



FIFTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

The World Employment Forum, 2001

1. The Governing Body has approved the holding of the World Employment Forum as part of the activities for 2000-01. The objective of holding the Forum was defined as “to review outstanding issues in the employment field and seek new and innovative approaches to the creation of more and better quality jobs, consistent with the commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995)”.¹ More recently, the 24th Special Session of the General Assembly held in Geneva on the fifth anniversary of the Social Summit, “recognized the need to elaborate a coherent and coordinated international strategy on employment to increase opportunities for people to achieve sustainable livelihoods and gain access to employment, and in this connection support the convening of a World Employment Forum by the International Labour Organization in 2001. It has also invited the International Labour Organization to facilitate the coordinated exchange of best practices in the field of employment policies to stimulate and expand employment generation, reduce unemployment, enhance the quality of work and improve labour market and employment services”.²

Themes

2. The main focus of the Forum will be to provide a definitive statement on employment in a globalizing world. A major question would relate to national and international prerequisites to close the “employment gap” reflected in the inability to create sufficient jobs or quality jobs. The Forum will thus help the practical implementation of the decent work strategy. The Forum is expected to reinforce the position of the ILO as the most important international organization dealing with the challenges of globalization in the world of work.

¹ ILO, Programme and Budget proposals for 2000-01, Vol. 2, para. 60.9, GB.274/PFA/9/2, March 2000.

² Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Geneva, 26-30 June 2000. Outcome document, Part 3: *Proposals for further initiatives for social development: Further actions and initiatives to implement the commitments made at the Summit*, paras. 37bis and 37ter (unedited version: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/docs/part3.htm>).

3. To achieve these objectives, the organizing concept of the Forum will be the decent work framework. New thinking and new coalitions are required to keep pace with the profound changes that are shaping the global economy and influencing deeply both families and national economies. The Forum is expected to endorse a comprehensive employment framework seeking positive answers to the problems and opportunities created by growth, development, technology and trade.

Organization

4. The Forum will aim to provide an opportunity for a high-level exchange between heads of governments, business leaders, trade union leaders, heads of other multilateral organizations, academics and NGOs. It will be organized around a single issues paper, the Comprehensive Employment Framework, which will draw on past work in the ILO and elsewhere. The organization of the Forum will provide a platform for in-depth discussions on employment issues as well as an opportunity for side events and exhibitions relevant to the subject. A media strategy will be worked out, and a web page will be established as early as possible.
5. Work related to the Forum will be carried out by staff of the Office, guided by a high-level expert group with tripartite representation.
6. The World Employment Forum is planned to take place for three days from Thursday, 1 to Saturday, 3 November 2001 at ILO headquarters in Geneva.

Geneva, 29 September 2000.