

Conference guide

***97th Session of the
International Labour Conference
Geneva, 28 May–13 June 2008***



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International Labour Organization

97th Session of the International Labour Conference Geneva, 28 May–13 June 2008

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
1. Agenda of the Conference	1
Standing items	1
Items placed on the agenda by the Conference or the Governing Body	1
2. Rules of procedure of the Conference	2
3. Conference programme	2
4. Plenary	3
I(a) Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General	3
I(b) Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work	3
5. Committees	5
II. Finance Committee of Government Representatives	5
III. Committee on the Application of Standards	5
IV. Promotion of rural employment for poverty reduction – <i>General discussion based on an integrated approach</i>	6
V. Skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development – <i>General discussion</i>	6
VI. Strengthening the ILO's capacity to assist its Members' efforts to reach its objectives in the context of globalization – <i>Continuation of the discussion on strengthening the ILO's capacity and possible consideration of an authoritative document, possibly in the form of a Declaration or any other suitable instrument, together with any appropriate follow-up, and the form they may take</i>	7
Standing Orders Committee	7
Selection Committee	8
Credentials Committee	8
6. Resolutions	8
7. Events	9
Special event on ratifications	9
12 June 2008 – World Day Against Child Labour	9
8. Reports	9
Communication of reports	9
Publication of the <i>Provisional Records</i>	9
9. Governing Body of the International Labour Office	10
Election of members of the Governing Body	10
10. Interpretation	10
11. Participation	11
Composition of delegations	11
Credentials	12
Representation of non-metropolitan territories	12
Representation of international non-governmental organizations	12
12. Health and safety	12

CONFERENCE GUIDE

	<i>Page</i>
13. Practical arrangements	13
Delegates with a disability	13
Accommodation for delegations in Geneva	13
Entry visas for Switzerland and France	13
Registration on arrival	14
Visitors to the Conference	15
Other matters	15

Appendices

I. Contact details.....	17
II. Representation of non-metropolitan territories	18
III. Representation of international non-governmental organizations at the International Labour Conference	19

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97th Session (May–June 2008) of the International Labour Conference

Dates: Wednesday, 28 May to Friday, 13 June 2008

Please note that preparatory meetings will take place on Tuesday, 27 May. These meetings will require the attendance of the tripartite members of national delegations.

Place: *Palais des Nations* and the headquarters of the
International Labour Office, Geneva

For details concerning registration for the Conference, see sections 11 (Participation) and 13 (Practical arrangements), as well as the *Explanatory note for national delegations on the submission of credentials* (appended).

1. Agenda of the Conference

Standing items

- I. (a) Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General
- (b) Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work ¹
- II. Programme and budget and other questions
- III. Information and reports on the application of Conventions and Recommendations

Items placed on the agenda by the Conference or the Governing Body

- IV. Promotion of rural employment for poverty reduction – *General discussion based on an integrated approach*
- V. Skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development – *General discussion*
- VI. Strengthening the ILO's capacity to assist its Members' efforts to reach its objectives in the context of globalization – *Continuation of the discussion on strengthening the ILO's capacity and possible consideration of an authoritative document, possibly in the form of a Declaration or any other suitable instrument, together with any appropriate follow-up, and the form they may take.*

¹ This year the Global Report will be on freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.

2. Rules of procedure of the Conference

The rules of procedure of the Conference are contained in the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation and in the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference.

These texts may be obtained in Geneva at the Document Distribution Service and can also be consulted on the ILO web site: <http://www.ilo.org>.

3. Conference programme

■ Tuesday, 27 May

In order to allow the technical committees to begin their substantive work on the first day of the Conference, the Governing Body decided, at its 300th Session (November 2007), that group meetings would be held on **the day before the official opening sitting**. This means that on **Tuesday, 27 May**, in addition to the usual meetings of the Government, Employers' and Workers' groups, where the groups elect their Officers, make proposals relating to the composition of the different committees and become acquainted with Conference procedure, provision will also be made for *group planning meetings for committees*, to be held as deemed appropriate by each group. **The tripartite members of national delegations should therefore arrive in Geneva in sufficient time to be able to take part in these meetings.**

The group meetings will take place in the following rooms:

Government group: Assembly Hall of the *Palais des Nations*

Employers' group: Governing Body room of the ILO

Workers' group: Room XIX of the *Palais des Nations*

■ Wednesday, 28 May

10 a.m.: *Opening sitting* in the Assembly Hall of the *Palais des Nations*. At the opening sitting, delegations will be called on to elect the Officers of the Conference, set up the various committees and take other decisions as needed. The *Selection Committee* will meet immediately after the opening sitting of the Conference to take decisions concerning arrangements for the Conference.

