



Governing Body

316th Session, Geneva, 1–16 November 2012

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Institutional Section

INS

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FIFTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Report of the Officers of the Governing Body

Status of developments in relation to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

1. At its 310th Session, the Governing Body expressed concern at the decision of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to establish a Technical Committee (TC) in the field of human resource management (HRM) despite the ILO's stated opposition.¹ It requested the Director-General to respond to any ISO request for cooperation in the matter by underlining the need for a clear and shared understanding of respective competences as the precondition for such cooperation.²
2. Earlier this year, an initial draft agreement exchanged between secretariats included certain principles demarcating respective mandates and recognizing international labour standards as an authoritative source of reference in the ISO's work. The draft also set out mechanisms for receipt of ILO comments on ISO proposals for new areas of work and draft standards where they relate to ILO issues, and for circulation of the comments to the ISO's Board and voting membership. However, last month the ISO sent a "redraft" that replaced the principles and mechanisms with general statements which alone do not provide for cooperation based on a clear and shared understanding of respective competencies. The ISO explained that it no longer supported the earlier draft's approach based on the 2005 ILO–ISO Social Responsibility (SR) agreement,³ and that events were moving along. TC 260 now has members from 36 countries.⁴ It remains unclear how any

¹ GB.309/18/4; GB.309/18/4(Add.) (November 2010).

² GB.310/17/7; GB.310/17/7, para. 5, as amended (March 2011).

³ GB.292/PV, para. 209 (satisfied at Office work that led to signing of ILO–ISO Memorandum of Understanding in field of social responsibility).

⁴ http://www.iso.org/iso/standards_development/technical_committees/other_bodies/iso_technical_committee.htm?commid=628737 (15 participating, 21 observing).

ISO standards to be developed on HRM, or in other fields related to ILO issues, will ensure due respect for ILO standards and mandated areas of activity.

Draft decision

- 3. In the light of its discussion on this issue at the 310th Session (March 2011) of the Governing Body and subsequent events, the Officers recommend that the Governing Body provide guidance on any elements necessary for pursuing a general cooperation agreement with the International Organization of Standardization.***