



## **Reports on credentials**

### **Second report of the Credentials Committee**

#### **Composition of the International Labour Conference: Proportion of women and men in delegations**

1. It is recalled that in its first report to the 101st Session (2012) of the International Labour Conference, the Credentials Committee noted with deep concern that the proportion of women among delegates and advisers had decreased. It deeply regretted that the participation of women in the Conference had again not achieved the target that the United Nations had set in 1990 of increasing the proportion of women in decision- and policy-making bodies to at least 30 per cent. In light of this lack of progress, the Committee requested the Governing Body, through the Conference, to consider concrete measures to improve the situation in this respect (*Provisional Record* No. 4B, 2012).
2. The Governing Body examined the question at its 316th Session (November 2012). Following the discussion, it:
  - (a) invited the Credentials Committee of the International Labour Conference (ILC) to consider more detailed reporting on the proportion of women and men accredited in Conference delegations, taking into account the views expressed in the discussion by the Governing Body at its 316th Session (November 2012);
  - (b) further invited the Credentials Committee to consider contacts with ILC delegations with consistently low female participation in order to receive information about the reasons and include the results in its report, with a view to improving the situation;
  - (c) requested the Director-General to send letters after every Conference to Members which have not reached a 30 per cent level of participation of women in ILC delegations, and to periodically report to the Governing Body on any obstacles encountered, as well as any measures taken to achieve gender parity;
  - (d) invited the Office to continue to collect relevant information and encourage and give assistance to concrete measures to be taken by governments, employers' and workers' organizations with a view to achieving gender parity in delegations to ILO meetings.
3. The Credentials Committee considered the invitations directed to it under points (a) and (b) and decided to respond to them in this, separate, report on the proportion of women and men in delegations.

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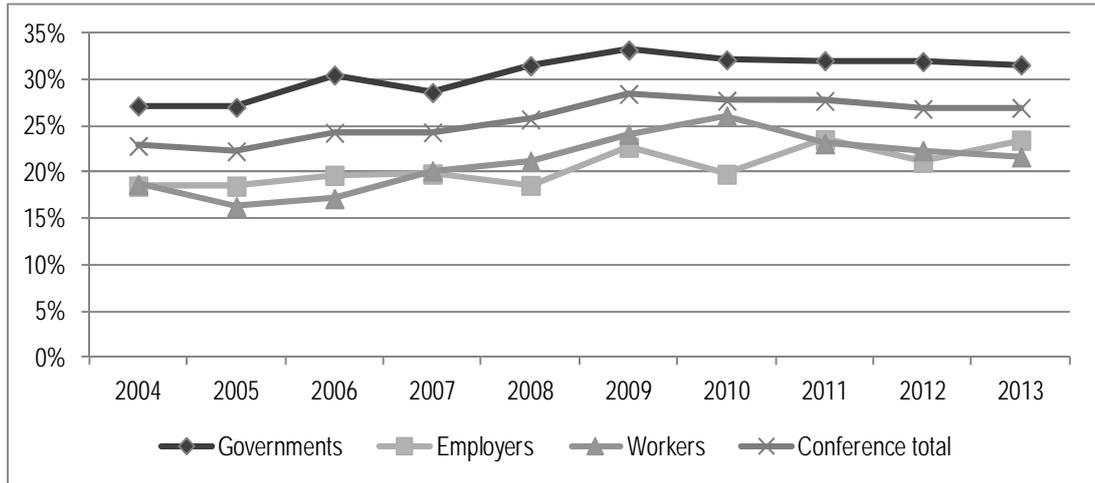
## Reporting on the proportion of women and men accredited in Conference delegations

4. Regarding point (a) of the Governing Body decision, the Committee first considers the proportion of women accredited at the present session of the Conference, as it has been doing for the last 30 years. It notes that as at 6 June 2013, the day following the opening of the Conference, 147 accredited titular delegates are women, representing 22.1 per cent (against 19.7 per cent last year) and 674 accredited advisers (28.4 per cent) are women; this includes advisers also accredited as substitute delegates. A total of 821 women have been accredited to the Conference, which is 27.0 per cent of total delegates (against 26.6 per cent last year).
5. While noting the slight improvement as compared to last year, the Committee regrets that the International Labour Conference still does not meet the target of 30 per cent of women in leadership positions set by the United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution 1990/15,<sup>1</sup> a level that according to the resolution should have already been met by 1995. It recalls the relevant resolutions adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1975, 1981, 1991 and 2009,<sup>2</sup> as well as United Nations General Assembly Resolution 58/142 of 10 February 2004, which urged member States “to promote gender balance for their delegations to United Nations and other international meetings and conferences”. The Committee hopes that progress towards this goal will be more constant in the coming years.
6. The Committee then considered the proportion of female delegates and advisers in the three groups and how this proportion had evolved over the last ten sessions of the Conference (excluding the Maritime Session in 2006), which can be seen in the following table and graph.

