



EIGHTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

## **Reports of the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee**

### **First report: Financial questions**

#### **Technical meetings reserve for 2004-05** (Eighth item on the agenda)

1. The Committee had before it two papers<sup>1</sup> on the technical meetings reserve for 2004-05.
2. The Chairperson reminded the Committee of the need to select a third meeting to be financed by the technical meetings reserve. The only meeting that appeared to have support in all groups was the Meeting of Experts on Updating the List of Occupational Diseases. This was supported by the Employers, the Workers and some Governments. No other meeting had such wide support and there was a risk that the opportunity to include a third meeting would be lost. He urged the Committee to select the Meeting of Experts on Updating the List of Occupational Diseases as its third choice.
3. Mr. Blondel, on behalf of the Workers, agreed with the proposals to select the Meeting of Experts on Updating the List of Occupational Diseases. However, he noted that there was also opportunity to select a meeting on the Multifibre Agreement. He asked the Office to find resources to finance such a meeting.
4. The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom asked for clarification as to the nature of the consultation with Governments, which had been carried out since the previous meeting.
5. The representative of the Director-General (Mr. Thurman) explained that, given the time constraints, it had not been possible to consult all members of the Committee. However, consultations had taken place with as many people as possible, including the coordinator of IMEC who had explained that no consensus on the matter had been reached within IMEC.
6. The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom believed that such consultations were normally held with regional coordinators. She explained that the Western European group had voiced concerns about a lack of consultation on earlier

<sup>1</sup> GB.291/PFA/8 (&Corr.) and Addendum.

occasions and that she would welcome contact being made by the Office with the Western European Coordinator in the future.

7. The representative of the Director-General (Mr. Thurman) apologized for not having spoken with the Regional Coordinator for the European group, whom he had been unable to locate during the intervening period. He promised to make greater efforts in the future.
8. The representative of the Government of South Africa, on behalf of the Africa group, said that there did not seem to have been extensive consultation. He was not aware that the Regional Coordinator had been consulted. In fact the position of the Africa group was not in support of the Meeting of Experts on Updating the List of Occupational Diseases but on the Meeting of Experts: Gaining Influence in Policy-Making: Challenges for Labour Ministries, particularly in regard to the outcome of the African Union Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation and the recommendations of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization.
9. Mr. Blondel reminded the meeting that if no decision were taken, the possibility of holding a third meeting would be lost.
10. The representative of the Government of El Salvador, on behalf of GRULAC, said that the group had taken part in consultations, during which indications had been obtained from various members as to their preferences. These had been forwarded to Mr. Thurman. No consensus had been found within the group.
11. The representative of the Government of France noted that consultations with regional groups had been insufficient. He shared the concerns of the Africa group with regard to their preferred choice of meeting, but the International Labour Conference had made a recommendation concerning occupational diseases. This recommendation could not be applied whilst a new list of occupational diseases had yet to be drawn up. For almost four years there had been a kind of legal void with regard to this recommendation, which required an updated list that would only become available following the meeting of experts. He regretted that full consultation with governments had not been carried out.
12. *The Committee recommends to the Governing Body that the following meeting, estimated to cost US\$275,080, be financed from the technical meetings reserve for 2004-05: Meeting of Experts on Updating the List of Occupational Diseases.*

## Corrections

13. Mr. Botha made a short statement as Reporter and Employer spokesperson about the process of preparing the report. It was an extremely delicate matter to record each speaker's comments accurately and to reflect the consequences of a careful editing and summarizing process. The transcripts of the meeting and the editors' drafts were given to each of the speakers for their approval and to the Reporter within a very tight and narrow time frame and under conditions of considerable pressure. On this occasion a situation had occurred where what he assumed was the final text was in fact subsequently edited. He proposed that a protocol be issued on the method of preparing the report that set out an order in which it was to be checked, ensuring that speakers finalized their own words and that any subsequent editing improvements and proposals were drawn to their attention, and ensured that the Reporter signed off the final version before publication.
14. The representative of the Director-General (Ms. O'Donovan) said that the staff and the office working on preparing the report were keen to have an accurate and full reflection of the debate and discussion. Essentially, the text of a very lengthy and complex discussion

had to be turned round in a 48-hour period, with priority on delivering the text to the spokespersons and the Officers as quickly as possible. Inevitably, there were regrettable human errors, but these should not in any way alter the content or the substance of the discussion. She welcomed the suggestion from Mr. Botha for a protocol and assured the Committee that all amendments to the text would be accurately and fully reflected in the final version of the report.

15. Amendments were announced by the Employer spokesperson and a number of Governments.

Geneva, 18 November 2004.

*Point for decision:* Paragraph 12.