11 a.m.: *Committees* start their work. Committee sittings continue until adoption of their reports at the end of the second, or beginning of the third week.

■ Monday, 2 June

3 p.m. (tentative): As the three-year mandate (2005–08) of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office expires at this 97th Session, the electoral colleges will meet to renew the Governing Body for another period of three years (2008–11). The electoral colleges will hold their elections in their usual meeting rooms (as above). Procedural details are given in section 9.

- **Friday, 6 June**

Discussion in plenary of the Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

- **Monday, 9 June–Friday, 13 June**

General discussion in plenary, encompassing delegates' statements, high-level panels, special presentations, adoption of reports and voting on instruments.

4. Plenary

The plenary sittings of the Conference are held in the Assembly Hall of the *Palais des Nations*.

After its opening sitting on Wednesday, 28 May, it is not foreseen that the Conference will meet in plenary until **Friday, 6 June** for the discussion of the Global Report. Plenary sittings for the discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General will be held daily throughout the third week, from **Monday, 9 June, at 10 a.m. through to Friday, 13 June**, as required. Committee reports and draft instruments will be submitted to plenary for discussion from **Tuesday, 10 June**. The closing ceremony will take place on **Friday, 13 June**. At all events, a plenary sitting of the Conference may be called at any other time if necessary.

I(a) Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General

Discussion of these documents will begin in plenary sitting on **Monday, 9 June, at 10 a.m.** The Chairperson of the Governing Body will submit a report to the Conference on the work carried out by the Governing Body from June 2007 to June 2008.

The Director-General of the International Labour Office will submit a report to the Conference on a social policy theme of current interest. It will include an annex on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. The Director-General will also submit a report on programme implementation and the results achieved by the Organization in 2006–07.

I(b) Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

The follow-up to the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 86th Session (1998), calls on the Director-General to issue a report each year providing a dynamic global picture relating to one of the four categories of fundamental principles and rights. This year the Global Report will focus on **freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining**, both in member States that have, as well as those that have not yet, ratified the relevant fundamental ILO Conventions, that is, the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

Registration of speakers

(i) Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General. Persons wishing to speak may register in advance, as from **31 March 2008**, by email, facsimile or telephone (see Appendix I – Contact details). They may also do so during the Conference, as early as possible, at the office of the Clerk of the Conference. The list of speakers closes on **Thursday, 5 June, at 6 p.m.**, subject to the decision of the Selection Committee. On the eve of the appointed sitting, written confirmation of the speaking time will be placed in the relevant delegation's pigeonhole at the *Palais des Nations*.

(ii) Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Discussion of the Global Report is scheduled to take place in plenary as of 10 a.m. on **Friday, 6 June**. There will be no list of speakers.

Time limit for speeches concerning the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General

To allow as many speakers as possible to take the floor, the time limit for speeches is set at a maximum of **five minutes** (ILC Standing Orders, article 14.6). This time limit will be strictly applied. For participants' information, this time allowance corresponds to approximately three typewritten double-spaced pages (or 1,000 words), read at a speed commensurate with accurate simultaneous interpretation.

It is therefore strongly recommended that delegates reduce courtesies to a minimum, so as to enter into the substantive elements of their statements without delay. Visiting ministers, delegates, observers and representatives of international organizations and international non-governmental organizations will wish to bear this in mind when preparing their speeches.

