



NINTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Reports of the Programme, Financial and
Administrative Committee****Second Report: Personnel questions*****Contents***

	<i>Page</i>
1. Statement by the staff representative	1
2. Composition and structure of the staff (Eleventh item on the agenda).....	1
3. Decisions of the United Nations General Assembly on the report of the International Civil Service Commission (Twelfth item on the agenda)	4
4. ILO human resources strategy (Thirteenth item on the agenda).....	4
5. Pensions questions: Decisions of the United Nations General Assembly on the report of the Standing Committee of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board (Fourteenth item on the agenda).....	9
6. Matters relating to the Administrative Tribunal of the ILO: Recognition of the Tribunal's jurisdiction by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) (Fifteenth item on the agenda)	9
7. Other personnel questions: Special operations approach (Sixteenth item on the agenda).....	10
 <i>Appendix</i>	
Statement by the staff representative	13

1. The Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee met on 12 and 13 March and was chaired by Mr. Elmiger (Government, Switzerland). Mr. Botha (spokesperson, Employers' group) was the Reporter.

1. Statement by the staff representative

2. The statement by the staff representative is appended to the present report.

2. Composition and structure of the staff (Eleventh item on the agenda)

3. The Committee had before it a paper on the composition and structure of the staff¹ and an associated document, which were presented for information.
4. The representative of the Director-General (Mr. Wild, Director, Human Resources Development Department) introduced the paper by identifying some key features of the data. First, every region is now within the guidelines established by the Office for acceptable levels of representation. Only 12 months ago, Asia and the Arab States were under-represented. Second, the United States is now adequately represented for probably the first time in the Organization's history. But the Office still had to improve the level of representation of Japan and the Republic of Korea and to reduce the number of non-represented countries. The Young Professional Career Entrants Programme (YPCEP) would be targeted towards improving the situation of the latter group of countries during the next three to five years. Third, the achievements since March 1999, in increasing the number of women at various levels throughout the Office, had been significant – at that time, 9 per cent of D2 officials were women, compared with 20 per cent today; 11 per cent of D1 officials were women, today it is 25 per cent; and then 34 per cent of P4 officials were women, now the level is 50 per cent. The major problem area remained the P5 level, but impending retirements provided an opportunity to reshape the situation at that level within two to three years. Mr. Wild indicated that the supplementary document provided to Committee members was not intended for discussion, but as an indication of how staff statistics might be presented to the Committee in future. He said he wished to talk with the Officers of the Committee about future presentation of these statistics before the November 2002 Governing Body session and invited members of the Committee to provide their views to the Office on the issue.
5. Mr. Botha, speaking on behalf of the Employer members, said that the Office appeared to be making progress in addressing the various staffing structure and representation issues and encouraged it to continue. He commended the presentation of the supplementary staffing information.
6. Speaking on behalf of the Worker members, Mr. Blondel first congratulated the new Chairperson of the Staff Union on his appointment and emphasized the point made during his presentation regarding social dialogue between management and staff. On the document under consideration, he noted that the gender balance in the Office was improving, albeit slowly. However, he expressed concern at the balance between fixed-term and without-limit-of-time contracts as he felt that there were more of the former than the latter under the ILO's regular budget. He also highlighted a concern that there were,

¹ GB.283/PFA/11.

amongst those non-represented member States, many who had not paid their contributions for more than two years and who had lost their voting rights. He wondered whether there might be a link between these two aspects of representation and suggested that initiatives might be taken in this regard.

