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Legal Issues and International Labour Standards Section

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FOR INFORMATION

Improvements in the standards-related activities of the ILO

Progress report on the implementation of the interim plan of action for the standards-related strategy

Overview

Summary

The Governing Body adopted a standards strategy with four components in November 2005 and an interim plan of action for this strategy in November 2007. This paper gives an update on progress made since November 2010 on the implementation of the interim plan of action as regards four specific action plans (concerning the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, and the governance, occupational safety and health and work in fishing instruments), as well as the technical cooperation and information and communication components of the standards strategy.

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International Labour Standards Department (NORMES).

References to other Governing Body documents and ILO instruments

GB.294/PV; GB.294/LILS/4; GB.298/PV; GB.298/15/3; GB.300/PV; GB.300/LILS/6; GB.306/10/2(Rev.); GB.306/LILS/4(Rev.); GB.306/LILS/6(&Corr.); GB.307/10/2(Rev.); GB.309/12/2(Rev.); GB.310/10/1(Rev.2); GB.310/LILS/5(&Add.); GB.312/LILS/5.

Introduction

1. At its 294th Session (November 2005), the Governing Body adopted a standards strategy covering four components: (1) developing, keeping up to date and promoting ILO standards (standards policy); (2) enhancing the impact of and strengthening the supervisory system; (3) improving the impact of the standards system through technical assistance and cooperation; and (4) enhancing the visibility of the ILO standards system (information and communication).¹ In November 2007, it approved an interim plan of action for the implementation of this strategy.² The technical cooperation and the information and communication components of the standards strategy were defined in November 2007 and are in the implementation phase. Work is continuing on the finalization of the components of the standards strategy on standards policy³ and the supervisory system.
2. In the context of standards policy, the development of specific action plans has been recognized as the most effective way for the promotion of instruments identified by the Governing Body, as it takes a strategic approach and emphasizes the importance of implementation in the promotion of Conventions. Action plans also provide frameworks that involve the Office as a whole (including the field structure), the International Training Centre of the ILO (Turin Centre) and tripartite constituents. Four specific action plans have been put in place since 2006. They relate to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006), the governance Conventions, the occupational safety and health (OSH) instruments and the work in fishing instruments. They are being implemented by the International Labour Standards Department (NORMES), the technical departments concerned and the field structure, in cooperation with the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP), the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and the Turin Centre.
3. This paper gives an update on progress made since November 2010⁴ as regards the implementation of the four specific action plans mentioned above as well as the technical cooperation and information and communication components of the standards strategy.

Implementation of the action plans

Action plan (2006–11) to achieve rapid and widespread ratification and effective implementation of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006

4. The action plan concerning the MLC, 2006, was based on the advice of the Officers of the 94th Session of the International Labour Conference, taking into account the resolutions adopted by the Conference to address specific implementation issues. Activities under the auspices of the action plan were initiated in September 2006,⁵ with a five-year time frame

¹ GB.294/PV, para. 222, and GB.294/LILS/4.

² GB.300/PV, para. 306, and GB.300/LILS/6.

³ At the present session, under the fifth item on the agenda of the Legal Issues and International Labour Standards Section, the Governing Body will consider a document for decision concerning the establishment and the implementation of a standards review mechanism (GB.312/LILS/5).

⁴ GB.309/LILS/4.

⁵ GB.298/15/3 and GB.298/PV, paras 277–283.

(2006–11), reflecting the view of constituents at the Conference that the combination of the comprehensive nature of the MLC, 2006, the ship inspection and certification system and the demanding entry into force formula (see paragraph 5 below), meant that it would take about five years to achieve sufficient ratifications to enter into force. In line with the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, the plan is implemented through cooperation between NORMES, the Sectoral Activities Department (SECTOR), the Turin Centre and the ILO field offices, in conjunction with Decent Work Country Programmes. The action plan adopted a strategic approach involving shipowners' and seafarers' organizations, interested governments and other concerned maritime actors and has involved numerous tripartite seminars at the regional⁶ and national levels as well as targeted capacity-building activities.⁷ The primary objective of the action plan is to achieve the required number of ratifications for the MLC, 2006, to enter into force, and at the same time seek to ensure the effective implementation of its requirements.

