

**FOR INFORMATION**

## FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Update on strategic priorities  
for MULTI for 2006–07**

1. This paper provides an update on the status of the MULTI strategic priorities, as endorsed by the Governing Body.<sup>1</sup> It also takes into account the further refinement of the priorities expressed during the 298th Session (March 2007) of the Governing Body.<sup>2</sup>
2. The following items were identified in March 2007 to be given highest priority by MULTI for the remainder of the biennium:
  - (a) **Analysis of the benefits and difficulties arising from MNE operations in EPZs and SEZs in terms of employment, working conditions and industrial relations mechanisms.**<sup>3</sup> The social partners will make a proposal regarding the countries to be included in this analysis.
  - (b) **Analysis of CSR initiatives and supply chain architecture.** Studies have been completed concerning the electronics sector and agribusiness, with a focus on fresh fruit and vegetables. These sectors were selected so that the reports could serve as inputs into the Tripartite Meeting on the Production of Electronic Components for the IT Industries: Changing Labour Force Requirements in a Global Economy (April 2007) and the Tripartite Meeting on the Impact of Global Food Chains on Employment (September 2007), respectively. The electronics study has been published electronically and is available on the MULTI web site. The agribusiness papers are expected to be published electronically by the end of November.
  - (c) **30th anniversary of the MNE Declaration.** A special forum to mark the 30th anniversary of the MNE Declaration will be held in Geneva, on 15–16 November 2007. At the request of local constituents, channelled through country and subregional offices, MULTI is also participating in a number of country-level events to mark the 30th anniversary. The countries for 2007 include Argentina, Hungary, Japan, Pakistan and South Africa.

<sup>1</sup> GB.295/MNE/4/1, GB.295/11, paras 34–37, and GB.295/PV, para. 212.

<sup>2</sup> GB.298/10, paras 38–44.

<sup>3</sup> GB.295/MNE/1/1, Eighth Survey, Conclusions, para. 110.

- (d) **Development of the help desk.** Following the decision of the Governing Body,<sup>4</sup> MULTI has developed a proposal to provide companies with expert advice on the realization of international labour standards and the MNE Declaration. Two draft notes were submitted to the social partners in June and July 2007, one on the organization of the help desk system, and one on the scope and the challenges of operating the help desk. The social partners proposed to provide comments on these notes by the end of September 2007. The notes will be adapted by the Office accordingly and will be made available for the Officers to discuss in November 2007. Consequently, the next discussion of the MNE Subcommittee on the help desk will be postponed until March 2008.
- (e) **Training on how to give practical effect to the principles in the MNE Declaration.** In July 2007, the Italian-funded project “Sustainable Development through the Global Compact” finalized the development of a training package entitled “The labour dimension of CSR: From principles to practice,” which MULTI could use as a basis for training activities. The training package is aimed at ensuring a better understanding of the three international frames of reference in the area of CSR, namely the MNE Declaration, the Global Compact and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises; and at providing elements to translate the labour principles into action at the workplace. It comprises a booklet and six training modules. The booklet provides an overview for easy reference concerning the concept of CSR, the three international instruments mentioned above, fundamental principles and rights at work, the European Union’s strategy on CSR, international framework agreements and codes of conduct. The first introductory module explains the content of the booklet while the other modules provide concrete ideas on how to put labour principles into practice in the following areas: industrial relations; the effective abolition of forced and child labour; the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation; occupational safety and health; and training and skills development. The materials follow a highly interactive approach in order to promote the dialogue and exchange of experience among participants. These materials were developed by the project experts with the assistance of two external consultants. The Bureaux of Employers’ and Workers’ Activities, as well as the relevant technical departments of the ILO in Geneva and the Turin Training Centre, were consulted and provided important contributions. Finally, the materials were tested during the first training of trainers programme organized by the project in collaboration with the International Training Centre in Turin during the week of 2–6 July. The participants in this training programme were trainers appointed by the Ministries of Labour and the employers’ and workers’ organizations of Morocco and Tunisia, the countries where the project operates. The training was delivered in French by the project experts; ILO specialists addressed the various relevant topics. After the training of trainers programme, which was considered successful, all the comments received from participants and ILO specialists were integrated into the materials and the final versions have been forwarded to the Bureaux of Employers’ and Workers’ Activities for further consultation.
3. The following items were included in the original strategic priorities presented to the Subcommittee in March 2006<sup>5</sup> and embarked upon before the reprioritization:
- (a) **Analysis of good practice by MNEs in areas covered by the MNE Declaration.** MULTI will present the first set of cases as inputs into the 30th anniversary forum welcome package for participants. The collection of effective practices will be an

<sup>4</sup> GB.298/10, para. 27.

<sup>5</sup> GB.295/MNE/4/1.

evolving work item for MULTI. A selected number of quality cases will be written up and posted online (downloadable in PDF format), with a search engine by topic, sector and region/country.

- (b) **Analysis of impact of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and identification of good practice and effective policies aimed at enhancing the positive contribution of FDI and minimizing and resolving any difficulties.** The ILO has launched the project “SADC: Harnessing corporate social responsibility and social dialogue to realize decent work” in collaboration with the Southern African Development Community Secretariat, SADC Employers’ Group and the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC). This project will include a policy development dialogue on a balanced regional framework for FDI to develop a common understanding of the substantive issues involved in formulating an integrated regional policy. The SADC social partners will undertake background preparatory research work in specific sectors (mining, agriculture, tourism and construction).
4. MULTI will continue to focus strategically on promoting awareness and use of the MNE Declaration and strengthening the ILO’s position in the area of CSR. Based on the outcome of the 30th anniversary forum, this approach will be further refined and a concrete action programme will be developed.

Geneva, 28 September 2007.

*Submitted for information.*