7. The representative of the Government of the Republic of Korea congratulated the Office on the developments during the past few years reflected in the staffing information, notably, improved regional balance and gender diversity. But difficulties were still apparent at the P5 level and above and he requested that information be provided in future on the distribution of staff by region of origin and grade level. He said it would also be helpful to present further information on under-represented countries on the basis of their level of contributions to the ILO.
8. The representative of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago said her Government appreciated the need for sound criteria to underpin recruitment of the best possible staff. She considered that the documentation for this agenda item presented useful information, but observed that it did not contain details of the quota of non-linguistic staff allocated to each member State, whether they were under-represented, adequately represented or over-represented. This information should be provided in future reports. She indicated that about half the members States of CARICOM and 57 ILO member States (roughly one-third of the total) were not represented in the non-linguistic staff of the Office. It was therefore necessary to understand the constraints to achieving more balanced representation of member States and for member States to work with the Office to eliminate them.
9. The representative of the Government of Japan supported the previous Government speakers. His Government appreciated what had been done by the Office to improve the level of representation of member States among ILO staff. But he noted that Japan was still significantly under-represented and this was not satisfactory. In this respect, he said that the number of Japanese nationals among Office staff was only 30 to 40 per cent of the desirable level established by the Office for his country. He strongly requested the Office to make further improvements in the level of Japanese representation.
10. The representative of the Government of Croatia stressed several issues – the need for the nationals of all member States to be on an equal footing in accessing opportunities for employment with the Office, the need for appropriate criteria applicable to secure the best staff for the Organization and the importance of the ILO practising what it preaches to others. Against this background, she expressed concern that the Office was informing candidates for recruitment that they could only apply “online” and noted that many persons did not have access to appropriate information technology. She asked for clarification of whether this would be ongoing Office practice. Finally, she stressed that the demographic structure of the Organization (i.e., there were many more men than women over age 55) provided hope for the recruitment of women in the future.
11. The representative of the Government of Germany shared the concern expressed by Mr. Blondel about developments with respect to the ratio between fixed-term contracts and contracts without-limit-of-time. He asked the Office whether it was possible to prepare further statistics in relation to this issue and inquired whether the development was due to the fact that many staff holding contracts without-limit-of-time were now retiring and being replaced by younger staff holding fixed-term contracts.
12. The representative of the Government of Algeria supported the progress made by the Office in relation to the composition and structure of the staff, particularly towards ensuring a better balance in representation of member States by region. However, he reiterated a proposal raised at previous meetings of the Committee that the Government

members of the African region wished to see changes to table V in GB.283/PFA/11 which should present information region by region.

13. The representative of the Government of Saudi Arabia stressed the importance of geographical distribution and the adequate representation of member States among the staff of the Organization. He referred to page 9 of the Office paper and observed that of the 57 countries not represented among Office staff, nine were Arab Gulf States. He wished to impress upon the Office the need to increase the level of representation of Arab member States as there were many Arab nationals well qualified to contribute to the work of the ILO.
14. The representative of the Government of the Netherlands welcomed the documentation prepared for this agenda item. She indicated that her Government was among those countries financing junior professional officers' (JPO) programmes and inquired why, given their significance and important contribution to the work of the Office, information on the number and distribution of JPOs was not reflected in this documentation.
15. The representative of the Director-General (Mr. Wild) responded to the issues raised, starting with the point made by Mr. Blondel concerning social dialogue, particularly in the day-to-day operations of the Organization. He indicated that next month, two new bodies would be meeting for the first time: the Joint Training Council which would decide on a training programme to make effective use of the additional resources likely to be allocated for that purpose, and the Joint Human Resources Committee which would discuss the future development of the human resources strategy and review the success or otherwise of those initiatives implemented recently. These two bodies had been created within the context of the Joint Negotiating Committee. He agreed that efforts had to be made, over one or two years, to reinforce the partnership approach and to embrace it more generally in the running of the Office.
16. As regards the balance between the different contract types, Mr. Wild informed the Committee that the percentage of without-limit-of-time contracts remained static over time. However, the numbers as reported to the PFAC varied from year to year because of the timing of the annual exercise of allocating without-limit-of-time contracts, which is based on seniority and performance. Had the data provided to the Committee been prepared next month, the figures would have been much higher because the latest exercise was almost completed just before the start of the Governing Body. As regards the long-term use of staff on short-term contracts, mechanisms had now been put into place to ensure that no one could remain in employment with the Office after a two-year period unless he/she held a regular fixed-term contract. Great efforts had been made to resolve the existing cases, and it was hoped that all cases would be resolved during the present year.
17. As regards non-represented countries being in arrears with their contributions, Mr. Wild indicated that efforts were actively being made to recruit from those and other non-represented countries. He felt that the relationship between the ILO and those countries was more distant than it should be and that further action was needed in this area to secure improvements.
18. In response to questions on geographical balance, Mr. Wild indicated that the situation had radically improved over the past three years and that the active measures taken to deliver this would continue. First, regional balance had now broadly been achieved. Second, bilateral arrangements have been entered into both with Japan and the United States, who historically had been significantly under-represented, to establish specific hiring programmes and to orientate the young professional career recruitment process to those countries. The United States was now adequately represented, but not Japan, although the level of Japanese representation had doubled since 1999. Improvements had to be made

progressively, but were nevertheless a firm objective. Third, the non-represented countries were also being targeted for the new intakes in the YPCEP – ten per year for the next three years – which should reduce the number of such countries. He informed the Committee that the ILO did not operate a quota system as such, but that a series of hiring guidelines (desirable ranges) existed for each country based on the level of contribution to the Organization's budget. Information on the system would be provided at a future session.

