



## Governing Body

326th Session, Geneva, 10–24 March 2016

GB.326/WP/GBC/1(Rev.)

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Working Party on the Functioning of the Governing Body and the  
International Labour Conference

**WP/GBC**

Date: 11 March 2016

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### FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA

## Improving the functioning of the International Labour Conference

### I. Background

1. In the light of the review of the trial of a two-week session of the International Labour Conference in June 2015 and possible improvements to be implemented at future sessions of the Conference, the Governing Body, at its 325th Session (November 2015): (a) confirmed the two-week duration for future sessions of the International Labour Conference; (b) requested the Office to prepare for the 326th Session (March 2016) of the Governing Body a detailed plan of work for the 105th Session (June 2016) of the Conference, based on a two-week format; (c) requested the Office to undertake a comprehensive review of the Standing Orders of the Conference with a view to submitting to the 328th Session (November 2016) draft amendments to the Standing Orders to the International Labour Conference; and (d) requested the Office to prepare for the 328th Session (November 2016) of the Governing Body an analysis of the session of the International Labour Conference in June 2016, which would allow the Governing Body to draw lessons from this experience and take the appropriate decisions as regards the arrangements for future sessions of the International Labour Conference.

### II. Preparatory process

2. Taking into account the successful reforms trialled in 2015, the areas identified in November 2015 for further improvements and the agenda of the 105th Session of the Conference,<sup>1</sup> the following arrangements are proposed to further improve the preparatory processes of the Conference.

#### A. The dissemination of pre-Conference information

3. Following recent practice, preparatory information will be published in two guides and briefing sessions will be held for Geneva-based missions. The first guide entitled

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I.

*Advance information* will be posted on the website in February. A second guide containing practical information on the arrangements agreed by the Governing Body in March 2016 will be posted on the Conference website in April. This second guide will be printed in a pocket format before the Conference for distribution to the delegates. More visibility will be given to the EPUB versions of the guide which will be published on the Web. The briefing session for the Geneva-based missions is tentatively scheduled for mid-May.

## **B. The advance registration process for committees**

4. The forms for early registration in committees will be available on the Web after the March session of the Governing Body. The forms prepared for each group of constituents are being revised to optimize the number of early registrations in each group.

## **C. Technical committees**

5. The individual webpages created for each of the technical committees will allow the early posting of information or material prepared by the Office to facilitate the discussion. The Office is also exploring the possibility of creating password-protected pages granting committee members access to restricted committee documents. In the absence of such password-protected pages, those documents (which include the tentative conclusions to be discussed by the committees' drafting groups) would be sent electronically to relevant delegates instead of being published on the ILO public website.

## **D. Early nomination of committee chairpersons**

6. Efforts should be made to ensure that the identification of all committee chairpersons and vice-chairpersons is finalized by the month of April, pending their formal election by the committee. Those nominations should be based on a clear understanding of the required profile (expertise in the subject and experience of the chairmanship or vice-chairmanship of tripartite discussions). This early identification is critical to enable the secretariat to brief and consult with the committees' officers prior to the Conference.
7. Early consultations of nominated Officers on the tentative plan of work of their respective committees would also allow the Office to make these draft plans of work available on the Web at an earlier stage.

## **III. In-session processes**

8. In the light of the discussion held in November 2015 and the additional reforms and improvements requested for this second experience of a two-week session, the following arrangements are proposed for the in-session processes.

### **A. Group meetings**

9. In June 2015, time allocated to group meetings was, in general, considered as being sufficient, even if some government regional groups expressed the wish that the time allotted to the regional groups' meetings be extended to 120 minutes, in particular on the opening day.