5. The MLC, 2006, will come into force 12 months after the ratification of at least 30 ILO member States with a total share of at least 33 per cent of the world's gross tonnage of ships. The Convention has now been ratified by 19 Members representing over 54 per cent of the world gross tonnage of ships.⁸ Of these, eight (8) ratifications have been received since the last report, the majority of which in the last six months. The increased pace of ratification is an indication that national ratification efforts are now nearing completion in many countries in all regions. As of the date of completing this paper, 11 more ratifications are needed to meet the 30/33 formula. Available information indicates that a number of countries in various regions have completed their national legal processes to allow for ratification in 2011 or not long afterwards. This means that seafarers working on more than 50 per cent of the world shipping fleet will be covered by the protection in the MLC, 2006, when it enters into force.
6. As the ratification information set out above suggests, progress has not been as rapid as the five years anticipated in 2006, largely due to economic and other events since 2008 that have occupied government legislative agendas. In addition, the compliance and enforcement system under the Convention, with the inspection of all ships and the mandatory certification for ships engaged in international or similar voyages, of the working and living conditions of seafarers combined with inspections of those ships in port States, means that building inspection-related capacity is an essential first step in

⁶ Since the last report, the Office has undertaken promotional activities in Australia (Asia-Pacific Dialogue on the MLC, 2006, 3–6 May 2011); Malaysia (national tripartite seminar on the MLC, 2006, and workshop on legislative drafting, 3–7 October 2011); the Philippines (Tripartite National Summit on the MLC, 2006, 17 October 2011); India (national tripartite workshop on the MLC, 2006, 19–21 October 2011); France (Seminar on the MLC, 2006); as well as participating in numerous international or maritime events as speakers on the MLC, 2006. In addition, the Office has continued to provide support and advice for national gap analyses and the preparation of legislative amendments in many regions.

⁷ In addition to the many training activities that have been regularly conducted since 2009 at the Turin Centre, in the period since the last report the Office has undertaken regional and national level maritime labour inspector training courses in Jamaica (Training of inspectors from the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean countries, 10–12 November 2010); the Philippines (National workshop on training of inspectors under the MLC, 2006, 11–15 July 2011); and Malaysia (Workshop on legislative drafting, 3–7 October 2011).

⁸ The following countries have ratified (in order of ratification): Liberia, Marshall Islands, Bahamas, Panama, Norway, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Spain, Croatia, Bulgaria, Canada, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Switzerland, Gabon, Benin, Singapore, Denmark, Antigua and Barbuda, Latvia, Luxembourg. The ratifications of Denmark, Gabon, and Latvia are awaiting registration, pending receipt of the information under Standard A.4.5, para. 10, of the MLC, 2006.

implementation. The wide range of topics covered by the Convention has required significant consultation and cooperation between government departments, combined with national social dialogue. The lack of capacity to undertake the legislative drafting tasks to allow for ratification was also identified as a barrier for some countries. Despite limited resources, the Office has been able to concretely address or help address many of these difficulties. Given the challenges faced by many governments over the last few years, the extent to which there has been significant effort made in all regions to move forward and implement the MLC, 2006, is impressive. For example, as a result of the training of trainers courses offered – under the auspices of the action plan – through the Turin Centre, over 240 trainers and maritime labour inspectors from national administrations, and other participants, drawn from all regions, have been trained. A survey carried out in mid-2011 reported that these people have, in turn, carried out MLC, 2006, training-related activities in their home countries or organizations for a total of over 2,000 people. The Office has also developed model national legal provisions to assist with national legal implementation.⁹ Pursuant to the resolutions on social security and OSH adopted by the 94th International Labour Conference, the Office has developed a draft handbook on social security protection under the MLC, 2006, and is in the process of developing draft guidance on the technical elements of maritime OSH. These two documents are aimed at helping member States fulfil their responsibilities in these areas.

7. As the foregoing indicates, it seems clear that the MLC, 2006, will enter into force in the next year or two and, when it does so, it will be implemented, if not universally, certainly on a widespread basis. The only question is the precise date for entry into force. Irrespective of the particular date of entry into force, it is important to take note of an important, perhaps unique, phenomenon that seems to have occurred with the MLC, 2006. Well ahead of government ratification efforts, many requirements of the Convention have already been taken into account and influenced the international collective bargaining discussions and agreements between the international organizations representing seafarers and shipowners. Since one of the ways that many provisions can be implemented is through collective agreements, this means that these aspects are already operative. In addition, a number of the MLC, 2006, provisions have been taken up by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and included in the amendments to one of its key Conventions.¹⁰ These amendments will enter into force in January 2012, with the result that some elements of the MLC, 2006, will already be mandatory for countries that have ratified the IMO Convention. It also appears that many other maritime actors, particularly in the last two years – recognized organizations such as ship classification societies, the maritime insurance sector, private sector trainers and others – are beginning to embrace the Convention. They see that it is an important step forward for the sector and an opportunity for their areas of activity. These various actors appear to be putting their support behind it, and promoting it. This is a rather unusual situation for an international labour standard.