Principles governing the discussion in plenary

The following principles, set out in paragraphs 54–58 of the fourth report of the Working Party of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office on the Programme and Structure of the ILO (1967), form a useful background to the discussion of the reports in plenary:

- Freedom of speech is a pillar of the ILO: neither governments, nor employers or workers are immune from criticism within its walls.
- Freedom of speech includes freedom to reply – one point of view may be parried by another.
- Social justice contributes to lasting peace; all human beings have the right to pursue their material well-being and spiritual development in freedom and dignity. The breadth of these fundamental principles of the ILO makes it impossible to circumscribe debate in the International Labour Conference, and the ILO must focus on the objectives that derive from these principles, irrespective of political considerations.
- Nevertheless, the purpose and scope of debate in the International Labour Conference must not encroach on discussions proper to the United Nations

Security Council and General Assembly, bodies entrusted by the Charter with responsibility for political decisions in the United Nations system.

- To uphold the values of human freedom and dignity enshrined in the ILO Constitution, in periods of acute political tension the Conference must strive towards the fullest possible continued cooperation in pursuit of the Organization's objectives. Every delegate has an obligation to keep these considerations in mind, and the President of the Conference to ensure they are preserved.

5. Committees

Registration in committees: For Employers' and Workers' delegates, this is undertaken at the group meetings on Tuesday, 27 May, or by obtaining registration forms from the group secretariats; Government delegates may register during the Government group meeting on Tuesday, 27 May.

Composition: Except when provided otherwise, the initial composition of committees is decided by the Conference at its opening sitting. Any modifications are carried out, for Employers' and Workers' delegates, through their respective groups and must be done before 6 p.m. to be effective the following day. Government delegates may make such modifications at the Composition of Committees Office.

II. Finance Committee of Government Representatives (ILC Standing Orders, article 7bis and section H, article 55(3))

Under **agenda item II**, the Conference will be called on to examine such financial and administrative matters as the Governing Body may decide to bring to its attention, including matters related to the Organization's programme and budget.

III. Committee on the Application of Standards (ILC Standing Orders, article 7 and section H)

This Committee is set up to deal with **agenda item III – Information and reports on the application of Conventions and Recommendations**. It will consider information and reports supplied by governments under articles 19, 22 and 35 of the Constitution on the effect given to Conventions and Recommendations, together with the *Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations* (Report III (Part IA), International Labour Conference, 97th Session, 2008), and submit a report on its work to the Conference.

At the 97th Session, the *General Survey* of reports submitted under article 19 (Report III (Part IB)) will deal with the Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949 (No. 94), and the Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Recommendation, 1949 (No. 84).

Pursuant to the resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject of *Myanmar*, adopted by the Conference at its 88th Session (2000), the Committee will hold a special sitting to discuss the effect given by the Government of Myanmar to the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry set up to examine the observance of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29).

IV. Promotion of rural employment for poverty reduction – *General discussion based on an integrated approach*

Three-quarters of the world's poor live in rural areas. Most earn their living from the land, and in many cases, the returns they derive from their labour are insufficient to meet their basic needs. Decent work deficits are rife. Low-skill, low-pay, low-quality jobs make it hard for the working poor to work themselves out of poverty.

Many countries focus their national employment strategies on urban areas, although poverty tends to be more widespread and more severe in rural areas. What role can the ILO and its tripartite constituents play in terms of closing the urban–rural gap and ensuring full, productive and freely chosen employment in rural areas?

The International Labour Conference will hold a general discussion on promoting rural employment for poverty reduction based on an integrated approach. In preparation for the general discussion, the Office has drafted a report: *Promoting rural employment for poverty reduction* (Report IV, International Labour Conference, 97th Session, 2008), which comprises a stocktaking of the nature, magnitude and changing patterns of rural employment, an analysis of the particular characteristics of rural labour markets and of possible policy interventions in favour of pro-poor growth, and an examination of key issues facing rural workers in terms of rights, employment, social protection and social dialogue. The Decent Work Agenda – and the Global Employment Agenda in particular – provide the general framework within which a comprehensive strategy to promote decent work in rural areas will be discussed and an integrated ILO programme of work to implement this strategy will be developed to promote productive employment and decent work in rural areas.

V. Skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development – *General discussion*

At its 295th Session (March 2006), the Governing Body of the ILO placed the topic of *Skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development* on the agenda of the 97th Session (2008) of the International Labour Conference for general discussion. The background report prepared for this discussion (Report V, International Labour Conference, 97th Session, 2008) examines how, within a decent work perspective, countries can develop the skills base of their economies in such a way as to increase both the quantity and the productivity of labour employed in the economy. The report also examines how skills development can improve the employability of workers and the sustainability of enterprises.

