

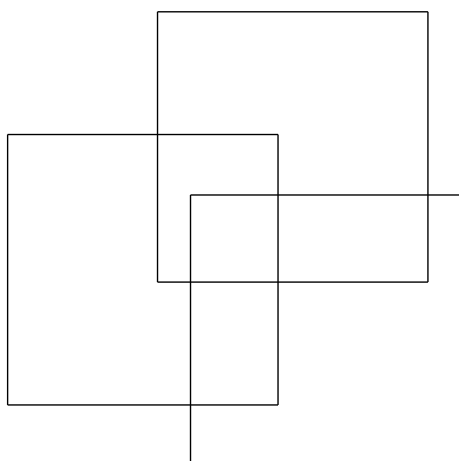


International
Labour
Office
Geneva

103rd Session of the International Labour Conference

Advance information

Building a future with decent work



Palais des Nations and ILO headquarters
Geneva, 28 May–12 June 2014

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Introduction to the Conference

The International Labour Conference is the ILO's highest decision-making body. It meets annually in June, bringing together the tripartite delegations from the Organization's 185 member States. The Conference is composed of a plenary and of technical committees. The plenary sits in the Assembly Hall of the *Palais des Nations*. Naturally, the Conference opens and closes in plenary sitting. During intermediate plenary sittings, all delegates may participate in the discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General. The plenary also performs administrative and formal tasks for the Conference and may hold sittings to receive distinguished guests, including Heads of State or Government.

The Conference usually establishes committees to deal with the technical items on its agenda, which this year means items III, IV, V and VI, of which details are given below. These committees thus meet concurrently, and work through the first and second weeks of the Conference, before finalizing their reports, conclusions or any instruments they may have drafted, which are then returned to the plenary for adoption.

As ILO member States are aware, the Governing Body of the ILO is currently reviewing the functioning of the Conference and reforming it. Certain decisions which may affect the 103rd Session of the Conference will be taken at the 320th Session of the Governing Body, to be held from 13 to 27 March 2014. This document therefore includes general and advance information on the Conference that is correct at the time of printing. **A Conference guide containing further and updated details will be published after the March Governing Body session.**

Proposed Conference programme

Tuesday, 27 May: Group meetings

In order to allow the technical committees to begin their substantive work on the first day of the Conference, group meetings will be held on **the day before the official opening sitting**. In addition to the meetings of the full Government, Employers' and Workers' groups, where the groups elect their Officers, make proposals relating to the composition of the different committees, and become acquainted with Conference procedure, provision will also be made for planning meetings for the groups in each of the technical committees, to be held as deemed appropriate by each group. **The members of tripartite national delegations should therefore arrive in Geneva in sufficient time to be able to take part in these meetings.**

Wednesday, 28 May: Opening sitting

The opening sitting will take place in the Assembly Hall of the *Palais des Nations* in the morning. At the opening sitting, delegations will be called on to elect the Officers of the Conference, set up the various committees and take other decisions as needed. The Selection Committee (see page 8) will meet immediately after the opening sitting of the Conference to take decisions concerning arrangements for the Conference.

Wednesday, 28 May–Saturday, 7 June: Work of the Committees

Committees begin their work on the opening day of the Conference and continue until Saturday, 7 June. This means that committee meetings and the general discussion in plenary will overlap by four days.

Wednesday, 4–Thursday, 12 June: Plenary sittings – Discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General

The plenary of the Conference will sit, morning and afternoon, to discuss the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General. The World of Work Summit will also take place during these dates, as will the adoption of reports and resolutions and voting to adopt international labour Conventions and Recommendations prepared by the technical committees. Please note that a plenary sitting of the Conference may be called at any other time, if necessary.

Thursday, 12 June: Closing ceremony

The closing ceremony will take place in the Assembly Hall of the *Palais des Nations*.

Agenda of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference

Standing items

- I. Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General
- II. Programme and budget and other financial questions
- III. Information and reports on the application of Conventions and Recommendations

Items placed on the agenda by the Conference or the Governing Body

- IV. Supplementing the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), to address implementation gaps to advance prevention, protection and compensation measures, to effectively achieve the elimination of forced labour – *Standard setting, single discussion*¹

¹ Under the single discussion procedure, the Conference may adopt an international labour standard at a single session (i.e. in a single year).

