



SECOND ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Monitoring and evaluation: Report
of the meeting of the Officers of the
Committee and follow-up activities**

1. At its 276th Session (November 1999) the Governing Body requested the Director-General to convene a meeting of the Officers of the Committee on Technical Cooperation well before the Governing Body session in March 2000, to review the proposals on the modalities of giving effect to a monitoring system, which would be submitted to the Committee on Technical Cooperation at the Governing Body's present session. The Officers of the Committee accordingly met in Geneva on 8 February 2000, chaired by Mr. Aboye (Government, Ethiopia). The Employer and Worker Vice-Chairpersons, Mr. Hoff and Mr. Agyei participated with their advisers.
2. The report of the Officers is as follows:
 1. The issue of monitoring of technical cooperation by the Governing Body has been the subject for discussion at several meetings of the Committee on Technical Cooperation. At the end of its 276th Session (November 1999), the Governing Body requested the Director-General "to convene a meeting of the Officers well before the Governing Body session in March 2000, to review the proposals on the modalities of giving effect to a monitoring system, which would be submitted to the Committee on Technical Cooperation in March 2000".
 2. In order to give effect to the decision of the Governing Body, the Officers of the Committee, along with their respective advisers met on 8 February at the ILO in Geneva.
 3. The following documents were considered: ¹
 1. Effect to be given to the recommendations of the Working Party on the Evaluation of the Active Partnership Policy (GB.274/TC/1).

¹ Documents I, II, III and the government statements are appended. Document IV is available on request. Document V is submitted to the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee at the present session (GB.277/PFA/7/1).

- II. A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework for technical cooperation: IMEC proposals.
- III. Information note prepared by the Office.
- IV. References to monitoring and evaluation in Governing Body documents: Committee on Technical Cooperation (March 1997 to November 1999) – Excerpts.
- V. Review of management and administration in the International Labour Office, prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit (Geneva 1999).

4. In addition, the meeting considered a statement on behalf of the Government group, supplemented by the African Government group proposals, and the Asian and Pacific group position.

5. The meeting appreciated the proposals of the Government groups, including the five elements of the IMEC proposals with which there was general agreement; however, given the substantial task implications of the proposals, a gradual phased implementation was recommended. In that light they should be reviewed by the Officers of the Committee on a regular basis for timely follow-up.

6. On the issue of monitoring, after extensive deliberations the Officers noted that there was general agreement that a review of field activities should be undertaken by members of the Governing Body every year in one region, coinciding with the respective Regional Meetings.

7. At the outset it was made very clear that these reviews were not intended to interfere with the Office's organization of work or its management. The main purpose of the exercise would be to enhance the quality of the deliberations in the Committee on Technical Cooperation and to increase the capacity of the members of the Governing Body to be able to provide guidance to the Office on matters pertaining to technical cooperation.

8. The Officers agreed that the review of field activities should have several components, to be undertaken over a period of time:

- (i) On-the-spot reviews would normally take place just before the Regional Meeting. The review exercise would consist of three members of the Governing Body, one designated from each group who would be attending the Regional Meeting, visiting an ILO office and a project in the same country for a period of five days to become familiar with the activities carried out and to provide the Committee with their views on the lessons learned.
- (ii) Since two Regional Meetings had just been held in 1999 for the Americas and Africa, an exception to the above timetable should be made for the 2000-01 biennium. In 2000, an additional review exercise should be carried out in the Americas, in connection with an ongoing activity (such as an official tripartite meeting or a planned project evaluation). In 2001 a similar review exercise should be carried out in Africa. The Office should submit proposals on the venue and timing to the Officers of the Committee at a meeting in March 2000 during the Governing Body session.
- (iii) In the light of the Joint Inspection Unit report, "Review of management and administration in the International Labour Office", which will be presented to the Governing Body in March 2000, the Officers support the

recommendation to evaluate field activities on a regular basis. They recommend that this be done on the occasion of the mid-term review, requested by the International Labour Conference in 1999, of the implementation of the conclusions concerning the role of the ILO in technical cooperation, with the involvement of tripartite members of the Governing Body in different regions.