19. In response to the query concerning online applications, Mr. Wild indicated that, given the number of job applications received each year (around 25,000, including 4,000 for the ten YPCEP posts), the only possibility of matching applications to the skills required throughout the Office was through electronic means. This also served the best interests of the candidates, in that they could be matched to multiple vacancies rather than just one specific post. Applications through non-electronic means were still accepted, but electronic submission was strongly encouraged.
20. Mr. Wild noted that several requests had been made for additional data, for example, regional breakdowns and numbers of junior professional officers. He said the secretariat would look into the best way of providing such data.
21. The Committee took note of the report.

3. Decisions of the United Nations General Assembly on the report of the International Civil Service Commission (Twelfth item on the agenda)

22. The Committee took note of an Office paper² which reported on the outcome of the United Nations General Assembly's consideration of the annual report for 2001, prepared by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC).
23. In response to a query from the Employers' group, the representative of the Director-General explained that UN salaries were benchmarked against the US federal civil service. The margin figures cited in the document under consideration indicated that the UN remuneration package at the higher grade levels was becoming progressively less attractive.

4. ILO human resources strategy (Thirteenth item on the agenda)

24. The Committee considered a report,³ presented for information only, on developments in implementing the ILO human resources strategy.
25. Mr. Botha, speaking on behalf of the Employer members, sought updated information on a number of matters, including: the outcome of discussions concerning the ILO Administrative Tribunal; the costs of the baseline grading exercise; whether young people in some countries were disadvantaged with respect to recruitment to the YPCEP when their

² GB.283/PFA/12.

³ GB.283/PFA/13 and GB.283/PFA/13(Add.).

applications were accepted only through the Internet; and the circulars that the Director-General was expected to issue on the proper use of contracts.

26. Mr. Blondel, speaking on behalf of the Worker members, recalled that it had been necessary to attempt to define the framework within which it was possible to propose reforms to the Statute of the ILO Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT), as that body did not belong exclusively to the ILO but brought within its jurisdiction some 40 other international institutions. Accordingly, it was in the legitimate interest of all of those who had submitted to the jurisdiction of the Tribunal to participate in determining the reforms to be made. Noting that the new grievance procedures on harassment were in full operation, the speaker wondered whether such conflicts had disappeared as it was astonishing that problems of that nature could exist in the Office. Further details were requested regarding the field security review as well as on the particular measures being taken to ensure the safety of all persons in each locality of the Office and in all circumstances.
27. The representative of the Government of Germany asked whether the outcome of the first round of Personal Development Planning (PDP) discussions between staff and managers (which was scheduled to take place shortly) would be placed on the ILO web site, as his Government had a considerable interest in this information. As concerned contract policy reform, it was hoped that a progress report would be given to the present session. On this matter, the speaker asked whether the circulars to be issued by the Director-General, together with a note for managers, could be made available to representatives. Information was sought as to when the Office expected to receive a formal response from the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) on the question of domestic partners of officials which, it was hoped, would be forthcoming in the near future.
28. The representative of the Government of the Russian Federation wished to confirm its traditional position with regard to the practice of collective bargaining in the Office and proposed that the Governing Body review the operation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement on a Procedure for Job Grading in two years' time after the planned review by the Staff Union and the Administration. Additional information was requested from the Office to alleviate the concern that this agreement did not affect the principle of the classification of posts adopted for the United Nations system. In particular, the speaker asked whether that agreement contained a reference to the fact that job classification was to be carried out objectively using the standards of the UN common system Master Standard, Tier II Standards and CCOG. Like the Employers' group, his Government would appreciate receiving information about the financial implications of the grading exercise. It would also be useful for the Governing Body to be supplied with general information about the effectiveness of the ILO human resources strategy and perhaps in November 2002, or in March 2003, the Office might be able to supply statistics on how much money had been spent in preparing and implementing the strategy and on the extent to which the Organization had benefited, in terms of increasing the effectiveness of its work, increased productivity and so on. Contract policy was a key element in the reform of the management of human resources in the direction of a non-career service and the Office's report on this matter would be awaited in November.
29. The representative of the Government of Japan expressed appreciation for the ILO human resources strategy and especially for the YPCEP, which appeared to have been very effective in fostering young professionals. It was regrettable, however, that the ILO had changed, without any consultation, the original starting time for this year's intake due to an internal communication problem between the personnel section and the finance unit. An adequate budget was indispensable for good personnel management and it was hoped that proper management, based on good communication among relevant departments, would be maintained in the Office.

