

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

**Standing Orders
for technical meetings**

**Standing Orders
for meetings of experts**



Geneva
International Labour Office
2019

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Introductory note

The International Labour Organization convenes a large number of global meetings of various formats and with different objectives such as policymaking, technical guidance, knowledge sharing or training. These meetings include regular sessions of its constitutional organs, the International Labour Conference and the Governing Body; sectoral meetings; meetings of experts; global dialogue forums; and a large number of other meetings, seminars and workshops.

The Governing Body has adopted specific Standing Orders for a limited number of meetings. In November 1995, the Governing Body adopted the Standing Orders for sectoral meetings with a view to regulating the participation in, conduct of business at and outcome of meetings organized for specific sectors of economic activity. These Standing Orders were not intended to apply to meetings of experts, which operated without standing orders. As of the 1990s, the Governing Body convened meetings of experts more frequently and these meetings have undergone considerable changes in terms of composition and the role of individual experts. In addition, new meetings were introduced, such as the global dialogue forums, which also fell outside the scope of application of the 1995 Standing Orders.

At its 334th Session (October–November 2018), the Governing Body adopted the Standing Orders for technical meetings and the Standing Orders for meetings of experts, which replace the 1995 Standing Orders.

The Standing Orders for technical meetings contain generic rules applicable to any tripartite meetings for which no specific standing orders have been adopted. They do not apply, however, to symposia, seminars, workshops and similar meetings not convened by the Governing Body.

The Standing Orders for meetings of experts apply to meetings of experts only and are based on the Standing Orders for technical meetings with adaptations to fit the particularities of meetings of experts.

At its 335th Session (March 2019), the Governing Body adopted this introductory note, to be published together with the Standing Orders for technical meetings and the Standing Orders for meetings of experts.

Introductory note

1. Purpose and formats of meetings

It is for the Governing Body to decide on the format of a meeting (technical meeting or meeting of experts), to establish the agenda of the meeting and to specify which form the results of the proceedings may take.

Technical meetings include sectoral meetings and global dialogue forums convened to address sector-specific issues. Technical meetings are convened for the purpose of conducting an in-depth discussion on policy issues based on a report prepared by the Office, in order to generate conclusions, points of consensus or similar documents and possibly resolutions. The value of these outcome documents lies in the fact that they reflect international tripartite consensus on a specific issue and can be used by the Organization and member States for policymaking to deal with the issue addressed. Technical meetings also provide guidance to the Office on its future work in the relevant field or economic sector.

Meetings of experts are convened either to provide the Organization with expert advice on a specific technical issue or in order to adopt technical guidance, based on a draft Office text, such as a code of practice, guidelines, or, on occasion, conclusions. The particularity of a meeting of experts is that it is composed of a fixed number of experts, who serve in their personal capacity and act and speak in their expert capacity and not as representatives of a government or group.

2. Date, length and place of meetings

The date, length and place of the meetings are determined by the Governing Body. In principle, meetings last five calendar days (Monday to Friday) and take place at headquarters in Geneva. Global dialogue forums normally last only three days.

3. Participation

There are three possible categories of participants at tripartite meetings: representatives/experts and their advisers; observers; and other participants. Members of the public who are given access to meetings are not participants.

- (a) **Representatives/experts and their advisers:** Technical meetings are composed of representatives who represent their respective governments or non-government groups at the meeting, whereas meetings of experts are composed of experts who serve in their personal capacity. Representatives and experts exercise all participation rights in the respective meetings, including the right to speak and the right to move motions, amendments and resolutions. Representatives/experts may be accompanied by advisers, who may speak when authorized to do so by the representative/expert they accompany and exercise all participation rights on behalf of the representative/expert when they are appointed by the latter to act as their substitute. In addition, representatives/experts may be assisted, on a need basis, by interpreters without participation rights.

