



THIRTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

## Report of the Committee on Technical Cooperation

1. The Committee on Technical Cooperation met on 12 November 2004, chaired by Mr. Yimer Aboye (Government, Ethiopia). The Employer and Worker Vice-Chairpersons were Mr. Jeetun and Mr. Attigbe, respectively.
2. The Committee had the following agenda items:
  - The ILO's technical cooperation programme 2003-04.
  - Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: Technical cooperation priorities and action plans regarding freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.
  - Plan of action giving effect to the resolution concerning tripartism and social dialogue: Oral presentation.
  - Development cooperation – donors' perspective: Oral presentation.
  - Other questions.
3. The members and Officers of the Committee on Technical Cooperation welcomed Ms. Ducci, who was representing the Director-General at the Committee on Technical Cooperation for the first time, and paid tributes to her predecessor, Mr. Skerrett, who had retired from the ILO.

### I. The ILO's technical cooperation programme 2003-04

4. At the outset, the representative of the Director-General, Ms. María Angélica Ducci, introduced the report<sup>1</sup> and briefly outlined her past work with the ILO, including 17 years as a technical cooperation expert. She informed the Committee that the Development Cooperation Department would report directly to the Director-General, and would monitor the development and implementation of ILO programmes in the regions, in close consultation with regional directors.

<sup>1</sup> GB.291/TC/1.

5. Ms. Ducci described how ILO technical cooperation was evolving in the context of a broader effort by the international community to improve the outreach and focus of development cooperation with a view to putting the Monterrey Consensus into practice and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In this connection, several donor agencies had announced an increase in their development assistance and had initiated action to ensure greater effectiveness and sustainability of development cooperation. In this context, donors were showing interest in ensuring a more strategic use of their development assistance through their multi-bilateral cooperation with the ILO.
6. She expressed that the ILO had already signed multi-annual partnership agreements with a number of major donors – and other funding agencies might soon be moving towards a programme approach with the ILO. In July 2004, the ILO had signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement with the European Commission.
7. Ms. Ducci pointed out that the donor agencies were increasingly channelling technical cooperation funding directly through the recipient governments or through multilateral country development exercises, such as UNDAF and PRSPs. That created additional incentives for the ILO to ensure that decent work country programmes were well integrated in national development agendas. The ILO's value added consisted in promoting the Decent Work Agenda as the most sustainable route out of poverty and in winning national ownership through the involvement of the social partners.
8. The ILO remained very keen to promote a dialogue with the donor community as a whole in order to enhance the overall consistency of its technical cooperation programme and to streamline planning, negotiation, implementation and evaluation procedures. At a time when the international community had recognized that ownership at the country level was a critical measure of success in development cooperation, the ILO's unique tripartite nature offered a tremendous potential for true, broader and effective ownership on the ground.
9. The representative of the Director-General highlighted three major developments in 2004 that were bound to have a profound impact on the direction of the ILO's technical cooperation programme. First, making decent work a global goal, as proposed by the Director-General in the Strategic Policy Framework for 2006-09 submitted to the Governing Body at this session, entailed sustained work at national, regional and global levels; indeed it called on the ILO to expand and share its knowledge base and promote policy dialogue and cooperation to create the economic and social conditions for decent work to prosper and bear fruit. Second, the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa and the Social Partners' Forum, both held in Ouagadougou in September 2004, placed an additional responsibility on the Office to help African constituents and the African Union to develop and apply policies and programmes aimed at working out of poverty. Third, a decision had been taken to undertake, in 2005, an international review of progress achieved towards attaining the commitments of the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs. If these goals were to be achieved by 2015, more support would be required to help countries create more and better jobs for their people. The Decent Work Agenda of the ILO was making a special effort to have its contribution recognized towards achieving the overarching goal of the Millennium Declaration to make the benefits of globalization work for all.
10. The Employer Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Jeetun, while appreciating the succinct report, wished that it had been more analytical, focusing on the results achieved and lessons learnt. His group was of the view that papers submitted to the Committee should contain points for decision so that the Committee could provide guidance to the Office on its future technical cooperation.