9. The Officers also considered the proposals to change the format of the annual report on technical cooperation activities, which has normally been presented at each November session of the Governing Body. Of the two proposals, the Officers preferred outline 2, with the critical issues and lessons learned. However, given the interest expressed in also having a report on selected themes, the Officers decided to review this matter at their next meeting in March 2000.

10. The Officers requested the Office to submit their report to the Committee on Technical Cooperation at the March session, together with proposals for the financing of the field reviews during the present biennium.

Geneva, 8 February 2000.

3. *The Committee is invited –*

- (a) to consider for approval the report of the Officers of the Committee on Technical Cooperation and to propose to the Governing Body the modalities contained therein on the review exercise. Two on-the-spot reviews are recommended to be undertaken in conjunction with a regional or other meeting in 2000 (Americas and Europe) and two further reviews in 2001 (Africa and Asia). Each review will be conducted by three members of the Governing Body, one from each group, and it is understood that a region-specific tripartite group will be constituted to carry out the exercise in the respective regions. The costs of conducting four on-the-spot reviews in 2000-01 are estimated at not more than US\$41,200;***
- (b) to propose to the Governing Body the modalities to give effect to the recommendation in paragraph 8(iii) of the report of the Officers of the Committee on Technical Cooperation;***
- (c) subject to the above considerations, to refer the proposals to the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee for consideration of the financial implications and the manner in which provision should be made to cover the proposed expenditure.***

Geneva, 6 March 2000.

Point for decision: Paragraph 3.

Appendix I

REPRO – Ajouter GB.274/TC/1

Appendix II

A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework for technical cooperation: Proposals by the IMEC governments

IMEC is expecting from the Office a **comprehensive evaluation framework**, allowing for a coherent view by Governing Body members. This should –

- allow Governing Body members to deal with policy evaluation (i.e. relevance, consistency, impact and sustainability), on which they should provide guidance, and not micro-manage projects;
- be cost-effective, allowing the greatest possible involvement of Governing Body members at lowest possible cost;
- with in the near future, including the forthcoming review of the Governing Body's committee structure.

To be included in this comprehensive framework, IMEC would suggest the five following elements:

1. An improved internal evaluation methodology, with systematic reporting to the Governing Body.
2. Enhancement of the implementation plan presented in November 1999.
3. A new format and new contents for the report on technical cooperation programmes.
4. Briefings by regional directors and programme managers, both from headquarters and from the field, on the basis of substantive and focused reports.
5. More external evaluation, from the External Auditor, the Joint Inspection Unit and independent external evaluation, and a full role for the Internal Auditor.

This should lead to **greater relevance, efficiency and impact of technical cooperation**, better service to beneficiaries, clearer accountability, and better monitoring, evaluation and reporting procedures, so as to enable the Governing Body to give the Office appropriate policy guidance. This also implies an integrated budget, covering both regular budget and extra-budgetary contributions.

1. An improved internal evaluation methodology, with systematic reporting to the Governing Body

In November, the IMEC governments called for an improved internal evaluation methodology with systematic reporting to the Governing Body. The IMEC governments consider it should provide a broad framework for monitoring of policy and programmes, on the basis of the targets and indicators contained in the programme and budget. It should give a better overview of what is going to be done through the four strategic objectives and the InFocus programmes. The IMEC governments would propose that effective supervision of technical cooperation be included as an indicator for this sector.

The IMEC governments look forward in that regard to seeing an integrated budget, including both budgetary and extra-budgetary resources, and their allocation to the different programmes.

The IMEC governments would ask the Office to pursue the assessment of current arrangements and the development of new approaches.

Benefits: improved internal monitoring; better information to management; more and better information to Governing Body members for monitoring programmes; a more coherent view of where resources are allocated, to which priority areas and whether they are used in the most cost-effective way.