- (b) **Observers:** Observers at technical meetings represent governments that have no representative at the meeting, employers or workers, invited official international organizations or non-governmental international organizations. At meetings of experts, possible observers represent interested governments (without speaking rights), invited official international organizations or non-governmental international organizations. Where active participation rights are granted to observers, those are limited to the right to speak under conditions set out in the Standing Orders. Observers are seated separately from the representatives/experts.
- (c) **Other participants:** Other possible participants include external persons who may be invited to address the meeting, for example during any panel or round-table discussions. Such participants may intervene in the debates, but are not normally expected to participate in the discussions throughout the meeting.

It is for the Governing Body to determine the composition of each meeting according to its specific requirements and with due regard to the need to ensure a balance across the three groups and the efficiency of deliberations. For all meetings, Employer and Worker representatives or experts are appointed by the Employers' and Workers' groups of the Governing Body. The names of the representatives/experts and advisers are communicated, to the extent possible, at least one month before the opening date of the meeting.

As regards the appointment of Government experts at meetings of experts, the Government group determines, on the basis of a proposal prepared by the Office, which governments shall be asked to nominate an expert and which governments shall be included on a reserve list. In identifying these governments, the Government group takes into account the following criteria: (i) appropriate geographical distribution; (ii) the importance of the country concerned in relation to the issue; (iii) the importance of the issue for the country concerned; and (iv) the ratification of relevant international labour Conventions and any other relevant factors. If the reserve list proves insufficient to ensure the composition of the meeting, the Office consults with the regional coordinator(s) concerned regarding the government(s) to be invited.

Whereas for technical meetings, the Office bears the cost of transportation and subsistence only of Employer and Worker representatives, for meetings of experts, the Office covers such costs for all experts, including those nominated by governments.

At all meetings, the Officers consist of the Chairperson and three Vice-Chairpersons. The Chairperson of the meeting, who can be either a member of the Governing Body or an independent person selected by the Office (in the case of meetings of experts, the Chairperson is always an independent person selected by the Office) is appointed in addition to the representatives/experts of the meeting.

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4. Group secretariats

The secretariats of the Employers' and Workers' groups, which are traditionally provided by the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), or the relevant sectoral international workers' organizations, respectively, play a key role in supporting the work of the respective groups. Members of the secretariats of the two groups may attend meetings, including the meetings of any subsidiary body, and intervene in the debates.

5. Report/draft outcome document

For technical meetings, the Office prepares a report on the matters covered by the agenda with a view to providing participants with a basis for their deliberations. The Office's preparatory report does not, in principle, exceed 40 pages (less for global dialogue forums). The Office also draws up a list of discussion points to focus attention on the major aspects of the matters covered by the agenda without, however, limiting the freedom of the meeting to carry out its work as it sees fit.

For meetings of experts, the Office normally prepares a draft outcome document (for example draft guidelines or a draft code of practice) that is submitted to the meeting to serve as the basis of its work.

The report or draft outcome document prepared by the Office for each meeting is made available electronically to the governments invited to be represented and to the appointed Employer and Worker representatives, or to the nominated experts, as the case may be, at least one month before the start of the meeting.

6. Outcome document and follow-up

The outcome document of a technical meeting or meeting of experts is submitted to the Governing Body, which can approve or reject it without modifying its content. Once the outcome document of the meeting and any resolutions are approved by the Governing Body, they constitute ILO documents on which action might be taken separately or jointly by governments and national organizations of employers and workers, or by the Governing Body. In particular, in the light of the outcome document, the Governing Body may consider proposed items for the agenda of the Conference, thus ensuring linkages between the tripartite global meetings and the ILO's future programme of work.

It is for governments to consider the effect to be given to the outcome document and any resolutions, the application of which is within their competence. Any action that they may take is determined in consultation with the employers' and workers' organizations concerned.

It is for the employers' and workers' organizations concerned and, where they exist, the national industrial relations bodies, whether tripartite or bipartite, to consider the effect to be given to the outcome document and any resolutions raising matters of interest for joint consultation or negotiation.

7. Note on the proceedings

A summary record of proceedings is prepared by the secretariat of the meeting, reflecting the views expressed by the participants. The draft summary record is sent electronically to all represented governments and Employer and Worker representatives, or experts, after the meeting, giving them the opportunity to ask for corrections to statements made by or attributed to them.

