



International Labour Office

Instructions for précis-writing teams

**Official Meetings, Documentation and Relations Department
(RELMEETINGS)**

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Introduction

1. The purpose of this document is to provide instructions to précis-writing teams preparing the official records of ILO meetings. It is divided into three parts:
 - I. General instructions on précis-writing, including a description of what précis-writing is, a description of roles and responsibilities, information on the different stages of the précis-writing process and instructions on how to prepare a summary.
 - II. Specific instructions on drafting Governing Body minutes.
 - III. Specific instructions on preparing summaries of proceedings of the technical committees at the International Labour Conference.
2. While the editorial guidance it contains is intended mainly for teams drafting in English, the information on the précis-writing process is also relevant to those drafting in French or Spanish.
3. This is a working document. It replaces the guidance and instructions provided by the Official Meetings, Documentation and Relations Department (RELMEETINGS) in the past and the information it contains is subject to change.
4. Members of précis-writing teams are expected to follow the instructions set out in the present document. By doing so, they will contribute to the timely compilation of the records and a smooth work process. Detailed instructions on specific editorial matters and other language-related matters may be found in the latest version of the [ILO house style manual](#). More detailed information on the technicalities of meeting procedure can be provided by RELMEETINGS.
5. The secretariat for each meeting works independently and may decide to deviate from the practices described herein. In such cases, the necessary information will be communicated to the précis-writing team.

I. General instructions

1. Précis-writing

6. The instructions contained in this document apply to the process known as précis-writing, whereby a team is called on to prepare a summary record of what was said at a meeting. Précis-writers at the ILO may vary in the detail of their coverage, and the final product might take the form of minutes (for example, for the Governing Body), a summary of proceedings (for example, for Conference committees), or some other form of summary record, depending on the requirements of the secretariat and the nature of the meeting.
7. What all these records have in common is that they are official documents intended to provide a clear, concise and accurate record of the proceedings. They reflect the discussions that took place, all major statements made and the outcomes of the meeting. The records are usually compiled in English, but for certain meetings any of the three official languages of the ILO (English, French and Spanish) may be used. In English, they are written in indirect (reported speech).
8. The product is **not** a verbatim record, which reproduces word-for-word what was said during a meeting.

2. Roles and responsibilities

9. The roles and responsibilities of the different team members and the exact composition of the team (and the terminology used) will vary depending on the requirements of the secretariat and the nature of the meeting. It is essential before the meeting for every member of the team to be clear about their role and responsibilities. Précis-writing teams generally – but not always – comprise:
 - *a coordinator or supervisor*, who is responsible for overseeing the précis-writing process, which includes: liaising with the different members of the team; coordinating the team of précis-writers; ensuring that each member of the team knows what is expected of them; ensuring that there is a space in the meeting room that is reserved for the précis-writers; ensuring that any prepared statements are made available to the précis-writers, before delivery if possible; in consultation with the lead précis-writer, ensuring that contingency arrangements are in place to provide précis-writing coverage when a sitting overruns; circulating useful information to the précis-writers; providing drafting guidance to the précis-writers; and adjudicating on matters of editorial practice;
 - *a lead précis-writer*, who is usually the précis-writer with the most experience, who is responsible for the day-to-day organization of work and for acting as a liaison between the précis-writers and the coordinator or supervisor;
 - *précis-writers*, who take notes in the room and write up a summary of the proceedings, – producing text that needs minimal editing. They must have an excellent command of the language they are drafting in and need to be: alert, proficient note-takers; able swiftly to grasp the subject matter dealt with at the meeting; able quickly to reduce their notes to a concise and coherent narrative account; familiar with ILO editorial standards; adept at Word (they must type up their own work); and prepared to work longer than usual days under pressure. When checking through work, an eye for detail is essential. They must also be able to work in a team;

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- *revisers or report-writers*, who are responsible for: compiling the texts supplied by the précis-writers; ensuring editorial and stylistic consistency and a coherent record of the deliberations; ensuring that the draft record is in as polished a state as possible and in line with the instructions provided in this document; ensuring that the word limit is adhered to; submitting the draft record for approval by the relevant officials within the established deadline; providing feedback to the précis-writers for training purposes; and answering any questions that might be raised about the content of the draft record. Whether or not the reviser or report-writer is responsible for checking the technical content of the draft record will depend on the requirements of the secretariat and the nature of the meeting.
 - Some teams may also comprise a *focal point* from the relevant technical unit and an *editor*.
 - In some teams, the role of supervisor, reviser and focal point might be performed by the same person.
10. For specific information about their roles, and the composition of the teams for meetings of the Governing Body and the Conference committees, see Parts [II](#) and [III](#).
 11. Most official documents are translated and processed by text-processing operators in RELMEETINGS before publication.

3. Stages of the précis-writing process

3.1. Preparation

3.1.1. Briefing session

12. Before the session, the coordinator or supervisor should arrange a briefing session with all members of the team to discuss précis-writing arrangements, including arrangements concerning the [roster](#), and specific matters such as sensitive issues and time frames for the submission of work.
13. The information provided at the briefing session must be conveyed to any members of the team who are unable to attend the briefing.

3.1.2. Documentation

14. The précis-writers are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves before the session with the information provided by the secretariat and the relevant documentation, such as the report and any proposed texts to be discussed. They are also encouraged to look at the records of previous meetings of the same type, to get an idea of what the final product should look like.
15. They should be familiar with the [ILO house style manual](#) and be prepared to refer to it routinely when drafting their summaries.

3.1.3. Sitting times

16. The précis-writing team should check the starting time of the sitting to which they are assigned – for instance by consulting the tentative order of business in the case of the

Governing Body or the Daily Bulletin in the case of the Conference – bearing in mind that adjustments are often made at short notice. Team members are also encouraged to use the ILO Events mobile app, which can be set up to send notifications concerning the relevant sittings, if available.

17. They should also familiarize themselves with the layout of the meeting room.

3.1.4. Roster

18. The lead précis-writer should prepare a roster to ensure that all team members know when they are expected to be in the room taking notes. This is usually done on a day-to-day basis and communicated to all précis-writers by email the evening before. Last minute changes may need to be made.
19. Experience has shown that a good approach is to assign each précis-writer a fixed time slot. Some teams may prefer to adjust the time slots depending on the actual start time of the sitting. Such arrangements – as well as a decision on standard length of a take – should be agreed on by the team prior to the session, in consultation with the other team members concerned. The standard length of a take may be between 20 and 40 minutes, depending on the size of the team.
20. Every effort will be made to ensure that the work is divided up as fairly as possible over the course of the session; that no single précis-writer is left to cover a disproportionate amount of a particular meeting; and that each précis-writer can hand in his or her work within the agreed deadlines. The roster is usually prepared on a rotating basis, with people moving up the list (ABCD, BCDA, CDAB, and so on). This means that the person covering the last portion of the afternoon sitting will not be required to cover the first portion of the following morning's sitting, and that each person gets a turn going first and last.
21. The lead précis-writer, in consultation with the coordinator or supervisor, will ensure that, in the event that a sitting overruns its allotted time, contingency arrangements are in place.
22. If, for some unforeseen and urgent reason, a précis-writer is not able to be in the room when he or she is supposed to be, he or she should contact the lead précis-writer immediately so that the roster can be revised. All précis-writers should have a mobile phone on which they can be reached at all times.

3.2. In the meeting room

3.2.1. Teamwork and overlap between précis-writers

23. The précis-writer responsible for the first part of each meeting should be in place before the announced opening time. He or she should note down the actual start time of the meeting and adjust the time slots assigned to each précis-writer if necessary, making sure that this information is conveyed to the other précis-writers. In some meetings, précis-writers are assigned to fixed slots, regardless of the actual start time of the discussion.
24. The other précis-writers should come into the meeting room before their assigned time, so that they can tune into the discussion and are ready to take over from their teammate at an appropriate point.
25. It is essential that each précis-writer knows exactly which sections of the meeting he or she is supposed to be covering. When one précis-writer hands over to the next, it should be clear to both parties.

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26. Whenever possible, there should be more than one précis-writer at the précis-writing table at a time. The précis-writer who is not taking notes should help the note-taker of the moment by identifying the speaker, recording the results of votes, verifying that the right documents are at hand and generally following the proceedings.