	2004 %	2005 %	2006 %	2007 %	2008 %	2009 %	2010 %	2011 %	2012 %	2013 %
Governments	27.2	27.0	30.5	28.6	31.5	33.2	32.1	32.1	32.0	31.6
Employers	18.5	18.5	19.7	19.8	18.6	22.7	19.8	23.5	21.1	23.5
Workers	18.7	16.3	17.2	20.2	21.2	24.1	26.1	23.1	22.3	21.7
<b>ILC total</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>24.3</b>	<b>24.3</b>	<b>25.7</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>26.9</b>	<b>27.0</b>

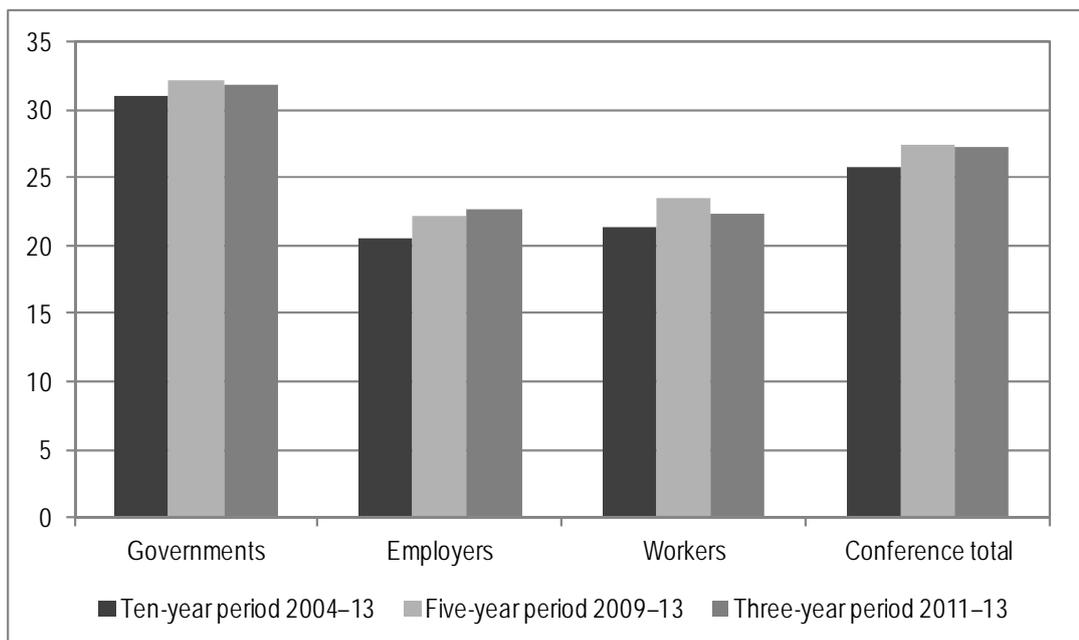
<sup>1</sup> ECOSOC: Resolution 1990/15 of 24 May 1990, Recommendations and conclusions arising from the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000, Annex, Recommendation VI.

<sup>2</sup> ILO: Resolution concerning a plan of action with a view to promoting equality of opportunity and treatment for women workers, 1975; resolution concerning the participation of women in ILO meetings, 1981; resolution concerning ILO action for women workers, 1991; and resolution concerning gender equality at the heart of decent work, 2009 (see paragraph 55(c)).



7. The Committee notes that the proportion of women in the delegations peaked in 2009 when the 98th Session of the Conference had before it an agenda item entitled “Gender equality at the heart of decent work”. While this could be considered to reflect compliance with article 3, paragraph 2, of the ILO Constitution, which provides that: “When questions specially affecting women are to be considered by the Conference, one at least of the advisers should be a woman”, it is not in line with the current understanding of this provision which emphasizes that all questions on the agenda affect both men and women.
8. In order to identify possible general trends, the Committee also examined the average proportion of women in the Government, Employers’ and Workers’ delegations, over the last ten, five and three years, which is represented in the following table and graph.

	Ten-year period 2004–13	Five-year period 2009–13	Three-year period 2011–13
Governments	31.0	32.2	31.9
Employers	20.6	22.1	22.7
Workers	21.4	23.5	22.4
Conference total	25.8	27.4	27.2



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9. While the comparison between the ten-year and the five-year period shows a positive trend, the Committee notes a slight backward trend for the three-year period that may, again, be largely due to the identified peak in female participation at the 98th Session (2009) of the Conference.