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- V. Facilitating transitions from the informal to the formal economy – *Standard setting, double discussion*²
 - VI. A recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of employment

Election of the Governing Body of the ILO for 2014–17

Election of members of the Governing Body

Article 7(5) of the Constitution of the ILO stipulates that the Governing Body's period of office is three years. As the last elections were held during the 100th Session (2011), elections will be held at the 103rd Session to select the Governments represented in, and the Employer and Worker members of, the Governing Body. The date at which the electoral colleges will meet for this purpose has been **tentatively** scheduled for the **afternoon of Monday, 2 June**.

Article 52 of the Standing Orders of the Conference sets out the voting procedure. Some brief details on the composition of the Governing Body and its electoral procedure follow.

Composition of the Governing Body

The composition of the Governing Body is regulated by article 7 of the Constitution of the ILO and section G of the Standing Orders of the Conference. It consists of 56 Governments (28 regular members and 28 deputy members), 33 Employer members (14 regular members and 19 deputy members), and 33 Worker members (14 regular members and 19 deputy members). Voting for membership takes place in the three groups' electoral colleges, explained below.

Electoral colleges

The Government electoral college, as set out in article 49 of the Standing Orders of the Conference, is composed of the Government delegates of all Members of the Organization, except those from the ten Members of chief industrial importance³ (which hold non-elective seats), and from governments that have lost the right to vote. It therefore elects 18 regular and 28 deputy Government members on the basis of geographical distribution.

The Employers' and Workers' electoral colleges consist of the Employers' and Workers' delegates to the Conference, respectively, excluding delegates of States that have lost the right to vote. They elect, by name, 14 persons as regular members and 19 as deputy members of the Governing Body (ILC Standing Orders, article 50).

² Under the double discussion procedure, the Conference may adopt an international labour standard over two sessions (i.e. over two years).

³ Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States.

Overview of the agenda of the Conference

Plenary

I. Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General

The Director-General of the International Labour Office will present his Report to the Conference during the opening sitting. It will be accompanied by an *Appendix on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*. The Chairperson of the Governing Body will submit a report to the Conference on the work carried out by the Governing Body from June 2013 to June 2014.

Committees

II. Finance Committee of Government Representatives (ILC Standing Orders, article 7bis and section H, article 55(3))

Under agenda item II, the Conference will be called on to consider and adopt the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2013 and to consider such other financial and administrative matters as the Governing Body may decide to bring to its attention.

III. Information and reports on the application of Conventions and Recommendations (ILC Standing Orders, article 7 and section H)

The Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations is set up to deal with this item. It submits a report on its work to the Conference.

The Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations will consider information and reports supplied by governments under articles 19, 22 and 35 of the Constitution on the effect given to Conventions and Recommendations, together with the *Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations*. This report consists of two volumes, both submitted to the Conference. A first volume (ILC.103/III/1A) includes, in particular, the observations on the application of ratified Conventions. The second volume (ILC.103/III/1B) contains the General Survey of reports under articles 19 and 22. The General Survey submitted to this session will deal with the following Convention and Recommendation: the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131), and the Minimum Wage Fixing Recommendation, 1970 (No. 135). This General Survey and its discussion by the Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations will contribute to the recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of social protection (labour protection) placed by the Governing Body on the agenda of the 104th Session (2015) of the Conference, under the follow-up to the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

IV. Supplementing the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), to address implementation gaps to advance prevention, protection and compensation measures, to effectively achieve the elimination of forced labour – *Standard setting, single discussion*

According to the most recent ILO estimates, at least 20.9 million people are victims of forced labour globally. The conclusions adopted by the Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Forced Labour and Trafficking for Labour Exploitation (11–15 February 2013) considered that despite the broad reach of Convention No. 29, and the measures taken by member States, there was “an added value in the adoption of supplementary measures to address the significant implementation gaps remaining in order to effectively eradicate forced labour in all its forms” (paragraph 26). The experts reached consensus that these gaps “should be addressed through standard setting to advance prevention, protection and compensation measures” (paragraph 27).