- 30.** The representative of the Government of China thanked the Office for the document which outlined the efforts in the area of human resource management reform. The Collective Agreement on Job Grading was a positive development. The Human Resources Strategy had a direct bearing on the efficiency and quality of the work of the ILO and all constituents were keenly interested in the outcome. Attention should be paid to a number of aspects of the strategy. The ILO appeared ready to dispatch more staff to its local offices so as to reinforce locally based professionals, to learn better the specific conditions and issues in localities which served directly the constituencies of member States and to ensure the implementation of the ILO's objectives of decent work. There was a need, however, to further improve the regular exchange and rotation system between headquarters and local offices which could also serve as an incentive to staff. With regard to the YPCEP, it was hoped that the ILO would give due consideration to candidates from developing countries and to a better regional balance.
- 31.** The representative of the Government of the Netherlands indicated that her Government was quite happy with the work done by the Director of the Human Resources Development Department and his staff and appreciated the information provided. Further details were sought concerning the question raised in paragraph 13 which stated that the ICSC's formal response to the questions raised on domestic partners would be received in time to provide a progress report to the Governing Body. It would be useful to know the status of this matter. A subject of concern to her delegation, which had been emphasized by the representative of the Staff Union, related to the role of managers in the Office. Great importance was attached to having qualified and dedicated managers who were dedicated not only to the work but also to their staff. The Director-General had spoken earlier of the need to invest in people in order to build a proper knowledge base in the Organization. This principle should apply equally to managers who had the duty of guiding and implementing the knowledge possessed by their staff. Too often, there was a lack of decision-making. Rather than taking a decisive approach, managers tried to keep all parties happy and, in that way, were not setting priorities or giving sufficient advice and support to their staff. This was not the way managers should go about their business. Her delegation was aware of the different demands placed upon the Office and its managers but unfortunately it was the role of managers to make decisions even when these were painful. Accordingly, some improvements in this field were required and it would be appreciated if more information were provided in future, perhaps under the item dealing with performance and reward management. There were many areas in the Organization where the role of managers was important. In some cases, it was not possible to do enough justice to their role but, even when it came to criticism, it was crucial to be open and to discuss the issue. This provided even more reason to emphasize the words expressed by the Director-General that it was necessary to invest in people and in training. Rather than making concrete decisions about people who were perhaps not doing a job in the way they should do, more money should be spent and invested in them in such a way that they improved and did better in the future.
- 32.** The representative of the Government of Denmark associated herself with the statement made by the representative of the Government of the Netherlands.
- 33.** The representative of the Government of Canada expressed great appreciation for the document: it was important to provide information on the measures taken to follow up the human resource strategy. As concerned the information on the field security review, he asked whether the item considered in the context of the expenditure of the cash surplus referred to the same matters as outlined in the document under consideration. In particular, referring to paragraph 18, which stated that a proposal to improve the ILO's overall security preparedness would be included in a separate paper for the Committee, the speaker asked whether it was correct to presume that this was the same proposal as had been outlined in the cash surplus expenditure budget. Information was also requested as to

what functions were carried out by the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD).

