



## SIXTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Improvements in the standards-related activities of the ILO: Possible approaches and an interim plan of action to enhance the impact of the standards system****Executive summary**

This paper proposes an interim plan of action for the implementation of the standards strategy approved by the Governing Body in November 2005 to enhance the impact of the standards system. With regard to certain aspects of standards policy and the strengthening of the supervisory system, it considers that the outcome of the discussion on the strengthening of the ILO's capacity, proposed for the 2008 Conference agenda, could have some implications and would have to be taken into account for an effective implementation of the strategy.

Concerning the implementation of the standards policy, the paper contains proposals on: (a) the organization of tripartite consultations on the matter in light of the Conference's upcoming discussion in June 2008; (b) the promotion and follow-up of the conclusions of the Cartier Working Party, focusing for thematic priorities, on priority Conventions – particularly on the Conventions relating to labour inspection and tripartite consultations – and on recently adopted Conventions, with the related Recommendations; and (c) discussion of the status of Convention No. 158 and Recommendation No. 166 regarding termination of employment.

With respect to streamlining the submission of information and reports due under article 22 of the Constitution, the paper suggests that additional options for a global approach to streamlining could be submitted to the 303rd Session (November 2008) of the Governing Body after the Conference discussion in June 2008, together with an evaluation of the current grouping of Conventions by subject matter. The proposals would also include measures to review report forms and enable governments to focus on urgent issues raised by the supervisory bodies. A global presentation of the dynamics of the supervisory system would be submitted to the 301st Session (March 2008) of the Governing Body.

With a view to enhancing the impact of the standards system through technical cooperation, the paper proposes a plan of action for 2008 focusing on three specific types of interventions: (a) the mainstreaming of standards-related priorities in the context of the ILO's broader technical cooperation activities and other major development initiatives; (b) specific interventions to address thematic priorities; and (c) specific interventions to address country-level priorities in the context of Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). The conclusions of the Cartier Working Party and the comments of the supervisory bodies would be the major sources for the identification of these priorities. A large-scale medium-term pilot programme covering a number of priority themes and pilot countries would be designed and implemented.

To enhance access to and the visibility of the standards system, the following steps are suggested: (a) a proposal for an online reporting system would be submitted to the 301st Session (March 2008) of the Governing Body and certain electronic reporting facilities would be made available for the 2008 reporting cycle; (b) the databases on international labour standards and national legislation, as well as the new country profiles portal, would be administered and further upgraded, with appropriate funding; (c) cooperation with the Turin Centre will continue and a review would be carried out of existing arrangements between the ILO and other international organizations for collaboration on standards-related matters, with a view to improving the visibility of international labour standards among the ILO's tripartite constituents, the broader public and throughout the international system.

## Introduction

1. At its 298th Session (March 2007), the Governing Body examined a paper<sup>1</sup> on improvements in the standards-related activities of the ILO. The paper contained proposals for a plan of action<sup>2</sup> to implement the four components of the standards strategy approved by the Governing Body at its 294th Session (November 2005)<sup>3</sup> with a view to strengthening, in a consistent and efficient manner, the impact of the ILO standards system. The first component of the strategy is focused on developing, keeping up to date and promoting ILO standards; the second on strengthening the supervisory system; the third on improving the impact of the standards system through technical assistance and cooperation; and the fourth on enhancing the visibility of the Organization's standards.
2. Following a rich debate, the Governing Body invited the Office to consider the comments made during the discussion and, in the light of those comments and further consultations, to submit a paper to the present session on a proposed plan of action, including additional options for the streamlining of information and reports due under article 22, such as the examination of an intensified thematic approach to non-fundamental and non-priority Conventions.<sup>4</sup>
3. The main objective of the present paper is to put forward proposals for an interim plan of action for the implementation of the strategy. These proposals take account of the conclusions of the discussion on "Strengthening the ILO's capacity to assist its Members' efforts to reach its objectives in the context of globalization" which took place at the 96th Session (May–June 2007) of the International Labour Conference (ILC).<sup>5</sup> The document reports on the measures adopted by the Office to make progress on implementing the points of the strategy relating to the third and fourth components on which a consensus was reached during the discussion last March.

<sup>1</sup> GB.298/LILS/4.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, para. 89.

<sup>3</sup> GB.294/LILS/4 and GB.294/9.

<sup>4</sup> GB.298/9(Rev.), para. 100.

<sup>5</sup> Report of the Committee on Strengthening the ILO's Capacity, *Provisional Record* No. 23, ILC, 2007.

## **Preliminary remarks: Possible implications of the discussion on strengthening the ILO's capacity**

4. The conclusions of the Committee on Strengthening the ILO's Capacity, which were adopted at the last session of the Conference, envisage the adoption of an authoritative document reflecting its Members' commitment to the Organization's objectives and encouraging them to pursue those objectives in an integrated manner consistent with the Decent Work Agenda, with the ILO's support. An essential element in supporting this commitment would be the possibility of establishing cyclical reviews relating to the strategic objectives. The reviews would be discussed each year at the Conference and would thus become a recurring item on the Conference agenda. At its present session, subject to the outcome of the consultations that are under way, the Governing Body should be invited to include on its agenda for the 97th Session (June 2008) of the Conference an item with a view to the continuation of this discussion and the possible examination of a draft authoritative document.
5. The conclusions state that the cyclical reviews could be a means of providing to constituents and to the general public a regularly updated overview of trends and policies relating to the strategic objectives, and would also serve to strengthen the knowledge base and analytical capacity of the Office. With regard to trends in law and practice, the overviews would be based among other sources on the General Surveys, which are in turn based on the reports submitted under articles 19 and 22 of the Constitution. The tripartite discussion each year at the ILC could thereby help to develop a more direct link between the needs of the constituents and the selection of priorities for future action, including standard setting.
6. The expected positive effects of this on the standards system relate not only to standards policy (the Conference agenda, keeping the body of standards up to date, and the promotion of standards), but also the integration of standards and technical cooperation with a view to the effective promotion of the strategic objectives and information, in particular, by making better use of the reports submitted under article 19 of the Constitution. It follows that the issue of cyclical reviews and the implementation of the strategy to strengthen the standards system should, in some respects, be coordinated. It would be for the LILS Committee to examine how to draw the greatest benefit from the discussion next June to improve the coherence, efficiency and impact of the standards system.