3.2.2. *In-session documents, written statements and speakers*

27. Appropriate arrangements will be made to ensure that all written statements and other relevant documents, including Chairperson's notes, are available to all members of the précis-writing team as a matter of priority and prior to delivery where possible.
28. If a précis-writer receives a written statement relating to a part of the meeting that has already been covered by one of his or her teammates, he or she should endeavour to give the statement to the relevant teammate as soon as possible. If the statement has not yet been delivered, the précis-writer is asked to make sure that the hard copy is kept in an agreed order on the table in the meeting room. Hard copies of statements should be removed from the précis-writing table at the end of each sitting; copies of any statements that have not yet been made should be given to the team member covering the first part of the next sitting.

3.2.3. *Prepared and off-the-cuff statements*

29. Prepared statements are often read out at a speed that makes it difficult to take notes. If the text has not been distributed prior to delivery, the précis-writer should endeavour to take as complete notes as possible, as it cannot be assumed that the text will be made available afterwards.
30. If the text is distributed in advance, the précis-writer should check against delivery, as speakers often do not adhere to their prepared texts. The official record must reflect what was actually said.
31. An off-the-cuff statement may contain as much important matter as a prepared statement. The précis-writer should therefore afford equal treatment to prepared statements and statements made off the cuff.

3.2.4. *Live broadcast, digital recordings and transcripts*

32. Whether or not a digital recording and transcripts are made available depends on the type of meeting.
33. For certain meetings, members of the précis-writing team may follow the discussions via a live broadcast on the intranet.
34. Under no circumstances should the précis-writers take inadequate notes on the assumption that they will be able to do their write-ups on the basis of the recordings or the transcripts, in case there is a technical problem that makes these unavailable.

3.2.5. *Languages*

35. The précis-writers may choose to listen to the original language of the speaker or the interpretation. The records are usually drafted in English, but for certain meetings any of the three official languages of the ILO (English, French and Spanish) may be used. Where précis-writers encounter difficulties with the interpretation, they are encouraged to refer to

the audio recording or transcript of the original language, if available, or to consult a colleague who understands the original language.

3.2.6. *Conduct at meetings*

36. Précis-writers are reminded that it is their duty to service the meeting as précis-writers and not participants: unless specifically invited to provide guidance on matters within their competence, précis-writers are strongly discouraged from indicating any opinions, positions or preferences relating to the issues under discussion, including outside the meeting room. They should remain impartial and professional at all times.

3.3. *After the meeting*

3.3.1. *Time frame*

37. It is essential for all members of the précis-writing team to adhere to a strict time frame, so that the draft records can be circulated for approval without delay. Usually, this means that précis-writers have to leave the meeting room as soon as they have finished taking notes and start writing up immediately. Specific instructions on the deadlines to be met will be provided to the précis-writers at the briefing session.
38. Précis-writers should inform the reviser or report-writer as early as possible if there is going to be a delay.
39. Specific instructions on the time frame for the preparation of Governing Body minutes and summaries of proceedings of Conference committees are provided in Parts [II](#) and [III](#).

3.3.2. *Division of work*

40. The precise time slot to be covered by each précis-writer may need to be adjusted by the team after the meeting has risen, to reflect the actual start and end time of the meeting, the language of each statement and the structure of the meeting. Every effort must be made to ensure that the work is divided up as fairly as possible; that no single précis-writer is left to cover a disproportionate amount of a particular meeting; and that each précis-writer can hand in his or her work within the agreed deadlines.
41. Précis-writers who are not assigned a take on a particular day (for example, if the meeting rises earlier than anticipated) are requested to inform the lead précis-writer that they are available to help out their colleagues.

3.3.3. *Procedures for saving and submitting work*

42. Each secretariat has its own arrangements for saving and submitting work. In RELMEETINGS, a workflow system known as RODIS is used. It is essential that précis-writers follow the instructions given to them in this regard.

3.3.4. *Leaving at the end of the day*

43. Each secretariat has its own requirements for leaving at the end of the day: some might require the précis-writers to finish their write-ups before leaving; others might allow précis-writers to continue working at home or to do their write-ups the following morning.

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44. All précis-writers are encouraged to check whether their teammates need any help before going home. Before leaving, everyone should be clear about the roster for the following day.
 45. In some cases, officials may be entitled to a taxi voucher if they have worked into the late evening.

3.3.5. *Revision and clearance*

46. Draft records are revised or reviewed for accuracy, coherence and clarity. Copies of the revised record are then transmitted to the appropriate officials for clearance.

3.3.6. *Feedback and assistance*

47. Précis-writers should not hesitate to contact the revisers or report-writers for drafting guidance and feedback and if possible should review the revised versions of their work.

4. Preparing a summary: General approach

4.1. Layout and formatting

48. Précis-writers should draft their text in a Word document. Unless instructed otherwise, they should indicate at the top of their document their name; the meeting number; the date of the meeting; and the time slot or part. They should also indicate in their document the names of the précis-writers who covered the preceding and subsequent parts of the meeting. A template is often made available.
49. Other than making sure that the hierarchy of headings is clear, the précis-writers should not spend time on formatting issues, as their text will eventually be processed by text processing operators. Similarly, revisers and report-writers are urged not to spend time on formatting.
50. Précis-writers should include any notes to the reviser or report-writer in comment boxes. This dialogue is a vital part of the process of developing the final text. See also [section on comments to the revisers and report-writers](#).

4.2. Length

51. Précis-writers will receive guidance before the meeting on how long and comprehensive their write-ups should be.
52. The amount of coverage given to a particular statement should depend on the number of definite points made and their relative importance rather than on the actual duration of the statement. In general, more coverage should be given to speakers representing groups than to individual delegates.
53. Précis-writers are advised, when in doubt about the need to include text on a certain issue, to refer to the guidance provided in section 4.5 on what to include and what not to include.

4.3. Order of statements

54. Each speaker's views should be summarized in a separate paragraph or paragraphs, following the chronological order of the discussion. There are some cases when rearrangements may be appropriate. For example:
- Statements by different speakers may be combined when they refer to procedural matters such as supporting a proposed amendment or when a speaker merely restricts himself or herself to supporting a previous statement.
 - If several speakers pay tribute to someone, a single paragraph identifying all the speakers may, in some circumstances, be sufficient.
 - It may sometimes be helpful to divide a single statement into two if it relates to two separate parts of the discussion. This is an exceptional act, must be specifically noted, and preferably checked with a reviser before being undertaken.
 - When a speaker makes two statements during a debate, the second of which merely amplifies or explains the first, they may be combined in a single summary (unless emphasis is necessary).
 - When a speaker mistakenly makes a statement under the wrong agenda item, it should be moved to the correct part of the record.
55. Any such rearrangement must be clearly flagged by the précis-writers in a comment. Likewise, if a précis-writer chooses to omit a statement, he or she should provide an explanation in a comment.
56. In other cases, the reviser or report-writer may have to rearrange the text once the discussion of a particular point has been completed. For example, in the summaries of proceedings of Conference committees, where amendments to a draft document such as conclusions are discussed out of sequence, the report-writer must rearrange the elements so that the record follows the order of the conclusions, not chronological order.

4.4. Identification of speakers

57. Each statement should begin with the identification of the speaker. The exact formulation to be used depends on the type of meeting and previous reports of the same body should be used as reference. For specific information about the identification of speakers in Governing Body minutes and summaries of proceedings of Conference Committees, see Parts I and II.

4.5. Content

58. The record should contain the main points of a discussion and should omit detail that is lacking in substance. At times, however, minor points, and even procedure, assume relevance and need to be recorded. Identifying the material to be included therefore requires a measure of subjective judgement. Précis-writers have to use their experience and judgement and be guided by the word limits when it comes to deciding what to include and what not to include, and how much detail to go into. It is impossible to be categorical about compression. What follows is intended merely as a guide. Reference should be made to previous (recent) records for precedents.
59. The record must be an accurate reflection of what was actually said, in language that is clear, neutral and easy to comprehend. The précis-writers should not include text from a written

statement that was not actually read out. The précis-writers should not accept any addition to or substantive change that a speaker may subsequently seek to have included in a statement.

60. The following are examples of the type of **material normally included**:

- policy statements;
- substantive proposals, suggestions and amendments (if orally presented, use the proposer's wording), and comments thereon;
- points which a speaker asks to have included;
- substantive questions and answers;
- statements by members of the secretariat at the end of the discussion of an item;
- references to financial implications and statements concerning programme and budget implications;
- decisions, rulings and votes;
- announcements of consensus following informal consultations;
- essential procedural matters such as the election of officers;
- statements of support for a document or report if action is to be taken.