- 34.** The representative of the Director-General (Mr. Wild) indicated in response that since the preparation of the document, there had been a number of developments, including two sessions of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC). The first of those JNC meetings produced the long-term Procedure for Job Grading which reflected a continuation of the baseline grading agreement previously approved by the Governing Body but with tighter managerial controls because it was possible to look at jobs, one at a time, as they arose, rather than to try and place the whole Organization onto a new grade structure within a relatively short period of time. No changes to the Staff Regulations were envisaged and, as was normal, the collective agreement was provided for information. As concerned the point raised by the representative of the Government of the Russian Federation, it was clear that the Governing Body was the custodian of the Staff Regulations and, as such, had the role of approving changes to the Staff Regulations. It was not possible to implement a collective agreement that relied on changes to the Staff Regulations without those proposed changes being submitted to, and approved by, the Governing Body.
- 35.** The job-grading agreement was in line with the master classification standards of the UN system. It did not require changes to the Staff Regulations and interestingly, in the course of the debate being held within the UN system to revise its own master classification standards, the new ILO generic system was being used as a basis for the revision of the UN system, which pleased the Office.
- 36.** In regard to the Administrative Tribunal, a number of discussions had been held which had identified areas of possible improvement on which the Office, the Legal Department and the Staff Union were in agreement. Those proposals would be developed in order that consultations could be held with all concerned parties, including those 40 organizations which recognized the ILO Administrative Tribunal. A considered decision paper containing the comments of those organizations would be presented to the Governing Body in November 2002. The approved proposals would then have to be submitted to the International Labour Conference in 2003 and could not be implemented before 2004.
- 37.** The field grading exercise had been completed, with the exception of the Arab States, where a series of structural changes had meant that it had been possible to begin the work only recently. Of the 699 posts in the field reviewed, 81 had been upgraded, and the review disclosed that 21 posts should be graded lower than was currently the case. The lower grades would be implemented when those posts were vacated. These statistics were very much in line with the situation at headquarters, the result of which had already been presented to the Governing Body in November 2001. Information on the cost of the baseline grading exercise would be prepared for the Governing Body's session in November 2002. On the work-life initiative, which concerned the issue of domestic partnerships, the Office had written to the ICSC following the November session of the Governing Body but no definitive answer had yet been received. The Office had learned that the issue would be considered at the April meeting of the ICSC and it had also sought to include the matter on the agenda of the UNHR Network Meeting (3-5 April 2002). Assuming an affirmative response was received from the ICSC, the Office would proceed to implement the three limited proposals that had been agreed upon during the November 2001 Governing Body.
- 38.** The issue of contract reform had been placed on the agenda of the ICSC. While the Office considered it urgent to address this question, it was also cognisant of the Governing Body's insistence that the Office not outpace the ICSC and that it remain within the common system rules and guidelines. Accordingly, the Office indicated, at the last ICSC meeting, that it considered the question to be urgent and, as a result, the ICSC had brought forward

its own discussion of the subject from 2003 to April 2002. It was hoped that the discussion within the ICSC would provide an enabling framework within which the Office could progress its own contract reforms.

39. Recruitment was not conducted solely through the Internet. Advertisements were placed in strategic locations in different countries; prospection missions had been undertaken, primarily in universities in Japan, Republic of Korea, the United States, the Gulf and Arab States, as well as in the United Kingdom and France. The ten YPCEP candidates comprising the 2002 intake would be starting on 1 April, rather than 1 January because of a lack of available funds.
40. It was hoped that the circulars on contracts to be issued by the Director-General would be released during the course of the current Governing Body. These documents were not confidential as they related to new procedures and rules to prevent the proliferation of the long-term use of short-term contracts. Copies could be made available to Governing Body members.
41. On the question of grievances, it was possible to say that there were fewer grievances now than for a considerable period of time and some of them did relate to inter-personal difficulties at work. The Ombudsperson started work in the Office in October 2001 and would produce a report later in 2002 that would be available to the Governing Body. In respect of field security, the Office had undertaken a major field review based on a questionnaire to officials and to managers working in all field duty stations. Security experts had also visited 11 duty stations with a view to identifying what needed to be done to improve security measures and the overall review report was about to be finalized. The implementation of that report was foreshadowed during the current session of the Governing Body in relation to the consideration of a request for \$2.8 million to begin to improve security. That sum of money included the contribution made by the Office to UNSECOORD which carried out a range of functions including providing information on all aspects of the security status of all UN operations around the world, on travel conditions and on the provision of security advisers in particular duty stations. The sum sought by the Office was also intended to address ILO-specific needs including training.
42. The outcome of the PDP discussions, which would begin in April 2002, could be made available to interested parties. On the wider question of reviewing the human resource strategy initiatives, it was agreed some 18 months ago that a major review of the impact of these measures would be undertaken, together with a review of the implementation of the agreements concluded to date, for presentation to the Governing Body in November 2002. It may well be that an extended period of time would be needed for the human resources review because it would be necessary to produce a very comprehensive document outlining the successes and shortcomings of the initiatives, as well as producing some concrete data around improvements or problems with the human resources reforms. A comment had been made regarding the need to increase the skill level in the Office. The only way to increase the skill level of an organization was to hire better people and to train and develop those already employed. In terms of mobility to local offices, ten young career entrants had already been moved into the field. Discussions were also taking place between the Executive Directors and the Regional Directors on moving another 30 or so people into the field during the course of the present biennium. The YPCEP was open exclusively to non-represented and under-represented countries. There was a need to respond more fully, in November, to the questions raised about the role of managers. The Office shared the concerns expressed about the fact that the focus of the human resource reforms had been mainly on procedural change: it was important to note, however, that these changes had been designed to provide managers with the tools to do their jobs properly and more effectively and to take responsibility in their functions. Having changed the processes, support mechanisms now had to be put into place to enable managers to take advantage of

those tools. The fund allocated to training was intended to be used to build up technical skills, to improve management knowledge in terms of strategic budgeting and programming and to strengthen management skills.