10. The Office was also requested by some regional groups to explore ways to provide, more systematically, interpretation services to the subgroups attending the technical committees.
11. This year two hours of interpretation services (9 a.m. to 11 a.m.) will be assigned to each of the official regional groups on each day of the Conference, with the exception of the opening day. This should offer the flexibility to allow them, as required, to share the interpretation service time with a subgroup needing that support.
12. On the opening day, and taking into account the expected visit of a Head of State, the Conference opening ceremony will commence at **11 a.m. sharp**. Accordingly, it is proposed to schedule regional group meetings on that day from **9 a.m. to 10 a.m.**, with a one-hour meeting of the whole Government group from **10 a.m. to 11 a.m.**
13. Interpretation services will be increased on **Sunday, 29 May**, to provide all regional groups with the opportunity to hold a first preparatory meeting on Sunday afternoon if requested.

## B. Shortening of the opening sitting

14. The arrangements trialled last year to reduce the duration of the opening sitting proved successful and will be pursued. Pending the adoption of amendments to the Standing Orders, the proposed suspensions to the provisions of the Standing Orders will be presented in a *Provisional Record* to be published prior to the opening of the Conference. Those suspensions are addressed in greater detail in Appendix II.

## C. Plenary

15. While the sequence of the four plenary periods should remain unchanged, some adjustments in the scheduling of individual speeches within the plenary periods II (Discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General), III (World of Work Summit) and IV (Formalities and adoption of the committees' reports) are envisaged to avoid the situation of speakers delivering their statements immediately before or after the adoption of reports, or addressing an empty room in the afternoon. On the assumption that the number of speakers would remain approximately the same as in 2014 and 2015 (around 300 speakers), it is proposed to start the discussion of the Reports of the Director-General and of the Chairperson of the Governing Body (plenary period II) on **Wednesday, 1 June**.
16. To avoid the anti-climax of the second Saturday morning and to ensure that adequate time is provided for group meetings to prepare the Governing Body session, it is proposed to close the Conference session on **Friday, 10 June**, instead of Saturday at noon. As a result, the plenary period IV (Formalities and adoption of the committees' reports) would start after the closure of the Summit, on **Thursday, 9 June**.
17. The Conference will receive a set of amendments to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006), adopted by the Second meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee established under Article XIII of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, held in February 2016. In accordance with Article XV of the MLC, 2006, the Conference may decide either to approve the amendments or to refer them back to the Special Tripartite Committee for reconsideration. A vote in this regard is tentatively scheduled on **Wednesday, 8 June**.

18. The Conference will also have to examine proposed amendments to the Annexes to the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No.185), submitted by the Ad Hoc Tripartite Maritime Committee which met in February 2016. The Conference will discuss in plenary the proposed amendments before taking a vote. It is therefore envisaged that the discussion be held in the Conference plenary on **Monday, 6 June**, and the vote on **Friday, 10 June**.
19. In accordance with articles 40(7) and 6(3) of the Standing Orders, a Conference Drafting Committee will be established by the Conference to review the amendments to the Annexes of Convention No. 185 once approved by the Conference, and prepare the final text to be put to the vote.

#### **D. Programme implementation report**

20. Pending the adoption of the relevant amendments to article 12 of the Standing Orders, suspensions should be proposed to allow the Director-General to present, in the first year of a biennial financial period (such as 2016), a report on a social policy theme, in addition to the Programme implementation report.

#### **E. World of Work Summit**

21. The World of Work Summit is currently scheduled for **Thursday, 9 June**. Efforts will be made to improve the interactivity of the debate and to keep, to the extent possible, the special sittings clustered.

#### **F. Selection Committee**

22. Following the suggestion made by the Officers of the Selection Committee and the experience of the June 2015 session, after the first meeting of the Committee, the Officers will work by email on any routine issue related to the programme of the Conference.

