



Governing Body

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

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FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Functioning of the International Labour Conference: Analysis of the 107th Session (2018)

1. This document reviews the arrangements implemented at the 107th Session of the Conference and explores further areas where improvements could be considered, having regard to the comments and feedback received from constituents, including during the 333rd Session (June 2018) of the Governing Body. ¹ It also contains preliminary ideas on whether particular adjustments should be made in certain respects for the 108th Session of the Conference in 2019, taking into account the special nature and format of the Centenary Conference.
2. The 107th Session (2018) was the fourth Conference working within the two-week format, but the first in that format to have a standard-setting item comprising two possible instruments: a Convention and a Recommendation. Noting the views expressed by several groups that the two-week format is reaching the limits of what is acceptable in terms of working hours and health and safety considerations for delegates and staff alike, and the fact that the dates have already been fixed for the Centenary Conference in 2019 and 2020, ² the Office could undertake at a later stage a review on the pros and cons, feasibility and implications of a two-week Conference spread over three weeks, with two weekends in between.

I. Conference preparations and logistics

I.1. Preparatory processes

3. The Office will continue to disseminate information about the programme, content, procedures and arrangements for the Conference as early and as widely as possible, through the Conference website, information sessions and a more proactive approach with regional

¹ [GB.333/PV](#), paras 17–48.

² [GB.333/INS/9](#), part II.

and other groups, as well as with the designated officers of the Conference and its committees.

4. The importance of the **consultation process** to prepare the discussions in technical committees has been highlighted, especially in the context of a shortened duration, with less time available during the Conference for informal contacts or negotiations. The format of those consultations, which involve usually the Geneva-based Consultative Group, could be clarified when there is a need to enlarge their composition, as was the case twice between the first and second discussions of standard-setting items, in 2015 and in 2017. This will be particularly important for 2019 with respect to the second discussion of the standard-setting item on violence and harassment at work, in view of the fact that the Committee could not finalize consideration of all paragraphs of the proposed conclusions during the first discussion in 2018.
5. Efforts will be pursued with the regional coordinators and with the secretariats of the Employers' and Workers' groups to ensure **early nominations of committee officers** so that they can be finalized during the Governing Body spring session. Early identification of chairpersons for the Conference committees is critical for the preparatory work carried out in the months preceding the Conference, including where necessary clarifications about the profile and skills required, and training on Conference procedures and practices.
6. In view of the difficulties experienced both in 2017 and 2018 with some nominations for committee chairpersons, the Government group may wish to review its internal arrangements regarding annual geographical rotation of officers' positions. Better coordination with the Employers' and Workers' groups on the nominations is also necessary to ensure, to the extent possible, more regional diversity between the officers of certain committees. Such coordination could also aim to ensure, to the extent possible, that the three officers of each committee have a common working language; if required the Office will continue to provide the necessary support to facilitate the communication flow between them.
7. Several groups have also called for better training of staff and delegates in Conference procedures, tools and practices, through the use of seminars, information sessions and user-friendly manuals and tutorials available before the Conference starts.

I.2. New technologies

8. The increasing use of technology has contributed to reducing document production and facilitating faster and more accurate access to information, in particular through the Conference App, more comprehensive websites dedicated to each committee, and the screens available in common areas of the Conference premises.
9. In 2018, 1,500 participants, out of the 3,000 delegates and advisers registered at the Conference, used the App. In view of the current usage, the Office will continue printing reasonable numbers of in-session documents. Once the majority of participants are equipped with mobile devices, a further step for consideration would be for the App to replace the paper distribution of the *Daily Bulletin* and some other Conference in-session documents.
10. Consideration is being given to other improvements, such as the online submission of amendments in committees, while keeping the necessary interaction with the Committees' secretariats before the amendments are verified, sequenced and distributed. It is intended to trial a new system in 2019, at least for the standard-setting committee, in the hope that it will reduce significantly the process time and effort for the production of the trilingual sets of amendments.

