malawi, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, expressed satisfaction that Africa remained the highest beneficiary of technical cooperation activities but dismay that no reasons had been given for the decline in the African delivery rate. The Africa group regretted the expected reduction of development aid from important donors, as well as the lack of explanation for it in the report. The speaker stated that NEPAD remained a priority for the African countries and hoped that the ILO and donors would support it.

20. The representative of the Government of Kenya echoed the sentiment of the previous speaker and outlined employment promotion, standards, social protection, HIV/AIDS, NEPAD and the fight against child labour as key areas for technical cooperation.
21. The representative of the Government of Nigeria noted that the report did not provide information on expenditure on national experts and deplored the absence of any national expert from Nigeria. He was of the opinion that late release of funds was a reason for the low delivery rate in the African region and asked the ILO to speed up the process for release of funds.
22. Mr. Anand (Employer member) stated the need to invest more in technical cooperation to tackle decent work deficits, especially the employment deficit. He suggested that the ILO should follow the example of WHO and invite the ministers of finance to the 2004 session of the International Labour Conference to promote the Decent Work Agenda, as the ministries of labour usually did not control resources.
23. The representative of the Government of India, speaking on behalf of the Asia and Pacific group, encouraged donor countries to give untied, rather than conditional, funding. He insisted that technical cooperation should be demand driven and that more emphasis should be put on the informal sector, particularly in social protection, employment generation and the upgrading of skills and training. He also suggested that the ILO should make greater use of experts and services of institutes available in the countries.
24. The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom supported ILO efforts to integrate decent work into national action plans and to clarify its role in the plethora of development frameworks to achieve coherence of action at the country level. He regretted the decline of resources for LDCs and supported the ILO's planned support to NEPAD. He congratulated the progress made with the TC-RAM mechanism and believed it had greatly enhanced prioritization in the ILO. The United Kingdom was happy to see progress being made by the ILO in supporting national PRSPs, but was not sure how the ILO would cope with the demand that was being generated through involvement in the process.
25. The representative of the Government of France pointed out that, contrary to what was indicated by the report, France had signed two three-year agreements with the ILO to support the promotion of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Referring to a resolution of the International Labour Conference, he called for closer cooperation between the ILO and industrialized countries in occupational safety and health programmes.
26. The representative of the Government of Germany, while expressing his support to the ILO for its existing programmes, also wished to see some programmes besides IPEC. He supported the focus on occupational safety and health as was decided in the resolution concerning occupational safety and health in June 2003.
27. The representative of the Government of Saudi Arabia hoped to see an increase in technical cooperation for the Arab States, and a more comprehensive report on it. He pointed out that the grouping "Arab States, Middle East" that was used in the appendix tables led to misunderstanding and needed to be corrected. He urged the Office to utilize more national experts from Arab countries.
28. The representative of the Government of the United States commented that the report had more data on actual accomplishments but was short on concrete information. As a result, the report had raised more questions than it had provided answers. More information was required on technical cooperation activities in such categories as the Executive Director's office and common services, under employment, policy integration, decent work pilot

programmes, etc. She wondered whether the shift of IPEC from operational programmes toward providing high-level policy and planning advice and promoting networking initiatives was permanent. The United States delegation attached great importance to monitoring and evaluation and the 2004 report on it would be extremely important.

