



Governing Body

344th Session, Geneva, March 2022

Institutional Section

INS

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Third item on the agenda

Agenda of the International Labour Conference

Arrangements for the 110th Session of the Conference (2022)

Purpose of the document

To finalize the programme of work and arrangements specific to the 110th Session of the Conference (see the draft decision in paragraph 27).

Relevant strategic objective: All four strategic objectives.

Main relevant outcome: Enabling outcome B: Effective and efficient governance of the Organization.

Policy implications: Ensuring a successful Conference with the effective participation of tripartite constituents.

Legal implications: Some arrangements will require the suspension of specific provisions of the Standing Orders.

Financial implications: Possible additional costs linked to the specific circumstances of this Conference session.

Follow-up action required: Implementation of decisions made by the Governing Body in the preparations leading up to the 110th Session.

Author unit: Official Meetings, Documents and Relations Department (RELMEETINGS).

Related documents: [GB.343/INS/2\(Rev.1\)](#); [GB.344/INS/3/1](#); [GB.344/INS/6](#).

▶ Introduction

1. This document sets out the proposed arrangements for the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference scheduled to be held from Friday, 27 May to Saturday, 11 June 2022, based on the guidance provided by constituents at the tripartite consultations organized on 16 and 24 February 2022.
2. Following the deferral of the 109th Session of the International Labour Conference in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which was subsequently held in 2021 in a virtual format, constituents have emphasized the importance of conducting the 2022 session in a format closely approximating that of a regular session with physical presence.
3. To this end, all efforts have been made to identify the most suitable arrangements that would respond to this request and enable the Conference to effectively complete its business in the current circumstances. The Office faced two major constraints in this process. In addition to the challenges arising from the continuing pandemic, the ILO was informed at a very late stage of an unexpected delay in the renovation work at the Palais des Nations, which has resulted in the unavailability of several rooms already allocated to the ILO for the Conference and a significant reduction in the overall seating capacity.
4. While the Swiss authorities have lifted almost all travel and meeting restrictions, the evolution of the pandemic globally and consequent restrictions on travel remain uncertain or significant in some locations. To ensure participation on equal terms, both for delegates attending in person and for those unable to travel to Geneva due to restrictions in their place of residence, all options presented by the Office at the tripartite consultations provided for remote participation in all aspects of the work of the Conference. The options presented were:
 - (i) a two-week session from 27 May to 11 June comprising two daily sittings, with in-person participation within the capacity of allocated rooms at the Palais des Nations and ILO premises, and remote participation available, operating within normal Geneva working hours;
 - (ii) a session extending beyond two weeks, operating either fully in virtual mode or with some in-person participation combined with remote access, within limited core hours of 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., at UN and ILO premises;
 - (iii) a session split into two parts and working within the core hours as in 2021 (1 p.m. to 4 p.m.), with the first part taking place in May–June, and the second part in an undetermined period in the latter part of 2022;
 - (iv) a two-week Conference at the PALEXPO Congress Centre, with unlimited physical presence, to take place in the second half of July 2022, when these facilities are available.
5. Other options explored were venues at other international organizations in Geneva, in other cities in Switzerland, and at the ILO International Training Centre in Turin. However, these were either unsuited to the needs of the Conference, unavailable on the dates foreseen, or entailed excessive travel and accommodation costs for the Conference secretariat and support staff, in addition to the rental and set-up costs of the venue.
6. The arrangements under option (ii) did not find favour. Option (iii) was rejected as constituents indicated that, generally, they did not wish to repeat the 2021 experience of a two-part Conference session. Option (iv) was also excluded due to financial and scheduling implications.

► Proposed format for the Conference

7. Conducted in a constructive, problem-solving spirit, the informal consultations reached consensus on option (i) – a two-week continuous session (from 27 May to 11 June), at the Palais des Nations and ILO premises, with in-person participation possible up to the maximum capacity of available meeting rooms, remote participation for all meetings, and operating within normal Geneva working hours.
8. This format, with two sittings per day, would allow for sufficient time to discuss all items on the agenda. It would also provide the highest level of flexibility and could be adapted to evolving circumstances. Should the pandemic situation deteriorate before the opening of the Conference, participation could be scaled down to a largely virtual format at no significant additional cost.
9. For the Conference to complete its work within the constraints mentioned, adjustments to its usual programme of work and working methods would be required, without compromising the integrity of its agenda. The proposed format would consist of the following key elements:
 - (a) maximum physical attendance allowed within the capacity of allocated rooms;
 - (b) remote connection available to all accredited participants;
 - (c) committees to hold two daily sittings during Geneva working hours over a two-week period;
 - (d) convening the Conference with a formal opening sitting on Friday, 27 May in a virtual format to allow some preparatory activities to take place and thereby maximizing the time available for the work of the committees from 30 May, as was done in 2021;
 - (e) plenary sittings devoted to the discussion of the reports of the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Governing Body to be fully virtual;
 - (f) a one-day World of Work Summit on Friday, 10 June;
 - (g) no side events, as has been the practice, except for a possible event celebrating the World Day against Child Labour;
 - (h) the post-Conference session of the Governing Body (345th Session) to take place on Monday, 13 June.
10. The items on the agenda of the 110th Session are as follows:

Standing items

- (i) Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General (including the report concerning the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories).
- (ii) Programme and budget and other questions.
- (iii) Information and reports on the application of Conventions and Recommendations.

