



Governing Body

356th Session, Geneva, 23 March–2 April 2026

Institutional Section

INS

Date: 20 March 2026

Original: English

Twentieth item on the agenda

Reports of the Officers of the Governing Body

First report: Action to be taken regarding the election and appointment of the Director-General

► Calendar of actions to be taken regarding the election of the Director-General

1. The Rules governing the election of the Director-General were adopted by the Governing Body at its 240th Session (May–June 1988) and amended at its 312th Session (November 2011). At its 342nd Session (June 2021), ¹ the Governing Body requested an opportunity for constituents to interact with candidates, in addition to the formal hearings held before each election. The Rules governing the appointment of the Director-General, which are contained in [Annex III of the Compendium of rules applicable to the Governing Body](#), were last revised by the Governing Body at its 347th Session (March 2023) to reinforce certain aspects of the process in terms of transparency and fairness, in order to uphold high ethical standards. ² The Rules now include an interactive event that was introduced for the first time in the form of public dialogues at the last election held in March 2022.

¹ GB.342/INS/6.

² GB.347/LILS/3(Rev.2).

2. The term of office of the current Director-General expires on 30 September 2027. Given that the necessary procedures to be followed require early planning, the Officers of the Governing Body recommend that a timetable for the election be submitted for consideration by the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026).
3. The current rules call for the following steps:
 - (a) The Governing Body decides on the date for the election and approves the election timetable.
 - (b) A call for candidatures is issued by the Chairperson of the Governing Body, specifying that candidatures need to be received before a date determined by the Governing Body, which shall be at least two months prior to the date of election.
 - (c) The Chairperson of the Governing Body receives the candidatures submitted by Member States or by members of the Governing Body, which shall include a curriculum vitae, a medical certificate and a vision statement.
 - (d) The Chairperson of the Governing Body distributes valid candidatures to Governing Body members and Member States not represented in the Governing Body for information.
 - (e) In the three-month period prior to the election, at least one interactive event, such as an interview or panel discussion, shall be organized with a view to providing an opportunity for candidates to make themselves and their vision known to the entire ILO constituency and the general public. At the 2022 elections when the interactive event was first introduced, only one public event accommodating all five candidates was organized.³
 - (f) Hearings of the candidate(s) are held at a private sitting of the Governing Body.
 - (g) The election of the ILO Director-General is conducted by ballot (as many ballots as may be necessary to determine which candidate has obtained the required majority). To be elected, a candidate must receive the votes of more than one half of the Governing Body members entitled to vote.
 - (h) The Director-General elect takes office on the day following the end of the mandate of the current Director-General.
4. The Governing Body is therefore required to determine the dates for:
 - (a) the issue of the call for candidatures;
 - (b) the closure of the call for candidatures;
 - (c) the interactive event;
 - (d) the hearings of candidates in private sitting; and
 - (e) the election.

³ Final arrangements for the public dialogues with candidates for the position of Director-General (GB.343/INS/14/1(Rev.1)).

► Possible time frame

5. The Officers of the Governing Body assessed two possible timetables based on the following considerations: ⁴
- (a) From a governance perspective, there is an expectation for the appointment process to be completed during the current Governing Body mandate. The timetable should therefore ensure that the elections are held at the latest during the 359th Session (March 2027), before the Governing Body elections scheduled to take place at the June 2027 session of the International Labour Conference.
 - (b) In light of the costs associated with holding the ballot at an additional ordinary session, as was the case in 2012, the Governing Body may wish to consider conducting the next election of the Director-General during one of its two ordinary sessions. For comparison, a two-day special meeting is estimated to cost US\$451,000 (in travel and interpretation expenses) while each extra day added to an ordinary session would cost approximately US\$99,000.
6. On this basis, the Officers recommend that the Governing Body should decide between the two options outlined below: holding the election either at the **358th Session (November 2026)** or at the 359th Session (March 2027) at the latest.

