



## SECOND ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Programme of sectoral meetings, 2002-03****Contents**

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## Introduction

1. For the fourth time since the evaluation of the Sectoral Activities Programme in 1995 the Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues is now called upon to select a programme of sectoral meetings for the coming biennium. The Committee agreed that it would decide in the November of even-numbered years on the programme of meetings for the biennium commencing some 14 months later. The selection of the sectors that would have meetings and of the topics for discussion would be made by the Committee from a list of choices proposed by the Office.
2. For the current biennium, the Director-General expressed his intention to bring sectoral activities into closer alignment with the strategic objectives. There has been a consistent effort over the past 12 months to achieve this. He believes that it is now time to start a process of consultation with constituents on the means of further adapting the programme to the decent work agenda above and beyond the existing programme. He will undertake this process soon. Meanwhile, it is proposed that in determining the sectoral meetings and their agendas for the next biennium, the meetings retained for 2003 would be subject to confirmation at the Governing Body session in November 2001. This would provide flexibility for any changes that may be decided.
3. In 2000-01, the sectoral meetings programme consists of 11 meetings for sectors covered by the programme and one meeting of a cross-sectoral nature. On the basis that there will be 12 sectoral meetings in 2002-03, and adhering to the principle of rotation between sectors agreed upon by the Committee, proposals are made for meetings in the 11 sectors which did not have meetings in 2000-01 – in effect the completion of the second rotation of the 22 sectors, as follows:
  - chemical industries;
  - commerce;
  - food, drink and tobacco;
  - health services;
  - mechanical and electrical engineering;
  - mining;
  - oil and gas;
  - postal and other communications services;
  - public services;
  - transport;
  - utilities.
4. As for the remaining meeting, the Committee had agreed that there would be unallocated slots in the rota of sectoral meetings in order to provide increased flexibility. A sector not on the list or an urgent meeting could thus be included in the programme of meetings.

5. Section II contains a proposal for a meeting for a sector not included in the 22 that receive regular coverage (gemstone cutting and polishing), for meetings for the maritime sector and for cross-sectoral meetings.
6. As in past presentations of proposed topics, the proposals presented here are in the form of modules. The 11 sectors each have at least two proposals, each describing the issues to be addressed, the way in which the report for the meeting would be prepared (paragraph A), the nature of the meeting (paragraph B), the type of follow-up that might be envisaged (paragraph C), and the relationship of the proposal to the ILO's strategic objectives (paragraph D). The promotion of relevant Conventions is also highlighted. Where previous meetings for the sector had suggested a topic for the next meeting, it has been included and is specified as such. Preliminary consultations have been held with other Office units and, once the Committee has made its selection, the meetings-related activities will be integrated as effectively as possible into the Office's work and the programme and budget.
7. The Committee will recall that under the arrangements agreed upon during the evaluation, the STM Committee will be asked – at the session (in this case in March 2001) following that in which the meetings are selected – to decide on the size, composition, type of delegation and output for each meeting. Regarding follow-up action, the Office is to report to the Committee once per biennium on follow-up action in each sector. The first two such reports were submitted in March 1998 and March 2000; the next will be in March 2002.
8. In drafting these proposals, the Office has placed them within the new strategic policy framework of the Organization as a whole and of the Social Dialogue Sector in particular. The document contains a comprehensive range of proposals reflecting major developments in and concerns of the sectors. They would promote the advancement of ILO objectives through sectoral meetings and be an effective mechanism for global social dialogue on the issues to be addressed. The proposals presented would also allow the ILO to explore various means of action to pursue its strategic objectives and contribute to the sectoral dimension of the decent work agenda. For example, the meetings may elaborate and recommend (a) codes of practice (telework/on-line work, violence at work) and (b) guidelines (gemstone cutting and polishing, gender in the services sectors), and/or adopt (c) conclusions and resolutions. The topics proposed focus on one or more strategic objectives, providing sectoral coverage of work organization, employment, industrial relations, social dialogue, human resource development, equal opportunities, liberalization, globalization, workers' rights, social protection, occupational safety and health, training and information and communications technologies, with gender as a cross-cutting theme.
9. *On the basis of the following proposals, the Committee is invited to make recommendations to the Governing Body concerning the choice of sectors and topics for 12 sectoral meetings to be included in the Programme and Budget proposals for 2002-03, it being understood that the selection of meetings and topics for 2003 will be subject to confirmation at the Governing Body session in November 2001.*

## I. Meetings for sectors considered in rotation

### A. Chemical industries

#### A.1. **Best practices in work flexibility schemes and their impact on the quality of working life in the chemical industries** (recommended by the Eleventh Session of the Chemical Industries Committee, 1995; repeat of a proposal made in 1996)

10. Although labour costs are only a small proportion of the total cost of chemical production, they often account for a large share of potentially controllable costs. Computerized production has changed the nature of work and skill requirements in the industry. Employers seek to deploy their workforce with maximum flexibility, both in order to control costs and to match available skills with requirements to the greatest extent possible. Workers and their organizations are concerned about the development and application of flexible working arrangements and their impact on working life and on career prospects.
- A. A report would identify, document and analyse examples of best practice, including the extent and nature of social dialogue in its development and application. There would be close cooperation with employers' and workers' organizations in obtaining information. The ILO and external specialists in work organization would be consulted.
  - B. The tripartite meeting of about 25 participants per group, including governments from countries where the leading chemical enterprises are located. It could encourage the promotion of ratifications of Convention No. 170.
  - C. If warranted, a manual on good practices in work flexibility in the chemicals (and possibly similar process) industries could be produced.
  - D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in the sector, this proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 3 (social protection).

#### A.2. **Industrial relations challenges in the global chemicals sector** (adapted from a resolution adopted by the Tripartite Meeting on Voluntary Initiatives affecting Training and Education on Safety, Health and Environment in the Chemical Industries, 1999)

11. The global chemical industry is facing many challenges, including financial, structural and organizational changes, while dependence on the sector and its products is increasing. Companies and workers must respond to the increasing educational and technical demands while simultaneously addressing public scepticism and mistrust of aspects of the sector and its products, much of it based on insufficient understanding and misinformation. For these challenges to be met, there is a need for mutual trust and cooperation between employers and workers and their representatives. This can only be achieved by ensuring effective industrial relations systems through social dialogue.

- A. A report for the meeting would comprise a comparative survey and analysis of industrial relations systems in the sector, carried out with the cooperation of all ILO constituents.
- B. A tripartite meeting of up to 22 participants from each group would review current industrial relations practices and performance. It could suggest ways to ensure the recognition of social dialogue, the strengthening of the institutions involved in social dialogue and of the parties to it, and to promote ratifications of Conventions Nos. 87, 98, 135 and 154 in the sector, in order to improve industrial relations in the sector, as well as Convention No. 144. It could also encourage the promotion of ratifications of Convention No. 170.
- C. Follow-up activity, for example under the InFocus Programme on Social Dialogue, would be determined in the light of the meeting's conclusions and related discussions.
- D. This proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue).

**A.3. *The outlook for employment and work in the rubber tyre industry (adapted from a proposal made in 1995)***

**12.** The manufacture of tyres is undergoing rapid and sustained change in terms of industry structure and technology. The industry employs more than 400,000 people and has a gross output of about \$75 billion per year. Excess capacity and modest or negative profitability have led to employment reductions and concentration. Six multinational enterprises account for more than 80 per cent of world tyre sales. Cyclical conditions are now improving and demand is increasing in certain new markets. But potentially revolutionary manufacturing technology is being introduced which promises major gains in flexibility and productivity, thereby threatening many of the jobs left after the cyclical contraction. What are the relative strengths and rates of introduction of these new developments? Is the relevant market global? Should the industry prepare itself for permanent massive job losses, and if so, how? Will the technology/jobs mix vary from one region to another for some time to come? Clear answers to these questions could ease the inevitable adjustments for employers and workers alike.