11. He reiterated that technical cooperation was the main means for achieving the ILO's four strategic objectives and believed that the policies of the Office could be translated into concrete action through technical cooperation. Mr. Jeetun expressed his group's concern over the decrease in extra-budgetary resources to the Employment Sector. Noting that the ILO was attaching high priority to employment promotion and poverty alleviation, he expressed the hope that adequate resources would be allocated to the Employment Sector.
12. Mr. Jeetun stressed the importance of establishing a more coherent policy in resource mobilization and expressed his group's readiness for dialogue with the donors with respect to priority setting. Referring to the problems of delivery, and its variation among regions, he questioned the impact of the delivery task force on actual delivery performance.
13. Expressing his group's support to the ILO's decentralization policy on technical cooperation, he underlined the importance of building the capacities of field offices, particularly through the Turin Centre. He emphasized the significance of a tripartite approach in technical cooperation programmes, drawing attention to the need for greater involvement of ACTRAV and ACT/EMP at the stage of project formulation. Referring to the ILO's work on crisis situations, he again pointed out the importance of involvement of social partners and building their capacity in this area.
14. He wished that more information had been provided on the Jobs in Africa programme. Noting the value of enterprise development in ILO technical cooperation, he maintained that the Office should work closely with the IOE in that technical field. On the ILO programme on HIV/AIDS and the world of work, he proposed that the ILO should allocate more of its resources to enable the programme to build the capacity of social partners to fight the pandemic.
15. With respect to evaluation, the Employer Vice-Chairperson pointed out the need for clear guidance and for building in-house capacity.
16. The Worker Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Attigbe, reiterated his request for a better presentation of the report and proposed that a specific section on the impact of technical cooperation in meeting the goals of the Decent Work Agenda be included in the next report.
17. The Worker Vice-Chairperson noted with satisfaction the increase of overall expenditures of the multi-bilateral funds and trust funds. However, he requested more information as to how social partners had equitably benefited in terms of access to resources and effective involvement in the programmes and projects. Information was also requested on how the programmes had improved working and living conditions of the people.
18. The Worker Vice-Chairperson drew attention to the fact that while extra-budgetary funding for technical cooperation had increased, the resources available for the employers and workers had fallen, which was a poor reflection of tripartism. He appealed for a mobilization of resources to support the Decent Work Agenda and, by extension, the activities of employers and workers. Referring to the flagrant imbalances in expenditures across different programmes, he urged the Office to address the problem by allocating adequate resources to workers' and employers' activities.
19. Thanking the donors for their increased funding, he appealed to them not to limit their funding to specific areas, such as the programme to eliminate child labour, but to extend support to other areas, including freedom of association, social protection, tripartism and social dialogue. He considered the reduction of funds from UNDP and UNFPA particularly deplorable as it was affecting the least developed countries which were the main beneficiaries of these United Nations agencies. This concern was expressed on several

occasions by the Workers' group and the Vice-Chairperson reiterated his demand for an Office strategy on this matter.

20. The Workers' group noted with satisfaction the increase in the delivery rate but deplored the fall in the Arab States. He stressed that the increase in the delivery rate should go hand in hand with efforts to improve the quality and impact of technical cooperation projects.
21. The Workers' group had taken note of the different modalities for mobilizing resources and the challenges to be resolved. It appreciated the Office's position on the need to strengthen the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations, particularly in the development and submission of products and proposals tailored to their organizations and in promoting tripartism across programmes. It was felt that there should be greater involvement of ACTRAV and ACT/EMP in these processes, including participation in donor meetings.
22. Concerning standards and fundamental rights at work, the Workers' group requested additional information on the impact of technical cooperation projects concerning the application of ratified Conventions. The Workers' group also requested details about the state of cooperation with those large member States that had not yet ratified all core Conventions, particularly those on freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.
23. Mr. Attigbe inquired what mechanisms the ILO would put in place to follow up the strategies and priorities agreed upon at the Extraordinary Summit organized by the African Union. He requested information on the impact of ILO projects, particularly on the number of informal economy workers covered by social security systems, the number of workers who benefited from measures aimed at fighting against HIV/AIDS, and the number of workers who saw an improvement in their health and safety and working conditions.
24. Concerning social dialogue, the Worker Vice-Chairperson stressed that the respect of freedom of association was the guarantor of representative, independent and democratic social partners that could have a real impact on social and economic debates. Therefore, there was a need for the Office to mobilize adequate resources to strengthen social partners' capacities.
25. Turning to Turin, he maintained that the training activities should be evaluated on a regular basis, taking into account as criteria for evaluation tripartism and the gender dimension.
26. The Workers' group requested the Office to ensure a proper follow-up concerning the participation of social partners in international development frameworks.
27. The Worker Vice-Chairperson concluded by endorsing the evaluation strategy proposed by the Office, and proposing some points for decision for consideration by the Committee.
28. Following a subsequent brief discussion on these proposals, an agreement was reached on the text for the point for decision that would be recommended by the Committee to the Governing Body.
29. The representative of the Government of Italy, speaking on behalf of the IMEC group, commented on the need to have more information on the impact of technical cooperation on the targeted beneficiaries. Noting with satisfaction the improvement in delivery rates, he asked the Office to ensure a more equitable distribution of resources and delivery. He requested more information on the decrease of UNDP and UNFPA funding and was concerned with the decreasing share of resources/expenditures for the least developed countries (LDCs).