Costs: to be conducted within existing resources.

2. Enhancement of implementation plan presented last November

The IMEC governments made it clear in November 1999 that the implementation plan in document GB.276/TC/2 could provide an efficient framework for follow-up on technical cooperation. They made a number of suggestions as to how this implementation plan might be enhanced, including the introduction of budgetary elements and managerial accountability, to be presented in March, including clear targets and indicators. This would help us to define a roadmap to manage technical cooperation and provide a framework for evaluation.

This **enhanced implementation plan** should allow for greater accountability. It should provide information, in a short and focused manner, on the following elements

- delivery rate: the problems, and how to increase the delivery rate;
- streamlining of the field structure, in particular, through further reflection on the respective roles of area offices and MDTs, taking into consideration the possibility of increased responsibilities at the field level;
- resource mobilization, according to an integrated plan, where the Office identifies the needs of the different programmes;
- better cooperation with other actors in the field, in particular UN agencies and UNDP through UNDAF.

Benefits: the enhanced implementation plan would be a tool for follow-up by the Governing Body. It could be included as a regular agenda item for discussion by the Governing Body.

Costs: to be conducted within existing resources.

3. A new format and new contents for the report on technical cooperation programmes

The existing report on technical cooperation programmes (GB.276/TC/1), covering the broad scope of technical cooperation activities, should be a **better tool for monitoring and evaluating** technical cooperation. It should provide constituents with a clear idea of the achievements and of what did not work and why, and should be based on the results of evaluations, particularly external evaluations, as well as on the comprehensive framework requested above.

In the view of IMEC governments, this report should be in line with the strategic objectives. It should provide more financial information, clear indicators of delivery, identify the problems, and the sources of these problems, the lessons learnt and the dissemination of the information thus gathered. The indicators should be selected in a realistic way, with a focus on different areas each year. The report should be concise and focused.

This report could be discussed with the regional directors present at the Governing Body.

The IMEC governments could ask the Office to produce, along those lines, proposals for March on a new, more efficient format for this report, which could be tested as a pilot project next November, and allow the Governing Body to draw conclusions from it.

Benefits: the document produced would be a much more efficient tool for supervision by the Governing Body than the present report. It would provide an integrated framework in which a programme or a project could be followed through its different stages, from conception to implementation.

Costs: the equivalent number of work-hours, no additional costs, could be financed from budget allocation.

4. Briefings by regional directors and programme managers, both from headquarters and the field, on the basis of substantive and focused reports

The IMEC governments have proposed **briefings by regional directors and programme managers, both from headquarters and the field**, on the basis of structured reports submitted to the Governing Body well ahead of time, to allow for serious preparation, followed by constructive dialogue. As opposed to the preceding proposal, these would focus more in detail on programmes or themes.

The reports, which should be short and focused, should include

- clear objectives for the programme;
- a clear view of how the programme contributes to the achievement of the strategic objectives and sub-objectives;
- method of selection of the particular programmes;
- data on progress or lack of progress and the problems faced;
- the level and involvement of governments and social partners (and other actors) at the local level;
- coordination with other donors in the field, within UNDAF and other frameworks;
- lessons learnt;
- how these lessons will be addressed in future planning.

To develop this proposal further, we need to define how the discussions should be led to be really **interactive** and profitable. We also need to identify which programmes we would like to see discussed in that way: on the agenda for the March Governing Body: occupational safety and health.

The IMEC governments would favour broad themes to be considered along those lines, such as employment, training, etc. They look forward to concrete proposals from the Office in relation to their work programme.

Benefits: this proposal covers a large series of themes over time, and allows broad participation of *all* the members of Technical Cooperation Committee. It gives all the members of the Governing Body information for monitoring specific programmes at lower cost. It enables regional directors to benefit from experience from other regions.