### **1. Standards policy**

7. With regard to the first component of the strategy, the plan of action proposed in March 2007 envisaged the following: organizing informal tripartite consultations on developing and keeping up to date the body of standards; the resumption of the discussion of this question in the Committee in the light of these consultations and the debate at the Conference in June 2007; and the resumption as soon as possible of the discussion on the status of the Termination of Employment Convention (No. 158) and Recommendation (No. 166), 1982. The paper indicated that the follow-up to the conclusions of the Working Party on Policy regarding the Revision of Standards (hereinafter the "Cartier Working Party") should be taken into account in establishing the thematic priorities and implemented taking into account each country's needs and priorities. These needs and priorities should be determined in agreement with the constituents and on the basis of an assessment of the country's situation, for example in the form of a profile, which might be drawn up making better use of the information gathered in the context of General Surveys.

Objectives and a timetable could be established at the national level on a tripartite basis, and could be included in the DWCPs. These proposals were contained in the part of the proposed plan of action concerning technical cooperation.

## 1.1. Consultations

8. Discussions should take place with representatives of the Employers' and Workers' groups and the regional coordinators. Nevertheless, given the very busy schedules of the constituents and the Office, and the numerous consultations that are currently in progress – including consultations on the follow-up to the conclusions on strengthening the ILO's capacity – which might in certain respects overlap, it has not yet been possible to put in place an effective mechanism for tripartite consultations on standards policy. The present discussion could allow the Committee to set the timetable for the consultations and the issues to be addressed, and to provide guidelines on the modalities.
9. With regard to the date, the question is whether it is necessary to wait until after the envisaged discussion on strengthening the ILO's capacity at the Conference in June 2008, for the reasons mentioned above. It should also be noted that the consultations on the working methods of the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards, which in certain cases involve the same representatives, are still in progress. With regard to the questions to be considered, the numerous suggestions that were made during the discussion in March 2007 and in previous discussions should be taken into account. They should therefore include the development of standards, mechanisms for reviewing standards with a view to keeping the body of standards up to date, and possible consolidations. Preparatory work will be necessary in this regard; the Committee might wish to indicate the priority areas for analysis with a view to possible consolidations. As regards the modalities, at the March 2007 session of the Governing Body, several members of the Committee expressed the hope that consultations would be held with as broad a group of constituents as possible. The Committee might wish to provide additional guidance.

## 1.2. The promotion of certain key Conventions and the follow-up to the conclusions of the Cartier Working Party

10. The promotion strategy proposed by the Office involves the identification of global thematic priorities and the more targeted identification of specific country needs, starting with a number of pilot countries.<sup>6</sup> As well as taking into account the conclusions of the Cartier Working Party in determining thematic priorities, the inclusion of these conclusions, in particular, the promotion of revised and up to date Conventions, in an individualized country approach will be developed along the lines indicated in Part III of this document. With reference to the thematic priorities, in November 2005<sup>7</sup> emphasis was placed on the importance of continuing the campaign on the fundamental Conventions<sup>8</sup> with a view to their ratification by all countries, but it was also agreed that priority should now be given to helping countries meet their obligations related to Conventions more effectively. Reference was also made to the importance of ensuring the more balanced

<sup>6</sup> GB.298/LILS/4. With regard to promotion, the question of the economic dynamics of international labour standards is the subject of a separate paper submitted to the present session of the LILS Committee (GB.300/LILS/10).

<sup>7</sup> GB.294/LILS/4.

<sup>8</sup> GB.300/LILS/7.

ratification and application of up to date, non-fundamental Conventions – that is, the technical Conventions, both priority Conventions and others, and in particular those concerning occupational safety and health. Particular efforts should initially be focused on the four priority Conventions, namely, the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129), and the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), and their accompanying Recommendations. Furthermore, the three most recent Conventions, namely, the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), and the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), which have been successfully adopted, now require a strategy for their rapid ratification and effective implementation. It should be noted that the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, already has a plan of action for this purpose, which, *mutatis mutandis*, could be used as a model; the challenge now for this Convention is to mobilize resources. The Office has started to consider the promotion of Convention No. 188.

***Three priority Conventions are essential  
for the effective application of standards:  
Conventions Nos 81, 129 and 144***

11. The paper on improvements in standards-related activities submitted to the Committee at its previous meeting proposed that the contribution of the labour inspection Conventions (Nos 81 and 129) and the Convention on tripartite consultation (No. 144) to the effectiveness of the supervisory system should be enhanced, as these Conventions are based on the participation of all the national actors directly concerned (governments, social partners and labour inspection) in the implementation of ratified Conventions.

Conventions Nos 81 and 129

12. Labour inspection was the subject of a General Survey by the Committee of Experts, which was discussed by the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards in June 2006.<sup>9</sup> On that occasion, the tripartite constituents reaffirmed their great interest in the sustained strengthening of national labour inspection systems as fundamental instruments in implementing decent work. In November 2006, the Office submitted a paper to the Committee on Employment and Social Policy (ESP)<sup>10</sup> setting out proposals for a strategy to modernize and reinvigorate labour inspection, which were supplemented to and commented upon by the constituents during the discussion. The promotion of the ratification and application of Conventions Nos 81 and 129 is included among the proposals.<sup>11</sup> Following this discussion, the Governing Body invited the Office to develop,

<sup>9</sup> See the General Survey on labour inspection, Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Report III (Part 1B), ILC, 95th Session, 2006; and Report of the Committee on the Application of Standards, Part One, *Provisional Record*, No. 24, ILC, 95th Session, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> GB.297/ESP/3.

<sup>11</sup> The following proposals are also mentioned: the preparation of a policy paper on the role of labour inspection in Decent Work Country Programmes; the organization of an international meeting of labour inspectors to further develop strategies for their future in the governance of the world of work; the development of fact sheets, guides and good practice studies in appropriate formats, including an Internet portal to disseminate research results and information on policy, legal and implementation matters related to labour inspection; the development of policy and training tools to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of inspection services; further consideration by the Subcommittee on Multinational Enterprises, in the context of the InFocus Initiative on corporate

evaluate and implement a strategy for the support of the modernization and reinvigoration of labour inspection, with international collaboration<sup>12</sup> as required to achieve these objectives.<sup>13</sup>