29. The representative of the Government of South Africa found the decline in shares for LDCs and for the Employment Sector disturbing. He wanted information on the recruitment process for experts. He welcomed the Distance Education and Learning Technology Applications Programme of the Turin Centre as it would increase the access to training for developing countries.
30. The representative of the Government of China hoped that the ILO would increase its expenditure in the Employment Sector, given its critical importance in poverty alleviation as well as the ILO's own pursuit of decent work objectives. He called for formulation of projects such as youth employment initiatives so as to attract more funding for the sector. The speaker wanted to see further improvement in the delivery rate by adoption of effective measures.
31. The representative of the Government of Mexico, acknowledging that there were projects supporting the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour to promote the fundamental principles and rights at work in the context of globalization, asked the ILO to explore the possibility of supporting the Inter-American Mechanism of Cooperation for the Professional Labour Administration.
32. The representative of the Government of Ecuador drew attention to an appendix table with some discrepancies in summation of figures and listing of some countries under headings which could be misleading.
33. In response to the deliberations of the Committee, the representative of the Director-General, Mr. Skerrett, thanked the members of the Committee for their comments and constructive criticism. He assured the meeting that the secretariat, as well as representatives from all the technical sectors, had been present throughout the deliberations, had taken note of those and would deal with the issues as required. Statistical discrepancies arising out of the rounding off of figures would be addressed; the comment made by the representative of the Government of France about the report not portraying its programme agreements with the ILO had also been noted. The speaker proceeded with replies focusing on issues of a more general nature.
34. On the issue of delivery, he recalled that the previous year had been particularly difficult for the Regional Office for Africa, owing to the civil war in Côte d'Ivoire. The Office had had to move some of its international staff, resulting in delays in implementation of programmes; furthermore, three duty stations had suffered from a breakdown in computer systems. The delivery task force continued to monitor the delivery and expenditures of the technical cooperation programme. Instructions had been sent to the various technical units for action. The Office was prepared to consider some more radical measures to improve the situation.
35. The reports could be more analytical in the future. Existing computer systems made it difficult to present information and data in a more disaggregated fashion; with the introduction of the new IRIS system next year, the Office would be able to provide more detailed information.
36. Technical cooperation was linked to the strategic objectives of the ILO and it was only one of the means of action at the disposal of the Organization. Technical cooperation needed to

be evaluated to assess its impact. However, impact was difficult to measure as it would often be visible only after several years.

37. Concerning the role of ACTRAV and ACT/EMP in technical cooperation, he observed that, while the International Labour Conference, the Governing Body and its committees, including the Committee on Technical Cooperation, were tripartite in structure and there was tripartite decision-making, that was not the case within the Office. ACTRAV and ACT/EMP had all been consulted internally, e.g. during the TC-RAM exercises, but they were not decision-makers.
38. On the decline in the share of expenditure for LDCs, Mr. Skerrett speculated that more aid went to LDCs for humanitarian work, and thus did not go through the ILO. He further pointed out that, although a lot of work had been done in the LDCs through interregional projects, the expenditure was not reflected in figures on LDCs provided in the report.
39. He reiterated that the ILO was committed to assist in NEPAD. He stressed the need to improve governance and that the ILO would help address the problems based on sustainability.
40. Mr. Paraiso, Director of CODEV, observed that the decline in expenditure in education and vocational training was a reflection of donors' preferences for funding projects on more general issues, such as policy formulation. The decrease in UNDP funding, a substantive part of which used to be earmarked for training, was another reason.

II. Further developments regarding technical cooperation activities in the United Nations system

41. The Chairperson indicated that Mr. Skerrett had already highlighted several issues on the subject in his earlier presentation and he felt that the Committee could begin deliberations on the agenda item and the report² straightaway.
42. The Employer Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Sanzouango, stated that the Office report had been presented as an information document and hoped that in future more importance would be given to documenting ILO perspectives in the United Nations system. He informed the Committee that the Employers' group had actually encountered difficulties in having its voice heard in the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which was discussing the activities of multinationals. Referring to the recommendations in the report, encouraging the United Nations and the UNCTs to strengthen participation by parliamentarians and civil society in the PRSP process, he wished to see, in addition, mention of the social partners. He drew attention to the need to strengthen the traditionally weak relationship that existed between the social partners and the ministries of finance, normally handling PRSPs.
43. The Worker Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Attigbe, noted, with satisfaction, the ILO's active participation in the meetings of the United Nations system and the increasing visibility of the Decent Work Agenda in the common development frameworks such as PRSPs and UNDAF. The Workers' group emphasized the importance of effective participation by the social partners in such activities at the country level. Efforts for cooperation and coordination at the global level should be accompanied by strategic cooperation in

² GB.288/TC/2.

technical cooperation activities, with all the United Nations agencies concerned, at the country, subregional and regional level. He requested that the next report on the subject should include such information. Noting the ILO's participation in the high-level segment on promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development, he requested a report on this subject in view of its importance.