Once finalized, the summary record of proceedings, the outcome document and any adopted resolutions are consolidated by the Office as a note on the proceedings. The note is submitted as soon as possible to the Governing Body. At the request of the Governing Body, the Office will publish the final note on the ILO website, together with any observations from or decisions of the Governing Body.

Subject to authorization by the Governing Body, codes of practice, guidelines or similar documents adopted by meetings of experts are published separately by the Office.

**Standing Orders
for technical meetings**

Standing Orders for technical meetings

ARTICLE 1

Scope

1. These Standing Orders apply to all technical meetings convened by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to which no other Standing Orders apply.

2. The Governing Body may for any particular meeting suspend the application of all or part of the provisions of these Standing Orders, or modify them, taking into account the particular composition or agenda of the meeting.

ARTICLE 2

Date, length and place of meeting

The Governing Body shall determine the date, length and place of the meeting.

ARTICLE 3

Agenda and expected results

1. The Governing Body shall establish the agenda of the meeting and shall specify which form the results of its proceedings may take, in particular conclusions or other agreed statement containing guidance on the matters covered by the agenda.

2. Subject to approval by the Governing Body, the results may be published and disseminated by the International Labour Office.

ARTICLE 4

Composition

1. Technical meetings shall be composed of:

- (a) one representative of each interested government; and
- (b) such number of representatives of workers and employers as determined by the Governing Body.

2. Notwithstanding article 4, paragraph 1(a), the Governing Body may decide to limit the participation of governments.

Technical meetings

3. Governments wishing to participate in the meeting shall so inform the Office within a time limit set by the Office.

4. The Employers' and Workers' representatives shall be appointed by the Employers' and Workers' groups of the Governing Body, respectively.

ARTICLE 5

Advisers; substitutes

1. Each representative may be accompanied by one adviser, who shall be appointed by the same government or by the Employers' or Workers' group, as the case may be.

2. Any adviser who has been authorized to do so by the representative to whom he or she is attached shall have the right to participate in the meeting but not the right to appoint a substitute.

3. A representative may, by notice in writing addressed to the Chairperson, appoint his or her adviser to act as his or her substitute. The notice shall specify the sitting or sittings at which the substitute will act for the representative. In that case, substitutes may take part in the debates under the same conditions as representatives.

ARTICLE 6

Officers of the meeting

1. The Officers shall consist of the Chairperson, appointed in accordance with paragraph 2, and three Vice-Chairpersons, respectively elected from among the representatives or their advisers in each of the three groups.

2. The Governing Body shall either appoint one of its regular or deputy members as Chairperson of the meeting, or request the Office to select an independent person with expertise on the matters covered by the agenda and notify the meeting accordingly.

ARTICLE 7

Duties of the Officers

1. The Chairperson shall preside over the sittings. The Vice-Chairpersons shall preside alternately over the sittings or parts of the sittings at which the Chairperson cannot be present and shall, while presiding, have the same powers as the Chairperson.

Technical meetings

2. The Chairperson shall direct the debates, maintain order and ensure the observance of the Standing Orders, put questions for decision by the meeting, and ascertain and announce consensus.

3. The Chairperson may withdraw the right to speak from any speaker whose remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

4. The Chairperson shall have the right to take part in the discussions.

5. The Officers of the meeting shall approve the programme of work of the meeting, and fix the date and time of the sittings of the meeting and of its subsidiary bodies and any time limits for interventions; they shall also report to the meeting on any other questions requiring a decision for the proper conduct of its business.

ARTICLE 8

Admission to the sittings

Unless the Governing Body decides otherwise, the sittings shall be public.

ARTICLE 9

Right to take part in the work of the meeting

1. No representative or adviser shall address the meeting without having asked and obtained the permission of the Chairperson, who shall normally call upon speakers in the order in which they have signified their desire to speak.