13. The labour inspection Conventions lay down the obligation to publish and communicate to the ILO an annual report on the work of the labour inspection services.<sup>14</sup> It should be emphasized that these reports are an extremely valuable tool in assessing the extent to which national legislation on working conditions and the protection of workers while engaged in their work is enforced in the major sectors of the economy (industry, commerce and agriculture). When they are of good quality, annual inspection reports reflect the organization, human and material resources, scope and results of the labour inspection system. Apart from the fact that the annual reports provide national authorities with a regular means of assessing the extent to which the available means match requirements, they are an invaluable and regular source of practical information and numerical data that is indispensable for the ILO supervisory bodies for the evaluation of the application of a large number of ratified international standards and support for the efforts made by the governments concerned in this regard.
14. Nevertheless, the General Survey deplored the fact that many countries bound by the labour inspection Conventions are still unable to produce and publish an annual report, and that the content of these reports is not always such that it is of real value. Considering the importance of fulfilling the obligation to produce an annual report on labour inspection with a view to improving the supervisory system for international labour standards, a strategy for the promotion of the labour inspection Conventions should give priority to technical assistance so as to develop the sustained capacity to publish an annual report, as required by Conventions Nos 81 and 129, and in accordance with the guidance provided in Recommendation No. 81.
15. The active participation of the social partners is another key element in this strategy. One of the objectives of the obligation to publish an annual report on inspection activities is precisely to keep the social partners informed of the functioning, progress and inadequacies of the labour inspection system and to give them an opportunity to express their criticisms, recommendations and opinions to its improvement. Comments from employers' or workers' organizations concerning the annual report on inspection are a very valuable additional source of practical information for the ILO supervisory bodies in carrying out their mission effectively.

#### Convention No. 144

16. It will be recalled that the resolution concerning tripartism and social dialogue adopted by the ILC at its 90th Session (Geneva, June 2002) mentioned that social dialogue and tripartism have proved to be valuable and democratic means to address social concerns,

social responsibility, on the role of the ILO in respect of these private systems and their relationship to public inspection.

<sup>12</sup> In collaboration with other organizations (including the WHO, the European Commission and the International Association of Labour Inspection), the ILO recently held an international conference on the theme "Making decent work a global goal and a local reality" during the largest safety and health exhibition in the world (Sep. 2007, Düsseldorf). One of the central issues addressed was the strengthening of labour inspection systems within the context of the Decent Work Agenda and, in particular, the Decent Work Country Programmes.

<sup>13</sup> GB.297/14(Rev.).

<sup>14</sup> GB.298/LILS/4.

build consensus, help elaborate international labour standards and examine a wide range of labour issues on which the social partners play a direct, legitimate and irreplaceable role. Activities have been carried out to give effect to this resolution.<sup>15</sup> In particular, during a special session of the Governing Body in November 2002 a campaign was launched for the ratification of Convention No. 144 with the publication of a brochure entitled *Tripartite consultation: Ratify and apply Convention No. 144*.<sup>16</sup> A series of promotional activities followed, with the support and assistance of many field offices, resulting in 18 new ratifications since 2002, bringing the total number of ratifications to date to 121.

17. More recently, the African Regional Meeting (April 2007) emphasized that effective tripartism is a mechanism of governance that enables labour markets to function efficiently and equitably, that it can make a major contribution to improving the effectiveness and accountability of government and that the ratification and application of Convention No. 144 is an important support to the development of tripartism.<sup>17</sup>
18. The discussion in the LILS Committee in March 2007 also showed that there was a consensus regarding the major importance of ratifying and applying this Convention for the standards system in general. It is therefore proposed to strengthen the campaign for the universal ratification and effective application of Convention No. 144.
19. The tripartite consultations required under the terms of Convention No. 144 cover five main areas: items on the agenda of the ILC; proposals to be made to parliaments in connection with the submission of instruments adopted by the Conference; re-examination of unratified Conventions and of Recommendations to which effect has not yet been given; reports under article 22 of the Constitution; and proposals for the denunciation of Conventions. In addition, Recommendation No. 152 indicates that tripartite consultations should also be held on the preparation and implementation of legislative or other measures to give effect to international labour Conventions and Recommendations, ILO technical cooperation activities, action to be taken in respect of decisions by the Conference and, in general, measures to promote a better knowledge of the ILO's activities. In the interests of efficient and effective implementation, it would appear necessary to maintain a global view of all the areas covered by Convention No. 144 and Recommendation No. 152.
20. The implementation of Convention No. 144 can therefore make an important contribution to implementing the four components of the standards strategy, by involving the social partners at the national level in the examination and discussion of all standards-related issues, thereby establishing an effective national intermediary for action at the international level.
21. Accordingly, as part of a plan of action including a reinforced campaign for the ratification and implementation of Convention No. 144, action should be taken in the field to promote the better application of this Convention at the national level in order to overcome the difficulties encountered by some member States, and to ensure full and effective tripartite participation at the sessions of the Conference.

<sup>15</sup> GB.285/7/1.

<sup>16</sup> An internal Task Team comprised of officials from the Social Dialogue, Labour Law and Labour Administration branch (DIALOGUE), the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) and the Standards Department, worked together to draft promotional material, aimed at both the ratification and implementation of Convention No. 144.

<sup>17</sup> Paragraph 21 of the conclusions of the 11th African Regional Meeting, Addis Ababa, 24–27 April 2007.

22. The Office should also pay special attention to countries that have a significant backlog in the submission to national parliaments of instruments adopted by the Conference. A major effort should also be made to ensure that the recommendations on policy regarding the revision of standards are implemented at the national level, in particular, with a view to promoting the ratification of recent Conventions which entails the denunciation of revised Conventions. The promotion of Convention No. 144 should therefore enable certain countries to determine on a tripartite basis their needs and priorities in the field of standards, including in terms of technical assistance, in accordance with the method proposed under the third component of the strategy.
23. Finally, the active participation of the social partners should be ensured so that the observations made to the supervisory bodies on the application of ratified Conventions is a source of detailed and reasoned information based on the relevant documents. The application of Convention No. 144 can accordingly contribute to the process of streamlining the submission and examination of information and reports under article 22, in particular by giving employers' and workers' organizations the opportunity to include their own observations in the reports submitted by governments. The consultation procedures relating to these reports could also make it easier to draw a distinction between questions that need to be brought to the attention of the supervisory bodies and those that might more usefully be discussed on a tripartite basis at the national level. In general, the social partners should be in a position to play to the full the role assigned to them under the terms of ratified Conventions in developing, implementing and reviewing the policies and measures envisaged by each instrument.
24. Lastly, greater use should be made of the tripartite consultation and social dialogue mechanisms established by Convention No. 144 for the development and implementation of DWCPs.