⁹ In addition to those noted above, in cooperation with the Turin Centre the Office has piloted a new workshop on national legal implementation of the MLC, 2006 (26–30 September 2011), aimed at building national capacity to transpose the Convention into national legislation or other measures.

¹⁰ The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (the “Manila amendments” adopted in Manila in June 2010).

8. In September 2010, a meeting of the Preparatory Tripartite MLC, 2006, Committee, established by the Governing Body at its 306th Session¹¹ was held. The participants at that meeting requested that a second meeting be held to allow for further discussion on the Standing Orders for the future Special Tripartite Committee to be established under Article XIII of the MLC, 2006. The Office will hold a second meeting of this preparatory committee from 12 to 14 December 2011, to discuss and make recommendations to the Governing Body with respect to the Standing Orders of the future Special Tripartite Committee.

Plan of action towards widespread ratification and effective implementation of the governance Conventions (2010–16)

9. The plan of action for the governance Conventions was adopted by the Governing Body in November 2009¹² and its implementation is still in its initial stages, due to difficulties in identifying sources of extra-budgetary funding. Nevertheless, through the collaborative action of NORMES, the Industrial and Employment Relations Department (DIALOGUE), the Employment Policy Department (EMP/POLICY), the Labour Administration and Inspection Programme (LAB/ADMIN)¹³ and the ILO field offices, the targets set with regard to the ratification of the governance Conventions and the cases of progress noted by the supervisory bodies have been met.¹⁴
10. Concerning labour inspection, since 2010 one ratification has been registered for the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81),¹⁵ and ratification is under consideration in Canada, China, and the United States.¹⁶ Moreover, in its 2011 Report, the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) noted 51 cases of progress in the application of this Convention.¹⁷ Regarding the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129), since 2010 three ratifications have

¹¹ GB.306/10/2(Rev.). The mandate of the Preparatory Committee is to “keep under review the preparations by Members for implementing the MLC, 2006, identify any common issues and prepare the work for the future special tripartite committee on any questions that might need to be dealt with as a matter of urgency after entry into force of the Convention, including the rules of procedure of the Committee”.

¹² GB.306/LILS/6(&Corr.) and GB.306/10/2(Rev.).

¹³ DIALOGUE for Convention No. 144, EMP/POLICY for Convention No. 122, and LAB/ADMIN for Conventions Nos 81 and 129.

¹⁴ For the cases of progress, see ILO: Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Report III (Part 1A), International Labour Conference, 100th Session, Geneva, 2011, pp. 22–28.

¹⁵ Czech Republic (2011). As of September 2011, 142 countries had ratified Convention No. 81.

¹⁶ See GB.310/LILS/5(&Add.), para. 25.

¹⁷ ILO: CEACR, op. cit., pp. 22–28. The CEACR noted six cases with satisfaction and 45 cases with interest in the application of Convention No. 81.

been registered,¹⁸ and ratification is under consideration in Suriname and South Africa.¹⁹ The CEACR noted nine cases of progress in the application of Convention No. 129.²⁰

11. The ILO has provided technical assistance to 27 countries, usually based on needs assessments and national plans of action agreed upon with the social partners in the context of technical cooperation projects.²¹ Advice has been provided on the design of national labour inspection training strategies in five countries,²² and training workshops based on a comprehensive labour inspector training curriculum published in collaboration with the Turin Centre²³ have been held in 19 countries²⁴ covering over 1,400 labour inspectors from 32 countries. Two separate guidelines for employers and workers have been prepared²⁵ and five workshops for workers and employers have been carried out using these guidelines.²⁶
12. Since 2010, three ratifications of the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), have been registered.²⁷ Furthermore, in Indonesia, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Switzerland and Viet Nam, governments are taking concrete steps in order to proceed with the ratification and implementation of Convention No. 122. The President of the Swiss Confederation announced at the International Labour Conference in June 2011 that the social partners in Switzerland had reached a consensus to ratify Convention No. 122 and the Government requested the Parliament to proceed quickly to complete the steps to ratify the Convention. In addition, in a joint activity of the Regional Office for the Arab States and NORMES, the 2010 General Survey concerning employment instruments was

¹⁸ Czech Republic (2011), Fiji (2010), and St Vincent and the Grenadines (2010). As of September 2011, 51 countries had ratified Convention No. 129.

¹⁹ See GB.310/LILS/5(&Add.), para. 28.

²⁰ op. cit. The CEACR noted two cases with satisfaction and seven cases with interest in the application of Convention No. 129.

