INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

Governing Body

Information and Communications Technology Subcommittee

GB.294/PFA/ICTS/1
294th Session

Geneva, November 2005

PFA/ICTS

FOR INFORMATION

FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Information Technology Systems Fund

1. At its 291st Session (November 2004), the Governing Body considered a status report [1] on three IT projects other than IRIS, funded through the Information Technology Systems Fund established by the International Labour Conference in June 2000. This paper provides a progress report on these three information technology initiatives.

Headquarters/field telecommunications infrastructure improvements

2. At its 288th Session (November 2003), the Governing Body approved a revised amount of US$500,000 to improve the ILO's global telecommunications infrastructure. [2] This was based on the findings of the evaluation of tender proposals and the budgetary implications of a full deployment of a global Wide Area Network (WAN) for the ILO. The first phase of this project, completed in July 2004, consisted of extensive testing by SITA, the selected vendor, to measure the performance of the connectivity links between headquarters and each ILO external office.

3. The second phase of this project was completed in April 2005. Three offices in Africa (Abidjan, Kinshasa and Algiers) and Geneva were connected to the SITA-managed private network. Except for some minor local infrastructure problems, this four-node configuration is fully operational. The three offices now have a direct connection to Geneva, and thus improved connectivity to all the enterprise applications at headquarters. Internet connectivity upgrades are also being planned for Yaoundé and Addis Ababa.

4. The security of Internet connections in the field continues to be enhanced. All of the external office networks are protected by firewalls to guard against attacks over the Internet. Additionally, all email from external offices which are unable to handle higher-than-average threat levels are being routed through Geneva where they can benefit from large-scale filtering hardware and software.

5. Expenditures and commitments to end-August 2005 amount to some US$230,000.

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[1] GB.291/PFA/3/1.

[2] GB.288/PFA/6.

Electronic document management system (EDMS)

6. At its 286th Session (March 2003), the Governing Body approved up to US$500,000 to implement an EDMS prototype that will result in the standardization of the process for preparing and storing internal ILO text documents, working papers and publications, to facilitate their research and retrieval. [3]

7. The Stellent software which was selected for an ILO EDMS system will also be used to manage the content of the restructured Internet and Intranet web sites. Additionally, the integration of IRIS document requirements into the EDMS is being explored.

8. The application software is fully operational and development is proceeding on several subprojects at the same time. Progress has been slow because much of the work is being done by ILO staff who have other primary responsibilities, thus causing delays for the project. However, some products are still expected for delivery before the end of 2005.

9. Expenditures and commitments to end-August 2005 have reached some US$270,000.

Electronic voting system (EVS)

10. In November 2002, [4] the Governing Body approved up to US$600,000 for the replacement of the electronic voting system and further development of information technology at the Conference.

11. The EVS was fully operational for the 2005 International Labour Conference. Procedural difficulties identified in 2004 were largely overcome, with the result that plenary votes were able to be held with a minimum of disruption to proceedings. Some delays were experienced largely due to two factors, the first being that many delegates who were entitled to vote, notwithstanding multiple announcements in plenary and in the *Daily bulletin*, forgot to get their pin codes before the first vote and had to obtain them in the Conference Hall prior to the vote commencing. The second factor was the failure of a number of delegates to formally notify as to their departure and/or to formally delegate their voting rights to an adviser in the event that they were absent at the time of vote. The Office is currently examining alternative options for the issuing of pin codes. However, no automatic solution to the delegation of rights issue can be foreseen with this matter being very much the responsibility of delegations.

12. The electronic system was used successfully in both the Government and Worker electoral colleges. From a practical perspective, it is noted that in future all candidates should, if possible, be listed on the same page without the need to scroll down.

13. For the 2005 International Labour Conference, an amendment/subamendment display program was developed using the EVS software technology to facilitate technical committee work. It was used on a trial basis in the Youth Employment Committee. The trial was very successful, with participants expressing satisfaction with the process which assisted them in clarifying the specific issue under debate. The Office is working to extend this program into more general use in technical committees. As part of this extension,

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[3] GB.286/PFA/6/2.

[4] GB.285/PFA/5/2.

consideration is being given to the possibility of utilizing the voting station hardware as individual display screens instead of, or as well as, large room projection screens.

14. In a similar vein, investigation is under way as to whether the electronic voting hardware could be used to provide participants during the Governing Body and other meetings with reference documents and other material. One major obstacle to the extended use of this equipment is the absence of electricity output points in ILO meeting rooms and those of the *Palais*. This means users must rely on the in-built battery which has a limited operational time before requiring recharging.

15. Concerning the software, it is ready for use by the Office for internal surveys and elections (viz. elections to the Pensions Committee, the Management Committee of the SHIF, the Staff Union Committee) from each official's workstation.

16. The balance of the allocated funds for this project is currently some US$104,000. This balance is being earmarked for the cost of the software development for the in-meeting documentation display program and the purchase of power adapters.

Geneva, 22 September 2005.

Submitted for information.