Option A: Election to be held in November 2026 (ten months before the expiry of the incumbent’s mandate)

March 2026	The Governing Body approves the timetable for the appointment of the Director-General
15 April 2026	The Chairperson of the Governing Body calls for candidatures
30 July 2026	Deadline for the receipt of candidatures
16 September 2026	Public interactive event with all candidates (could be extended by one more day depending on the number of candidates.)
358th Session (November 2026)	
Monday, 9 November	Candidate(s) hearings in private sitting
Monday, 16 November	Election by secret ballot in private sitting
1 October 2027	The term of office of the Director-General commences

7. The timetable outlined above is based on the practice followed in the past when the incumbent was eligible for re-election, as reflected in Appendix III.
8. Paragraph 8 of the Rules states that “detailed arrangements concerning the date, format and duration of the interactive event shall be decided by the Governing Body at its session preceding the event”. If the Governing Body decides that the elections should be held in November 2026, it may prefer to approve the arrangements at the 356th Session, rather than

⁴ It is recalled that, at its 347th Session (March 2023), a number of Governing Body members commented on the need for the campaign period to be limited in length.

during its shorter 357th Session (June 2026) held immediately after the closure of the Conference session.

Option B: Election to be held in March 2027 (six months before the expiry of the incumbent's mandate)

March 2026	The Governing Body approves the timetable for the appointment of the Director-General
July 2026	The Chairperson of the Governing Body calls for candidatures
30 October 2026	Deadline for the receipt of candidatures
358th Session 2026	The Governing Body decides on the modalities of the interactive event in the form of public dialogues
20 January 2027	Public interactive event with all candidates (could be extended by one more day depending on the number of candidates.)
359th Session (March 2027)	
Monday, 15 March	Candidate(s) hearings in private sitting
Monday, 22 March	Election by secret ballot in private sitting
1 October 2027	The term of office of the Director-General commences

9. The timetable outlined above is based on the practice followed at the most recent election held in 2022.

Additional considerations for both options

10. Subject to the requirement that the call for candidatures must close at least two months prior to the date of the ballot, the Governing Body has full discretion to determine when the Chairperson should open the call for candidatures and the deadline for closing the receipt of candidatures.
11. Depending on the number of candidates and the number of other items on the agenda, it may be necessary to extend the duration of either session to ten days.

► Election and appointment

12. The election will be conducted by secret ballot in accordance with the Rules. It will then be for the Governing Body, upon the recommendation of its Officers, to decide on the period of appointment of the Director-General pursuant to article 4.6(a) of the Staff Regulations which reads as follows:

The Director-General shall be appointed for a period of five years. The Governing Body may renew the appointment once. The possible extension shall not exceed five years.

Past practice shows that the Governing Body has decided to renew the appointment also for five years.

13. Information on the timelines of the most recent elections is provided in Appendix III.

► Arrangements for the public interactive event with candidates

14. Considering that in March 2022 the arrangements for the public interactive event with candidates were well received by constituents, the Governing Body may wish to retain the same arrangements outlined in the appendix to this document.
15. The Officers of the Governing Body propose that the interactive event be convened either on 16 September 2026 (option A) or on 20 January 2027 (option B), with the possibility of extending by one day, should a high number of candidates make this necessary.
16. To enable constituents and the public at large to follow the interactive event from different time zones, it should be held between 12h00 and 16h30 Central European Time, with a ten-minute break between each event, and webcast on the ILO public website in all ILO official languages.
17. In accordance with paragraph 8 of the Rules, the order of appearance shall be determined by lot. As stated in the Rules, expenses arising out of the candidates' participation in the interactive event shall be borne by the Organization.

► Draft decision

18. **The Governing Body decided to apply the following timetable for the appointment of the Director-General and approved the arrangements for the public interactive event with candidates, as well as for the private hearings and the election described in Appendix I to document GB.356/INS/20/1(Rev.1):**

- **[option A]**

15 April 2026	The Chairperson of the Governing Body calls for candidatures
30 July 2026	Deadline for the receipt of candidatures
16 September 2026	Public interactive event with all candidates (which could be extended by one more day depending on the number of candidates.)

358th Session (November 2026)

Monday, 9 November	Candidate(s) hearings in private sitting
Monday, 16 November	Election by secret ballot in private sitting
1 October 2027	The term of office of the Director-General commences.]

or

- **[Option B**

July 2026	The Chairperson of the Governing Body calls for candidatures
30 October 2026	Deadline for the receipt of candidatures
358th Session 2026	The Governing Body decides on the modalities of the interactive event in the form of public dialogues
20 January 2027	Public interactive event with all candidates (which could be extended by one more day depending on the number of candidates.)