The report looks at the challenges faced by countries at different development levels and their policy options, seeking lessons that are relevant for least developed, developing and more industrialized countries in linking skills development systems not only to current labour market needs but also to future needs as technologies, markets, the environment and development strategies change. In particular, skills development can help developing or informal economies move from a vicious circle of low education, low productivity, informality and persistent poverty to a virtuous one of more productive and more formal employment and higher incomes.

In approaching this multifaceted subject, the report seeks to apply the components of effective skills and employability policies articulated in the conclusions concerning human resources and development, adopted by the 88th Session of the International Labour Conference (2000), and in the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), adopted by the 92nd Session of the Conference (2004).

The report also builds on ILO research findings on the linkages between skills, productivity and economic and employment growth and, in particular, the World Employment Report 2004–05, which examined the conditions under which employment and productivity could grow in tandem and so create a virtuous circle of decent and productive employment opportunities. In turn, the report contributes to the knowledge base of the skills components of the Global Employment Agenda.

VI. Strengthening the ILO's capacity to assist its Members' efforts to reach its objectives in the context of globalization – *Continuation of the discussion on strengthening the ILO's capacity and possible consideration of an authoritative document, possibly in the form of a Declaration or any other suitable instrument, together with any appropriate follow-up, and the form they may take*

Pursuant to the resolution and conclusions adopted by the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference (June 2007),² the Governing Body at its 300th Session (November 2007) placed this item on the agenda of the 97th Session of the Conference for general discussion. In accordance with the mandate given by the Conference last year, intersessional consultations have taken place on this item since the Conference last year; and the Governing Body has agreed to a programme of work. Consistent with this programme, the Office has prepared draft elements of an authoritative document for further consultations in February 2008. A report containing the results achieved will be available at least two months before the opening of the Conference. Following this report, further work and discussions on the rest of the mandate relating to governance and capacity issues will continue. They will take place in the framework of a steering group of the Governing Body in March 2008 and will be reported on to the 97th Session of the Conference in a supplementary report.

Standing Orders Committee
(ILC Standing Orders, section H)

This Committee will meet to examine the *Interim provisions of the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference concerning the verification of credentials* (see “Credentials Committee” below), in addition to other changes to the Standing Orders that may be proposed by the Governing Body at its 301st Session (March 2008).

² See *Provisional Record* No. 23, ILC, 96th Session, Geneva, 2007.

Selection Committee

(ILC Standing Orders, article 4 and section H, article 55(2))

The Selection Committee is composed of 28 members appointed by the Government group, 14 members appointed by the Employers' group, and 14 by the Workers' group. Its responsibilities include arranging the programme of the Conference, fixing the time and agenda of its plenary sittings and acting on its behalf on any other routine question. Since the 1996 reforms to the Conference, most of these tasks have been delegated to the Officers of the Committee. While the Selection Committee may be called on at any time to consider specific issues, it normally holds only one sitting at the beginning of the Conference.

Credentials Committee

(ILC Standing Orders, article 5 and section B)

Please note that these provisions are now reflected in the *Interim provisions concerning verification of credentials*, adopted by the Conference at its 92nd Session (2004) (*Provisional Record* No. 16, 92nd Session, Geneva, 2004), and extended by the 96th Session (2007) of the Conference.

The Credentials Committee is composed of one Government, one Employers' and one Workers' delegate, appointed by the Conference. It meets in closed sittings.

Its responsibilities include:

- examining the credentials, as well as any objection relating to the credentials, of delegates and their advisers, or relating to the failure to deposit credentials of an Employers' or Workers' delegate (ILC Standing Orders, article 5(2) and 26bis);
- considering complaints of non-observance of article 13, paragraph 2(a), of the Constitution (payment of expenses of tripartite delegations) (ILC Standing Orders, article 26ter);
- monitoring of any situation with regard to the observance of the provisions of article 3 or article 13, paragraph 2(a), of the Constitution, about which the Conference has requested a report (ILC Standing Orders, article 26quater);
- determining the quorum required for the validity of votes taken by the Conference (ILC Standing Orders, article 20(1)).

