



Governing Body

323rd Session, Geneva, 12–27 March 2015

GB.323/WP/GBC/1(Rev.1)

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

WP/GBC

Date: 19 March 2015

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FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Improving the functioning of the International Labour Conference

Background

1. At its 322nd Session (November 2014), the Governing Body requested the Office: (i) to convene, before March 2015, tripartite consultations on the issues listed in the addendum to document GB.322/WP/GBC/1; and (ii) to finalize for March 2015 a plan of work for the 104th Session (June 2015) of the International Labour Conference, which would take into account the reforms agreed by the Working Party.¹
2. A number of reforms were trialed in June 2014 and reviewed by the Governing Body in November 2014. Further to the recommendations of its Working Party, the Governing Body considered that they should be retained and further improved, taking into account the following requirements.
 - 2.1. The need to improve the pre-Conference preparatory processes:
 - (a) As in 2014, the communication of the necessary preparatory information will be ensured through the publication of two guides and briefing sessions for the Geneva-based missions. The first guide entitled “Advance information”, sent in January 2015 with the convocation letter, is focused on the Conference agenda, the mandates of the committees and the participation requirements, whereas the second guide to be published in May 2015 will provide information on practical arrangements. The briefing session for the Geneva-based missions is already tentatively scheduled for mid-May and consultations on the reports to be submitted to the Conference have already taken place.
 - (b) The early appointment of the committees’ chairpersons and vice-chairpersons is crucial to ensure that the Office has time to arrange their appropriate training, including by the organization of remote consultations or briefings by videoconferences or conference calls. Early consultations on the tentative plan of work of their respective committees would also allow the Office to make these draft plans of work available on the Web pending their adoption by the relevant committees.

¹ See GB.322/WP/GBC/1 and GB.322/WP/GBC/1(Add.).

- (c) The registration forms, readjusted in the light of the June 2014 experience, will be developed to provide opportunity for delegates to register in advance in the committees. This advance registration process, which was trialled with success in June 2014, should play a critical role at the opening of the Conference. Further to the request made by the Government group in November 2014, its first meeting during the Conference is now planned on Monday, 1 June, from **10.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.**, that is to say, just before the opening sitting of the Conference. As a consequence, most of the registration forms filled by Government delegates will need to reach the Office before the Conference, with the late registrations being received before **10.30 a.m.** on the opening day of the Conference. The registration forms for the Government, Employers' and Workers' delegates will be available on the Web after the March 2015 session of the Governing Body.
- (d) Individual pages for each of the technical committees will be developed on the website of the Conference. The reports as well as any information or material prepared by the Office to facilitate the discussion of the committee will be available on that page. This will include the tentative plan of work of the committee (watermarked until its formal approval by the committee), the form to be used to submit amendments, the contact email address of the committee, etc.

2.2. The reforms agreed for the following in-session processes:

- (a) **Shortening of the opening sitting:** In accordance with the request made by the Governing Body to further reduce the duration of the opening sitting to 90 minutes as a maximum, the proposed suspensions to the provisions of the Standing Orders of the Conference will be detailed in a *Provisional Record* to be published prior to the Conference as a transitional measure in 2015. While the proposed suspensions will still have to be submitted to the Conference by its Officers, there will no longer be a need for further explanations by the President and for the interruption to the work caused by adjourning and then immediately reconvening a second sitting of the Conference. Those suspensions are further developed in Appendix I.
- (b) **Side events:** In the light of the concerns expressed as regards the number and scheduling of side events and information sessions in June 2014, it is proposed, during the forthcoming two-week session, to restrict the holding of such parallel sessions to avoid overlaps or disruptions in the work of the Conference.
- (c) **World of Work Summit:** Taking into account the experience of last year as well as the comments made by the members of the Governing Body in November 2014, some readjustments have been made in the proposed outline of the World of Work Summit contained in Appendix II, in particular as regards the organization of the panel discussion tentatively planned for the morning plenary sitting on **Thursday, 11 June**. It is worth noting that this tentative outline is subject to changes in the scheduling of the morning and afternoon sitting, as well as in the order and sequence of interventions by Heads of State who have not yet confirmed their visit.
- (d) **Working methods of the technical committees:** The trial of moving the adoption of the technical committees' reports to the plenary will continue to be implemented and the deadline for the electronic submission of corrections to the reports will be extended to provide at least 24 hours. The reports of the three technical committees will be posted on the Web on **Thursday, 11 June**.

As discussed in November 2014, the procedural part of the opening sitting of committees could be simplified through streamlining the election processes of the chairperson and vice-chairpersons; ensuring that the Office introductory remarks are kept to a reasonable duration and considering the tentative plan of work as posted on the Web without the need for further explanation from the Office.