359th Session (March 2027)

Monday, 15 March	Candidate(s) hearings in private sitting
Monday, 22 March	Election by secret ballot in private sitting
1 October 2027	The term of office of the Director-General commences.]

► Appendix I

Proposed arrangements for the public interactive event, private hearings, election and appointment of the Director-General

I. Interactive event with candidates for the post of Director-General

Nature and audience of the interactive event

1. An interactive event with each candidate provides an opportunity for candidates to make themselves and their vision known to the entire ILO constituency and the general public. The event will be webcasted on the ILO's public website.

Duration and format of the interactive event(s)

2. The Chairperson of the Governing Body will facilitate each event, with a maximum of 80 minutes allocated to each event. Interpretation will be provided in all seven ILO working languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Russian and Spanish).
3. Candidates and the three constituent groups shall have equal participation opportunities through a well-structured and balanced organization of the event.
4. The interactive events will be held virtually to ensure equal participation opportunities for all constituents. Candidates will be invited to participate in person at Geneva headquarters, as was done during the previous election. To guarantee a fair allocation of time among the three groups, and among the four regional groups within the Government group, as well as to ensure a consistent approach for all candidates, the interviews will be conducted in three stages:
 - **Candidate presentation:** a five-minute presentation by each candidate to supplement the vision statement included with the submission of the candidature
 - **Questions and answers:** 16 questions and answers – 4 from Employer constituents, 4 from Worker constituents and 8 from governments (2 per geographical region)
 - Each question should be formulated in one minute.
 - Candidates may use no more than three minutes to answer each question.
 - **Concluding remarks of the candidate:** within the time remaining to reach 80 minutes.
5. Unless any group decides otherwise, each group secretary or regional coordinator will be invited to communicate to the Office – no later than the eve of each interactive event – the names of all the representatives within their groups who wish to pose a question to the candidates. For each event, those names will be placed into six receptacles (one for the employers, one for the workers and one for each regional group) and the Chairperson of the Governing Body will randomly draw from each receptacle the names of the representatives who will be invited to address questions to the candidate.
6. All representatives seeking to ask a question must prepare more than one question in order to avoid similar questions being posed to the same candidate. Alternatively, a representative may forfeit their turn and let the Chairperson draw another name from the same receptacle.

7. The Chairperson shall determine which group is granted the right to pose the first question to each candidate and shall thereafter alternate questions from each regional group with questions from each of the social partners.

Date and time of the interactive event

8. The interactive event will be held on 16 September 2026 or 20 January 2027, with the possibility of extending it by one day should a high number of candidates make this necessary.

II. Private hearings, election and appointment of the Director-General

Private hearings (9 November 2026 or 15 March 2027)

9. In accordance with paragraph 9 of the Rules, hearings shall be conducted with the candidate at a private sitting of the Governing Body held prior to the election.
10. In order to ensure that access to the Governing Body Room is restricted to Governing Body members and authorized persons, special badges will be distributed as follows:
 - **Green badges** – Governing Body members:
 - o two badges per Government regular and deputy member of the Governing Body;
 - o one non-transferable, nominative badge per Employer regular and deputy member of the Governing Body;
 - o one non-transferable, nominative badge per Worker regular and deputy member of the Governing Body;
 - o one badge per officer of the Government group;
 - **Orange badges** – Groups' secretariats and additional members of Governing Body delegations:
 - o one badge per Governing Body regular and deputy member (seating in the back of the Governing Body Room);
 - o four transferable badges per each of the Workers' and Employers' group secretariats;
 - **Red badges** – Secretariat staff servicing the hearing;
 - **Blue badges** – Interpreters and cabin operators.
11. The private sitting will be opened by the Chairperson of the Governing Body at 12 p.m. on Monday, 9 November 2026 or 15 March 2027.

