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SEVENTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

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

Report of the Chairperson of the Working Party

1. The Working Party on the Functioning of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference met in the morning and afternoon of Monday, 6 November 2017 and in the afternoon of Tuesday, 7 November. The Office had prepared four documents ¹ for the Working Party, in response to the decisions taken by the Governing Body at its 328th Session (November 2016). These dealt with the following issues: Composition of the Governing Body; Analysis of the 106th Session (2017) of the Conference; Comprehensive review of the Standing Orders of the Conference; and Review of the role and functioning of the Regional Meetings. As Chairperson of the Governing Body, I presided over the sitting, Mr Munthe spoke for the Employers on the first document, while Mr Mdwaba spoke for the Employers on the two documents on the International Labour Conference, and Ms Hornung-Draus was Employer spokesperson in regard to Regional Meetings. The Worker spokesperson of the Governing Body, Ms Passchier, was Worker spokesperson throughout. This is my informal report to the Governing Body on the work of the Working Party. It is not a summary verbatim report or minutes, but a brief synopsis of the main elements of the discussion, containing the Working Party's recommendations to the Governing Body as draft decisions.

¹ Composition of the Governing Body: Update on the status of ratification of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the ILO ([GB.331/WP/GBC/1](#)); Improving the functioning of the International Labour Conference: Analysis of the 106th Session (2017) of the Conference ([GB.331/WP/GBC/2/1](#)); Improving the functioning of the International Labour Conference: Comprehensive review of the Standing Orders of the Conference ([GB.331/WP/GBC/2/2](#)); and Review of the role and functioning of the Regional Meetings ([GB.331/WP/GBC/3\(Rev.\)](#)).

Composition of the Governing Body: Update on the status of ratification of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the ILO

2. Many countries, and also the Employers' and Workers' groups, strongly supported the 1986 Instrument for the amendment of the Constitution of the ILO. The Africa group in particular stressed that the credibility and legitimacy of the Organization would be jeopardized by its inability to defend the sovereign equality of all member States, as set out in the United Nations Charter. The ILO would be best able to promote social justice if its governance system was firmly rooted in equality of States. The current situation whereby non-elective seats were held by States of chief industrial importance no longer reflected present reality, but rather represented a hangover from the past. Africa was now the fastest growing region in the world, with untapped potential for industrial progress. With its centenary in 2019, the ILO should demonstrate its commitment to equity among States. The 1986 Instrument for Amendment would allow much fairer geographic representation within the Governing Body – the changes that it would introduce were more far-reaching than those introduced by the 1995 amendment to the Standing Orders of the Conference, which had simply increased the number of Governing Body deputy members as an interim measure. Many African member States added their individual voices to their group statement, maintaining that the present situation was not consistent with democratic values. The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC) also spoke in favour of the 1986 Amendment, echoing the sentiment expressed by the other speakers and reaffirming the need to seek a more balanced regional representation, taking into account the different geographical, social and economic interests.
3. The Working Party noted that 19 ratifications were still required for the Amendment to enter into force, and of these, at least three must come from States of chief industrial importance. Of those ten member States, only India and Italy had ratified the Instrument. A number of speakers expressed gratitude to Honduras for the Government's recent ratification of the Instrument, and encouraged other member States, particularly those of chief industrial importance, to ratify. The Working Party called on the Director-General to engage in consultations to move the ratification forward, noting that five governments had reported that they had already initiated or were shortly to initiate the ratification procedure. More efforts to encourage ratification should be taken. Some members regretted the apparent lack of interest among some ILO member States to consider positively the Instrument for Amendment. They expressed their determination to carry the process forward.
4. Following a clarification by the Office that the phrase "direct contacts with member States" was not referring to a "direct contacts mission" but meant simply to "contact member States directly", the Working Party recommended the following draft decision to the Governing Body.

Draft decision

5. *The Working Party recommends that the Governing Body request the Director-General to continue promotional efforts for the ratification of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment, including through direct contacts with member States, and to report at the 332nd Session (March 2018) on the results obtained and the feedback from Members concerned on the reasons which prevent or delay such ratification.*

Improving the functioning of the International Labour Conference

6. Before opening up the discussion on the second document before the Working Party, I gave the floor to the ILO Director of the International Labour Standards Department, who gave a report on the Informal Tripartite Consultations on the Working Methods of the Committee on the Application of Standards that had taken place on Saturday, 4 November.

