



Governing Body

334th Session, Geneva, 25 October–8 November 2018

GB.334/WP/GBC/2

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

WP/GBC

Date: 24 October 2018

Original: English

SECOND ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Comprehensive review of the Standing Orders of the Conference: Progress report of the intersessional consultations

1. At its 331st Session (October–November 2017),¹ the Governing Body requested the Director-General to undertake intersessional email and Geneva-based consultations for the purposes of an in-depth review of the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders of the Conference and drafting of any additional amendments, as may be necessary. It also decided that the progress of such consultations be reported to the Working Party at the following sessions of the Governing Body with a view to finalizing a comprehensive package of amendments to the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference for validation by the Working Party and possible approval by the Governing Body in March 2019 as part of the Governance Initiative.
2. The intersessional consultation process requested by the Governing Body aims at soliciting the views of the tripartite constituents on the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders of the Conference in an open, transparent, informed and effective manner, in order to facilitate the decision-making process in the Governing Body. No amendment will be decided until such time as the Governing Body takes a decision on the comprehensive set of amendments on the basis of the recommendation of the Working Party.
3. Pursuant to this decision, the Governing Body examined, at its 332nd Session (March 2018), the first progress report on the intersessional consultations carried out through electronic correspondence on proposed amendments aiming mainly at deleting obsolete provisions or revising them so that they reflect current practices.²
4. A second set of proposed amendments was circulated through electronic correspondence on 25 June 2018, after the 107th Session of the Conference (May–June 2018).³ These proposed

¹ [GB.331/PV](#), para. 480.

² [GB.332/WP/GBC/3](#); [GB.332/INS/12](#), paras 17–19 and [GB.332/PV](#), para. 296.

³ [GB.332/INS/12](#), para. 17.

amendments concerned certain general provisions (Part I) and the procedure in the plenary of the Conference (Part II, section A), and aimed at reflecting the codification/modernization of current practices.⁴ Further consultations were held in October 2018.⁵

5. Respondents expressed agreement with most of the proposed amendments. Three matters, however, gave rise to comments and questions:
 - the proposed replacement of the Selection Committee by a Special Committee that would be appointed whenever circumstances so required (proposed amendments to article 4 of the Standing Orders and other provisions referring to the composition and specific functions of the Selection Committee): some respondents were of the view that any such Committee should be appointed at each session of the Conference so that it could be convened when required; others disagreed with the proposed changes in the role and functioning of the Committee;
 - the proposed amendments to the methods of voting (article 19), including quorum (article 20) and majority (article 21): while the proposed reference to consensus did not raise any objection, it was underlined that consensus should be defined in a consistent manner throughout the rules applicable to the governance organs and other tripartite meetings and that taking decisions through a vote should always remain a clear option. It was also proposed to clarify that both alternatives provided for in paragraph 2 of article 21 (new), that is, the possibility for the President to take a record vote and the President's obligation to do so if requested by a certain number of delegates, apply only if a quorum has not been obtained in a vote by a show of hands. In a record vote, the final call should be maintained in case delegates did not respond to the first call;
 - the right to address the Conference (article 14): some respondents were of the view that explicit mention of the right of the President of the Conference to require a speaker to stop speaking if the remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion (article 14, paragraph 4) should be retained. It was also deemed necessary to have clarity as regards the time limits for all speech in the context of the two-week format of the Conference, in particular as regards statements from non-governmental organizations, and that the agreed time limits should be respected (article 14 paragraph 4).
6. Other comments related in particular to: the explicit mention of the role of the Selection Committee as regards resolutions relating to matters not included in an item placed on the agenda and the need to have a minimum of procedural requirements (article 4, and article 17 paragraph 4); the preservation of the role of the Selection Committee as regards the steering functions and routine decision (article 4); the need to retain the reference to persons appointed to occupy advisers posts which may fall vacant in the delegations (article 2, paragraph 3(i)).
7. A third set of proposed amendments concerning the provisions set forth in Part II, section H (Committees of the Conference) will be circulated after the present session of the Governing Body and a further set of amendments in January 2019. The Office intends to focus the next intersessional consultations on the Standing Orders referring to the work of Conference committees as these are the procedural rules most frequently used. Further, many of these

⁴ GB.332/WP/GBC/3, para. 5.

⁵ Six replies were received from the Employers' group, the Workers' group, the group of industrialized market economy countries (IMEC) and the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, China and Finland.

provisions are practically identical to provisions of Part I thus offering possibilities for further rationalization of the overall structure of the Standing Orders.

Draft decision

- 8. The Working Party recommends that the Governing Body takes note of the second progress report on the intersessional consultations concerning the comprehensive review of the Standing Orders of the Conference and provide guidance on the next stages.***