Conduct of the hearings

12. In order to ensure an orderly and proper conduct of the hearings, participants must refrain from recording (audio or video) the proceedings and from commenting on social media; and must use parliamentary language during the hearing.
13. Doors will remain closed and delegates are expected to remain seated throughout the hearing.
14. The order of appearance in the hearings shall be drawn randomly by the Governing Body Chairperson, and candidates shall be informed of the date and approximate time of their hearing at least one week prior to the hearing.

15. Each candidate shall be heard individually and shall be invited to make a presentation to the Governing Body. Following the presentation, the candidate shall receive and respond to questions from the Governing Body. The time allocated to candidates for making their presentation and receiving and responding to questions shall be determined by the Officers. Equal time will be allocated for all candidates.

Date of the Election (16 November 2026 or 22 March 2027)

16. The secret ballot will be held in a private sitting of the Governing Body at 10 a.m. on Monday, 16 November and will last as long as required to conclude the election, with at least 45-minute breaks between each round to allow for consultations, as determined by the Chairperson of the Governing Body, in consultation with the two Vice-Chairpersons.

Admission to the ballot

17. Admission to the room will be limited in the same manner as for the hearing and will be monitored using the same badge system. The candidates will not be admitted to the room during the private sitting. Each candidate will, however, be invited to designate a representative to observe the conduct of the ballot as long as the candidate is still on the ballot.
18. Doors will remain closed during each ballot; video or audio recording of proceedings will not be authorized, nor will the posting of comments on social media.
19. At the conclusion of the election, the private sitting will close and after a short break the Governing Body will resume in a public sitting to formally declare the election result and appoint the ILO Director-General. The Director-General elect will be invited to speak. The public sitting will be broadcast through the ILO website.

Ballot papers

20. The name of the candidate(s) will appear on the first ballot paper in the alphabetical order of the candidates' family names, with a box next to each candidate's name. Voters must cross or tick the box next to their preferred candidate and fold and place the ballot paper in the ballot box.
21. Ballots in which more than one candidate has been ticked or containing any other mark shall be void. Voters who do not wish to vote for any candidate should leave the ballot paper blank but must still fold and place their ballot paper in the ballot box.
22. At the conclusion of each ballot, a new ballot paper will be prepared with the names of the remaining candidates.

Ballot process

23. Three voting booths will be available in the room.
24. The Clerk will call the members of the Governing Body entitled to vote as follows: Governments will be called first in the French alphabetical order of the 28 Member States holding regular seats (except any State which may be in arrears in the payment of their contributions to the Organization at the time of the vote), followed by the 14 Employer and 14 Worker regular members, or their designated deputy members in accordance with article 1.5.3(b) of the [Standing Orders of the Governing Body](#), by their family name.
25. As they are called, Governing Body voting members, upon presentation of their badge, will be issued with a ballot paper initialled by the Clerk. The voters will complete their ballot in a voting

booth and fold and place the ballot in the ballot box. Voters may not be accompanied to the voting booth.

26. If a voter makes an error on their ballot paper before placing it in the box, they will be able to replace it with a new ballot paper from the Clerk. The original ballot paper will be immediately destroyed by the Clerk.
27. One scrutineer will be appointed from their membership by the Government group, the Employers' group and the Workers' group. At the conclusion of each ballot, the votes will be counted, in the room, by the three scrutineers with assistance from the Clerk. The Chairperson will adjudicate any dispute relating to the validity of the ballot papers and announce the result of each ballot immediately after the count of votes, indicating which candidates will progress to the next ballot. The results of each ballot will be shown on screens in the room and the list of candidates progressing through each round will be published on the ILO website and the ILO Events APP.
28. The representative of each candidate invited to observe the process will be seated close to the podium. They will be prohibited from interacting with members of the Governing Body or ILO staff during the conduct of any ballot and may raise any issue of concern only with the Chairperson of the Governing Body.

► Appendix II

Rules governing the appointment of the Director-General (Annex III of the Compendium of rules applicable to the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

Adopted by the Governing Body at its 240th Session (May–June 1988) and amended at its 312th Session (November 2011) and 347th Session (March 2023).

