



## Governing Body

313th Session, Geneva, 15–30 March 2012

GB.313/POL/4/1(&Corr.)

Policy Development Section  
*Social Dialogue Segment*

**POL**

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### FOURTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

## Global dialogue forums and mandate of sectoral meetings: Global dialogue forums – lessons learned

#### Purpose of the document

In the present document, the Governing Body is invited to approve proposals made in relation to improvements to the format of global dialogue forums (GDFs) (see draft decision in paragraph 16).

**Relevant strategic objective:** Strengthen tripartism and social dialogue, Outcome 13: A sector-specific approach to decent work is applied.

**Policy implications:** None.

**Legal implications:** If adopted, the proposals would result in a delegation of the decision regarding a GDF's composition to the Officers of the Governing Body and new rules for the designation of chairpersons of GDFs.

**Financial implications:** None.

**Follow-up action required:** If approved, the proposals would be implemented by the Office in time for the next GDF to be held in 2012 (on Future Needs for Skills and Training in the Oil and Gas Industry, December 2012).

**Author unit:** Sectoral Activities Department (SECTOR).

**Related documents:** GB.312/POL/5.



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## Executive summary

This paper outlines proposals to improve the functioning of GDFs.

### I. Introduction

1. At its last session in November 2011, the Governing Body discussed lessons learned from GDFs <sup>1</sup> and decided to examine this issue further at the current session. <sup>2</sup> This paper provides a basis for this discussion. <sup>3</sup>
2. The proposals that found wide support in November 2011 are reproduced in Part II; new proposals that are based on the statements made in November are in Part III.

### II. Proposals that found support in November 2011

3. At the end of the discussion in November, it became clear that not all proposals then presented were fully supported by all Governing Body members who had spoken. It is therefore proposed that the Governing Body now endorse those proposals that had not met any opposition. These were in paragraphs 12, 16 and 18 of GB.312/POL/5 and are reproduced below.

#### *Improvements at the programming stage*

12. Given that the three types of meeting mentioned above have different characteristics, the Office will in future brief advisory bodies on the strengths and limitations of the different formats, in order to facilitate the selection of the most appropriate type of meeting, and to ensure that GDFs are not chosen to address issues that are not adequately focused to be discussed in this short time frame. The Office will therefore ask advisory bodies, when the proposals are discussed, to determine the purpose of a GDF. Advisory bodies will be asked to ensure that the purpose of every GDF is sufficiently focused, bearing in mind that they are short meetings on topical and well-defined subjects of importance to the sector in question, not a general review of trends and issues, and that not more than three points for discussion (plus recommendations for follow-up activities) can be discussed in a single GDF.

#### *Standard form for inputs*

16. In the interest of cost savings and greater focus, the inputs into each GDF should be standardized. Issues papers should: be limited to no more than 20 pages in English, French and Spanish; contain the proposed points for discussion; and outline the most important elements of the issue, focusing on recent developments and providing facts and figures. In order to ensure wider ownership, and in particular the involvement of labour ministries and line ministries with a sectoral focus, the Office proposes that issues papers should be based on concise questionnaires devised through consultations in the

<sup>1</sup> GB.312/POL/5.

<sup>2</sup> GB.312/POL/PR, para. 104.

<sup>3</sup> Although this paper is self-contained, since all proposals suggested for discussion at this session, which were made in November, are reproduced in this document, readers might want to refer to the introductory paragraphs of GB.312/POL/5 for background information.

advisory bodies and sent out to workers' and employers' organizations as well as governments, in addition to research undertaken by sectoral specialists.<sup>4</sup>

*More assistance to participants*

18. Government representatives, in particular, have criticized the lack of clear rules. For this reason, the Office proposes to establish a new and more in-depth briefing on the standing practice and rules of GDFs, as outlined herein, and to present this briefing to all groups at the beginning of the first day, and make these materials available online to assist delegates in their preparations for each GDF.

### **III. New proposals**

4. In addition, the Governing Body is invited to consider a number of further proposals. They respond to the statements made and requests put forward at the last session of the Governing Body.<sup>5</sup>
5. In this context, it is proposed that, at the end of the 2012–13 biennium, experience in the implementation of proposals adopted by the Governing Body be reviewed to allow for possible further adjustments.

#### **Improvements at the programming stage**

6. Concerns were raised in relation to the proposal to delegate the decision concerning the composition of each GDF to the Officers of the Governing Body. The proposal had been made in order to further reduce the number of submissions to the Governing Body and associated timing problems in the event that changes to the composition were needed.
7. In responding to these concerns, the Office confirms its understanding that such delegation is possible. The composition, i.e. the number of participants from each of the three groups, can be considered an element within the “programme” of meetings in the sense of article 2.3.1 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body. It is thus covered by the delegation under said article.
8. It is therefore proposed that the Governing Body delegate the decision regarding the composition of GDFs to its Officers and at the same time instruct its chairperson to ensure that consultations take place with the chairperson of the Government group or his or her representative, bearing in mind that any decision on the composition of a GDF would only concern paid participation of Worker and Employer representatives and not have adverse effects on Government representation, given that all GDFs are open to participation by any government interested.
9. It is also proposed that the Governing Body instruct the Office to duly consider and to remind the advisory bodies to bear in mind, in the preparation of proposals for activities under the Sectoral Activities Programme, the need to spread meetings as evenly as possible throughout the biennium and, in order to avoid possible bottlenecks while at the same time

<sup>4</sup> If all proposals were adopted, the use of questionnaires would be reassessed (in line with para. 6) with a view to ensuring that further increased reporting burdens are avoided.