Cost estimates: if two programme managers, chief technical advisers or heads of MDTs are invited, the cost will be approximately: travel costs: 5,000 Sw.frs., DSA: \$200/day. No cost for the regional directors (they are in Geneva during the Governing Body), no cost for the programme coordinator, (who is based at headquarters).

5. More external evaluation by the External Auditor, Joint Inspection Unit and independent external evaluation, and a full role for the Internal Auditor

Requests should be made to the **External Auditor** to undertake special studies on management issues. This would provide the Governing Body with an independent assessment.

The External Auditor writes yearly reports on different areas of ILO activity, but the choice of the areas is his own decision. In 1997, however, he made recommendations on project management in technical cooperation. If the External Auditor plans to undertake a special study on the management of technical cooperation, it will be at no extra cost.

The IMEC governments would welcome the views of the External Auditor on the role they might play.

In the same spirit, the **Internal Auditor** could provide reports on technical cooperation evaluation.

The IMEC governments welcome the report produced by the **Joint Inspection Unit** on a review of management and administration in the ILO, particularly the chapter devoted to technical cooperation. It would encourage the pursuit of work in this area.

Last, but not least, the IMEC governments reiterate their strong support for the development of **independent, external evaluations**. This covers in particular **ex-post evaluations** to make it possible to measure the relevance, consistency, impact and sustainability of projects.

Benefits: such reports would provide external, independent views, from experts in evaluation, on work performed in technical cooperation.

Costs: external independent evaluations would imply a cost, already budgeted for in the Programme and Budget for 2000-01. The IMEC governments would look forward to further information from the Office as to the amounts involved.

Appendix III

Information note by the Office

Information requested in the various proposals on modalities of Governing Body participation in the monitoring and evaluation of technical cooperation

I. Effect to be given to the recommendations of the Working Party on the Evaluation of the APP ¹

1. The Office was requested to provide an estimate of the costs involved for the exercise involving tripartite teams of Governing Body members visiting a project and an MDT/area office for a 5-day period, with one visit planned to each of the four regions in each year of the biennium.
2. The cost for the biennium would range from \$95,000 to a maximum of \$140,000. The maximum figure would cover the contingency whereby the tripartite teams would visit the regional office or MDT/area office in one country and a project site in another country. The lower figure assumes that the ILO office in question and the project are in the same country and vicinity and no significant transport costs are involved. Both estimates are based on the calculation that the members of the tripartite teams are travelling within their respective regions.

II. A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework for technical cooperation: IMEC proposals ²

A. *Improved internal evaluation methodology, with systematic reporting to the Governing Body*

3. An outline of an evaluation strategy in the ILO is provided at the end of this annex.

B. *Enhancement of implementation plan presented in November 1999*

4. The Office is in the process of developing a common programming framework as indicated in the implementation plan. To this end consultations are being held in February and March between the regional departments and the sectors at headquarters. These consultations will include the identification of objectives and the setting of indicators and targets and will delineate the responsibility of the various units for accomplishing the action outlined in the implementation plan. The Office will provide a progress report on this activity to the Committee on Technical Cooperation at its November 2000 session.

C. *A new format and new contents for the report on technical cooperation programmes*

5. The following is proposed by the Office:

¹ Meeting of the Officers of the Committee on Technical Cooperation, doc. 1.

² CTC Officers' meeting, doc.2.

*Towards a more focused and analytical
annual report on technical cooperation*

The new strategic orientation of the Office as a whole will lead to major changes in its operational activities. With the establishment of a strategic plan there will be a sharper substantive focus on strategic objectives and the InFocus programmes. There will be a rapid response to the demands of constituents. Drawing on regular as well as extra-budgetary resources, and working within the parameters of a common programming framework, the coherence of ILO programmes at headquarters and in the field will be ensured. ILO technical cooperation programmes and the annual reports to the Governing Body will be approached in that context.

With a view to serving as an efficient tool for the monitoring and evaluation of technical cooperation activities, the annual reports will be presented in a fashion that will give constituents a clear idea of the achievements and lessons learnt, of what did not work and why, and of the necessary refinements and adjustments envisaged. The reports will be based on analytical work, drawing on the results of internal and external evaluations.