#### **G. Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS)**

23. The experience of the June 2015 session demonstrated that the work of the Committee can be completed within the framework of a two-week session. On the basis of the positive developments acknowledged in June 2015, such as the timely agreement on the list of cases and adoption of conclusions on every case, further improvements in the working methods (allowing, for example, the Conference to adopt the CAS report on Friday afternoon) will be discussed in the context of the regular informal consultations prior to the 2016 session of the Conference.<sup>2</sup>

#### **H. Credentials Committee**

24. While the Credentials Committee was able to complete its work, the reduced number of working days put considerable strain on the capacity of the Committee members and the secretariat, as well as on governments, which were asked to provide information and

<sup>2</sup> The Informal Tripartite Working Group on the Working Methods of the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards met in March 2015 and should meet again during the March 2016 Governing Body session.

comments on cases within very tight deadlines. As it may not be reasonably possible to further reduce the time limits for submitting objections and complaints, improvements in the situation will continue to depend on the willingness and the ability of the employers' and workers' organizations to submit their cases as early as possible in advance of the deadlines and on the capacity of the secretariat and the Committee to process and consider all cases submitted.

## **I. Side events**

25. It is proposed to pursue the policy applied in June 2015 and to restrict the holding of such parallel sessions to special events, such as the Ceremony for the World Day against Child Labour or briefing sessions on major international conferences having a direct link with the Conference, to avoid overlaps or disruptions in the work of the Conference.

## **J. Technical committees**

26. The agenda of the forthcoming session of the Conference comprises one standard-setting committee,<sup>3</sup> and two non-standard-setting committees.
27. Following the experience of the June 2015 session, the reports of the technical committees, once approved by their respective Officers, will continue to be submitted directly to the plenary, and the deadline for the electronic submission of corrections to the reports will be extended until the closure of the Conference. The reports of the three technical committees will be posted on the Web on *Thursday, 9 June*, at the latest.
28. In order to improve time management, the procedural part of the opening sitting of committees will be simplified through streamlining the election processes of the chairperson and vice-chairpersons, ensuring that the Office's introductory remarks are kept to a reasonable duration and that the tentative plan of work of the committee, as posted on the Web, is adopted without unnecessary explanation from the Office.
29. Some reforms explored by the Working Party in November 2015, in particular as regards the working methods of the non-standard-setting committees, may be trialed in June 2016, subject to their endorsement by each committee.
30. Screens will be available in all committee rooms for their drafting groups and for the discussion of amendments in plenary.

## **K. Standard-setting committees**

31. The experience of 2015 has demonstrated that a standard-setting committee can complete its work within the two-week format with the same amount of time (nine days), sequence, number of sittings and group meetings as previously available. The June 2016 session of the Conference will provide the opportunity to trial a first discussion of a standard-setting discussion within the new format. The arrangements to be put in place by the committee for the amendment process and the meetings of the committee drafting committee will therefore play a key role in the success of this trial.

<sup>3</sup> As reflected in Appendix I.

32. The committee will start its work on *Monday, 30 May*, and will complete its discussion by *Wednesday, 8 June*. The committee will determine the time and frequency of the meetings of its drafting committee, knowing that its final meeting will have to be scheduled before the end of the afternoon on *Wednesday, 8 June*.

## L. Non-standard-setting committees

33. Following the discussions held at the 322nd, 323rd and 325th Sessions of the Governing Body on the preparation of the evaluation of the impact of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, and taking into account that the Declaration itself envisages that “Interested multilateral organizations will be given the opportunity to participate in the evaluation of the impact and in the discussion”, members expressed support for arrangements to organize interactive panel discussions as part of the Conference’s evaluation of the impact of the Declaration.
34. In November 2015, the Governing Body therefore decided to recommend to the Conference that the evaluation of the impact of the Declaration be organized as a Committee of the Whole to allow for broader participation as well as interactive discussion.
35. As regards the interactive panel discussions, it is tentatively proposed that they focus on Chapters 1, 2 and 4 of the Office report, with a view to complement the information provided therein and enable Conference delegates to benefit from inputs by the panellists in a way that will facilitate further tripartite discussion in the Committee.
36. Subject to the decisions to be adopted following informal consultations in April 2016, it is tentatively proposed that the discussion be organized in five parts, as follows:
- interactive panel discussions starting on *Monday, 30 May*;
  - a tripartite general discussion to be completed by *Thursday, 2 June*;
  - a tripartite drafting group, which would meet on *Friday, 3 June* and *Saturday, 4 June*;
  - a submission of amendments, tentatively planned for *Monday, 6 June*;
  - the discussion of amendments in the plenary of the committee to be completed by the end of *Wednesday, 8 June*, at the latest.
37. The detailed arrangements to be submitted to the Conference will be finalized during informal consultations to be organized in April 2016 on the specific modalities of the discussion as well as possible outcomes.
38. In accordance with the decision of the Governing Body regarding the preparations for the general discussion on decent work in global supply chains,<sup>4</sup> an Office task force was established. The task force has ensured consistency with the follow-up of the 2015 Conference committees on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the informal economy and the recurrent discussion on social protection. Informal regional consultations for governments were held in all regions while the consultation process with the Workers’ and the Employers’ groups was coordinated through their Bureaux. This process included various meetings as well as global symposia.