30. The representative indicated that IMEC welcomed the idea of organizing periodic meetings with the donor community to coordinate efforts and to have an overall picture of the ILO's technical cooperation. This was important as the issue of sustainability needed to be seen in a wider framework. He looked forward to the thematic evaluation on gender issues to be presented to the Committee next year, and required information on the status of implementation of IRIS and its potential with regard to technical cooperation. He underlined the wish of the IMEC group in having a discussion on ways and means to improve the functioning of technical cooperation and its Committee. On behalf of Italy, the speaker also expressed appreciation for the programmes financed by Italy. He stressed the importance of involving the Turin Centre adequately in the undertaking of technical cooperation programmes in training and capacity building, which represented 19 per cent of total funding of technical cooperation activities, and welcomed the work of the task force created by the Director-General in this regard.
31. The representative of the Government of Malawi, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, thanked the Office for producing such a high-quality and elaborated paper which was not only informative and educational but also analytical and objective.
32. He regretted that the Employment Sector had lost its position as the sector with the highest expenditures and requested the Office not to ignore the importance of employment creation as an explicit and central objective for sustainable poverty alleviation in member States. He pointed out that the loss of emphasis on the Employment Sector was in direct contradiction to the conclusions of the African Union's Extraordinary Summit on employment and poverty alleviation. The representative expressed concern over the decline of expenditures in LDCs, many of which were in Africa.
33. The representative of the Government of Nigeria also expressed her concerns regarding the decrease in support to LDCs. She appreciated the Office's proposal to streamline ILO internal priority setting and resource allocation mechanisms in response to demonstrated constituents' needs and priorities which would ensure ownership by constituents and increase delivery rates. On the issue of organizing meetings with donor communities, she pointed out that this might increase administrative costs unnecessarily and proposed that other methods for interaction be explored.
34. Acknowledging ILO technical assistance in Nigeria, she appealed for more projects on HIV/AIDS awareness and added that the country would benefit immensely from ILO support in mainstreaming international occupational safety and health (OSH) standards into national policies through strengthening local capacity for policy formulation and implementation.
35. The representative of the Government of Kenya also regretted that the Employment Sector had lost its position as the sector with the highest funding. He highlighted the need for maintaining high delivery rates to broaden its donor resource base, including at the local level. He was of the opinion that the ILO's technical cooperation should continue to focus on: helping member States achieve a higher rate of ratification and implementation of the ILO's international standards to improve working and living conditions; employment promotion; fighting against HIV/AIDS; and increased social security coverage for all.
36. The representative of the Government of the Dominican Republic pointed out that in Central America and in his country programmes which addressed the issues of gender, employment and poverty reduction, as well as labour standards, were vital for the socio-economic development of the area and better governance. He regretted that programmes like MATAAC and PRODIAC, funded by Spain and Norway respectively, had recently ended when the region needed similar technical cooperation programmes.

37. The representative of the Government of India, noting that UNDP funding was still decreasing, called upon the ILO to diversify its resource mobilization efforts. He observed that employment was a major issue for developing countries and that this sector should be accorded the largest portion of technical cooperation projects. The informal sector and social protection should also be considered as priority areas. He advised that more funding should be made available from the ILO regular budget for technical cooperation, to avoid depending too much on donor contributions. National and local expertise should be used heavily to ensure sustainability of the projects and to reduce the cost of technical assistance. He warned that within a globalized economy, inequalities and disparities were serious threats and more emphasis needed to be placed on skills development and capacity building.
38. The representative of the Government of France expressed satisfaction with the quality of the report submitted by the secretariat. She noted that technical cooperation was essentially funded with extra-budgetary resources and with 11 per cent of expenditures coming from the regular budget for technical cooperation. This situation could present a risk for the implementation of the ILO's strategic objectives. In fact, donors' agendas and rules for biddings could, in future, determine a shift in the strategic priorities set up by the Office. In that context, it would be useful for the Committee to adopt clear rules regarding the distribution of extra-budgetary resources for technical cooperation. A more balanced regional distribution should be ensured, with a reversal of the decline in total expenditures for Africa.
39. The representative of the Government of China highlighted the need to make more efforts to give employment its due importance in poverty reduction. He maintained that Asia, being the most populated region in the world, should receive a higher share of resources for technical cooperation. Concerning Turin, he pointed out that field and long-distance training were more cost-effective than other methods and should feature more in training programmes. The representative wanted information, through evaluation, on lessons learned and on good practices that could be replicated.
40. The representative of the Government of the Republic of Korea emphasized the need to ensure a better balance between extra-budgetary resources and the regular budget, maintaining that technical cooperation should not rely exclusively on extra-budgetary resources. He expressed his concern at the delivery rate in Asia which stood at below the average rate. The Office was called upon to give higher importance to the Employment Sector since decent work could not exist without jobs. There was a need to further diversify sources of funding and he felt that competitive bidding through regional development banks was a possibility.
41. The representative of the Government of Belgium took the position that even if the delivery rate had increased, it was still too low. He informed the Committee that Belgium would continue to give priority to social dialogue and social protection in Africa. Maintaining that donor harmonization was crucial, he felt that the ILO had an important role to play toward the realization of the MDGs and the ILO should actively participate in the UNDAF and national poverty reduction exercises.
42. The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom expressed concern at the decline in the share of expenditure in Africa, particularly the LDCs. There was a need for a better sectoral and geographical balance. He welcomed the move towards extending the donor base and the setting up of more strategic partnerships as well as the alignment of technical cooperation to the Strategic Policy Framework.
43. The representative of the Government of Ecuador observed the lack of information on the impact and successes of technical cooperation programmes. Recognizing the volume of

work involved to provide the information, he suggested that the Office could start with one or two sectors. He concluded by wondering why the level of Latin American experts was so low.