Informal tripartite consultations on the working methods of the Committee on the Application of Standards

7. The informal tripartite consultations took place on Saturday, 4 November 2017. The meeting reviewed the functioning of the Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) in June 2017 and discussed possible further suggestions for improvement.
8. In this regard, the meeting participants noted that, in 2017, the CAS was able to successfully complete its work in a constructive and efficient manner due, to a large extent, to a better use of technology and strict time management, while encouraging exploration of further technological improvements. The preliminary and final lists of cases had been adopted and communicated on time, and conclusions were adopted with respect to all 24 cases of the CAS.
9. The meeting acknowledged that the modalities and criteria for the establishment of the lists of cases which had been applied in 2017 had allowed for their timely adoption. The meeting then discussed whether any changes could be made to these modalities in the future. For example, some meeting participants raised the question as to whether a lengthier notice period could be provided with respect to the preliminary and final lists of cases. In this regard, the meeting discussed whether the preliminary list, which is now available no less than 30 days before the opening of the International Labour Conference, could be made available beforehand. The Employer and Worker spokespersons both recalled the tight timelines between the publication of the report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) and the adoption of the preliminary and final lists of cases, adding that it would be difficult to provide for longer prior notice with the current timelines.
10. The meeting also discussed the criteria used for the selection of individual cases, including, as some participants mentioned, the need for a better regional and subregional balance and a greater balance of the Conventions to be discussed. The Employer and Worker spokespersons recalled the criteria contained in document D.1 adopted by the CAS, clarifying that there was no hierarchical order of importance concerning the criteria listed in that document. Improvements could be made to document D.1 in this regard and the Office was called upon to take steps to better share and inform delegates about the selection criteria contained in document D.1.
11. With respect to the list of cases, the meeting also examined the possibility of including cases of progress on that list. Such possibility was supported by the Employers' group and many regional groups. The Workers' group stressed that such cases of progress could be discussed in addition to the list of 24 cases, time permitting. Moreover, the Workers' group added that cases of progress could also be discussed during the opening and closing statements of the CAS' general discussion.

12. The meeting also discussed the selection of cases on the list of the CAS with regard to cases that are already dealt with under the complaint procedure established under article 26 of the ILO Constitution. The meeting agreed that duplication of procedures should be avoided as much as possible.
13. With respect to the preparation of conclusions, some meeting participants raised the question as to whether there should be government participation in the preparation of conclusions. The Employers' and Workers' groups considered that the current modalities for the preparation and adoption of conclusions should continue to be applied in 2018, as conclusions were addressed to governments and all positions were carefully taken into account in the drafting of conclusions.
14. The meeting also discussed and reviewed the modalities for the adoption of conclusions and agreed to pursue the following measures in 2018: the conclusions should be made visible on a screen while being read by the Chairperson; and a hard copy of the conclusions should also be given to the concerned Government representative. The meeting discussed whether the concerned representatives of governments should have an advance copy of the conclusions, before their adoption. As no consensus emerged from the discussion, it was agreed that Government representatives should have a right to take the floor immediately after the adoption of the conclusions.
15. With respect to the modalities for the adoption of the report by the CAS, the meeting welcomed the continued practice of adopting draft minutes in a "patchwork" version (that is, where each intervention is reflected only in English, French or Spanish) and continued extension of this practice to the adoption of the CAS report as regards the minutes on the individual cases.
16. The meeting discussed the use of the table on the "Follow-up to the Conclusions of the Committee on the Application of Standards (2015–16)" which was made available online on the CAS dedicated web page on 1 April 2017. This summary table includes, for example, information on whether or not, following requests made by the CAS in its conclusions, reports have in fact been submitted to the CEACR, ILO missions have been undertaken and technical assistance has been provided.
17. The meeting welcomed the continued use of the table and suggested further improvements which could include more information on the type of technical assistance offered by the ILO. The meeting also agreed that a summary report about missions undertaken as a follow-up to CAS conclusions should be made available on the CAS dedicated web page. In that regard, the Employers' and Workers' groups also reiterated that the national representative organizations of employers and workers of the member State concerned by the CAS conclusions should be informed and involved in the ILO missions, through the involvement of the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP).
18. With respect to the discussion of the General Surveys by the CAS, the meeting agreed that it would continue its discussion on this matter at its next meeting. The next meeting will also continue its discussion on participation in these informal tripartite consultations, including, as some participants proposed, on the possibility of increased government participation.
19. In concluding the meeting, participants agreed that the next meeting of the informal tripartite consultations on the working methods of the CAS should be held during the 332nd Session of the Governing Body (March 2018) in order to continue its discussions prior to the 2018 session of the CAS.

