



Governing Body

319th Session, Geneva, 16–31 October 2013

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

WP/GBC

FOR INFORMATION

Review of the implementation of the Governing Body reform: Proposed issues for consideration

Summary: This document contains a list of proposed issues/questions to guide the Office in the preparation of an in-depth analysis of the Governing Body reform to be discussed in March 2014. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but to stimulate discussion and allow the members of the Governing Body to contribute to its final formulation.

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Related document: GB.310/9/1.

Background

1. Further to the recommendation of the Working Party on the Functioning of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference (WP/GBC), at its 310th Session (March 2011), the Governing Body adopted a reform package¹ and decided that the Governing Body should start to function in its new format on a trial basis at its 312th Session (November 2011).
2. As emphasized by the Working Party, no reform package could be expected to operate perfectly and it was acknowledged at that time that further adjustments might be required. For that reason, the Governing Body decided that after a period of implementation, the situation would be reviewed in order to introduce any necessary adaptations. It was agreed that the implementation of the reform package would be reviewed by the Governing Body in 2013.
3. In the process leading to the establishment of the agenda of the 319th Session (October 2013), the members of the Screening Group requested the Office to prepare, for this session, an information paper containing a list of issues/questions to guide the review, with a view to an in-depth analysis in March 2014. The Office was requested to undertake informal consultations on the drafting of those issues/questions.
4. The attached list of questions is therefore not intended to be exhaustive but to stimulate discussion and allow the members of the Geneva-based consultative group,² to contribute to its final formulation.
5. The box below summarizes the guiding principles of the Governing Body reform and the four main pillars of the reform package adopted in March 2011.
6. While the objective of this review is to consider the need for further improvements, it is worth noting that the overall positive impact of this reform has been emphasized by the three groups of constituents, in particular regarding the following points:
 - full involvement of all Governing Body members in the deliberations and decision-making process in the context of a continuous plenary;
 - stronger involvement of all parties in the agenda-setting process;
 - enhanced transparency through systematic informal consultations and follow-up to Governing Body decisions;
 - better focus on decision-making and governance functions of the Governing Body; and
 - improved communication, allowing the three groups to exchange views and arrive at common positions during the sessions.

¹ GB.310/9/1.

² The Geneva-based Consultative Group is composed of representatives of the secretariats of the Employers' and Workers' groups, a representative of the Chairperson of the Government group and the Regional Coordinators.

Guiding principles of the reform

- Within the framework of the ILO Constitution and a shared vision regarding the role and functions of the Governing Body the reform package was guided by the following principles:
 - focusing on supervision and constituent-led governance of the Office while avoiding micromanagement;
 - ensuring full tripartite participation through the active engagement of all three groups;
 - giving priority to policy- and decision-making debates, including follow-up of Governing Body and Conference decisions;
 - alignment with the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization; and
 - maintaining appropriate space for high-level and strategic discussions.
- On this basis, the reform was composed of four main pillars:
 - an improved agenda-setting mechanism;
 - a new Governing Body meeting structure;
 - enhanced transparency and Office support to the tripartite constituents; and
 - better document presentation and time management.

List of possible issues for consideration

(This list is purely indicative and intended to assist consideration of possible lines of discussion)

- Has the reform met its objectives?
 - Has the reform enhanced policy debate in the Governing Body?
 - Has the reform allowed constituents to better measure progress towards giving effect to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and its integrated approach?
- Will readjustments be needed to take account of the most recent developments?
 - What will be the impact of recent developments, such as ILO internal reform, areas of critical importance (ACIs) and the future Strategic Policy Framework, on the reform of the Governing Body?
- How could the agenda-setting mechanism be improved?
 - Could the Office's role in the establishment of the preliminary list of agenda item proposals be improved so as to provide appropriate guidance to the members of the Screening Group?
 - How should agenda items be distributed between the sections/segments in order to ensure a governance-oriented approach and effective use of the respective mandates of various segments and sections?
 - Should we seek a better balance between the four strategic objectives and/or ACIs within the different segments of the Policy Development Section?
 - How could a more strategic and forward-looking approach be used in the planning of forthcoming sessions of the Governing Body?

- What improvements/changes, if any, would contribute to a better decision-making process by the Screening Group?
- How could time management be improved to ensure a smooth and fluid running of the continuous plenary?
 - What measures could be put in place to ensure the required level of flexibility, should the discussion of an agenda turn out to be shorter or longer than expected?
 - How could the in-session consultation process on possible changes to the programme be improved in order to avoid suspensions or interruptions?
- For pre-session and in-session consultations, how could existing channels be improved or developed to ensure the same degree of involvement of all three groups?
 - Which steps can be taken to ensure that every decision point submitted to the Governing Body (including those proposed through recommendations of the Governing Body Officers) is communicated to Governing Body members early enough to allow consultation within the groups or with capitals?
- Availability of documents
 - The rules provide that all documents prepared by the Office must be made available 15 working days ³ before the opening of each session except for documents arising from meetings taking place immediately before or during the Governing Body session, including its Officers' meetings.
 - How could arrangements for consultations with the Officers of the Governing Body better enable relevant information to be communicated to Governing Body members early enough to allow consultation with capitals or within the groups?
- Other issues which may be considered
 - length, content and format of Governing Body documents;
 - structure/operation of the High-Level Section;
 - timing of Governing Body meetings, for example, October/November;
 - process for provision/consideration of amendments to decision points;
 - paper-smart policies.

Geneva, 8 October 2013

³ Other than programme and budget proposals which require 30 days.