FOR INFORMATION

SEVENTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Report of the Director-General

Seventh Supplementary Report: Possible collaboration between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in the field of occupational safety and health management systems (OSH–MS)

Introduction

1. At its 297th and 298th Sessions, the Governing Body discussed developments in relation to possible collaboration between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) on occupational safety and health management systems (OSH–MS). [1] The Governing Body, at its 298th Session, reaffirmed the mandate of the ILO in the field of occupational safety and health and, in that context, asked the ISO to refrain from developing an international standard on OSH–MS, and requested the Office to report back on the further developments.

Recent developments in ISO

2. In line with the decision taken by the Governing Body, the Director-General wrote to the ISO Secretary-General in May 2007 informing him of the Governing Body decision to request the ISO to refrain from developing ISO standards in the field of OSH–MS.

3. At its June 2007 session, the ISO Technical Management Board (TMB) took note of the letter from the Director-General and decided to carry out a survey concerning OSH–MS among ISO members. The 24 responses received reflected a fairly even split between members who believed that a further document on OSH–MS was needed in addition to the ILO *Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems (ILO–OSH 2001)* (13 members) and those that did not (ten members). One respondent abstained. Of the 13 members who felt there was a need for an additional document to the ILO Guidelines,

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[1] GB.297/19/4, GB.298/15/5, GB.298/15/5(Add.).

four favoured a guidance document, nine favoured a document giving certifiable requirements and two wanted both.

4. On the basis of the survey responses, the TMB concluded that there was little support for any activity in the ISO. However, one member of the TMB reserved its position pending discussion with stakeholders.

5. More recently, the ISO requested its members to vote on a proposal for the revision of ISO 19011 – Management systems auditing. [2] The purpose of the proposal is to develop a generic guideline for auditing non-financial management systems in order to expand the coverage of ISO 19011 to other disciplines, including occupational safety and health and information security management systems. In tandem with this proposal, the ISO issued a second voting request that, if accepted, would give the OHSAS Project Group [3] a category D liaison status to participate in the working group responsible for the revision of the ISO 19011 Guidelines. [4] The voting deadlines are 17 March 2008 for the revision proposal and 28 March 2008 for the OHSAS proposal.

Recent Office activities

6. In line with the global strategy on OSH adopted by the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference (2003), the Office has been promoting the ILO Guidelines, particularly their national application as part of national OSH strategies. Recent activities and developments include:

- adoption, by 11 CIS countries, of a new interstate standard – GOST 12.0.230-2007 "Occupational safety standards system. Occupational safety and health management systems. General requirements" based on the ILO–OSH 2001 (March 2007);

- organization of a national tripartite workshop on ILO–OSH 2001 in Mauritius (July 2007);

- participation in the national workshop on OSH–MS for the construction industry based on ILO–OSH 2001 in Thailand (August 2007);

- ASEAN–OSHNET workshop on OSH–MS focusing on the promotion of ILO–OSH 2001 (December 2007); and

- presentation of ILO–OSH 2001 at the World Business District Summit for Sustainable Development held in Paris (February 2008).

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[2] ISO 19011 is an international standard that provides guidance on the principles of auditing, managing audit programmes, conducting management system audits and the generic competence of management system auditors. Currently, the standard applies to non-financial auditing of quality and environmental management systems.

[3] The OHSAS (Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series) Project Group was established to develop OSH management system standards. It adopted OHSAS 18001 and has been revising it. The group consists of the members from various institutions, such as national standards bodies, academic bodies, accreditation bodies, certification bodies and OSH institutions.

[4] ISO/TC 176/SC 3 Working Group on Supporting Technology.

Future Office activities

7. Given the multiplication of certification schemes based on informal OSH management system standards that are not associated with national strategies for OSH promotion, nor based on the ILO Guidelines, the Office will continue to work closely with constituents for the strategic implementation of ILO Guidelines (ILO–OSH 2001) through:

- continued promotion of the ILO–OSH 2001 by the Office and constituents (IOE, ITUC and member States) including the integration of OSH and ILO–OSH 2001 in Decent Work Country Programmes;

- support for national implementation by closely working with the constituents who have taken initiatives to implement ILO–OSH 2001, such as those in the CIS countries and ASEAN;

- promotion of ILO–OSH 2001 at major meetings and events such as the World Congress on Safety and Health at Work (Seoul, 2008) and the annual World Day for Safety and Health at Work (28 April);

- in response to requests from constituents, the development of implementation and audit guides to supplement ILO–OSH 2001; and

- continued promotion of the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), which proposes the application of the management systems approach at the national level and promotes the OSH–MS approach based on ILO–OSH 2001 through its accompanying Recommendation.

Geneva, 11 March 2008.

Submitted for information.