Analysis of the 106th Session (2017) of the Conference

20. The Working Party then turned its attention to the second document before it.² Many participants commented on this document, and there were particularly detailed remarks from GRULAC, the Africa group, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), India and from group of industrialized market economy countries (IMEC), as well as from the Employers and Workers. Across the three groups, particular stress was laid on the importance of thorough preparation prior to the Conference, with appreciation expressed for the *Advance information* and *Conference guide* documents, but also suggestions that more information should be posted as early as possible on the Conference and committee web pages. This was of particular importance to the Workers' group, as in countries where there was more than one union, negotiation was necessary to agree on representation at the Conference. Many speakers emphasized the need to identify committee officers as far in advance as possible, to ensure the correct balance of experience and expertise in those selected, but also to allow the Office to brief them fully. There was broad support for the suggestions put forward in the Office paper, and indeed, once again, for the Conference in its two-week format. Some concerns were however raised in respect of how to deal with the adoption of a Convention supplemented by a Recommendation in the reduced Conference format, with the Workers' group foreseeing the need to resort to night sittings. The Workers also made it clear that they would not countenance any attempt to avoid adopting two instruments at the same session on the pretext of lack of time. Their spokesperson suggested that the Conference could begin on a Tuesday or a Wednesday, as it would then include two working weekends, thus allowing more time. On a less positive note, lack of space in meeting rooms was evoked, and while this was understood to be, to a degree, inevitable, there was support for the idea of differentiating those present who had no institutional role to play with a particular badge, which would not allow them entry to the meeting rooms. Equally, it was noted that the two-week format restricted time for bilateral meetings and other consultations, as well as putting pressure on constituents and the secretariat. Further improvements should be made to palliate these effects, including through still more rigorous time management.

21. There was support for increased use of information technology, with electronic means used for the submission of credentials, for early registration in committees, and possibly also for the submission of amendments. There was agreement on the online posting of the documents for the Finance Committee, but it was important to retain some paper documents until such a time as all participants were equipped with mobile devices that were able to access the systems and applications coming into use. The proposal to integrate certain of the Selection Committee's functions into the Standing Orders, enabling these functions to be completed as part of the business of the plenary opening sitting, and to transfer the steering function of the Committee to the Officers of the Conference, also met with approval. This would free up the Selection Committee to perform other tasks, as necessary. I noted general support for time limits and a framework for the submission of committee reports, though the Workers' group pointed out that the Worker and Employer spokespersons were giving voice to their groups' opinions when submitting committee reports, and needed sufficient time to do this. There was also support for the new time limits set for the deposit of complaints or objections to the Credentials Committee, as well as the requirement to submit credentials three weeks prior to the Conference. The Employer spokesperson warned however that any further change in the deadline for submitting complaints might deprive some delegations of their rights. A number of speakers felt that the Office had arrived at a successful and value-adding formula in the World of Work Summit, though the Employers advised that further efforts should be made to enhance interaction. Finally, on the question of the production of the provisional records, while IMEC still expressed a preference for the trilingual production of

² GB.331/WP/GBC/2/1.

records of all plenary transactions, I believe that the general feeling of the Working Party was that the Office had found a reasonable compromise in its current practice, and in particular in the introduction of text-searchable trilingual transcriptions of speeches.

