



Governing Body

329th Session, Geneva, 9–24 March 2017

GB.329/INS/10

Institutional Section

INS

Date: 2 March 2017

Original: English

TENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Review and possible revision of formats and standing orders for meetings

Proposed standing orders for global tripartite meetings

Purpose of the document

This paper contains proposals for the development of procedural rules applicable to all global ILO tripartite meetings. The Governing Body is invited to request the Director-General to convene consultations with a view to the Governing Body adopting standing orders and rules for global tripartite meetings at its 331st Session in November 2017 (see the draft decision in paragraph 14).

Relevant strategic objective: All.

Main relevant outcome/cross-cutting policy driver: Cross-cutting policy driver: social dialogue.

Policy implications: None.

Legal implications: New standing orders for tripartite meetings.

Financial implications: None.

Follow-up action required: None.

Author unit: Office of the Legal Adviser (JUR) and Sectoral Policies Department (SECTOR).

Related documents: GB.326/POL/5; GB.313/POL/4/1(&Corr.); GB.312/POL/5; GB.289/STM/2; and GB.286/STM/1.

Introduction

1. Following consultations with constituents in July 2015, the Governing Body considered, at its 326th Session (March 2016), a document providing an overview of the different formats of ILO meetings, stressing current practices and issues identified as requiring attention, as well as outlining a process through which a revision of the standing orders for these meetings could be conducted. The Governing Body subsequently requested the Office to submit “revised standing orders for meetings for consideration at its 329th Session (March 2017)”.¹
2. This document describes the approach to be followed in preparing a set of uniform standing orders for global tripartite meetings convened by the Governing Body and outlines the major changes and innovations as compared to the existing “Standing Orders for sectoral meetings” adopted by the Governing Body in 1995.²
3. In view of the complexity of this issue and the differing views among constituents it is proposed that the Governing Body notes the content of this paper and requests the Director-General to convene consultations with a view to the Governing Body adopting standing orders and rules at its 331st Session in November 2017.

Purpose and scope of the proposed standing orders for global tripartite meetings

4. The proposed standing orders for global tripartite meetings could substantially draw upon the “Standing Orders for sectoral meetings”. The purpose of this revision would be to provide a set of generic standing orders for all global tripartite meetings convened by the Governing Body to which no other standing orders apply.³ The proposed standing orders would thus cover the current sectoral meetings, including Global Dialogue Forums, tripartite technical meetings and meetings of experts; grouped together in two formats of global tripartite meetings:
 - meetings of experts; and
 - technical meetings.⁴
5. The Governing Body would at all times retain the prerogative to suspend or modify the proposed standing orders for a particular meeting. The rules for technical meetings could be sufficiently general and flexible to fit many different situations. As regards meetings of experts, certain modifications of the general rules could be provided for in the standing orders to reflect their particular nature.

¹ [GB.326/POL/5](#), paras 6 and 14; [GB.326/PV](#), para. 404.

² GB.264/LILS/1.

³ Among the most recent examples of tripartite meetings for which the Governing Body has adopted specific Standing Orders are the meetings of the Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group and of the Special Tripartite Committee established under Article XIII of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006), see <http://www.ilo.org/global/standards/lang--en/index.htm>.

⁴ When addressing sector-specific issues, these formats shall be referred to as “sectoral technical meetings” and “sectoral meetings of experts”.

6. In order to retain a formal statement of current and proposed practices regarding the most common types of global tripartite meetings, that is, technical meetings and meetings of experts, the note on “General characteristics of the meetings”, which precedes the “Standing Orders for sectoral meetings” of 1995, could also be revised. A new introductory note would replace the “Introductory note on the International Labour Organization” and the “General characteristics of the meetings”⁵ and would be published together with the revised standing orders. This introductory note could provide non-binding guidance on current practices and default solutions for a number of practical questions in connection with convening, operating and participating in global tripartite meetings. It would allow keeping the standing orders relatively simple and flexible.

