



NINTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Consideration of the Director-General's  
report on the situation of workers of  
the occupied Arab territories at the  
91st (2003) Session of the International  
Labour Conference**

1. At its 285th Session (November 2002) the Governing Body had before it a motion presented by the representative of the Government of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab members, seconded by the representative of the Government of Nigeria, in accordance with article 15 of its Standing Orders.<sup>1</sup>
2. This motion asked the Director-General to include on the agenda of the Governing Body's 286th Session in March 2003 a proposal to hold a special sitting of the Conference at its 91st Session (June 2003) for the consideration of the Director-General's report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, including implementation of the ILO's Plan of Action.
3. It was decided that an item would be included for examination on the agenda of the Governing Body's 286th Session (March 2003).
4. The procedure applicable for this special sitting is described in previous documents.<sup>2</sup> According to article 12 of the Standing Orders of the Conference, the Director-General's report must be discussed in plenary; however, it has been deemed acceptable to defer consideration of the part of the report concerning the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories to a special sitting of the Conference, provided that certain conditions are met, namely that:

<sup>1</sup> Doc. GB.285/11/2, para. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Doc. GB.271/7, GB.255/3/3, paras. 4-10, GB.255/PV(Rev.), pp. VII/1-VII/6, GB.259/6/3, GB.262/6.

- (a) no draft resolution on the same subject is submitted to the same session of the Conference;
- (b) there is a consensus in the Conference Selection Committee;
- (c) there is no discussion on the subject outside the special sitting.

The procedure adopted for organizing a special sitting of the Conference is described in greater detail in the document reproduced in the appendix.

5. It should be recalled that one of the conditions regarded as essential for the adoption of a Governing Body decision to propose a special sitting of the Conference is that there should be a consensus on the subject. That consensus existed until the Governing Body's 262nd Session (March-April 1995), when it was decided, given the prevailing circumstances, that the 1995 session of the Conference would be the last occasion on which such a special sitting would be held. However, the Governing Body decided once again to submit proposals for special sittings for the purpose of considering the Director-General's report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories at the 86th (1998), 87th (1999) and 89th Sessions of the Conference.
6. Consequently, the Governing Body will no doubt wish to determine whether the conditions that justified the decisions taken in 1998, 1999 and 2001 and between 1990 and 1995<sup>3</sup> to hold special sittings to examine the Director-General's report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories are met once again.

**7. *More specifically, the Governing Body will no doubt wish:***

- (a) to take a decision regarding the proposal to hold a special sitting to examine the Director-General's report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories at the 91st Session (2003) of the Conference; and***
- (b) if it accepts the proposal, to invite the Director-General to submit proposals to the Selection Committee concerning the organization of a special sitting at the 91st Session (June 2003) of the International Labour Conference to examine his report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, based on the arrangements agreed at the 87th Session (June 1999) of the Conference (appendix), subject to the conditions referred to in paragraph 4 above and any new changes or additions that may be made to them in the light of the Governing Body's discussion.***

Geneva, 13 January 2003.

*Point for decision:* Paragraph 7.

<sup>3</sup> Special sittings were held in 1990 (77th Session), 1991 (78th Session), 1992 (79th Session), 1993 (80th Session), 1994 (81st Session), 1995 (82nd Session), 1998 (86th Session), 1999 (87th Session) and 2001 (89th Session). There was no special session in 1996 (83rd Session), 1997 (85th Session) or 2000 (88th Session). The 84th Session of the Conference (1996) was a Maritime Session.

## Appendix



# INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE

87th Session

Geneva, June 1999

Selection Committee

**CP/D.2**

*First sitting, Tuesday, 1 June 1999*

### **Consideration of the Director-General's Report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories**

1. At its 274th Session (March 1999), the Governing Body decided that the Director-General should submit to the present session of the Conference a proposal to hold a special sitting for the consideration of the Director-General's report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, under the same conditions as those that applied at the 77th (1990), 78th (1991), 79th (1992), 80th (1993), 81st (1994), 82nd (1995) and 86th (1998) Sessions. These were –
  - (a) that no resolution would be submitted on the same subject to the same session of the International Labour Conference;
  - (b) that there was a consensus on the matter in the Selection Committee of the Conference;
  - (c) that no discussion of the subject would take place at the Conference outside the special sitting.
2. In taking that decision, the Governing Body recommended that the Director-General submit proposals to the Selection Committee of the Conference based on the arrangements made at the earlier sessions of the Conference.
3. Considering that the conditions now seem to be satisfied for a sufficient consensus to be reached in the Selection Committee, the Director-General therefore submits the following proposals in the light of the above, in accordance with the mandate conferred on him by the Governing Body and taking account of the arrangements already applied at the 77th (1990), 78th (1991), 79th (1992), 80th (1993), 81st (1994), 82nd (1995) and 86th (1998) Sessions of the Conference.