III. Meeting of the Officers of the Committee on Technical Cooperation and the Regional Coordinators – Oral report by the Chairperson

44. The Chairperson, Ambassador Fisseha Yimer, made an oral presentation on the meeting held on 10 November 2003 with the Officers and the Regional Coordinators to discuss an IMEC paper on improving the functioning of the Committee on Technical Cooperation. He briefed the Committee that a rich debate had ensued covering the importance of technical cooperation and its committee, imposing time limits on speakers, the need for more information, especially on concrete results and lessons learnt, the need to focus on topics and issues covered at the sessions of the International Labour Conference, the need for meetings to be more interactive and the importance of thematic as well as project-level evaluations.
45. It was decided at the meeting that written comments on the IMEC paper, as well as on issues covered during the meeting, would be made by each of the groups and submitted to the secretariat which, in turn, would ensure that it was received by all the groups. The issue would be taken up by the Officers of the Committee during the March session of the Governing Body.

IV. Report of the IPEC Steering Committee – Oral presentation

46. The Executive Director, Mr. Tapiola, informed the Committee on Technical Cooperation of the outcomes of the meeting of the Steering Committee of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, held on 10 November 2003. He summarized the results of IPEC's work as reflected in the report *IPEC action against child labour 2002-03: Progress and future priorities*, submitted to the members. The total expenditure of the programme was likely to be between \$48 and \$50 million for 2003; and around \$90 million for the biennium. Ratifications of Convention No. 182 stood at 147, and those concerning Convention No. 138 at 131. Fourteen countries were engaging in time-bound programmes as compared to only three in the previous biennium. A total of 1.2 million children had benefited directly or indirectly from IPEC's interventions, and more than 33 million were reached through campaigns and awareness-raising activities. A number of important tools and manuals – notably the *Manual for Action Planning for Time-Bound Programmes* (TBP-MAP) – had been produced and made available to constituents, partners and to the members, as well as a large number of reports and other publications. Further management and efficiency improvements had been introduced in IPEC during the biennium.
47. He informed the Committee that, during the discussions, the delegations commended the high quality of the Office's report but expressed concern that it had been late in arriving. The Office acknowledged this problem and expressed its regrets. Noting the large number of ratifications, Government delegates as well as Employer and Worker spokespersons had

stressed the importance of follow-up action to apply and implement the Conventions on child labour. Many representatives referred to the time-bound approach as a promising option, but stressed the importance of IPEC cooperating with other ILO programmes internally, as well as with UNICEF and other international organizations such as the World Bank and UNESCO. The Employer and Worker members stressed the importance of IPEC drawing more on the expertise of these constituents in all its activities. IPEC was encouraged to intensify its work on identifying and disseminating good practices. Resources and staffing issues, including support from the ILO's regular budget and programme support income, were also discussed. The Worker spokesperson proposed that the IPEC Steering Committee, its link to and oversight by Governing Body organs, and the periodicity of its meetings be reviewed and revised. It was suggested that IPEC step up concrete action to mainstream HIV/AIDS concerns into child labour-related policies and activities. Discussions on the planned global evaluation of the IPEC programme focused on its scope, timetable, resources and consultative process for this exercise.