61. The following are examples of the type of **material normally omitted**:

- introductory remarks ("I declare the floor open for discussion"; "I shall be brief"; "I have listened carefully to all the previous speakers"; "I shall refer to the following points: first ...; second ...");
- statements introducing a document, if the heading provides information about the document that it is under discussion, unless new information is added;
- announcements of internal arrangements (briefing of delegates, explanations of time limits for statements, times and places of working group meetings, and so on);
- procedural announcements that are of no permanent interest;
- statements of welcome, farewell or congratulations to new or departing officers or members of the body; flowery expressions of gratitude;
- statements in support of a statement made on behalf of the regional group to which the speaker belongs (for example, there is no need to say that the Government representative of Kenya endorsed a statement made on behalf of the Africa group);
- digressions, unless an important political point is being made;
- long quotations from documents;
- recapitulations of information already provided in the documents;
- anecdotes and digressions that add nothing to the debate;

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- statements in which a speaker asks for a piece of information which already exists in the documentation of the meeting and which they are supposed to know;
 - statements made as a result of misunderstandings;
 - summaries by the Chairperson of a discussion, unless useful (for example after a very complicated debate or to indicate or imply tacit acceptance).

62. The following are examples of the type of **material normally summarized briefly**:

- agreements that certain items or certain parts of a document should be considered together (doing so helps the reader understand the structure of the discussion);
- invitations by the Chairperson to move onto the next part of a discussion, if there is no new heading and if helpful to the reader (for example, “*The Chairperson* invited the members of the Governing Body to consider paragraphs 72(1) and (4).”);
- substantive additions or modifications, updates and corrections to reports, or other fresh material;
- reviews of the background of an agenda item, a programme, a proposal, and so on, if useful for understanding the discussion;
- statements similar to those already delivered by the same speaker, if something new is added or emphasis is necessary;
- detailed national information, enumerations or statistics; these should be summarized along the following lines: “A Government representative of [name of country] [F] described the situation in her country, giving particular attention to ...” or “Among the awareness-raising measures taken in [name of country], she singled out ...”;
- exercise of the right of reply;
- expressions of sympathy;
- explanations of vote;
- proposals or amendments not commented on and subsequently withdrawn;
- detailed statements by non-governmental organizations about their overall activities, remit or membership.

63. Compliments to the Office should be included only if they are the only means of knowing whether the speaker approves of a particular report, proposal or programme. In such cases, they should be cut to a minimum.

64. In cases where there may be gaps in the précis-writer’s notes – perhaps the interpretation was poor, or the précis-writer was unsure what the speaker intended to say, or there was an interruption while the précis-writer was note-taking – the précis-writer should check against the written statement, transcript or digital recording (if available) or with his or her colleagues and, if the query remains, flag it to the reviser or report-writer using a comment box.

4.6. Comments to the revisers or report-writers

65. Précis-writers are expected to use comment boxes to convey information to the revisers or report-writers, indicating for example whether a written statement was checked against delivery, whether the summary is drafted on the basis of the interpretation, whether a statement was drafted by someone else and whether a term has been checked. They should use the comment boxes to convey any other useful information.
66. As all versions of the draft records are retained for reference purposes and may be consulted by colleagues in other teams, the précis-writers should take care to use an appropriate tone in their comments. They should also make sure that links to web pages or reference documents provide evidence to justify the précis-writer's decision to use a certain term or reference (for example, a paragraph number).

4.7. Question-and-answer exchanges

67. In a question-and-answer exchange, only the answer need be given if it is clear what the question was, although the person who asked the question should be identified:

In reply to a question by [identify speaker], [identify speaker] said that ...:

68. The question must be given separately if it is combined with a comment:

[Identify speaker], noting that the report cited many instances of management shortcomings, asked whether the Office intended to introduce further control measures.

69. The question must also be given separately if it does not receive an adequate answer at the same meeting.
70. A précis-writer may need to consult with the other précis-writers on the team to understand the questions. If in doubt, the précis-writer should leave a comment in the draft record for the reviser or report-writer, who will have an overview of the whole discussion.
71. For information on the use of direct questions, see [Part VI](#) of Appendix I.

4.8. Checking of titles and references

72. As far as possible in the time available, all references to names, titles and dates and all quotations, reference numbers and specific terminology should be checked by the précis-writers. The précis-writers are asked to indicate the source in a comment box in the margin of the draft. Should it be impossible to check a reference, a comment “not checked” should be included.
73. References to Conventions and Recommendations, the ILO Constitution and other ILO texts should always be checked. If it has not been possible to check something, a comment should be added in a comment box to let the reviser or report-writer know that it has not been checked.
74. The short titles of [ILO Conventions and Recommendations](#) should be used, for example:
- the Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1957 (No. 106).

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75. When referring to any project, programme or meeting, the full official title should be used on the first mention. This applies also to ILO terminology. Again, the title should be checked.

4.9. Style

4.9.1. House style

76. ILO house style rules apply, as set out in the [ILO house style manual](#).

4.9.2. Language

77. Précis-writers are instructed to keep the following principles in mind when preparing a draft summary record:

- Complete sentences should be used. The aim is to produce text that is in as polished a state as possible in the time available.
- The terminology used should be standard and that used in the document under discussion.
- In-house jargon should not be used.
- No phrase should appear in the record which the précis-writer cannot explain and, if necessary, justify.
- It is essential that the draft text is clear and concise and can be easily understood by the translators or the readers.
- Neutral language should be used. Approval or disapproval of any of the views expressed should not be conveyed.
- The language of the report should be formal. Humorous or heated language should be paraphrased or omitted. The actual words should be reproduced only if they are taken up by later speakers and become an issue. If in doubt, the précis-writer should consult a reviser or the report-writer.
- Accuracy is paramount and should never be sacrificed to elegance of style; the latter is, however, not necessarily incompatible with the former. A summary record should be interesting to read and should convey something of the atmosphere as well as the content of the proceedings.

4.9.3. Reported speech

78. The records of meetings are written in indirect, or reported, speech. The change from direct to indirect speech requires changes of verb tenses, pronouns and possessive adjectives, some adverbs and adverbial phrases and some other words. Guidance on using indirect speech may be found in [Appendix I](#) to this document.

4.9.4. Introductory verbs

79. A verb of saying is necessary at the beginning of the summary of a statement, followed by “that” where appropriate. Thereafter, introductory verbs should be omitted wherever possible and only the substance of the remarks given. If a verb other than the neutral “said”

is used, care should be taken not to add undue emphasis such as might be imparted by “stated”, “emphasized”, “doubted”, “affirmed”, “declared”, and so on. Likewise, emotive verbs such as “hoped”, “felt” and “thought” should be avoided. Rather than using “He hoped that...”, or “She regretted that”, a formulation like: “He expressed the hope that...”, or “She voiced her regret that...” should be used.

80. Care should be taken not to personify countries or groups (for example, it is incorrect to say: “Spain felt that...” or “The European Union said that...”).

4.9.5. Direct questions

81. Direct questions (with a question mark, such as “Why was...?” or “How did...?”) should normally be replaced by such indirect expressions as “he asked why ...” and “she would welcome information about ...”. Further guidance is provided in [Part VI](#) of Appendix I.

4.9.6. Spelling and hyphenation

82. Generally speaking, précis-writers should follow the first usage in the Oxford English Dictionary, available at <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/>. They may also refer to the spelling list in the ILO house style manual. It should be noted that the “z” spelling is used at the ILO for words like “organize” (but not for “analyse” or “advertise” – see the Oxford English Dictionary).
83. Before submitting their work, précis-writers should check the spelling in Microsoft Word. It should be noted that the language may have to be set to English (United Kingdom) and the spelling check may have to be activated in the computer’s default settings.

- Note the following:
 - subamendment;
 - subparagraph;
 - sub-clause;
 - subregion;
 - Vice-Chairperson.