- A. A report would be drafted based on enterprise- or plant-level information from sites where state-of-the-art technology is being developed or used, country-level reviews of some of the more important emerging markets and producers, and more general information.
- B. A tripartite meeting of up to 22 participants from each group would bring together delegates from countries representing a cross-section of major present and emerging tyre producers and consumers, with the aim of reaching conclusions on the above issues.
- C. The outcome of the meeting would be widely disseminated and, together with the report, would form the basis for technical advisory services.
- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in the sector, this proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 2 (employment).

## B. Commerce

### B.1. *Employment effects of mergers and acquisitions in commerce* (recommended in the conclusions of the Tripartite Meeting on the Human Resource Implications of Globalization in Commerce, 1999)

13. Commerce has experienced radical transformation over the past few years. Small and medium-sized enterprises still employ a majority of commercial workers, but mergers and acquisitions have resulted in market-dominant regional and global distribution giants. Many dominant retailers and wholesalers in Europe have been spurred by the introduction of the Euro and the creation of a large unified market outside their national market; in addition to expansion within the European Union, the newly emerging market economies of Central Europe, as well as the United States, Latin America and Asia, have become attractive destinations for them. American retailers are similarly extending their global reach. For these commerce giants, size translates into many major advantages in a highly competitive globalizing marketplace, and mergers and acquisitions – rather than “greenfield” investments – are a rapid means to tap new markets. The past few years have therefore witnessed big merger and acquisition deals, with substantial employment effects. The trend is expected to continue; analysts predict a radical shakeout and sectoral consolidation, which may result in a global market dominated by a few massive firms.

- A. A study would be carried out in selected countries to analyse the impact of consolidation in commerce on local, national and international labour markets. It would outline the primary reasons behind mergers and acquisitions and the impact of consolidation on employment levels, training and retraining, working hours and other working conditions, compensation practices, levels of remuneration and labour-management relations. It would highlight corporate strategies that balance bottom-line considerations against acceptable employment and the social costs of rationalization.
- B. A tripartite meeting of 20-25 participants from each group would provide a forum to examine the results of the study and enable exchanges of experience. The debate could lead to the adoption of conclusions on the best general employment and human resource policies and practices to be adopted in respect of mergers and acquisitions in the commerce sector.
- C. The conclusions would be actively disseminated and promoted in conjunction with other related ILO work, and would provide guidance on ILO follow-up activities.
- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in the sector, this proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 2 (employment).

### B.2. *Social and employment dimensions of e-commerce* (recommended by the Tripartite Meeting on the Human Resource Implications of Globalization and Restructuring in Commerce, 1999)

14. Electronic commerce (business-to-business and business-to-consumer) and other technological developments (self-scanning devices, logistics systems, multimedia and other in-store sales support applications) are radically transforming commerce and employment in commerce. The share of electronic commerce, especially the business-to-business component, is growing exponentially, fundamentally changing all aspects of business, including its processes, skill requirements, work organization, product

delivery, workforce composition and labour utilization. Almost all major retailers and actors in the supply-delivery chain have adapted e-commerce to their operations, either as autonomous undertakings, or a hybrid “bricks and clicks” strategy in which e-commerce supplements existing activities. E-commerce is altering the roles and the balance of power and influence of different actors in the distribution chain. It is also increasing market competition by reducing barriers to new entrants into distribution services. The conclusions of the Tripartite Meeting on the Human Resource Implications of Globalization and Restructuring in Commerce, 1999, stressed the many practical benefits of e-commerce, but called for these to be spread, maximized and extended to as wide a number of workers in the sector as possible. It also called attention to the likely effects of e-commerce on working relations, occupational categories and work organization, and the difficulty of enforcing certain legal provisions, such as those relating to hours of work, to cyber-commerce.

- A. A study would ascertain current employment in e-commerce and its potential to generate new jobs in the next few years, the number and types of jobs created, transformed or destroyed; the educational and training requirements for e-commerce; evolution in work organization, and working time; remuneration levels and labour-management relations in traditional retail and wholesale commerce and e-commerce as a result of these developments. Aspects of e-commerce that maximize employment benefits and those that might have negative job outcomes in different occupations would be highlighted.
- B. A tripartite meeting of 20-25 participants from each group would provide a forum to examine the results of the study and exchange experience around the world.
- C. Conclusions and resolutions from the meeting would be used to develop guidelines on e-commerce related “best” policies and practices on human resource development in member States, as well as to guide future ILO action on the subject.
- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in the sector, this proposal would advance Objectives Nos. 2 (employment) and 3 (social protection).

## **C. Food, drink and tobacco**

### **C.1. *The future of employment in the tobacco sector***

15. In recent years there have been significant job losses in the tobacco sector in countries with long-established tobacco processing and manufacturing industries. The reasons for the continued downward pressure on employment at company and industry level include the introduction of new technologies, the shift of production to low-wage countries, mergers and acquisitions, and the privatization of state monopolies. At the government level, they include tobacco-control measures and increased taxation. At the market level, changing consumption patterns are characterized by declining markets in industrialized countries and growing markets in developing countries. The shift of production to other countries has been accompanied by the introduction of new technology, which often involves the transfer of labour-substituting equipment and technology from an abandoned site to a new one, and does not necessarily lead to increased employment. All three social partners have an important stake in the issues now affecting the industry. Strategies used by governments to control tobacco and decrease demand have been cited by companies as factors contributing to decisions to close manufacturing sites and shift production to countries where demand is increasing. Strategies employed by companies to increase shareholder value have led to the replacement of labour by machines and the shift of production to low-wage countries. Closures and job losses not only affect workers and their families, but

the network of dependent businesses and services and the economies of entire communities. Employers and governments alike have a responsibility for the impact of their decisions on employment.

- A. A report for the meeting would comprise a comparative survey and analysis of the tobacco sector carried out with the cooperation of all ILO constituent groups.
- B. A tripartite meeting of about 20 participants per group would discuss measures to be undertaken jointly to minimize the adverse effects of labour-substituting technologies, production transfers, industrial concentration, changing consumption patterns and government tobacco-control measures (public smoking regulations and tax increases) on employment and working conditions.
- C. Follow-up activity would be determined in the light of the meeting's conclusions and related discussions.
- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in the sector, this proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 2 (employment).

## **C.2. Globalization and employment in the drink industry**

**16.** Globalization is having a major impact on the drink industry worldwide and on conditions of employment in the industry. The global industry has become increasingly concentrated, with a growing market share controlled by a few large transnational companies in each subsector. The non-alcoholic carbonated beverages segment is dominated by the Coca-Cola company, together with its various anchor bottlers, which themselves increasingly operate in many countries. The bottled water industry is dominated by Nestlé and Danone, which are acquiring mineral springs all over the world. Another rapidly growing global industry is bottled “purified” water from non-identifiable sources. The brewing industry is experiencing a wave of mergers and acquisitions and is increasingly dominated by a few global companies (Anheuser Busch, Heineken, Interbrew, AmBev, South African Breweries, Tsingtao, etc.). Several such companies are based in developing countries. The spirits sector is also undergoing rapid consolidation. Employees in these industries are not only affected by the dislocations caused by mergers and acquisitions; their employment conditions are increasingly subjected to “benchmarking” against operations in other countries of the same company and of its competitors. Globalization in the form of introducing new technologies also has a major impact on employment numbers and conditions of employment – labour-saving technologies have cut the number of production and distribution jobs, and require continuous training. Competitive pressures towards continuous production have led to an increase in the amount of work performed at unsocial hours, putting strain on the family life of workers.

- A. A report would survey the global drink industry, its workforce, processes, working conditions, working time, flexibilization, health and safety, collective bargaining, and relations between multinational enterprises and local competitors and subsidiaries.
- B. A tripartite meeting of up to 20 participants per group would examine the issues raised in the report, and develop conclusions to provide guidance for the social partners on measures to minimize any adverse impact of globalization on employment, occupational safety, health and working conditions.
- C. Follow-up activities could include the provision of technical assistance and advisory services in the establishment and monitoring of initiatives in the sector.

- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in the sector, this proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 2 (employment).

## D. Health services

### **D.1. Social dialogue in the health services: Institutions, capacity and effectiveness** *(recommended by the Joint Meeting on Terms of Employment and Working Conditions in Health Sector Reforms, 1998)*

17. Health sector reforms, often accompanied by decentralization and privatization, have created new challenges for the social partners. Non-institutionalized settings outside hospitals (e.g. in rural areas) have emerged to bring primary health care services closer to people. Practical experience and policy statements confirm that these changes are most likely to achieve their objectives in delivering efficient, high-quality services when they are planned and implemented with full participation of workers, their unions and consumers. After reforms, the newly emerging structures, management approaches and political responsibilities make necessary a review of social dialogue institutions and of the capacity and effectiveness of social dialogue in the health sector. Consequently, in many countries the capacity of the social partners to conduct effective dialogue needs to be strengthened. In decentralized health systems and “non-institutionalized” settings, employers are often unfamiliar with social dialogue in the health sector, as are private employers entering the field of service provision in the public interest. Collective agreements have to be reached at the local level, and can be a challenge to the structures of workers’ organizations. In some countries, framework agreements have been developed to face these changes. The capacity of management and workers to participate in these processes needs to be developed in step with the reforms. Strengthened institutions of social dialogue would facilitate the operationalization of decent work in health care at the national level.

- A. Based on the results of the Joint Meeting in 1998, the results of the Joint Meeting on the Impact of Decentralization and Privatization on Municipal Services in 2001, and the evidence of their follow-up activities, the Office would prepare a report on the current potential, limitations and need for improvement of social dialogue in the health services facing structural change and new quality standards.
- B. A joint meeting, with some private employers participating, or a tripartite meeting, would discuss the report and adopt conclusions including practical guidance for the strengthening of social dialogue and the promotion of ratification of Conventions Nos. 87 and 98 in the sector, as well as Conventions Nos. 144 and 151.
- C. The results would be widely disseminated to ILO constituents, policy-makers, international organizations and/or bodies dealing with health sector reforms. National or regional meetings could use them as a reference for activities.
- D. This proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue).

**D.2. *Changing labour markets in the health services:  
What consequences for human resource  
development, professional standards and  
working conditions?***

18. Owing to demographic and epidemiological factors, the demand for health workers is constantly changing worldwide and within countries, while limited by the level of public and private expenditure which can be devoted to health care. Nevertheless, in most countries demand is expanding rapidly. Since most of the health workforce can be described as skilled or semi-skilled, and qualifications are acquired over very long periods and lifelong learning is often needed, the supply side of this labour market can only adjust slowly to demand. Workforce planning, sectoral labour market policies and the use of information technology to access training and information may produce long-term solutions. In the short run, imbalances may however affect the health education and training systems and other aspects of human resource development. Insufficient supply of health workers may result in shorter qualification periods and lower professional standards. Furthermore, in such environments, working conditions and decent work can be affected, and thereby the general quality of services. The shortage of qualified staff has also led to increasing migration, which further affects national labour markets in health services. As in other sectors, unbalanced supply and demand have affected the quality of services. However, this is of even greater concern in the health sector, which includes essential services. These labour market trends must, however, be distinguished from other factors leading to deteriorating working conditions and professional standards, such as restricted budgets and newly emerging organizational forms. Detailed analysis of these various and related trends could reveal their impact on the decent work environment of health services worldwide and the efficiency and quality of services.

- A. The Office would prepare a report on the changing labour market in the health sector and the consequences for human resource development systems, professional standards and working conditions.
- B. A joint meeting, with some private employers participating, or a tripartite meeting, would discuss the report and adopt conclusions, including practical guidance for labour market policies in the health sector.
- C. The results of the meeting would be widely disseminated to ILO constituents, policy-makers, selected international organizations and/or bodies dealing with health sector reforms and other changes in the provision of health services. National or regional meetings could use them as a reference for activities in the sector.
- D. As well as promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue), this proposal would advance Strategic Objectives Nos. 2 (employment) and 3 (social protection).

**E. *Mechanical and electrical engineering industries***

**E.1. *The impact of globalization on employment and  
rights at work in the mechanical and electrical  
engineering industries***

19. The MEE industries cover a wide range of activities including: the manufacture of both special and general purpose machinery; domestic appliances; office and computing equipment; electrical machinery and apparatus; radio, TV and communications equipment; medical, precision and optical instruments; and watches. Globalization has had a different

impact on each segment. The machine tool industry is largely concentrated in Japan and Germany, which account for 44 per cent of world production, followed by the United States, Italy and Switzerland. The United States has seen its global market share cut in half in the past 35 years, while that of Japan has quadrupled. Mergers and acquisitions have been prevalent in companies that manufacture computing, communications and entertainment equipment, which are closely linked to the ICT sector. Many electronic components are manufactured and sub-assembled in EPZs, with incentives being offered by governments to attract such industries. Questions of freedom of association and collective bargaining have arisen, especially in developing countries.

- A. A combination of research, interviews, questionnaires, and case-studies would form the basis of a report that examined the issues in different regions and subsectors.
- B. A meeting would be held with up to 24 participants from each group with a mix of participants from industrialized and middle-income developing countries. Such a meeting would provide an opportunity to discuss the application of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in these industries, and for the promotion of ratification of relevant Conventions, including the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144).
- C. Technical assistance or advice could be proposed and examples of best practice collected and discussed in tripartite workshops.
- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in the sector, this proposal would advance Strategic Objectives Nos. 1 (standards, fundamental principles and rights at work) and 2 (employment).

**E.2. Lifelong learning in the mechanical and electrical engineering industries** (*recommended in conclusions of the tripartite meeting of the MEE industries, 1998*)

**20.** The MEE industries cover a wide range of activities, including the manufacture of special and general-purpose machinery; domestic appliances; office and computing equipment; electrical machinery and apparatus; radio, TV and communications equipment; medical, precision and optical instruments; and watches. Many countries are suffering from skills shortages at various levels in many of the segments of the industry that are under pressure from global competition. In 1998, the tripartite meeting for the MEE industries adopted conclusions stating that governments should provide sound basic education and regularly adapt curricula and teaching methods so that they remain relevant to the rapidly changing needs of the workplace. Training should impart portable skills and be carried out in the context of lifelong learning for long-term careers. There should be tripartite involvement in the definition of training needs, and, where appropriate, in the administration of training programmes.

- A. A combination of research, interviews, questionnaires, and case studies would form the basis of a report examining lifelong learning in different regions and subsectors.
- B. A meeting would be held with up to 24 participants from each group, with a mix of participants from industrialized and developing countries.
- C. Technical assistance or advice could be proposed, and examples of best practice collected and discussed in tripartite workshops.

- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in the sector, this proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 2 (employment).

## F. Mining (coal mines and other mines)

### F.1. **Working time in the mining industry: Labour and social effects** (adapted from a resolution by the Twelfth Session of the Coal Mines Committee, 1995)

21. The mining industry is having increasingly to address the twin pressures of competition and operating in remote locations. Consequently, the evolution of working time in the mining industry is driven by a combination of the need for greater flexibility in operations, including multiskilling and teamwork, 24x7 production, and constraints arising from remote location. Understanding the implications for productivity, training, industrial relations, health and safety – and the broader social impact of longer consecutive periods of work and rest – is important if the benefits of new work methods are to accrue to enterprises and workers alike. This is a highly competitive industry that is operating under ever more stringent occupational health, safety and environmental regulations and expectations. How and to what extent social dialogue can ensure adequate terms of employment and social protection in sometimes difficult conditions are important issues for consideration.