The reports will also provide an overview of the technical cooperation programme and trends by sector and region, with information on expenditure and statistics on delivery, etc. A brief on resource mobilization would be an integral part of the report.

Two options are proposed for the annual report:

Outline 1

I. *The ILO technical cooperation programme: An overview*

(i) General statistics

- Approvals
- Expenditure by strategic objective (sector) and region
- Delivery

(ii) Information and description of the programme by sector

- Integrated account of headquarters and field activities

(iii) Resource mobilization and partnerships (status report and future outlook)

- UNDP/UN
- Multi-bilateral
- Banks
- Foundations, etc.

II. *In-depth analysis of selected themes (for example, small-enterprise development)* (analysis to be undertaken in multidisciplinary fashion, covering elements cutting across sectors)

- Substantive and focused reports
- Evaluation results
- Financial and other statistics

Outline 2

I. *The ILO technical cooperation programme: An overview*

- (i) General statistics
 - Approvals
 - Expenditure by strategic objective (sector) and region
 - Delivery
- (ii) Information and description of the programme by sector
 - Integrated account of headquarters and field activities
- (iii) Resource mobilization and partnerships (status report and future outlook)
 - UNDP/UN
 - Multi-bilateral
 - Banks
 - Foundations, etc.

II. *Critical issues in technical cooperation – lessons learnt*

- Summary of several projects and programmes that have been evaluated
- Highlights of what works, what does not, and the way ahead

D. *Briefing by regional directors and programme managers both from headquarters and from the field, on the basis of substantive and focused reports*

6. The Office would be prepared to propose subjects or themes for the substantive and focused reports in due course. However, it awaits guidance on the scope of the discussion, as it understands that the selection may depend on how the discussions should be managed and whether the intention is to focus exclusively on technical cooperation activities or to cover all means of action within a given programme or theme. This item should also be considered in the light of the proposals for the new reporting format for the annual report on technical cooperation programmes, presented above.
7. The Office has been requested to provide estimates of the costs involved. For each staff member from the field who would travel to Geneva for three days during one Governing Body session, the average cost is \$4,000 per year. Thus, for two field staff, the cost for the biennium would be \$16,000.

E. *More external evaluation from the External Auditor, Joint Inspection Unit and independent external evaluation, and full role for the Internal Auditor*

8. The Office was asked to obtain the views of the External Auditor. They are as follows:

The External Auditors would be willing to undertake a special study on the management of technical cooperation. The latter is an important issue to them and most probably they would have, in any case, undertaken such a study. The timing of such a review is important; in order to avoid duplication, they would normally not

undertake such a review if a similar exercise was simultaneously being conducted internally. The exercise would not, as such, entail extra costs but there would be a trade-off. It would mean that some other item would not be reviewed.

9. The Office was asked to obtain the views of the Internal Auditor. They are as follows:
- (a) The Internal Auditor does not do evaluations of technical cooperation projects. He carries out the audit of a selected number of projects in conjunction with audits of MDTs or external offices, and is intending to increase the number in the current biennium.
 - (b) These audits examine projects to determine if funds are being used efficiently and in accordance with approved financial procedures. They also verify the progress of projects against approved workplans and identify obstacles to the delivery of outputs.
 - (c) The Internal Auditor provides an internal service to management for audits of all types. His reports are confidential and are intended to lead to corrective action, where this is judged necessary, by programme managers of the ILO. He reports annually to the Governing Body on his activities and may comment on the follow-up action taken by the Office on his reports if he believes this is warranted. These reports cover his findings in summary form of audits of technical cooperation projects. All of his reports are copied to the External Auditor.
 - (d) It is not recommended that the Internal Auditor provide his specific reports on projects to the Governing Body or a committee thereof. His is an internal service and he is an ILO official. He would find himself serving two masters. This would not prevent a change in the presentation of his findings on technical cooperation in his reports to the Governing Body if this were wanted.
10. *External independent evaluations.* On the question of costs, there is no specific provision for them in the Programme and Budget for 2000-01. There are resources – notably for external collaboration – in each technical and regional programme, which are available for purposes such as evaluation. The Office needs to acquire further experience of programme evaluation, and particularly how the best use can be made of independent evaluators to ensure value for money before trying to assign specific allocations in the programme and budget.