²¹ Albania, Angola, Armenia, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, China, Gabon, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Lebanon, Republic of Moldova, Nepal, Oman, Philippines, Samoa, Serbia, South Africa, Syria, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Republic of Tanzania, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

²² India, Lebanon, Oman, Syria and Yemen.

²³ This training material was developed under a technical cooperation project financed by Norway. The curriculum, "Building modern and effective labour inspection systems", covers 13 thematic modules and has been translated into 12 languages.

²⁴ Albania, Angola, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, India, Indonesia, Lebanon, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malaysia, Mexico (covering participants from 14 Latin American countries), Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Oman, Serbia, South Africa, Syria, United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen.

²⁵ ILO: *Labour inspection: What it is and what it does* (Geneva, 2010).

²⁶ In Lebanon, Republic of Moldova, Oman, Syria and Yemen.

²⁷ Fiji (2010), Rwanda (2010), and St Vincent and the Grenadines (2010). As of September 2011, 104 countries had ratified Convention No. 122.

translated into Arabic and published by the ILO Country Office in Cairo. In its 2011 report, the CEACR noted six cases of progress in the application of Convention No. 122.²⁸

- 13.** The Office has provided technical assistance to 53 countries (including 21 non-ratifying countries)²⁹ in order to help in the formulation and implementation process of national employment policies, as one of the Decent Work Country Programme priority outcomes. A training module on employment policies and international labour standards is under preparation, in order to promote employment policies through a rights-based approach. The training module will aim at increasing the capacity and awareness of the ILO constituents, as well as ILO staff in charge of technical cooperation projects for the implementation of Convention No. 122 and related instruments concerning employment.
- 14.** Since January 2010, there have been nine ratifications of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144).³⁰ The Government of Tajikistan is finalizing the ratification process of this Convention. The Office published an updated version of a booklet designed to promote tripartite consultations which will be used as training material in the numerous activities held in the field and the Turin Centre to ensure a better application of Convention No. 144 and to promote its ratification. In its 2011 report, the CEACR noted 14 cases of progress for Convention No. 144.³¹
- 15.** The plan of action was published as a brochure in May 2011 for promotional and further resource mobilization purposes. As indicated in the timetable found in Part V of the plan of action, the initial 12 months should focus on the preparation of country profiles as a basis for the selection of 25 focus countries and the elaboration of national action plans. In this respect, an electronic tool is in the process of being set up in order to give access to country profiles and help in the identification of target countries.
- 16.** The plan of action notes that promotion of the four governance instruments is a shared objective that permeates numerous activities throughout the ILO – at headquarters, in the field, and at the Turin Centre. Thus, an integral part of the plan is ensuring Office-wide cooperation in promoting the ratification and effective application of the governance Conventions, as well as on enhancing synergies with other related activities that are major priorities for the ILO, such as follow-up to the Global Jobs Pact, and the Conference conclusions of the recurrent discussion on employment and of the general discussion on rural employment.

²⁸ *op. cit.* The CEACR noted six cases with interest in the application of Convention No. 122.

²⁹ Benin, Botswana, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Syria, United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam.

³⁰ Canada (2011), Ethiopia (2011), Ghana (2011), Slovenia (2011), Afghanistan (2010), Israel (2010), Laos (2010), St Vincent and the Grenadines (2010) and Singapore (2010). As of September 2011, 132 countries had ratified Convention No. 144.

³¹ *op. cit.*

Plan of action to achieve widespread ratification and effective implementation of the occupational safety and health instruments (2010–16)