11. It is also envisaged to refine the online registration in committees introduced in 2018 for the Government group, and extend it to the Employers' and Workers' groups in order to continue promoting and facilitating early registration in committees.

I.3. Side events

12. The policy of limiting the number of side events included in the official programme of work of the Conference, applied since the introduction of the two-week format in 2015, was again strictly observed in 2018, with only two approved side events held during the lunch break: an information session on the work of the Global Commission on the Future of Work on Wednesday 30 May and a ceremony for the World Day against Child Labour on Monday, 4 June.
13. As regards events organized by Conference participants themselves (tripartite constituents, like-minded groups, international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, etc.), the Office will continue to provide logistical support only to the extent that it does not detract from its capacity to service the official programme of meetings of the groups, the plenary and committees.

I.4. Conference attendance and room capacity

14. In 2018, the number of Conference participants remained very high, with over 6,400 accredited persons, of whom 5,235 registered (4,578 from national delegations and 657 from observer delegations from non-member States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, etc.). Conference participants in national delegations without an institutional role (for example, persons accompanying Ministers, other persons attending the Conference, etc.), represented close to 1,500 persons, or 31 per cent of all registered participants from member States (27 per cent in the case of Government delegations, 19 per cent in Employers' delegations and 43 per cent in Workers' delegations).
15. Concerns have again been voiced in 2018 about the limited capacity of certain meeting rooms to accommodate the number of participants interested in the proceedings of the Conference, such as the Assembly Hall during the opening ceremony, the Governing Body room during many sittings of the Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS), and some sittings of technical committees, in particular the standard-setting committee on violence and harassment.
16. In 2018, the Office increased the rooms where those well-attended sittings were broadcast (Room XVI in addition to Concordia I for the opening ceremony, and Room II for the CAS), and a differentiated badge system was implemented with preferential access to participants with institutional responsibilities at the Conference. However the Assembly Hall capacity remained a challenge and a matter of concern in terms of security, especially during the opening ceremony. Indeed, while the capacity of the Assembly Hall ground floor and lateral galleries is 1,500 seats, distributed badges giving access to those areas exceeded 3,500. With respect to attendance in committees, the differentiated badge system was helpful in the CAS and in the standard-setting committee. There were no difficulties with room capacity in relation to the general discussion and recurrent discussion committees.
17. The situation in plenary might be more acute during the Centenary Conference, both during the opening ceremony and in any of the special sittings that might take place with heads of State or Government. The major difficulty with the differentiated badge system is the number of persons entitled to preferential badges, currently Ministers attending the Conference, delegates, substitute delegates, advisers and persons appointed in accordance

with article 2(3)(i) of the Standing Orders of the Conference. In large tripartite delegations, there could be as many as 70 persons in those capacities, whereas the maximum capacity per national delegation in the Assembly Hall is eight persons.

18. A possible solution would be to implement a dual badge system for some sittings, whereby access to the Assembly Hall would be limited to those participants holding both a special badge and their normal Conference badge. Eight transferable badges could be distributed upon registration to the top four persons in the Government delegation list, and two to each of the persons appearing on top of the Employers' and Workers' delegations of each country (i.e. the delegate and the first substitute delegate or adviser).
19. Lastly, a solution has to be found to the overlap between the Workers' group meeting and the plenary of one of the technical committees, for which they share the same meeting room; as a result, members of other groups cannot access the meeting room until the Workers' group has finished its proceedings. At the same time, it is important for the committee plenary to start on time. In this regard, a five–ten-minute gap between the end of group meetings and the start of the committees could be considered, so as to allow for the proper flow of participants and more realistic starting times.