At its 317th Session (March 2013), the Governing Body decided to place a standard-setting item on the agenda of the 103rd Session (2014) of the Conference with a view to supplementing Convention No. 29, to address implementation gaps to advance prevention, protection and compensation measures, to effectively achieve the elimination of forced labour. The Governing Body also approved a programme of reduced intervals for this item, to allow the Conference to deal with it at this session.

Accordingly, the Conference will consider the possible adoption of an instrument, or instruments, under the single discussion procedure foreseen in article 38 of the Standing Orders of the Conference. The Office has prepared two reports as a basis for this item. The first (summary) report, *Strengthening action to end forced labour* (ILC.103/IV/1), sent out to all member States in August 2013, contains a statement of law and practice with regard to the elimination of forced labour in member States. It also contains a questionnaire to which governments were invited to give their views, in consultation with the most representative organizations of employers and workers. The second (final) report, to be despatched in March 2014, consists of two volumes: Conference report IV(2A) (ILC.103/IV/2A) includes summaries of replies received from governments, employers’ and workers’ organizations, and the Office commentary; and Conference report IV(2B) (ILC.103/IV/2B) contains the draft text of the proposed Protocol and Recommendation to be submitted for discussion.

V. Facilitating transitions from the informal to the formal economy – *Standard setting, double discussion*

The informal economy is significantly impacting the world of work, with as much as 40–80 per cent of the labour force in developing countries working within it. Increasingly, transition to formality has emerged as a priority policy agenda in developed and developing countries, and new policy initiatives and approaches are taken in different regions that facilitate this transition through multiple pathways.

At its 317th Session (March 2013) the Governing Body decided to place a standard-setting item on the agenda of the 103rd Session (June 2014) of the Conference on facilitating transitions from the informal to the formal economy, under the double

discussion procedure, which means that this item will be dealt with at the current session and at the 104th Session of the Conference (2015).

This standard-setting item builds on the conclusions concerning decent work and the informal economy, adopted by the Conference in 2002, the outcome of the ILO Tripartite Interregional Symposium on the Informal Economy (2007) and the 2012 Conference conclusions concerning the recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work, which called for the convening of a meeting of experts on advancing fundamental principles and rights at work in the informal economy.

At its 317th Session, the Governing Body decided to convene a Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Facilitating Transitions from the Informal Economy to the Formal Economy, to provide guidance on the nature and content of the proposed instrument, in particular concerning innovative solutions and up-to-date experience (legal, policy, institutional, governance and other interventions) which have proved successful in supporting the transition from informality to formality. The Tripartite Meeting of Experts took place in Geneva from 16 to 20 September 2013. Its report, including the Chairperson's summary, was submitted to the 319th Session of the Governing Body as a Supplementary Report of the Director-General (GB.319/INS/14/6).

The law and practice report prepared by the Office, *Transitioning from the informal to the formal economy* (ILC.103/V/1), sent out to all member States in August 2013, provides an overview of the informal economy, its impact on the attainment of decent work for all workers and employers and the ILO's approach to the transition to formality, as set out in the 2002 conclusions. It covers the regulatory environment relating to the informal economy at national and international levels, with examples of existing laws and practice from different regions, legal systems, traditions and circumstances adopted by ILO constituents to move progressively to the formal economy. Finally, it examines the need for an integrated policy framework, encompassing the ILO's four strategic objectives (fundamental principles and rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue) adapted to the national context of each member State for a progressive transition to the formal economy and decent work. The report is accompanied by a questionnaire, as provided for in article 39 of the Standing Orders of the Conference, which has been drawn up with a view to preparing a Recommendation on facilitating transitions from the informal to the formal economy.

The second report (ILC.103/V/2), to be sent to member States in April 2014, is based on the replies received to the questionnaire, summarized and commented on in the report. It contains a set of proposed draft conclusions, prepared on the basis of these replies, which are intended to serve as a basis for discussion by the Conference during this session.