17. The plan of action for the OSH instruments was adopted by the Governing Body in March 2010.³² It is being implemented by the Programme for Safety and Health and the Environment (SafeWork) and NORMES in close cooperation with ACT/EMP and ACTRAV. The action plan has been published in the three working languages of the ILO, and distributed widely. Some early achievements in meeting the operational objectives set out in the plan have been registered.
18. In order to promote and support the development of a preventative safety and health culture and increase the awareness of all the elements necessary for establishing and sustaining it, additional promotional packages and other general awareness-raising tools are being developed. These include: guidelines and a training package on the development of national OSH programmes; guidelines for the improvement of national data collection and analysis on occupational accidents and diseases, and on the development and improvement of national systems for recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases; and global guidance on strengthening employment injury insurance schemes towards prevention of occupational accidents and diseases. Support has also been provided for translation of relevant materials into local languages.
19. Three training packages to promote a management systems approach to OSH, i.e. the systems approach at the enterprise level, are in progress. These include packages on risk assessment and management for medium and large enterprises; risk assessment and management for small enterprises; and an audit guidance for companies based on the ILO 2001 *Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems (ILO–OSH 2001)*.
20. The systems approach to OSH and the plan of action have been actively promoted through campaigns such as the World Day for Safety and Health at Work (28 April 2011) and at conferences, symposia and other meetings, including the XIX World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in Istanbul, 11–15 September 2011, and the ILO International Safety Conference in Dusseldorf planned for October 2011.
21. Country-specific assistance has been provided through NORMES with the collaboration of SECTOR to Chile in 2010³³ and the Dominican Republic in 2011; in both cases, tripartite discussions were held on the national legal situation in relation to the Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176), in the context of the three key instruments covered by the plan of action. The ILO also assisted Cambodia, Honduras, Malawi, Republic of Moldova, Nicaragua, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine and Zambia in organizing consultation workshops and developing national OSH profiles and programmes. A mission to provide technical assistance to Ghana is scheduled for late 2011. ACT/EMP continued to raise awareness amongst national employers' organizations on the importance of OSH and to help them offer OSH-related services to members, including training on OSH hazard identification and risk assessment; OSH audits; and preparation of OSH-related guidance material. Capacity-building programmes and workshops were carried out, among other countries, in Albania, Armenia, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Colombia, Croatia, Ecuador, Georgia, Indonesia, Kenya, Mongolia, Romania, The former Yugoslav Republic of

³² Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and its 2002 Protocol, and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187). See GB.307/10/2(Rev.), para. 33 and Appendix I.

³³ As a result, Chile ratified Convention No. 187 on 27 April 2011, and a gap analysis of the three Conventions covered by the action plan as well as of Convention No. 176 is being carried out.

Macedonia and Uganda. ACT/EMP has been also instrumental in setting up an OSH network amongst OSH experts from national employers' organizations in Latin America.

22. Technical assistance has been provided to Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan through ACTRAV to develop and implement OSH policies reflecting ILO standards. In Africa, a trade union manual on ratification and implementation of OSH standards has been tested in regional seminars in Benin and Gabon. In Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia consultations and workshops have been carried out on the application of Convention No. 155. In cooperation with the Turin Centre, ACTRAV has provided training to Asian trade union leaders on the application of the three instruments.³⁴ In Latin America, ACTRAV developed a manual on OSH Conventions and an e-learning training programme on OSH for trade unionists with the support of the Project on Social Security for Unions (SSOS) funded by the Government of Spain. They were widely applied in various countries of the region.³⁵
23. Technical cooperation activities in the initial phase of the plan of action to promote the ratification and implementation of the three key OSH instruments aimed to identify countries that should be targeted for action. This was carried out taking into account the context of each country and the particular needs of its constituents. To enable a systematic implementation of the plan of action, a compilation of relevant country-specific information for all ILO member States has been carried out. This compilation links a large amount of data on demonstrated political will to take action in the area of OSH with relevant standards-related data and selected factual information on the actual situation in member States.
24. This information has been collected in a pilot database. However, a preliminary analysis of the utility of the database indicates that it could constitute a powerful tool to develop effective strategies to implement the plan of action, to seek synergies and to monitor progress made, as well as to identify targets for promotional action and for action to reduce the implementation gap in respect of the three instruments that the plan of action covers.
25. In order to assist the Office in its efforts to seek donor support on the basis of effective proposals, a technical cooperation intervention model for the plan of action has been developed in cooperation with the Partnerships and Development Cooperation Department (PARDEV).
26. Support was provided for national efforts to improve the reporting systems of occupational accidents and diseases in order to be able to use the number of fatalities and accidents as a reliable indicator of progress for national OSH programmes. In Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, OSH staff were offered training based on the ILO code of practice on recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases to strengthen the reporting systems. A global report on recent developments in OSH, including new estimates of occupational accidents, injuries and diseases prepared by the Office, was submitted to the World Congress for Safety and Health at Work in September 2011.

³⁴ Trade Union Training on Occupational Safety, Health and HIV/AIDS.

³⁵ *Formación Sindical en Seguridad y Salud en el Trabajo (SST) para Sindicalistas de América Latina: Los Convenios de la OIT y los mecanismos de control.*