Candidatures

1. Candidatures for the post of Director-General shall be received in the office of the Governing Body Chairperson on or before a date to be determined by the Governing Body which shall be at least two months prior to the date of the election.
2. In order to be considered these candidatures must be submitted by a Member State of the Organization or by a member of the Governing Body.
3. Each candidate shall annex to their candidature a curriculum vitae and a certificate of good health signed by a recognized medical facility.
4. Candidates shall be invited to provide together with their candidature, a statement of no more than 2,000 words describing their vision for the Organization and the strategic direction they would pursue in the event they are appointed. The statement should also address the candidate's commitment to the values and work of the ILO and its tripartite structure; their experience in economic, social and labour issues, international affairs, leadership and organizational management, and their appreciation of cultural, social and political diversities. Candidates should pledge to observe at all times the ethical principles and standards set out in these Rules. Candidates should also indicate their language proficiency with regard to the official languages of the ILO.
5. All of the documents mentioned in Rules 2, 3 and 4 above shall be submitted by the candidates in English, French and Spanish, with the exception of the certificate of good health that can be submitted in only one of these three languages or accompanied by an authenticated translation in one of these languages.
6. To be valid, candidatures shall meet the conditions specified in Rules 1, 2, 3 and 5 above.
7. Candidatures submitted in accordance with the above-mentioned conditions shall be distributed together with curricula vitae and statements, in the official languages in which they are submitted, to the members of the Governing Body and to the Member States not represented on the Governing Body for information, by the Chairperson as soon as practical after the candidature has been received. Only statements received at the same time as the candidatures shall be receivable and distributed.

Election procedure

8. In the three-month period prior to the election, at least one interactive event, such as an interview or panel discussion, shall be organized with a view to providing an opportunity for candidates to make themselves and their vision known to the entire ILO constituency and the general public. The interactive event shall be webcast on the ILO public website in all ILO official languages. The order of appearance shall be determined by lot. Detailed arrangements

concerning the date, format and duration of the interactive event shall be decided by the Governing Body at its session preceding the event. Expenses arising out of the candidates' participation in the interactive event shall be borne by the Organization.

9. Hearings shall be conducted with the candidates at a private sitting of the Governing Body held prior to the election. The order of appearance in the hearings shall be drawn randomly by the Governing Body Chairperson and candidates shall be informed of the date and approximate time of their hearing at least one week prior to the hearing. Each candidate shall be heard individually and shall be invited to make a presentation to the Governing Body. Following the presentation, the candidate shall receive and respond to questions from the Governing Body. The time allocated to candidates for making their presentation and receiving and responding to questions shall be determined by the Officers. Equal time will be allocated for all candidates.

10. On the date set for the election, as many ballots shall be held as are necessary to determine which of the candidates has obtained the required majority.

11. To be elected, a candidate must receive the votes of more than one half of the members of the Governing Body entitled to vote.

12. (i) After each ballot, the candidate who has obtained the lowest number of votes shall be eliminated.

(ii) If two or more candidates obtain simultaneously the lowest number of votes, they shall be eliminated together.

13. If in the ballot between the remaining candidates they receive the same number of votes and a further ballot still does not produce a majority for one of them, or if one candidate remains but does not obtain the required majority in a further ballot in which his or her name is submitted to the Governing Body for a final vote, the Governing Body may postpone the election and freely set a new deadline for the submission of candidatures.

Fairness and transparency of the appointment process and ethical conduct

14. Practices that may undermine or improperly influence the integrity of the appointment process, such as promises, favours and gifts provided by, or in support of, candidates for the post of Director-General, are prohibited.

15. Appropriate measures shall be taken by the Director-General to remind the staff of the Office of the rules and standards of conduct aimed at ensuring the Office's strict neutrality and impartiality with respect to the electoral process, as well as the sanctions that can be imposed on staff in the event these rules and standards are not respected.

16. In particular, appropriate measures shall be taken by the Director-General to prohibit the use of ILO resources for the purposes of campaigning as well as any action that amounts to, or may be perceived as, disapproval of, or support for any candidate.

17. Candidates shall promptly disclose their campaign activities (such as the hosting of meetings, workshops and visits) together with the amount and source of all funding for such activities, and communicate this information to the Office. Information so disclosed shall be posted on a dedicated ILO web page.

18. Candidates shall refer to one another with respect. They shall refrain from making any oral or written statement or other representation that could be deemed slanderous or libellous.