6. Resolutions

At its 96th Session (2007), the International Labour Conference adopted the ILO's Programme and Budget for 2008–09, which provided that funds would not be available for the work of a Resolutions Committee at the 97th Session.

Further information regarding the submission of draft resolutions on items which are not included on the Conference agenda and the manner in which they will be addressed at the 97th Session of the Conference will be communicated in due course.

7. Events

Special event on ratifications

A brief special event (date, time and location to be announced) will be held, at which countries can deposit their instruments of ratification or acceptance of the instrument for the amendment of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization 1997, and their instruments of ratification of any international labour Convention, with the Director-General, and at which all countries having ratified the Constitutional amendment of 1997 can be publicly recognized.

12 June 2008 – World Day Against Child Labour

The ILO launched this event in 2002 in order to highlight the plight of children compelled to work. It is intended to serve as a catalyst for the growing worldwide movement against child labour, reflected in the huge number of ratifications of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138). It will provide an opportunity to gain further support for the campaign against child labour from the ILO's tripartite constituents, and from others, including civil society, schools, youth and women's groups, and from the media.

The 2008 World Day Against Child Labour will focus on combating child labour through education. Please consult the Conference *Daily Bulletin* for further details on the event.

8. Reports

Communication of reports

Reports for examination in technical committees will be communicated to member States at least two months before the session. Reports will be available in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, German and Russian. They will also be accessible electronically, with this *Conference guide*, by visiting the ILO's web site (<http://www.ilo.org>), and following the link for the "International Labour Conference".

To enable all participants to prepare fully for the discussions, governments are urged to distribute the reports sent to them in good time to Government delegates, as well as to those representing the Employers and Workers. Conference participants are encouraged to bring the documents thus received with them to Geneva, and to refrain, where possible, from requesting additional sets once on the Conference site.

Publication of the *Provisional Records*

During the session, the decisions of the Conference are published in *Provisional Records* in English, French and Spanish, and may also be consulted on the ILO's web site. Speeches delivered in plenary by delegates as part of the discussion of the reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General will be published, and they will also be recorded electronically. All plenary activities will be webcast.

9. Governing Body of the International Labour Office

Election of members of the Governing Body

Article 7, paragraph 5, of the Constitution stipulates that the Governing Body's period of office is three years. As the last elections were held during the 93rd Session (2005), elections will be held at the 97th Session to select the Governments represented in the Governing Body and the Employer and Worker members of the Governing Body. The date at which the electoral colleges will meet for this purpose has been **tentatively** scheduled for the **afternoon of Monday, 2 June**.

Article 52 of the Standing Orders of the Conference sets out the voting procedure. Some brief details on the composition of the Governing Body and its electoral procedure follow.

Composition of the Governing Body

The composition of the Governing Body is regulated by article 7 of the Constitution and section G of the Conference Standing Orders. It consists of 56 Governments (28 regular members and 28 deputy members), 33 Employer members (14 regular members and 19 deputy members), and 33 Worker members (14 regular members and 19 deputy members).

Electoral colleges

The Government electoral college, as set out in article 49 of the Conference Standing Orders, is composed of the Government delegates of all Members of the Organization, except those from the ten Members of chief industrial importance³ (which have permanent regular membership of the Governing Body), and from governments disqualified from voting. It therefore elects 18 regular and 28 deputy Government members on the basis of geographical distribution.

The Employers' and Workers' electoral colleges consist of the Employers' and Workers' delegates to the Conference, respectively, excluding delegates of States disqualified from voting. They elect by name 14 persons as regular members and 19 as deputy members of the Governing Body (ILC Standing Orders, article 50).

10. Interpretation

Interpretation services at Conference meetings is provided in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, German, Russian and, in certain cases, Japanese. Interpretation **from** Portuguese is also available in tripartite meetings.

³ Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States.

11. Participation

Composition of delegations

Delegations to the International Labour Conference are composed of **four** delegates: **two** Government delegates, **one** delegate representing the Employers and **one** delegate representing the Workers (Constitution, article 3(1)).