48. The following are the main points of the debate that followed the presentation of the Executive Director.
49. The Employer spokesperson noted that Mr. Tapiola's summary reflected well the discussions of the IPEC Steering Committee, including the requests of both Employer and Worker members for increased participation of the social partners in IPEC programmes and activities and the Employers' request for an annual report of IPEC activities with workers and employers. The Employers welcomed the clarification in IPEC's report of the distinction between legal and acceptable work for children, child labour that should be progressively eliminated and the worst forms of child labour that needed to be urgently eliminated. He expressed satisfaction about the number of ratifications of Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 and the number of time-bound programmes. He noted with satisfaction the emphasis in IPEC's report on the underlying causes of child labour and cautioned against a too-heavy focus on reforming national legislation, since it was not sufficient to make child labour illegal. The Employers also urged IPEC to coordinate its work with other international organizations, including UNAIDS. Finally, the Employer spokesperson indicated that the Employers were keenly interested in the global evaluation of IPEC and available to participate fully in its implementation.
50. The Employer member from India welcomed the inclusion in IPEC's report of the discussion about the importance of education, and in particular vocational training, for the elimination of child labour. The Employers had pointed out in the past that educational and vocational education opportunities had to be provided to children withdrawn from work, so that they could have access to gainful employment in the future.
51. The Worker spokesperson expressed appreciation for the Executive Director's report and for the Office's efforts in promoting the ratification of the Conventions on child labour. He also noted that the Workers had repeatedly expressed their concern about IPEC's lack of connection to the Governing Body's structures. He expressed the concern that trade unions continued to be marginalized in IPEC programmes and that a great amount of IPEC resources were still channelled to non-governmental organizations of which neither the nature nor the impact of their work was always known. The Governing Body should be more informed about IPEC's activities and therefore he recommended that the IPEC Steering Committee meet twice a year, in November and in March, to ensure full tripartite participation. The Workers also wanted to recommend that IPEC staff be provided with better training about the ILO and its tripartite structure. Finally, he said organizations such as labour administrations, decentralized authorities, ministries of education and customs services should be more involved in IPEC programmes so as to ensure greater effectiveness and impact.

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52. The representative of the Government of Germany affirmed that IPEC had become difficult to control. Germany had supported IPEC very strongly and would continue to do so, but the programme had grown too rapidly. Although child labour was a problem of extraordinary magnitude, many other issues that were also under the responsibility of the ILO, such as safety and health at work, were just as important; however, ILO programmes dealing with the latter did not receive the same level of attention or support as IPEC. He stated that Germany would continue to support IPEC but not with the same amount of resources, since it was essential to emphasize the elimination of the root causes of child labour, such as poverty.
53. The Executive Director, Mr. Tapiola, responded by first pointing out that the comment about the difference between types of work performed by children was correct. As the ILO had learnt more about the problem, its response had improved, as could be seen by the preparation and ratification of Convention No. 182. The Executive Director also pointed out that the ILO worked closely with employers to ensure that the response to the problem was not simply a blanket expulsion of children from the workplace, but that it included the provision of educational and vocational training opportunities. He stated that IPEC was planning three regional workshops the following year where one of the items on the agenda would be to develop ways to collaborate with the social partners. The new IPEC *Operations Manual* also included guidance on this topic. Concerning the future organization and scope of the IPEC Steering Committee, he reminded the Committee that six years previously the meeting would only have been a two-hour discussion with a few donors and participating countries and one representative from the Workers and one from the Employers; it was now a full tripartite meeting held during Governing Body sessions. IPEC's activities were discussed in the Governing Body twice a year. He concluded that the future organization of the IPEC Steering Committee would be studied in light of the concerns expressed in the meeting and practical considerations derived from IPEC's own characteristics, including the large number of donors and participating countries. He also expressed the need to work in close collaboration with other programmes. The Global Report for 2002 pointed out that there was a much larger number of children working in hazardous labour than previously thought. IPEC was therefore working closely with SafeWork to develop responses to the problem jointly.
54. The Employer member from India recommended studying the role of national steering committees in participating countries. These committees currently examined IPEC proposals for their countries before they were submitted to Geneva, but the possibility of expanding the scope of their work should be considered. National steering committees should have a role in the review of local initiatives and in progress reporting.
55. The Worker spokesperson suggested that IPEC consider the participation of Worker and Employer representatives in selected sessions of the regional meetings to be held in 2004, since the participation of the social partners would enrich the discussion and promote better understanding. Mr. Tapiola responded that that would indeed be feasible and that ACTRAV and ACT/EMP would be involved in the discussion.

V. Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: Priorities and action plans for technical cooperation

56. The Executive Director, Mr. Tapiola, introduced the Office report³ for the item. He explained that, after the action plan for 2000, concerning freedom of association and collective bargaining, which had given rise to a number of important projects, the action plan for 2001, concerning forced labour, had led to the establishment of the Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour, and the action plan for 2002, concerning child labour, was taken care of by IPEC. The proposed action plan for 2003, concerning the elimination of discrimination, completed the first cycle under the follow-up to the Declaration. It covered areas that many parts of the ILO had been active on and, therefore, called for coordination rather than a new structure – for focus and improvement in what the Office would seek to achieve. The Global Report, *Time for equality at work*, had highlighted the changing nature of discrimination in employment and occupation and had shown that the shift from ignorance or denial to remedial action was neither straightforward nor irreversible. It had stressed that there was neither a “one-size-fits-all” recipe nor a definitive formula for eliminating discrimination at work. Policy responses had to be country-specific, involve a combination of interventions and be sustained over time. The challenge was to set priorities, find the right mix and sequence of policy interventions and allocate adequate resources for implementation and monitoring. Non-discrimination was an area in which employers’ and workers’ organizations should play a key role. This required strengthening the capacity of the social partners to tackle discrimination within their own structures and at the workplace, individually or jointly. The action plan aimed to raise the coherence, visibility and impact of ILO action in this field and to achieve measurable results between 2004 and 2007, when the next Global Report on the subject was due. It proposed to focus on two main themes: (i) racial/ethnic discrimination, work and development; and (ii) equal remuneration between the sexes and racial/ethnic groups. An Office-wide task force on the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation was envisaged. The goal would be to improve communication and enhance coordination and synergy between present and future activities in that area. The proposed action plan required considerable extra-budgetary support, as the proposed activities could not be carried out with the present budgetary funds. He, therefore, appealed to donors to make the investment required to ensure sustained progress in the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation.
57. The Worker spokesperson was pleased with the documents and the good collaboration maintained with his group, but he had hoped to have had information on, and evaluation of, the activities carried out by the InFocus Programme on Promoting the Declaration before looking at the proposal, owing to the interdependence of the four categories of principles and rights. He had hoped that the point would be on the agenda for the March 2004 meeting. He then stated that the Workers’ group agreed with the analysis of the familiar and persistent, or the new, manifestations of discrimination, and subscribed to the analysis of interventions to tackle discrimination effectively through policies to be implemented and the role of the social partners. He stated that the Workers’ group agreed with the two key themes proposed. With regard to racial/ethnic discrimination, the ILO had only a weak knowledge base, except with regard to migrant workers, hence the need to focus on this point, emphasizing, as the report did, the cumulative effect of multiple discrimination against specific peoples or groups (e.g. a migrant worker, who is female and

³ GB.288/TC/4.

black). He also supported the means of action listed in the Office's proposal. Nevertheless, he insisted on the need to integrate this action plan for equality with all ILO programmes, the importance of work with the social partners at all levels, in particular through strengthening tripartism and social dialogue, mobilization of the donor community, the effective application of Conventions Nos. 87 and 98, and the involvement of the regional offices in monitoring national programmes. He then suggested that the action plan did not concern only developing countries and that consultations with international financial institutions should cover ethnic origin, and also racism. The Worker spokesperson, after expressing his satisfaction with the global task force for equality within the ILO, which, in his opinion, should contribute to providing more coherent action, stated that his group agreed to all of the Office's proposals, having first insisted on an appeal to the donor countries to finance this action plan.