4.9.7. Abbreviations

84. As a rule, acronyms and abbreviations should be used sparingly. If used, they should be spelled out on the first mention and should be checked. Common sense should be applied as to whether or not a précis-writer needs to spell out an abbreviation in full in his or her write-up, especially as a session progresses (for example, it would probably be unnecessary to spell out “IMEC” or “GRULAC” a week into the session). For a given meeting, a list of frequently occurring abbreviations that do not need to be spelled out by the précis-writers in their write-ups might be prepared.
85. At the ILO, organization names that are initialisms are used with the definite article, whereas acronyms are used without the definite article:

the ILO, the ITUC, the UN

but UNICEF, WIPO, UNOG

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86. Alternatives to using an abbreviation should be considered; for example, for organizations and bodies, the full name could be used at the first mention, and thereafter an appropriate noun could be used (such as “the Committee”; “his Association”).
 87. The use of “etc.” should be avoided – the wording “factors including x, y and z” should be used rather than “x, y and z, etc.”.
 88. The use of “e.g.” and “i.e.” should also be avoided – “for example” or “such as”, and “in other words” should be used instead.
 89. For further guidance on the use of abbreviations, see the [ILO house style manual](#).

4.9.8. Capitalization

90. Initial capitals should be used sparingly, and as consistently as possible. The rule of thumb is “upper case for the specific, lower case for the generic”. See also Part III, section 2.3.8.

4.9.9. Numbers and dates

91. Numbers from one to ten inclusive are generally expressed in words in the body of a text and numbers above ten are generally expressed in figures.
92. Figures are also used in certain cases, such as for percentages, compound fractions, sums of money, measurements, ages, times of day and dates, and with the word “million”.
93. Numbers should be written out where they occur as the first word of a sentence after a full stop (it is usually preferable to rephrase the sentence).
94. The percentage symbol (%) should be used only in tables and graphs. Otherwise, “per cent” is used.
95. The order for dates, with no commas is: day, month (spelled out in full), year, for example: 23 September 2016, 3 January 2017. A comma should be used when the day of the week is included: Tuesday, 3 July 2018.
96. Further guidance on the use of numbers, including currencies, may be found in the [ILO house style manual](#).

4.10. Countries and territories

97. For country and territory designations, the [Alphabetical list of ILO member countries](#) should be consulted. It should be noted that the following countries are always referred to in the long form (although they may be abbreviated in tables):
 - the Plurinational State of Bolivia;
 - the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
 - the Islamic Republic of Iran;
 - the Lao People’s Democratic Republic;
 - the Republic of Korea;

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- the Republic of Moldova;
 - the Russian Federation;
 - the Syrian Arab Republic;
 - the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
 - the United Republic of Tanzania;
 - the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The shorter form may be used adjectivally, such as “the Venezuelan Government”, to avoid repetition.

Also of note:

- Cabo Verde (formerly Cape Verde);
- Eswatini (formerly Swaziland);
- Libya (formerly the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya);
- Hong Kong, China;
- Macau, China;
- Côte d’Ivoire (not Ivory Coast);
- Myanmar (not Burma);
- the United States (not “United States of America” or “US”), the United Kingdom (not “UK”) – these may, however, be abbreviated when used adjectivally;
- the Netherlands (not “Holland”);
- the occupied Arab territories (not “Palestine”; see the note in the [ILO house style manual](#)).

98. Particular care should be taken with references to divided countries or areas of indeterminate or disputed status.

99. In certain cases, speakers may deliberately refer to a country using a non-ILO designation and this should not be changed. A typical example is any reference by a speaker to “Burma” rather than to Myanmar. If in doubt, the précis-writer should flag this to the reviser or report-writer.

4.11. References to groups

100. Précis-writers should note the following:

- the Workers’ group;
- the Employers’ group;
- the Africa group (not “African group”);

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- the Asia and Pacific group (ASPAG);
 - the group of industrialized market economy countries (IMEC);
 - the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC);¹
 - the group of the Americas (GRUA);
 - the Arab group;
 - the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

4.12. Sensitive issues

- 101.** Précis-writers are advised to discuss any politically sensitive statements with the reviser or report-writer, or to flag them.
- 102.** They are also instructed to use gender-neutral language. This means that, except where strictly necessary:
 - the use of the exclusive masculine pronoun (he, and derived forms him, his and himself) when referring to both sexes should be avoided by repeating the noun, using the plural or rephrasing;
 - terminology that includes both men and women should be used (for example, “the best candidate for the job” should be used rather than “the best man for the job”);
 - words ending in “-man” should be replaced with a term that can apply to either sex, for example, “seafarer”, “police officer”, “firefighter”, “fisher” and “Chairperson”;
- 103.** Further guidance on the use of non-discriminatory language can be found in the ILO house style manual and in the [*Oxford English Dictionary*](#).

¹ N.B. Use this formulation, rather than that provided in the house style manual, which is fully capitalized.

II. Draft Governing Body minutes

1. General

- 104.** This part provides specific details of the roles and responsibilities of précis-writing teams involved in the preparation of draft Governing Body minutes.
- 105.** The Governing Body is the executive body of the International Labour Organization. It meets three times a year, in March, June and October/November. It takes decisions on ILO policy, decides the agenda of the International Labour Conference, adopts the draft programme and budget of the Organization for submission to the Conference, and elects the Director-General.
- 106.** The Governing Body currently structures its work through the following sections and segments:

Acronym	English
INS	Institutional Section
POL	Policy Development Section Employment and Social Protection Segment Social Dialogue Segment Technical Cooperation Segment Multinational Enterprises Segment
LILS	Legal Issues and International Labour Standards Section Legal Issues Segment International Labour Standards and Human Rights Segment
PFA	Programme, Financial and Administrative Section Programme, Financial and Administrative Segment Audit and Oversight Segment Personnel Segment
HL	High-Level Section Strategic Policy Segment Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization
WP/GBC	Working Party on the Functioning of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference

2. Précis-writing teams and other arrangements

2.1. Teams

- 107.** To the extent possible, the draft minutes of Governing Body sessions are to be prepared using précis-writers who have been trained in the technique of summarizing the discussions at meetings, including those dealing with complex technical and politically sensitive issues. Depending on the section of the meeting, the précis-writers may be provided by RELMEETINGS or by the relevant technical unit. The précis-writers provided by RELMEETINGS are qualified linguists who have been trained in the technique of précis-writing. Where technical units assign their own staff, they may request RELMEETINGS to arrange a briefing session for them, to ensure that the précis-writers are familiar with the established procedure and practices.

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- 108.** In cases where RELMEETINGS provides the précis-writers to prepare the draft Governing Body minutes, the roles and responsibilities of the different team members are set out below. In cases where the précis-writers are provided by the relevant technical unit, the roles of supervisor, reviser and focal point may be combined and performed by the same expert.
- 109. Supervisor:** The supervisor is generally the head of the relevant language unit (usually the English unit). He or she is responsible for overseeing the précis-writing process, which includes liaising with the other members of the team; coordinating the team of précis-writers; ensuring that each member of the team knows what is expected of them; ensuring that there is a table in the Governing Body room that is reserved for the précis-writers; ensuring that any prepared statements are made available to the précis-writers, before delivery if possible; ensuring that contingency arrangements are in place to provide précis-writing coverage when a sitting overruns; circulating useful information to the précis-writers; providing drafting guidance to the précis-writers; and adjudicating on matters of editorial practice.
- 110. Lead précis-writer:** The lead précis-writer, who is usually the précis-writer with the most experience, is responsible for the day-to-day organization of work and for acting as a liaison between the précis-writers and the supervisor.
- 111. Précis-writers:** The précis-writers work under the general guidance of the supervisor and revisers and produce text that needs minimal editing for inclusion in the draft minutes.
- 112. Revisers:** Revisers are members of the relevant RELMEETINGS language unit who are responsible for: putting the draft minutes for a particular sitting together from the elements supplied by the précis-writers; ensuring editorial and stylistic consistency and a coherent record of the deliberations; ensuring that the draft minutes are in as polished a state as possible and are in line with the guidance provided; ensuring that the word limit is adhered to; submitting the draft minutes to the focal point through the RELMEETINGS workflow system (RODIS) within the established deadline; providing feedback to the précis-writers for training purposes; and answering any questions that might be raised by the other members of the team or the translators.
- 113. Focal point:** The focal point is generally, but not necessarily, an expert from the relevant technical unit of the ILO. The focal point is responsible for: ensuring the technical accuracy of the draft minutes; compiling the minutes prepared for a segment stretching over more than one sitting; circulating the document to the relevant officials for approval; returning it with tracked changes through RODIS to RELMEETINGS within the established deadline; and answering any questions that might be raised by RELMEETINGS.
- 114. Editor:** The editor, assigned by RELMEETINGS, will finalize the draft minutes after they have been approved by the responsible technical unit. Given the time constraints, and because the text will have already undergone a thorough approval process, the editor will not do any redrafting or make any substantive changes.