VI. A recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of employment

At its 97th Session (2008), the Conference adopted the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, calling all Members of the Organization to pursue policies based on the strategic objectives – employment, social protection, social dialogue, and fundamental principles and rights at work. The follow-up to the Declaration introduced a scheme of recurrent discussions by the International Labour Conference, covering each of the four strategic objectives in turn, in order to “understand better the diverse realities and needs of [ILO] Members with respect to each of the strategic objectives, respond more effectively to them, using all the means of action at [the ILO's] disposal, including

standards-related action, technical cooperation, and the technical and research capacity of the Office, and adjust its priorities and programmes of action accordingly” (Part II(B)(i)). The discussion on the strategic objective of employment in 2010 inaugurated the first seven-year cycle of recurrent discussions. A first round of all four strategic objectives concluded in 2013; a second discussion of the strategic objective of employment is due to take place in 2014.

Consequently the report, entitled *Employment policies for sustainable recovery and development* (ILC.103/VI), prepared by the Office in line with the guidance provided at the 317th Session (March 2013) of the Governing Body, which will be sent out to member States in early 2014, analyses current employment challenges in diverse regional and national contexts and their implications for effective responses and employment policy. It discusses the impact of the continuing economic and financial crisis, and weak and uneven recovery, on employment and labour markets in different regions and for different groups, especially young people and women. It examines policy responses to the crisis and their effectiveness beyond the crisis, analysing six global and structural trends and drivers of change that carry profound implications for employment policy: globalization and technological transition; income inequality; climate change, the new demographic context; skills mismatches; and gender gaps.

The report also provides a succinct review of action by the Organization and its Members to promote employment. It presents measures taken by the Office to implement the 2010 recurrent discussion conclusions, placing emphasis on the inseparable, interrelated and mutually supportive nature of the four strategic objectives of the ILO.

In its approach to the challenging and evolving environment, the report takes account of the new priorities introduced by the ILO’s internal reform, reviewing possible ways to address the employment challenges faced by ILO constituents in specific contexts. It contains a set of suggested points for discussion.

Amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006

The Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006), entered into force on 20 August 2013. On 9 September 2013 the Director-General received two sets of proposals for amendments to the Code of the Convention (the Standards in Part A of the Code and the Guidelines in Part B of the Code, including their appendices). These proposals cover, respectively, the issue of abandonment of seafarers and the requirement, already stipulated in the MLC, 2006, that shipowners provide financial security for compensation in the event of death or long-term disability of a seafarer due to occupational injury, illness or hazard.

These proposals for amendments were submitted jointly by the Shipowners’ and Seafarers’ groups on the Special Tripartite Committee (the MLC Committee). The Committee, which is provided for under Article XIII of the MLC, 2006, was established by the Governing Body in June 2013. It has several important functions under the MLC, 2006, including, under Article XV, a central role with respect to the simplified process for amendment of the Code of the Convention. In accordance with that Article, the Director-General communicated the proposals for amendments to all Members, with an invitation to submit comments or suggestions on them by 17 March 2014. The MLC Committee will meet from 7 to 11 April 2014 and will consider the proposals for amendments. If it adopts amendments, these must, under Article XV(5) of the Convention,

be submitted for approval by the next session of the International Labour Conference. The Governing Body, at its 320th Session (March 2014), will consider provisionally placing any amendments that may be adopted by the MLC Committee on the agenda of the 103rd Session of the Conference.

On the assumption that the proposed amendments will be adopted, the Conference will need to decide how they should be discussed. Under Article XV(5) of the MLC, 2006, this decision is limited to approving the amendments, or referring them back to the MLC Committee for further consideration, thus taking up a minimum of Conference time. It is therefore expected that this question will be put to a vote in plenary. Approval requires a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast of delegates present at the Conference.

Further information on this matter will be communicated to Members in due course.

Selection Committee (ILC Standing Orders, article 4 and section H, article 55(2))

The Selection Committee is composed of 28 members appointed by the Government group, 14 members appointed by the Employers' group, and 14 by the Workers' group. Its responsibilities include arranging the programme of the Conference, fixing the time and agenda of its plenary sittings and acting on its behalf on any other routine question. Since the 1996 reforms to the Conference, most of these tasks have been delegated to the Officers of the Committee. The Selection Committee may be called on at any time to consider specific issues.

Credentials Committee (ILC Standing Orders, article 5 and section B)

The Credentials Committee is composed of one Government, one Employers' and one Workers' delegate, appointed by the Conference. It meets in closed sittings.

