

RM/2008/SO

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

Rules for Regional Meetings



Geneva
International Labour Office
2008

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Introductory note

For budgetary reasons, the Governing Body decided at its 264th Session (November 1995) to replace the Organization's Regional Conferences by shorter Regional Meetings with a single agenda item, which would still be considered as Regional Conferences for purposes of article 38 of the ILO Constitution. On the authority conferred to it by the International Labour Conference, the Governing Body adopted a set of new rules on an experimental basis at its 267th Session (November 1996). Based on experience with the new rules drawn from five Regional Meetings, the Governing Body adopted, at its 283rd Session (March 2002), a revised version of the Rules, which was confirmed by the 90th Session (June 2002) of the Conference. Taking account of further experience gained from five Regional Meetings since June 2002, the Governing Body adopted a second revised version of the Rules in its 301st Session (March 2008), which were confirmed by the 97th Session (June 2008) of the Conference. The Governing Body also agreed to the following guidelines to accompany the Rules.

1. Purpose and length of Regional Meetings

Regional Meetings offer the opportunity for tripartite delegations to express their views on the programming and implementation of the ILO's regional activities. Group meetings are held before the start of the discussion in plenary of the single agenda item related to ILO activities in the region concerned. Groups may meet at any other time at their request. The Meeting lasts four days unless the Governing Body decides otherwise.

2. Date, frequency and place of Regional Meetings

Normally, a Regional Meeting is held each year in one of the four regions in the following order: Asia and the Pacific, the Americas, Africa and Europe. Regional Meetings are in principle held in the country where the relevant ILO regional office is located. Any member State hosting a Regional Meeting shall guarantee at least the level of protection afforded under the 1947 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies and its Annex I concerning the ILO.

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3. Composition

Subject to the discretion of the Governing Body, the composition of each Regional Meeting is determined on the basis of States and territories (or States responsible for the territories) which are served by the following four ILO regional offices: Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (including the States covered by the Regional Office for Arab States); Regional Office for the Americas; Regional Office for Africa; and Regional Office for Europe.

Article 1 of the Rules provides for the composition of the delegations of States or territories invited to the Meeting. As regards advisers, account should be taken of the fact that there is only one item on the agenda. Additional advisers may be appointed in the delegation of a State responsible for a territory that has not sent a separate tripartite delegation to the Meeting.

Member States from a different region, non-member States, official international organizations or non-governmental international organizations of universal or regional character may also be represented at Regional Meetings on the basis of individual or standing invitations of the Governing Body. Requests to be represented at Regional Meetings should accordingly reach the Office at the latest before the opening of the Governing Body session preceding the Regional Meeting concerned. Eminent public figures and Officers of the Governing Body who are not accredited as delegates to the Regional Meeting may also attend the Meeting.

4. Right to address the Meeting and conduct of business

Under article 10, no person may address the Meeting without the permission of the Chairperson, with priority given to delegates (or their substitutes). Without prejudice to the flexibility afforded to the Officers of the Meeting to discharge their duties under article 6, paragraph 5, the time limit for speeches is in principle five minutes.

5. Credentials

In view of the short duration of the Meetings, the credentials of delegates and their advisers must be submitted 15 days before the opening date of the Meeting (article 1, paragraph 3). A preliminary list of participants is published electronically a week before the opening of the Meeting. Two additional lists are made available at the Meeting: a provisional list of credentials of delegations by the scheduled time for the opening of the Meeting, and a final list of accredited delegations on the morning of the last day of the Meeting. The Office will also publish electronically on the last day a list of persons who actually registered at the Meeting.

Under article 9, the Credentials Committee is competent to receive and examine objections alleging non-observance of article 1, paragraph 2

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(designations made in agreement with the most representative organizations of employers and workers in the State or territory concerned); time permitting, complaints alleging the non-payment of travel and subsistence expenses (article 1, paragraph 1); and communications.