19. Allegations of inappropriate behaviour or non-compliance with the ethical principles and standards of the appointment process shall be referred to the Chairperson of the Governing Body for appropriate follow-up action.

20. Candidates may consult the Ethics Officer in case of doubt and seek advice with respect to the applicable ethical principles and standards.

21. On accepting appointment, the candidate appointed to the post of Director-General shall divest of any earning of any income, gift or allowance, and any financial involvement or interest, where such could have an impact on, or could be perceived to have an impact on, the objectivity or independence of the person appointed. Furthermore, the appointed candidate shall be required to comply with the procedure for financial disclosure laid down in the ILO's internal rules.

Status of internal candidates

22. Any ILO officials submitting their candidature for the post of Director-General must observe at all times the highest standards of ethical conduct and strive to avoid any appearance of impropriety. They must clearly separate their ILO functions from their candidature and avoid any overlap, or perception of overlap, between campaign activities and their work for the ILO. They also must avoid any perception of conflict of interest.

23. To this end, ILO officials submitting their candidature for the post of Director-General shall be placed on special leave with half salary, under article 7.7 of the Staff Regulations, for the period between the closure of candidatures and the date of election. They may also use their annual leave entitlement during this period.

24. Rule 23 above does not apply to a Director-General running for reappointment.

► Appendix III

Timeline of the six most recent elections (1998–2022)

Director-General (term of office)	Calendar of actions taken	
Gilbert Houngbo (1 October 2022 – 30 September 2027)	March 2021 <i>(one year before the election date)</i>	The Governing Body decided on the timetable for the election (GB.341/INS/15/Decision)
	June 2021	The Governing Body decided holding public interviews with candidates (GB.342/INS/6/Decision)
	July 2021	Letter sent by the Chairperson of the Governing Body – call for candidatures
	October 2021	Deadline for submission of candidatures
	20–21 January 2022	Public dialogues with candidates
	14 March 2022	Candidates' hearings (private sitting)
	25 March 2022	Elections held
Guy Ryder (second mandate) (1 October 2017 – 30 September 2022)	March 2016 <i>(seven months before the election date)</i>	The Governing Body decided on the timetable for the election (GB.326/INS/16/1)
	July 2016	Deadline for submission of candidatures (GB.328/INS/1) (no other candidatures were received by the deadline)
	31 October 2016	Candidate's hearing (during Governing Body session)
	7 November 2016	Election: • vote held in private sitting • Governing Body work resumed after a break for the formal announcement of the results
	1 October 2017	Start of second mandate
Guy Ryder (first mandate) (1 October 2012 – 30 September 2017)	November 2011 <i>(six months before the election date)</i>	The Governing Body decided on timetable for the election (GB.312/INS/16/3)
	9 March 2012	Deadline for submission of candidatures
	30 March 2012	Hearings of the 9 candidates
	28 May 2012	Election
	1 October 2012	Start of mandate

Director-General (term of office)	Calendar of actions taken	
Juan Somavia (third mandate) (4 March 2009 – 30 September 2012)	November 2007	The agenda of the Governing Body session included an item on the appointment of the Director-General (GB.300/21/1)
	March 2008 <i>seven months before the election</i>	The Governing Body decided on the date of the election of the Director-General (GB.301/7)
	17 October 2008	Deadline for submission of candidatures (no other candidatures were received by the deadline)
	November 2008	Election held
	4 March 2009	Start of third mandate
Juan Somavia (second mandate) (1 March 2004 – 3 March 2009)	June 2002	The Governing Body decided to include on the agenda of the following session an item on the appointment of the Director-General (GB.284/10/1)
	November 2002 <i>four months before the election</i>	The Governing Body confirmed the timetable for the election (GB.285/8)
	24 February 2003	Deadline for submission of candidatures (no other candidatures received by the deadline)
	25 March 2003	Election held
	1 March 2004	Start of second mandate
Juan Somavia (first mandate) (4 March 1999 – 29 February 2004)	November 1997 <i>four months before the election</i>	The Governing Body decided on the timetable for the election to be held on March 1998 (GB.270/4)
	23 February 1998	Deadline for submission of candidatures (two candidatures received)
	23 March 1998	Election held
	4 March 1999	Start of first mandate