### ***Development of a strategy for Convention No. 187***

25. Since the adoption of the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention (No. 187) and Recommendation (No. 197), 2006, their promotion by ILO specialists both at headquarters and in the field has been part of the implementation of the Global Strategy of 2003. This aims to improve the occupational safety and health situation generally and to increase awareness of the need to take action, not only at the enterprise level, but also at the national level. The promotion of Convention No. 187 and Recommendation No. 197 is designed to be part of a multipronged "package" involving targeted action at the global, regional and national levels. This package would also include the promotion of the closely related Occupational Safety and Health Convention (No. 155) and Recommendation (No. 164), 1981, in the light of the outcome of the General Survey to be carried out in 2008 by the Committee of Experts in relation to these two instruments.
26. Globally, the Office is promoting Convention No. 187 and Recommendation No. 197, together with the ILO *Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems (ILO-OSH 2001)*, at relevant international conferences and symposia, as well as at events such as the World Day for Safety and Health. The ILO is also promoting them in the context of its collaboration with other relevant international agencies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO)<sup>18</sup> and the International Association of Labour Inspection (IALI). Promotional material (pamphlets and CD-ROM-based information) is being developed and the ILO web site will be upgraded to give these new instruments increased visibility.

<sup>18</sup> The recently adopted WHO strategy – "WHO global plan of action on workers' health 2008–17" – includes a reference to Convention No. 187.



27. At the regional level, the objective is to mainstream the promotion of Convention No. 187 in the activities of regional institutions and alliances.<sup>19</sup> This strategy is being pursued in other regions, including through the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) and the African Regional Labour Administration Centre (ARLAC). The strong support from the European Union for the adoption of Convention No. 187 is reflected in the EU Strategy for improving quality and productivity at work.<sup>20</sup>
28. At the national level, specially tailored approaches are being applied in accordance with the needs of individual countries. Assistance has in many cases been targeted towards developing national occupational safety and health profiles and programmes, as well as the implementation and evaluation of national programmes, building on the approach adopted in Convention No. 187 and Recommendation No. 197. This strategy will, as a priority, be pursued in countries that have expressed an interest in upgrading their national occupational safety and health situation in the context of the DWCPs.<sup>21</sup>
29. For the purpose of this strategy, the ILO is seeking to mobilize donor support. Interdepartmental collaboration, including with the Employers' and Workers' Activities Bureaus and the Turin Centre, is being strengthened. A targeted action plan will be examined at a meeting in Geneva with all field specialists at the end of 2007.

### 1.3. Resumption of the discussion on the status of the Termination of Employment Convention (No. 158) and Recommendation (No. 166), 1982

30. It should be recalled that, at the start of its work in 1995, the Cartier Working Party took as the point of reference for its review the classification established by the Ventejol Working Party.<sup>22</sup> Convention No. 158 and Recommendation No. 166 were classified by the Ventejol Working Party as instruments to be promoted on a priority basis.<sup>23</sup> In 2002, when the Cartier Working Party completed its work, these two instruments were the only ones in respect of which it did not reach any conclusions. Thus, the last decision by the Governing Body concerning the status of these instruments dates back to 1987, while the views of the social partners at present remain widely divergent. In these circumstances, the Committee could indicate how it wishes to proceed on this matter, including, if necessary, by envisaging preliminary consultations.

<sup>19</sup> See for example, the Joint Communiqué of the 19th ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting in Singapore, 5 May 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Community Strategy 2007–12 on Health and Safety at Work (SEC (2007) 214; SEC (2007) 215; SEC (2007) 216).

<sup>21</sup> See for example, the DWCPs for many of the Eastern European countries.

<sup>22</sup> GB.262/LILS/3, para. 67(1).

<sup>23</sup> See *Official Bulletin*, Special issue, Series A, Vol. LXX, 1987; GB.280/LILS/5, para. 65.

## **2. Increasing the coherence, integration and efficacy of the supervisory system**

### **2.1. Streamlining the sending and processing of information and reports due under article 22 of the Constitution**

- 31.** Implementation of the second main component of the strategy focuses on streamlining the sending and processing of information and reports due under article 22 of the Constitution. This involves identifying means of reducing the workload on governments, the supervisory bodies and the Office, while maintaining and improving the quality of information on the application of ratified Conventions so that it can be used appropriately by constituents and the ILO.<sup>24</sup>

#### ***The importance and issues involved in a global approach to streamlining***

- 32.** The paper on the standards-related strategy discussed last March set out two options: (1) adoption of specific streamlining measures (improved follow-up in cases of serious failure to meet reporting and other obligations, strengthening the participation of employers' and workers' organizations in the supervisory process, further adjustment of the reporting cycle for fundamental and priority Conventions, simplification of the questions and requests for information made to governments); and (2) a global approach to streamlining the sending and processing of information and reports, based on the integration of a country-based approach into the supervision of the application of ratified Conventions.
- 33.** Two of the individual measures proposed should first be outlined briefly. Strengthening the participation of employers' and workers' organizations in the supervision of the application of ratified Conventions is an important aspect of the promotion of Convention No. 144, to which reference was made in the context of the first component of the strategy. With regard to the individualized follow-up of cases of serious failure to meet reporting or other standards-related obligations, the Office will report to the Committee of Experts at its next meeting (November–December 2007) on the action it has taken since the last session of the Conference, including in the area of technical assistance, so that it can take this information into account in its observations on these cases. The issue will also, in accordance with its normal practice, be addressed in the general part of the next report of the Committee of Experts. An assessment of the individualized follow-up since 2005 could be presented to the Governing Body at its 303rd Session (November 2008) at the earliest, taking into account the progress made in integrating issues relating to the sending of reports into the DWCPs, in accordance with the approach advocated under the third component of the strategy.
- 34.** The discussion that took place in March 2007 confirmed the value of a global approach with a view to identifying the most sustainable solutions in relation to the workload of constituents, the supervisory bodies and the Office, and also to enhance the impact of the supervisory system and its integration it into the ILO's activities. What is at stake is the contribution of the supervisory system to the achievement of decent work objectives, as the supervisory system should at one and the same time be a means of obtaining information on the application of international labour standards, of guaranteeing their effective

<sup>24</sup> GB.298/LILS/4, paras 23–53.

implementation and a dialogue and reference framework in support of the efforts of member States to implement international labour standards. However, the incorporation of a country approach to the supervisory system has been set aside. The Governing Body accordingly requested the Office to propose additional options, such as an intensified thematic approach for the non-fundamental and non-priority Conventions.

35. It should be recalled that the Governing Body is due to discuss an evaluation of the thematic grouping of Conventions for reporting purposes in 2008.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, as indicated in paragraphs 5 and 6 above, there may be a link between the cyclical reviews proposed in the context of the discussion on strengthening the ILO's capacity and the General Surveys, which are based on article 19 and 22 reports. This means that the cycle that would be adopted for the cyclical reviews would have implications for a possible cycle of General Surveys.
36. It would seem to be judicious, in the interests of coherence and maintaining an overview of the situation with regard to the sending and processing of reports, for the 303rd Session of the Governing Body (November 2008) to undertake both an evaluation of the current grouping and an examination of any new proposals, in the light of any decisions that are made on the proposed cyclical reviews following the Conference discussions in June 2008.