I.5. Logistics

20. Concerns regarding catering and transport availability, as well as security and safety and health considerations, have grown exponentially with more frequent occurrences of late evening and night sittings in almost all committees; in the most severe case, the drafting committee of the standard-setting committee, which only meets after the committee adjourns, often at very late hours.
21. In 2018, the ILO negotiated with the service provider extended opening hours of the Serpent bar in Building E at the *Palais* every day until 8.15 p.m. instead of 5.15 p.m., with a larger choice of snacks. However, the turnover was clearly insufficient to cover the extra cost. At the ILO, the Delegates' bar at R3 remained open during all CAS sittings.
22. The availability of after-hours catering services is dependent on the commercial considerations of the external service provider. Late opening hours require additional staff or the payment of overtime, and the guarantee that a minimum business volume will be achieved. Two conditions would therefore need to be met for the service provider to expand, as requested, its working hours and catering choices: a minimum period of notice (from half a day for sandwiches and other light snacks, to 24 hours in the case of wider options, such as salad buffet or a basic choice of one or two cooked dishes), and the assurance of a minimum turnover. While these conditions seem to pose no problem with the CAS at the ILO building in view of its regular working hours, they are not met in the current organization of technical committees' work at the *Palais*, where the need for late sittings is not known till the last moment, and where the use of evening catering services is unpredictable and very uneven.
23. Similarly, the availability of public transport after midnight could only be considered if the ILO could secure a sufficient volume of users for a selected number of itineraries. It is difficult to know, however, how many delegates use public transport, let alone the place of their accommodation.
24. Two solutions could address the concerns raised. The first one would be to have the ILO absorb all or part of the cost of additional catering and transport facilities for any late sittings. With respect to catering, it could thus be envisaged to plan a basic dinner buffet service open to all committee participants, the Office having to cover the difference between the minimum

sales volume negotiated with the service provider and the actual sales.³ In the case of transport facilities, the Office could for instance arrange shuttle services to the train station in Geneva from where night public transport departs. If deemed appropriate, the Office could provide various cost estimates depending on the level of service provided and whether the service would be covered fully or partly by the ILO or by Conference participants.

25. A second solution, suggested at the Governing Body in June, would be to set an end time for all committees at 10 p.m., with a break between the afternoon and evening sittings during which a more varied catering offer could be available for delegates. Public transport is available until midnight. If the end time was set at 9 p.m., as is the case with the CAS, the availability of catering services could be avoided as delegates could still have dinner options in town. A fixed end time would also be beneficial to the health and well-being of delegates and facilitate improved working arrangements for committee secretariats.
26. The occurrence of late sittings is specific to the plenary of the standard-setting committee and to the drafting groups of the other two technical committees: in 2018, the standard-setting committee had eight evening sittings (between 7 p.m. and up to 10 p.m.) and only one sitting beyond 10 p.m., while both drafting groups of the general discussion and recurrent discussion committees needed evening and night sittings, often beyond midnight; no evening or night sitting was needed for the plenary of the general discussion or recurrent discussion committees. In the case of the CAS, morning and afternoon sittings were longer than those of technical committees, and evening sittings were part of its regular programme of work, but only until 9 p.m., thereby avoiding the need for unplanned night sittings. These figures and practices indicate that an end-time at 9 or 10 p.m. could be implemented without major impact on the overall number of sittings available to committee plenaries. Measures to compensate for the possible elimination of night sittings are discussed in sections III.3 and III.4 below relating to the standard-setting and non-standard-setting committees.
27. An additional advantage to the implementation of strict end times for committees would be better planning and use of the interpretation capacity.
28. In the case of the few members of the drafting committee of the standard-setting committee (ten to 12 persons) who will inevitably have to continue working at night even if the committee were to finish by 9 or 10 p.m., the Office will continue to cover their food and transport costs, while trying to improve the catering options.

II. Conference plenary

II.1. Opening ceremony

29. As part of the continuous Conference simplification and improvement process, some of the Conference opening formalities previously discharged by the Selection Committee, were performed satisfactorily by the Conference itself during its opening ceremony in 2018 (see section III.1 below), together with the adoption of other suspensions to its Standing Orders necessary to implement previously approved Conference reforms. These adjustments were implemented without difficulty and could be pursued in future sessions. It is noted that in the context of the ongoing comprehensive review of the Standing Orders of the Conference,

³ Other organizations using the *Palais* have for instance negotiated with the current caterer a minimum sales volume of CHF8,000 per meal for approximately 400 delegates: the organization having to cover the difference, if any, below such minimum sales volume; if the minimum volume is reached, there is no cost to the Organization.

the necessary modifications have been proposed with regard to article 76 on suspension of a provision of the Standing Orders.