44. Mr. Anand (Employer member) highlighted the usefulness of carrying out a cost-benefit analysis of programmes on freedom of association and collective bargaining. He expressed the wish of the employers to see an increase in their participation in training programmes at Turin. He concluded by pointing out that there should be a decision from the Governing Body on the Strategic Policy Framework before any decisions were made on resource allocation for technical cooperation.
45. The representative of the Director-General, Ms. Ducci, responded to the debate and deliberations on the agenda item. She ensured the members of the Committee that all their views and comments would be carefully taken into account. She stressed the importance of having the views of the social partners at all the stages in the programme cycle. Indeed, the participation of ACT/EMP and ACTRAV in the donors' meetings was a step forward in that direction. She shared the concerns expressed by different members of the Committee with respect to evaluation and assessing the impact of projects and programmes; in this context, the Director-General had announced that a unit on evaluation might be set up earlier than foreseen in the Strategic Policy Framework paper submitted to the PFAC. As regards the imbalance in the share of resources among technical sectors, she commented that as the Office moved into a Decent Work Agenda, the boundaries between sectors would be less pronounced and conditions would be more favourable for individual programmes to integrate more with other strategic objectives. Nevertheless, she agreed that additional resources were required for technical cooperation programmes in the Employment Sector. The link between poverty and employment had been well recognized at the African Union Extraordinary Summit; although employment as such was not included in the Millennium Development Goals, it was the responsibility of all to advocate the cause. Without employment, respect for workers' rights and social dialogue, the agreed target of 2015 would not be met; this underscored the need to direct more resources and technical cooperation to the LDCs.
46. Ms. Ducci reaffirmed that the work to improve delivery would continue. She had taken note of the support for the crisis programme and noted that the ILO's contribution to countries in crisis and reconstruction should be given greater recognition. In respect of resource mobilization, she stressed the ILO's need to have a strategy to mobilize resources at the national level and to develop partnerships and work together through the national and international agreed processes and goals, such as the PRSPs, the MDGs, UNDAF and CCA. This was not an easy task and it required the advocacy and help of constituents at the national level. The decent work country programmes were also an important tool fully embedded into those efforts. She also indicated that the Office would take the initiative, if accepted by this Committee, to organize a donors' meeting in order to advance on the partnership agreements and further the integration between regular budget and extra-budgetary technical cooperation activities. She informed the Committee on the forthcoming circular in respect of the collaboration between the ILO and the Turin Centre, and noted that besides the RBTC, all the technical support activities and advisory services provided by field and headquarters specialists to our constituents were also regular budget technical cooperation.
47. ***The Committee on Technical Cooperation recommends that the Governing Body:***
  - (a) ***take note of the ILO's technical cooperation programme 2003-04;***

- (b) request the Office to implement the strategy on resource mobilization as stated in paragraph 17 of the report (GB.291/TC/1) and report back regularly on the results achieved; and*
- (c) take into consideration ILO established guidelines on the evaluation of technical cooperation projects and programmes, as stated in paragraph 141 of the report, and request the Office to ensure that independent evaluations are carried out and reported on a regular basis.*

## **II. Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: Technical cooperation priorities and action plans regarding freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining**

48. In referring to the agenda item under discussion,<sup>2</sup> the Employer Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Jeetun, felt that lessons needed to be drawn from the first action plan, in terms of not only what had been achieved in terms of ratification, but of removing obstacles to the realization of the principles and rights in question – which was the goal of technical cooperation in the area of freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.
49. Referring to various parts of the document, he stated that labour law should also promote flexibility and competitiveness. He wondered whether evaluations had been carried out regarding the ability of labour ministries to improve dispute settlement, and stated that bridges with the Committee on Freedom of Association findings might blur the lines between the supervisory machinery and the Declaration, whose nature was promotional.
50. The Employer Vice-Chairperson posed a number of questions regarding technical cooperation projects relating to the kinds of activities requested by governments; the number of constituents served and their selection; and the criteria used to measure success or failure. He concluded by saying that the Employers' group was unable to endorse the point for decision in paragraph 25, as this only called for an endorsement of an "approach", while the Declaration follow-up called for an action plan.
51. The Worker spokesperson noted the increase in ratifications of Conventions Nos. 87 and 98 since the first action plan, but was concerned that half of the world's workers still lived in countries that had not ratified these two Conventions. The Workers' group drew the following lessons from the first action plan: many projects had been implemented with success, despite problems in some countries; tripartite activities needed to be reinforced by specific activities for workers and employers; the Declaration programme should work in synergy with other ILO programmes concerned with freedom of association and labour law reform; the choice of chief technical advisers for projects was key to their effectiveness; the involvement of the Bureau for Workers' Activities and the social partners in all phases of project design and implementation, including a clear communication policy, was essential.