<sup>4</sup> GB.320/INS/2, paras 20–23; and GB.320/PV, para. 42.

39. Further to the discussion on improving non-standard-setting committees, the organization of the discussion and tentative plan of work should enable the committee members and the secretariat to have a clear understanding of the elements of the general discussion to be reflected in the outcome document at the end of each sitting. To this effect, the Office will organize, at the end of each day of general discussion, a short informal meeting with the Officers of the committee to identify the key issues discussed during the day which should be retained in the tentative text to be prepared by the Office.
40. The general discussion will start on *Monday, 30 May, afternoon*, and conclude by *Thursday, 2 June, lunch time*. On the basis of the guidance provided by the Officers, the secretariat will then finalize a zero draft of the tentative conclusions to be considered by a tripartite drafting group. Those tentative conclusions will be distributed to the members of each committee drafting group on *Friday, 3 June, early morning*.
41. A tripartite drafting group will meet on *Friday, 3 June* and *Saturday, 4 June*. Group meetings will be scheduled on *Friday, 3 June*, in the morning before the drafting group starts its work. The draft conclusions, as agreed by the drafting group, will then be distributed to the groups *by the end of Sunday, 5 June*, and posted on the webpage of the committee in English, French and Spanish.
42. Subject to the decision of the committee, the plenary may be reconvened on *Monday, 6 June*, with a late morning sitting (*from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.*) during which the Employer and Worker Vice-Chairpersons and the Government members of the drafting group (or one Government spokesperson) could present the draft text resulting from the tripartite discussion in the drafting group. This information would help the members of the committee that were not part of the drafting process to understand better how the text has been elaborated. In the light of this information, the members of the committee will be given the opportunity to submit formal amendments to the draft conclusions in the afternoon.
43. During the two remaining days (*Tuesday, 7 June*, and *Wednesday, 8 June*), the committee will then discuss the amendments received and adopt the outcome text paragraph by paragraph.

#### IV. Tentative plan of work of the Conference

44. A tentative plan of work of the Conference reflecting the abovementioned arrangements is appended.<sup>5</sup> This tentative plan of work will be subject to changes until its adoption by the Selection Committee on the opening day of the Conference. A watermarked version of the draft will be posted on the Web after the March 2016 session of the Governing Body to facilitate the preparatory processes.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix III.

**Draft decision**

45. *The Working Party on the Functioning of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference, having examined the proposed arrangements contained in document GB.326/WP/GBC/1(Rev.) and the proposed plan of work for the 105th Session (June 2016) of the Conference, recommends that the Governing Body:*

- (a) propose to the Conference that it implement the proposed arrangements for its June 2016 session;*
- (b) request the Office to prepare for the 328th Session (November 2016) of the Governing Body an analysis of the June 2016 session of the Conference, which would allow the Governing Body to draw lessons from this experience and take the appropriate decisions as regards the arrangements for future sessions of the Conference;*
- (c) request the Office to undertake a comprehensive review of the Standing Orders of the Conference with a view to submitting draft amendments to the 328th Session (November 2016); and*
- (d) request the Office to prepare for the 328th Session (November 2016) a background document on the conduct of the Regional Conferences (or Meetings) to enable the Working Party to commence its review of the functioning and role of the Regional Meetings, as agreed by the Governing Body in June 2011.<sup>6</sup>*

<sup>6</sup> GB.311/PV, para. 107(a); and GB.311/8, para. 4.