### **Questions and requests for information addressed to governments: Interim proposals**

37. One aspect of streamlining is referred to repeatedly by governments, which emphasize the need to reduce their workload in terms of reporting. There are two related issues involved: re-examination of the content of the report form and the distinction between important requests for information by the supervisory bodies and those that are less important.
38. The issue of the questions and requests made by the Committee of Experts is an issue that pertains directly to the Committee's working methods, on which it has already embarked upon a process of reflection.<sup>26</sup> The question will accordingly be proposed to the Committee for discussion at its 78th Session (November–December 2007).
39. The paper discussed in March<sup>27</sup> recalled the constitutional basis of report forms and the role of the Governing Body in this matter. It also recalled that these forms only give rise to detailed reports in the case of first reports following ratification, or at the request of the supervisory bodies.
40. During the discussion last March, a number of members of the Governing Body supported the simplification of reporting on ratified Conventions, including through a review of the report forms. The Office suggested that difficulties were more likely to arise with report forms relating to "technical" Conventions and that all report forms for Conventions grouped under the same subject should be reviewed simultaneously.
41. Report forms are adopted by the Governing Body after meticulous preparation and discussion in the LILS Committee. The approach followed up to now in the formulation of

<sup>25</sup> Documents GB.298/LILS/4, para. 32, and GB.283/LILS/6, para. 9.

<sup>26</sup> The Committee of Experts had envisaged the possibility of assigning a specific priority to its comments when sending them, so that governments could identify more easily and reply to urgent questions.

<sup>27</sup> GB.298/LILS/4, para. 40.

report forms is that they have to be aligned closely with the provisions of the Convention and allow the Committee of Experts to receive the information required. A complete review of the report forms would entail: (1) an examination of the questions contained in the report forms with a view to rendering them more easily to understand and to answer, including the process followed in their identification and formulation; (2) an examination of the current approach followed for the substantive part of the report forms based on provision-specific questions, with a view to facilitating the compilation by governments of information on the application of ratified Conventions. A complete review of report forms would therefore, to a certain degree, depend on the outcome of the decision taken on the broader issue of how to streamline the information and reports due under article 22 of the Constitution. In the meantime, a review of a particular subject could be considered, as a “pilot project”, with a view to examining the questions contained in the report forms corresponding to that subject. An assessment of the pilot could then be made. On that basis, consideration could be given to how to proceed in the most efficient and effective manner, taking into account the outcome of the broader discussion and the suggestions made by some members of the Governing Body last March. Taking the current grouping of Conventions as a starting point for the preliminary review, it is suggested that one of the three following groups of Conventions should be used as pilot Conventions: employment, occupational safety and health or social security. As suggested by some members of the Governing Body, the Office will seek the views of the Committee of Experts on the matter and hopes to have the benefit of the comments of the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards.

42. In the short term, the three following possibilities could be considered with a view to addressing the call for the simplification of report forms.
43. *Making report forms available online.* While report forms for the majority of Conventions have been available online for some time, it has not been possible to fill them out electronically. The Office is currently piloting refined versions of electronic report forms, which will contain specific spaces for responses by governments to the questions on the forms. It will be possible to download the report forms and process them offline before submitting them to the International Labour Office. Some of these report forms should be available for the 2008 reporting cycle.<sup>28</sup>
44. *Guidance.* The complexity of reporting has increased, partly due to an increase in ratifications, different reporting cycles and the need to differentiate between first and subsequent reports. It has been found that the present “Practical guidance for drawing up reports” on the cover page of report forms does not provide all the guidance currently required by users. This practical guidance could be reviewed to provide a clearer and updated note for users of report forms, incorporating relevant passages of the *Handbook of procedures relating to international labour Conventions and Recommendations*. It should also be made more relevant to the online reporting process and the fact that much information referred to by Governments is available online by, for example, including links to the relevant documentation available online.
45. *Introductory and closing paragraphs of report forms.* The introductory and concluding sections could also be reviewed as an intermediate step. The introductory and closing paragraphs of the report forms for the various Conventions often request different information from governments. While part of this distinction is warranted by the differences in the scope of the Conventions, the general questions could be standardized to further facilitate reporting.

<sup>28</sup> See para. 72 below.

46. A report on the progress made in this review, which would also cover short-term suggestions, could be submitted to the Governing Body at its 303rd Session (November 2008) as part of the options for the streamlining of information and reports due under article 22 of the Constitution. In any event, any proposed revision will entail a formal resubmission of report forms to the Governing Body. The human resource implications of such a review would also need to be assessed.

## 2.2. The dynamics of the supervisory system <sup>29</sup>

47. Still based on the logic of a global approach, the paper discussed in March 2007 drew attention to the need to undertake a global analysis of the dynamics of the supervisory system, which has never been done before. The issue has required considerable research effort, which has been undertaken since the discussion in March, but could not be completed early enough to be able to produce a paper for discussion at the current session of the Governing Body. A paper could therefore be submitted at the 301st Session (March 2008). At this stage, clarification is still needed on a number of points, including the objective and utility of a discussion within the Governing Body.
48. There were originally two main issues regarding the dynamics of the supervisory system: (1) the question of the links between the various procedures relating to ratified Conventions (articles 22, 24 and 26 of the Constitution), including the special procedure for freedom of association; a full analysis of this question should also include the question of the interpretation of Conventions; and (2) the specific case of the obligation to report on non-ratified Conventions and on Recommendations (article 19 of the Constitution) at the request of the Governing Body, which gives rise to the General Surveys of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, which also draw on information contained in article 22 reports.
49. The question of reports submitted under article 19 of the Constitution also overlaps with another question, namely the links between the cyclical reviews proposed in the framework of the question of strengthening the ILO's capacity and General Surveys. It would therefore seem logical to await the outcome of the forthcoming discussions in the Governing Body and the Conference on this subject before determining when and how the examination of the question of reports under article 19 of the Constitution and their complementary with the reports under article 22 should be resumed in the context of the implementation of the standards strategy.
50. The question of the links between the various procedures relating to ratified Conventions (articles 22, 24 and 26 of the Constitution), including the special procedure for freedom of association, is based on the following consideration (referred to in previous discussions in the Governing Body): <sup>30</sup> in keeping with the relevant constitutional provisions, the Governing Body and the Conference have pragmatically evolved procedures as the need arose to enable these provisions to be applied. In addition, within their respective mandates, the supervisory bodies have sought to define and improve their working methods and procedures, which have also evolved in line with requirements related, for example, to the increase in their workload.
51. Because they are part of a single overall supervisory system, the aim of which is to ensure the effective implementation of international labour standards, there are close links between the supervisory procedures, which all influence one another. These links mostly

<sup>29</sup> GB.298/LILS/4, para. 53.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, GB.288/LILS/1, para. 3.

have no formal basis, having arisen from the practice of each supervisory body or from the requirements associated with the examination of an individual case, and they have never been presented from a global point of view. Such an initiative would provide a basis for an analysis of these links, some of which are better known than others, recalling their origins and development. It would also contribute to a better and more coherent overall understanding of the supervisory system, and therefore to greater transparency in its functioning. It would logically form part of a strategy to strengthen the impact of the supervisory system. Finally, the Governing Body would appear to be the most appropriate body to discuss this issue, in view of the key role that it plays in many respects in coherent operation of the system as a whole.