2. Persons representing official international organizations which have been invited by the Governing Body to be represented at the meeting as observers may, with the permission of the Chairperson, address the meeting but not move motions or amendments.

3. Persons representing non-governmental international organizations, with which the ILO has established consultative relationships and with which standing arrangements for such representation have been made, and persons representing other non-governmental international organizations which have been invited by the Governing Body to be represented at the meeting, may attend it as observers. The Chairperson may, in agreement with the Vice-Chairpersons, permit such observers to make or circulate statements for the information of the meeting on matters included in its agenda. If agreement cannot be reached, the Chairperson shall refer the matter to the meeting for decision.

4. Governments not represented at the meeting in accordance with article 4(1)(a) may attend the meeting as observers. Such observers shall be entitled to make one statement to the meeting at its opening sitting. Time permitting and due priority being given to representatives, the Chairperson may, in agreement with the

Technical meetings

Vice-Chairpersons, permit Government observers to make additional statements. If agreement cannot be reached, the Chairperson shall refer the matter to the meeting for decision.

5. The Employers' and Workers' groups may each appoint observers to attend the meeting.

6. The Officers of the Governing Body are entitled to attend the meeting and participate in the proceedings without the right to move motions or amendments.

7. Members of the secretariat of the Employers' and Workers' groups at the meeting may intervene in the debates.

8. The meeting may invite external persons to address the meeting, for example during any panel discussions or round tables that may be organized within the framework of the meeting.

ARTICLE 10

Motions and amendments

1. Motions as to procedure may be moved verbally, without previous notice and without having been seconded.

2. No other motion or amendment shall be discussed unless it has been seconded. If moved by a representative who is the spokesperson of a group, it is deemed to have been seconded.

3. The Chairperson, after consultation with the Vice-Chairpersons and the secretariat of the meeting, may set time limits for the submission of amendments.

4. Any amendment may be withdrawn by the representative who moved it unless an amendment to it is under discussion or has been adopted. Any amendment so withdrawn may be moved without previous notice by any other representative.

5. Any representative may at any time draw attention to the fact that the Standing Orders are not being observed, and the Chairperson shall give an immediate ruling on any question so raised.

ARTICLE 11

Resolutions

1. The meeting may consider draft resolutions concerning matters related to the agenda, provided that priority shall be given to the adoption of the result of the meeting specified by the Governing Body in accordance with article 3 and the content of such resolutions does not duplicate such result.

2. Such resolutions shall be submitted in writing to the secretariat before the end of the first day of the meeting.

ARTICLE 12

Adoption of decisions

Decisions shall be taken by consensus. Representatives shall make every effort to reach an agreement that is generally accepted, so that a decision can be adopted without formal objections. In such cases, any dissenting positions or reservations shall be placed on the record without however constituting an impediment to the adoption of the decision in question.

ARTICLE 13

Subsidiary bodies

1. The meeting may set up subsidiary bodies. Subsidiary bodies shall consist of equal numbers of members appointed by each of the groups, as well as the Chairperson or a Vice-Chairperson of the meeting, who shall preside over the sittings of the subsidiary body.

2. The Government members of a subsidiary body may be accompanied by their advisers, whose overall number shall not exceed that of the members of the Employers' and Workers' secretariats taken together. Such advisers and members of the Employers' and Workers' secretariats may take part in the debates.

3. These Standing Orders shall apply in so far as they are relevant and with the necessary adaptations to subsidiary bodies.

4. Sittings of subsidiary bodies are not open to observers or to the public.

ARTICLE 14

Secretariat

The secretariat of the meeting is appointed by the Director-General. The secretariat shall provide the necessary administrative and substantive support to facilitate the discussions. The Secretary-General of the meeting represents the Director-General and is the chief of the secretariat.

Technical meetings

ARTICLE 15

Languages

1. Unless the Governing Body decides otherwise, the official languages of the meeting shall be English, French and Spanish.
2. If the meeting decides to make use of screens to visualize text to be adopted, the International Labour Office shall make its best efforts to show the text in the official languages. Where this is not possible due to practical limitations, the text may appear in only one language.
3. The International Labour Office shall make arrangements for interpretation into and from other working languages, taking into account the composition of the meeting.