Improved working methods have been emphasized as critical to the success of the technical committees' work in the context of the two-week scenario. In that respect, the format of the conclusions, the shortening of the Office introductory statement, time limits for the presentation of the reports to the plenary, and possible measures to reduce the need for night sittings have been identified as deserving particular attention.

- (e) ***Better use of information technologies:*** Further to the requests made by various groups, the Office will ensure the availability of the SAMM devices (projection on screens of amendments and subamendments in the three official languages) in the plenary of the three technical committees for the discussion of amendments and subamendments. According to the established practice, the same equipment will be provided to the drafting groups of the recurrent discussion committee and the general discussion committee. Further measures will also be adopted to promote a paper-smart policy.
- (f) ***Proposed arrangements for the work of the committees:*** The arrangements agreed in November 2014² will be implemented, including the setting up, with the agreement of the standard-setting committee, of a permanent drafting committee, and the suggestion made by the Officers of the Selection Committee that, after the first meeting of the committee, they may work by email on any routine issue related to the programme of the Conference.
- (g) ***Conference Drafting Committee:*** In accordance with articles 40(7) and 6(3) of the Standing Orders, once adopted by the plenary of the Conference, a draft instrument is reviewed by the Drafting Committee of the Conference, which prepares the final text of the instrument to be put to the vote of the Conference. In the case of a Recommendation, the task of the Conference Drafting Committee is limited to rechecking the legal consistency of the text and the concordance between the English and French versions which have already been checked by the Committee Drafting Committee. Taking into account that, under the proposed arrangements for the two-week Conference in June 2015, the adoption of the committee report containing the proposed instrument and the vote on the instrument will take place on the same morning, it is proposed, as a trial, to omit this second check at the 104th Session of the Conference. This trial, which would consist in merging both checks, would not entail the abolition of the Conference Drafting Committee nor affect its mandate as described in the Standing Orders. Its justification, which is based on the duplication of work between the two drafting committees, would not apply in the same manner in the case of a Convention, where the Conference Drafting Committee fulfils certain additional tasks.

² As reflected in para. 7 of GB.322/WP/GBC/1.

- (h) **Credentials Committee:** In order for the Committee to have the time to examine objections and complaints,³ they should be submitted as early as possible before the expiry of the time limits and contain all the necessary supporting documentation.⁴ Proposals to amend the Standing Orders have been discussed by the Governing Body at its 320th Session (March 2014).⁵ It has been agreed at the November 2014 session of the Governing Body that such reduced time limits be trialled at the 104th Session on the basis of the suspension of the corresponding Standing Orders. It is accordingly proposed to set reduced time limits for this session, leaving the possibility for the Credentials Committee to extend the time limits for objections in justified exceptional cases. To ensure delegates and their organizations are aware of this requirement, information on the proposed arrangements has been included in relevant pre-Conference documentation (Conference guides, etc.).
- (i) **Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS):** Pending the outcome of the CAS follow-up and the consultation with the tripartite working group of the CAS, the Office is examining the options so as to ensure that the CAS can fulfil its mandate in accordance with its working methods, taking into account that: (1) there would be no reduction in the number of days (see tentative plan of work) or amount of time available for discussions; (2) the workplan, including the group meetings, would differ from those of other committees and would have to be closely examined by the CAS tripartite working group; (3) the adoption of the report of the Committee by the Conference would be scheduled for the final **Saturday (13 June)**.
3. The tentative plan of work⁶ has been readjusted to take into account decisions agreed in November 2014 and the comments made during the informal consultations.
- 3.1. Provision will be made for holding preparatory group meetings on **Sunday, 31 May 2015**. Provision will also be made for group meetings to be held from **9.00 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.** on **Monday, 1 June**. Further to the request of the Government group to hold its first meeting in the morning of **Monday, 1 June**, this meeting is now scheduled from **10.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.**, just before the opening ceremony.
- 3.2. As a consequence, the proposed programme for **Monday, 1 June**, has been reorganized as follows: The opening plenary sitting of the Conference will start at **11.45 a.m.** and will be followed by the Selection Committee meeting from **1 p.m. to 1.30 p.m.** The first meetings associated with the work of the technical committees (group meetings or plenary meetings) will commence at **2.30 p.m.**
- 3.3. In light of the agenda of the Finance Committee during a budgetary session, the first full-day meeting of the Finance Committee is now scheduled for **3 June**, and the second for **5 June**. The adoption by the Committee of its reports is planned for **9 June, in the morning**.

³ See articles 5(2) and 26bis to 26quater of the ILC Standing Orders.

⁴ See *Provisional Record* No. 5C, 103rd Session of the ILC, 2014, para. 72.

⁵ GB.320/LILS/1, pp 21–23 and GB.320/PV, paras 550–559.