<sup>2</sup> GB.291/TC/2.



52. The Worker Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Attigbe, outlined the four objectives that had been adopted by the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference in its discussion of the Global Report, noted in paragraph 16 of the document under discussion. Any action plan should be based on these. However, the Workers' group did not feel that the document proposed a clearly elaborated action plan with strategies and means for achieving these objectives. This action plan should include: clearer criteria for selecting countries benefiting from projects; consulting the Bureaux for Employers' and Workers' Activities in this selection, and finding a balance between the geographical priorities of donors and the priorities of the ILO; and full involvement of the social partners and the Employers' and Workers' Activities Bureaux at all stages of projects. New initiatives such as training of judges and employers' and workers' assessors in labour courts should be promoted. The new action plan should also take into account the recommendations of the Committee of Experts, the Committee on Freedom of Association and the annual report under the Declaration. He concluded that his group could not support the point for decision, and requested the Office to present an action plan at the next session of the Governing Body.
53. The representative of the Government of Malawi, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, noted the positive impact of Declaration projects in East and southern Africa. Noting the complex set of issues involved in the implementation of ratified Conventions and the principle of freedom of association, he wondered whether the Office could benchmark good practices of freedom of association and collective bargaining, since nobody seemed perfect in this respect. The group concurred that the political will of the actors involved was a precondition for success in this area, and agreed with the point for decision in paragraph 25.
54. The representative of the Government of Italy, speaking on behalf of the IMEC group, referred to the statement made at an earlier session of the Governing Body, requesting a meeting with the Office to discuss the "interactive" element of the Global Report discussion at the Conference, which needed to be developed further.
55. The representative of the Government of El Salvador, speaking on behalf of the GRULAC group, expressed support for the Office work on the Declaration follow-up; he urged it to continue promoting the ratification of Conventions Nos. 87 and 98. Acknowledging that technical cooperation training initiatives improved the protection of vulnerable groups, he recommended that these programmes include the participation and involvement of the social partners. He also suggested that training activities be more focused on strengthening the capacity of national labour administrations and upgrading labour inspections, with a view to improving compliance with national and international labour standards. The GRULAC group agreed with the approach outlined in paragraph 25.
56. The representative of the Government of Venezuela supported the statements of the GRULAC group. He emphasized the importance, for the action plan and for technical cooperation, of social dialogue and of the involvement of the social partners in discovering new ways and areas of inclusion of vulnerable groups of workers and creating solidarity with those excluded, while a heavy toll had already been extracted from the workers and their families. To ensure fair and socially just productivity, this new dialogue should be informed by a culture of social responsibility. Finally, he stressed the efforts made by his Government to improve labour administration, to which the major increase in the budget and the number of government employees bore witness. He supported the recommendations contained in paragraph 25.
57. The representative of the Government of the United States, supporting the IMEC group statement, posed additional questions relating to the priorities for freedom of association and collective bargaining in the informal sector, and to the impact and evaluation of technical cooperation.

58. She raised questions as to: who would carry out the national tripartite diagnoses and develop the national action plans; who the freedom of association specialists would be; whether an estimate had been made of the costs entailed; and whether there was a resource mobilization strategy.
59. The representative of the Government of Nigeria was glad that her country had benefited from a Declaration project in terms of labour law reform, and felt that more work was needed regarding the informal economy. She endorsed the point for decision.
60. The representative of the Government of Kenya stated that his country had also benefited from technical cooperation in labour law reform. The priorities in his view were universal ratification and application of Conventions Nos. 87 and 98; an extension of the principle to vulnerable groups, in particular those in the informal economy; a deepening of the knowledge base on this subject; and enhanced regular budget resources for the Declaration follow-up. He supported the point for decision.
61. The representative of the Government of China noted that the Declaration technical cooperation projects were strengthening the social partners' capacity to settle disputes and to negotiate and bargain. Government officials should receive training in these matters – an area in which the ILO could do more. He also supported targeting vulnerable groups for training on collective bargaining and organization skills.
62. A Worker member (Mr. Edström) supported certain points in paragraphs 10-12, namely: the necessity of political will for the realization of freedom of association and collective bargaining and the need for technical assistance to allow speedy judicial proceedings in labour matters. He noted that paragraph 17 implied that workers' organizations increased membership in both the formal and informal economies and that a growing number of workers should be covered by collective agreements. He highlighted that extra-budgetary resources would be critical to the ILO's work in following up the action plan. In response to the Employer spokesperson, he stated that it was perfectly valid for the ILO to respond if a government requested assistance in the context of a Committee on Freedom of Association case. He stressed that under paragraph 20(i) the national plans should cover all workers with specific attention to vulnerable groups. Under paragraph 20(ii) he emphasized that national plans should promote collective bargaining and sound industrial relations at all levels, which would result in increased productivity.
63. In replying to the discussions, a representative of the Director-General, Mr. Tapiola, assured both the Employers' and the Workers' groups that if they did not feel comfortable with the draft plan on freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the Office would withdraw the point for decision and go back to the drawing board. The Committee should merely regard this paper as a progress report submitted for information on progress to date; a more focused paper would be provided next March. Indeed, such a rich and basic discussion should have occurred when the Conference was examining the Global Report – which contained all the information and ideas being discussed here. This would have helped the Office to provide a better basis for decision by the Committee on Technical Cooperation.
64. He explained the use of the term "approach" and the hesitation to use the term "action plan" in too structured a way, given that this principle and right was something that several Office programmes were working on. It was also a fundamental constitutional obligation for the Office and the constituents. Such work should not be duplicated, but rather coordinated and rendered more cooperative. In the area of freedom of association, the ILO had a clear mandate; it might even be wondered if this required a formal plan – particularly if this was to be a new plan, different from the one already adopted four years ago after the first Global Report on this subject. If a new plan were developed, would donors be

