



SEVENTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Reports of the Officers of the Governing Body

Second report: Procedure and criteria applied to initial requests by international non-governmental organizations ¹ to be invited to be represented at the International Labour Conference

1. In May 2004 the Officers of the Governing Body requested the Office to include an item on this subject on the agenda of a forthcoming meeting of the Officers in order to clarify the situation and provide a basis for an explanatory document, if needed, for the information of or approval by the Governing Body.

Current procedure

2. The current accreditation procedure for INGOs can be summarized as follows. The required documents and information sent by each INGO applying for accreditation to the Conference for the first time are compiled by the Office in an information note (“write-up”). The write-up is then circulated amongst the Office of the Legal Adviser, the Bureaux for Employers’ and Workers’ Activities, and any technical departments concerned, for review and comment. If there is no evident lack of conformity with the agreed criteria (see paragraph 3 below), the write-up is then included in the customary note submitted to the Officers of the Governing Body for decision.
3. INGOs which request the invitation to the International Labour Conference must:
 - (a) demonstrate the international nature of its composition and activities by proving that it is represented or has affiliates in a considerable number of countries and that it is active in those countries;
 - (b) have aims and objectives that are in harmony with the spirit, aims and principles of the Constitution of the ILO and the Declaration of Philadelphia;
 - (c) formally express a clearly defined interest, supported by its statutes and by explicit reference to its own activities, in at least one of the items on the agenda of the Conference session to which it requests to be invited;

¹ Including workers’ and employers’ organizations.

- (d) submit its request, in writing, to the Director-General of the International Labour Office at least one month before the opening of the session of the Conference.

INGOs with regional consultative status with the ILO, those on the ILO Special List, and those invited to previous sessions of the Conference are regarded as having satisfied criteria (a) and (b) above, and are not required to resubmit the required documents and information.

4. In recent years, a considerable number of first-time requests for accreditation were received and approved in 1998 and 2004, since the Conference agenda for those years included highly topical items – child labour (1998) and migrant workers (2004) – that attracted considerable attention from the large numbers of INGOs active in those fields. In the intervening years only a few or even none were received or approved. Among the 21 organizations accredited for the first time since 1998, the average number of countries covered by the organizations was 60, with numbers ranging from five to more than 100. It is also noted that three of the 21 organizations accredited covered fewer than ten countries.

Proposed amendment

One-month rule

5. Article 2(4) of the Standing Orders of the ILC states:

Requests from non-governmental international organizations for an invitation to be represented at the Conference shall be made in writing to the Director-General of the International Labour Office and shall reach him *at least one month before the opening of the session of the Conference*. Such requests shall be referred to the Governing Body for decision in accordance with criteria established by the Governing Body. (Emphasis added.)

Procedure for handling problematic requests

6. At its 256th Session (May 1993) the Governing Body adopted the following decision:²

The Governing Body delegated to its Officers – under the rules currently in force – the authority to invite non-governmental international organizations (NGOs) which wish to be represented at sessions of the General Conference, regional conferences as well as at other meetings which are not prepared by one of the Governing Body committees and which do not have specific rules for this purpose. The same delegation of authority would apply to invitations of official international organizations whose relations with the ILO are not governed by a particular agreement. In both cases it is understood that *requests for invitations presenting a particular problem would continue to be submitted to the Governing Body through its Officers*. (Emphasis added.)

The problem

7. The Governing Body's May sessions were abolished with the reforms of 1993. Hence, if the Director-General receives any "requests for invitations presenting a particular problem" at any time after the March session of the Governing Body, and one month

² Report of the Working Party on Improvements in the Functioning of the Governing Body, GB.256/13/24, para. 6(e).

before the Conference, such requests cannot be submitted to the Governing Body for decision, and it is hence impossible to apply the procedure adopted in 1993 in such cases.

8. Prior to the 92nd Session (2004) of the International Labour Conference, a problem arose in May of that year due to this procedural contradiction, concerning three INGOs: the European Civic Forum, the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants, and the Scalabrini Foundation for a Culture of Integration and Solidarity in the Field of Human Mobility.

Proposal

9. To avoid such situations, a change to the one-month rule regarding the deadline would suffice, by amending article 2(4) of the Standing Orders as follows:

Requests from non-governmental international organizations for an invitation to be represented at the Conference shall be made in writing to the Director-General of the International Labour Office and shall reach him at least one month before the opening of the session of the Governing Body preceding [the opening of] the session of the Conference. Such requests shall be referred to the Governing Body for decision in accordance with criteria established by the Governing Body.³

10. The application of this new rule would not only solve the procedural problem of handling “requests for invitations presenting a particular problem”, but would also avoid problems associated with the last-minute handling of other legitimate requests.
11. *The Officers recommend to the Governing Body that it propose to the Conference an amendment to its Standing Orders along the lines indicated in paragraph 9 above.*

Geneva, 21 March 2005.

Point for decision: Paragraph 11.

³ It is proposed to add underlined words and delete words in brackets.