



TENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

## Reports of the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee

### I. Technical meetings reserve (Eighth item on the agenda)

1. Mr. Blondel, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, accepted the meetings proposed, which mostly reflected the Workers' preferences. He thanked the Office for its efforts in producing the revised proposals and the Chairperson for his involvement in the discussions.
2. Mr. Botha, speaking on behalf of the Employers' group, also thanked the Chairperson. He noted that full budgets had not been provided for the meetings but assumed that all the costs were inclusive. He believed that Office staff costs should not be included.
3. The representative of the Director-General (Executive Director and Acting Treasurer and Financial Comptroller) explained that costs were covered in the revised proposal, but these did not include the cost of Professional staff, who were already funded under the regular budget, and interpretation costs, which were covered by the RELCONF budget.
4. Mr. Botha pointed out that this was of some concern because it meant that a third meeting would actually incur extra costs.
5. The representative of the Director-General (Executive Director and Acting Treasurer and Financial Comptroller) remarked that all the costs which were traditionally included in the technical meetings reserve were covered by the revised budget of US\$213,000 for each of the three meetings. The savings against the original estimates were made through a reduced level of participation. The cost of interpretation for the third meeting was incremental because it was excluded from the technical meetings reserve budget and would effectively be covered by the regular budget of RELCONF.
6. Mr. Botha asked if in future such additional costs should be included, in order to have a full understanding of the expenditure to which commitment was being made.
7. The representative of the Director-General (Executive Director and Acting Treasurer and Financial Comptroller) reiterated the established budgeting practice concerning the technical meetings reserve and indicated that this could be changed if necessary. However,

in order to establish the level of incremental costs, certain assumptions would have to be made regarding the mix of participants and the resulting interpretation requirements.

- 8.** The representative of the Government of South Africa, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the proposals to hold meetings (b), (c) and (d). However, the Africa group wished to express its disappointment that its proposal for the Meeting of Experts on Gaining Influence in Policy-making: Challenges for Labour Ministries had not been favourably considered. The Africa group's interest in this particular meeting related to the fact that the output of the meeting would lead to an agreed set of conclusions on good practices to improve the position of labour and employment ministries in the formulation of economic and social policy. This was particularly important for ministries of labour in Africa, and in general for the developing world, as the role and function of ministries of labour were critical in the implementation of ILO standards and resolutions. The group therefore requested that this matter be reconsidered at a future date.
- 9.** The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom was concerned about the handling of the issue and about the way in which a third meeting had been added. The United Kingdom had already expressed its concerns at the last meeting, although they were not included in the record of that meeting. At that time, there had appeared to be a general consensus in support of the meeting on decent work and many had thought that the remaining funds should be retained for follow-up to the World Commission report. The Office had explained that meeting costs could not be reduced but now proposals had been presented for three smaller meetings, which left no balance in the technical meetings reserve. However, it was still not clear what the additional costs would be for the third meeting. She questioned the transparency of the discussions on the issue and noted that the meeting was again being presented with an option that appeared to meet only the requirements of the social partners. It was unclear what consultations, if any, had been held with governments. The United Kingdom was not prepared to accept the proposal, but could agree on the two meetings originally considered. If consensus did exist, it was for one meeting, with the use of remaining funds for the follow-up to the work of the World Commission.
- 10.** The representative of the Government of Germany supported the statement made on behalf of the Africa group. The three meetings, each at a reduced cost, represented a good compromise and he was pleased to see that meeting (b) would take place. He did not believe that interpretation costs should be attributed to the cost of technical meetings. This could possibly lead to a reduction in the number of nationalities invited to attend such meetings in an effort to keep down total interpretation costs.
- 11.** The representative of the Government of Norway shared the concerns of the representative of the Government of the United Kingdom. He was unaware of any consultation with Government members. He believed that interpretation costs should be included in the costs of technical meetings and questioned the cost of meeting (c) for which the number of participants had remained the same. He could not support this meeting and was keen to set aside resources for a possible follow-up meeting to the report of the World Commission.
- 12.** The representative of the Government of the United States shared the concerns of several of the previous Government speakers. The cost figures provided did not give sufficient information. Logistical costs such as transportation, interpretation, supplies and accommodation were not included. He questioned how the Office had managed to reduce the costs of the meetings when, only a few days previously, the Committee had been informed that this was not possible. It was difficult to understand how a small reduction in participants could produce enough savings to finance a third meeting. He was also concerned to see what seemed to be a failure of tripartism as governments did not appear

to have been consulted on this revised proposal. He could support the idea of selecting one meeting whilst reserving some funds for later use or, if necessary, he could choose two meetings but he could not accept the proposal for three meetings.

13. The representative of the Government of France also regretted that Government members had not been consulted but gave his support to the revised proposals. He pointed out that in fact the meeting on decent work and local development addressed one of the priorities of the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization and that, at the previous session of the Governing Body, a decision had been made to hold a meeting on the social dimension of globalization. Together, these two meetings should address the concerns expressed.
14. The representative of the Government of Canada asked whether it would be possible to amend later the decisions taken regarding the meetings, once the conclusions of the World Commission were known. He shared the concerns expressed by many of the Government speakers with regard to the costs of the three meetings proposed. He could not support meeting (b), the subject of which was already covered by clear guidelines.
15. The representative of the Government of Japan shared the concerns expressed by the representatives of the Governments of the United Kingdom, Norway, the United States and Canada with regard to the cost implications of the proposal.
16. Mr. Blondel did not seek to obstruct the decision and pointed out that the Workers' group was not in the habit of causing obstruction. However, as it was now being employed, he stated that there should be no surprise if in future the Workers were to have recourse to such methods.
17. The representative of the Government of Germany asked whether, if the decision were deferred to November, the meetings planned for 2005 would have to take place at the end of that year because the preparation time would be too short for them to take place any earlier.
18. The representative of the Director-General (Director of the Bureau of Programming and Management) replied that a deferral of the decision would place the Office under pressure. Much depended on whether the final decision was for two or three meetings and on the topics of those meetings. However, it was unlikely that meetings decided upon in November would take place before late 2005.
19. *The Committee recommends that a decision be deferred.*

## II. Personnel questions (Eighteenth item on the agenda)

20. Mr. Blondel and Mr. Botha supported the point for decision.
21. *The Committee recommends to the Governing Body that it approve the text of the draft Staff Regulations contained in Annex I to Appendix II, as well as those set out in Appendix III of document GB.289/PFA/18.*

### III. Composition of the ILO Tribunal (Twentieth item on the agenda)

22. The Committee had before it a paper on this item.<sup>1</sup>
23. Mr. Blondel supported the point for decision and conveyed his gratitude to Mr. Egli.
24. Mr. Botha also supported the point for decision and associated himself with Mr. Blondel's comments.
25. *The Committee recommends to the Governing Body, and through it to the Conference, that they convey to Mr. Egli their appreciation for the services he has rendered to the work of the Administrative Tribunal over the past decade; and recommends that the Governing Body propose to the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference:*
- (i) the renewal of the term of office of Mr. Gentot for three years;*
  - (ii) the appointment of Mr. Rouiller for a term of office of three years;*
  - (iii) the appointment of Mr. Gordillo for a term of office of three years.*

Geneva, 25 March 2004.

*Points for decision:* Paragraph 19;  
Paragraph 21;  
Paragraph 25.

<sup>1</sup> GB.289/PFA/20/1.