forthcoming on this issue? Could all freedom of association issues be best dealt with through a technical cooperation project? In practice, there were very few projects exclusively on freedom of association – it was rather an element within projects dealing with one or more of the principles, and with other ILO concerns.

65. In practice, as noted by different members of the Committee, different kinds of work were carried out. The findings of the supervisory bodies required follow-up. Much of this entailed activities relating to legislative advice and reform. Longer term, broader technical cooperation projects, focusing on more substantive capacity building, should actually be carried out primarily under the approach of social dialogue, with the active participation of that programme, and the Bureaux for Employers' and Workers' Activities. The Declaration follow-up had worked in this way on this principle, and should continue to do so.
66. He recalled that each Global Report was followed up in a different way. In the case of the report on child labour, the action had naturally been undertaken by IPEC. In the one on forced labour, a new special action programme to combat forced labour had been set up, since no programme had previously been operational in this area. In the case of the report on discrimination, the action plan had focused on coordinating existing activities in order not to duplicate existing work. Regarding freedom of association and collective bargaining, it was important to avoid the impression that something new was being formally created; rather the aim was to strengthen activities that already took place.
67. In responding to some specific questions, Mr. Tapiola provided details on some projects in which employers' and workers' representatives, along with government officials, had been trained in large numbers in this area. He gave further examples of projects in which both workers' and employers' representatives had been involved in all stages of labour law reform. For instance, in Indonesia, 10,000 persons had received training, and 2,500 of these had been selected by the national employers' association. In Ukraine, work on the Labour Code had been strongly tripartite, due to the Declaration project in this country. In the Gulf States, the understanding of the concept and practice of workers' representation was being expanded, in cooperation with ACTRAV. The Declaration programme had not worked anywhere with employers' and workers' organizations without the involvement of ACT/EMP and ACTRAV, including their field representatives.
68. He made it clear that the approach of diagnoses and tripartite action plans at national level proposed in the paper would be firmly in the hands of the national constituents on a tripartite basis, and that the ILO would be there to help if and as requested. The idea of expanding specialists on freedom of association was to ensure that more people were trained and knowledgeable in this area in all regions, on the basis of the sort of training initiated in this area in Turin. Finally, he noted that work on the Global Report had brought to light the weak information and statistical database of the Office, which needed to be rectified.

### **III. Plan of action giving effect to the resolution concerning tripartism and social dialogue: Oral presentation**

69. A representative of the Director-General, Ms. Paxton, highlighted the steps taken by the Office following the adoption of the 2002 International Labour Conference resolution concerning tripartism and social dialogue. She stressed that in order to be successfully implemented, the follow-up relied on the active participation of all parts of the Office, both at headquarters and in the field. As the lead sector with responsibility for the follow-up, the Social Dialogue Sector had taken a number of actions to lay a foundation for the effective mainstreaming of tripartism and social dialogue throughout the Office. Key aspects of the

two main follow-up components had been laid out, the first focusing on the development of a small number of good practices at the national level, and the second aimed at mainstreaming tripartism throughout the ILO. The national programmes were intended to demonstrate the value added of addressing a priority topic through social dialogue. She provided a brief country-by-country summary of progress, emphasizing the participatory process of programme development and the importance that the national programmes were owned and implemented by the tripartite constituents at the national level.

