



THIRD ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Preparations for the Special Session of  
the General Assembly of the United  
Nations: World Summit for Social  
Development and Beyond: Achieving  
Social Development for All in a  
Globalizing World**

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## Introduction

1. The Special Session of the General Assembly entitled “World Summit for Social Development and Beyond: Achieving Social Development for All in a Globalizing World” will be held in Geneva from 26 to 30 June 2000. It will be preceded by a second and final session of the Preparatory Committee (New York, 3-14 April 2000). Since the Committee on Employment and Social Policy will now be holding its last meeting before the Special Session takes place, it is invited to take a number of decisions concerning various aspects of the arrangements foreseen.

## The ILO’s contribution to the preparatory process

2. The ILO has from the outset been making substantial inputs to preparations for the Special Session. It contributed substantive documentation to the first session of the Preparatory Committee in May 1999, and has remained in close contact with the secretariat team responsible for the preparations for the Special Session, responding to various requests and participating in many preparatory activities. It has also made available to the UN Secretariat the full-time services of an ILO official, who has been working in the secretariat team since January 1999.
3. At its First Session the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session adopted a decision recalling the crucial role of the United Nations system and calling for reports and proposals for further action to be prepared by different organizations on topics related to the ten commitments adopted at Copenhagen, to be submitted to the UN Secretariat in January 2000.<sup>1</sup> The assessment of issues and the proposals for further action contained in these reports were expected to be reflected in a revised Chairman’s draft text to be presented in early February.
4. With regard to the ILO’s contribution, the direct requests to the Organization mentioned in Decision 1 of the Preparatory Committee referred in particular to Commitment No. 3 of the Copenhagen Declaration (Full employment), but there were also a number of issues of interest in other commitments, notably Commitment No. 1 (An enabling environment for social development), No. 2 (Eradication of poverty), No. 4 (Promoting social integration), No. 5 (Equality between men and women), No. 7 (Acceleration of development in Africa and in the least developed countries) and No. 8 (Inclusion of social development goals in structural adjustment programmes).
5. The ILO paper *Decent work and poverty reduction in the global economy*, submitted by the Director-General to the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee, constitutes an integrated ILO response to all the issues mentioned in Decision 1 and in the Chairman’s draft text – as it stood following the first round of the inter-sessional, open-ended, informal consultations of the Preparatory Committee (September 1999) – relevant to the ILO’s mandate and concerns. The basic message of the paper is that the present form of globalization is facing a crisis of legitimacy because insufficient attention has been given to its social consequences and its social dimensions. It stresses the need to improve distribution of the benefits of globalization and to reduce inequalities and uncertainty and

<sup>1</sup> Decision 1, A/54/45 (Supp.).

insecurity in the lives of ordinary people, focusing on employment promotion, social protection, workers' rights and social dialogue. Drawing on the discussions and conclusions of the ILO's International Consultation concerning Follow-up on the World Summit for Social Development (Geneva, 2-4 November 1999), the report proposes a number of initiatives to contribute to solving some major problems plaguing the world, such as poverty, the dearth of decent work, and social disintegration and exclusion. Such initiatives emphasize two interrelated dimensions.

6. First, the report proposes that the Special Session call for a more coherent and integrated approach to policy-making, based on recognition of the necessary interdependence of economic and social policies in order to address the core issues of the Social Summit. The paper stresses that it is essential to make a conceptual leap from sectoral approaches towards integrated thinking in order to find viable solutions to interrelated problems. It is important for this integrated approach to be reflected in policy-making at the international level (i.e. among multilateral organizations and international forums responsible for different aspects of economic and social policy) and also at the national level, among the various government departments and sectors concerned.
7. Secondly, the report focuses on the need to organize international cooperation and partnerships in support of the ILO's global programme on decent work, which is a strategic means of reducing poverty and creating and distributing wealth, as well as giving effect to the more integrated approach to social and economic policies that is being called for. The paper proposes that the Special Session accord the highest priority to objectives such as full employment, the strengthening of social protection, respect for basic workers' rights and greater openness to social dialogue and consensus-building involving governments and employers' and workers' organizations. Particular emphasis is given to gender equality and the elimination of discrimination in the world of work. The Special Session is therefore invited to call on all States and international organizations to support the ILO's global programme on decent work.
8. As requested by the Preparatory Committee at its First Session, the ILO contribution to its Second Session was to be made available to the 38th Session of the Commission for Social Development (New York, 8-17 February 2000) and to the inter-sessional, open-ended, informal consultations of the Preparatory Committee (New York, 21-25 February 2000). The outcome of those meetings is reported in the addendum to this paper,<sup>2</sup> which contains in its appendix the ILO paper *Decent work and poverty reduction in the global economy*. The Office also submitted various review reports as its contribution to the overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit that the Commission was to undertake.<sup>3</sup>
9. The Special Session should be seen as a perfect opportunity to promote ILO views and values and project them to the international community and public opinion. For this reason, and apart from its substantive contribution to the preparatory process and its active participation in the Special Session itself, the ILO intends to participate in and organize,

<sup>2</sup> GB.277/ESP/3(Add.1).