II.2. Discussion of the reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General

- 30.** As recommended by the Governing Body, in 2018 the plenary started consideration of the reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General only on Thursday of the first week, and finished on Wednesday evening of the second week. Ten sittings were devoted to such discussions, with morning sittings of three hours (from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.) and afternoon sittings of four hours (from 2.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.). The number of speakers in 2018 (305) was slightly higher than those in preceding Conferences: 295 in 2017; 294 in 2016; and 299 in 2015.
- 31.** Thanks to better time management in the commencement of the sittings (with delays not exceeding ten minutes), stricter observance of time limits of speeches and a smooth organization of the sequence of speakers in the room, the number of sittings that needed to be extended was relatively limited and for a shorter duration (by 15 minutes or so). Some are, however, of the view that there were significant delays between the approximate time announced in advance to a speaker and the actual time at which the speaker was called to the lectern. The manner in which the five-minute time limit of speeches was implemented varied across the different chairing officers. Better consistency could be achieved with the introduction of new devices, such as a sound reminder that the time is coming to an end before the microphone is cut at the end of the speaking time.
- 32.** Should the number of delegates wishing to take the floor in plenary continue to rise, as could be the case during the Centenary Conference, rather than increasing the number of sittings or the duration of those sittings, consideration could be given to reducing the maximum duration of speeches. By reducing the time-limit to four minutes, five hours of plenary time would be liberated, making it possible to accommodate between 65 and 70 additional speakers. Another time-saving measure which could be explored is to limit Government interventions to strictly one intervention per member State, unless the second intervention is on behalf of a regional group. At present, a Minister can take the floor in addition to one of the Government delegates.
- 33.** A source of concern to several groups was the disturbance caused in the Assembly Hall by some delegations at the end of the interventions of their leaders. This is mainly a matter of self-discipline on the part of each and every delegation and of respect vis-à-vis other speakers, as the intervention of the chairing officer calling the meeting to order is in itself a further interruption of the speaker at the lectern.

II.3. World of Work Summit

- 34.** The Office will continue its efforts towards an earlier preparation of and consultation with the tripartite constituents regarding the format of the World of Work Summit panel and the identification of panellists. In order to retain the interactive and engaging nature of the panel, interventions from the floor should be limited to focused genuine questions rather than lengthy speeches, so as to give more time interaction with the panellists.
- 35.** Concerning the visit of Heads of State and other dignitaries, while the general view throughout the Conference reform process has been that such visits should all be scheduled on day of the Summit, experience in 2018 has shown, with the visit of the Presidents of Ireland and Central African Republic during the Summit, but also with that of the President

of Colombia on Friday, 1 June, that, where necessary, special sittings can exceptionally be organized earlier during the Conference, without disrupting the work of the plenary or committees, while securing a reasonable level of attendance at those special sittings.

II.4. Votes

36. The Conference resorted again in 2018 to the organization of ten votes outside the plenary as a time-saving measure in view of the two-week duration. The votes, taken at the same time as a group vote, concerned the abrogation of six Conventions, the withdrawal of three Recommendations, and the approval of amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC, 2006).
37. The votes could be completed within the announced time frame, most likely due to better outreach to the groups and the fact that the votes were scheduled on a day where all committees and the plenary were in session (it will be recalled that in 2017 a vote organized on Friday of the first week, when two committees were not in session, had to be retaken during the second week of the Conference due to a lack of quorum).
38. At least three votes may be required in 2019 (one on the Programme and Budget for 2020–21, and two on the possible two new instruments on violence and harassment at work). While the vote on the programme and budget could be taken early in the second week, outside the Plenary Hall, the votes on the two new standards cannot be organized before the last day of the Conference. The question arises as to whether these two votes could be organized outside the Plenary Hall in the morning of the second Friday, and the results solemnly announced and displayed at the end of that morning sitting, or whether they should be taken one after the other in the plenary.