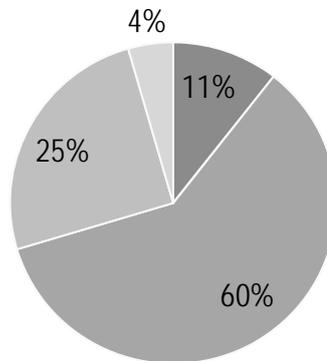
### **Conference delegations with consistently low female participation**

10. With regard to point (b) of the Governing Body decision, the Committee considered writing to delegations with consistently low female participation to request information about the reasons for it, but eventually refrained from taking such action for the following reasons. It noted that contacting only governments would in many cases not be appropriate as it was the independent responsibility of employers and workers to take into account gender criteria when composing their own delegations. Moreover, it considered that receiving and, in particular, examining, such information would go beyond its mandate regarding gender questions, which is limited to collecting and commenting on numerical information on the composition of the Conference regarding the proportion of women and men.
11. The Committee also considered that the inquiries that will be carried out by the Director-General of the ILO in accordance with point (b) of the Governing Body decision will yield information on substantially the same questions, which will likely be more detailed and reliable as governments will have time to consult with employers' and workers' organizations and, as necessary, with other government departments when preparing their replies.
12. The Committee nevertheless examined criteria to determine the Members which could be considered to have "delegations with consistently low female participation". The following graphs show the percentage of delegations, which on average included less than 10 per cent, 10 to 30 per cent, 30 to 50 per cent, and over 50 per cent of women over the last ten, five and three years.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The figures are presented clockwise from the top, starting with less than 10 per cent.

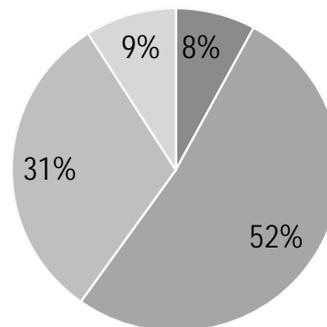
**Percentage of women in delegations  
Ten-year average (period 2004–13)**

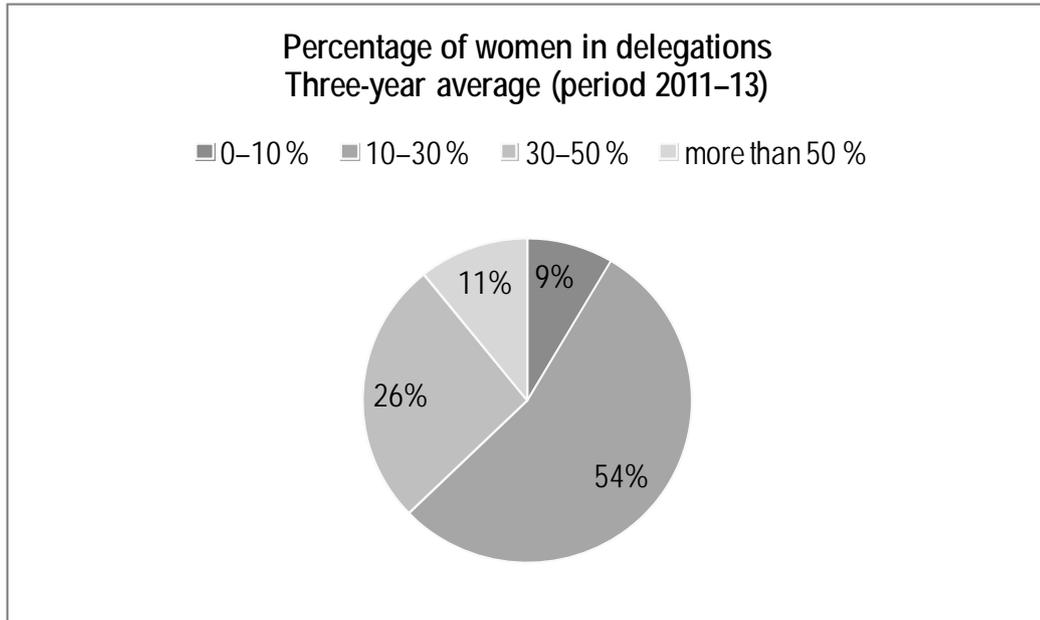
■ 0–10 %   ■ 10–30 %   ■ 30–50 %   ■ more than 50 %



**Percentage of women in delegations  
Five-year average (period 2009–13)**

■ 0–10 %   ■ 10–30 %   ■ 30–50 %   ■ more than 50 %





- 13.** The Committee notes that while the five-year average values are again marked by the 2009 peak, the comparison between the ten-year and the three-year period shows that the overall trend goes in the right direction. In particular, the proportion of delegations in which female participation remains under 30 per cent and which will thus receive letters from the Director-General after the Conference in accordance with point (c) of the Governing Body decision reproduced in paragraph 2 above has decreased from 71 per cent for the last ten years to 63 per cent for the last three years.
- 14.** The Committee believes that it is not for it to further analyse the data presented in this report as it is not within its mandate to make any policy recommendations to Members on how to address the continued imbalance between women and men in many delegations. It considers that it provided the contribution it could make to the question by submitting this report and it hopes that this report will facilitate discussions in the competent policy-making bodies of the ILO.

Geneva, 17 June 2013

*(Signed)* Mothusi B.R. Palai  
Chairperson

Edward E. Potter

Yves Veyrier

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## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Reports on credentials</i>	
Second report of the Credentials Committee .....	1
Composition of the International Labour Conference: Proportion of women and men in delegations.....	1
Reporting on the proportion of women and men accredited in Conference delegations .....	2
Conference delegations with consistently low female participation.....	4

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