<sup>3</sup> Background document and conclusions of the International Consultation concerning Follow-up on the World Summit for Social Development, doc. FWSD/1999; ILO papers on the economic and financial crises, GB.274/4/1, 4/2, and 4/3, and ITM/1/1999; E. Lee: "The Asian financial crisis: The challenge for social policy", ILO, 1999; Country studies on the social impact of globalization: Final report (GB.276/WP/SDL/1 and Add.1); Report of the Director-General to the 87th Session (1999) of the International Labour Conference.

during the Special Session, a number of parallel events (meetings, panel discussions, seminars, public information activities) on issues on the agenda that are close to its concerns and of interest to its constituents. For this purpose a close collaborative effort is being made with ILO constituents, the UN Secretariat, the host country and member States, as well as other international organizations and actors. These special events will be organized within two distinct but complementary frameworks –

- (a) The first is closely linked to the intergovernmental event itself. The Bureau of the Preparatory Committee is proposing, inter alia, an innovative format for the Special Session involving a *committee of the whole*, which would allow non-state actors to interact with governments as part of the official proceedings through a series of round tables chaired by member States. The results of the round tables would be reported to the plenary. The round tables would be composed of five panellists, one high-level government representative (possibly a Head of State), one executive head of an international organization, and three others from different facets of civil society. A round table on employment is planned, with the expected participation of the Director-General. It may be noted that the Preparatory Committee has still to decide on the organization of work of the Special Session.
  - (b) The second is being developed by the Government of Switzerland and is intended to take place in parallel with the intergovernmental event. The Swiss authorities are organizing a forum entitled *Geneva 2000: The next step in social development*, which will provide a platform for the exchange and sharing of experience through special events such as panel discussions, exhibitions, workshops, etc., organized by international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other interested actors in the development process. Apart from the selected special events organized in the framework of the Special Session, the *Geneva 2000* forum will provide the official umbrella for most of the parallel events held in June 2000. The ILO is closely associated with this major initiative. The Director-General is a member of the High-Level Advisory Group of the Forum, and two other ILO officials are participating in the Steering Group. This event is expected to attract not only representatives of NGOs, but also parliamentarians, industry and business groups, trade unions, academics, citizen interest groups and professional organizations, as well as governments and intergovernmental organizations. One of the key events of the Forum will be a symposium entitled “Partnerships for Social Development in a Globalized World” which will bring together the main actors in the development process, including workers and employers. Some 25 speakers should participate directly in the symposium through four panel discussions, which will be open to the public and to the media. The Director-General has agreed to address the symposium on the theme of “A multilateral commitment to decent work”. The Chairperson of the symposium, former Netherlands Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers, will share the results of these discussions with the Special Session and a summary report will be prepared for wider distribution.
10. The Director-General has agreed to make some of the facilities in the ILO building available to the Swiss authorities as organizers of the *Geneva 2000* forum. These facilities include ILO meeting rooms and office space to accommodate the delegations of least developed countries. The Swiss authorities have agreed to reimburse all directly identifiable costs to the ILO.
  11. ***The Committee may wish to recommend to the Governing Body that it take note of the overall ILO contribution to the preparatory process, in particular the document entitled Decent work and poverty reduction in the global economy,***

*submitted by the Director-General to the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee.*

## **Recent developments concerning the Special Session**

12. On the recommendation of the Preparatory Committee, the UN General Assembly decided at its Fifty-fourth Session that the title of the Special Session would be: “World Summit for Social Development and Beyond: Achieving Social Development for All in a Globalizing World”. The General Assembly also adopted without a vote a resolution on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit.<sup>4</sup> The resolution emphasized the urgent need to place the goals of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the Summit at the centre of economic policy-making. Recalling its decision to hold a Special Session in 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Summit’s outcome, it reiterated that the objectives of that session would be to reaffirm the Declaration and Programme of Action and not to renegotiate them. It also reaffirmed the need for effective partnership and cooperation between governments, international organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations in follow-up on the Summit and in the Special Session’s preparatory process.
13. Based on extensive consultations with the major negotiating groups and following the receipt of documents from the United Nations system and other international organizations, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Maquieira of Chile, with the assistance of the Secretariat prepared and submitted a new, integrated working draft text early in February 2000.<sup>5</sup> This text, which should form the basis of the final document adopted by the Special Session, is in three parts: Part I is intended to reaffirm the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action; Part II to review and assess the implementation of the outcome of the Summit; and Part III to contain further initiatives for inclusion in the outcome of the Special Session. The revised Chairman’s draft text reflects several ILO concerns and shows that the ILO’s inputs have been taken into account and are likely to be reflected in the final Chairman’s text to be adopted by the Special Session.
14. The UN Commission for Social Development, a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), was entrusted by the Preparatory Committee with the responsibility to act as the forum for national reporting, benefiting from the sharing of experience gained and thus identifying areas where further initiatives are needed for consideration by the Preparatory Committee. At its 38th Session the Commission was to devote time to a review and appraisal of national implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and to the identification of obstacles.
15. The discussion was to be based on a report by the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and based on national reports submitted by 74 countries since mid-1999. These national reports are important, comprehensive reviews of progress made by countries in implementing the Copenhagen Commitments. The Secretary-General’s report reveals a number of points of particular importance to the overall mandate and current work of the ILO. First, it indicates that, in the context of the