27. In terms of progress since the adoption of the plan of action, reference is made to the information in the appendix.³⁶ This information draws on formal sources of the ILO as well as the compilations of information referred to previously. This information confirms the trend that in many countries, in all regions of the world, efforts are being made to improve the OSH situation at the policy, legislative and operational levels. This fact, together with the number of cases where technical assistance appears to be required or has been formally requested in order to ensure an improved application of the OSH Conventions, seems to be a clear indication that continued vigorous action to implement the plan is both opportune and has the potential to yield high impact.
28. The implementation of the plan of action has to a large extent been carried out within the context of the regular activities of its implementing partners.³⁷ However, since the plan of action was adopted, SafeWork has also been engaged in the implementation of two externally funded projects, one funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)³⁸ and one funded by the European Union.³⁹
29. Next steps for implementation of the plan of action should include increased emphasis on implementing programmes in selected countries for the promotion of the three instruments and overcoming difficulties in their implementation. Target countries for priority action should be identified, and a comprehensive proposal regarding technical assistance to meet their needs should be designed for possible donor support. Promotion of the integration of OSH in Decent Work Country Programmes and UN programming processes will continue to be a priority in the main phase of the plan of action. To increase visibility, a website should be developed where available information on good practices and all relevant guidance, information and training materials can be uploaded. Two research activities on the effects of safe and healthy working conditions on productivity and competitiveness, and on OSH applications or practices which are particularly cost-effective, affordable or suitable to the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises and the informal economy, are being carried out. Based on careful assessment of extra-budgetary funding requirements, efforts will be made to secure the resources needed to implement the priority work items mentioned above.

³⁶ Indicator 11 in the appendix notes the cases of progress identified by the CEACR since the adoption of the action plan. In its 2011 Report (op. cit.), the CEACR noted ten cases with satisfaction and 47 cases with interest in the application of the OSH Conventions.

³⁷ The technical assistance provided to the Caribbean in 2010–11 and to Ghana in the fall of 2011 was funded by extra RBSA allocations.

³⁸ “Linking safety and health at work to sustainable economic development: From theory and platitudes to conviction and action”, available at: http://www.ilo.org/safework/projects/lang--en/WCMS_149534/index.htm.

³⁹ “Improving safety and health at work through a Decent Work Agenda”, available at: http://www.ilo.org/safework/projects/lang--en/WCMS_149466/index.htm.

Action plan (2011–16) to improve the conditions of work of fishers through the widespread ratification and effective implementation of the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188),⁴⁰ and the effect given to the Work in Fishing Recommendation, 2007 (No. 199)

30. The action plan on work in fishing was adopted by the Governing Body in November 2010.⁴¹ The Office has undertaken numerous activities and developed new tools in order to raise awareness about the purpose, scope and content of the Convention, facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices, and assist member States with legislative reforms.
31. The Office prepared promotional material (in the form of a handbook, a training toolkit and a brochure) to support knowledge-building activities such as seminars, training courses and tripartite consultations and campaigns. The Office has also convened a tripartite meeting of experts and adopted guidelines for port State control officers carrying out inspections under Convention No. 188. Moreover, regional and national seminars were organized to strengthen capacity building of constituents in the fishing sector. In the same vein, a technical cooperation project, funded by the Ministry of Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs of Spain, was undertaken for the improvement of the social and working conditions of fishers in six target countries (Ecuador, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Morocco, Peru and Senegal). In addition, training courses were held at the Turin Centre and in Spain through projects funded by the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and in collaboration with Spain's Social Marine Institute.
32. The main priorities for future action in this field are: (i) assistance to member States in undertaking comparative analyses of national laws and regulations and identifying possible gaps; (ii) expert advice in commenting on draft national legislation, participating in seminars, and responding to requests for legal opinions and other information; (iii) preparation of guidelines for flag State control implementation of the Convention; (iv) development of new advocacy tools; (v) guidance on addressing specific issues such as medical examination and certification of fishers, hours of rest and fatigue prevention, and child labour; (vi) identification of priority countries for the ratification of the Convention; and (vii) resource mobilization and identification of donors or other sources of funding to support future activities.

Improving the impact of the supervisory system through technical cooperation

33. An operational framework for the standards-related technical cooperation programme and its action plans has been initiated.⁴² Together with PARDEV, a strategy for attracting supplementary funding is being elaborated and an "intervention model" has been created, which reflects NORMES involvement and goals in technical assistance activities. An additional shorter concept note will present the salient points of the technical cooperation programme to prospective donors, as the basis for further discussion and involvement.

⁴⁰ Convention No. 188 has been ratified by two countries: Argentina (2011) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (2010).

⁴¹ GB.309/12/2(Rev.), para. 33 and appendix.

⁴² GB.306/LILS/4(Rev.), para. 50.