Each delegate may be accompanied by advisers, who shall not exceed two for each item on the Conference agenda (Constitution, article 3(2)). **At the present session, this concerns items III, IV, V and VI. Therefore, each Government, Employers' and Workers' delegate to the 97th Session of the International Labour Conference may be accompanied by up to eight advisers.** To guarantee the required balance of Government, Employer and Worker representatives, governments should ensure that an equal number of Employers' and Workers' advisers are appointed to each delegation. **Travel and living expenses of delegates and their advisers are to be borne by their respective States** (Constitution, article 13(2)(a)).

Under the Constitution, member States shall ensure that their delegations are fully tripartite, and that the delegates are able to act in full independence of one another. They are required to nominate non-government delegates chosen in agreement with the industrial organizations, if such organizations exist, which are most representative of employers or workpeople in their respective countries (Constitution, article 3(5)).

Constituents are asked to remember that the success of the discussions depends on the competencies of participants. It is therefore of critical importance that participants should be chosen not only for the technical expertise required, but also with a view to adopting a coordinated approach, involving action shared between different government administrations.

It is essential that the tripartite balance of delegations be maintained throughout the duration of the Conference, for the purpose of voting, which takes place on the last days of the session.

Governments are also asked to bear in mind the resolution adopted at the 78th Session (1991) of the Conference, which calls on governments, employers' and workers' organizations to include more women in their delegations to the International Labour Conference.

	Total delegates and advisers	No. of women	Percentage of total
2002	2 460	500	20.33
2003	2 642	540	20.44
2004	2 753	640	23.24
2005	2 684	597	22.20
2006	2 712	670	24.40
2007	2 813	678	24.10

Since 2002, as the above table shows, there has been a trend of slight yearly improvement in the proportion of women participating in the Conference. However, 2005 and 2007 both represent a decrease on the preceding year. Given the United Nations target of increasing the proportion of women in decision- and policy-making bodies to at least 30 per cent, the Credentials Committee at the 96th Session was once again obliged to call on constituents to strive to meet this target.

Governments, employers' and workers' organizations are therefore strongly urged to include a higher percentage of women in delegations to the International Labour Conference, with a view to obtaining equitable representation at an early date.

Credentials

Credentials of delegates and their advisers must be deposited with the International Labour Office **at least 15 days** before the date fixed for the opening sitting, in line with article 26, paragraph 1, of the International Labour Conference Standing Orders. The closing date for deposit of the credentials of all delegates and advisers is therefore **Tuesday, 13 May 2008**. Participants cannot register for the Conference unless their credentials have been previously deposited.

The form for the submission of credentials, attached to the letter of convocation, is accompanied by an *Explanatory note for national delegations* on the importance of depositing credentials with the secretariat, giving details on the various categories of participants at the Conference, and the roles that they play. Contact details are given both in the *Explanatory note*, and in Appendix I to this *Conference guide*.

Credentials may also be submitted electronically. Access codes will be sent to permanent missions in Geneva in early 2008. These codes allow the form for credentials to be downloaded from the Organization's web site, and returned electronically to the ILO after completion.

Representation of non-metropolitan territories

See Appendix II.

Representation of international non-governmental organizations

See Appendix III. **The deadline for applications this year is 6 February 2008.**

12. Health and safety

The International Labour Office will do all possible to safeguard participants' health and safety during the Conference. Conference participants are requested to report to the secretariat any situation they believe to be a health or safety hazard. During the Conference full medical services are available.

Participants at the Conference must obtain their own coverage, at their own, or at their government's expense, both in respect of accident and illness occurring during travel to and from the Conference, and during the period of the Conference.

13. Practical arrangements

Practical information of use to delegates during their attendance at the Conference can be viewed online by visiting the ILO web site (<http://www.ilo.org>) and following the link to the “International Labour Conference”, and then to “Practical information for delegates”. Further information concerning the day-to-day running of the Conference can be obtained by following the link to the “*Daily Bulletin*”.

Delegates with a disability

The Conference premises are fully accessible to persons with a disability.