- A. A report would build on work commenced in 2000-01 on extended and irregular shifts in the industry, examining aspects of workplace, community and industrial implications. Results of other work on related topics, such as long-distance commuting, would be reviewed and updated by case studies, questionnaires or interviews as appropriate. Specialists on work organization and industrial relations would also be consulted.
- B. The tripartite meeting would be of average size (about 20 participants per group) with participants drawn from industrialized, newly industrializing, transition and developing countries, with each region represented.
- C. Conclusions and resolutions from the meeting would be widely disseminated, and could form the basis for further research on different aspects of working time in mines, as a means to develop and implement training and mechanisms for social dialogue at the international, national and enterprise levels, and for the promotion of ratification of the Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176).
- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in the sector, this proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 3 (social protection).

### F.2. **Mining and the environment: Implications for employment and training** (adapted from a resolution adopted by the Twelfth Session of the Coal Mines Committee, 1995)

22. There have been a number of well-publicized environmental accidents and incidents at mining sites in several countries in the past few years, generally due to a combination of design faults, operating procedures and unforeseen weather conditions. Whatever their cause, such accidents are damaging to the mining industry as a whole and can jeopardize decent work within and outside the industry. The development and implementation of both workplace and general environment policies, standards and operating procedures require

close cooperation between management and the workforce, as well as comprehensive education and training. The move towards global industry standards, possibly similar to the “responsible care” programme in the chemical industry, would affect the training and education of the mining workforce, as regulation changes from “command-and-control” towards goal-setting. Only with well-developed institutions and practices for social dialogue would it be possible to underpin the integration of voluntary initiatives or global standards at company and mine level, so as to minimize confusion in the perception of the workforce and the general public.

- A. A report would highlight the main issues and progress towards ensuring global best practice in the environmental performance of mines and the role of employers’ and workers’ organizations. It would draw on relevant work undertaken by UNEP and under the Global Mining Initiative, principally the Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development Project.
- B. A tripartite meeting of up to 20 participants per group would examine the issues and their implications, identify likely trends and their impact on employment and training.
- C. The meeting could identify action to be taken by the ILO and the social partners to promote the concept of global best environmental practice and the ratification of the Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176), and to determine how the ILO could help improve environmental performance through voluntary initiatives and associated training and education activities.
- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in mining, this proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 2 (employment).

### ***F.3. New mining technology: Its impact on training and employment***

**23.** Mining equipment continues to get bigger, faster and more complex – both mechanically and electronically – above and below ground. On-site mineral processing operations are also increasing, using equipment and chemicals that require special skills and care in their use, maintenance and disposal. Two principal effects are a reduction in the workforce and an increase in the educational level, vocational skills, aptitudes and competence of all workers and supervisors. Attracting and keeping a skilled workforce requires careful planning and execution of prospection, recruitment, training and retraining, particularly when multiple skills, both practical and analytical, are required. The related issues of competence and legal liability are important for some tasks.

- A. A report would examine existing and developing recruitment, training and retraining policies and practices as a basis for a discussion on the best ways to meet existing and foreseen needs, including setting career paths, the certification of competence and the portability of skills.
- B. A tripartite meeting of average size (about 20 participants from each group) is proposed, with representation from the major mining regions of the world.
- C. The meeting could propose guidelines for the development and implementation of recruitment and training policies and procedures.
- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in mining, this proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 2 (employment).

## **G. Oil refining; oil and gas production**

### **G.1. Promotion of good industrial relations practices in oil refining** *(requested in a resolution adopted at the Tripartite Meeting on Employment and Industrial Relations Issues in Oil Refining, 1998)*

24. The employment and welfare of oil refinery workers and the economic health of many countries depend on the viability of the sector. In turn this viability depends, among other things, on the quality of the workforce, good industrial relations and the maintenance of production and the supply of the products. If industrial disputes are not dealt with appropriately, in line with applicable ILO standards, the supply of products and hence the enterprise, workers and the economy at large could be affected. The promotion of cooperative approaches to problem-solving in industrial relations in oil refineries and seeking appropriate means of preventing and settling industrial disputes can be advanced through social dialogue.

- A. A report would contain examples of solutions being used to settle industrial disputes in different regions, with particular emphasis on the incidence and impact of company-wide agreements and works councils.
- B. A tripartite meeting of up to 20 participants per group could recommend practical means to improve industrial relations, highlight the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches, provide guidance for future action, including by the ILO, and promote the ratification of Conventions Nos. 87, 98, 135 and 154 in the sector, as well as Convention No. 144.
- C. The results of the meeting would enhance the ILO's capacity to provide technical assistance and advisory services, and to improve social dialogue in the industry.
- D. This proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue).

### **G.2. Social and labour issues arising from oil and gas production in remote regions**

25. The pace at which oil and gas companies are entering remote areas, particularly in developing countries, remains high. This is largely as a result of continuing deregulation and privatization programmes for the energy sector and the ensuing foreign direct investment. An oil or gas production facility has an inevitable impact on any region, and indigenous communities are often particularly affected by such developments. The industry provides investment, jobs that are generally highly skilled and well paid, infrastructure and other economic benefits. Depending on the nature of the area or region, it can attract workers from existing sectors, sometimes to their detriment. Conflicting interests can only be accommodated and sustainable livelihoods and decent work ensured through appropriate procedures of social dialogue. The parties involved in these tasks must be adequately prepared and a suitable enabling environment must be created. Governments, employers' and workers' organizations and elements of civil society all have a role to play in achieving a satisfactory and lasting outcome.

- A. A report would be prepared that identified and analysed the social and labour issues of oil and gas development in remote areas and how they are being addressed. Issues for tripartite consideration would form the basis for a discussion.

- B. A tripartite meeting of about 20 participants from each group would discuss how best to ensure that oil and gas development in remote regions leads to decent work and sustained economic and social development.
- C. The meeting's conclusions would be widely disseminated to the industry's social partners and to other organizations. The ILO could assist in the development of the institutions and machinery of social dialogue if required.
- D. As well as promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue), this proposal would advance Strategic Objectives Nos. 2 (employment) and 3 (social protection).

## H. Postal and other communications services

### H.1. **Employment, employability and equal opportunities in the postal and telecommunications services** (recommended by the Tripartite Meeting on Postal and Telecommunications Services, 1998)

26. New technologies have transformed the postal and telecommunications sector substantially, bringing growth, new investment and greater openness of societies, but they are also being blamed for job losses, information overload and reinforcement of the digital divide between rich and poor. They can be seen as a threat to *postal services*, but also offer opportunities to those who use them to their advantage. Lack of Internet connectivity or technological capability among the poor means that postal services remain important. New technologies are helping streamline postal sorting and delivery to increase its speed, efficiency and reliability. Such changes affect employment and working conditions, as post offices attract new business to compensate for the employment impact of other changes. The recent changes in *telecommunications services* have been even deeper than in postal services, and it is now possible to start gauging the employment effects of technological changes, privatization and deregulation. It is hard to separate the impact of technology from that of privatization and reorganization, but the combined effects have influenced the quantity and quality of jobs, the workforce structure, working conditions, and safety and health, especially in recent years. Training and retraining in IT and other areas are crucial for these industries' future. Equitable training and employment opportunities are essential to enhance employability and boost productivity. A major challenge for workers and management is to adapt to new equipment, new forms of ownership and new ways of working. The holding of this meeting was also recommended by an ILO-UPU regional seminar on social dialogue in postal services in Asia (May 2000).

- A. A report would be prepared drawing on experience and best practice in the two industries, linking with the UPU, ITU, World Bank and WTO; it would treat the two subsectors separately. It would have strong gender and social dialogue components, and some links and synergies with the next *World Employment Report*.
- B. If this proposal for a tripartite meeting were to be retained, it would be of above average size (about 25 participants from each group), with a mix of governments having public telecommunications and postal services and those which have made the transition towards private ownership.
- C. The focus of follow-up work is likely to be the promotion of social dialogue at the national and regional levels, possibly through workshops.

- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in the sector, this proposal would advance Strategic Objectives Nos. 2 (employment) and 3 (social protection).

## **H.2. Liberalization in the postal industry: Impact on employment and work organization of privatization, alliances and competition**

27. The postal industry is changing rapidly worldwide because of privatization, globalization, technology and competition from new sources. New competitors include global integrators, national private courier companies, and multinational alliances of postal administrations, private couriers and airfreight businesses. Liberalization is under way in many countries, the market has been segmented, post offices are providing services to compete with private couriers, and electronic communications, e-commerce and new products may offer growth potential. While the universal postal service for letters, parcels and counter services is essential for balanced economic development, there is strong competition from global integrators, private courier companies and multinationals. Subsidies and reserved areas on parts of the universal service may help maintain it. However, it is important to ensure that global integrators, courier companies and multinationals also discharge their social obligations and operate under similar rules to national postal services on competition, wages and workers' rights etc. In many countries privatization is not an option – some would be unable to find buyers for their universal postal service. The holding of this meeting was also recommended by the ILO-UPU regional seminar on social dialogue in postal services in Asia (May 2000).

- A. A report would be prepared drawing on experience in selected countries, linking with the UPU. It would have a strong social dialogue component.
- B. The tripartite meeting would be of average size (about 20 participants from each group), with a mix of governments having public postal services and those making a transition towards private ownership.
- C. The focus of follow-up work is likely to be the promotion of social dialogue and decent work at the national and regional levels, probably through regional workshops.
- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue), this proposal would advance Strategic Objectives Nos. 2 (employment) and 3 (social protection).

## **H.3. Training and social dialogue in the telecommunications industry** *(adapted from the conclusions of the Tripartite Meeting on Postal and Telecommunications Services, 1998)*

28. The telecommunications industry has experienced major changes over the past few years. Since the WTO agreements on telecommunications in 1998, deregulation, privatization and competition have accelerated at an unforeseen pace. The sector has reshaped substantially, moving from state ownership to the private sector, with major implications for the workforce. Hundreds of new companies have been created, and there have been major developments in the mobile and Internet areas. Working conditions and practices have completely changed and therefore training, retraining, skills upgrading and learning-by-doing have become a top priority for workers – crucial for the future of all who work in telecommunications. The former state-owned operators have had to restructure to survive, putting their workforce under tremendous pressure. Along with new entrants, they have

become major players as providers of mobile, Internet and media services. Equitable training and employment opportunities are essential to enhance employability, boost productivity and adapt to new equipment and new ways of working.

- A. A report would be prepared drawing on experience and best practice in the industry, linking with the ITU. It would have a strong social dialogue component, and some links with the next *World Employment Report*.
- B. The tripartite meeting would be of average size (about 20 participants per group). It could be used to promote ratification of Conventions Nos. 87, 98, 135 and 154 in the sector, as well as Conventions Nos. 144 and 151.
- C. The focus of follow-up work is likely to be the promotion of best practices in training and social dialogue at the national and regional levels, possibly through workshops.
- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in the sector, this proposal would advance Strategic Objectives No. 2 (employment).

## **I. Public service**

### **I.1. Basic workers' rights for uniformed employees in the public service**

29. Uniformed services – including firefighters, customs and immigration officers, public health inspectors, security personnel, prison staff, police and the armed forces – are a specific group within the public service. These workers have powers to direct citizens, seize goods and property or to exercise by force other police powers on behalf of the State. They are frequently excluded from workers' rights, or given limited protection, compared to the public service in general, which in turn has special provisions in contrast to the private sector. The ILO has remained steadfast in arguing that an effective public service is a prerequisite for economic and social development and that negotiation and social dialogue are as important in the public as in the private sector, being vital to the effectiveness and productivity of both sectors. Although some countries draw no distinction between the public and private sector as regards freedom of association, others restrict the right to organize for public servants to certain categories of officials or specific types of unions. A few countries completely deny the right to organize within the public service. The Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) allows for an exception in the case of the armed forces and the police on the grounds of security. But no exceptions are made for fire service personnel and prison staff. Despite this, a number of countries deny the right to organize to these categories of public servants. As regards restrictions for the public service, national legislation varies widely, from recognizing the right to strike, to prohibiting it or not mentioning the matter. The definition of the concept of the public service is often decisive for the scope of the restrictions. Too broad a definition is likely to result in very wide restrictions or even in prohibition of the right to strike for these workers. For uniformed employees, the situation becomes more complex in the context of the changing role of the State, public service reforms, decentralization and contracting out services. A detailed study in various countries is required in order to ensure that groups of public service workers are not being unfairly excluded from basic workers' rights, and to identify possible alternative forms of workers' participation in the settlement of disputes on conditions of work and employment and in ensuring decent work.

- A. Based on a comparative survey on the various occupational groups, the Office would prepare a report on worldwide practice and legal implications for basic workers' rights for uniformed employees in the public service.
- B. A joint meeting would discuss the report and adopt conclusions which include practical guidance for assuring basic workers' rights for uniformed employees.
- C. The results would be widely disseminated to ILO constituents, policy-makers and selected international organizations, and used to promote ratification of relevant Conventions, including Nos. 87, 98, 144 and 151. National or regional meetings on the public service could use the results of the meeting as a reference.
- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in the sector, this proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 1 (standards, fundamental principles and rights at work).

## ***1.2. National social dialogue in public service reform***

**30.** Public service reforms over the last two decades showed that they are most likely to achieve their objectives of delivering efficient, effective and high-quality services when planned and implemented with the full participation of public sector workers and their unions – and of consumers of the public services – at all stages of the decision-making process. Governments are increasingly aware of the changing role of the State and of the need for social dialogue in order to arrive at sustainable reforms. International organizations, while promoting such reforms, are, however, often accused of paying insufficient attention to ensuring that they are carried out with the participation of the social partners. As affirmed in the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, the ILO is the constitutionally mandated and competent international body to set and deal with international labour standards, and enjoys universal support and recognition in promoting these rights and principles. The conclusions and resolutions of several sectoral meetings request the ILO to develop a greater policy dialogue with other international bodies, and to ensure that adjustment policies and programmes involving public service reforms are designed and implemented within a framework of bipartism or tripartism, sound industrial relations and respect for the principles of freedom of association and collective bargaining. The ILO was also asked to cooperate at national level with constituents in promoting fundamental rights and principles in relation to the public service, in particular the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151). If both activities can be coordinated in a systematic way, synergies can be expected for sustainable reform processes.

- A. Based on a survey of the potential and limitations of linking national strategies of social dialogue in public service reforms with international approaches to promoting such reforms, the Office would draft a report on best practice and conditions for their success.
- B. A joint meeting would discuss the report and adopt conclusions which include practical guidance for strengthening social dialogue in public service reforms.
- C. The results would be widely disseminated to ILO constituents, policy-makers and selected international organizations, and used to promote ratification of relevant Conventions, including Nos. 87, 98, 144 and 151. National or regional meetings on the public service could use the results of the meeting as a reference.

- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in the sector, this proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 1 (standards, fundamental principles and rights at work).