⁶ As reproduced in Appendix III.

- 3.4. The tentative plan of work will be subject to changes until its adoption by the Selection Committee on the opening day of the Conference. A watermarked version of the draft will be posted on the Web, after the March 2015 session of the Governing Body to facilitate the preparatory processes.

Draft decision

4. *The Working Party on the Functioning of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference, having examined the proposed arrangements contained in document GB.323/WP/GBC/1 as well as the proposed plan of work for the 104th Session (June 2015) of the Conference, recommends that the Governing Body:*
- (a) propose to the Conference that it implement, on a trial basis, the proposed arrangements for a two-week session of the International Labour Conference in June 2015;*
 - (b) request the Office to prepare for the 325th Session (November 2015) of the Governing Body an analysis of the trialled format of a two-week session in June 2015, which would allow the Governing Body to draw the lessons of this experience and take the appropriate decisions as regards the format arrangements for the future sessions of the International Labour Conference.*

Appendix I

Suspension of various provisions of the Standing Orders of the Conference

1. The implementation of the proposed format of the 104th Session (1–13 June 2015) of the International Labour Conference requires a number of changes to the Standing Orders of the Conference. As the new Conference format will be implemented on a trial basis, pending the adoption of amendments to the Standing Orders following an evaluation of the new arrangements, it is proposed to proceed, as in the past, by suspending the relevant Standing Orders provisions for this session in accordance with article 76 of the Standing Orders.
2. Certain proposals to suspend Standing Orders provisions simply repeat suspensions that have been adopted at the last session of the Conference, while others, which are rendered necessary by the reduction of the duration of the Conference to two weeks, are entirely new.

Proposals which were already implemented at the 103rd Session (2014) of the Conference

World of Work Summit

3. For the ILO World of Work Summit, to the extent necessary to enable statements of Heads of State and Government, Prime Ministers and Vice-Presidents, and interactive panel-style sessions, it is proposed to suspend:
 - (a) the limitation concerning the number of statements by each member State in plenary and, to that extent, article 12, paragraph 3;
 - (b) the provisions regarding time limits of speeches and, to that extent, article 14, paragraph 6;
 - (c) the sequence in which the speakers are given the floor, in order to facilitate an exchange of views and, to that extent, the provisions of article 14, paragraph 2; and
 - (d) the rules on moving the closure of the discussion provided in article 16.

Records of the Conference

4. As regards the records of the Conference, it is proposed to suspend several provisions of article 23, namely:
 - (a) paragraph 1 to the extent necessary to permit the publication only after the Conference of the *Provisional Records* of speeches made during the plenary discussion of the reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General;
 - (b) paragraph 2 solely for the purpose of permitting the Director-General to present only in writing his reply to points raised in the discussion in plenary of his Report to the Conference; and
 - (c) paragraph 3 with respect to the deadline for receiving proposed corrections to the *Provisional Records*, to permit that all records – those published during the session as well as those published afterwards – be reviewed together within the same time period following the Conference.

Adoption of committee reports

5. It is proposed to suspend article 67 – which concerns the possibility for a standard-setting committee to consider amendments to the text of a proposed instrument submitted by its drafting committee – to the extent necessary to avoid that the committee may have to hold an additional sitting for the adoption of its report containing the proposed instrument. This permits the committee to delegate to its Officers the authority to approve the report including the proposed instrument.

New proposals due to the reduced duration of the Conference

Time limits for filing objections and complaints with the Credentials Committee

6. In order for the Committee to have the time to examine all objections and complaints, it is proposed to reduce the time limit for lodging objections from 72 to 48 hours from the opening of the Conference (and from 48 to 24 hours from the publication of a revised list of delegations) (with the possibility for the Committee to make exceptions)¹ and to reduce the time limit for complaints from seven to five days. In addition to suspending article 26bis(1)(a) and article 26ter(3)(a) to the extent that they provide for the current, longer, time limits, this would also require adopting amended provisions to replace them, which provide for the new, shorter, time limits. For the duration of the 104th Session of the Conference only, the relevant provisions would thus read as follows (emphasis added):

Article 26bis

Objections

1. An objection in pursuance of article 5, paragraph 2(a), shall not be receivable in the following cases:

- (a) if the objection is not lodged with the Secretary-General within **48** hours from 10 a.m. of the first day of the Conference, the date of publication in the Provisional Record of the official list of delegations, on the basis of the presence of a person's name or functions on this list, or its absence. If the objection is based on a revised list, the time limit shall be reduced to **24** hours. The Credentials Committee may in justified exceptional cases extend these time limits by up to 24 hours;

...

Article 26ter

Complaints

...