Its responsibilities include:

- examining the credentials, as well as any objection relating to the credentials, of delegates and their advisers, or relating to the failure to deposit credentials of an Employers' or Workers' delegate (ILC Standing Orders, articles 5(2) and 26bis);
- considering complaints of non-observance of article 13(2)(a), of the Constitution (payment of expenses of tripartite delegations) or concerning delegates or advisers prevented from attending the Conference (ILC Standing Orders, articles 5(2) and 26ter);
- monitoring of any situation with regard to the observance of the provisions of article 3 or article 13(2)(a) of the Constitution, about which the Conference has requested a report (ILC Standing Orders, articles 5(2) and 26quater); and
- determining the quorum required for the validity of votes taken by the Conference (ILC Standing Orders, article 20(1)).

Participation

Composition of delegations

Member States' delegations to the International Labour Conference are composed of **four** delegates: **two** Government delegates, **one** delegate representing the Employers and **one** delegate representing the Workers (Constitution, article 3(1)).

Each delegate may be accompanied by advisers, who shall not exceed two for each technical item on the Conference agenda (Constitution, article 3(2)). **At the 103rd Session, there are presently four such items on the agenda, items III, IV, V and VI, therefore, each Government, Employers' and Workers' delegate to the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference may be accompanied by up to eight advisers.** In order to allow for a full and equal participation of Government, Employer and Worker representatives, in line with the principles of tripartism, the number of advisers accompanying each of the delegates should be balanced. **Travel and living expenses of delegates and their advisers are to be borne by their respective States** (Constitution, article 13(2)(a)).

Under the Constitution, member States shall ensure that their delegations are fully tripartite and that they remain so throughout the duration of the Conference, in particular for the purpose of voting, which takes place on the last days of the session. Delegates must be able to act in full independence of one another. The non-government delegates must be chosen in agreement with the most representative organizations of employers and workers, respectively, in their respective countries, if such organizations exist (Constitution, article 3(5)).

Constituents are asked to remember that the success of the discussions depends on the competencies of participants. It is therefore of critical importance that participants should be chosen not only for the technical expertise required, but also with a view to adopting a coordinated approach, involving action shared between different government administrations.

Gender parity

Governments and employers' and workers' organizations are asked to bear in mind the resolutions addressing the participation of women in ILO meetings, adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 67th (1981), 78th (1991) and 98th (2009) Sessions. As the proportion of women among delegates and advisers remains low, the Governing Body of the ILO discussed this issue at its 316th Session (November 2012) and decided, among other measures, to request the Director-General to send letters after every Conference to Members which had not reached a 30 per cent level of participation of women in International Labour Conference delegations, and to report periodically to the Governing Body on any obstacles encountered, as well as any measures taken to achieve gender parity.

Such letters were sent out to the member States concerned following the last session of the International Labour Conference (2013). Governments and employers' and workers' organizations are strongly urged to include a higher percentage of women in their delegations to the Conference, with a view to achieving gender parity in delegations.

Credentials

Credentials of delegates and their advisers must be deposited with the International Labour Office **at least 15 days** before the date fixed for the opening sitting, in line with article 26(1) of the Standing Orders of the Conference. The time limit for the deposit of the credentials of all delegates and advisers is therefore **Monday, 12 May 2014**.

The form for the submission of credentials, attached to the letter of convocation and also available on the ILO website, is accompanied by an Explanatory note for national delegations on the deposit of credentials, giving details on the various categories of participants at the Conference, and the roles that they play. Contact details are given both in the Explanatory note and in the table at the end of this document.

This form will also be available online. Access codes will be sent to permanent missions of member States in Geneva in early 2014. The codes allow the form to be completed online and submitted through the Organization's website. The electronic submission is validated by sending a printed copy of the form signed by the authorized representative of the government to the International Labour Office. The use of the online credentials form is strongly encouraged as it speeds up the processing of the credentials and reduces the risk of clerical errors in the transcription of the credentials.

Representation of non-metropolitan territories

Requests for invitations of non-metropolitan territories must reach the Office by **Wednesday, 26 February 2014** to be submitted to the Governing Body for approval by its Institutional Section at the 320th Session (March 2014).