### **Principle and timing of a special sitting**

4. In previous years the Conference recognized that, while the Director-General's report on the occupied Arab territories is an integral part of the Director-General's Report provided for in article 12 of the Standing Orders of the Conference, and has always been treated as such, it was nevertheless possible to see a discussion of the report in the framework of a special sitting, on the understanding that the nature of the sitting would not be modified and could not give rise to anything other than a discussion.
5. On this basis and in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it to fix the time and agenda for the plenary sittings, *the Selection Committee is invited to decide to convene a special sitting for the discussion of the Appendix to the Director-General's Report dealing with the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, it being understood that speakers will have to confine their remarks at that sitting to this Appendix and that, conversely,*

*that subject will not be discussed in the framework of the discussion on the remainder of the Report.*

6. In order to take account of the programme of work for the beginning of the Conference and of the fact that a number of ministers who can be present only during the early days of the Conference may wish to take the floor during the special sitting, *it is proposed that the special sitting should be held in the afternoon of Thursday, 10 June.*

## **Procedure at the special sitting**

7. As stated above, the report of the Director-General on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories is an integral part of the Report of the Director-General, and its discussion is governed by article 12 of the Standing Orders of the Conference. However, in order to enable speakers wishing to do so to take the floor both during the discussion of the Report of the Director-General as a whole and during the special sitting, it was accepted in previous years that the Conference could – as an exception and as in the case of other special occasions in the past – authorize speakers to take the floor during both discussions.
8. *The Selection Committee is accordingly invited to recommend that the Conference allow speakers who so wish to take the floor both on the General Report and during the special sitting, it being understood that the subject to be discussed in that sitting would not be discussed in the debate on the remainder of the Report.*
9. As regards the actual arrangements for the special sitting, experience at the earlier sessions has shown that a single special sitting – in the afternoon, extended as appropriate beyond 6 p.m. and continuing until 9 p.m. at the latest – is sufficient to allow all those wishing to do so to speak on the subject within reasonable time limits. This was achieved in part because, following appeals by the Officers of the Conference in favour of combining statements, a number of joint speeches were made. An additional measure adopted in previous years – the fixing of a shorter time limit for speeches at the special sitting – does not seem necessary this year in view of the proposal, which will be before the Conference for approval at its second sitting, for a generally applicable reduced time limit for speeches in plenary.
10. In line with the practice in previous years, *the Selection Committee may wish to decide that the list of speakers for the special sitting will be closed at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, 8 June.*
11. As in previous years, within the framework of the principles governing the discussion of his Report in plenary sitting, the Director-General will devote part of his reply to the discussion of his Report to the lessons to be drawn from the special sitting.
12. It is possible that the special sitting will give rise to a request or several requests for a right of reply. The granting of such a request is a matter for the President in accordance with his duties under article 13 of the Standing Orders. It will be for him, in consultation with the other Officers, to determine the timing, length and modalities of any right of reply he may grant, in accordance with the principles set out in his statement opening the discussion of the Reports of the Chairman of the Governing Body and the Director-General, and with the established practice of the Conference.

## **Committee meetings**

13. In previous years the view was put forward that no committees should meet during the time devoted to the special sitting so as to enable all delegates to attend.
14. While experience has shown that this concern can be met without undue difficulty as regards certain committees, others, and in particular the technical committees and the Committee on the Application of Standards, already face serious time constraints in completing their business. The technical committees are moreover largely composed of technical advisers attending the Conference exclusively for the purpose of taking part in the committees, and their meeting would be unlikely to reduce significantly the numbers attending the special sitting. This means that the only committee whose plan of work could allow it not to meet during the time devoted to the special sitting would be the Finance Committee of Government Representatives.

15. *It is therefore proposed that the Finance Committee should not meet at the same time as the special sitting.*

*Points for decision:* Paragraph 5;  
Paragraph 6;  
Paragraph 8;  
Paragraph 10;  
Paragraph 15.