2.2. Sitings

- 115.** Précis-writing coverage is generally provided for two sittings a day, namely a morning sitting, which will usually begin at 10.30 a.m. and conclude at 1 p.m., and an afternoon sitting, which will run from 3.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. On request, arrangements for précis-writing coverage can also be made for extended sittings as well. Group meetings and private sittings are not covered by the précis-writers.

2.3. Time frame for the preparation of draft minutes

- 116. The draft minutes of the sections of the Governing Body have to be published in English, French and Spanish on the Governing Body website as soon as possible after each section has concluded its work, but at the latest within six weeks. This means that the documents have to be processed within a very tight time frame. Each member of the team is therefore required to adhere to the agreed deadlines to allow all those involved time to do their work and to ensure timely publication.
- 117. In cases where the précis-writers are provided by RELMEETINGS, once the précis-writers have finished their write-ups for a particular sitting, they submit their work to the reviser, who in turn submits a compiled and revised version of the minutes to the relevant focal point, through RODIS and in accordance with an agreed deadline.
- 118. In cases where the précis-writers are provided by the technical unit, the Document Coordination and Translation Support Unit (DCU) of RELMEETINGS will provide instructions before the session on the deadlines to be met.

3. Précis-writing process

- 119. For general instructions on the précis-writing process, see Part I. The instructions below apply specifically to the process of preparing Governing Body minutes.

3.1. Before the session

- 120. Before the session, RELMEETINGS (usually the DCU) will contact the technical unit concerned to discuss the précis-writing requirements.
- 121. In cases where the précis-writers are provided by RELMEETINGS, the focal point is invited to arrange a briefing session with the précis-writers, revisers and editors shortly prior to the session to discuss specific matters such as preferred terminology and sensitive issues that may arise during the discussions.

3.2. During the session

- 122. *Sitting times:* As adjustments are often made to the schedule at short notice, précis-writers should consult the [Tentative Order of Business](#) on the Governing Body website for the most up-to-date information about sitting times and the order in which the agenda items will be discussed at a particular sitting.
- 123. *Roster:* The lead précis-writer will prepare a roster to ensure that all team members know when they are expected to be in the room taking notes. For further information, see [roster](#).
- 124. *In-session documents, written statements and speakers:* Appropriate arrangements will be made to ensure that all written statements, transcripts and other relevant documents are available to all members of the précis-writing team as a matter of priority and prior to delivery where possible.
- 125. *Chairperson's notes and statements by representatives of the Director-General:* Wherever possible, focal points should ensure that a copy of the Chairperson's notes and statements by representatives of the Director-General are provided to the précis-writing team before the meeting begins.

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- 126. *Recordings of meetings:* These are accessible to the RELMEETINGS team through the “ILO Applications” window.
 - 127. *Transcripts:* These are prepared by a team of operators provided by RELMEETINGS and are made available to the team several hours after the sitting.
 - 128. *Languages:* The précis-writers are encouraged to listen to the original language of the speaker when possible. Although the draft minutes are usually prepared in English, précis-writers may write minutes in French or Spanish, if arranged in advance. In such cases, the minutes for the entire sitting (morning or afternoon) must be drafted in that language.

3.3. Writing up

- 129. Précis-writers leave the meeting room as soon as they have finished taking notes and start writing up immediately.

3.3.1. General approach

- 130. Précis-writers should keep the general principles set out in Part I of this document in mind when preparing the draft minutes.
- 131. *Length:* The prescribed word limit for draft minutes is 1,900 words of draft text per hour of sitting, unless otherwise indicated in the RODIS workflow. This is an exacting requirement, which can be attained only through rigorous application of the technique of summarizing and the omission of elements not considered indispensable in draft minutes by all those involved in the preparation of the draft minutes.
- 132. Précis-writers have to use their experience and judgement and be guided by the information in this document and the word limits when it comes to deciding what to include and what not to include, and how much detail to go into. They must absolutely resist the temptation to reproduce everything that is in the transcript. As far as is compatible with good English, they should use the words used by the speaker

133. A model for the draft minutes is provide below:

**Draft minutes of the Policy
Development Section**

Development Cooperation Segment

Fourth item on the agenda

**ILO South–South and triangular
cooperation and decent work:
Recent developments and future
steps
(GB.332/POL/4)**

1. *A representative of the Director-General* (title, department) ... [include any information not included the document].
2. *The Employer spokesperson* ...
3. *The Worker spokesperson* ...
4. *A Government representative of* ...

Decision

134. *The Governing Body* ...

135. (GB.332/POL/4, paragraph 23.)

3.3.2. Specific indications

- Information on the dates on which the sittings were held and on the assignment of speaking responsibilities will be inserted by RELMEETINGS into the first part of the compiled draft minutes.
- The terms “the Employer spokesperson” and “the Worker spokesperson” should be used when referring to representatives of the respective groups. The terms “the Worker Vice-Chairperson” and “the Employer Vice-Chairperson” should be used only when those persons are acting in their capacity as Officers of the Governing Body or with reference to a Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Freedom of Association.
- At the beginning of the discussion on each agenda item, a heading should be inserted giving the number and exact title of the agenda item, followed by the document number.
- If the document includes a draft decision, the précis-writer should insert at the end of its discussion the subheading “**Decision**” and then reproduce the paragraph for decision

in bold and italics modified to start as follows: “***The Governing Body decided/approved/endorsed/invited/etc. ...***”. The decision paragraph should incorporate any amendments to the draft decision that might have been agreed upon during the discussion. This paragraph should be followed by a reference in brackets to the relevant document and draft decision. For example “(GB.333/POL/1, paragraph 65)” or “(GB.333/POL/1, paragraph 65, as amended)”.

- If the document was submitted for guidance by the Governing Body, insert at the end of its discussion the subheading “***Outcome***” and then reproduce the last paragraph concerning its discussion in bold and italics and start with a sentence such as the following, as appropriate: “***The Governing Body took note of the document and invited the Office to take into account the views expressed during its discussion concerning ...***”.

3.3.3. Identification of speakers

136. Précis-writers are instructed to refer to speakers in the draft minutes as follows:

- Each statement should begin with the identification of the speaker in italics. For example:
 - *A representative of the Director-General* (plus title and department in brackets), for example: “*A representative of the Director-General* (Deputy Director-General for Policy)”. When the same speaker is referred to subsequently, “*The representative of the Director-General* (plus title and department in brackets)” should be used.
 - *The Chairperson.*
 - *The Worker spokesperson.*
 - *The Employer spokesperson.*
 - *A Government representative of [name of country].*
 - *An Employer member from [name of country].*
 - *A Worker member from [name of country].*
- In cases where a Government representative is speaking on behalf of a group, the following formulations should be used:
 - *Speaking on behalf of the [name of group],* a Government representative of [name of country] said that ...

Given the constantly evolving membership of the European Union, particular care should be taken with statements made by its representatives. Currently, and until further notice, wording on the following lines should be used:

- *Speaking on behalf of the European Union [and its Member States],* a Government representative of [name of country] said that [the following countries aligned themselves with the statement: [list countries in the order given by the speaker] ...

The exact formulation – whether or not to include “and its Member States” or a list of the countries aligning themselves with the statement – will depend on the actual

language used by the speaker. Qualifiers such as “candidate countries”, “potential candidate countries” and so on should be omitted.

- It is assumed that, once the speaker has been identified, everything else in the text until a new speaker is defined is the speaker’s views. There is hence no need to use “He added that ...” or any other phrase introducing indirect speech after the first one, unless some specific request or question is posed.
- There is no need to include the name of the speaker who takes the floor, but it is very important to indicate in square brackets the gender of each speaker ([M] or [F]) for translation purposes (RELMEETINGS will remove this information before publication). It is important to bear in mind that the sex of the speaker is not always the same as that of the interpreter.
- As a rule, no titles (for example, Ambassador, Doctor, General, Lieutenant, Counsellor, Professor), honorifics (His or Her Excellency) or first names should be used: when participants are being named, they should be referred to as Mr or Ms.

3.4. Submitting work

137. Précis-writers from RELMEETINGS submit their individual write-ups through RODIS to the reviser, who will compile the different parts for a particular sitting and will submit the revised version to the focal point, also via RODIS.
138. In cases where the précis-writers are provided by the technical unit, the Document Coordination and Translation Support Unit (DCU) of RELMEETINGS will provide guidance before the session on the submission requirements.