Accommodation for delegations in Geneva

There is constant pressure for accommodation in Geneva in the month of June and, this year, this will be greatly increased by the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Euro 2008 Championship, of which Austria and Switzerland are co-hosts. Delegations are therefore requested to make reservations well in advance. As the International Labour Office **does not have a hotel reservation service**, delegations to the Conference should request the diplomatic representations of member States in Geneva, or where applicable, in Berne, to make the necessary reservations with hotels in the Geneva area. Reservations may also be made through the:

Office du tourisme de Genève
18 rue du Mont Blanc
Case postale 1602
CH-1211 Genève 1

Telephone: +41 22 909 70 00
Facsimile: +41 22 909 70 11
Internet site: <http://www.geneve-tourisme.ch>

Entry visas for Switzerland and France

Entry visas for Switzerland are issued primarily by Swiss diplomatic representations abroad. Delegates to the Conference who require an entry visa should submit, well in advance, a personal request to the Swiss embassy or consulate in their country of residence.

The main responsibility for obtaining entry visas for Switzerland lies with the governments of member States and the delegates included **by them** in the delegation’s official credentials.

The Office can only intervene with Swiss diplomatic representations if a visa request **has been refused** by them. Such interventions may be made only on behalf of the following categories of participants: **delegates, persons formally designated as advisers, and persons designated in accordance with article 2, paragraph 3(i), of the Standing Orders of the Conference**. For all other participants (“other persons attending the Conference” and “support staff for the delegations”), member States should contact the Swiss representation in their country directly and arrange their visas without any ILO involvement. **Please note that for the Office to intervene with Swiss diplomatic representations on behalf of the categories of participants noted above, their credentials must have been received in Geneva by Tuesday, 13 May 2008.**

In order for the Office to intervene in relation to a visa application as stated in the preceding paragraph, the following conditions must be met:

- the **first and last names** of the person concerned must be included in the official credentials of the delegation within one of the categories of participants referred to above, as submitted to the International Labour Office by the government;
- the visa application **has already been processed by a Swiss diplomatic representation**;
- the request for intervention must reach the Office **at least a week before the departure date**, indicating the Swiss representation to which the visa application is being made.

Delegates may wish to note that visas are issued upon arrival at the airport in Geneva **only in exceptional circumstances**. When such circumstances so warrant (in particular where there is no Swiss representation in the country of origin), the Swiss authorities may authorize the issuance of a visa upon arrival in Switzerland, provided that the request is made sufficiently in advance of the departure date. The Office may intervene with the Swiss authorities regarding exceptional requests for a visa to be issued on arrival, if the applicant is included in the official credentials of the delegation, and the request reaches the Office at least one week before departure. The following additional information must also be provided:

- first and last name of the person concerned;
- date of birth;
- type and number of the passport and its issuance and expiry dates.

As the Office does not have the capacity to handle each request individually, it will, where appropriate, transmit directly to the competent Swiss authorities its support for any visa application within 24 hours of receipt of the request.

No request will be handled for persons who travel without having first obtained a visa, or the necessary authorization to obtain it upon arrival in Switzerland. Any person who travels to Switzerland without meeting these requirements may be denied entry at the point of immigration.

The French Consulate in Geneva is not authorized to issue **entry visas for France** to temporary visitors to Switzerland, without first referring the application to the French embassy or consulate in the applicant's home country. Consequently, members of delegations wishing to visit, or stay in, France during the session should obtain the necessary single or multiple entry visas for France in their own country **before leaving for Switzerland**.

Registration on arrival

Delegates will be able to register and collect their badges at the **ILO Pavilion, at the entry to the International Labour Office (headquarters building)**, provided that the Office has received their credentials. The registration desk will be open on **Friday, 23 May, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.**, and as from **Monday, 26 May**, daily from **8 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.**, excluding Sundays. Registration is essential for the calculation of the quorum for each vote.

During the Conference all participants must be in possession of a personalized badge issued by the ILO, and of an appropriate identity document, containing a

photograph, to gain access to the *Palais des Nations* complex. Badges must be worn visibly at all times.

Visitors to the Conference

Visitors to the Conference may be issued with special visitors' badges on presentation, at the ILO Pavilion, of a national identity document bearing a photograph. Visitors' badges are valid for access to the *Palais des Nations* only if they are accompanied by the aforementioned national ID, which may be kept as security on a daily basis.

For access to the *Palais des Nations*, a dedicated visitors' shuttle bus (specially marked) will depart from the ILO and visitors will be required to alight upon arrival at the main *Palais des Nations* gate to undergo UN security service scrutiny, prior to admission to UN premises.