43. The representative of the Director-General (Mr. Ahmad, Treasurer and Financial Comptroller) recalled that the amount earmarked for the Building and Accommodation Fund in the context of the cash surplus was destined, in part, to improve the fire detection equipment in the Office, based on the recommendations of experts. The cost is estimated to be about \$650,000.

5. Pensions questions: Decisions of the United Nations General Assembly on the report of the Standing Committee of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board (Fourteenth item on the agenda)

44. The Committee noted an Office paper⁴ which had been submitted for information about the 184th Session of the Standing Committee of the Board. The Standing Committee had dealt mainly with the management of the Fund's investments, the preliminary outcomes of the review of the Fund's benefit provisions, the structure of the Board, the administrative budget provisions, and the situation of former international civil servants of the former USSR, Ukrainian SSR and Byelorussian SSR. The United Nations General Assembly had considered the report of the Standing Committee in December 2001, and had adopted the proposed budget for the biennium 2002-03.

6. Matters relating to the Administrative Tribunal of the ILO: Recognition of the Tribunal's jurisdiction by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) (Fifteenth item on the agenda)

45. The Committee had before it a paper⁵ proposing that the Governing Body approve the recognition of the ILO Administrative Tribunal's jurisdiction by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA).
46. Mr. Blondel, on behalf of the Worker members, welcomed further recognition of the jurisdiction of the Administrative Tribunal of the ILO as an additional manifestation of the Tribunal's credit, recalling that in addition to the ILO, there were 40 other international institutions to which such jurisdiction already extended. He recalled that this recognition would entail no additional cost to the ILO.
47. *The Committee recommends that the Governing Body approve the recognition of the Tribunal's jurisdiction by the International Institute for Democracy and*

⁴ GB.283/PFA/14.

⁵ GB.283/PFA/15.

Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), with effect from the date of such approval.

7. Other personnel questions: Special operations approach
(Sixteenth item on the agenda)

48. The Committee had before it an Office paper⁶ which proposed the implementation of a special operations approach allowance, based on the scheme applied by UNDP.
49. Mr. Blondel, speaking on behalf of the Worker members, agreed with the proposal, while regretting that the state of certain areas of the world necessitated such action.
50. Mr. Botha, speaking on behalf of the Employers, requested clarification as to the purpose of the allowance: was it destined to cover travel expenses or protective equipment? He wondered whether the Office should consider moving the staff in question to another area.
51. The representative of the Government of Germany agreed that staff serving in very hazardous conditions should be appropriately compensated but felt that the document did not provide sufficient detailed explanation of the Office's proposal.
52. The representative of the Government of the Russian Federation also requested further clarification, particularly on the relationship between the proposed allowance and existing hardship allowances. He also expressed concern about the possibility of setting a precedent for the UN common system organizations financed through assessed contributions. He asked for written information on the proposed simplified formula for the implementation of SOLA in the ILO and proposed to request an opinion from the ICSC which, according to its statute, was responsible for the determination of all allowances.
53. The representative of the Director-General explained how the SOLA (Special Operations Living Allowance) had come into being through actions taken by other UN organizations. He explained that by applying the scheme in the same manner as the other agencies, allowances and entitlements, including travel, would be based on a theoretical duty station which would mean that the staff member would not be able to benefit from additional trips to visit family members who, because of the security situation, were not able to come to the duty station. By applying 75 per cent of the allowance paid by UNDP, and maintaining all other conditions of the actual duty station, the ILO would be offering a package of very similar value to that of UNDP. The situation would be drawn to the attention of the ICSC for their comments, but he did not advocate withholding payment to an individual in a hardship situation pending receipt of those comments.
54. *The Committee recommends to the Governing Body that the Director-General be authorized to implement the proposal for those officials who may be eligible to receive the Special Operations Living Allowance according to UNDP criteria.*

Geneva, 15 March 2002.

⁶ GB.283/PFA/16/1.

Points for decision: Paragraph 47;
Paragraph 54.