### **3. Enhanced impact of the standards system through technical cooperation**

52. The third component of the strategy,<sup>31</sup> focusing on technical cooperation as a means of enhancing the impact of the standards system, was generally endorsed by the Governing Body last March.
53. The paper discussed in March recalled that, in the context of ILO standards-related activities, technical cooperation activities should be provided, as appropriate, to assist member States through the different phases leading to the full implementation of standards: at the promotional stage, in the ratification phase and through the implementation and application of Conventions, taking into account the comments of the supervisory bodies.
54. On this basis, the strategy draws on the advantages of the combined thematic and country-specific approach of the International Labour Standards Department to standards-related activities. It is also based on the experience gained in ongoing technical cooperation projects implemented by the Department. These projects, where the ILO has a clear mandate and comparative advantage, have already proven to be effective and to have the potential to attract funding.<sup>32</sup> In addition, in this context, the ILO can also benefit from the experience of the standards specialists in the ILO field offices, who have an in-depth knowledge of national situations and relevant priorities and opportunities for standards-related technical cooperation.
55. The strategy outlines three main implementation mechanisms, it being understood that the conclusions of the Cartier Working Party and the comments of the supervisory bodies will be major sources of information for the identification of priorities at the promotion and implementation stages:
- specific interventions to address thematic priorities for the promotion, ratification and implementation of standards, shared across countries or regions;
  - specific interventions to address priorities for the promotion, ratification and implementation of standards at the country level, in the context of DWCPs;

<sup>31</sup> GB.298/LILS/4, paras 54–73.

<sup>32</sup> This has been the case, for example, of the project to promote ILO policy on indigenous and tribal peoples, which operates on the basis of ILO Convention No. 169, as well as of the action plan to achieve rapid and widespread ratification and effective implementation of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006.

- the mainstreaming of standards-related priorities in the context of the ILO's broader technical cooperation activities, DWCPs, the Common Country Assessment (CCA), the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and other major development initiatives.

### **3.1. Implementing the strategy**

#### ***Initial steps***

- 56.** The International Labour Standards Department increased its focus on technical cooperation through the establishment of a task force on technical cooperation in 2005. This task force has coordinated discussions, drawing on existing experiences and resources within the Department, and has also initiated closer collaboration with the Department of Partnerships and Development Cooperation (PARDEV).
- 57.** The main initiatives undertaken since the beginning of 2007 include initiating the preparation of a short and practical guide, which will provide guidance to ILO headquarters staff and field specialists in clear and simple language on good practices and funding opportunities for the promotion and implementation of standards through technical cooperation.
- 58.** The International Labour Standards Department has also contributed to the DWCP programming cycle through country-level consultations, as well as the quality assessment process. Standards specialists in the field have been involved in country-level programming and regional focal points at the Department have provided input and comments on draft DWCPs from the various regions. The Department's input so far has been focused on emphasizing major standards-related implementation gaps and challenges identified by the supervisory bodies for specific countries.
- 59.** Capacity building within the Department has been initiated, inter alia, through the training of a member of the task force in project design and management and a number of other training sessions are envisaged for the further sharing of experience in collaboration with CODEV.

#### ***Medium term***

- 60.** In addition to more immediate action, in the medium term, a systematic approach and methodology for identifying the main thematic priorities for standards-related technical cooperation should be developed on the basis of the thematic analyses carried out by the supervisory bodies, the conclusions of the Cartier Working Party and of the ILC.
- 61.** In the process of identifying relevant country-specific technical cooperation programmes and projects for the inclusion of standards in DWCPs, CCA-UNDAF and/or the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), attention should be focused on a selected number of pilot countries in order to build experience and a more generally applicable methodology.
- 62.** The Department will pursue the mainstreaming of standards-related priorities by seeking common priorities and possible partnerships to ensure donor collaboration on technical cooperation proposals, covering both thematic and country-specific priorities, and to develop tools and training materials, and strengthen the sharing of experience and good practices for the inclusion of standards in DWCPs, CCA/UNDAF and PRSPs.

63. A large-scale medium-term pilot programme (three years), proposed for 2008 and covering a number of priority themes and pilot countries, should be implemented.

### ***Plan of action for 2008***

64. In the context of a plan of action for 2008, a methodology should be developed to mainstream standards more effectively in technical cooperation. The initial focus will be on a peer review of ongoing partnerships and agreements, in cooperation with technical departments.
65. In terms of country-level priorities, the modalities for the quality assessment process for DWCPs should be reviewed and the good practice guide finalized and disseminated. Account should also be taken more systematically of the difficulties encountered by some member States in fulfilling their reporting obligations, as identified in the reports of the Committee of Experts and the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards. These difficulties are often linked to capacity issues, which can more appropriately be dealt with in the framework of broader technical cooperation programmes, and particularly DWCPs.
66. In terms of thematic priorities for pre-ratification and ratification-related action, in line with the proposal set out under the first component of the strategy,<sup>33</sup> the focus should be on the promotion of the priority Conventions (Nos 81 and 122, 144 and 129), and the related Recommendations, with special emphasis on the Conventions on labour inspection and tripartite consultations as a means of achieving the effective implementation of international labour standards. It should be noted in this regard that these latter Conventions are key to the development and implementation of DWCPs. The focus should also be on the standards adopted over the past three years, including the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, Convention No. 187 (occupational safety and health) – together with Convention No. 155, in the light of the forthcoming General Survey on this subject – and Convention No. 188 (work in fishing), and their accompanying Recommendations, for which a strategy should be developed (or implemented in the case of the Maritime Labour Convention). In terms of proposed action related to the implementation of standards, priorities would be determined by the comments and conclusions of the supervisory bodies.
67. In addition, awareness raising and the training of focal points in the International Labour Standards Department and of field specialists (in collaboration with CODEV) will be developed. These activities will cover the modalities for technical cooperation, emphasizing good practices for the integration of standards into DWCPs and technical cooperation, project design and measuring the of impact of interventions.
68. All the proposed activities will, in due course, take account of the developments relating to the horizontal governance and, in particular, the streamlining of DWCPs, as well as other relevant issues arising from the discussion concerning the strengthening of the ILO's capacity.
69. It is suggested that a progress report on the implementation of the third component of the strategy be submitted to the 303rd Session (November 2008) of the Governing Body.