## Appendix I

### Agenda of the 105th Session of the International Labour Conference

#### *Standing items*

- I. Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General
- 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. Decent work in global supply chains (general discussion)
- V. Employment and decent work for peace and resilience: Revision of the Employment (Transition from War to Peace) Recommendation, 1944 (No. 71) (standard setting, double discussion)
- VI. Evaluation of the impact of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008
- VII. Maritime matters:
  - Approval of amendments to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006)
  - Adoption of amendments to the Annexes of the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185)

## Appendix II

### Suspension of various provisions of the Standing Orders of the Conference

#### *Introduction*

1. The implementation of the proposed format of the 105th Session (30 May–11 June 2016) of the International Labour Conference requires a number of changes to the Standing Orders of the Conference. Pending the adoption of amendments to the Standing Orders, it is proposed to proceed, as in the past, by suspending the relevant Standing Orders provisions for this session in accordance with article 76 of the Standing Orders.
2. None of the proposed suspensions are new. The suspension concerning the Report of the Director-General was previously adopted in 2014 and those relating to the Resolutions Committee in the first year of biennial financial periods (“non-budget year”) since 2006. All others were adopted in identical terms last year, some of them also in previous years.

#### *Proposed suspensions*

##### Report of the Director-General

3. As it has been agreed that the Director-General would henceforth present a thematic Report to each session of the Conference, including in non-budget years when the Director-General is required to report on programme implementation, it is proposed to suspend article 12(2), of the Standing Orders to the extent necessary to permit the thematic report to be submitted under article 12 along with the Programme implementation report.

##### World of Work Summit

4. For the purpose of the ILO World of Work Summit, to the extent necessary to enable statements of Heads of State and Government, Prime Ministers and Vice-Presidents, and interactive panel-style sessions, it is proposed to suspend:
  - (a) the limitation concerning the number of statements by each member State in plenary and, to that extent, article 12(3);
  - (b) the provisions regarding time limits of speeches and, to that extent, article 14(6);
  - (c) the sequence in which the speakers are given the floor, in order to facilitate an exchange of views and, to that extent, the provisions of article 14(2); and
  - (d) the rules on moving the closure of the discussion provided in article 16.

##### Records of the Conference

5. As regards the records of the Conference, it is proposed to suspend several provisions of article 23, namely:
  - (a) paragraph 1 to the extent necessary to permit the publication only after the Conference of the *Provisional Records* of speeches made during the plenary discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General;
  - (b) paragraph 2 solely for the purpose of permitting the Director-General to present only in writing his reply to points raised in the discussion in plenary of his Report to the Conference; and

- (c) paragraph 3 with respect to the deadline for receiving proposed corrections to the *Provisional Records*, to permit that all records – those published during the session as well as those published afterwards – be reviewed together within the same time period following the Conference.

### Resolutions Committee

6. Following agreement at the 319th Session of the Governing Body not to reactivate the Resolutions Committee, the provisions of the Standing Orders concerning the referral to the Resolutions Committee of resolutions relating to matters not included in an item placed on the agenda would have to be suspended, as has been done since 2006 in non-budgetary years when such resolutions were receivable. It is accordingly proposed to suspend the provisions of paragraphs 3, 4 and 10 of article 17 of the Standing Orders.