An evaluation strategy in the ILO

Strategic programme and budget

The unanimous adoption of the programme and budget by the International Labour Conference in June 1999 has not only meant its approval for 2000-01, but also the endorsement of the new strategic programming and budgeting framework proposed by the Director-General for the future work of the ILO. Making this framework operational requires an integrated process of programme planning and implementation, focusing on the monitoring and assessment of actual delivery, and the evaluation of and reporting on the results, in accordance with a results-based management approach and system.

Such a system is built on a coherent articulation of precisely stated objectives, clearly described outputs and activities, measurable indicators and specific targets to assess the progress made towards the achievement of the expected results.

It is to be applied to all ILO activities, financed from both regular budget and extra-budgetary resources, which fall under the technical sectors, including in particular technical cooperation programmes and projects and support services.

Its stakeholders are the entire ILO, including all its constituents, the Governing Body, the Director-General, the Executive Directors, the IFP directors and all programme and subprogramme managers and staff members, both at headquarters and in the field.

An evaluation system

The ultimate aim of such a system is to ensure the greatest possible impact of ILO work, which should be defined and carried out in line with the Office's strategic and operational objectives. The system places emphasis on the need for a good design that provides a clearer guide for monitoring programme implementation and a more solid basis for evaluating programme results. The system also ensures that evaluation findings are used in the planning and programming of future activities.

The first and foremost aim of the system is to help programme and project managers to comply with the principles of strategic programming and budgeting by: (i) ensuring the coherence of their work with the Office's strategic and operational objectives; (ii) making the programming and management of activities more transparent; (iii) enhancing accountability for work results and the use of resource allocations at all levels of the decision-making structure; (iv) redefining ongoing work and planning future work based on lessons learnt, changed circumstances and emerging opportunities; and (v) contributing to the formulation of overall policy orientations and the definition of new programme priorities.

Evaluation is regarded as one of the key functions that are an integral part of a comprehensive management system. While monitoring involves reviews of the work done, assessing the delivery of outputs and activities against fixed targets, evaluation is primarily concerned with the assessment of the impact of the work done against the expected results, meaning *relevance*, *effectiveness*, *sustainability* and *efficiency*.

Evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations, from both internal and external evaluations, provide the basis for adding new activities and/or expanding, reducing or deleting planned activities, all of which are key management decisions in support of strategic planning and budgeting.

An evaluation strategy

In terms of who is responsible for conducting an evaluation in the ILO, there are two main evaluation types in use, namely, *self-evaluations* and *independent evaluations*. These are carried out regularly and complement one another. Self-evaluations are undertaken by those directly responsible for the implementation of specific programmes and projects. *Independent evaluations* are carried out by external consultants (independent *external* evaluations) or by ILO officials from other units (independent *internal* evaluations).

In terms of coverage, there are also two main types in use, namely, individual *project/programme* evaluations and *thematic* evaluations. The latter focus on *themes* that cut across programmes and projects, programme/project components, technical sectors or fields. All ILO activities are subject to self-evaluation, while independent evaluations are carried out according to specific needs and purposes.

The Director-General has proposed that a larger number of independent external evaluations be conducted. Executive Directors will be responsible for ensuring that these independent evaluations are carried out, covering the whole or parts of the programmes (or their components) under their responsibility. Each sector will determine the activities to be the subject of an independent external evaluation in each biennium, which would then become part of the Office's evaluation plan.