Objections are to be submitted within two hours after the scheduled time for the opening of the Meeting, although the Committee may find valid reason to accept a late objection (article 9, paragraph 3(a)). In order to facilitate the work of the Credentials Committee under time constraints, objections (and complaints) should be submitted as soon as possible, even before the publication of the name of the delegate or adviser whose credentials are impugned.

The Credentials Committee submits a report to the Meeting under article 9, paragraph 4 which shall be brought to the attention of the Governing Body. There is no discussion of the report at the plenary of the Meeting.

6. Form, nature and evaluation of results

The decisions of Regional Meetings normally take the form of conclusions, reports, or resolutions relating to the item on the agenda (article 3). Decisions will be taken by consensus whenever practicable or, if not possible, normally by show of hands (article 12, paragraphs 3 and 4). While there is no provision for a record vote or secret ballot, the Rules do not exclude voting by such means.

The decisions of the Meeting are submitted by the Office to the Governing Body at the earliest session after the Regional Meeting. The Governing Body may make observations on the results, decide on the implementation of action called for by the Meeting and request the Office to report on the matter by a certain time, or take such other action as may be appropriate.

Rules for Regional Meetings¹

ARTICLE 1

Composition of Regional Meetings

1. Each Regional Meeting shall be composed of two Government delegates, one Employers' delegate, and one Workers' delegate for each State or territory invited by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to be represented at it. Acceptance by a State or territory of an invitation to be represented at a Regional Meeting implies that it assumes responsibility for the travel and subsistence expenses of its tripartite delegation.

2. Employers' and Workers' delegates and advisers shall be chosen in agreement with the industrial organizations, if such organizations exist, which are most representative of the employers or workers² as the case may be in the State or territory concerned.

3. The credentials of delegates and their advisers at Regional Meetings shall be deposited with the International Labour Office at least fifteen (15) days before the date fixed for the opening of the Meeting.

4. (1) Delegates may be accompanied by advisers and by such additional advisers as may be appointed by a State as representatives of non-metropolitan territories for whose international relations the State is responsible.

(2) Any delegate may by notice in writing addressed to the Chairperson appoint one of his or her advisers to act as his or her substitute.

(3) An adviser who is acting as substitute for his/her delegate may speak and vote under the same conditions as the delegate who is being replaced.

5. Eminent public figures, including ministers from States or territories represented at the Meeting or from constituent States or provinces thereof whose departments deal with the questions discussed by the Meeting and who are not delegates or advisers may also attend the Meeting.

¹ The ILO is committed to promoting gender equality. Amendments to this effect were adopted at the 97th Session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva, 2008).

² As used in these Rules, the term "workers" is interpreted consistently with the meaning of "workpeople" in article 3 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization.

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6. Any Member of the International Labour Organization from a different region and any State which is not a Member of the International Labour Organization which has been invited by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office may be represented at the Meeting by an observer delegation.

7. Liberation movements recognized by the African Union or the League of Arab States which have been invited by the Governing Body may be represented at the Meeting by an observer delegation.

8. Representatives of official universal or regional international organizations and of non-governmental universal or regional international organizations which have been invited by the Governing Body, either individually or as a result of a standing arrangement, to be represented at the Meeting may attend it as observers.

9. Officers of the Governing Body who are not delegates accredited to the Regional Meeting may attend the Meeting.

ARTICLE 2

Agenda and venue of Regional Meetings

1. The Governing Body shall establish the agenda for a Regional Meeting.

2. The Governing Body shall decide upon the venue of a Regional Meeting. A member State which offers to host a Regional Meeting shall guarantee at least the level of protection afforded under the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies, 1947, including its Annex I concerning the International Labour Organization.

ARTICLE 3

Form of decisions of Regional Meetings

Subject to any specific indication by the Governing Body to the contrary, the decisions of Regional Meetings shall take the form of resolutions on matters relating to the item(s) on the agenda, conclusions or reports addressed to the Governing Body.

ARTICLE 4

Reports for Regional Meetings

1. The International Labour Office shall prepare a report on the item(s) on the agenda designed to facilitate an exchange of views on the issues referred to the Meeting.