Appendix

Statement by the staff representative

Last December, my colleagues in the Staff Union Committee elected me, a union member who has spent most of the past 15 years of my ILO working life in the field, as their new Chairperson. The Staff Union expects that I should carry the views of the field to the debate and that I should also view the current state of the Union and its relations with the Office through fresh eyes.

Let me say at the outset that the impressive landmark achievements of recent Staff Union committees have indeed brought about fundamental changes for the better, especially in the way the staff and the Office interact, yet many of these important achievements are still to be realized in the field.

The managerial reforms put in place by the Director-General at the beginning of his term, together with the introduction of collective bargaining, have certainly been refreshing changes and have forever changed this Organization. We are however struggling to move from an old style hierarchical “personnel administration” system, reminiscent of the 1950s, to a much more appropriate, modern and more cost-effective “human resources management” approach for the international civil service that we are.

From the Union’s point of view, these long overdue reforms could position the ILO as the workplace where management is finally and gradually starting to practice what it preaches and helping the ILO emerge as a model of “best HR management practice” for other organizations in the UN system. The process of reform is being built by gradually developing mutual trust with HRDD and in working together in an environment where “good faith” should prevail. This does not happen overnight.

That the Director-General and the Governing Body have seen fit to support the introduction of these reforms is to the credit of all concerned, especially when we should now consider sharing these reforms with the wider family of UN and other international organizations.

At this stage, the Union considers that collective agreements in place and in the pipeline open real windows of opportunity for a fairer and more delivery-oriented management of human resources in the ILO. This could be a win-win for both staff and management.

These collective agreements could however have already been making much more impact on delivery rates. This is because the new budgetary practices, if properly implemented, should lead to a higher degree of flexibility and commitment on the part of staff themselves. Inevitably we end up with a half-baked effort when serious commitment by senior management is absent.

Through the progressive implementation of collective agreements in the ILO, staff/management relations could result in real social dialogue. Progress with these changes, however, even for this relatively small Organization of some 2,500 staff members, has, nevertheless, been unduly slow. The main reason identified by the Union as the cause of delays is regrettably the lack of ongoing commitment on the part of many managers, not used or not willing to bear responsibility for their actions, and of course the current highly complicated, ineffective structure of decision-making.

An example of this is the interim measure of the baseline grading/matching exercise that unfolded last year. This exercise of matching staff tasks to generic job descriptions and grading staff within several broad bands is certainly not rocket science. Yet, many managers disregarded their obligations to reason their decisions, and did not respect agreed deadlines. Little wonder then that the staff rightly complained about procedural flaws, unfair treatment and favouritism by management. This was an example of a good method that turned sour because of slow and ineffective implementation. The cost? Staff dissatisfaction. And why? Simply because many managers repeated former inefficient practices or expected others to take their decisions for them.

One has only to contrast the remarkable efficiency with which the reforms to strategic budgeting were put in place with total commitment and professionalism to the inept way in which management responded to the implementation of the fundamental reforms of HR management policy, apparently not sufficiently supported.

The Union submits to the Governing Body that ILO management failed in this instance because there was no desire at the strategic level to make human resources management the critical issue it deserves to be. For as long as managers are not held responsible for the job satisfaction and productivity of those they supervise, at all levels from the top down, we cannot see why managers would bother to even consider changing their present ways. And in the aftermath of this exercise, we have seen no process of healing, which should have included some sort of accountability for failed management of human resources.

The Union is disturbed by this distancing of management from its direct responsibilities for the reform of HR management. The Union has offered as far back as 18 months ago and as recently as two months ago, to hold periodic meetings with the Senior Management Team to discuss HR strategy issues such as facilitating teamwork, encouraging performance, streamlining procedures, increasing accountability and so on, but so far the Union has been denied this possibility for constructive social dialogue. The Union offered to be a resource to those who are here to manage. I must add that we neither wish nor claim to be able to co-manage. But we are entitled to represent staff, and those who manage us should listen to what staff has to say. This is best done through dialogue, but for the time being a conducive environment still needs to be built by management. This Office really needs to practice what it preaches about social dialogue.

Earlier this week at the Joint Negotiating Committee, I had the privilege of contributing to an initial agreement in principle being reached between the Office and the Union on a number of issues where it is now recognized that there is need for amendments to the practices and/or statutes and rules of the ILO Administrative Tribunal. While this process is far from finished, it is now finally moving ahead. The Union position is commitment to the reform of the ILOAT with a view to improve both its functioning and its image as an instrument of justice.

The Union's strategy and programme for 2002 covers a great deal of ground and in setting out to defend and promote the interests and working conditions of all ILO staff and former officials, the Union is also paying special attention to preserving staff rights.