34. In the meantime, the Governing Body, during its 310th Session, allocated US\$2 million of Special Programme Account funds for a limited duration to support the strengthening of programmes which will result in the better application of international labour standards.⁴³ These time-bound assistance activities will be carried out in 2012 and 2013 and are comprised of two elements:
- Reporting assistance to 20 countries, to create a reporting “safety net” that will enable these countries to catch up on their backlog and to better discharge their reporting obligations in the future.
 - Assistance to an additional 20 countries to reduce the implementation gap with respect to certain ratified Conventions.
35. A mapping of all ILO member States has been carried out to identify their problems relating to reporting and implementation. The final outline of the time-bound assistance programme for 2012–13 is being finalized and target countries identified. While this programme is a one-time exercise, it will provide valuable insights for the precise shaping of the wider standards-related technical cooperation programme, once an evaluation of lessons learned is made and additional funds become available. As both the time-bound and the wider standards-related technical cooperation programmes contain strong components related to training, knowledge and capacity building, NORMES has entered into an agreement with the Turin Centre for closer cooperation in their implementation, effective 1 October 2011.

Enhanced access to the standards system and broader visibility

Update on the NORMES database unification project and the online reporting system

36. In August 2009, NORMES launched a major project to consolidate, upgrade and unify its existing databases and develop an online reporting system, the primary objective of which is to facilitate and streamline the reporting burden on governments. The main phase of this project will be completed in November 2011, with the launching of the NORMLEX database. NORMLEX is a new information system which brings together data on international labour standards (such as ratification information, reporting requirements, comments of the ILO’s supervisory bodies, etc.) as well as national labour and social security laws. NORMLEX has been designed to provide comprehensive and user-friendly information on these topics and includes the NATLEX database as well as material which was previously contained in the former APPLIS, ILOLEX and LIBSYND databases. This new information system is part of the ILO’s overall knowledge strategy, which aims to offer a systematic approach to gathering, sharing and analysing information at the country level on laws, standards, statistics and policies and their effectiveness. Such an approach will enable the easy collection and timely aggregation of data across the four strategic objectives of the ILO. NORMLEX is one of the three pillars of this central gateway and will enable the ILO to achieve greater visibility and impact via a single platform and consolidation of all legal information.

⁴³ GB.310/10/1(Rev.2).

- 37.** The final phase of this project is the design and implementation of an online reporting system. The rationale behind the system is to offer the possibility for each member State (including the social partners) to:
- access in one single application all the relevant information concerning the member State's reporting cycle;
 - access all the comments of the CEACR (new and pending comments, as well as historical data);
 - reply to such comments directly online, with the ability to upload and complete all the report forms (whether for a detailed or simplified report) also directly online. The online reporting system will have a secure portal which should enable each member State to log in with a password, taking into account the need for the most representative workers' and employers' organizations to have access to the Government's report that will be submitted through the system.
- 38.** At present, approximately 80 per cent of reports are received by the Office through email. This can raise practical problems, as in most cases, governments also send paper copies of their reports at a later date. The Office has to double-check to ensure that the paper copies and email reports are identical. Once the online reporting system is up and running, countries submitting reports via the system would no longer send paper copies of their reports. After obtaining a login and password, member States would connect to NORMLEX which will give them a list of all their current obligations. The site will provide the opportunity to upload the relevant reports. Annexes, if small, could also be uploaded. Large annexes could be mailed via postal services, but the system will capture their existence. Either these annexes could be made available in electronic format or member States could direct the Office to official websites with reliable information. From the date that member States enrol in the online reporting system, the uploaded electronic version of their reports would become the official submission, and paper or emailed copies would be discarded. At the same time, as a significant number of the 183 ILO member States do not enjoy a reliable internet connection, the possibility of sending paper reports will always be available for countries unable to use the online reporting system.
- 39.** In order to move forward with the online reporting system, some member States will need to volunteer to participate in the pilot phase of the system. These member States will be encouraged to submit comments as to whether the use of the system is feasible for them and how it could be improved to fill their reporting needs.

Geneva, 24 October 2011

Appendix

Plan of action concerning occupational safety and health: Indicators of progress (1 March 2010–30 August 2011)