## J. Transport

### J.1. *The restructuring of civil aviation: Consequences for management and personnel*

31. Civil aviation is far more affected by regional integration and globalization than most other modes of transport, basically because the skies have no borders. The process of restructuring has spread around the world, as major airlines in all regions need access to other markets to stay in business. Interest in global regulatory developments has increased due to the possible inclusion of air transport in trade negotiations under the auspices of the World Trade Organization. The changed regulatory environment, combined with the drive to privatize state-owned airlines, has led to national consolidation, an increase in transnational ownership and transnational airline alliances. There has been marked growth among autonomous service providers for the operation of airports and air navigation services over the past decade. Other trends include the outsourcing of “non-core” activities such as ground handling and catering to “independent” companies, the introduction of e-ticketing and Internet bookings, and the rapid growth of low-cost airlines. The process of restructuring, with important changes occurring over a short period, is profoundly changing management and worker attitudes and the nature of industrial relations, leading to further changes in collective bargaining, employment relations, job security, working conditions and social protection. The introduction of competition in ground handling and other airport services may affect the accident rate among ground staff. The 1999 Symposium on the Social and Labour Consequences of Technological Developments, Deregulation and Privatization of Transport called on the ILO to hold meetings “which should be more focused, dealing either with the transport sector as a whole, or subsector by subsector, depending on the issues to be discussed”.<sup>1</sup> The focus on aviation could lead to conclusions of direct relevance to constituents.

- A. Research would be undertaken for the various segments of civil aviation (airlines, air navigation service providers, ground services), to the extent possible providing data on changes in employment, earnings and accident rates based on ILO and other data, and case studies focused on the subsectors. The report would be prepared taking into consideration specific policies being pursued at intergovernmental level.
- B. The tripartite meeting would comprise participants from countries where the regulatory environment has been or will be changed, and where there has been a process of corporatization or privatization or the introduction of competition.
- C. The output of the meeting would provide a knowledge base for advisory services. The conclusions of the meeting would be selectively channelled to concerned institutions at the regional and international levels with proposals for continued inter-agency dialogue on the implications of changes for decent work in civil aviation.
- D. As well as promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue), this proposal would advance Strategic Objectives Nos. 2 (employment) and 3 (social protection).

<sup>1</sup> GB.277/STM/3/1, Conclusions on future activities of the ILO transport sector, i.e. air, rail and road, para. 2.

## **J.2. Social protection and decent work in the road transport sector**

32. The organization of road transport services is changing rapidly as a result of technological innovations in information processing and equipment. At the same time, deregulation (including the partial or total removal of rules on competition) is changing the structure of road transport. In several countries, many wage-earning truck drivers have been “transferred” to contractor enterprises, or have been “converted” into self-employed drivers and forced into owning or renting their vehicle, frequently at the initiative of the former employer and as a condition for retaining their employment. The result is the emergence of a growing universe of workers in contractor enterprises or self-employed persons. Unclear or concealed employment relationships can lead to a real lack of protection for workers by totally or partially preventing the application of labour legislation, with adverse effects for society as a whole. In addition, in many countries, workers in this sector are seriously affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Working hours, driving time, rest periods, safety and the legal protection of drivers during stays abroad have been long-standing concerns of ILO constituents (see Inland Transport Committee, 1992, or the Symposium on the Social and Labour Consequences of Technological Developments, Deregulation and Privatization of Transport, 1999, cited above), and should be examined in the light of the ILO’s decent work agenda.

- A. Research would be undertaken – based on fact-finding missions, information from employers’ and workers’ organizations and relevant international organizations, and case studies – to assess the extent and implications of the above changes for decent work. The report for the meeting would be prepared taking into consideration ongoing work within the ILO on workers in situations needing protection, and the revision of the Hours of Work and Rest Periods (Road Transport) Convention, 1979 (No. 153).
- B. The tripartite meeting would have a balanced composition of industrialized and developing countries, particularly those where the problems are most acute.
- C. The output of the meeting would provide a knowledge base for technical advisory services and could provide input into these ILO activities. The conclusions of the meeting would be disseminated to relevant national, supranational and international institutions concerned with road transport regulation.
- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in the sector, this proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 3 (social protection).

## **K. Utilities**

### **K.1. Regulation of public utilities: Consequences for employment, wages and working conditions**

33. The restructuring of public utilities has become a major priority for many national governments. This trend does not happen in isolation: it is often the result of a worldwide tendency towards dismantling monopolies, cutting public spending and liberalizing markets. The improvement of infrastructure and service delivery in the utilities sector is essential for both business performance and the improvement of living standards. The restructuring process poses an enormous challenge to the authorities and to workers’ organizations. The importance of putting well-designed regulatory systems in place prior to privatization and liberalization cannot be sufficiently emphasized. Regulation can help to protect workers, consumers and the environment. It can foster competition and innovation while constraining the use of monopoly power. The present institutional

framework of regulation reveals a wide range of variation. There is ample evidence that the powers accorded to regulatory authorities and their decisions have an impact on employment, wages and working conditions, as well as on the services provided to the public, in both developing and industrialized countries. The decisions also affect the structure of utility companies, which are increasingly creating separate units for regulated and non-regulated activities.

- A. The Office would review available experience with different regulatory systems in order to identify good practices with a positive impact on issues of concern to ILO constituents. Work would depart from and update research undertaken earlier in this field in various countries, with additional attention given to multinational and international regulation of liberalized utility services. Research would focus on changes in job security, employment levels, working conditions, social protection and social dialogue as well as on experience of social dialogue at international level. Research results would be published in various working papers and a worldwide report.
- B. A tripartite meeting would discuss that report and suggest policy options for sectoral constituents concerning regulatory models for liberalized utility services having an impact on employment, wages, protection and decent working conditions.
- C. The results of the meeting would be widely disseminated to ILO constituents, policy-makers, international organizations, and other interested parties, with proposals for continued dialogue on the labour and social implications of utility liberalization and regulation, and promotion of ratification of Conventions Nos. 87, 98, 144 and 151. National or regional meetings on the public service could use them as a reference.
- D. As well as promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in utilities, this proposal would advance Strategic Objectives Nos. 2 (employment) and 3 (social protection).

## ***K.2. Global multi-utility (infrastructure) companies: Equal treatment for all workers?***

34. There has been rapid growth and globalization of multi-utility or infrastructure companies as a result of the ongoing process of liberalization of utilities, the introduction of competition, the privatization of state-owned utility companies, the high costs of investment and maintenance and the total or partial removal of restrictions on foreign ownership. At the same time, these companies are increasingly becoming involved in telecommunications and multimedia activities, often benefiting from their rights of way or local distribution networks. This rapid and important change in the structure and management of utility services poses an enormous challenge to government authorities and employers' and workers' organizations at local, national and international level, particularly in developing countries and transition economies. Reputation can be a source of self-regulation for international infrastructure companies, where public lists exist of companies that violate environmental, health and safety and other labour standards or have engaged in corrupt activities. Some companies have adopted their own codes of conduct in this respect. ILO constituents in recent sectoral meetings have expressed their concern about the consequences for human resource management, labour relations (including equality of treatment of workers and gender issues), the role of employers' and workers' organizations and service delivery resulting from the rapid expansion of such companies.

- A. Building on data from the Office and other organizations, the ILO would undertake further research on the internationalization of utility (infrastructure) companies and the impact of this process on employment levels, wages, safety and health and

working conditions around the world through research, fact-finding missions, data provided by employers' and workers' organizations and the companies involved. It would aim to find examples of best practices, including experiences with voluntary initiatives. Experiences with forms of social dialogue at international level would also be studied. Research results would be published in working papers and a global report.

- B. A tripartite meeting would discuss that report and suggest policy options for sectoral constituents concerning labour relations in multi-utility (infrastructure) companies.
- C. The results of the meeting would be widely disseminated to ILO constituents, policy-makers, international organizations dealing with the promotion of social dialogue in the sector, and used to promote ratification of Conventions Nos. 100, 111, 144 and 151. National or regional meetings could use the results as a reference for activities in the sector.
- D. As well as promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in utilities, this proposal would advance Strategic Objectives Nos. 2 (employment) and 3 (social protection).