<sup>33</sup> See paras 10–29.



## 4. Enhanced access to the standards system and broader visibility

70. It should be recalled that, to enhance the visibility of the standards system, but also to merge all the components of the strategy, three objectives were identified for the implementation of the fourth component of the strategy:<sup>34</sup>

- streamlining the supply of reports by governments through an innovative use of information technology;
- providing enhanced access to information on international labour standards stored in a reliable and up to date knowledge base; and
- improving the visibility of international labour standards by reaching the ILO's tripartite constituents and the broader public.

### 4.1. Streamlining the supply of reports by governments through an innovative use of information technology

71. At the specific request of some governments, the Office has given preliminary consideration to the development of an online reporting system, i.e. a system functioning through an Internet application, bearing in mind the necessity of addressing the difficulties encountered by some countries with respect to the use of information technology. As far as the ILO supervisory system is concerned, the main advantages for governments of an online reporting system were detailed in the March 2007 paper.<sup>35</sup> The implementation of such a system would constitute an important step in the streamlining of the information and reports due under article 22 of the Constitution and would accordingly support the implementation of the second component of the strategy.

72. As a first step towards the implementation of a comprehensive online reporting system, the Office is planning to make some electronic reporting facilities available for the 2008 reporting cycle. At present, over 130 report forms are available online on the International Labour Standards Department's web site. These report forms will be converted into a compatible Word or PDF text format with clear indications of the sections that need to be filled in so that member States can reply to the various questions directly on the report form. While this should prove useful for countries submitting first or detailed reports, consideration will also have to be given to the situation of countries that have to submit simplified reports or mere replies to the comments of the supervisory bodies. It is also clear that this new system will have no effect on the obligation of governments to communicate their respective reports to their social partners. When testing this first phase of the system, countries with poor Internet connection will be encouraged to submit comments as to whether the use of the system is feasible for them. In any case, for the time being, paper reports will still have to be provided as they will ultimately be considered as the official reports of the member State concerned. Several other issues will have to be addressed, such as access rights, the storage and consultation of the information, the possibility for a member State to make amendments to its report once it has been sent online, the language in which the report can be sent and, ultimately, whether the questions

<sup>34</sup> GB.298/LILS/4, paras 74–88.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, para. 79.

in the report forms have to be simplified to make them easier for governments to answer, as envisaged under the second component of the strategy.<sup>36</sup>

73. It should be recalled that an online reporting system will also require the expansion of the current databases on international labour standards (namely ILOLEX and APPLIS), which would constitute the basis for the functioning of the system and will therefore have to be upgraded to support the system and store the information generated. Additional external funding will still be necessary to finance this overall and integrated upgrade and to ensure the complete migration of these two databases to a new platform.

#### **4.2. Enhanced access to information on international labour standards through a reliable and up to date knowledge base**

74. The International Labour Standards Department has in place a well developed web site and manages four databases: APPLIS, ILOLEX, NATLEX and LIBSYND. These databases are still the ILO's most frequently visited department-specific information products. In 2006, the NATLEX database (on national legislation) received an average of over 1.2 million external user requests per month, while ILOLEX received nearly 1 million requests per month. In fact, following the upgrade of the NATLEX database in 2006, the average number of queries per month have increased by 253 per cent since 2004. Furthermore, the NATLEX country profile portal, which gives access to all standards-related information regarding a particular member State and has been online on the Department's web site since March 2007,<sup>37</sup> now has a direct link to the DWCPs. By offering integrated information and a complete picture on international labour standards for a specific country, and although it has only been online for a few months, this portal is already proving to be one of the most frequently used tools in reply to requests from constituents or the general public. Subject to the availability of resources, it will be further developed to respond to the particular needs arising from the implementation of the strategy.

75. Three databases on international labour standards (ILOLEX, APPLIS, LIBSYND) are still in need of major technological investment and development in the coming years to maintain the necessary quality of services and to support the implementation of the projected online reporting system. Some technical developments are currently under way in this regard.

#### **4.3. Reaching the ILO's tripartite constituents and the broader public**

76. In order to reach the widest possible audience, the dissemination of the information on standards should be: (i) integrated into the Organization's activities and programmes, including its use of communication technology to reach the broader public in close collaboration with the Department of Communication and Public Information; and (ii) carefully geared to the objectives sought and the target audience. The audiences targeted by the ILO's products and activities relating to information on standards include the people and institutions that are directly concerned (constituents, the Office and intergovernmental organizations), people and institutions that have a direct interest but do

<sup>36</sup> See para. 41 above.

<sup>37</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/country\\_profiles.home](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/country_profiles.home)

not have very extensive knowledge of the standards system, and the broader public in so far as they are interested in labour issues in general.

77. In this regard, in recent months, the Department of Communication and Public Information launched a new and more user-friendly version of the ILO's public web site, on which international labour standards and the International Labour Standards Department's own web site benefit from greater visibility compared to the previous version. The new portal on labour standards is easier for the broader public to access and, following closer coordination between the Standards Department and other departments of the Office (DECLARATION and IPEC, among others), some web sites have been harmonized and direct links on common themes have been developed. Moreover, the module created for the Maritime Labour Convention in 2006 has been further developed.
78. International labour standards have also continued to be disseminated through the training activities conducted by the Turin Centre. Furthermore, with a view to reaching a broader audience, the Standards Department has recently distributed its new publications and CD-ROMs on international labour standards to depositary libraries around the world. These libraries are either university libraries, national libraries or government libraries and were selected by the ILO Library based on specific criteria.<sup>38</sup>
79. The ILO's collaboration with other specialized agencies and international organization on standards-related matters takes various forms. Special arrangements exist with certain organizations to benefit from information provided by them in the context of the supervision of ILO instruments relating to subjects of common interest. In the area of human rights, the ILO contributes to the supervision of United Nations and Council of Europe treaties by supplying standards-related information to the respective monitoring bodies.<sup>39</sup> Outside the context of supervisor activities, the Office regularly collaborates with a number of international organizations on subjects such as occupational safety and health, indigenous and tribal peoples, and child labour. These activities include, for instance, participation in the preparation of new instruments by partner organizations, joint technical assistance or research and publications. Within the ongoing efforts to mainstream decent work in the international system, it would appear to be timely for the Office to review, together with the organizations concerned, existing arrangements for collaboration on standards-related matters with a view to ensuring that they contribute to increased visibility and consideration of international labour standards throughout the international system. This effort would also include reflection on arrangements with relevant agencies in relation to more recently adopted ILO instruments. The Office will keep the Governing Body informed of developments in this area at its next sessions.