Draft decision

22. Following the discussion and lessons learned from the 106th Session of the Conference (June 2017), the Working Party on the Functioning of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference recommends that the Governing Body:

- (a) take note of the successful trialling of the first set of amendments to the Standing Orders of the Conference set out in Appendix II of document GB.329/INS/18;***
- (b) continue to explore further improvements taking into account the discussion in the Working Party;***
- (c) request the Director-General to prepare for its consideration at the 332nd Session (March 2018) a detailed plan of work for the 107th Session of the Conference (May–June 2018) based on a two-week format.***

Comprehensive review of the Standing Orders of the Conference

- 23.** The discussion on the review of the Standing Orders of the Conference opened with a presentation by the Office of a revised draft decision in the document.³ The purpose of this was to make clear that the amendments to the Standing Orders were simply proposals at this stage – none had been adopted. It was also to answer to concerns expressed by the groups at the proposal to establish a “small technical subgroup” to meet during sessions of the Governing Body to review the Standing Orders: the new proposal was that the Director-General should convene Geneva-based consultations, involving the Employers’ and Workers’ secretariats and the regional coordinators for the Government group, to carry out the review. These consultations would be reported regularly to the Governing Body.
- 24.** All three groups in the Working Party welcomed the document prepared by the Office, and endorsed the four strands of the proposed approach: deletion of obsolete provisions; codification of current practices; simplification of processes; and rationalization of the overall structure of the Standing Orders. All those who took the floor were in favour of comprehensive review, noting that the last time that this had been done had been 72 years previously. Support was also expressed for the proposed time frame, allowing the review to be completed by the ILO’s centenary in 2019. Some concerns were however raised by the IMEC group in relation to the proposal in the document to codify the notion of consensus in the Standing Orders as part of the Conference decision-taking processes. IMEC considered that the sophisticated Conference voting procedures, set out in the Standing Orders, had the value of facilitating decisions on highly controversial issues, where the principle of consensus might lead to a “lowest common denominator” decision. The Worker’s group did not wish to see the deletion of the note for maritime sessions of the Conference, because the group could still foresee the possible need for a dedicated maritime session. The constraints

³ GB.331/WP/GBC/2/2.

inherent to the amendment procedure for the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006), whereby amendments adopted by the Conference required ratification by Members representing at least 33 per cent of the world's gross shipping tonnage could give rise to the need for a stand-alone Convention. Moreover, the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185), remained outside the MLC, 2006, and while it had provision for simplified amendments to its annexes, this was not the case for its articles. Finally, the Seafarers' Pensions Convention, 1946 (No. 71), also excluded from the MLC, 2006, had been identified by the Cartier Working Party as in need of revision. The group was also unwilling to commit to the proposed merger of the Conference Drafting Committee and committee drafting committees. This proposal was still under trial, and had not yet been tested by the adoption of a Convention supplemented by a Recommendation at a two-week Conference.

25. The discussion on this item closed with an exchange of views as to the procedure to be followed to move forward and the extent to which email correspondence could be used during the review process. The principle concern of Governments, expressed by both IMEC and GRULAC, was that the review proceedings should be open and transparent and that all governments should be able to participate. The social partners recalled that in such consultations their participation was reduced to the presence of their respective secretariats, and they wished to avoid an imbalance in the composition of the consultations.

Draft decision

26. *The Working Party on the Functioning of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference recommends that the Governing Body:*

- (a) take note of the additional proposed amendments for the simplification and modernization of the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference;*
- (b) request the Director-General to undertake inter-sessional email and Geneva-based consultations with the three groups for the purposes of an in-depth review of the proposed amendments and drafting of any additional amendments, as may be necessary;*
- (c) decide that the progress of such consultations be reported to the Working Party at the 332nd (March 2018), 334th (October–November 2018) and 335th (March 2019) Sessions of the Governing Body with a view to finalizing a comprehensive package of amendments to the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference for validation by the Working Party and possible approval by the Governing Body in March 2019 as part of the Governance Initiative.*

Review of the role and functioning of the Regional Meetings

27. The Working Party held a lengthy exchange on the fourth paper before it, *Review of the role and functioning of the Regional Meetings*.⁴ Many Governments, as well as the Employers' and Workers' groups commented very fully on the document, and this will be very useful to

⁴ GB.331/WP/GBC/3(Rev.).

the Office, which has certainly noted all the points made. There was broad support from the three groups for the content of the report, a document suggesting possible improvements to the Regional Meetings and proposing changes in the *Rules for Regional Meetings* and their Introductory note to accommodate these improvements, though IMEC suggested that Regional Meetings should only be held when there was a genuine need and added value for them. Other Governments, with the Employers and Workers, saw Regional Meetings as important events that should be maintained.

