



Governing Body

309th Session, Geneva, November 2010

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TENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Report of the Steering Group on the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization

Oral report by the Chairperson of the Steering Group, H.E. Mr M.A. Jemal, Ambassador of Tunisia and Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations in Geneva

1. The third meeting of the Steering Group on the Follow-up to the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization was held on 12 November 2010. H.E. Mr Jemal (Government, Tunisia), Chairperson of the Governing Body, chaired the meeting; Mr Funes de Rioja (Employers' group) and Mr Trotman (Workers' group) were the Vice-Chairpersons. The Steering Group consisted of 16 Government members (Argentina, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Jordan, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Tunisia, United States and Uruguay), eight Employer members and eight Worker members. Other members of the Governing Body attended in an observer capacity.
2. It should be recalled that at the last meeting of the Steering Group on 19 March 2009, it was decided to meet again at the 309th Session of the Governing Body to look at the lessons learned related to the first recurrent discussion on employment and to review the progress of implementation of follow-up to the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

Review of the process of the first recurrent discussion on employment

3. The first item on the agenda of the Steering Group was the "Review of the process of the first recurrent discussion on employment". The document was submitted for debate and guidance.
4. Guy Ryder, Executive Director, Standards and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, introduced the paper and drew attention to the questions listed in paragraph 12 of the document. He pointed out that it was important to reflect openly and frankly on the

experience of the first recurrent discussion so that the lessons learned could be taken forward into the next recurrent discussion on social security which would take place in June 2011.

5. A rich discussion followed on lessons learned from the experience of the preparation and discussion of the report for the recurrent discussion on employment in 2010.
6. In general, the extensive consultations in preparation of the recurrent discussion report, including the discussions in the Committee on Employment and Social Policy, were considered satisfactory. The consultations contributed to the outcome of the recurrent discussion. For future recurrent discussions, it was felt that preliminary discussions, including in the relevant Governing Body committees, could help build consensus on the right content and structure of the report. It was nonetheless emphasized that each recurrent discussion would have its own inherent specificities and therefore, it would not be desirable to believe that there could be a single template applicable to all.
7. As regards the balance between policy challenges and ILO activities covered in the report, the Steering Group considered that ILO activities and lessons learned from their implementation should be covered together with an analytical report of the actual situation and policy challenges faced by member States. The importance of striking an optimal balance between the two was noted. In this regard, prior consultations during the preparation of the report would provide guidance. It was also important, in line with the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, that the recurrent discussion be considered a governance tool and therefore that its outcomes be reflected in programme and budget proposals and other work of the Governing Body.
8. Another issue discussed by the Steering Group was the coordination of General Surveys with the same theme as recurrent discussions. The Group was of the view that the review of the General Survey by the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards should take place one year in advance of the recurrent discussion by the Conference. This would facilitate better consideration and integration of the standards-related aspects into the recurrent discussion. This required a shift from the current arrangement of the General Survey being submitted the same year. Further reflection was necessary to determine how this change could best be managed.
9. There were many comments on the need to have a more focused approach in the reports prepared by the Office. The report on employment was extensive and had covered a broad range of issues in a structured manner. Many speakers nonetheless hoped to see much more focused reports for future recurrent discussions. They strongly emphasized the importance of collaboration across the four strategic objectives in the preparation of the report in line with the requirements of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. It would also be very important to receive the report well in advance of the Conference so that the necessary consultations could take place at the national level.
10. As regards future recurrent discussion topics, the Steering Group endorsed the topic of social dialogue for 2013. Topics for following years would need to be decided in the future.
11. Finally, the Steering Group considered it prudent to continue with a review of the modalities and lessons learned of the recurrent discussions process as it was still new and would evolve each year.

Progress report on the implementation plan on the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization

12. The second item on the agenda was the “Progress report on the implementation plan on the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization”. The document was submitted for decision.
13. The paper was introduced by Patricia O’Donovan, Executive Director, Management and Administration, who explained that it provided a summary of the most relevant actions taken by the Office in respect of the implementation plan. It was a status report and was not intended to provide comprehensive information on all activities undertaken since the adoption of the implementation plan in March 2009. It should be seen as providing a “snapshot” to assist the Steering Group to reflect on the following two questions: first, had sufficient momentum been created to refocus the work of the Office to priorities driven by the needs of the constituents, and second, was there evidence of a fundamental shift in the methods of work of the Office reflecting the “inseparable, inter-related and mutually supportive” nature of the four strategic objectives as required by the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.
14. Overall, members of the Steering Group expressed appreciation for the progress that had been made but considered that there was room for important improvements. It was stressed that realization of the full potential of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization would require a sustained effort over time by the Organization as a whole, with appropriate adaptation to changing economic and social circumstances. The next progress report should present a more comprehensive picture of progress across the Office. There was also a need to report on both political and strategic dimensions, in addition to the technical aspects presented in the current report. Regarding the technical components of the report, the increase in the cross-sectoral work of the Office was noted but there was a strong view that this needed to be strengthened further.
15. There was appreciation of the complexity of the work to be undertaken, as demonstrated by the number of committees of the Governing Body that were dealing with various aspects of the follow-up to the Declaration. It was important that this work fed into the programme and budget discussions.
16. The hope was expressed that the adoption by the Governing Body of the four core results-based management strategies in November 2009, which were key commitments in the implementation plan, would lead to a more integrated approach to achieving the ILO’s four strategic objectives. Both the Worker and Employer representatives expressed a desire for increased consultation and involvement of constituents in the implementation work.
17. The need to review the lessons learned from the pilot Decent Work Country Profiles referred to in the table was considered important. This should be completed before proceeding with a roll-out to all ILO member States which seemed unrealistic.
18. The Worker and Employer Vice-Chairpersons noted that the implementation plan had assigned responsibility to the ILO’s Senior Management Team (SMT) for leading implementation of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, while the Governing Body would continue to guide and monitor the follow-up. The SMT was to oversee the process and define the roles and objectives of ILO departments. More information on how the SMT was fulfilling this role and its responsibilities would have been appreciated. The Workers’ group recalled that, following the adoption of the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, it had requested that a small,

dedicated team be established to coordinate implementation across the Office. It expressed disappointment that this had not happened.

19. In concluding the discussion on this item, the Office acknowledged that adjustments clearly needed to be made to meet expectations and that a greater level of focus and energy would be required to increase the pace of implementation and take full advantage of the potential offered by the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization to meet the needs of constituents.
20. *In conclusion, the Steering Group recommends that the Governing Body note the actions taken to date by the Office to implement the plan and request the Office to take into account the guidance provided by the Steering Group on priorities for future action.*

Geneva, 12 November 2010

Point for decision: Paragraph 20