II.5. Adoption of committee reports in plenary

39. The reports of the three technical committees (standard-setting, general discussion and recurrent discussion) as well as the reports of the Credentials Committee and the CAS were adopted within the planned schedule in 2018. Some are, however, of the view that the committee report adoption process could be further streamlined and shortened if time-limits are introduced to the speeches from committee officers and other interveners.
40. Experience with the two-week format shows that the last day of the Conference would not be sufficient to adopt all committee reports unless time-limits were imposed or unless one report continues to be submitted and discussed in plenary at the end of the World of Work Summit.

II.6. Provisional Record

41. Since 2014, *Provisional Records* containing the speeches made during the plenary discussion of the reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General have been replaced by audio recordings in the original language of the debate, plus the audio recording of their interpretation in English, French and Spanish; where available, the text file of the original speech has also been web-posted. On demand, the Office provides a translation of any speeches delivered in plenary in any of the working languages of the Conference. *Provisional Records* of all other plenary sittings (opening ceremony, special sittings, World of Work Summit, adoption of committee reports, closing ceremony) continue to be produced after the closure of the Conference in its three official languages.

42. At the request of some members of the Governing Body, the Office has made provisions for the reintroduction in 2018 of a written record of the discussion of these reports in the form of lightly edited transcriptions of the speeches as delivered or interpreted in English, French and Spanish. The result of those transcriptions is for the time being available at: www.ilo.org/ilc107/transcript. If the Governing Body is of the view that the transcriptions serve the purpose for which their reintroduction was requested (the possibility of making a full text search of themes, names, countries, etc.), and that they can be made available in their current form, they could be integrated in the compilation of all *Records of Proceedings* pertaining to the last session of the Conference in a single file available on the public website.
43. Should the Governing Body consider that a more formal, elaborate version of the *Provisional Record* is required for these speeches (such as a professional translation into English, French and Spanish of the source language of the speech), resources would have to be reallocated to cover the equivalent of some 24 months of editing, translation, proofreading and formatting work (approximately US\$350,000–400,000).

III. Conference committees

III.1. Selection Committee and Finance Committee

44. For the first time in 2018 some of the opening formalities under the Selection Committee's purview (the setting of the closing date for the registration of speakers in plenary, suggestions to facilitate the work of the Conference and its committees, or invitations to international non-governmental organizations to participate in committees) were discharged on a trial basis by the Conference during its opening ceremony. This trial has proved conclusive and should be retained for future sessions.
45. The Selection Committee was nevertheless convened in 2018 to consider a number of issues for whose discussion there was no other forum at the Conference, namely the procedures for the proposed abrogation or withdrawal of nine international labour standards, the amendment to the MLC, 2006, and approval of the revised *Rules for Regional Meetings*.
46. For the second consecutive year, the Finance Committee followed the same procedure for the adoption of its report as all three technical committees. It is therefore proposed to consolidate the principle whereby committee reports (other than that of the CAS and the Credentials Committee) can be submitted after their approval by the officers of the committee directly to the plenary for adoption, subject to any corrections made to them by committee members within the deadline of one week after the closure of the Conference.
47. Similarly, it is proposed to consolidate the practice introduced in 2018 in respect of the Selection and Finance Committees consisting of making their working documents (and any related *Provisional Record*) available on dedicated committee web pages similar to those of technical committees: prior to 2018, working documents were distributed electronically through the regional coordinators and made available in print form in the room at the time of the committee meeting. The early availability of those working documents to all members of the committee and easier access to them have no doubt contributed to the efficiency of the work of these two committees: both were indeed able to deal with their respective agendas in sittings of less than one hour.
48. Attendance at these two committees was noticeably low: less than ten member States were present at each committee. The question therefore arises as to whether consideration could be given, in the context of the comprehensive review of the Standing Orders of the Conference, to a further simplification of procedures: the Conference could delegate to a

limited tripartite group the mandate to review any routine, financial and administrative matters (or any other non-controversial matter such as those reviewed by the Selection Committee in 2018), thereby limiting the convocation of either of those two committees to situations requiring more in-depth discussion, as well as in any case where the tripartite group would not be in agreement. The tripartite committee could, for instance, be similar in composition to the Governing Body Screening Group.