28. The main point of divergence in the discussions concerned the composition of Regional Meetings, with the Africa group strongly arguing that the principle that each member State should be invited as a full member to only one Regional Meeting, with the Governing Body having the discretion to invite, on a case-by-case basis, any member State as an observer to other Regional Meetings, and introducing an amendment to the draft decision to this effect. This amendment was supported by the Employers' and Workers' groups as well as by a number of Governments, including Panama, host of the 2018 Regional Meeting of the Americas. The Governments of France and of the United Kingdom however recalled that they were under constitutional obligation to represent the populations of their non-metropolitan territories or of territories for which they held responsibility for external relations. Similarly, the Government of China said that any amendment to the Rules should not preclude the possibility of the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions sending individual delegations to the Regional Meetings, a practice that had worked satisfactorily under the "one government, two systems" approach. IMEC suggested that a way forward might be for each member State with territories in another region to set out their specific situation in writing. The Office could then review these texts bilaterally and formalize the individual situations by a letter to each State concerned.
29. The Employers' group stressed that Regional Meetings had evolved over recent years, and had moved beyond exchanges restricted to programming and implementing ILO activities in the region. They now served to discuss relevant themes coming from the Governing Body and the Conference. The suggestion that they could provide an appropriate forum to follow up on the Social Justice Declaration also met with approval. The group agreed on the importance of the discussion of the report submitted to Regional Meetings by the Director-General, but felt that issues of particular interest to the region were equally, if not more, important. The Meetings could also provide significant input on broad policy discussions, and this would be enhanced if there were better coordination between the implementation of the conclusions of Regional Meetings and the programme and budget cycles. The Employers stressed a point, made by other participants as well, that preparatory consultations on the themes, format and working methods in recent Regional Meetings had been very positive. Exchange of best practice was lacking at the Meetings and could perhaps be reinforced. One proposal in the report which was appreciated by many Governments and also by the Workers, but with which the Employers were in contention, was the introduction in the Rules of a clause promoting equal representation of women and men in delegations. The Employers believed that a rigid, prescriptive clause was inappropriate and, while they fully believed in having a gender balance, they favoured merit and competence as key criteria and disapproved quotas or nominations on the basis of gender.
30. The Workers also approved the suggestion that Regional Meetings could discuss ways for achieving the full potential of the Social Justice Declaration. Indeed, the group stressed the importance of ensuring coherence between Regional Meetings and ILO policy organs and proposed an amendment to section 1 of the Introductory note *Purpose and length of Regional Meetings*. The proposal was firstly to reword the phrase "They serve to adapt the global strategies decided by the International Labour Conference and the Governing Body" by "They serve to *implement* the global strategies decided by the International Labour Conference and the Governing Body"; and secondly to reword the phrase "to achieve the strategic objectives by bringing it closer to regional and national realities" by "to achieve the

strategic objectives by *translating it to* regional and national realities”. The group wished to strengthen social dialogue as a means of implementing the outcome documents of Regional Meetings.