## II. Proposals for other meetings

### L. Other industries and topics

#### *Teleworking and on-line work in selected sectors*

##### **L.1. Meeting of experts to develop a code of practice on telework/on-line work (recommended by the Tripartite Meeting on Postal and Telecommunications Services, 1998)**

35. The growth of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has created on-line employment opportunities and outlets for on-line businesses of all kinds, and for telework among many occupations, especially in call centres, software development, Internet content provision and design, data entry and processing. New occupations have mushroomed in banking, commerce, telecommunications, media and entertainment, such as webmasters, web editors and ICT specialists. Greater use has been made of teleworking, remote production and other advantages offered by ICTs. Telework and on-line work are increasingly common in industrialized countries and some developing countries, in commercial, financial, IT, consultancy, media and communications professions. Teleworkers may work full or part time at home for an employer; or only telework for part of the week or month; or be independent contractors. Employers' responsibilities for working conditions and social security etc. for teleworkers vary according to the contract or understanding with teleworkers, and the relevant labour laws. While telework and on-line work can pay well and be highly satisfying for some, others may find that their coverage by social protection and rights at work and with respect to social dialogue fall short of the ILO's decent work agenda.

- A. Research could review agreements, codes of practice and national guidelines as a starting point for flexible guidelines, identifying general and sector-specific features and best practices on this issue, building on work already carried out in the ILO on teleworking and on-line work, and complementing the Home Work Convention, 1996

(No. 177). The ILO would draft a code of practice (covering safety and health, contracts, social security, training, working conditions, privacy, intellectual property, etc.).

- B. A meeting of experts to be nominated by the three groups would discuss and adopt a code.
- C. The code would in due course be disseminated by the Office, with social dialogue activities to encourage implementation, and to promote ratification of Convention No. 177.
- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue), this proposal would advance Strategic Objectives Nos. 2 (employment) and 3 (social protection).

### **Service sector**

#### **L.2. Meeting of experts to develop a code of practice on violence and stress – a threat to productivity and decent work**

**36.** Violence at work is a growing and worrying phenomenon worldwide, the real scale of which is unknown. The huge costs of violence for the individual, the workplace and the community are becoming increasingly apparent through working days lost, increased security measures, health care, long-term rehabilitation and indirect social costs. Violence and stress at work have become a threat to productivity and decent work in many countries. Violence affects all work environments, but some sectors and occupational groups (e.g., service sectors such as education, health, hotels, tourism and transport) are particularly exposed to it. It includes both physical and non-physical violence, in the form of verbal abuse, physical assault, homicide, bullying, mobbing, sexual harassment and mental stress. It takes place between workers and clients, but also among co-workers. Stress and other afflictions resulting from violence- and stress-related environments are increasingly noted in many societies. In the education sector, the incidence of violence has attracted considerable public attention, and its increase is of widespread concern. Since health and safety in schools – for students, teaching personnel and the learning environment – is of particular concern to employers and workers in that sector, violence and stress must be included in analysis and preventive action. Violence is so common among those working directly with people in distress that it may be considered an inevitable part of the job – 24 per cent of work accidents involving violence occur in health services. Nurses are three times more likely to experience violence at work than other occupational groups. Hotels and restaurants are strongly affected by occupational violence, since risk factors include late night and early morning shifts, working alone and in premises where alcohol is served and money exchanged in public. In most forms of transport (railways, urban transport, planes, taxis) aggression against employees and passengers has worsened considerably in recent years. Conclusions of sectoral meetings confirm the need to examine violence and stress in the context of sectoral occupational safety and health.

- A. Based on the collection of information and best practice in 2000-01, and building on the ILO's work on this topic in recent years, the Office would develop a draft code of practice to fight against violence and stress at work as a threat to productivity and decent work, in close cooperation with the Social Protection Sector. This draft would be circulated to member States for comment before a sectoral meeting.

- B. A meeting of experts to be drawn from the three groups would discuss and adopt a code of practice to prevent and combat violence at work.
- C. Following the meeting of experts, the code would be widely disseminated by the Office, and social dialogue activities encouraged and facilitated to put the code into practice.
- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in these sectors, this proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 3 (social protection).

### **L.3. Engendering decent work in services sectors**

37. The services sectors all over the world are very dynamic in terms of growth and employment creation. Jobs in services may offer women more opportunities for decent work, equal pay and promotion opportunities than other work. However, gender imbalances exist at different levels and in different forms in all services, many of which have been identified in sectoral reports and meeting conclusions: In *public services*, though employment in many countries is shared roughly equally between the sexes, female representation decreases at higher levels and remains low in *utilities*. Men tend to work in infrastructure development and maintenance; women are mainly employed in clerical and administrative work. Data from some countries indicate increasing gender differentials in wages and working conditions as a result of restructuring and flexible working arrangements. In *education* and *health*, women constitute a majority of workers, yet remain under-represented in higher-skill jobs and positions of responsibility in their professions (medical specialists, tenured professors, senior health and educational administrators). In *postal and telecommunications services*, women have often been segregated into low-paid and low-skilled jobs, and despite measures to protect their employment against risk during restructuring, labour flexibility has been maintained or increased by the growing use of part-timers, particularly women. In *hotels and tourism*, women make up more than half the labour force, and tend to hold lower-paid jobs, although an increasing number of management posts in hotel chains are held by women. Women suffer most from the job instability prevalent in the sector. In *transport*, factors limiting female workforce participation and making them vulnerable to change include inadequate maternity and parental leave, lack of childcare and discriminatory practices in hiring, promotion and training. In *commerce* and *financial services*, women appear to have benefited to some extent from the positive impact of globalization, restructuring, privatization and decentralization, while shouldering more negative effects such as higher rates of dismissals, job segmentation and wage differentials. In *media and entertainment*, the growing use of precarious employment has often affected the employment prospects of workers with family responsibilities. Job opportunities for women are often especially age-sensitive in the sector, and this may be a disincentive to women seeking such work.
38. Common threads from these industries could form the basis of cross-sectoral strategies to enhance a gender-balanced decent work agenda at the national level.
- A. An international survey would be carried out on legislation, sectoral-level and workplace practices in equality of opportunity and treatment, incorporating gender-disaggregated statistics on employment, training, professional development, remuneration and workplace conditions. Based on this survey, ILO standards and work carried out in other programmes, the Office would draft guidelines on creating and strengthening gender-equitable workplaces in public and private services.
  - B. A tripartite meeting would discuss and further refine the guidelines to reflect commonalities and, as appropriate, sector-specific differences.

- C. The guidelines would be widely disseminated through the organization of national seminars, workshops and consultative structures based on social dialogue, to promote ratification of Conventions Nos. 87, 98, 100, 111 and 144 and incorporation of measures in national legislation and collective bargaining agreements.
- D. As well as promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in these sectors, this proposal would advance Strategic Objectives Nos. 1 (standards, fundamental principles and rights at work) and 2 (employment).

### ***Information and communication industries***

#### **L.4. *Social dialogue in the information and communication industries (recommended by the Symposium on Information Technologies in the Media and Entertainment Industries, 2000)***

- 39.** The digital revolution has transformed the economic structure of sectors now involved in the information and communication industries (e.g., media, entertainment, printing and publishing, commerce, financial services, IT, electronics, computers and communications). Some information and communication enterprises have vertically integrated their production chain, and a few are multinational conglomerates involved in equipment manufacture, software development, film and music production, publishing and printing, for example; it is sometimes difficult to determine which is their core business. Certain labour characteristics developed over decades – relatively stable employment relations, collective agreements, worker representation, employer-provided training, jointly funded social security schemes – have been weakened by globalization, casualization and technological developments. Until recently, it was hard for workers’ and employers’ organizations in these industries to communicate across boundaries. They operated in relative isolation from each other, but convergence, mergers of firms and workers’ organizations, and the increasingly global nature of these industries seem to have encouraged wider-based, new forms of social dialogue, sometimes across sectors, occupational groups and frontiers. These could help find acceptable solutions, and assist the sector at all levels – addressing the impact of the technologies, issues relating to social protection and employment status, and promoting training as being in the interests of all stakeholders. The ILO can bring these groups together to discuss issues and solutions at the regional and global levels. This proposal covers a converging range of new media, information, electronics, computer and communications industries that do not fit neatly into the current 22 sectors.
- A. A report would be prepared drawing on experience in selected countries. It would have strong social dialogue and gender components.
  - B. The tripartite meeting would be of average size (about 20 participants from each group), with a mix of industrialized and developing countries from all regions.
  - C. Follow-up work would focus on promoting ratification of Conventions Nos. 87, 98, 100, 111 and 144, and on social dialogue at the national and regional levels, probably through regional workshops.
  - D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue), this proposal would advance Strategic Objectives Nos. 2 (employment) and 3 (social protection).