Visitors shall adhere at all times to instructions as may be issued by security staff. They may observe public sittings only from the public gallery of the relevant meeting room and are not permitted to sit in the main body of the hall. Visitors are requested to ensure that they in no way interfere with the orderly conduct of meetings.

Other matters

A shuttle-bus service will be available to transport participants between the ILO headquarters building and the *Palais des Nations* (five- to ten-minute ride).

Car parking space at the *Palais des Nations* will be limited, and participants are consequently encouraged to use public transport, or ILO car parks and the shuttle-bus service.

Appendix I

Contact details

ILO web site: <http://www.ilo.org>

	email address	Fax number	Telephone
Credentials			
By post to: Office of the Legal Adviser ILO CH-1211 Geneva 22	credentials@ilo.org	+41 22 799 84 70	
Registration of speakers	orateurs@ilo.org	+41 22 799 89 44	+41 22 799 77 30
Official Relations Branch (for general inquiries)	RELOFF@ilo.org	+41 22 799 89 44	+41 22 799 77 32
Documentation	DISTR@ilo.org	+41 22 799 63 61	+41 22 799 80 40

Appendix II

Representation of non-metropolitan territories – deadline 18 February 2008

Under article 3, paragraph 3, of the Constitution:

Each Member which is responsible for the international relations of non-metropolitan territories may appoint as additional advisers to each of its delegates:

- (a) persons nominated by it as representatives of any such territory in regard to matters within the self-governing powers of that territory; and
- (b) persons nominated by it to advise its delegates in regard to matters concerning non-self-governing territories.

In line with the constitutional, political, economic and social development of any non-metropolitan territory for which a member State is responsible, the non-metropolitan territory in question may be invited, through the member State concerned, to participate by means of a tripartite observer delegation in sessions of the Conference, with the rights and status accorded to observers under the Standing Orders of the Conference.

Requests for invitations of non-metropolitan territories must reach the Office by 18 February 2008 to be submitted to the Governing Body for approval at its 301st Session (March 2008).

Appendix III

Representation of international non-governmental organizations at the International Labour Conference

1. *Conditions to be met*

Any international non-governmental organization (INGO) wishing to be invited to be represented at the Conference should meet the following conditions. It should:

- (a) demonstrate the international nature of its composition and activities by proving that it is represented or has affiliates in a considerable number of countries and that it is active in those countries;
- (b) have aims and objectives that are in harmony with the spirit, aims and principles of the Constitution of the ILO and the Declaration of Philadelphia;
- (c) formally express a clearly defined interest, supported by its statutes and by explicit reference to its own activities, in at least one of the items on the agenda of the Conference session to which it requests to be invited;
- (d) **submit its request, in writing, to the Director-General of the International Labour Office as soon as possible and at least one month before the opening of the session of the Governing Body preceding the session of the Conference,¹ i.e. by 6 February 2008.**

2. *Documents and information to be submitted*

In order for the Office to verify that the conditions set out in subparagraphs 1(a), (b) and (c) above are met by the organization submitting the request, the latter must send with its request:

- a copy of its statutes;²
- the names and titles of its Officers;
- a description of its composition and the aggregate membership of the national organizations affiliated to it;
- a copy of its latest report;
- detailed and verifiable information about its sources of financing.

If, following the examination of the documents and information, the Office considers that the organization submitting the request meets the prescribed conditions, its request will be submitted to the Officers of the Governing Body for decision.³

Organizations having regional consultative status, those on the ILO special list of INGOs, those invited to previous sessions of the General Conference are considered to have satisfied the conditions set out in subparagraphs (a) and (b) and are exempt from submitting once again the documents and information indicated above.

Any request submitted less than one month before the opening of the session of the Governing Body preceding the session of the Conference will not be examined.

Organizations which have been invited to be represented at the Conference may appoint one representative only for each of the agenda items in which they have expressed a particular interest. The participation of INGOs in the work of the Conference committees dealing with the technical items in which they have expressed a particular interest is subject to a decision of the Selection Committee (article 56.9 of the Standing Orders of the Conference).

¹ ILC Standing Orders, article 2(4).

² In English, French and Spanish, if these versions exist.

³ At its 256th Session (May 1993), the Governing Body delegated to its Officers the authority to invite INGOs wishing to be represented at sessions of the General Conference.