31. The sitting closed with a renewed exchange of views on the issue of the composition of Regional Meetings, with the Africa group arguing very strongly once again for the adoption of its proposed amended draft decision and an acceleration of the process of reforming Regional Meetings. The Worker spokesperson raised the question of participation by regional trade unions from non-metropolitan territories dependent for their external relations on States in other regions. Would they be prohibited from participating in Regional Meetings in their regions and obliged to attend only the Regional Meeting in the region of the State on which they depended? The point was also made that the proposed amendment had been submitted by the Africa group at the last minute and that Working Party members required more time to reflect on its implications. I therefore adjourned the sitting and reconvened the Working Party on the afternoon of Tuesday, 7 November.
32. On reopening the discussion in the Working Party the floor went to the Government representative of France, who stressed that Mayotte, Réunion, Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guiana were French departments and as such integral parts of French territory. The 3 million people living in those territories were not just observers of, but actors in, the social and economic factors discussed at Regional Meetings. On the principle that a member State could participate as a full member in only one Regional Meeting, the Office should prepare amendments to the *Rules for Regional Meetings* that ensured an appropriate right of participation for the populations concerned. France, with the United Kingdom, submitted a submendment to this end, calling on “the Office to conduct discussions with the three groups on a means of appropriate representation by the tripartite constituents of non-metropolitan territories in Regional Meetings”.
33. The Government representative of Nigeria, speaking for the Africa group, did not agree with this procedure, neither did he agree with the amendment submitted. The group felt that it had been agreed that today’s discussion should not re-open debates, nor should new amendments be tabled. The Africa group’s amendment had been clear. It called for the adoption of the principle of one member State attending only one Regional Meeting as a full Member, while leaving it to the discretion of the Governing Body to invite other member States to Regional Meetings on a case-by-case basis.
34. IMEC then recalled that the original intent of the discussion had been to consider proposed amendments and to request the Office to prepare for consideration at the 332nd Session of the Governing Body a consolidated version of the *Rules for Regional Meetings* and the Introductory note, with any additional proposed amendments based on the guidance provided during the discussion for referral to a future session of the Conference for confirmation. The amendment tabled by the Africa group changed the intent and scope of the agenda item. Putting forward an amendment during the discussion obliges member States to consult with the capitals and territories affected by the changes.
35. The United Kingdom supported the points made by France and by IMEC, and expressed deep disappointment that certain constituents should seek to exclude other constituents from discussion in which they might have legitimate interests. An appropriate way should be found for non-metropolitan territories to be represented at Regional Meetings.
36. Representatives of the Governments of Ethiopia, Namibia and Uganda joined their voices to that of the spokesperson for their group in support of the amendment that the region had tabled. GRULAC also expressed full support for the amendment proposed by the Africa group.

37. The Worker spokesperson reiterated her question, raised the previous day, of whether trade unions local to Réunion and to the Dutch Caribbean Islands would be obliged to attend the European Regional Meeting, rather than the African or American Regional Meeting, if it were the nationality of the responsible State, rather than their geographical location which took precedence. Clearly, the local actors should participate in the region to which they were local. This was a legitimate issue, and one which the Office should take the time to solve.
38. The Employer spokesperson again expressed understanding for the position of the Africa group, and noted that the group had left an opening for a solution by admitting that States from outside the region could be invited to Regional Meetings on a case-by-case basis.
39. The Deputy Director-General for Management and Reform stated that the second paragraph of the draft decision including the Africa group's amendment was the operative paragraph, in that it requested the Office to prepare for the 332nd Session a consolidated version of the *Rules for Regional Meetings* based on the guidance provided during the Working Party's discussion. This could include proposals as to how to address the concerns of member States with interests in more than one region as raised in the discussion.
40. On observing the clear Working Party majority in favour of the amendment, I gavelled the draft decision as amended by the Africa group and worded as follows:

Draft decision

41. *The Working Party recommends to the Governing Body that it:*
- (a) *adopts the principle that each member State would be invited as a full Member to only one Regional Meeting with the Governing Body having the discretion of inviting on a case-by-case basis any member State as an observer to other Regional Meetings;*
 - (b) *request the Office to prepare for its consideration at the 332nd Session (March 2018) a consolidated version of the Rules for Regional Meetings and the Introductory note based on the guidance provided during the discussion for adoption and referral to a future session of the Conference for confirmation.*
42. The Government representative of France asked the report of the Working Party to record that the decision adopted was in flat contradiction of the amended text his delegation had tabled. France had already approved the principle that each member State should only be invited as a full member to one Regional Meeting, but had requested that the question of the status of member States invited on a case-by-case basis to other Regional Meetings should be left open for reflection and discussion, as that was the crux of the problem. Observer status, in the case of France and the United Kingdom, did not answer to the needs of the territories for which the countries held responsibilities. His Government acknowledged the necessity of defining the status of Members taking part in Regional Meetings and while it was clear that a majority was in favour of the amendment adopted, the populations in non-metropolitan territories had been let down.