- 58.** The Employer spokesperson insisted, in his preliminary comments, on recalling that, according to the Employers' group, the follow-up to the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work essentially consisted of the promotion of fundamental principles and rights. It was not a question of obtaining ratification of Conventions but of identifying obstacles to the implementation of the principles. With regard to the document submitted for discussion, he made a certain number of comments. The Employers believed that not every inequality in remuneration was necessarily synonymous with discrimination and, moreover, they believed that equality and equity of remuneration should not be confused. He also stated that it was difficult to describe discrimination when the only statistics available were those on gender. Also, the composite index varied between developing countries and industrialized countries. With regard to the informal economy, he stated his preference for the wording used and the approach of the resolution adopted at the International Labour Conference in 2002. He wondered about the list of countries for paragraph 10 of the document, recalling the unique role of tripartism. Finally, on behalf of the Employers' group, he stated his scepticism about the policy of quotas. Beyond these remarks, he was delighted with the efforts made by the Office through this action plan, in particular, those in favour of greater coherence through the establishment of a global task force. While agreeing with the proposals, he repeated his queries with regard to identifying target countries. He concluded by stating that the moment had perhaps arrived, now that the first cycle of reports had been concluded, to query the effectiveness of the follow-up activities of the Declaration to help States in reality identify and overcome obstacles preventing them from implementing the fundamental principles and rights at work.
- 59.** The representative of the Government of Malawi, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, indicated his appreciation of efforts towards the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation and the other initiatives outlined in the document. He expressed the support of the governments of the Africa group to the point for decision in paragraph 26.
- 60.** The representative of the Government of Germany, welcoming the action plan, noted that the Declaration was one of the most important priorities for his Government. Germany had taken a range of actions to deal with racial discrimination at the workplace, in which employers and trade unions took part, as well as local organizations, churches, and communities. It was not simply a question of eliminating discrimination but more importantly of promoting integration.
- 61.** The representative of the Government of Ecuador endorsed the approach outlined in the paper and the point for decision in paragraph 26.
- 62.** The representative of the Government of India highlighted the linkages between poverty and discrimination, noting the difficulties in achieving decent work in conditions of poverty. Emphasizing that employment creation was at the heart of poverty reduction, he

urged the ILO to focus on job creation in the informal economy, skill development, and promoting the free movement of people. The ILO Declaration should not be used for protectionist purposes, nor should adherence to labour standards and decent work be used as a precondition for increased financial assistance to developing countries. He closed by stating that governments, workers and employers had a common responsibility towards eliminating discrimination at work.

- 63.** The representative of the Government of South Africa acknowledged the positive correlation between poverty and discrimination. He agreed that neither a “one-size-fits-all” nor a definitive formula for eliminating discrimination existed. He stressed the importance of the commitment of all interest groups and, particularly, of employers’ and workers’ organizations. He supported the two themes identified in paragraph 16. While supporting the idea of a task force, he noted the lack of a workplan and specific time frames, and expressed concern about budgetary support for the envisaged action plan. He also expressed support for the point for decision in paragraph 26.
- 64.** The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom welcomed the action plan. He noted the key areas of concern that the plan highlighted and agreed that they applied to both developed and developing countries. He stressed the need to address discrimination in the informal sector and referred to the need for a more strategic approach to be applied to the selection of priorities. He indicated his preference for a more detailed action plan with greater focus on outcomes. He voiced particular support for the multimedia global campaign for equality. He endorsed the point for decision in paragraph 26.
- 65.** The representative of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed support for the action plan and stated that globalization had created the need for common international minimum standards. She noted that the failure to eliminate discrimination, including in the workplace, was often blamed on the government while, in fact, any policy must be compatible with social and political realities, economic conditions and the capacity of the social partners. She highlighted the important role that tripartite institutions were playing in her country in the fight against discrimination.
- 66.** The representative of the Government of the Dominican Republic thanked the Office for the thorough review of the technical cooperation activities carried out in the framework of the follow-up to the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. He added that the Dominican Republic was very committed to the promotion of the respect of the fundamental principles and rights at work, as reflected also by the ratification of the eight fundamental Conventions. He stated that equality at work was essential to eradicating poverty and combating discrimination. His Government attached special importance to technical cooperation activities, particularly those aimed at fighting discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. He referred to a tripartite sectoral action plan that was under way in his country in this area and had produced valuable results. This plan had been implemented with ILO assistance; it facilitated multi-sectoral cooperation through sensitization workshops and seminars. While acknowledging that technical cooperation was an essential means to combat discrimination, he said that awareness raising and fund-raising were equally necessary. He concluded by endorsing the creation of a global task force on the elimination of discrimination, as expressed in paragraphs 24 and 25, and expressed his support for the approach outlined in the document, as stated in paragraph 26.
- 67.** The representative of the Government of Indonesia welcomed the focus on elimination of discrimination, including against migrant workers, which accorded with the Government’s national policy to fight poverty. He supported the statement in the paper that there should be no “one-size-fits-all” approach, and stated that consultation with national tripartite constituents was imperative. Any new activities should be coordinated with existing

initiatives, including the work being done with the ILO Office in Jakarta on policies in that field. Capacity building and promotional work should be prioritized.