2. The report shall be dispatched by the Office so as to reach governments at least two months before the opening of the Meeting. The Officers of the

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Governing Body may approve shorter intervals if exceptional circumstances so require.

ARTICLE 5

Officers of the Meeting

1. Each Regional Meeting shall elect as Officers a Chairperson and three Vice-Chairpersons. For the election of the Chairperson, account should be taken of the need to afford all Members and groups the opportunity to hold office.

2. The three Vice-Chairpersons shall be elected by the Meeting on the nomination of the Government, Employers' and Workers' delegates respectively.

ARTICLE 6

Duties of the Officers

1. It shall be the duty of the Chairperson to declare the opening and closing of the sittings, to bring before the Meeting any communication which may concern it, direct the debates, maintain order, ensure the observance of the present Rules, put questions for decision and announce the results of any voting.

2. The Chairperson shall not take part in the debates and shall not vote, but may appoint a substitute in accordance with article 1, paragraph 4(2), of these Rules.

3. If the Chairperson is absent during any sitting or part of a sitting he or she shall be replaced by one of the Vice-Chairpersons, who shall act in rotation.

4. A Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson shall have the same rights and duties as the Chairperson.

5. The Officers of the Meeting shall arrange its programme of work, organize the discussions, determine, where appropriate, a time limit for speeches and fix the date and time of the sittings of the Meeting and of its subsidiary bodies, if any; they shall report to the Meeting on any controversial matter requiring a decision for the proper conduct of its business.

ARTICLE 7

Secretariat

The Director-General of the International Labour Office, being charged with the organization of the Meeting, is responsible for the secretariat-general of the Meeting and the secretariat services under its control, either directly or through a deputy appointed by the Director-General.

ARTICLE 8

Committees

Each Regional Meeting shall appoint a Credentials Committee and any other subsidiary body as the Meeting may consider appropriate. Any such subsidiary body shall operate mutatis mutandis under the Rules applicable to the Meeting, unless the Meeting decides otherwise.

ARTICLE 9

Credentials

1. The Credentials Committee shall consist of one Government delegate, one Employers' delegate and one Workers' delegate.

2. The Credentials Committee shall examine the credentials of delegates and their advisers and any objection alleging that an Employers' or Workers' delegate or adviser has not been nominated in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 2 of article 1 of these Rules. The Committee may also, time permitting, consider any complaint alleging that a Member has failed to carry out its responsibility in accordance with article 1, paragraph 1, to pay travel and subsistence expenses of the tripartite delegation. The Committee may also receive and examine communications.

3. An objection or a complaint shall be receivable in the following cases:

- (a) it has been lodged with the secretariat of the Meeting within two hours after the scheduled time for the opening of the Meeting, unless the Committee considers that there were valid reasons why the time limit could not be respected;
- (b) the authors of the objection or the complaint do not remain anonymous;
- (c) the objection or the complaint is not based upon facts or allegations identical to those which the International Labour Conference or an earlier Regional Meeting has already discussed and recognized to be irrelevant or devoid of substance.

4. The Credentials Committee shall promptly submit its report to the Meeting, which shall request the Office to bring the report to the attention of the Governing Body.

ARTICLE 10

Right to address the Meeting

1. No person may address the Meeting without having asked and obtained the permission of the Chairperson, who shall normally call upon speakers in the order in which they have signified their desire to speak, while bearing in mind that priority should be given to delegates.

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2. The Director-General of the International Labour Office or his or her representative may, with the permission of the Chairperson, address the Meeting.

3. Persons entitled to take part in the Meeting in accordance with paragraphs 5, 6, 7 or 9 of article 1, and representatives of official universal or regional international organizations may, with the permission of the Chairperson, address the Meeting during any discussion in plenary.

4. Representatives of non-governmental universal or regional international organizations entitled to take part in the Meeting in virtue of paragraph 8 of article 1 may, with the permission of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons, speak and make or circulate statements for information of the Meeting on matters included in its agenda. If agreement cannot be reached, the Chairperson shall refer the matter to the Meeting for decision without discussion.