### Time limits for filing objections and complaints with the Credentials Committee

7. To enable the Committee to examine all objections and complaints in time, it is proposed to reduce the time limit for lodging objections from 72 to 48 hours from the opening of the Conference (and from 48 to 24 hours from the publication of a revised list of delegations) (with the possibility for the Committee to make exceptions) and to reduce the time limit for complaints from seven to five days. In addition to suspending article 26bis(1)(a) and article 26ter(3)(a) to the extent that they provide for the current, longer time limits, this would also require adopting amended provisions to replace them, which provide for the new, shorter, time limits. For the duration of the 104th Session of the Conference only, the relevant provisions would thus read as follows (emphasis added):

#### Article 26bis

##### *Objections*

1. An objection in pursuance of article 5, paragraph 2(a), shall not be receivable in the following cases:

- (a) if the objection is not lodged with the Secretary-General within **48** hours from 10 a.m. of the first day of the Conference, the date of publication in the Provisional Record of the official list of delegations, on the basis of the presence of a person's name or functions on this list, or its absence. If the objection is based on a revised list, the time limit shall be reduced to **24** hours. The Credentials Committee may in justified exceptional cases extend these time limits by up to 24 hours;

...

#### Article 26ter

##### *Complaints*

...

3. A complaint shall be receivable if:

- (a) it is lodged with the Secretary-General of the Conference before 10 a.m. on the **fifth** day following the opening of the Conference or, thereafter, in the case of a complaint referred to in paragraph 2, it is lodged within 48 hours of the alleged act or omission preventing attendance of the delegate or adviser concerned, and if the Committee considers that there is sufficient time to deal with it properly; and

...

Adoption of committee reports

8. It is proposed to suspend article 67 – which concerns the possibility for a standard-setting committee to consider amendments to the text of a proposed instrument submitted by its drafting committee – to the extent necessary to avoid that the committee may have to hold an additional sitting for the adoption of its report containing the proposed instrument. This permits the committee to delegate to its Officers the authority to approve the report including the proposed instrument.

***Presentation of the proposed suspensions to the Conference***

9. Under article 76 of the Standing Orders of the Conference, a suspension of a provision of the Standing Orders can only be adopted by the Conference at a sitting following that at which the proposed suspension is presented to the Conference. In order to contribute to the streamlining of the Conference and in line with the approach adopted in 2015, it is intended that the publication of the above proposed suspensions in a *Provisional Record* issued before the start of the Conference replace the formal presentation of the proposed suspensions to the opening plenary, so that, unless the Officers of the Conference decide otherwise, the Conference may approve those suspensions at its first sitting.

## Appendix III

### Tentative plan of work – 105th Session of the International Labour Conference (30 May–10 June 2016)

	Su 29	M 30	T 31	W 1	Th 2	F 3	Sa 4	Su 5	M 6	T 7	W 8	Th 9	F 10	Sa 11
<b>Plenary sittings</b>		■ <sup>2</sup>		■	■	■			■	■	■	■ <sup>1</sup>	■	□
Committee on the Application of Standards		■ <sup>2</sup>	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	A	PI	
Committee on decent work in global supply chains ( <i>general discussion</i> )		■ <sup>2</sup>	■	■	■	■*	■*		■**	■	■		PI	
Committee on employment and decent work for peace and resilience: Revision of the Employment (Transition from War to Peace) Recommendation, 1944 (No. 71) ( <i>standard setting, double discussion</i> )		■ <sup>2</sup>	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■ CDC <sup>4</sup>		PI	
Evaluation of the impact of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008		■ <sup>2</sup>	■	■	■	■*	■*		□**	■	■	PI		
Approval of amendments to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006									PI		V			
Adoption of Amendments to the Annexes of the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185)									PI		V			
Finance Committee				■		A				PI				
Selection Committee		■ <sup>2</sup>								PI				
Group meetings	■	■					■							■
Governing Body		■ <sup>3</sup>												■

<sup>1</sup> World of Work Summit.

<sup>2</sup> After the opening sitting.

<sup>3</sup> Programme, Financial and Administrative Section of the Governing Body.

<sup>4</sup> The Committee will have to determine the time and frequency of the meetings of its Committee Drafting Committee (CDC).

\* **Drafting group.** \*\* **Receipt of amendments.**

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Adoption by the Committee of its report/products.

Adoption of the report by the Conference in plenary sitting.

Half-day sitting.

All-day sitting.

Sitting if necessary.