68. The representative of the Government of the United States supported the point for decision, but raised concerns that the Office was confusing the terms “migrant workers” and “national workers of foreign origin”. She stated that those should be treated distinctly. Certain types of employment might be denied to migrant workers on the basis that they lacked citizenship or proper documentation. That did not constitute discrimination. She supported the view that policy responses should be flexible, and shared the concerns of the Employers regarding the use of quotas to address discrimination, stating that a wide range of available measures should be considered.
69. The representative of the Government of Nigeria supported the views expressed on behalf of the Africa group and endorsed the approach outlined in the action plan. A broad approach covering ethnic groups, gender issues and HIV/AIDS-infected people should adequately integrate country-specific cases and actions, and should be consistent with work already done by the ILO. He indicated that any initiative must take country-specific concerns of ethnic balancing between majorities and minorities into consideration. He called for the support of ILO constituents from developed countries and stressed that Nigeria welcomed any technical assistance. He supported the point for decision in paragraph 26.
70. The Executive Director, Mr. Tapiola, replying to the discussion, assured speakers that the Office had taken careful note of what had been said. He agreed with the Workers’ group that one should find an appropriate way of tracking the progress of Declaration-related technical cooperation activities – beyond that which a global report every four years could present. As regards countries that might be high on the Office’s list of non-discrimination projects, there was no such list because the Office worked with countries that approached it for help. Even if the supervisory bodies pointed to desirable Office assistance, it was still necessary for the specific government and the ILO to agree on what should be done. The action plan provided for a theme coordinator from the InFocus Programme on Promoting the Declaration who should be seen as a first point of contact for constituents looking for help, and who would head a global task force encompassing headquarters and the field. Responding to the points made by several speakers, notably the representative of the Government of the United States, on positive discrimination, Mr. Tapiola reiterated that the Office did not believe in a “one-size-fits-all” approach. Quotas were one means of action that might be adopted in certain circumstances. Elsewhere, other methods would be appropriate. Fundamental principles and rights at work, while universal, could not be applied in the abstract. On every occasion, the ILO discussed with constituents how to translate them into practical effects according to the specific circumstances of a particular country.
71. The Chairperson concluded the item on the agenda, pointing out that there was the need to include the following point for decision in the report of the Committee.
72. ***The Governing Body may wish to endorse the approach outlined in the paper,⁴ and request that it be kept informed, through the Committee on Technical Cooperation, of the implementation of the activities proposed.***

⁴ GB.288/TC/4.

VI. Tribute to members of the Committee on Technical Cooperation

73. The Committee paid tribute to two members who were attending the session of the Governing Body for the last time before their retirement. Mr. Hoff had served the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference in several capacities, including as the Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Technical Cooperation for a number of years. His substantive contribution to the Committee was acknowledged with thanks by the Chairperson as well as by the two Vice-Chairpersons. The Committee also thanked Mr. Ito (Worker member, Japan) for his dedicated participation in the Committee over the past ten years.
74. In his reply, Mr. Hoff asked the Committee to keep in mind that it was a fully fledged committee of the Governing Body with all the rights and privileges which needed to be utilized to give guidance to the work of the Office pertaining to technical cooperation. He recalled the excellent working relations he had had with Ms. Chinery-Hesse and Mr. Trémeaud, and was sure that the Committee would have a similar relationship with Mr. Skerrett, the present Executive Director. Mr. Hoff thanked Mr. Iqbal Ahmed for all the support he had provided to the Committee over the years, recalling that he had saved the work of the Committee on several occasions. He concluded by thanking Mr. Muia for having assisted him while he was with the Committee.

VII. Other questions

75. There being no other issue under this item, the Chairperson closed the meeting, informing the Committee that, in accordance with the standard procedures, the report of the meeting would be approved on its behalf by the Officers of the Committee. They would also agree on the agenda for the next meeting.

Geneva, 18 November 2003.

Point for decision: Paragraph 72.