



EIGHTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Report of the Working Party on the Functioning of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference**Oral report of the Chairperson**

1. The Working Party on the Functioning of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference met on 19 March 2010. HE Ambassador Farani Azevêdo was Chairperson, while Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja and Sir Roy Trotman were Employer and Worker spokespersons, respectively.
2. The Working Party had before it a document ¹ on improving the functioning of the Governing Body. The document provided an account of the discussions held by the Working Party at its first meeting in November 2009 as well as the tripartite consultations of 11–12 February 2010 and those of a smaller consultative group that met on 2 March 2010. A draft of the document had been seen and commented on by all groups and the Working Party agreed that it provided an excellent basis for discussion. The method applied for its preparation was a model of cooperation and transparency. The three groups shared the vision of the roles and function of the Governing Body as outlined in Part A of the document. They recognized that the debate was still evolving and that all documents and all proposals put forward during the consultations were still on the table.
3. There was consensus that the point of departure for the reform should continue to be the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and that the aim of any reform should be to increase the Governing Body's ability to fulfil its governance, strategic guidance and standards-related functions effectively. The world had changed since the last Governing Body reform of 1993 and the Organization had to ensure that its governance mechanisms allowed it to be responsive to the challenges of the times.
4. In respect of the two approaches put forward in the document, speakers either favoured the first one, in which the committee structure of the Governing Body was reviewed to improve governance and to ensure that the four strategic objectives were covered, or the second, which articulated a more fundamental reform, or one that combined elements of both approaches. The Working Party acknowledged that the two approaches were not mutually exclusive and that elements from each could indeed be combined to make an effective whole. There was a general feeling that discussion on structure must focus on the

¹ GB.307/WP/GBC/1.

content of meetings. The Workers stressed that any reform of the Governing Body should not compromise the Organization's standard-setting function.

5. As a synthesis between options 1 and 2, a third suggestion was put forward, according to which the work of the Governing Body would be divided under three themes: strategic questions; questions of resources, programming and implementation; and questions concerning legal matters and standard setting. A fourth element could serve to formally adopt decisions and to provide a forum for high-level guests, as the Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization currently did. The Working Party felt that such an approach merited further discussion.
6. All three groups supported the concept of an improved mechanism for setting the agenda of the Governing Body in which the regional coordinators would participate. *As a result of this consensus, the Office will organize advance tripartite consultations with the Employers' and Workers' groups' secretariats and the regional coordinators on the agenda for the next Governing Body session in November 2010.*
7. There was wide agreement that the question of criteria for the classification of documents should be reviewed. Some documents that were submitted "For information" should continue to come before the Governing Body, even if a new classification system would provide a different way of dealing with issues that did not require a decision. There was also wide support for the inclusion in Governing Body documents of an *executive summary* or an *information sheet*, which would indicate the policy, resource and administrative implications of the matters covered and any points for decision.
8. A proposal was made by the Africa group to establish a structure within the Office to provide a greater level of support for the Government group than the current system of liaison through the regional coordinators. Governments supported this proposal. The Employers also favoured the idea and felt that this would enhance tripartism. The Workers also expressed support for such a structure. Its precise form remained to be defined and should be discussed further.
9. All sides felt that there was a need for concrete proposals to be made. The momentum achieved by the Working Party was important and should be maintained but the process should remain one of evolution. The Working Party agreed that the process should be carried forward through as many informal consultations as necessary before the Governing Body session in November 2010. At an initial stage, such consultations would involve the regional coordinators and the secretariats of the Employers' and Workers' groups. Further discussions could take place during the 99th Session (June 2010) of the International Labour Conference, or before.
10. ***The Governing Body may wish to request the Office to apply tripartite consultation, in an inclusive, transparent and comprehensive manner, to the agenda-setting process and organize informal tripartite consultations for further developing proposals for reform of the functioning of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference to be submitted to the meeting of the Working Party in November 2010.***

Geneva, 23 March 2010.

Point for decision: Paragraph 10.