- 70.** Ms. Paxton also described a number of the tools being used to carry out the ILO-focused component of the follow-up, including the Strategic Policy Framework and the 2006-07 programme and budget process. Key learning from the resolution follow-up would be integrated into promotional and training tools focusing on the roles, structure and function of social dialogue in addressing decent work deficits and leading to a fundamental change in the way the ILO worked. While working across sectors, and between headquarters and the field had been challenging, Ms. Paxton concluded that there had also been some very positive responses and encouraging results.
- 71.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Jeetun, thanked Ms. Paxton for her report. This had laid a foundation for future work, but was only the beginning. He emphasized that the responsibility for follow-up to the resolution concerning tripartism and social dialogue should not be confined to the Social Dialogue Sector. He hoped to be able to analyse the response from other sectors to the follow-up at the March session of the Governing Body. He also inquired as to the general involvement of and capacity building for the social partners in the follow-up activities. Regarding the review of the 2006-07 programme and budget process, he considered it important to analyse the achievements of this assessment.
- 72.** Mr. De Arbeloa (Employer member) congratulated Ms. Ducci for her new appointment. He hoped that more resources would be mobilized in order to promote freedom of association, social dialogue and tripartism, particularly in Latin America.
- 73.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Attigbe, recognized that the comprehensive oral presentation did not allow much room for extensive comments since it dealt both with deficits in giving effect to the resolution as well as the possible ways of redressing them. Additional time would be required to consider these points in depth. However, further information was requested on the results of the surveys undertaken – particularly on the survey of tripartism in member States. Although it appeared that social dialogue was functioning well within the framework of the Social Dialogue Sector, he requested information on the ways in which the other three sectors cooperated with ACTRAV and ACT/EMP. The programme and budget 2006-07 exercise would be instrumental in this way – especially in identifying the extent to which various ILO units addressed the social partners’ capacity-building needs. At the country level, it was very important that the potential of ACTRAV and ACT/EMP field staff be fully used, as they were well placed to know the realities of tripartism and social dialogue on the spot.
- 74.** He also pointed to the importance of clearly demonstrating the value added of social dialogue which took different shapes in various countries, and was largely influenced by government attitudes. At times, tripartism and social dialogue had broken down, and unambiguous analysis should be carried out in order to clarify the situation, ensuring a positive evolution.
- 75.** The representative of the Government of the United States noted that much had been accomplished within a short time frame. However, it was difficult to determine whether additional information would be available by next March on how the various action plans were being implemented in the individual countries. She hoped that the report to the March 2005 session of the Committee would include feedback on the implementation of

the resolution by other in-house units as well, since this exercise was an interesting attempt to integrate social dialogue throughout the Office.

76. Ms. Paxton thanked the Committee for their comments. Referring to specific questions, she emphasized that building the capacity of the tripartite partners was a key component of each of the national programmes. The responses to the reviews of tripartism and social dialogue undertaken in 2003 could be obtained through ACT/EMP and ACTRAV. Although she did not wish to speak for the Bureaux, her understanding was that they worked closely with all the technical sectors, and had developed their own institutional structures to facilitate such contacts. In field offices employers and workers and technical specialists collaborated closely, and were key actors in those offices implicated in the national follow-up programmes. Regarding the value added of social dialogue, it was too early to determine this from case studies, but there were other examples which demonstrated this clearly. In labour law reform, for example, a tripartite approach meant that all parties addressed the topic as a “clean slate”, reaching agreement on principles and putting aside self-interest in the national interest. Improved ownership of the resulting legislation led to enhanced compliance, labour peace and stability. Given the fact that social dialogue could be a slow-moving process, she doubted that the Office would have made significant progress on the implementation of the national plans of action in time to report anything new in a paper submitted for the March session of the Governing Body.

#### **IV. Development cooperation – donors’ perspective**

77. An oral presentation was made by Ms. Alison Scott, currently a senior social development adviser in the International Division of the Department for International Development (DFID), where she leads multilateral effectiveness issues. She is also the lead person on DFID’s Partnership Framework Agreement with the ILO.
78. The presentation focused on the changing international aid context and its implications for technical cooperation; views on technical cooperation in the ILO and how it could be made more effective; and modalities for DFID’s future support to the ILO.
79. Ms. Scott described the current aid environment, outlining the expected increase in aid flows during the next three to five years and the changes in the way aid was being delivered – including continued focus on the MDGs. Although some organizations had felt that the MDGs were not as important, the existing international context of development assistance and contributions towards it were significant. She was of the opinion that the ILO was moving in the right direction.
80. With respect to the MDGs, she pointed out that the focus had shifted from efficiency concerns to effectiveness and outcomes. Ms. Scott confirmed that the focus on country ownership and national policy frameworks were orienting the framework for international assistance. Donor harmonization and participation at the country level would reduce duplication and transaction costs between donors – and the division of labour between agencies would be based on comparative advantage. She stressed that the ILO’s technical cooperation should be linked to national policy frameworks and demonstrate how it was working within its own comparative advantage.
81. Regarding the development role, Ms. Scott held the view that the United Nations had a unique position because of its normative function, its intergovernmental set-up and its neutrality. The ILO was further privileged with its unique tripartite structure, labour standards mandate and Decent Work Agenda. The ILO’s technical cooperation had an important part to play in supporting this role in development. However, she cautioned

against the risk of fragmentation which could result from reliance on extra-budgetary funding. There could be a loss of strategic vision and internal coherence with excessive focus on the donors as the client and not enough on the partners at the country level. She agreed that it was difficult to meet the current demands for technical cooperation with the available resources. She stressed the importance of providing adequate attention to internal quality assurance, lesson-learning, and increased coordination between headquarters and regions, and within the regions. She would like to see the ILO fill its niche and unique role as a specialized agency with high-quality services.