3.5. Approval process

139. As mentioned above, the focal points are requested to check the technical accuracy of the texts prepared by RELMEETINGS, and circulate the document to the relevant officials for approval. They are requested to track any changes that are made.
140. The officials responsible for approving the draft minutes are encouraged not to add significant amounts of new text at the approval stage and to endeavour to ensure that the compiled draft minutes for their segment adhere to the word limit.

3.6. Returning the approved version of the minutes to RELMEETINGS

141. The focal points should return the approved version of the draft minutes through RODIS to RELMEETINGS, within the established deadline. They are asked to remain available afterwards for any questions that may arise.

III. Summaries of proceedings of technical committees at the International Labour Conference

1. General

142. The purpose of this part of the instructions is to assist précis-writers working for technical committees of the International Labour Conference. Précis-writers are called on to prepare text that will form the basis of the summaries of proceedings of the committees, which are compiled by the report-writers.² As mentioned in Part I, each committee secretariat works independently and may decide to deviate from the practices described herein. All such information will be communicated to the précis-writers.

2. Précis-writing teams and other arrangements

2.1. Teams

143. To the extent possible, summaries of proceedings of Conference committees are to be prepared using précis-writers who have been trained in the technique of summarizing the discussions at meetings, including those dealing with complex technical and politically sensitive issues. The roles and responsibilities of the different members of the team are set out below.
144. *Coordinator (products)*: receives the instalments and corrections and sends them to the relevant people; oversees the process to ensure timely publication of the summary of proceedings; responds to queries from the translators as well as the report team and provides practical assistance.
145. *Lead précis-writer*: The lead précis-writer, who is usually the précis-writer with the most experience, is responsible for the day-to-day organization of work and for acting as a liaison between the précis-writers and the report-writers and products coordinator.
146. *Précis-writers*: The précis-writers work under the general guidance and supervision of the report-writers to produce text that needs minimal editing for inclusion in the draft summary of proceedings.
147. *Report-writers*: The report-writers are experts who are responsible for producing the summary of proceedings. They take their own notes in the committee plenary; compile and revise the texts of the précis-writers; seek advice on any sensitive statements; and provide guidance and feedback to the précis-writers.
148. *Reviewers*: conduct a high-level review of the substance of the draft summary of proceedings, focusing on potentially contentious issues; approve each instalment of the draft summary of proceedings before it is sent for translation; and provide feedback to the report team, where necessary.

² Since 2016, the records of committees have been split into two documents and published as separate provisional records, the first containing the resolution and conclusions or instrument(s) adopted by the committee, and the second containing the summary of proceedings. The latter document is still commonly referred to as the “committee report”.

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149. *Translators*: translate the instalments of the report into French and Spanish and may flag statements that are unclear or potentially incorrect.
 150. *Text processing operators*: compile and format the report instalments; proofread and apply ILO house style; incorporate the changes arising from the approval process into the master; and transcribe dictation from translators, if necessary.

2.2. Sitings

151. Committees normally meet twice a day, morning and afternoon/evening, at the times set out in the corresponding plan of work. However, it is increasingly common for afternoon sittings to be extended into late evening, and even beyond the times set out in the plan of work. Sittings may also be held at the weekend.
152. Précis-writers should check in the Daily Bulletin of the Conference whether there have been any changes to the sitting times and whether there is likely to be an extended sitting. Adjustments can also be made to the schedule at short notice, so the précis-writer who is in the room when an announcement is made should inform his or her teammates accordingly.
153. Group meetings and meetings of drafting groups and the Committee Drafting Committee are not covered by the précis-writers.

2.3. Time frame for the preparation of summaries

154. Summaries of proceedings must be available in English, French and Spanish for circulation and adoption before the end of the session. Accomplishment of this task places considerable pressure on all those involved and necessitates a great deal of effort and coordination on the part of the team. In all cases, it can be said that time is of the essence.
155. As a rule of thumb, précis-writers are expected to spend three times the amount of time spent taking notes on preparing their write-ups. In other words, if a précis-writer covers 20 minutes of discussion in the room, he or she should spend an hour writing up; if a précis-writer covers 30 minutes of discussion in the room, he or she should spend 90 minutes writing up. The report-writers will provide further instructions to the précis-writers in this regard. The report-writers must ensure that the summaries of all sittings of one day are sent to the reviewer by late that evening so that the review can be completed before the start of the morning sitting on the following day.

3. Précis-writing process

156. For general guidance on the précis-writing process, see Part I. The guidance below applies specifically to the process of preparing summaries of proceedings of Conference committees.

3.1. Before the session

157. The précis-writers are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves before the session with the information provided by the secretariat and the relevant documentation, such as the background report and any proposed texts to be discussed, which are published on the website for the relevant session of the Conference at www.ilo.org/ilc. They are also encouraged to look at the summary of proceedings of previous meetings of Conference

committees to get an idea of what the final product should look like. They should be familiar with the ILO house style manual and be prepared to refer to it routinely when drafting their summaries.

158. They will meet with the report-writers for their committee, who will discuss with them practical details relating to their work, including arrangements concerning the roster (see [roster](#)). They should also familiarize themselves with the layout of the meeting room.

3.2. During the session

159. *Sitting times:* The précis-writing team should check the starting time of the sitting to which they are assigned by consulting the Daily Bulletin of the Conference, bearing in mind that adjustments are often made at short notice. Team members are also encouraged to use the ILO Events mobile app, which can be set up to send notifications concerning the relevant sittings.
160. *Roster:* The lead précis-writer will prepare a roster to ensure that all team members know when they are expected to be in the room taking notes. He or she will ensure that, in the event that a sitting overruns its allotted time, contingency arrangements are in place. For further guidance, see [roster](#).
161. *In-session documents, written statements and speakers:* The coordination support team in the meeting room will endeavour to ensure that written statements and other relevant documents are available to the précis-writers as a matter of priority and prior to delivery where possible. They will also ensure that copies of all written statements are kept in a central folder for reference. A list of speakers will also be prepared.
162. If a précis-writer receives a written statement relating to a part of the meeting that has already been covered by one of his or her teammates, he or she should endeavour to give the statement to the relevant teammate as soon as possible. If the statement has not yet been delivered, the précis-writer is asked to make sure that the hard copy is kept in an agreed order on the table in the meeting room. Hard copies of statements should be removed from the précis-writing table at the end of each sitting; copies of any statements that have not yet been made should be given to the team member covering the first part of the next sitting.
163. *Digital recordings and transcripts:* No recordings or transcripts are available for Conference committees.
164. *Languages:* The précis-writers may choose whether to listen to the English interpretation or the original language as the basis for their notes. In either case, the summaries must be drafted in English.

3.3. Writing up

165. Précis-writers should leave the meeting room as soon as they have finished taking notes and should start writing up immediately.
166. They should keep the general principles set out in Part I of this document in mind when preparing their summaries.
167. They should also bear in mind the points below.

3.3.1. *Layout and heading*

168. At the top of their write-ups, précis-writers should indicate their name, the date, the sitting, the time period covered and the names of the précis-writers who covered the preceding and subsequent parts of the sitting. For example:

Mary Smith

8 June 2015

6th sitting, 15.30–15.50

Following from: Susana Gonzalez

Followed by: Charles Bardot

- Unless otherwise instructed, précis-writers should prepare their text using 12 point Times New Roman font, without italics, bold or underlining.
- Automatic numbering should be applied to the paragraphs. Under no circumstances should manual paragraph numbers be used.
- Depending on the secretariat, a template might be provided.

3.3.2. *Length*

169. Précis-writers will receive guidance from the report-writers on how long and comprehensive their write-ups should be.

3.3.3. *Specific indications*

170. Specific indications for each committee will be provided by the report-writers.
171. The correct terminology for subdivisions of a draft text should be used (see [Appendix II](#)).

3.3.4. *Amendments*

172. Précis-writers should bear in mind the following when summarizing a discussion on amendments:
- At the beginning of the discussion on each new point, Article or Paragraph, a heading should be inserted, and a subheading should be inserted for the subdivisions of the point/Article/paragraph:

Point 3

Chapeau ...

Point 3(a) ...

- Précis-writers should include the number of each amendment in square brackets for internal reference purposes (the number is deleted from the published version of the summary of proceedings).

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- Précis-writers should reproduce in full the text of all amendments that are discussed (but not those that are not discussed) and the full list of countries that submitted the amendment, in alphabetical order.

The Government member of Denmark, speaking also on behalf of the Government members of Germany and Norway, introduced an amendment [D.XX] to add in paragraph 3, after the words “on similar vessels”, the words “in whole or in part”.