5. With the permission of the Chairperson, an Officer of the Governing Body may address the Meeting.

6. The Chairperson may withdraw the right to speak from any speaker whose remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

7. Except with the unanimous consent of the Officers of the Meeting, no speech shall exceed five minutes.

ARTICLE 11

Motions, resolutions and amendments

1. Subject to the following rules, any delegate may move any motion, resolution or amendment.

2. No motion, resolution or amendment shall be discussed unless and until it has been seconded.

3. (1) Motions as to procedure may be moved without previous notice and without the handing of a copy to the secretariat of the Meeting. They may be moved at any time except after the Chairperson has called upon a speaker and before the speaker has finished speaking.

(2) Motions as to procedure include the following:

- (a) a motion to refer the matter back;
- (b) a motion to postpone consideration of the question;
- (c) a motion to adjourn the sitting;
- (d) a motion to adjourn the debate on a particular question;
- (e) a motion for the closure of the discussion.

4. (1) No resolution shall be moved at any sitting of the Meeting unless a copy has been handed in to the secretariat of the Meeting on the previous day.

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(2) Any resolution thus handed in shall be translated and circulated by the secretariat not later than during the sitting preceding that at which it is to be discussed.

(3) Amendments to a resolution may be moved without previous notice if a copy of the text of the amendment is handed in to the secretariat of the Meeting before the amendment is moved.

5. (1) Amendments shall be voted on before the resolution to which they refer.

(2) If there are several amendments to a motion or resolution, the Chairperson shall determine the order in which they shall be discussed and put to the vote, subject to the following provisions:

- (a) every motion, resolution or amendment shall be put to the vote;
- (b) amendments may be voted on either individually or against other amendments as the Chairperson may decide, but if amendments are voted on against other amendments, the motion or resolution shall be deemed to be amended only after the amendment receiving the largest number of affirmative votes has been voted on individually and adopted;
- (c) if a motion or resolution is amended as the result of a vote, that motion or resolution as amended shall be put to the Meeting for a final vote.

6. Any amendment may be withdrawn by the person who moved it unless an amendment to it is under discussion or has been adopted. Any amendment so withdrawn may be moved without previous notice by any other delegate.

7. Any delegate may at any time draw attention to the fact that the rules are not being observed, and the Chairperson shall give an immediate ruling on any question so raised.

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ARTICLE 12

Voting and quorum

1. Subject to the provisions of article 13, paragraph 4, of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization,³ every delegate shall be entitled to vote individually on all matters which are under consideration by the Meeting.

2. If one of the Members represented fails to nominate one of the non-government delegates whom it is entitled to nominate, the other non-government delegate shall be allowed to sit and speak at the Meeting, but not to vote.

3. Decisions shall, whenever practicable, be taken by consensus. In the absence of consensus duly ascertained and announced by the Chairperson, decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of the votes cast by the delegates who are present at the sitting and entitled to vote.

4. Voting shall normally be by show of hands.

5. A vote is not valid if the total number of votes cast for and against is less than half the total number of delegates at the Meeting entitled to vote.

6. The vote shall be recorded by the secretariat and announced by the Chairperson.

7. No resolution, conclusion, report, amendment or motion shall be adopted if the number of votes cast for and the number of votes cast against it are equal.

ARTICLE 13

Languages

The Governing Body shall determine the working languages of the Meeting and may request the secretariat to make arrangements for interpretation and for translation of documents into and from other languages, taking into account the financial resources available.

³ Article 13, paragraph 4, reads as follows: "A Member of the Organization which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contribution to the Organization shall have no vote in the Conference, in the Governing Body, in any committee, or in the elections of members of the Governing Body, if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years: Provided that the Conference may by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast by the delegates present permit such a Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member."

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ARTICLE 14

Autonomy of groups

Subject to these Rules each group shall control its own procedure.