- 82.** Ms. Scott stressed the need for core funding, outside of the regular and extra-budgetary funds, and the need to link the strategic framework for technical cooperation and the overall ILO policy framework – focusing on country priorities, results, working in partnership and a strengthened evaluation system.
- 83.** The lessons learnt from the DFID TC-RAM projects showed that the ILO core system included a quality assurance system which had eroded due to financial constraints; this system needed further development. The Office could strengthen its niche role, its lesson-learning mechanisms, and raise quality standards within it.
- 84.** Ms. Scott described DFID as a highly decentralized institution with key decisions and priority setting made at the country level in line with PRSPs and the national context. DFID had thereby minimized risk of supply-driven agendas. It had moved away from funding dispersed projects to core funding against a set of objectives, and from short-term funding to medium-term funding. It worked with other donors' banks and multilateral agencies on a common agenda, had identified indicators and looked for more synergies at the country level.
- 85.** Ms. Scott confirmed that DFID would continue to support the ILO both centrally, through a mechanism like the Partnership Framework, and at the country level providing core extra-budgetary funding – as was already the case in South-East Asia and India. She hoped to share experiences with partnerships with other donors, learn from those processes and continue to work more effectively with the ILO.
- 86.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Jeetun, expressed his appreciation for the presentation made by the guest speaker. He recognized a number of important issues raised, such as partnership, participation, synergies, focus and results for technical cooperation programmes. He noted that employers were part of decision-making processes at the local, national and regional levels. Poverty reduction and employment were still on top of the list of national development strategies of governments as well as social partners. He added that employment creation was an important vehicle for poverty alleviation. He mentioned that the Cotonou agreement with the EU was an important partnership agreement for a poverty reduction strategy and a step forward for the recognition of employment creation as a major issue for socio-economic development. He noted that the Employers' group was working with the EU through the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE). He expressed the wish that the priorities of social partners be taken into account by donors.
- 87.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Attigbe, noted that the Workers were not always requested to participate in decision-making processes – for example, the setting up of projects aimed at achieving the MDGs and this should be addressed – which was not the right approach for participation and partnership in development. He commented that NEPAD had already elaborated some of the issues raised by the guest speaker but in practical terms very little had been applied.

88. The representative of the Government of the Republic of Korea indicated that although their funding level was small, the Republic of Korea would prefer contributing to larger frameworks to increase the impact of technical cooperation projects. He would welcome further discussions on the issue.
89. Mr. Steyne (Worker member) welcomed the presentation by the DFID representative, particularly on the need to reinforce the ILO's technical cooperation core funding in order to ensure effective strategic planning, management and evaluation. He underlined that the DFID Secretary of State for International Development, Mr. Hilary Benn, was fully committed to involving workers' organizations at the local, national and international levels, as well as both the formal and informal economy, in the promotion of the MDGs.
90. At the end of the discussion, Ms. Scott underscored the strong DFID commitment to strengthen the participatory process in poverty reduction programmes. She recalled that through the Partnership Framework Agreement, DFID supported the ILO's attempts to build the capacity of the constituents for more effective involvement in the PRSP process. She endorsed the previous intervention concerning the commitment of the DFID Secretary of State to the core labour standards.

## V. Any other business

91. The Chairperson informed the Committee that, responding to a request of the IMEC group, there would be a report and discussion on improved functioning of the Committee on Technical Cooperation during the March 2005 session of the Committee on Technical Cooperation. He called upon the groups and Government members to provide their inputs to the secretariat at the latest by the first week of December 2004 so that a synthesis report could be drafted in time for circulation to the members of the Committee.
92. The Chairperson also announced that the next "on-the-spot" review of technical cooperation projects by members of the Governing Body would be undertaken in Budapest during the European Regional Meeting in February 2005; an oral presentation of the review would be made by the review team during the March 2005 session of the Committee.
93. Ms. Ducci assured the meeting that the Office had taken note of all the questions raised and observations made during the very fruitful deliberations. She thanked the Committee and looked forward to working closely with the Committee in the future.
94. There being no other issue under this agenda item, the Chairperson closed the meeting, informing the Committee that in accordance with the standard procedures, the report of the meeting would be approved on its behalf by the Officers of the Committee. They would also agree on the agenda for the next meeting.

Geneva, 16 November 2004.

*Point for decision:* Paragraph 47.