## **Gemstone cutting and polishing industry**

### **L.5. Labour practices in the gemstone cutting and polishing industry**

40. Gemstone cutting and polishing remain labour-intensive activities largely carried out in a few, mainly developing, countries. The diamond industry alone produces almost \$7 billion worth of rough gems per year and supplies a retail jewellery market estimated at almost \$60 billion. There is a range of working conditions and work practices, some of which enable decent work, whereas others require examination and improvement. It is also an industry in which child labour has been known to occur. Improvements in productivity and product quality that are being sought in order to enhance the image and profitability of the industry can best be achieved through education, training and better working conditions, including work schedules and health and safety. These should be developed and underpinned by a process of constructive social dialogue.
- A. A report would review current practices, particularly those that have led to an improvement in the profitability of enterprises and benefits to workers. A number of representative case studies would be undertaken to illustrate the different issues.
  - B. A small tripartite meeting comprising representatives of the ten to 12 countries most involved in the industry would be held, probably in Asia, to review the issues and suggest courses of action.
  - C. The outcome of the meeting could provide guidelines on effective ways to combine good labour practices, training and improved profitability. They could also be used for the future work of the ILO and be widely disseminated and promoted among constituents.
  - D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in the sector, this proposal would advance Strategic Objectives Nos. 1 (standards, fundamental principles and rights at work) and 3 (social protection).

## **Maritime sector**

### **L.6a. Meeting of experts on the inspection of seafarers' living and working conditions**

41. Accidents involving merchant ships that result in the loss of life, cargo and valuable ships, as well as damage to the environment, are a fact of modern times. Over the years, significant changes have taken place in the conditions of employment of seafarers, and the problems of operating ships that do not fully comply with accepted international standards and regulations have increased. The ILO publication, *Inspection of labour conditions on board ship: Guidelines for procedure*, was agreed by a Meeting of Experts in 1989. The 84th (Maritime) Session of the International Labour Conference (1996) adopted a resolution concerning the inspection of seafarers' working and living conditions, which requested the Director-General to make proposals for a further meeting of experts to review the guidelines referred to above, especially in the light of the standards adopted by that Conference and for the promotion of the widest possible use of such guidelines. It is expected that the revised guidelines would reflect the Protocol of 1996 to the Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 147), the Labour Inspection (Seafarers) Convention, 1996 (No. 178), and its accompanying Recommendation, 1996 (No. 185), and other developments concerning ship inspection.

- A. The Office would finalize research and consultations started during the 2000-01 biennium, and would draft revised guidelines based on the results.
- B. These guidelines would be submitted to the meeting for discussion, review and adoption.
- C. The revised guidelines would quickly replace the existing version and therefore have a direct impact on improving the breadth and quality of ship inspections. It is foreseen that workshops would be held and technical advisory services provided to interested countries on the development and implementation of national/regional guidelines.
- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in the sector, this proposal would advance Strategic Objectives Nos. 1 (standards, fundamental principles and rights at work) and 3 (social protection).

**L.6b. Meeting of experts to revise Safety and health in dock work: An ILO code of practice**  
*(recommended by the ILO Tripartite Meeting on Social and Labour Problems caused by Structural Adjustments in the Port Industry, Geneva, 1996)*

42. The ways in which cargo was packaged, handled and carried by sea did not change much until developments in cargo-handling methods started to be implemented in the late 1950s, in particular mechanization, unitization, the beginnings of roll-on roll-off (ro-ro) ships and containerization, at the same time as the ILO published *Safety and health in dock work: An ILO code of practice*, in 1958. The next 20 years saw a complete revolution in cargo-handling methods, and therefore the ILO published a *Guide to safety and health in dock work* in 1976, intended for workers, supervisors and management involved in dock work. The ILO code of practice was revised in 1977. By the mid-1970s, safety and health in docks had undergone further evolution, and the Occupational Safety and Health (Dock Work) Convention, 1979 (No. 152) and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 160) were adopted, with goals being specified in the Convention and technical measures in the Recommendation. The practical measures to achieve those goals were intended to be set out in the code of practice and guide, so that the Convention and Recommendation would remain relevant despite the fast-changing nature of the port and shipping industries, with only these two ILO publications needing updating to take account of developments as they occurred. Since the 1970s, the size and cost of ships have increased, and this requires ships to reduce their time in port. Therefore, automation and mechanization of cargo handling were introduced to speed up handling operations, resulting in an increase in fatal accidents in cargo handling, particularly when securing containers stacked high on deck. Furthermore, new types of cargoes, especially bulk and liquid chemicals, have increased risks in cargo handling. Since the 1996 meeting, technical bodies, governments and the social partners have emphasized to the Office the urgent need to revise the two publications.

- A. The Office would undertake research and consultations, and draft a revised code based on the results, to replace the existing guide and code.
- B. The text would be submitted to a meeting of experts for discussion, review and adoption.
- C. Following the meeting, the revised code of practice would be widely disseminated, and social dialogue activities facilitated to implement it. This would help reduce accidents in cargo handling and promote a safety culture in ports.

- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue) in dock work, this proposal would advance Strategic Objectives Nos. 1 (standards, fundamental principles and rights at work) and 3 (social protection).

### ***Mergers and acquisitions in selected sectors***

#### ***L.7. Social and labour implications of international mergers and acquisitions***

43. Mergers and acquisitions (M&As), as well as strategic alliances, have been taking place at a rapid pace in all sectors, and increasingly across borders and between industries. While they purport to increase shareholder value and the return on capital employed, little is known of their precise social and labour impact (on managers and employees alike), let alone how successful they have been in achieving their stated goal. Small and medium-sized companies are often forced to attempt to acquire others in order to avoid becoming the targets of hostile takeover bids. While restructuring and job losses are often reported in the immediate aftermath, M&As can also have employment-preserving effects for the weaker of the two partners, which otherwise might go out of business altogether. Strategic alliances can also help to fend off a potential acquisition by allowing each partner to further develop its own strengths or specialization independently, thereby guaranteeing the continued existence of each entity. Share-swapping is another way to acquire a controlling interest in another company without formally taking possession of it (and thereby avoiding scrutiny from anti-trust authorities). As companies try to focus on their core activities, disinvestment or demergers can also occur. Cross-cultural problems can arise if the stronger of the two companies tries to impose its industrial relations practices on the other, especially if they conflict with law or practices in other countries. In addition, the social and labour implications concern not only the parties directly involved, but can also have significant ramifications throughout the entire supply chain.

- A. Research would be undertaken in a sample of industries (oil and gas; chemicals; food and drink; transport equipment manufacturing; information and communications technologies; textiles, clothing and footwear; media and entertainment; commerce and retailing; banks and financial services; hotels and tourism; wood industries, etc.) to ascertain the impact of mergers and acquisitions, many of which are cross-sectoral.
- B. A tripartite meeting would be held covering the main countries affected, including the major sectoral employers' and workers' organizations.
- C. Depending on the outcome, guidelines for best practice could be developed.
- D. In addition to promoting Strategic Objective No. 4 (social dialogue), this proposal would advance Strategic Objective No. 2 (employment).

Geneva, 2 October 2000.

*Point for decision:* Paragraph 9.