Items placed on the agenda by the Conference or the Governing Body

- (i) Apprenticeships (standard setting, first discussion).
- (ii) A recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of employment under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

- (iii) Decent work and the social and solidarity economy (general discussion).
 - (iv) Inclusion of safe and healthy working conditions in the ILO's framework of fundamental principles and rights at work through an amendment to paragraph 2 of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998.
11. In addition, the Governing Body is likely to place provisionally on the agenda an item on the approval of amendments to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006), subject to the adoption of any amendments by the Special Tripartite Committee during Part II of its fourth meeting in May 2022.¹ As with the first, second, and third sets of proposed amendments to the Code approved by the Conference at its 2014, 2016 and 2018 sessions respectively, it is suggested that the proposed amendments be referred to the General Affairs Committee (formerly known as the Selection Committee).

Physical and remote attendance

12. Under the exceptional circumstances in which the 110th Session of the Conference will meet, and specifically the significant room capacity constraints prevailing, the Governing Body will need to consider the practical arrangements to be put in place to address the fact that in some cases it is likely that not all delegation members wishing to be physically present in Committee meetings will have the opportunity to do so.
13. The point is illustrated in table 1 below. Two rooms (Rooms XX and XVIII at the Palais) offer the same capacity as has been available to committees in the past and may therefore be presumed to enable full physical participation. The two other rooms in the temporary ILO building provide less space and this will mean that not all representatives registering for the committees meeting in them will be able to participate physically. It should be noted that in the event that the Conference decides to establish a fifth technical committee on the inclusion of safe and healthy working conditions in the framework of fundamental principles and rights at work, one committee may need to work on a fully virtual basis. The availability of rooms for a fifth committee and related group meetings is being explored, but if unsuccessful, one fully virtual committee would be necessary.

► **Table 1. Capacity of the largest meeting rooms available at the Palais des Nations and at the ILO building (as of 4 March 2022)**

	Maximum occupancy without physical distancing *
Palais XX (full face-to-face capacity)	730
Palais XVIII (full face-to-face capacity)	602
ILO GB Temp (Room A) (reduced capacity)	270
ILO II Temp (Room E) (reduced capacity)	140

* Seating capacity would be reduced by approximately 50 per cent if 1.5m distancing measures need to be applied.

14. The main issues for consideration arising from this situation concern:

¹ GB.344/INS/3/1, para.17.

- (a) The allocation of meeting rooms for the different committees and in particular those two committees for which the largest rooms should be reserved.
 - (b) Decision-making processes on who should be able to have access to meeting rooms when demand for physical participation exceeds room capacity. The nature of the decisions concerned and the principle of group autonomy would indicate that it should be for the different groups – Government, Employer and Worker – rather than for the Office, to determine access to rooms and that decisions should respect the 2:1:1 ratio of the respective group representation.
 - (c) Whether there should be any limitation placed on the size of national delegations travelling to Geneva and prior designation of representatives who would participate remotely.
15. The Governing Body is invited to provide guidance on these, and related matters, it being understood that Conference arrangements will be such as to enable participation on an equal footing for those taking part physically and virtually. In the light of that guidance, it is proposed to convene further tripartite consultations in the week of 4 April with a view to communicating final arrangements to constituents by 14 April.

Plenary sittings

16. To enable the Conference to be duly constituted and allow committees to begin their work on Monday, 30 May, the **formal opening sitting** would be held on Friday, 27 May. In accordance with article 3 of the Standing Orders, it would consist of a brief sitting, held virtually, to formally elect the Officers of the Conference, establish the Conference committees, and elect their officers should groups be ready, approve special arrangements and rules of procedure, including any proposed suspension of specific provisions of the Standing Orders and approve the tentative programme of work of the Conference.
17. The **discussion of the reports of the Director-General and of the Chairperson of the Governing Body** would start on Tuesday, 31 May and be held virtually during seven days from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. It is proposed to keep the maximum duration of four minutes for the statements of delegates, as was done at the 109th Session, to be delivered either live or as pre-recorded videos. The suspension of article 14(4) of the Standing Orders – providing for a maximum duration of five minutes – will be accordingly proposed.
18. The **World of Work Summit** would be held on Friday, 10 June, in person and with remote access.
19. The plenary sittings for the **adoption of Committee outcomes** and the **closing ceremony** would be held on Saturday, 11 June with physical presence to the extent allowed by the room capacity limit.

Committees on the agenda

Standing committees

20. The **Finance Committee** would be convened through virtual means on Monday, 30 May. The **Credentials Committee** would be convened in person as required.
21. The **General Affairs Committee** might be convened to consider amendments to the Code of the MLC, 2006, as it was in the 2014, 2016 and 2018 sessions of the Conference. This Committee would also need to be convened if the Conference decided to refer to it the consideration of

► Draft decision

27. The Governing Body:

- (a) decided that the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference should be held from Friday, 27 May to Saturday, 11 June 2022 in the format set out in document GB.344/INS/3/2, with the opening sitting on 27 May to be conducted in a fully virtual format;**
- (b) instructed the Director-General to convene tripartite consultations in the week of 4 April 2022 to finalize the outstanding operational arrangements for the Conference session, in accordance with the guidance provided during its discussion; and**
- (c) requested the Director-General to monitor closely the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and to present any modifications to the proposed format that might be required in the event of a serious deterioration of the situation.**