Towards the end of the 2000-01 biennium, mid-term evaluations of the InFocus programmes will begin. The evaluation results will be submitted to the Governing Body for assessment and guidance.

The evaluation unit will ensure that all evaluation studies are carried out as planned and will assist in their preparation and in the dissemination of evaluation results, as appropriate.

As regards the evaluation of technical cooperation activities, the established procedures are as follows:

- *All* technical cooperation programmes and projects are subject to annual self-evaluations.

- All programmes and projects budgeted for \$250,000 or more are subject to an independent evaluation at least once during implementation.
- All phases of programmes and projects (including pilot phases), regardless of their duration or budget, are subject to an evaluation (either self- or independent) before the start of a new phase.

In the Plan of Action adopted to respond to the discussions at the International Labour Conference of June 1999, the Office has proposed to work out and secure the necessary budgetary resources to conduct longer term *ex-post* impact studies, as well as special evaluations of programmes and projects *by sector* and *by country*.

The ILO has also made substantial efforts to ensure the use of evaluation findings and lessons learnt in the programming of new activities. The notion of providing feedback on evaluation results to all levels of management is based on the premise that it not only satisfies demands for transparency and accountability, but also leads to quality improvements in the delivery of outputs and, ultimately, in the progress made towards the achievement of objectives.

The central evaluation unit

The central evaluation unit is responsible for promoting evaluation work of all ILO activities throughout the Office. It will work closely with the officials designated by the Executive Director in each sector to ensure that evaluation work is carried out as planned and the sectors receive appropriate advice and support. It will continue to update evaluation guidelines and manuals as well as training materials for Office-wide use. It will also continue to further develop institutional memory for processing and disseminating evaluation results, ensuring that experience and knowledge gained from past work is documented and that appropriate lessons learnt are used in strategic planning and future programming. It will participate in individual programme and project evaluations, including thematic evaluations.

The strategic plan

More information on evaluation will be provided in the strategic plan to be submitted to the Governing Body in November 2000.

Appendix IV

A. Statement on behalf of the Government group at the meeting of the Officers of the Committee on Technical Cooperation (Geneva, 8 February 2000)

Ambassador Kálmán Petöcz, Chairperson of the Government group

On behalf of the Government Group I would like to thank the Office for providing the organizational background of this informal meeting and for the preparation and distribution of the documents for today's discussion.

I would especially appreciate the document outlining an updated evaluation strategy in the ILO, appended as Annex I of document 3 of our meeting. This document in a number of respects reflects also the views of our group.

Let me underline some basic principles that in our opinion should be taken into account while working out a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework for technical cooperation. I would focus on some general principles and ideas shared within the group. My colleagues could and surely will further elaborate on these ideas.

First of all, a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy should be placed within the framework of the new strategic objectives of the Organization defined at the last International Labour Conference; it should reflect the key decisions in strategic planning and budgeting and help the Governing Body and the Office to forecast and accomplish the necessary or required changes. In this respect the evaluation strategy and the different modalities should reflect also the changes in which technical cooperation is going to be dealt with in the near future, including the ILO's field restructuring and the forthcoming review of the Governing Body committee structure, it should take into account new initiatives in resource mobilization and better cooperation with other actors in the field, in particular with the other UN agencies and UNDP. Evaluation should be based on country objectives, where the beneficiaries should have a clearly defined role in the evaluation of the country-specific programmes.

Secondly, if monitoring and evaluation is to play the role that we expect of it – as a tool of more effective management, strategic planning and budgeting – it should be comprehensive, covering all possible types and aspects of technical cooperation and using as many types and techniques of evaluation as possible. We stress the role of independent external evaluation by the External Auditor and the Joint Inspection Unit. In this respect we appreciate the Review of Management and Administration in the ILO prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit. We also advocate improved internal evaluation methodology, with systematic reporting to the Governing Body, briefings by regional directors and programme managers, and a full role for the Internal Auditor – in full respect of the fact that he, of course, is an ILO official and his service is an internal one.

