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PRIME MINISTER

Press Statement No. 525
27 June 1975

AUSTRALIAN ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF ILO GOVERNING BODY

The Prime Minister, Mr Gough Whitlam, announced today that Dr P.B. Cook, OBE, Australian Ambassador and Special Labour Adviser in Europe and head of Australia's delegation to the recent Conference of the International Labour Organisation in Geneva, had been elected as Chairman of the Governing Body of the ILO for 1975-76.

Mr Whitlam said "although Australia has been a foundation member of the ILO since 1919 and has been represented on the Governing Body for most of the past 30 years, this is the first time that an Australian has been accorded the high honour of the Chairmanship."

"Over the years Australia has taken an increasingly active and responsible role in ILO affairs, particularly in the Asian region", Mr Whitlam said. "My Government has moreover taken vigorous steps to apply international labour standards in Australia. It has ratified ILO Conventions dealing with equal pay, trade union rights and elimination of discrimination in employment, thereby ensuring Australian accord with all ILO Conventions in the field of fundamental human rights, Australia's record, some 42 ratifications in all, compares favourably with that of other federal states."

The ILO is the senior specialised agency of the United Nations. It seeks to improve the conditions of work and the general welfare of workers in its 126 Member States throughout the world, operating largely through consultation and collaboration between governments, employers and workers.

The Governing Body of the ILO is instrumental in determining the direction and priorities of the ILO's activities. The Chairman's duties obviously call for considerable understanding and expertise in regard to the labour and related social problems that confront both developed and developing countries.

Dr Cook, a former permanent head of the Department of Labour, has held various important offices in the ILO in recent years, serving with distinction as Chairman of a number of ILO Committees. A biographical note is attached.

CANBERRA. A.C.T.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

DR P.B. COOK, OBE

Philip Balford Cook, OBE, is Ambassador and Special Labour Adviser in Europe, attached to the Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva.

He was born in Benalla, Victoria, and attended the University of Melbourne, University College, London, Columbia University, and the University of Kansas, where he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1941.

Dr Cook joined the then Department of Labour and National Service in February, 1942 and combined his work in that Department with lecturing at the University of Melbourne. He also served as Honorary Psychologist at Prince Henry's Hospital, Melbourne from 1944 to 1962. He was appointed Head of the Department in 1968.

For his outstanding services to the Department, and to industry, he was honoured by the award of Order of the British Empire in 1965. He is a Fellow of both the British Psychological Society and the Australian Psychological Society.

In December 1972, the Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) announced that Australia would strengthen its labour representation in Europe and its relations with the International Labour Organisation and other organisations concerned with labour and social affairs in Europe, notably the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, by appointing in Europe a Special Labour Adviser with the personal rank of Ambassador, to handle all labour questions.

The appointee to this position was Dr Cook, who, as the Prime Minister pointed out, had had great experience and expertise in labour matters generally, and in the work of the ILO, having participated on many occasions as Australia's representative at ILO Conferences.

Besides his responsibilities in connection with the ILO, Dr Cook is Australia's principal representative with the OECD on issues relating to manpower and social affairs.
