



SEVENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Consideration of the Director-General's
report on the situation of workers of
the occupied Arab territories at the
89th (2001) Session of the International
Labour Conference**

1. At its 279th Session (November 2000), the Governing Body had before it a draft resolution submitted by the Arab regular members of the Governing Body in accordance with article 15 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body, the text of which is reproduced as Appendix I.¹
2. The draft resolution requested the Director-General to include an item on the agenda of the 280th Session (March 2001) of the Governing Body in order to prepare proposals for submission to the International Labour Conference at its 89th Session (2001) with a view to holding a special sitting of the Conference for the consideration of the Director-General's report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, including the implementation of the ILO Plan of Action.
3. It was decided that an item would be placed on the agenda of the 280th Session (March 2001) of the Governing Body for its consideration.
4. The legal framework applicable to such a sitting has been explained in previous documents.² While article 12 of the Standing Orders of the Conference provides for the Report of the Director-General to be discussed in plenary, it was found possible to refer the part of the report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories to a special sitting of the Conference provided that certain conditions were met, namely:
 - (a) that no resolution would be submitted on the same subject to the same session of the International Labour Conference;

¹ GB.279/D.1.

² GB.271/7; GB.255/3/3, paras. 4-10; GB.255/PV(Rev.), pp. VII/1-6; GB.259/6/3; GB.262/6.

- (b) that there was a consensus on the matter in the Selection Committee of the Conference;
- (c) that no discussion of the subject would take place at the Conference outside the special sitting.

The procedure followed regarding the holding of a special sitting at the Conference is set out in more detail in the document appearing in Appendix II.

5. It should be recalled that one of the conditions considered necessary for the adoption of a decision by the Governing Body to make a proposal for the Conference to hold such a special sitting is that a consensus must be reached. Such a consensus was reached until the 262nd Session (March-April 1995) of the Governing Body, when it was felt, in view of the prevailing conditions at the time, that the Conference of 1995 would be the last occasion on which such a special sitting would be held. However, the Governing Body again decided at its 271st (March 1998) and 274th (March 1999) Sessions to submit proposals to the 86th (1998) and 87th (1999) Sessions of the Conference, respectively, to hold a special sitting for the consideration of the Director-General's report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories.
6. The Governing Body may therefore wish to determine whether the conditions that formed the basis of the decisions taken in 1998 and 1999 and between 1990 and 1995³ for the holding of a special sitting of the International Labour Conference for the consideration of the Director-General's report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories are again met.

7. *More specifically, the Governing Body may wish:*

- (a) to take a decision on the proposal for the holding of a special sitting for the consideration of the Director-General's report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories at the 89th Session (2001) of the Conference;*
- (b) if it decides in favour of that proposal, to invite the Director-General to submit to the Selection Committee proposals relating to the holding of a special sitting at the 89th Session (June 2001) of the International Labour Conference for the consideration of his report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, based on arrangements approved at the 87th Session (June 1999) of the Conference (Appendix II), subject to the conditions mentioned in paragraph 4 above and to any further changes or additions that might be made thereto in the light of the Governing Body's discussion.*

Geneva, 13 February 2001.

Point for decision: Paragraph 7.

³ Special sittings were held at the 77th (1990), 78th (1991), 79th (1992), 80th (1993), 81st (1994), 82nd (1995), 86th (1998) and 87th (1999) Sessions of the Conference. No special sitting was held at the 83rd (1996), 85th (1997) or 88th (2000) Sessions. The 84th Session (1996) was a Maritime Session of the Conference.

Appendix I

Draft resolution submitted by the Arab regular members¹ of the Governing Body in accordance with article 15 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body, relating to the second report of the Committee on Legal Issues and International Labour Standards at the 279th Session (November 2000) of the Governing Body

The Governing Body of the International Labour Office,

Noting with satisfaction the efforts made by the Director-General to give effect to the resolution adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1980 concerning the situation of Arab workers in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories, including the implementation of the ILO Plan of Action (drawn up by the multidisciplinary mission in 1993: “Report on capacity building for social development: A programme of action for transition in the occupied Palestinian territories”),

Noting the discussions on this question that took place during the 277th Session (March 2000) of the Governing Body;

Decides to request the Director-General to include an item on the agenda of the 280th Session (March 2001) of the Governing Body in order to prepare proposals for submission to the International Labour Conference at its 89th Session (June 2001) with a view to the holding of a special sitting of the Conference to examine the annual report of the Director-General on the situation of Arab workers in Palestine and in the other occupied Arab territories, including an examination of the implementation of the above ILO Plan of Action.

Geneva, 14 November 2000.

¹ Government members: Algeria, Saudi Arabia; Employer members: Mr. Dahlan, Mr. M’Kaissi.

