



SECOND ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**The functioning of the Committee on
Employment and Social Policy**

1. At the meetings of the Committee in November 1999 and March 2000, members of the Committee requested that an item on its functioning be included on its agenda. This reflects recognition of the importance of the subjects that the Committee is expected to discuss, and offers an opportunity to examine how to develop ways in which Committee meetings could better be used to inform members of progress towards the strategic objectives, particularly the objective of creating greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income. The Committee may also wish to consider how it could provide timely policy guidance on the issues that often arise during the implementation of the programme and budget.

Background

2. The last discussion by the Committee on its own work was in November 1996.¹ In concluding that discussion, the Committee's Chairperson noted that:

... no one doubted the importance of the Committee or of the employment issue. However, the Committee had many topics to discuss and was subject to a time constraint. The Committee was supposed to advise the Governing Body, and it should take a more active role. He also saw some frustration expressed in asking what the Committee had achieved. For the future, he noted support for an examination of the reports on world employment and of a synthesis of country employment reviews.

3. The Committee came into being as a result of a resolution adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 70th Session (1984) in conjunction with the revision of the Employment Policy Recommendation, 1964 (No. 122).²
4. In 1993, following the revision of the procedures and functioning of the Governing Body, the Committee's terms of reference were given their present form, which is "to consider,

¹ GB.267/ESP/4 and GB.267/10.

² ILC, 70th Session, 1984, *Record of Proceedings*, p.32/28.

and advise the Governing Body on, ILO policies and activities in the fields of employment; training; enterprise development and cooperatives; industrial relations and labour administration; working conditions and environment; social security; and promotion of equality between women and men in employment”.³

5. The current practice of deciding on the agenda items in meetings of its Officers at each session of the Governing Body has been followed since March 1996. The Office also places items on the agenda, but there is no established procedure: this is the case concerning the third and fourth items on the Committee’s agenda at the present session. Items are also included that arise from decisions of the International Labour Conference, such as the sixth item on the agenda at the present session (“Effect to be given to the conclusions concerning human resources training and development”).

Issues for consideration

6. Any review of the Committee’s functioning is inevitably related to an eventual discussion on a more extensive reform of the Governing Body as a whole.
7. In the meantime, the Committee may wish to consider whether it would be advisable to structure each meeting so as to include approximately three agenda items, as follows:
 - a concise overview of progress towards one or more of the strategic objectives since the previous meeting or during the preceding year (this item would hence recur once a year);
 - one item to provide policy guidance to the Office for future biennia;
 - one item presenting activities or products that have reached a major milestone.
8. More specifically, the Committee may wish to consider the following related issues:
 - the time allocated to the Committee’s meetings in relation to the number of items on its agenda: the scheduling of Committee meetings within a limited time frame is a complex process;
 - submitting documents to the Committee that are more focused on strategic concerns, with a view to the adoption of policy positions and providing policy guidance to the Office;
 - providing the Committee, and through it the Governing Body, with concise information on progress achieved towards a specific strategic objective, especially the objective of creating greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income;
 - reviewing the scope of items that are included in the Committee’s terms of reference, especially items related to the strategic objective of enhancing the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all;

³ GB.257/2/9, para. 14.

- reviewing whether the Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization would be a more appropriate forum for discussing the ILO's relations with the Bretton Woods institutions;
- possibilities for wider interaction between members of the Committee and the Office in ways that would not interfere with the process of consolidating group positions, which could include the following activities, which could also be organized among members in the regions:
 - workshops, symposia or seminars on topics within the Committee's mandate;
 - exchanges of experience between members on questions that have been discussed in the Committee; these could be facilitated using the Internet.

Geneva, 29 September 2000.