III.2. Committee on the Application of Standards

49. The three groups agreed once again that the effective implementation of the informal tripartite consultations on the working methods of the CAS had produced excellent results and enabled the CAS to fully discharge its duties and to lead a meaningful and results-oriented tripartite dialogue. Strong time management and the adoption of clear and focused conclusions were particularly appreciated. Clear time limits applied through the use of an electronic board allowed participants to know the number and names of speakers, thereby facilitating an orderly discussion. The informal tripartite working group on the working methods of the CAS was encouraged to continue discussions to further improve the Committee's functioning. Due to the limited seating available in the Committee's room, the Office was asked to continue considering improvements in seating arrangements for the Governments.

III.3. Standard-setting committee

50. All groups coincide on the view that the standard-setting committee in 2018 stretched the limits of a two-week Conference and called for urgent adjustments and corrective measures in order to ensure that in its second discussion in 2019 it will be able to conclude its work.
51. Some of the measures necessary to ensure a smoother operation of technical committees in general, and the standard-setting committee in particular, have been outlined in preceding sections of this paper, namely through more intense and extensive consultations before the Conference, better preparation of members of the committee in its working methods, a more strategic use of amendments, stricter time management of starting times and possible breaks, improved management of the debates through recourse to working groups or parallel discussions, etc.
52. Even if all these measures are put in place successfully, it is still felt that the time available to the committee during a second discussion might not be sufficient to conclude its work, especially if, as requested by many, late sittings are to be avoided. Some ideas have been put forward:
- Reduce the general debate during the second discussion to half a day on Monday of the first week: this might require the introduction of time-limits for interventions, including the overall time available for interventions from observers; early consultations should also contribute to a better understanding of the positions of the groups between themselves and facilitate discussions and negotiations before the Conference starts.
 - Earlier start for the submission of amendments during the second discussion as from the opening day of the Conference; this could be possible only if the groups, including regional groups, are willing to hold preparatory committee meetings before the Conference or in the morning of the opening day.
 - Earlier start of the discussion of amendments as from Tuesday morning of the first week and/or submission of amendments on larger portions of the draft text.

- Tighter chairing of committee discussions (for example, no recourse to suspensions for group consultations or bipartite negotiations during the sitting, which could be deferred to lunch or evening breaks).
- Provide for the committee to finish its work on Thursday of the second week, rather than on Wednesday; this would imply that only the proposed instruments would be submitted to the plenary for adoption in the Conference working languages. The draft report of the committee (its summary of proceedings) would have to be finalized (in consultation with the officers) and web-posted after the Conference closure, with an extended deadline for members of the committee to introduce corrections to their own interventions.

53. Taken together, these measures in a second-year discussion could give the Committee four additional sittings to discuss amendments, for a total of 19 morning and afternoon regular sittings. In 2018, the standard-setting committee held 27 sittings: 17 regular morning and afternoon sittings, eight evening sittings (between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m.) and two night sittings (between 10 p.m. and midnight). With these additional sittings, if the standard-setting committee was to follow the CAS programme of work, with morning, afternoon and evening sittings almost every day, it could have 26 or 27 sittings available, with no need for night sittings.

III.4. Non-standard-setting committees

54. Both the recurrent discussion committee and the general discussion committee concluded their business within the time allotted to them following the traditional format and sequence of a general debate in committee plenary, consideration of draft conclusions in a drafting group of limited membership, and the consideration again in committee plenary of amendments submitted to the conclusions issued from the drafting group.