The Union position for 2002 is commitment to implementation of existing collective bargaining agreements at both headquarters and in the field and of course the negotiation of further collective agreements on relevant issues.

The Union position for 2002 is commitment to proper health insurance and commitment to the pension concerns of all and especially those former officials who were in certain duty stations and are suffering the consequences of improper employment terms and conditions.

Occupational safety and health issues currently seriously trouble the Union. The existing Advisory Committee on OSH has barely met in recent times and whenever it has made recommendations to management for basic reforms, it has seen no follow-up action. We are told that we all work in a safe environment, so why worry? The recent fire in the headquarters building has shown us just how vulnerable we are, all the more so because there is an absence of adequate fire prevention measures in this very building – and I mean right here and now.

The Union is appalled by the fact that no other international organization of this size and complexity takes the risk to operate without a single person or focal point dedicated exclusively to occupational health, security and safety issues. Safety and health problems in both the headquarters and the field emanating from stress, active and passive smoking, alcohol, lack of fire safety procedures, lack of analysis or policy on sick leave, and the absence of a proactive policy on good health practices in the workplace, position the ILO almost as far away as is possible from its own OSH Conventions (Nos. 155 and 161). The implications for employers' liability, let alone the likely loaded cost of insurance premiums, are reasons why we call on the Office to take immediate action in this area before we are caught unprepared by some catastrophe.

Since 11 September 2001, field staff especially have also been calling for improvements in their personal and family safety and security. Locally recruited field staff would also like to see the ILO afford them the same kind of protection currently offered only to international staff.

The Union calls on the Office to practice what it preaches regarding OSH.

The Union position for 2002 is commitment to improving the current situation of occupational safety and health for all staff at headquarters and in the field through a new collective agreement.

Another important issue where the Union would again like to see action taken by the Office regarding commitments already made is in the signing of the collective agreement on personnel

policy for HIV/AIDS. A copy of this document is with the Director-General and the Union is committed to this agreement that has been prepared in close collaboration with specialists from the ILO/AIDS programme. It would be very appropriate for the Director-General to sign this agreement before he attends the meeting in Rome on 10 April, where the ILO is chairing the Inter-agency Advisory Meeting on HIV/AIDS.

As an ILO official having spent most of my service in the field, it would be remiss of me not to mention the need for bringing technical cooperation personnel contracts (mostly operational in the field) and conditions more into line with similar benefits enjoyed by those under regular contracts. HR reforms are needed in basic administrative issues such as salaries and medical insurance payments in hard currencies and this would not necessarily result in significant costs to the Office. These are part and parcel of putting decent work principles into practice.

The Union position is commitment to the view that there needs to be a rationalization and integration where possible of the technical cooperation budget and regular staff contracts and conditions.

In conclusion, I would like to make the following points:

1. The Union is firm in its position that it can only accept the “consolidation” of negotiations and agreements reached with the Office as a process which involves collective bargaining arrangements that are essential to keeping the process alive.
2. The Union believes that it is paramount that both the Office and the Union show an open and demonstrable willingness to maintain the momentum for effective reform and accept that it is a continuous process of moving towards better practices founded on basic rights and sound management principles.
3. The Union recognizes with concern that most ILO managers in the Director category and above, are now due to retire in the next two years and that succession arrangements need to be put in place. The Union is of the view that the basic HR frameworks now adopted in the important areas of grading, recruitment, benefits, and entitlement/performance appraisal/personal development plans and especially training could, if properly applied, hold the keys to the future success of this Organization. Adequate resources must be allocated for these programmes, especially training and development and I congratulate the Governing Body on supporting the budget allocations for this purpose yesterday.
4. The Union calls on the Office to see the reforms being proposed by the Union more as representing cost/benefit initiatives and as sound and sensible measures now so critically essential to secure smooth succession planning and much less as legal and administrative procedure “inconveniences” that have to be overcome.
5. The Union calls on the Office to concur once and for all to a true partnership approach to ensure we become the “best in class” among the UN organizations. We would then further wish to see our achievements replicated within the UN family of organizations.
6. Finally, may I say that the Union fully recognizes that delivery rates should indeed be the best performance indicators for the HR reforms. Only when the processes now moving into place become really operational can the Director-General, the Governing Body and the Union have much to be proud of. It is now up to all of us to see that these reforms bring credit to this great Organization, which after all is mandated to bring social dialogue into every workplace. To this the Union is committed.