Thirdly, the methodology should be cost-effective. As seen from above, we advocate methods that are less cost-demanding or could be accomplished within existing resources.

Fourthly, as far as the role and position of the Governing Body is concerned, it is our belief that the primary role of the Governing Body is to provide policy guidelines, and not to be involved in micro-management. This is not contradictory to the requirement and need that the Governing Body be much more involved in the real life of the Organization and in the various types of its activities, especially field activities, and in their monitoring and evaluation. However, the modalities mentioned above, including a new format and contents for the report on technical cooperation programmes, are in our opinion efficient, comprehensive, and cost-effective methods of monitoring and evaluation.

B. Monitoring and evaluation mechanism for ILO technical cooperation activities: Proposals by the African Government group

The African Government group reiterates its view that –

- any evaluation and monitoring exercise should be output-oriented and based on country objectives;
- such an exercise should involve beneficiary countries so as to enhance their participation in the process.

In view of the fact that an evaluation and monitoring mechanism would be an integral part of ILO activities as proposed by the Director-General, the group also emphasizes the critical importance of independent external evaluation for ILO technical cooperation activities. Such an evaluation should however be periodic and cost-effective. In particular –

- it should not replace or replicate existing evaluation and monitoring systems;
- it should reflect country objectives and the role of beneficiary countries should be clearly defined;
- it should not compete for regular and earmarked extra-budgetary resources, and the role of donor countries should be clearly stated;
- it should provide factual, objective and analytical reports;
- lessons learnt from independent external evaluations have to be shared widely by all constituents in recipient countries, and among countries;
- the tripartite evaluation mechanism proposed by the Employers' group can complement evaluation and monitoring mechanisms, including external independent evaluation;
- terms of reference and a modus operandi should be developed through consultations and by consensus so as to maximize the value and utility of independent evaluation.

C. Position of the Asian and Pacific Government group

The Asian and Pacific Government group is at one with the IMEC governments in expecting of the Office a comprehensive evaluation framework that will allow a coherent view by Governing Body members of ILO technical cooperation programmes. The Asian and Pacific Government group would like to reiterate the importance of the comprehensive proposals made by the Director-General in the strategic budget for the biennium 2000-01, where monitoring and evaluation of all ILO activities were proposed in a very systematic manner by setting performance indicators and targets. This integrated approach gives a common framework for an effective internal monitoring arrangement.

The Asian and Pacific group would suggest the inclusion of the following elements in the annual report:

- country-specific as well as programme-specific technical cooperation activities, in view of the fact that the financial crisis that started in our region is still being felt in certain sectors of the economy; technical assistance in the formulation of policies conducive to employment generation is of primary concern;

- an indicative plan of pipeline projects;
- proposals for future technical cooperation activities to ensure transparency and monitoring;
- the prediction of resource inflow so as to enable the Governing Body to give the Office appropriate policy guidance.

The Asian and Pacific group noted with interest the two proposals by the Office on a new format and new content for the report on technical cooperation programmes. If a choice has to be made between an in-depth analysis of selected themes and a discussion of critical issues and lessons learnt in technical cooperation, the Asian and Pacific group is inclined to favour the second Office proposal. However, the Asian and Pacific group believes that these two proposals are not mutually exclusive, as the synergy between analytical work or action research and technical activities cannot be overlooked. Thus, it is possible to have both the analysis, albeit not in-depth, of selected themes, and a discussion of critical issues and lessons learnt. This type of report would be able to provide an integrated framework where a programme is monitored from its conception right through to its implementation.

The Asian and Pacific group similarly supports the IMEC proposal on briefings by regional directors and programme managers, both from headquarters and the field, on the basis of substantive and focused reports.

Finally, the Asian and Pacific group believes that too fine and detailed analyses often lead to complicated and difficult documents, particularly for countries where the ILO official languages are not spoken. The Asian and Pacific group would accordingly appreciate concise reports that would be of greater relevance and efficiency.