Under article 3(3) of the Constitution:

Each Member which is responsible for the international relations of non-metropolitan territories may appoint as additional advisers to each of its delegates:

- (a) persons nominated by it as representatives of any such territory in regard to matters within the self-governing powers of that territory; and
- (b) persons nominated by it to advise its delegates in regard to matters concerning non-self-governing territories.

Alternatively, in accordance with a Governing Body decision of 1954, in line with the constitutional, political, economic and social development of any non-metropolitan territory for which a member State is responsible, the non-metropolitan territory in question may be invited, through the member State concerned, to participate by means of a tripartite observer delegation in sessions of the Conference, with the rights and status accorded to observers under the Standing Orders of the Conference.

Representation of international non-governmental organizations

For information on participation at the International Labour Conference by international non-governmental organizations, please visit the ILO web page on engaging civil society at: www.ilo.org/pardev/civil-society/lang--en/index.htm, which gives full information on the conditions to be met.

The deadline for applications by international non-governmental organizations to be represented at the 103rd Session of the Conference is **Thursday, 13 February 2014**.

Speaking in plenary

Delegates are reminded that, in order to have the right to speak in plenary, they must be accredited either as regular delegates or as “advisers and substitute delegates”, acting on behalf of regular delegates. Delegates accredited as “advisers” are normally not entitled to speak in the plenary. Please refer to the Explanatory note on credentials for national delegations.

Delegates wishing to speak in plenary are encouraged to register in advance, as from **Tuesday, 1 April 2014**, by email, fax or telephone (see section – Contact details). They may also do so during the Conference, as early as possible, at the registration of speakers office. The list of speakers closes on **Wednesday, 4 June, at 6 p.m.**, subject to the decision of the Selection Committee. Please note that this concerns registration only for those wishing to take the floor in plenary in the discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

Advance registration in committees

The membership of the technical committees set up to deal with agenda items III, IV, V and VI is determined by the groups, subject to approval by the Conference of the initial composition of these committees. Delegates wishing to be a member of a committee must therefore register with their respective group.

This year, in order to facilitate the work of the Conference and group secretariats, delegates who intend to participate in committees are asked to complete registration forms in advance and send them to the International Labour Office. The registration forms will be made available for download on the ILO website in the course of the month of February 2014, and will be sent to Members along with the Conference guide, after the March Governing Body session.

The completed forms should be sent to the following ILO departments (contact details at the end of this document):

Governments: Official Relations and Meetings Branch (RELOFF)

Employers: Bureau for Employers’ Activities (ACT/EMP)

Workers: Bureau for Workers’ Activities (ACTRAV)

Please note that committee membership will be effective only once:

- the Office has received official credentials from the government accrediting the person concerned as regular delegate, adviser, or person designated in accordance with article 2(3)(i) of the Standing Orders of the Conference; and
- the registration request is endorsed by the group concerned and the initial committee composition approved by the Conference.

Practical arrangements

Delegates with disabilities

The Conference premises are generally accessible to persons with disabilities. For further information please contact the RELOFF Meetings Management Unit (email: MEETINGS-SERVICES@ilo.org; telephone: +41 22 799 6767).

Accommodation for delegations in Geneva

June is a busy month in Geneva so delegations are encouraged to make reservations well in advance. The International Labour Office does not have a hotel reservation service, therefore delegations to the Conference should request their permanent diplomatic missions in Geneva, or where applicable, in Bern, to make the necessary reservations with hotels in the Geneva area. Reservations may also be made through the:

Delegates Welcome Service
Centre d'Accueil – Genève Internationale (CAGI)
La Pastorale – 106, route de Ferney
CH-1202 Genève
Telephone: +41 22 546 23 00
Email: delegates.cagi@etat.ge.ch
Website: www.cagi.ch

Office du tourisme de Genève
18, rue du Mont Blanc
Case postale 1602
CH-1211 Genève 1
Telephone: +41 22 909 70 00
Fax: +41 22 909 70 11
Website: www.geneve-tourisme.ch/en/home/

Entry visas for Switzerland (and France)

Nationals of many ILO member States require visas to enter and remain in Switzerland for the period of the Conference. Please note that Switzerland applies the **European Schengen regulations** concerning the issuance of visas.

