

**FOR DECISION**

SIXTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Report of the Director-General**Obituary****Mr Vijit Sangtong**

1. The Director-General announces with deep regret the death, on 13 May 2009, of Mr Vijit Sangtong, Chairperson of the Governing Body from 1980 to 1981, and Government delegate of Thailand to the International Labour Conference from 1978 to 1983.
2. Mr Sangtong brought to the role of Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body many years of experience as a very senior official in the Labour Department of Thailand, as well as a rich experience in labour administration, employment and teaching. His period as Chairperson of the Governing Body took place at a time of considerable world tension, with the cold war still marking international relations. As Chairperson he did his utmost to enable the ILO to fulfil its mandate of promoting universal peace through social justice. He did much to increase awareness of the specific problems of the developing world. In his first speech to the Governing Body he stressed that universality was essential to the fulfilment of the ILO's objectives, and that the principle of universality must be based on the recognition and acceptance of differences in values and attitudes among member countries. He urged the ILO to attune its activities to the changes and realities of the world, and to respond more closely to the needs, conditions and aspirations of the developing nations.
3. Mr Sangtong was in particular a strong advocate for improving working conditions and the working environment, to improve the lives of working women and men throughout the world. He believed passionately that jobs should be shaped to enable people to give the fullest measure of their skills and capabilities and make their greatest contribution to the common well-being. He therefore used his position as Chairperson of the Governing Body to help the ILO move towards the adoption, in 1981, of the Collective Bargaining Convention (No. 154); the Occupational Safety and Health Convention (No. 155); and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156).
4. Mr Sangtong believed in the multilateral system in the understanding that it alone could enable contact between people of all nations and allow them to work together, rather than against each other. He also believed in, and promoted, the value of work. As he stated in his address to the 67th Session of the Conference (1981), "The building of a peaceful, just and prosperous world community, in which the dignity of the human person is given paramount importance, can be achieved if we join in working together to inspire, sustain

and assist those who can bring it about: the working peoples of the world.” He will be remembered as a staunch defender of tripartism and of social dialogue.

- 5. *The Governing Body will no doubt wish to invite the Director-General to convey its condolences to the family of Mr Vijit Sangtong and to the Government of Thailand.***

Geneva, 17 June 2009.

Point for decision: Paragraph 5.