



THIRD ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Methods of revision of instruments
concerning occupational safety
and health**

1. In November 1999 the Working Party held a preliminary discussion concerning methods of revision, on the basis of a document prepared by the Office.¹ At its meeting in March 2000, the Working Party asked the Office to submit to it at the present session a document on methods which might be used for the revision of instruments concerning occupational safety and health.² These instruments comprise five Conventions³ and six Recommendations,⁴ which the Governing Body decided should be revised in accordance with the recommendations of the Working Party. The portfolio of proposals for the agenda of the Conference, submitted to the Governing Body in November 1999,⁵ contained various possible options regarding the direction that the revision of the five Conventions might take. For some of them, it had become clear that their revision could not be considered in isolation and that a broader approach was necessary.
2. In addition, the Governing Body requested the Office to submit to it at the present session a document on possible improvements in ILO standards-related activities.⁶ A new

¹ Document GB.276/LILS/WP/PRS/2.

² Document GB.277/11/2, Appendix I.

³ White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921 (No. 13), Marking of Weight (Packages Transported by Vessels) Convention, 1929 (No. 27), Guarding of Machinery Convention, 1963 (No. 119), Maximum Weight Convention, 1967 (No. 127), and Benzene Convention, 1971 (No. 136). Document GB.279/LILS/WP/PRS/5, para. 7.

⁴ Anthrax Prevention Recommendation, 1919 (No. 3), Lead Poisoning (Women and Children) Recommendation, 1919 (No. 4), White Phosphorus Recommendation, 1919 (No. 6), Guarding of Machinery Recommendation, 1963 (No. 118), Maximum Weight Recommendation, 1967 (No. 128), and Benzene Recommendation, 1971 (No. 144). Document GB.279/LILS/WP/PRS/5, para. 41.

⁵ Document GB.276/2.

⁶ Document GB.279/4.

approach aimed at a better integration of standards among themselves and with the other means of action of the Organization was defined by the Office in this context. The purpose of this approach is on the one hand to improve the coherence of standards and their relevance in the light of the Organization's objectives and on the other hand to strengthen their impact through an integrated use of all the means of action available to the Organization. This approach would rely in particular on an in-depth analysis by the Office of existing Conventions and Recommendations in a given field. The analysis would be submitted to a discussion at the Conference with a view to identifying in particular: the gaps in standards-related issues which need to be filled; the subject and form of planned new standards – including with regard to revisions decided upon by the Governing Body; and the possibilities of consolidation. Other possible types of instruments and action would also be identified. The results of the work of the Working Party would serve as a starting point for this analysis.

3. To enable the Governing Body to have a clearer picture of the scope of this approach, the Office wished to submit an outline for the proposed analysis in a specific field. Occupational safety and health seemed to be a suitable choice for this first experiment given the request from the Working Party, initial considerations regarding possible options for handling the revisions in question and the fact that it is a field that is rich in standards of a general and sectoral scope and also very diverse in its means of action. A proposal for an in-depth examination of standards-related activities concerning occupational safety and health, including the revisions concerned, is therefore included in the form of a detailed plan in the document concerning the proposals for the agenda of the 91st Session (2003) of the Conference, which is submitted to the Governing Body at the present session.⁷ If the Governing Body approves the proposed approach, it will be able to include this question in the restricted list of subjects which will be submitted to it for final selection in March 2001.
4. In the light of these new developments and the discussions that will take place on this matter within the Governing Body during its present session, *the Working Party may well wish to refer to the Governing Body the examination of the issue in the wider context of the discussion on possible improvements in standards-related activities and on proposals for the agenda of the 91st Session (2003) of the Conference.*

Geneva, 17 October 2000.

Point for decision: Paragraph 4.

⁷ Document GB.279/5/2.