- Where an amendment is submitted by one Government member, précis-writers should indicate which Government member(s) seconded it.
- Précis-writers should indicate which members supported or did not support each amendment, indicating the justification, if any. Identical statements should be grouped:

The Government members of Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and France on behalf of the EU and its Member States supported the amendment.

- Précis-writers should also indicate the full text of each subamendment, as it appears in the Subamendment Management Module (SAMM). They should also indicate which Committee members supported it or did not support it; care should be taken in noting this information, as it is not recorded in the SAMM.
- When amendments are not discussed because they are not seconded or when they become irrelevant through the adoption of another amendment, they are said to have fallen. In such cases, the following wording could be used:

The Government member of X submitted an amendment [D.XX] which was not seconded and therefore fell.

As a consequence of the adoption of the amendment [to delete point 5(a)], subsequent amendments to point 5(a) fell.

- Every amendment submitted to the Committee should be accounted for, and its fate stated (for example: the amendment was adopted or not adopted). In case of doubt, the information can be obtained from the SAMM, where the amendment or subamendment that was adopted is indicated in green font.
- At the end of each point/Article/Paragraph, there should be an action line indicating whether it was “adopted as amended” or “adopted without amendment”.
- Although, as a rule, statements should be summarized in chronological order, an amendments discussion must be reordered to follow the sequence of the draft text under discussion, which may not necessarily be the chronological order.
- Where the discussion of an amendment is deferred (when the text is left in square brackets), the précis-writers should indicate this. After the committee’s last sitting, the report-writers will move the parts related to the continued discussion of a particular point/Paragraph/Article to come under that point/Paragraph/Article.

3.3.5. Identification of speakers

173. Each statement should begin with the identification of the speaker. For example:

- The representative of the Secretary-General (as an exception, the name and job title of the representative and deputy representative of the Secretary-General are included on first mention in the summary of proceedings)
- The Chairperson
- The Employer/Worker Vice-Chairperson
- The Government member of [...]
- An Employer member from [...]
- A Worker member from [...]
- The Legal Adviser/The representative of the Legal Adviser
- The representative of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
- The representative of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- In cases where a Government representative is speaking on behalf of a group, the following formulations should be used:
 - The Government member of [*name of country*], speaking on behalf of the [*name of group*], said that ...³
- Particular care should be taken with statements made by representatives of the European Union, as they are entitled to speak only on behalf of EU Member States, but other countries may align themselves with the statement. Unless instructed otherwise, wording along the following lines should be used:
 - The Government member of [*name of country*], speaking on behalf of the EU [and its Member States], said that the following countries aligned themselves with the statement [*list countries in the order given by the speaker*] ...

The exact formulation – whether or not to include “and its Member States” or a list of the countries aligning themselves with the statement – will depend on the actual language used by the speaker. Qualifiers such as “candidate countries”, “potential candidate countries” and so on should be omitted.

³ The Office of the Legal Adviser (JUR) suggests that report-writers should add a footnote at the beginning of the report to explain that, unless otherwise specified, all statements made by Government members on behalf of regional groups or members of intergovernmental organizations are reported as having been made on behalf of all Governments members of the group or organization in question who are Members of the ILO and are attending the Conference. Report-writers are referred to the latest minute from JUR on this matter.

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- When one government speaks on behalf of a group of governments, the précis-writer should list them in alphabetical order, except in the case of the European Union, when the order given by the speaker should be used (see above).
 - Précis-writers should indicate whether a speaker is male [M] or female [F] after the identification of the speaker. This is important information for the translators. Précis-writers should bear in mind that the sex of the speaker is not always the same as that of the interpreter; if listening to the interpretation, they may have to switch briefly to the language of the floor to ascertain the sex of the speaker. If necessary, the sex of a speaker can be checked against the speakers' list after the sitting has ended.
 - It is assumed that, once the speaker has been identified, everything else in the text until a new speaker is defined is the speaker's views. There is hence no need to use "He added that ..." or any other phrase introducing indirect speech after the first one, unless some specific request or question is posed.
 - If participants are referred to exceptionally by their name, Mr or Ms should be used, and not any title (for example, Ambassador, Counsellor, Doctor, General, Lieutenant, Lord, Professor, Reverend) or honorific (His or Her Excellency).

3.3.6. Capitalization

- Note the following:
 - Conference committees *but* this Conference Committee;
 - Committee Drafting Committee;
 - Member States of the European Union;
 - member States of the ILO;
 - proposed Conclusions;
 - report (lower case when used generally);
 - Report (upper case when in a title or with a number):
 - Report of the Director-General;
 - Reports V(2A) and V(2B), entitled *The transition from the informal to the formal economy ...*;
 - "the 107th Session", but "the current session" (upper case "S" when preceded by a number).

3.4. Procedures for saving and submitting work

174. Each committee secretariat will have its own arrangements for saving and submitting work. Usually, précis-writers must save their work on the O drive, which is a shared directory that is backed up regularly, rather than on a personal drive. They must follow the exact naming convention specified by the report-writers to enable the different documents to be sorted by time and identified by the précis-writer's initials, for example: "CN-28May-1600-1630-SA".

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175. Both the précis-writers and the report-writers are encouraged to use the checklist set out in [Appendix III](#) before submitting their work.

3.5. Afterwards

3.5.1. *Filling in time sheets*

176. Précis-writers should record their hours each day on an [electronic time sheet](#). When recording their hours, they must include a break of at least 30 minutes per day. At the end of the session, the form must be printed out, signed by the précis-writer and sent for verification and signature by one of the coordinators.

3.5.2. *Leaving at the end of the day*

177. Précis-writers should not leave the office at the end of each workday until they have finished their write-ups, sent their work to the report-writers and have been released by the report-writers or coordinators. They are encouraged to check whether their teammates need any help before going home. Before leaving, everyone should be clear about the roster for the following day.
178. Officials may apply to their coordinator for a taxi voucher if they have worked into the late evening.

3.5.3. *Feedback and assistance*

179. Précis-writers should not hesitate to contact the report-writers for drafting guidance and feedback, and the coordinators for assistance with any practical matters.

Appendix I

Indirect speech

(Adapted from the United Nations Editorial Manual, 1983
(article F5. Use of indirect speech, pp. 393–398))

English reports and minutes are written in indirect, or reported, speech, a technique that is described below.

I. *General rule*

1. When converting direct, or quoted, speech to indirect, or reported, speech, it is necessary to add a principal clause containing a verb of saying. Though this verb should not be repeated at the beginning of every sentence, it governs the tenses of the verbs of the original statement. The change from direct to indirect speech requires changes of verb tenses, pronouns and possessive adjectives, some adverbs and adverbial phrases and some other words.

II. *Verbs*

2. Verbs that are in the present tense in direct speech should be in the past tense in indirect speech; those in the continuous present should be in the continuous past.

Examples:

Fifteen States are represented in the working group.

He said that 15 States were represented in the working group.

The figures show that the price is dropping gradually.

The figures showed that the price was dropping gradually.

3. In summaries of speeches, even though the statement constituting the “that” clause may still be valid at the time of reporting, the verb is changed from the present to the past tense, since it depends on the verb in the main clause, which, whether stated or understood, is in the past tense.

Examples:

He said that his delegation was strongly opposed to the plan.

He said that his delegation could not support the draft resolution. It was strongly opposed to the plan.

4. Verbs in tenses of the past should be changed to the pluperfect; those in the continuous past to the continuous pluperfect.

Examples:

In all the countries studied, imports grew faster than exports in that period.

He said that in all the countries studied, imports had grown faster than exports in that period.

The Commission has followed the question with intense interest.

She stated that the Commission had followed the question with intense interest.

The Commission has been following the question with interest.

She noted that the Commission had been following the question with interest.

5. Verbs in the future tense (shall, will) should be changed to the secondary future, or future in the past (should, would); those in the continuous future to the continuous secondary future.

Examples:

My delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

He said that his delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution.

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6. Verbs expressing a wish should be changed to the secondary future or the infinitive.

Examples:

If only all States would heed the warning!

He expressed the wish that all States might heed the warning.

May I urge all delegations to come to the meeting on time.

He urged all delegations to come to the meeting on time.

7. Verbs in the future perfect should be changed to the secondary future perfect, or future perfect of the past (should have, would have), those in the continuous future to the continuous secondary future perfect (should have been, would have been).