<sup>5</sup> The new proposals do not cover all issues originally dealt with in GB.312/POL/5, since some of them met considerable opposition, such as the proposals to require the mandate of each GDF to comprise whether that respective GDF should adopt points of consensus (para. 13), the limitation of holding two meetings per semester (para. 14) or the introduction of fixed rules for the development and discussion of points of consensus (paras 19–22).

maintaining adequate flexibility to allow for quick responses to emerging issues, to propose, at the start of each biennium, a programme comprising no more than eight meetings.

### **Standard format for outputs**

10. Given the wide support in November for the proposals to standardize the format of outputs, the Office reintroduces its proposal that “points of consensus” should not be longer than three pages and comprise sections, grouped in accordance with the points for discussion, on “points of consensus” and suggested “follow-up activities”.
11. In view of the discussions in November, it is further proposed that a section on “issues that require further attention” be included. That section would contain topics on which no immediate agreement could be found during the respective GDF, but that could be addressed in future activities, such as research or a tripartite meeting.
12. As is the case for sectoral meetings and meetings of experts, a report of the discussions will also continue to be produced. It is proposed that this report should typically not exceed 40 pages for a two-day GDF.

### **Designation of a chairperson**

13. Given that GDFs were a new format, outside chairpersons had been designated by the Office, in line with the standing practice for meetings of experts. Whereas this practice is helpful in the context of meetings of experts, where selecting a Government expert as chairperson automatically results in that expert being unable to participate fully in the discussions, it does not seem to be adapted to the realities of GDFs, in which all interested governments can participate. For this reason, the Office proposes that in the future the chairperson be designated from one of the three groups, typically the Government group, as is the case, e.g. for committees of the International Labour Conference. It is further proposed that, when designating a chairperson, GDFs be encouraged to consider giving preference to experienced participants, in particular Governing Body members.

### **Duration of GDFs**

14. Whereas all GDFs held so far have had a duration of two days, participants of a number of GDFs pointed out that the time allotted did not suffice. Based on this feedback, Governing Body members highlighted that there might be cases where a more flexible approach would be needed.
15. It is thus proposed that at the programming stage, sectoral advisory bodies already make a recommendation regarding the length of each GDF (from two to three days) and that the Governing Body, when adopting the programme of activities under the Sectoral Activities Programme, also determine the duration of each GDF at that session. Estimates of cost of increases that would result from extending the duration of a GDF by an additional day are provided in the appendix.

#### **IV. Draft decision**

**16. *The Governing Body:***

- (a) approves the proposals for improvements to the GDF format in paragraphs 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 15; and*
- (b) delegates to its Officers, under paragraph 2.3.1(a) of its Standing Orders, the authority to approve the composition of GDFs as regards the number of Worker and Employer participants to be invited.*

## Appendix

### Estimated costs that would result from the extension of the duration of a GDF by an additional day <sup>1</sup>

Additional cost	Unit cost	Number of units required	Total (in US\$)
Daily subsistence allowance (DSA) for participants	CHF437 (per participant and day) <sup>1</sup>	Depending on number of participants paid for by the Office in the specific meeting  Example: assuming the typical composition of a GDF (six Worker and six Employer participants): 12 units	Example: \$5,244 (for 12 participants)
Interpretation	CHF16,800 (for English, French and Spanish) or CHF49,000 (for all seven official languages) <sup>2</sup>	One day <sup>3</sup>	\$20,000 (for English, French and Spanish) or \$58,333 (for all seven official languages)
Translators	\$500 (for a T3-grade translator) <sup>4</sup>	A team of four translators is typically needed (two for French and two for Spanish)	\$2,000
Note takers	\$300	A team of four note takers is typically needed	\$1,200
Messenger	\$200	One person	\$200
Outside experts <sup>5</sup>	\$400 (maximum remuneration for an expert) plus \$402 (DSA) <sup>6</sup>	If required	If required

<sup>1</sup> Current special DSA rate for a committee delegate. <sup>2</sup> English, French and Spanish as well as Arabic, Chinese, German and Russian. <sup>3</sup> Assuming the following schedule: group meetings from 9 to 10 a.m. and 2.30 to 3.30 p.m. and plenary sessions from 10 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and 3.30 to 6.30 p.m. <sup>4</sup> Exact daily rate depending on the translator's grade. <sup>5</sup> In cases where highly specialized technical advice might need to be provided during the meeting (e.g. by a veterinary or microbiologist). <sup>6</sup> Standard rate for Geneva (January 2012).

In addition to the costs contained in the table, others which are not easily quantifiable would likely need to be incurred, such as overtime compensation for translators and for General Service staff (working on text processing) and printing (if in-session documents need to be produced). These cost increases vary greatly depending on the timetable adopted by the forum and documents requested to be produced during the GDF.

<sup>1</sup> These cost estimates are based on costs incurred in recent meetings and current rates applicable. Conversion from Swiss francs (CHF) to US dollars was made using the budget rate of exchange for 2012–13 (CHF0.84 to US\$1).