<sup>38</sup> See the list at *ILO Information around the world*, [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/depolib\\_screens.main\\_page\\_EN#U](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/depolib_screens.main_page_EN#U)

<sup>39</sup> The human rights treaty bodies and the European Committee of Social Rights. The European Code of Social Security and its Protocol is a special case, as its supervision is entrusted to the Committee of Experts.

## **Conclusions: Proposed interim plan of action and timetable**

80. In the light of the above considerations, an appropriate interim plan of action and timetable might be as follows:

### **I. Standards policy**

(1) Possible timetable and objectives of consultations:

- The consultations could begin in November 2008, in the light of the conclusions of the 2008 session of the Conference on strengthening the ILO's capacity to assist its Members' efforts to reach its objectives in the context of globalization.
- They would include the following questions: development of standards, review mechanisms for keeping the body of standards up to date, and possible consolidations, and would take into account the suggestions made by the Committee during the discussions on improvements to standards-related activities since November 2005.
- The Committee could provide some guidance as to the practical modalities.

(2) Promotion and follow-up of the conclusions of the Cartier Working Party:

- Strengthened promotion of the priority Conventions and the three new Conventions should begin as soon as possible (see section III below on technical cooperation).
- In addition to these thematic priorities, the conclusions of the Cartier Working Party regarding the promotion of revised and up to date Conventions should be fully taken into account in establishing specific country priorities in accordance with the approach proposed in section III on technical cooperation.

(3) Resumption of the discussion on the Termination of Employment Convention (No. 158) and Recommendation (No. 166), 1982:

- In the light of the indications provided in paragraph 30 above, the Committee may wish to agree on a date for the resumption of this discussion. It may also indicate whether it considers that this discussion should be preceded by consultations.

### **II. Reinforcement of an integrated and dynamic supervisory system**

(1) In order to streamline the sending and processing of information and reports under article 22 of the Constitution, the following is proposed:

- An assessment of the follow-up with regard to compliance with reporting obligations undertaken by the Office, to be submitted to the Governing Body at its 303rd Session (November 2008) at the earliest, taking into account the progress made in integrating questions relating to the sending of reports into technical assistance activities, and particularly the DWCPs.

- An evaluation of the grouping of Conventions by subject for reporting purposes, to be submitted to the Governing Body at its 303rd Session (November 2008).
  - A review of the questions contained in the report forms focusing, on a trial basis, on a group of Conventions covering a subject that is yet to be determined (for example, employment, occupational safety and health or social security) and the implementation of specific measures to simplify the work of governments; and an activities report to be submitted to the Governing Body at its 303rd Session (November 2008) containing firm proposals.
  - New options for a global approach to streamlining, to be submitted to the Governing Body at its 303rd Session (November 2008), taking into account the evaluation of the grouping of Conventions and the most recent developments in the discussion of the strengthening of the ILO's capacity.
- (2) In the context of the dynamics of the supervisory system:
- A global overview of the links between the various procedures relating to ratified Conventions (articles 22, 24 and 26 of the Constitution), including the special procedure for freedom of association, could be submitted to the Governing Body at its 301st Session (March 2008).

### **III. Integrating international labour standards and technical cooperation**

- (1) For the initial implementation period of 2008, it is proposed to focus on the following activities:
- (a) Mainstreaming:
- Initiate a peer review of partnerships and agreements in cooperation with technical departments so as to improve the mainstreaming of standards-related priorities.
  - Finalize and disseminate the good practice guide for the integration of standards into technical cooperation projects, with particular emphasis on DWCPs.
- (b) Country-level priorities:
- Review the modalities for the quality assessment of DWCPs as a basis for more targeted standards-related inputs, taking into account the conclusions of the Cartier Working Party and the comments of the supervisory bodies.
- (c) Thematic priorities:
- In terms of action related to pre-ratification and ratification, focus on the promotion of the four priority Conventions (Nos 81, 122, 129 and 144), with special emphasis on the standards on labour inspection (Conventions Nos 81 and 129) and tripartite consultations (Convention No. 144), and the related Recommendations, and on the promotion of standards adopted over the past three years, including the Maritime Labour Convention, Convention No. 187 (occupational safety and health), together with Convention No. 155 (also occupational safety and health) in the light of the outcome of the forthcoming General Survey on this subject, and

Convention No. 188 (work in fishing), and their accompanying Recommendations; in terms of action relating to the implementation of standards, focus on the comments and conclusions of the supervisory bodies.

- (d) Pilot programme:
  - Against this background, develop a proposal for a large-scale medium-term pilot programme for standards-related technical cooperation, resource mobilization and subsequent implementation.

#### **IV. Enhanced access to the standards system and broader visibility**

- (1) The following action is proposed:
  - (a) A comprehensive proposal for the implementation of an online reporting system, which would include an examination of the situation of countries experiencing difficulty with their Internet connection, or lacking the necessary equipment to use the system, to be submitted to the 301st Session (March 2008) of the Governing Body.
  - (b) Administration and upgrading, with appropriate funding, of the three databases on international labour standards (ILOLEX, APPLIS and LIBSYND), the database on national legislation (NATLEX) and the new NATLEX country profiles portal, as major tools for a reliable and up to date knowledge base on the standards system.
  - (c) Cooperation with the Turin Centre to continue enhancing the visibility of the standards system within the framework of current training activities and to disseminate standards-related information through specific activities targeting the tripartite constituents and the public at large.
  - (d) A review, together with the other international organizations concerned, of existing arrangements for collaboration on standards-related matters with a view to ensuring that these arrangements contribute to the increased visibility and consideration of international labour standards throughout the international system.
  - (e) A progress report on the last three issues will be submitted to the Governing Body at its next sessions.

**81. *The Committee on Legal Issues and International Labour Standards may wish to:***

- (i) take note of the information contained in the present document;***
- (ii) approve the elements of the interim plan of action to enhance the impact of the standards system, making any adjustments that are deemed necessary;***

- (iii) keep this subject on its agenda with a view to following the progress made;*
- (iv) make appropriate recommendations to the Governing Body on the above.*

Geneva, 19 October 2007.

*Point for decision:* Paragraph 81.