Entry visas for Switzerland are issued primarily by Swiss diplomatic representations abroad. Delegates to the Conference who require an entry visa should submit a request, well in advance, to the Swiss embassy or consulate in their country of residence. However, certain countries do not have a Swiss consulate/embassy, in which case the visa request might have to be made in another country where the competent representation is located. Switzerland has signed agreements with certain countries where it is not represented by a diplomatic or consular entity. Under certain conditions these agreements allow for the issuing of visas by a Schengen State in a country where Switzerland is not represented.

Additional information may be found at the following web address: www.bfm.admin.ch//content/bfm/en/home/themen/einreise.html.

The Schengen visa issued will be valid for entering the territory of all States belonging to the Schengen area. Likewise, persons already holding Schengen visas issued by other Schengen States will be permitted to enter Switzerland.

The governments of member States are solely responsible for ensuring that all delegates included in their delegation's official credentials obtain necessary entry visas for Switzerland.

Please keep the following in mind:

- **The time for processing visa requests** may vary from case to case. Delegations are strongly encouraged to communicate their credentials to the Office as early as possible and to take the necessary steps for visa application well in advance (but **at the earliest three months before the departure date**), so that the visa can be issued in a timely manner.
- On 11 October 2011 the Schengen member States introduced the Visa Information System (VIS) which is used to store biometric data (ten fingerprints and facial image) of the Schengen visa applicant. All Swiss embassies and consulates are gradually being connected to the VIS system. It is necessary for the visa applicant to make an appointment with the Swiss embassy/consulate in his/her country of residence and present him/herself in person to submit and register his/her biometric data. This data remains valid in the VIS system for a period of five years. A document in several languages explaining the implementation of the VIS system, registration of biometric data and the rollout timetable for Swiss embassies/consulates connected to the VIS system is available at the following web address: www.bfm.admin.ch//content/bfm/en/home/themen/einreise/einfuehrung_vis.html.
- The following documents must be submitted by each member of the delegation:
 - a travel document, the validity of which exceeds that of the stay, and covers the period necessary for the return journey;
 - a visa application form, together with two photos;
 - supporting documents concerning the purpose of the journey, for example, a *note verbale* from the Government duly initialled together with an authorization to undertake the mission, a copy of credentials, an invitation to the Conference, etc.
 - any other document that the representation considers necessary.
- Except for holders of diplomatic or service passports, the Swiss authorities may require that member States provide proof of adequate travel insurance.

Office intervention

The International Labour Office can only intervene with Swiss authorities if a **visa request is not granted** by them. Such interventions can be made only on behalf of the following categories of participants: delegates, advisers, and persons designated in

accordance with article 2(3)(i) of the Standing Orders of the Conference. For all other participants (“other persons attending the Conference” and “support staff for delegations”), member States should contact the Swiss representation in their country directly and arrange their visas without any ILO involvement. Please note that for the Office to intervene with Swiss diplomatic representations on behalf of the categories of participants listed above, their credentials must have been received in Geneva **by Monday, 12 May 2014**.

The following conditions must be met:

- the first and last names of the person concerned must be included in the official credentials of the delegation within one of the above categories of participants, as submitted to the International Labour Office by the Government;
- the visa application must have already been processed by a Swiss diplomatic representation;
- the request for intervention must reach the Office **at least a week before the departure date**, indicating the Swiss representation to which the visa application is being made.

Meeting room reservations

Participants wishing to reserve rooms for the purpose of bilateral, multilateral or group meetings on matters related to ILC business may do so in advance by email, as of **Tuesday, 15 April 2014**, to the following address: ilcrooms@ilo.org.

Rules of procedure of the Conference

The rules of procedure of the Conference are contained in the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation and in the Standing Orders of the Conference.

These texts can be consulted on the ILO website: www.ilo.org/ilc. They may also be obtained in Geneva at the document distribution service.

The submission of draft resolutions on items which are not included on the Conference agenda will be addressed at the 103rd Session of the Conference in accordance with articles 15 and 17 of the Standing Orders of the Conference, unless the Conference determines otherwise in conformity with article 76.

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