



## FOR INFORMATION

### **Request by an international organization, MERCOSUR, wishing to be invited to ILO meetings**

1. The Director-General received from Mr Jorge Taiana, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of the Argentine Republic and President pro tempore of MERCOSUR (Mercado Común del Sur), a letter requesting the appropriate ILO bodies to invite, on a standing basis, that organization to be represented at ILO meetings, in particular at sessions of the International Labour Conference and the Governing Body. In his letter of 27 June 2008, Mr Taiana stresses the importance that MERCOSUR attaches to social and labour matters in the process of market integration and notes that certain MERCOSUR bodies dealing with those questions have a tripartite composition.
2. MERCOSUR is an economic community among four Latin American countries: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. The accession of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has been approved recently but is not yet effective. MERCOSUR also has associate members and observers. Its main objective is the strengthening of economic and political integration of the States parties through the free movement of goods, services and means of production, the establishment of common external tariffs and the adoption of a common trade policy, coordination of macroeconomic and sectoral policies and the harmonization of legislation in relevant areas. MERCOSUR was created in 1991 by the Treaty of Asunción, later amended and updated by the 1994 Protocol of Ouro Preto. The institutional structure of MERCOSUR comprises bodies with representative, administrative, standard-setting and dispute-settlement functions, in addition to its economic institutions. The intergovernmental decision-making bodies are the Common Market Council, which is the organization's supreme organ, the Common Market Group and the MERCOSUR Trade Commission. A permanent Administrative Secretariat (based in Montevideo, Uruguay) has been created by the 1994 Protocol of Ouro Preto, which states that "MERCOSUR shall have a legal personality of international law", so that there is no doubt that MERCOSUR today is a public international organization within the meaning of article 12(3) of the Constitution of the ILO.
3. Under the various Standing Orders governing the International Labour Conference, the Governing Body and other meetings, it is normally the Governing Body that issues invitations to intergovernmental organizations to attend meetings and to take part in the discussions without the right to vote. In accordance with the standing arrangements for such questions, the Officers of the Governing Body decide on the issue of such invitations, except in cases presenting particular problems.
4. MERCOSUR has already been invited by the Governing Body to attend its 303rd and 304th Sessions on an ad hoc basis.

5. At the 304th Session (March 2009) of the Governing Body, the Officers authorized the Director-General to invite MERCOSUR, on a standing basis, to be represented at ILO meetings likely to be of interest to it, in particular to the sessions of the International Labour Conference and the Governing Body.

Geneva, 16 March 2010.

*Submitted for information.*