Examples:

The cost will be increasing annually.

She stated that the cost would be increasing annually.

By 2030 the number will have doubled.

He said that by 2030 the number would have doubled.

By 2020 the project will have been operating for 20 years.

By 2020 the project would have been operating for 20 years.

8. Verbs in the conditional may have to be changed to the conditional perfect depending on the sense.

Examples:

Direct: If the necessary funding were available, the programme would be put into operation.

Indirect: He said that if the necessary funding were available, the programme would be put into operation.

He said that if the necessary funding had been available, the programme would have been put into operation.

9. As the modal auxiliary “must” does not, strictly speaking, have a form in the past tense, the form “must” may be used in reported speech. The alternative “had to” tends to make the text cumbersome and may be either weaker or stronger than “must”, according to the context.

Example:

The report must be issued before the opening of the session.

He said that the report must be issued before the opening of the session.

10. The present subjunctive is not only archaic in English, except in a few stereotyped phrases, but is grammatically incorrect in indirect speech; however cumbersome the result, the word “should” must always be included in such sentences as “He suggested that the Committee should adopt the text.”.
11. The infinitive form may conveniently be used in some cases to avoid an awkward construction in indirect speech.

Examples:

I declare that it is a fraud.

He declared it to be a fraud. (instead of: He declared that it was a fraud.)

It is reported that the situation is grave.

He stated that the situation was reported to be grave. (instead of: He stated that it was reported that the situation was grave.)

12. The rules governing the sequence of tenses apply also to clauses that depend on gerunds and on present and past participles.

Example:

Having indicated that he himself would not be able to serve on the Committee, he proposed ...

13. Précis-writers should avoid such expressions as “that is to say”, “as regards”, “be that as it may” and “if need be” (which use the present tense).

III. Pronouns and possessive adjectives

14. The changes normally required in personal pronouns and possessive adjectives are as follows:

Direct speech	Indirect speech
I	he, she
me	him, her
my	his, her, the
we	they
mine	his, hers
us	them
our	their, the
ours	theirs
you	they, them
your	their, the
yours	theirs

15. In most reports, however, “we” should be replaced by “they” if the subject is plural, or by “he” or “she”, “his” or “her delegation”, “his” or “her Government”, the name of the country (preferable to “his” or “her country”), “the group”, “the Office”, “the Governing Body”, or “the international community” and so on.

IV. Adverbs, adverbial phrases and adjectives

16. Some adverbs, adverbial phrases and adjectives denoting time and place may have to be changed, as shown below:

Direct speech	Indirect speech
here	there
now	then, at that time
at the present time	at the time, currently
present	current, existing
today	that day, at that time
yesterday	the day before, the previous day
tomorrow	the day after, the next day
ago	before, earlier

V. Use of “this” and “these”

17. In converting direct speech to indirect speech, the words “this” and “these” should normally be changed to “that” and “those” respectively. The strict application of this rule, however, may give rise to ambiguity or awkwardness, and some other solution may be preferable. The words “this” and “these” may often be rendered by “the”. Where the speaker has said “this year”, “this month” or “at this session”, formulations such as “in 2018”, “in June 2018” and “at the current session” make better sense in indirect speech than “in that year”, “in that month” and “at that session”.

Examples:

One of the principal features of this report is to indicate the extent of the effort required.

One of the principal features of the report was to indicate the extent of the effort required. [If the report in question has been identified and it is clear from the context that it is the one referred to.]

I hope the Committee will resolve this issue this year.

She expressed the hope that the Committee would resolve the issue in 2018.

VI. Interrogative sentences

18. The above rules also apply to the conversion of interrogative sentences from direct to indirect speech. In addition, a change in the order of the words, from an interrogative to a statement construction, may be required. The choice of form will depend on the type of statement being converted – that is, whether the personal element has to be retained, as in a summary of a statement.

Examples:

Why should we not include the question in the agenda?

He asked why the Committee should not include the question in the agenda.

He asked why the question should not be included in the agenda.

What can be done to alleviate this condition?

He wondered what could be done to alleviate that condition.

What does this type of development cost?

She inquired what that type of development cost.

Is this kind of aggression to be allowed?

He asked whether that kind of aggression was to be allowed.

The question was whether that kind of aggression was to be allowed.

Appendix II

Divisions and subdivisions of official texts

Conventions

These are successively divided into:

- **Parts**, with the word “Part” centred, followed by a figure in roman numerals and the title of the Part, all in small capitals;
- **Articles**, with the word “Article” centred, in italics, followed by the number in Arabic figures;
- **paragraphs**, a division of the Article, numbered 1., 2., 3., and so on (Arabic), and laid out as ordinary paragraphs;
- **subparagraphs**, a division of the paragraph, or of the Article, where this is not divided into paragraphs, identified by (a), (b), (c) and so on, and laid out as first-level indents;
- **clauses**, a division of the subparagraph, numbered (i), (ii), (iii) and so on, and laid out as second-level indents.

Recommendations

These are successively divided into:

- Parts, indicated by a number in roman numerals, centred, without the word “Part”, followed by the title of the Part, all in small capitals;
- Paragraphs, numbered 1., 2., 3., and so on, and laid out as ordinary paragraphs;
- subparagraphs, a division of the Paragraph, numbered (1), (2), (3) and so on, and laid out as ordinary paragraphs. The figure (1) follows the Paragraph number and is preceded by an en space (e.g. 27. (1));
- clauses, a division of the subparagraph (or of the Paragraph, where this is not divided into subparagraphs), identified by (a), (b), (c) and so on, and laid out as first-level indents;
- sub-clauses, a division of the clause, numbered (i), (ii), (iii) and so on, and laid out as second-level indents.

Conclusions

These are successively divided into:

- parts, if applicable, indicated by a number in roman numerals;
- points, numbered 1., 2., 3., and so on, and laid out as ordinary paragraphs;
- paragraphs, a division of the point, preceded by a number in Arabic figures in brackets;
- clauses, a division of the paragraph or of the point where this is not divided into paragraphs, lettered (a), (b), (c) and so on;
- sub-clauses, a division of the clause, numbered (i), (ii), (iii) and so on.

References to subdivisions

References to subdivisions of official texts should normally take the shortest possible form.

Point 3(a) of the proposed Conclusions
Article 12(1)(a) of the Convention,
clause (a)(i) of that Paragraph of the Recommendation
Paragraph 7(a)(i) of the Recommendation
Part I(A)(ii) of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization
Part II(B)(i) of the Annex to the Declaration, or Annex, Part II(B)(i)

The main purpose is to avoid ugly and cumbersome references such as “subparagraph (a) of paragraph 1 of Article 12 of the Convention”.

Common sense will demand a departure from the above rule from time to time.

Clauses (i) and (ii) of subparagraph (a) are mandatory, whereas clauses (iii) and (iv) are permissive.

Appendix III

Checklist for teams preparing summaries of proceedings of Conference Committees

General

- ☐ all substantive statements made during the sitting have been included;
- ☐ the paragraphs have automatic numbering;
- ☐ the required headings have been included;
- ☐ the text is written in indirect speech;
- ☐ the language is formal and neutral;
- ☐ the correct terminology has been used to identify speakers, groups and countries;
- ☐ the sex of each speaker has been included in square brackets ([M] or [F]);
- ☐ the correct terminology has been used for the divisions and subdivisions of the text;
- ☐ abbreviations have been used in moderation and have been spelled out at least once;
- ☐ references to instruments, official documents, meetings and so on are correct;
- ☐ the paragraph length is balanced, with more coverage given to group representatives;
- ☐ interventions expressing identical views have been consolidated;
- ☐ unnecessary text has been omitted;
- ☐ the language has been set to English and a spell check has been run.

Discussion of amendments

- ☐ The following have been included:
 - a heading for each division and subdivision of text;
 - the text of each amendment discussed (but not those that were withdrawn or fell), with the reference number in square brackets (for example, [D.25]);
 - the text of each subamendment, from SAMM;
 - who introduced each amendment, on behalf of whom, and who seconded it (if applicable);
 - who supported and who did not support each amendment and subamendment;
 - an action line stating the fate of each amendment and subamendment (for example, adopted, not adopted, fell);
 - an action line stating whether each point/Article/Paragraph and subdivision was “adopted without amendment” or “adopted as amended”.

After the final sitting

- ☐ Any text that needs to be moved so as to follow the sequence of the points/Articles/Paragraphs has been identified and clear instructions have been given to the text-processing operators.