Indicators	Progress
1. Number of ratifications of Convention No. 155, its 2002 Protocol, and Convention No.187	10 ratifications ¹ Convention No. 155: Belgium (28.11.11). Protocol to Convention No. 155: Australia (10.08.11); Portugal (12.11.10); Slovenia (01.03.10). Convention No. 187: Austria (20.05.10); Bosnia and Herzegovina (09.03.10); Canada (13.06.11); Chile (27.04.11); Germany (21.07.10); Russian Federation (24.02.11)
2. Number of ratifications of other up-to-date OSH Conventions	12 ratifications Convention No. 127: India (26.03.10). Convention No. 139: Ukraine (17.06.10). Convention No. 161: Belgium (28.02.11); Ukraine (17.06.10). Convention No. 162: Australia (10.08.11); Kazakhstan (05.04.11); Morocco (13.04.11). Convention No. 174: Slovenia (01.03.10); Ukraine (15.06.11). Convention No. 176: Slovenia (01.03.10); Ukraine (15.06.11). Convention No. 184: Ghana (06.06.11)
3. Number of countries that have developed and adopted a national OSH profile	3 cases of adopted profiles: Cambodia, Ukraine and Zambia 4 ongoing: Dominican Republic, Ghana, Ukraine and Zambia 47 countries (2002–09)
4. Number of countries that have developed and adopted a national OSH policy and programme	6 cases of adopted policies: Argentina, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Republic of Korea and Pakistan 8 draft policies initiated and under way: Bangladesh, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Estonia (revised policy), Mauritius, Montenegro, Seychelles and Sri Lanka A strategy for collecting data on national programmes is being developed
5. Number of countries tabling or adopting national legislation necessary for ratification or implementation	5 cases of adopted legislation: Ethiopia, Peru, Seychelles, Thailand and Zambia 14 cases of draft legislation initiated and under way: Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Benin, Burundi, Cambodia, Grenada, Kenya, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Sierra Leone, Thailand, Vanuatu, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe
6. Number of communications by member States of decisions to take steps for the effective application of Convention No. 155, its 2002 Protocol, and Convention No. 187 and of other OSH instruments	4 cases of plans to ratify Convention No. 155 declared during the period: Bangladesh, Benin, Chile and Dominican Republic 2 cases of plans to ratify Convention No. 187 declared during the period: Dominican Republic and Oman

¹ In addition, for Argentina the decision of ratification of the three instruments has been taken at the national level.

Indicators	Progress
7. Number of cases for which technical assistance would be particularly useful in helping member States for the purpose of ratification or implementation of Convention No. 155, its 2002 Protocol, and Convention No.187 and of other OSH instruments according to the CEACR or where governments have requested such technical assistance	<p>CEACR: Albania (Convention No. 174); Antigua and Barbuda (Convention No. 155); Armenia (Convention No.174); Plurinational State of Bolivia (Convention No. 45); Bosnia and Herzegovina (Conventions Nos 119, 136, 139, 148, 155, 161 and 162); Burkina Faso (Conventions Nos 161 and 170); Cameroon (Convention No. 162); Colombia (Convention No. 161); Cuba (Conventions Nos 45 and 155); Ecuador (Conventions Nos 115, 119, 136 and 148); Egypt (Conventions Nos 45 and 62); Ghana (Conventions Nos 115 and 119); Guatemala (Convention No. 45); Honduras (Convention No. 62); Kyrgyzstan (Convention No. 148); Mexico (Convention No. 176); Peru (Convention No. 139); Portugal (Convention No. 155); Rwanda (Convention No. 62)</p> <p>Requests: Chile (Conventions Nos 155, and its 2002 Protocol, 176 and 187); Comoros (Convention No. 13); Dominican Republic (Conventions Nos 155, and its 2002 Protocol, 176 and 187); Ethiopia (Convention No. 155)</p>
8. Number of countries that have set up or substantially improved national systems for recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases	<p>1 case of improved systems: Tunisia</p> <p>2 cases of plans to improve recording and notification system: Benin and Botswana</p>
9. Number of countries that have developed a methodology for and use specific OSH indicators	A strategy for collecting data is being developed
10. Number of requests for assistance for purposes of ratification or implementation of the OSH instruments, notably requests from national authorities for legal opinions or advice necessary for ratification	3 cases: France, Republic of Korea and Russian Federation, all concerning Convention No. 161
11. Number of cases of improved implementation as reflected by positive comments (expression of interest or satisfaction) by the supervisory bodies on the application of Convention No. 155, its 2002 Protocol, and Convention No. 187 and other OSH Conventions (2011 CEACR Report)	<p>2 cases of satisfaction concerning Convention No. 155, and its 2002 Protocol, and Convention No. 187</p> <p>8 cases of satisfaction concerning other OSH Conventions</p> <p>14 cases of interest concerning Convention No. 155, and its 2002 Protocol, and Convention No. 187</p> <p>33 cases of interest concerning other OSH Conventions</p>
12. Number of persons effectively trained by the ILO in OSH-related capacity-building activities at national, regional and interregional levels	A conservative estimate is 700 persons. A more efficient strategy for collecting data is being developed
13. Number of Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) that include commitments to improve the OSH system	Out of three DWCPs adopted after 2010, one included an OSH component. Out of 23 pending draft DWCPs initiated in the period, ten include an OSH component