3. A complaint shall be receivable if:

- (a) it is lodged with the Secretary-General of the Conference before 10 a.m. on the **fifth** day following the opening of the Conference or, thereafter, in the case of a complaint referred to in paragraph 2, it is lodged within 48 hours of the alleged act or omission preventing attendance of the delegate or adviser concerned, and if the Committee considers that there is sufficient time to deal with it properly; and

...

¹ Owing to the procedure provided for in article 26bis(2) of the Standing Orders, such exceptions will in practice require a unanimous decision by the Committee.

Conference Drafting Committee

7. In accordance with article 40(7) and article 6(3) of the Standing Orders, once adopted by the plenary of the Conference, a draft Convention or Recommendation has to be reviewed by the Drafting Committee of the Conference, which prepares the final text of the instrument to be put to the vote of the Conference. However, since under the proposed arrangements for the two-week Conference the adoption of the committee report containing the proposed instrument and the final vote on the instrument will take place on the same morning, there will be no time for a full review by the Conference Drafting Committee. Under normal circumstances, due to the fact that the proposed instrument has already been fully reviewed by the drafting committee of the competent technical committee (article 59(1) of the Standing Orders) and no further amendments to the text are adopted by the committee or the plenary, in the case of a Recommendation, the task of the Conference Drafting Committee is limited to double-checking the legal consistency of the text and the concordance between the English and French versions. In the interest of time, it is therefore proposed to omit this additional check at the 104th Session of the Conference, at which only a Recommendation will be discussed.
8. It is accordingly proposed to suspend article 40(7) and article 6(3) of the Standing Orders to the extent necessary to omit the review of the proposed Recommendation on the transition from the informal to the formal economy by the Conference Drafting Committee, provided that the text is adopted by the plenary as proposed by the drafting committee of the Committee on the Informal Economy. The general responsibilities of the Conference Drafting Committee as set out in article 6(3) of the Standing Orders will be assumed by the committee drafting committee. In the unlikely event that the Conference amends the text proposed by the committee drafting committee, a short meeting of the Conference Drafting Committee could take place to review such amendment and its possible consequences on the rest of the text. It is therefore proposed that a Conference Drafting Committee be appointed in accordance with article 6(1) of the Standing Orders even if it will most probably not meet.

Appendix II

World of Work Summit at the 104th Session (2015) of the International Labour Conference Thursday, 11 June 2015

First provisional programme

10:00–10:05	Opening by the ILC President
10:05–10:15	Introduction by the ILO Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder
10:15–10:40	Keynote speech by Prof. Paul Krugman, Princeton University (to be confirmed)
10:40–12:45	Panel: Moderator: prominent journalist <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Employer representative2. Worker representative3. (Minister from region not represented by Employers or Workers)4. (Minister from second region not represented by Employers or Workers) <p>No opening remarks; the moderator will immediately take six to seven rounds of questions from the floor of a maximum of two minutes each, clustered around a number of themes.</p> <p>Towards the end of the sitting, the moderator will ask each panellist to speak for one to two minutes to make a rapid closing remark, and then return the chair to the ILC President to close the session. Panellists and the moderator will then be escorted to the official lunch.</p>
13:00–14:30	Lunch break

Speeches by high-level delegates

Address by Mr Kailash Satyarthi, Nobel Laureate

Address by a Head of State from the European region (to be confirmed)

Address by a Head of State from the African region (to be confirmed)

Address by a Head of State from the Americas region (to be confirmed)

Closing remarks by the Director-General

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Appendix III

Tentative plan of work – 104th Session of the International Labour Conference (1–13 June 2015)

	Su 31/05	M 1	T 2	W 3	Th 4	F 5	Sa 6	M 8	T 9	W 10	Th 11	F 12	Sa 13
Plenary sittings		I			■	■		■	■	■	■ ³	■	I
Committee on the Application of Standards		■ ¹	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	A	PI
Committee on SMEs and Employment Creation (<i>general discussion</i>)		■ ¹	■	■	■	■ ^{**}	■ ^{**}	□ ^{***}	■	■		PI	
Committee on Transition from the Informal Economy (<i>standard setting, second discussion</i>) (CDC) *		■ ¹	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		PI/V	
Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on the Strategic Objective of Social Protection (Labour Protection) (<i>recurrent discussion</i>)		■ ¹	■	■	■	■ ^{**}	■ ^{**}	□ ^{***}	■	■			PI
Finance Committee				■		I			A	PI		V	
Selection Committee		I ¹											
Group meetings	■	I					I						
Governing Body		I ²											I

¹ As from 2.30 p.m. ² Programme, Financial and Administrative Section of the Governing Body. ³ World of Work Summit.

* **The Committee will have to determine the time and frequency of the meetings of its Committee Drafting Committee (CDC).** ** Drafting group. *** Receipt of amendments.

