



## SEVENTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Other personnel questions****Adoption leave**

1. For a little over 20 years, female staff members of the ILO adopting a child below school age have been entitled to special paid leave according to the practice of the agencies applying the United Nations common system. In the ILO, this leave is seven weeks.<sup>1</sup>
2. To keep pace with societal change and to meet growing concerns for equal treatment and achieving a work-life balance, paid paternity leave of one week on the birth or adoption of a child was introduced on a pilot basis in 2001 at the ILO.<sup>2</sup>
3. Following the Governing Body decision in March 2005<sup>3</sup> to endorse the decisions of the United Nations General Assembly granting up to four weeks' paid paternity leave on the birth of a child<sup>4</sup> and not to subsume the provisions for adoption leave for male staff members under those for paternity leave, the Office decided to examine the provisions for adoption leave. The elements taken into account during that examination were:
  - the principle of non-discrimination between men and women;
  - the revised Human Resources Strategy (work-life balance);
  - practices in this regard in other UN common system organizations (at least seven other organizations grant staff of both sexes adoption leave of up to eight weeks).

<sup>1</sup> Compared to eight weeks in nearly all the other organizations applying the common system.

<sup>2</sup> GB.282/PFA/8/1, GB.282/7/2 and Circular No. 633, Series 6, of 6 December 2002.

<sup>3</sup> GB.292/PFA/18 and GB.292/9/2(Rev.).

<sup>4</sup> “211. The Commission therefore decided that: (a) A duration of up to four weeks paid leave for paternity purposes should be granted to staff at headquarters and family duty stations and up to eight weeks for staff at non-family duty stations or in exceptional circumstances, such as those mentioned in paragraph 204 above, including death of the mother, inadequate medical facilities or complications encountered at time of pregnancy ...” (*Report of the International Civil Service Commission for 2004*, General Assembly Official Records, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/59/30 (Vol. I)), para. 211).

4. The Office proposes to introduce paid leave in the case of the adoption of a child below school age, of up to eight weeks for both female and male staff members, provided that, where both adoptive parents are employed by the Office, the total combined duration of their adoption leave shall be limited to eight weeks.
5. *The Committee may wish to recommend that the Governing Body approve the proposal contained in paragraph 4 above and authorize the Director-General to give effect to this decision in the ILO by introducing the necessary amendments in article 8.7 of the Staff Regulations and present those amendments for information at a future session.*

Geneva 17 October 2006.

*Point for decision:* Paragraph 5.