Appendix II



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE

87th Session

Geneva, June 1999

Selection Committee

CP/D.2

First sitting, Tuesday, 1 June 1999

Consideration of the Director-General's Report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories

1. At its 274th Session (March 1999), the Governing Body decided that the Director-General should submit to the present session of the Conference a proposal to hold a special sitting for the consideration of the Director-General's report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, under the same conditions as those that applied at the 77th (1990), 78th (1991), 79th (1992), 80th (1993), 81st (1994), 82nd (1995) and 86th (1998) Sessions. These were –
 - (a) that no resolution would be submitted on the same subject to the same session of the International Labour Conference;
 - (b) that there was a consensus on the matter in the Selection Committee of the Conference;
 - (c) that no discussion of the subject would take place at the Conference outside the special sitting.
2. In taking that decision, the Governing Body recommended that the Director-General submit proposals to the Selection Committee of the Conference based on the arrangements made at the earlier sessions of the Conference.
3. Considering that the conditions now seem to be satisfied for a sufficient consensus to be reached in the Selection Committee, the Director-General therefore submits the following proposals in the light of the above, in accordance with the mandate conferred on him by the Governing Body and taking account of the arrangements already applied at the 77th (1990), 78th (1991), 79th (1992), 80th (1993), 81st (1994), 82nd (1995) and 86th (1998) Sessions of the Conference.

Principle and timing of a special sitting

4. In previous years the Conference recognized that, while the Director-General's report on the occupied Arab territories is an integral part of the Director-General's Report provided for in article 12 of the Standing Orders of the Conference, and has always been treated as such, it was nevertheless possible to see a discussion of the report in the framework of a special sitting, on the understanding that the nature of the sitting would not be modified and could not give rise to anything other than a discussion.
5. On this basis and in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it to fix the time and agenda for the plenary sittings, *the Selection Committee is invited to decide to convene a special sitting*

for the discussion of the Appendix to the Director-General's Report dealing with the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, it being understood that speakers will have to confine their remarks at that sitting to this Appendix and that, conversely, that subject will not be discussed in the framework of the discussion on the remainder of the Report.

6. In order to take account of the programme of work for the beginning of the Conference and of the fact that a number of ministers who can be present only during the early days of the Conference may wish to take the floor during the special sitting, *it is proposed that the special sitting should be held in the afternoon of Thursday, 10 June.*

Procedure at the special sitting

7. As stated above, the report of the Director-General on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories is an integral part of the Report of the Director-General, and its discussion is governed by article 12 of the Standing Orders of the Conference. However, in order to enable speakers wishing to do so to take the floor both during the discussion of the Report of the Director-General as a whole and during the special sitting, it was accepted in previous years that the Conference could – as an exception and as in the case of other special occasions in the past – authorize speakers to take the floor during both discussions.
8. *The Selection Committee is accordingly invited to recommend that the Conference allow speakers who so wish to take the floor both on the General Report and during the special sitting, it being understood that the subject to be discussed in that sitting would not be discussed in the debate on the remainder of the Report.*
9. As regards the actual arrangements for the special sitting, experience at the earlier sessions has shown that a single special sitting – in the afternoon, extended as appropriate beyond 6 p.m. and continuing until 9 p.m. at the latest – is sufficient to allow all those wishing to do so to speak on the subject within reasonable time limits. This was achieved in part because, following appeals by the Officers of the Conference in favour of combining statements, a number of joint speeches were made. An additional measure adopted in previous years – the fixing of a shorter time limit for speeches at the special sitting – does not seem necessary this year in view of the proposal, which will be before the Conference for approval at its second sitting, for a generally applicable reduced time limit for speeches in plenary.
10. In line with the practice in previous years, *the Selection Committee may wish to decide that the list of speakers for the special sitting will be closed at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, 8 June.*
11. As in previous years, within the framework of the principles governing the discussion of his Report in plenary sitting, the Director-General will devote part of his reply to the discussion of his Report to the lessons to be drawn from the special sitting.
12. It is possible that the special sitting will give rise to a request or several requests for a right of reply. The granting of such a request is a matter for the President in accordance with his duties under article 13 of the Standing Orders. It will be for him, in consultation with the other Officers, to determine the timing, length and modalities of any right of reply he may grant, in accordance with the principles set out in his statement opening the discussion of the Reports of the Chairman of the Governing Body and the Director-General, and with the established practice of the Conference.

Committee meetings

13. In previous years the view was put forward that no committees should meet during the time devoted to the special sitting so as to enable all delegates to attend.
14. While experience has shown that this concern can be met without undue difficulty as regards certain committees, others, and in particular the technical committees and the Committee on the Application of Standards, already face serious time constraints in completing their business. The

technical committees are moreover largely composed of technical advisers attending the Conference exclusively for the purpose of taking part in the committees, and their meeting would be unlikely to reduce significantly the numbers attending the special sitting. This means that the only committee whose plan of work could allow it not to meet during the time devoted to the special sitting would be the Finance Committee of Government Representatives.

15. *It is therefore proposed that the Finance Committee should not meet at the same time as the special sitting.*

Points for decision: Paragraph 5;
Paragraph 6;
Paragraph 8;
Paragraph 10;
Paragraph 15.