ARTICLE 16

Record of proceedings

1. A summary record of proceedings of the meeting reflecting the views expressed by the participants shall be prepared by the secretariat of the meeting. The record of proceedings shall be sent to all participants after the meeting, giving them the opportunity to ask for corrections to statements made by or attributed to them, before it is made available online and submitted to the Governing Body.
2. If the meeting fails to reach the result specified by the Governing Body in accordance with article 3, the record of proceedings shall contain any recommendations which the meeting may wish to address to the Governing Body regarding possible future action on the matters covered by the agenda.

ARTICLE 17

Autonomy of groups

Subject to these Standing Orders, each group shall control its own procedure.

**Standing Orders
for meetings of experts**

Standing Orders for meetings of experts

ARTICLE 1

Scope

1. These Standing Orders apply to all meetings of experts convened by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office.
2. The Governing Body may, for any particular meeting, suspend the application of all or part of the provisions of these Standing Orders, or modify them, taking into account the particular composition and agenda of the meeting.

ARTICLE 2

Date, length and place of meeting

The Governing Body shall determine the date, length and place of the meeting.

ARTICLE 3

Agenda and expected results

1. The Governing Body shall establish the agenda of the meeting and shall specify which form the results of its proceedings may take, in particular a code of practice, guidelines or a similar document containing detailed technical guidance on the matters covered by the agenda or, on occasion, conclusions on the matters covered by the agenda.
2. Subject to approval by the Governing Body, such documents may be published and disseminated by the International Labour Office.

ARTICLE 4

Composition

1. The Governing Body shall determine the composition of each meeting of experts.
2. The meeting shall be composed of an equal number of experts nominated by governments, the Employers' group and the Workers' group of the Governing Body. This number shall be a multiple of four.

Meetings of experts

3. The Government group of the Governing Body shall establish the list of member States whose governments are to be invited to nominate experts, and those which are to be included on a reserve list, established on a regional basis. For this purpose the Office shall, following consultations with regional coordinators, provide a list of member States that are relevant to the subject matter of the meeting.

4. If the government of a member State invited to nominate an expert under paragraph 3 declines the invitation or if the government does not reply within a time limit set by the Office, the Government group shall be so informed and called upon to appoint a government from the reserve list as a replacement.

5. The persons appointed as experts shall serve in their personal capacity and act and speak in their expert capacity. In appointing those persons the governments and groups of the Governing Body shall be guided by the need to secure the highest possible level of qualifications as well as geographical and gender balance.

ARTICLE 5

Advisers; substitutes

1. Each expert may be accompanied by one adviser, who shall be appointed by the same government or by the Employers' or Workers' group, as the case may be.

2. Any adviser who has been authorized to do so by their group or the expert to whom he or she is attached shall have the right to participate in the meeting but not the right to appoint a substitute.

3. An expert may, by notice in writing addressed to the Chairperson, appoint his or her adviser to act as his or her substitute. The notice shall specify the sitting or sittings at which the substitute will act for the expert. In that case, substitutes may take part in the debates under the same conditions as experts.

ARTICLE 6

Officers of the meeting

1. The Officers shall consist of the Chairperson, selected in accordance with paragraph 2, and three Vice-Chairpersons, respectively elected from among the experts or their advisers in each of the three groups.

2. The Chairperson shall be an independent person with expertise on the matters covered by the agenda selected by the International Labour Office.

ARTICLE 7

Duties of the Officers

1. The Chairperson shall preside over the sittings. The Vice-Chairpersons shall preside alternately over the sittings or parts of the sittings at which the Chairperson cannot be present and shall, while presiding, have the same powers as the Chairperson.
2. The Chairperson shall direct the debates, maintain order and ensure the observance of the Standing Orders, put questions for decision by the meeting, and ascertain and announce consensus.
3. The Chairperson may withdraw the right to speak from any speaker whose remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.
4. The Chairperson shall have the right to take part in the discussions.
5. The Officers of the meeting shall approve the programme of work of the meeting, and fix the date and time of the sittings and any time limits for interventions; they shall also report to the meeting on any other questions requiring a decision for the proper conduct of its business.

