



TENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Report of the Steering Group on the
Follow-up to the Declaration (2008)**

**Oral report by the Chairperson of the
Steering Group, H.E. Mr Z. Rapacki,
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland
and Permanent Representative of Poland
to the United Nations in Geneva**

Oral report

1. The Steering Group on the Follow-up to the Declaration (2008) met on 13 November 2008. Its composition was agreed through consultations as provided for in the decision of the 302nd Session of the Governing Body establishing the Steering Group in June 2008. It was chaired by Mr Rapacki, Chairperson of the Governing Body, and consisted of the following 16 Government members (Argentina, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Jordan, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Tunisia, United States, Uruguay), eight Employer members and eight Worker members. Other members of the Governing Body attended in an observer capacity. The meeting was open to the public.
2. The agenda of the Steering Group contained the following items: the recurrent items for the agendas of the 99th Session (2010) and the 100th Session (2011) of the International Labour Conference and the preliminary implementation plan. The Steering Group decided to discuss these two items together as they were closely interrelated.
3. The Chairperson reminded the Steering Group that the issues relating to the General Survey and the article 19 questionnaire were not before the Steering Group for discussion as these matters would be dealt with at the meeting of the LILS Committee scheduled for Friday, 14 November 2008.

**Recurrent items for the agendas of the
99th Session (2010) and the 100th Session
(2011) of the International Labour Conference**

4. On the question of employment, as the possible recurrent discussion item in 2010, a presentation on the concept, overall content and methodology of the report was made by

the Executive Director of the Employment Sector. The members of the Steering Group supported the proposal which would be before this session of the Governing Body to place employment as an item on the agenda of the 99th Session (2010) of the International Labour Conference.¹

5. With regard to the scope and methodology of the initial report on employment, different views were expressed. Some considered that the report should be focused on capturing what the constituents asked the ILO to do and the impact of the ILO response. It should enable constituents to have a clear picture from which to draw conclusions regarding future work and orientation. Others expressed a preference for a more comprehensive treatment of the topic rather than a very selective treatment, noting that the content will depend on the frequency of the discussion of the employment strategic objective in the cycle. The need for coherence was emphasized and any tendency to treat separately the different strategic objectives should be avoided. The report should deal with how employment promotion enhanced social protection, social dialogue, standards and principles and rights at work. Other members insisted on the need to include a review and analysis of the policies and strategies adopted by the ILO, and not to focus only on Members.
6. On the methodology, there was general agreement that General Surveys should not be the only source of information and that the report should draw on a wide range of sources, internal as well as external, and bring them together in a coherent way.
7. Concerning the second recurrent item discussion at the 100th Session (2011) of the International Labour Conference, an issue which would be before this session of the Governing Body,² there was general agreement that it should deal with social protection, with a preference to address the item of social security among those Members who addressed the issue.
8. With regard to the sequencing of the recurrent discussions and the length of the cycle, in light of views expressed in favour of discussing employment twice in a given cycle, there was support to examine a seven-year cycle instead of a six-year cycle. This would permit two discussions each on employment, fundamental principles and rights at work and social protection and one on social dialogue, in each cycle. This matter will be further examined during informal tripartite consultations before the next meeting of the Steering Group in March 2009.

Implications for the follow-up to the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

9. The Steering Group had an initial discussion on the implications of the 2008 Declaration for the follow-up to the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The inherent value and integrity of the 1998 Declaration itself were strongly emphasized. There was general agreement with the suggestion that the Office would prepare a paper setting out options for review of the operation of the follow-up of the 1998 Declaration in light of the 2008 Declaration.

¹ GB.303/3/1.

² GB.303/3/2.

Preliminary implementation plan

10. The Steering Group recognized that the preliminary implementation plan prepared by the Office represented a very useful document to initiate the discussion. It felt, however, that it should be considered as a very initial step and that the final plan to be presented in March 2009 should be strengthened in several ways and cover a series of issues that were not yet tackled in the preliminary implementation plan.
11. The overall view expressed by the members was that the 2008 Declaration must change the way in which the ILO works: what is expected is not a repackaging of existing work methods and programmes with new labels. The objective is to enhance the capacity of the ILO to make it more relevant to its Members. The members of the Steering Group insisted that the 2008 Declaration and its accompanying resolution should be taken as a whole and the implementation plan should cover all elements of both of them. In particular, capacity and governance issues addressed in the resolution need to be covered.
12. The members of the Steering Group shared the view that concrete proposals are needed to tackle problems arising out of fragmentation across the Office and the lack of coherence and teamwork. The Steering Group recognized the ambitious and experimental nature of the exercise. It was generally in favour of a gradual approach, and adaptation would take place in the light of experience and evaluation. Several members provided a list of specific elements they would like to be explicitly tackled in the implementation plan. Special emphasis was placed on the importance of social dialogue and the involvement of the social partners. The need for a comprehensive communications strategy was stressed and it was suggested that it should combine global and local means and make use of both old and new media.
13. On the concrete proposal made by the Office to launch four voluntary pilot country studies, Steering Group members emphasized the importance of the involvement of the tripartite constituents and requested more information on the criteria to be used to identify the countries and on the purpose of the studies.
14. One observer requested and was given the floor, explaining the support of the Non-Aligned Movement for the Declaration and the need for the ILO to provide the necessary assistance to Members in their efforts to implement it.
15. In summary, the discussions in the Steering Group were open and constructive and provided valuable guidance on the implementation of the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. In the rapidly changing global environment, the Steering Group members considered the 2008 Declaration to be more relevant than ever and its actual implementation all the more urgent.
16. Informal consultations will be scheduled in January/February 2009 with a view to facilitating the finalization of the implementation plan to be presented to the Steering Group and the Governing Body in March 2009.

Geneva, 18 November 2008.