<sup>4</sup> Resolution A/RES/54/23.

<sup>5</sup> Document A/AC.253/L.5/Rev.2.

fight against poverty, employment as an income-generating activity is a key political priority of government worldwide. The report states further that, since the Summit, many governments have developed national plans and strategies and formulated a range of active employment and labour policies; they have also taken steps to integrate employment more fully with wider social and economic policies so as to better cope with the challenges of unemployment and underemployment. In addition, several governments also reported on specific measures adopted to enhance the quality of employment; to promote equality of treatment between women and men and between different socio-economic groups, including young people, older workers, migrants and the disabled; and to provide social safety nets in times of crisis.

16. The meeting of the Commission was to be immediately followed by a second round of inter-sessional, open-ended informal consultations to consider a new, integrated Chairman's working draft text and the compilation of the summaries and proposals taken from the documentation provided by the United Nations system and other international organizations. On the basis of the outcome of these two events, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee should present during the month of March a further revised working draft text to be submitted to the Preparatory Committee at its Second Session.
17. In accordance with Decision 5 of the Preparatory Committee at its organizational session, the UN Secretariat organized two events to prepare for the Special Session and to assist it in its work. The ILO was represented at both events. The first was a symposium on "States, markets and social progress: Roles and cooperation of public and private sectors", held in Beijing from 11 to 13 October 1999 and organized in cooperation with the State Development Planning Commission of China. The second event was a seminar on "Values and market economies", held in Paris from 11 to 13 January 2000 and organized in cooperation with the Government of France.
18. As current President of the Council of Europe, the Government of Ireland organized a Conference on Social Development in Dublin from 17 to 18 January 2000. The aim of the conference was to review progress in the 41 member States of the Council since Copenhagen regarding implementation of the ten Commitments, and to make a contribution to the Council of Europe's input to the Special Session. Various international organizations and bodies were represented, including the ILO. Other preparatory meetings will be organized in the near future, in particular a Parliamentary Meeting of CIS countries in preparation for the Special Session (St. Petersburg, March 2000), an International Conference on Preparations for the Special Session (Berlin, March 2000) and a Regional Meeting on Follow-up to the Social Summit (organized by the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago, May 2000).

## **Governing Body delegation to the Special Session**

19. On various occasions in the past the Governing Body has decided to appoint a delegation to attend important UN events such as the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and, more recently, the World Summit for Social Development itself in 1995. On that occasion the Governing Body decided that a tripartite delegation (consisting of its Chairperson and one representative of each of the Employers' and Workers' groups) should attend the Summit. The delegation accompanied the Director-General to Copenhagen as part of the ILO delegation. The Director-General made a statement during the Summit on behalf of the ILO.

20. Since the appointment of such a delegation has financial implications, the matter is also the subject of a paper before the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee at the present session of the Governing Body.
21. *The Committee may wish to recommend that, subject to the recommendation of the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee, the Governing Body appoint a tripartite delegation, consisting of one member from each group, to accompany the Director-General as part of the ILO delegation to the Special Session of the General Assembly.*

### **Consideration by the Governing Body at its 279th Session (November 2000) of the outcome of the Special Session**

22. The Special Session will be a major international forum for global consensus-building to address the social impact of globalization and to advance the implementation of the Copenhagen agenda. Due to the significance of this event for the ILO and its constituents, the Director-General therefore proposes that the Committee recommend to the Governing Body that it consider the outcome of the Special Session at its 279th (November 2000) Session.
23. *The Committee may wish to recommend to the Governing Body that it decide what arrangements should be made for the consideration, at its 279th Session (November 2000), of the outcome of the Special Session.*

Geneva, 2 March 2000.

*Points for decision:* Paragraph 11;  
Paragraph 21;  
Paragraph 23.