55. While some constituents continue calling for the introduction of time-limits for interventions in the general debate, experience with the two committees in 2018 has shown that such limitations were not necessary. In the case of the recurrent discussion committee, the general debate even finished half a day before schedule; as a result, the drafting group could start earlier. However time management should be overall improved so as to ensure a timely start of sittings, and to reduce the number and length of interruptions of committee plenary sittings. Instead, it has been suggested that when debates reach an impasse or informal consultations are required to untangle an issue, committees should move to a different subject and appoint smaller working groups to meet in parallel to find solutions. Where breaks are unavoidable, they should be announced, including their duration.

56. The request for focused, concise and action-oriented outcomes has also been reiterated, as has the need for more in-depth training of officers and the groups in general about both the content of the discussions and Conference procedures and practices. The request has also been made for more systematic meetings of the officers of the committees. It is felt that some deadlocks faced in the general discussion committee could have been avoided through better understanding of the issues under consideration, the format of the discussions and its purpose, and more fluid communication between and within the groups.

57. With respect to the late sittings of the drafting groups, strict end times at 10 p.m. could also be introduced. If combined with shorter general debates scheduled to finish on Wednesday afternoon of the first week, drafting groups could have an additional full day or at least half a day at its disposal to compensate for possible night sittings. The introduction of some of the other improvements referred to above should also contribute to shortening the duration of the sittings of drafting groups.

58. In view of recent discussions concerning the composition of the drafting groups of the general and recurrent discussion committees and the right to take part in their proceedings, consideration could also be given to the codification of their membership and working methods.

III.5. Credentials Committee

59. For the first time, in 2018, the Credentials Committee and its secretariat were relocated at the ILO headquarters building on a trial basis. This provided a calmer working environment for Committee members and ILO staff as they were physically separated from the accreditation and registration support services. This new arrangement was largely seen as positive and is proposed to be continued in future sessions.
60. Regarding the caseload of the Credentials Committee, the upward trend experienced in 2017, with 40 cases, compared to an average of 25 per year, was confirmed in 2018, which also experienced a total of 40 monitoring cases, objections and complaints. While the Committee continues to invite the early filing of objections and complaints, as well as that the Standing Orders be reviewed so as to permit it to be automatically seized of cases involving incomplete delegations, such work can only be advanced to the extent that national tripartite delegations are accredited in a timely manner (i.e., three weeks before the commencement of the session). In this regard, the number of member States that were accredited in a timely manner in 2018 was 64 per cent (103 out of a total 159). For 2017, 67 per cent of member States were timely accredited (112 out of a total 168) and 50.3 per cent in 2016 (85 out of a total 169). While there has been an increase as the online accreditation system has gained more visibility and visa requirements have tightened, an improved preparatory process (see paragraph 3 above) may lead to an even greater number of national tripartite delegations being accredited on time.
61. Despite the higher number of objections and complaints, no further adjustment in time limits for their filing is proposed based on the feedback of the Employers' and Workers' groups as the time for their preparation during the Conference, with other responsibilities, is already extremely limited.
62. The handling of the high volume of cases was facilitated in so far as the members of the Credentials Committee were able to commence their work immediately, as they had previously served as members during the preceding session of the Conference. In addition, no emergency proceedings or hearings were held. This demonstrates the significant advantage of continuity in membership of the Committee which would warrant consideration by the Government group of the possibility of exempting the Credentials Committee from the geographical rotation agreement in place for the appointment of chairpersons of standing committees mentioned in section I.1 above.
63. The Office will pursue its efforts to further simplify and facilitate through IT tools the accreditation of delegations and the continued publication in real time of information relating to the composition and registration of delegations.

Draft decision

64. *Following the discussion and lessons learned from the 107th Session of the Conference (June 2018), the Working Party on the Functioning of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference recommends that the Governing Body:*

- (a) continue to explore further improvements taking into account the discussion in the Working Party;*
- (b) request the Director-General to prepare for its consideration at the 335th Session (March 2019) a detailed plan of work for the 108th Session of the Conference (June 2019) based on a two-week format;*
- (c) request the Director-General to take into account the discussion of the Working Party in developing proposals for the plan of work of future sessions of the Conference.*