Major changes and innovations

7. The coverage of the proposed standing orders could be extended to a redefined category of “technical meetings” and to “meetings of experts”, which differ in relation to their objectives and composition.
8. Regarding the status of the experts and the criteria for their selection, the proposed standing orders could be based on the provisions of the “Decision concerning the composition of meetings of experts and advisory panels established by the Governing Body”, adopted by the Governing Body in 1970 and included as Annex VIII in the *Compendium of rules applicable to the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*.
9. The particular nature of meetings of experts would require some derogating provisions to accommodate their specific composition and role.
10. The proposed standing orders could also provide for a shorter technical meeting (dialogue forum) to discuss emerging policy issues with a view to adopting consensus points and suggestions for follow-up.
11. The standing orders could cover the following issues:

1. *Scope*

The standing orders could apply to all global tripartite meetings convened by the Governing Body, including sectoral and policy tripartite meetings and meetings of experts. The Governing Body would, at all times, retain the authority to suspend or modify their provisions for any particular meeting. They would not apply to symposia, seminars, workshops and similar meetings approved by the Governing Body.

2. *Agenda and expected results*

The Governing Body would continue to establish the agenda of the meeting and specify which form the results of its proceedings may take. These could include:

- (a) conclusions or other agreed statements giving guidance to the Governing Body and its constituents; or

⁵ These are Parts I and II of the document SM/1996/SO, see http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/1996/96B09_70_engl.pdf.

- (b) a code of practice, guidelines or a similar document containing detailed technical guidance on the matters covered by the agenda, to be subject to authorization by the Governing Body.

3. *Composition*

The standing orders could provide for a predetermined number of representatives from each of the three groups for each category of meeting or provide that the Governing Body could determine the composition when approving each meeting.

With respect to representatives to be nominated by governments, the Governing Body could either:

- (a) decide that all interested governments may participate in the meeting; or
- (b) set a fixed number of governments to be represented; and
- (c) for meetings of experts, approve the list of member States whose governments are to be invited and those whose governments are to be included in a reserve list.

The Employers' and Workers' representatives could be appointed respectively by the Employers' and Workers' groups of the Governing Body.

For meetings of experts, the experts would serve in their personal capacity, not as representatives of any government, group, or other interest. The standing orders could require that the appointment of experts be guided by the need to secure the highest possible level of qualifications as well as geographical and gender balance.

4. *Advisers, substitute representatives*

The standing orders could provide that representatives may be accompanied by advisers, and appoint substitutes, and the conditions under which they participate in a meeting.

5. *Officers of the meeting*

The standing orders would provide for the appointment of the chairperson and vice-chairpersons for each meeting. This could provide for either appointment of the chairperson by the meeting, or the selection by the Office of a suitably qualified person, depending on the nature of the meeting.

6. *Duties of the officers*

The standing orders would outline the duties of the officers in the conduct and management of the meeting.

7. *Admission to the sittings*

While generally ILO meetings are open to the public, the standing orders could outline the circumstances and provisions for holding a meeting or part of a meeting in closed session.

8. *Right to take part in the work of the meeting*

The standing orders could outline the speaking and other participation rights of:

- representatives to the meetings;

- advisers;
- observers from ILO member States who are not representatives to the meetings;
- invited representatives from other international organizations or non-governmental international organizations;
- representatives of the Office;
- representatives of the Employers' and Workers' secretariats; and
- other persons.

9. *Meeting procedure*

The standing orders would outline the provisions for reaching consensus and the dealing with motions, amendments, resolutions, adoption of decisions and voting.

10. *Subsidiary bodies*

The standing orders could provide for the meeting to establish subsidiary bodies, for example drafting committees, including the role, procedure and composition of such bodies.

11. *Languages*

The standing orders would provide for the use of the ILO official languages, and working languages where relevant, and the provision of interpretation services.

12. *Record of proceedings*

The standing orders would provide for the nature and form of the record of proceedings, the procedures for their amendment and publication and their transmission to the Governing Body.

12. The concept of decision-making by consensus could also be codified in the standing orders in line with the definition of consensus contained in paragraph 46 of the Introductory note to the Standing Orders of the Governing Body.

13. The proposed introductory note could also contain indications on:

- the typical composition of meetings of experts, technical meetings, including dialogue forums;
- the typical length of meetings; and
- the typical length of reports to be produced for technical meetings, including dialogue forums.

Draft decision

14. ***The Governing Body requests the Director-General to take account of its guidance in the revision of the Standing Orders for tripartite global meetings and the Introductory note, and to convene consultations with a view to presenting standing orders and rules to the Governing Body for adoption at its 331st Session in November 2017.***