ARTICLE 8

Admission to the sittings

Unless the Governing Body decides otherwise, the sittings shall not be public.

ARTICLE 9

Right to take part in the work of the meeting

1. No expert or adviser shall address the meeting without having asked and obtained the permission of the Chairperson, who shall normally call upon speakers in the order in which they have signalled their desire to speak.
2. Persons representing official international organizations which have been invited by the Governing Body to be represented at the meeting as observers may, with the permission of the Chairperson, address the meeting but not move motions or amendments.
3. Persons representing non-governmental international organizations with which the International Labour Organization has established consultative relationships, and with which standing arrangements for such representation have been made, and persons representing other non-governmental international organizations which have been invited by the Governing Body to be represented at

Meetings of experts

the meeting may attend it as observers. The Chairperson may, in agreement with the Vice-Chairpersons, permit such observers to make or circulate statements for the information of the meeting on matters included in its agenda. If agreement cannot be reached, the Chairperson shall refer the matter to the meeting for decision.

4. Interested governments may attend the meeting as observers without speaking rights (one per government) upon prior notification within a deadline set by the Office. Special seating arrangements shall be made for such observers in the meeting room.

5. The Officers of the Governing Body are entitled to attend the meeting and to intervene in the debates.

6. Members of the secretariat of the Employers' and Workers' groups at the meeting may intervene in the debates.

7. The meeting may invite external persons to address the meeting, for example during any panel discussions or round tables that may be organized within the framework of the meeting.

ARTICLE 10

Motions and amendments

1. Motions as to procedure may be moved verbally, without previous notice and without having been seconded.

2. No other motion or amendment shall be discussed unless it has been seconded.

3. The Chairperson, after consultation with the Vice-Chairpersons and the secretariat of the meeting, may set time limits for the submission of amendments.

4. Any amendment may be withdrawn by the expert who moved it unless an amendment to it is under discussion or has been adopted. Any amendment so withdrawn may be moved without previous notice by any other expert.

5. Any expert may at any time draw attention to the fact that the Standing Orders are not being observed, and the Chairperson shall give an immediate ruling on any question so raised.

ARTICLE 11

Adoption of decisions

Decisions shall be taken by consensus. Experts shall make every effort to reach an agreement that is generally accepted, so that a decision can be adopted without formal objections. In such cases, any dissenting positions or reservations shall be

placed on the record without, however, constituting an impediment to the adoption of the decision in question.

ARTICLE 12

Secretariat

The secretariat of the meeting is appointed by the Director-General. The secretariat shall provide the necessary administrative and substantive support to facilitate the discussions. The Secretary-General of the meeting represents the Director-General and is the chief of the secretariat.

ARTICLE 13

Languages

1. Unless the Governing Body decides otherwise, the official languages of the meeting shall be English, French and Spanish.

2. If the meeting decides to make use of screens to visualize text to be adopted, the International Labour Office shall make its best efforts to show the text in the official languages. Where this is not possible due to practical limitations, the text may appear in only one language.

3. The International Labour Office shall make arrangements for interpretation into and from other working languages, taking into account the composition of the meeting.

ARTICLE 14

Record of proceedings

1. A summary record of proceedings of the meeting reflecting the views expressed by the experts shall be prepared by the secretariat of the meeting. The record of proceedings shall be sent to all participants after the meeting, giving them the opportunity to ask for corrections to statements made by or attributed to them, before it is made available online and submitted to the Governing Body.

2. If the meeting fails to reach the result specified by the Governing Body in accordance with article 3, the record of proceedings shall contain any recommendations which the meeting may wish to address to the Governing Body regarding possible future action on the matters covered by the agenda.

Meetings of experts

ARTICLE 15

Autonomy of groups

Subject to these Standing Orders, each group shall control its own procedure.